

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. IX, No. 255, 6th Waxing of Pyatho 1384 ME

www.gnlm.com.mm

Tuesday, 27 December 2022

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.

SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla inaugurate Youth and Literary Arts Exhibition to mark Diamond Jubilee Independence Day 2023



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing views round the exhibits at the inauguration of the Youth and Literary Arts Exhibition in marking Diamond Jubilee Independence Day 2023, in Nay Pyi Taw on 26 December 2022.

CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and his wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla attended to open the Youth and Literary Arts Exhibition to mark Diamond Jubilee Independence Day 2023 at the Myanmar International Convention Centre-II in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

Union Ministers U Maung Maung Ohn, Dr Nyunt Pe and U Min Thein Zan cut the ribbon to open the exhibition.

The Senior General and his wife unveiled the exhibition. The Senior General and his wife posed for documentary photos together with attendees to the ceremony. They then took two and a half hours interestingly

viewing round the booths of the exhibition and the booth on screening the documentary film “Noble Myanmar”.

In the second session of the ceremony, artistes and students from No 6 Basic Education High School, No 11 BEHS and No 20 BEHS in Nay Pyi Taw, Pynmana BEHS No 1, Nay Pyi Taw BEHS No 7, BEHS No 5, vocalist

Myanmar Pyi Thein Tan, and Tin Maung San Min Win and troupe performed the song and dance entertainment.

The Senior General and his wife presented the flower basket and cash awards to the students and artistes who performed the song and dance entertainment.

SEE PAGE-3

INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL

Holidaymakers flock to Wanet Elephant Camp during Dec holidays

PAGE-2



NATIONAL

Floating bike riding service runs as recreational activity on Ayeyawady River

PAGE-4

NATIONAL

Big numbers of students, youths, children participate in Youth and Literary Arts Exhibition in commemoration of Diamond Jubilee Independence Day

PAGE-5



CURRENT AFFAIRS

SIM card registration deadline extended to 31 January 2023

PAGE-6

Five National Objectives of Diamond Jubilee Independence Day

1. To ensure cementing the discipline-flourishing genuine multiparty democratic system and build the Union based on democracy and federalism;
2. To utmost strive for ensuring prosperity of the nation and food sufficiency as national work processes;
3. To build a better State and socioeconomic life in accord with the theme "Keep Moving Forward to Achieve Our Goal" focusing on interests of the State and ethnic national people;
4. To initiate national solidarity and peace of the Union with a firm vow;
5. To successfully hold the free and fair multiparty democratic general elections and emerge an electoral system in which all ethnic nationals would participate proportionately.

Holidaymakers flock to Wanet Elephant Camp during Dec holidays



Riders are seen on the elephants at the Wanet Elephant Camp during the Christmas holidays.

WANET Elephant Camp in Mandalay Region was packed with holidaymakers during the Christmas holidays (24 and 25 December), attracting approximately 100 visitors in two days.

Wanet Elephant Camp is located by the roadside of Yeywa Dam between Mandalay and PynOoLwin. Thanks to maintaining the campgrounds, the home-grown visitors and tourists come

to the camp to relax under the shade trees, enjoy the elephant ride and the natural scenic beauty and fed the elephant, said U Toe Aung, assistant manager, in his capacity as in-charge of the elephant camp conservation.

The camp is crowded with the visitors during December holidays. It was a coincidence that the PynOoLwin flower festival is being held. The bikers' groups

and other family group travellers also visit these recreation sites, he added.

The camp received 54 visitors on Christmas day yet the number of visitors was the highest during Tazaungdine Festival. It is because of the cold weather. The camp offers great service with three male elephants and five female elephants on the holidays. Normally, visitors can interact with only four.

"Visitors enjoy the natural fresh air, elephant ride and feeding elephants returning from waterfall camps. Elephant feed-stuffs are banana, watermelon, sugarcane and pumpkin," he continued.

Visitors can observe the natural scene on elephant rides, watch elephant theme shows and take documentary photos with the elephants. The entrance fee is K1,000 per person. A short trip is estimated at K3,000 while the elephant ride for a long-distance trip costs K5,000. — Maung Aye Chan/EMM

5 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 26 December, total figure rises to 633,617

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **633,617** after **five** new cases were reported on 26 December 2022 according to the Ministry of Health.

The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **608,221** including **nine** new recoveries.

The death toll from COVID-19 in the country remained unchanged at **19,490** on 26 December with no new death reported from the pandemic.

According to the research, it is found that people who have been vaccinated do not suffer severely from the disease, need not to be hospitalized and unlikely to die. If they have received booster shot, the death rates can be reduced more.

As such, the people need to follow the new normal way in living with COVID. Hence, all the people above five have to fully receive COVID-19 vaccination inoculated by the Ministry of Health free of charge. Six months after the vaccination, they have to take booster jabs at relevant health centres and ward/village administration offices without fail.

Moreover, they have to wear masks while in closed chambers and public places. They need to often wash hands with soap and water or the hand gel containing alcohol (at least 60 per cent) for 20 seconds.

People need to follow the social distancing rule and avoid the crowds as much as possible. While not wearing masks, if they cough and sneeze, they need to cover mouth and noses with elbows in line with the personal hygienic ways. COVID-19 information can be browsed on the internet page moh.gov.mm of the Ministry of Health. — MNA

Naungtarlaw island resort crowded with vacationers on Christmas

DURING the Christmas holiday on 25 December, the small island resort of Naungtarlaw was packed with visitors who came via Myitkyina city's Kyun Pintha jetty and Kachinsu jetty are crowded with travellers.

The visitors took photos

with groups of friends at beauty spots at the resort, rode four-wheel motorcycles, played volleyball and soccer and took a ride in speed boats in the Ayeayawady River. Then, camps and traditional restaurants on the beach were crowded with

vacationers.

An official of the management sub-committee of the resort said that it was Christmas Day and the office was closed and so there were more visitors than on the previous holiday. — Yein Nu(IPRD)/KZW



Beachgoers are pictured on Christmas 2022.



Myanmar citizens to decide Myanmar's affairs without external interference

"ENSURING peace and stability in the country is rather difficult as long as foreign involvement exists in our country's internal affairs. Myanmar citizens, themselves are to decide the affairs of Myanmar. It is by no means possible to let other foreign countries interfere or decide. It must be the Myanmar citizens who are to decide the affairs of Myanmar."

(Excerpt from the speech delivered by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the State Administration Council Meeting 4/2022 held on 12-5-2022)



Union Ethnic People. PHOTO BY SAI TUN NAY HLAING

SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and ...



SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla and dignitaries watch the song and dance performance at the event.

FROM PAGE-1

As a gesture of hailing the Diamond Jubilee Independence Day, the Youth and Literary Arts Exhibition aims to motivate the students to read books and publications, know

the advantages of literature, uplift patriotic spirit, prestige and integrity through movies and fine arts, adore the independence of the nation with the knowledge of independence struggle and sufferings in the

colonial era, enjoy peace, stability and beautifying scenes of the nation with development activities as well as panoramic rural scenes, have the soul for adoring the relevant regions and states through the photo

art show, and easily know endeavours of relevant ministries through the displays of booths at the exhibition.

The exhibition will last until 28 December, and it is formed with 62 booths of relevant min-

istries showcasing books and publications, bookstalls, record photos on screening the documentary film "Noble Myanmar" put on attractive display, and admission is free for students and enthusiastic people. — MNA

MoBA Union Minister receives Ambassador of Nepal to Myanmar

UNION Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung received Mr Harishchandra Ghimire, Ambassador of Nepal to Myanmar, at the meeting hall of the Ministry of Border Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

They cordially discussed stability, peace and development of border areas, the development of human resources for ethnic youths and the

progress of the socioeconomic development of locals in border areas, the implementation of tourism development and cooperation between the two countries.

The meeting was also attended by Deputy Ministers for Border Affairs Maj-Gen Khun Thant Zaw Htoo and Maj-Gen Phyo Thant, the permanent secretary, the director-general and officials. — MNA/MKKS



Nepali Ambassador Mr Harishchandra Ghimire calls on Union Minister Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Existing Constitution provides ethnic rights

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

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

Artistes perform for Nay Pyi Taw's basic school students, supervisor teachers

ARTISTES from the movie and music industries performed entertainment yesterday at the Transit Centre where 1,100 students who will perform the alphabet presentation and image performance at the celebration of Diamond Jubilee Independence Day and their supervisor teachers from basic education schools of Nay Pyi Taw Council stayed.

The entertaining event was enjoyed by Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn and relevant officials. — MNA\KTZH



Union Information Minister U Maung Maung Ohn, officials, students and teachers watch the entertainment in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Floating bike riding service runs as recreational activity on Ayeyawady River



An aerial view of the floating bike riding service on the Ayeyawady River.

PEOPLE can enjoy the beauty of nature in the autumn season by riding floating bicycles in the Ayeyawady River at Myitkyina, Kachin State. Starting on 17 De-

cember, visitors can enjoy a fun ride starting from the bank of the Ayeyawady River near the Sipinthaya jetty to the middle island.

The floating bicycle service

was opened in 2020 and a lot of residents took an interest in it. The business was shut down in 2021 due to the COVID-19 outbreak and it is currently back

in service. Floating bike rental service will be available only between 9 am to 4 pm during December, the opening season, said U Seng Khun, an owner of the Dolphin Hydro Bike (floating bicycle).

Riders must wear a life jacket for their safety. If something happens in the middle of the water, the whistle installed in the life jacket can be used to call for help.

Plans are being made to carry out rescue operations by boats and monitoring programmes are also being planned for visitors.

The Dolphin Hydro Bike (floating bicycle) have 30 floating bikes for rent, and the rental fee for the mono bike and duo bike cost K3,000 and K5,000 per 30 minutes respectively. — Kachin State IPRD/CT



THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

www.gnlm.com.mm
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com



CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION

(+95) (01) 8604532,
Hotline - 09 454237515

ADVERTISING & MARKETING

(+95) (01) 8604530,
Hotline - 09 251022355
marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Printed and published at the Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the Global New Light of Myanmar Daily under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.

gnlmnews@gmail.com
www.gnlm.com.mm

Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm with your name and title.

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

Big numbers of students, youths, children participate in Youth and Literary Arts Exhibition in commemoration of Diamond Jubilee Independence Day

THE Youth and Literary Arts Exhibition as a gesture of hailing Diamond Jubilee Independence Day was held at the Myanmar International Convention Centre-II in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The event was crowded with the ministries' staff, families, students, youths and children.

The booths of various ministries and Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association featured awareness of drugs, anti-human trafficking, traffic rules, the record of the State Flag hoisting ceremony, declaration of independence, independence monument, State Flags, honorary titles and medals conferred between 1948 and 2022, book stalls, mobile book shops and photos of Sarpay Beikman.

Moreover, the event featured over 60 displays of historic agreements, documents, stone inscriptions, the national museum, marine, airlines, Myanma Railways and cyber security, forestry, mobile science and technologies, innovations of technological universities, COVID-19 education, dangers of cigarette/tobacco and betel chewing habit and youths-related activities and products of the Ayeyawady Region.

Similarly, the Ministry of Information and the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture opened book shops for students and young people.

It also included photo displays of the "Hlapa Thayar Pyi Myanmar" (Beautiful and Pleasant Myanmar) colour photo contest marking Diamond Jubilee Independence Day and photos of the writers of the 20th century.

Besides such programmes, the exhibition became more alive for its special entertainment movie programmes – Kyee Myat Thaw Myanmar (Noble Myanmar), Never Shall We Be Enslaved (Thu Kyun Ma Khan Pyi) and Nga Ba and singing sessions of artistes.

Moreover, officials displayed the movie-making materials of Kyi Myat Thaw Myanmar film, the first 3D film in Myanmar.

The people should not miss the film as it shows the famous pagodas of Myanmar such as Shwedagon, Maha Muni, Kyauktiyo and Inlay PhaungdawU including picturesque scenes and Myanmar traditional handicrafts.

Moreover, MRTV arranged a news studio where people can read news like news announcers and take photos.

The News and Periodicals Enterprise also explained to visitors that they can read the Myanma Alinn, Kyemon (The Mirror) and The Global New Light of Myanmar which covers local and international news on www.mdn.gov.mm website and Mobile Application for free any



The exhibition draws large numbers of students, youths and children. **PHOTOS: KO HTEIN.**

time. Moreover, students and youths were interested in the displays of Nay Pyi Taw Police Force as they featured security, the rule of law and criminal cases, public services, capacity building, cartoon displays of traffic rules and regulations, actions on gambling and other matters.

The booths of the Ayeyawady Region also featured the making of Pathein Umbrella and the region's food.

The event also included fun fair games and quiz of ministries concerned with youths and children and award-giving programmes.



Students and youths are pictured at the books stalls.

The festival intends to encourage students to read books and journals, know the benefits of literature, uplift patriotic spirit and dignity through arts with the knowledge of the history of independence and know peace, stability and development of the country including the lovely culture of rural regions and

to love their regions and states via photo contests and to understand activities of ministries concerned clearly through the booths.

Therefore, students, youths and children should participate in the event from 26 to 28 December. — Aung Ye Thwin, Aye Aye Thant/KTZH



Students are seen on the display at the Science and Technology booth.



At the Transport and Communications booth.

CURRENT AFFAIRS

SIM card registration deadline extended to 31 January 2023

THE Department of Posts and Telecommunications announced that the deadline for SIM card registration of mobile phones would be extended until 31 January 2023.

Since unregistered SIM cards will be deactivated, the number of SIM card applicants at communication centres is increasing every day.

The department announced on 19 September that the name and the citizenship scrutiny card number used for SIM card registration will be checked against the data in the Immigration Department, and if the data does not match, the SIM card will be blocked.

It was mentioned in the announcement that some people make use of incorrect data for using SIM cards according to the verifications of the Department of Posts and Telecommu-

nications under the Ministry of Transport and Communications. Therefore, the data filled in the SIM card registration process will be checked against the e-ID database data from the Ministry of Immigration and Population. Therefore, the department has urged people to buy and use SIM cards only after the proper registration using the correct data. In addition, SIM cards currently in use will be shut down if the data is wrong and incomplete, the department stated.

The statement said that action will be taken against telecommunications operators and SIM card vendors if they do not follow the instructions for the selling and re-registration of SIM cards. It is notified in the announcement that users must buy new SIM cards and re-register the current-in-use SIM



The picture shows some mobile phone users.

cards in time by filling up their correct information at provided online service of respective mobile operators and shops, to avoid the deactivation of cards.

Users can check their ID by dialling *601# for Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications (MPT), *766# or *979*3*3# for ATOM, *666# for Ooredoo and

*966# for Mytel. The re-registration process can be done at relevant mobile operators' official websites, applications and shops. — TWA/CT

Palm oil prices continue to decline

THE delivery order-DO price decreased to K5,150 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes) in the Yangon edible oil market on 24 December 2022.

The wholesale reference price of palm oil between 19 and 25 December was K4,415 per viss, indicating a price drop of K100 per viss to the previous week. With the drop of the reference price, the DO price of palm oil also decreased from K5,250 per viss on 20 December to K5,150 per viss on 24 December.

The DO price of palm

oil fetched K5,100 per viss on the morning of 26 December. Ko Aung Myint, a broker, told the Global New Light of Myanmar-GNLM that the price could be K5,075-K5,050 in the evening due to competitive prices in the market.

Domestically produced two types of palm oil are often sold at lower prices in the market this month compared to imported palm oil. From 19 to 25 December, the price for a tonne of oil at Yangon port was \$1,006 and ready-to-pack (18 litres) oil cost \$1,156 per tonne.

The cost (purchase price) of oil was K4,327 per viss with an average exchange rate of K2,478, according to the relevant notification.

The external palm oil dipped from 3,900 Ringgit on 23 December to 3,829 Ringgit on 24 December. Therefore, the reference price slumped again in the last week of December. Most of the buyers are speculating that the external exchange price in the Yangon edible oil market may drop below K5,000 per viss.

The wholesale reference was K4,630 per viss in early December and showed three consecutive weeks of decline. During the three weeks, the edible oil wholesale reference price decreased by K270 per viss.

From 28 November to 4 December, the reference price was K4,425, while the DO price was K5,450. On 24 December, the DO price was only K5,150-K5,175 per viss, with a reference price of K4,415.

The DO price of imported palm oil declined again by K50 per viss, while the reference price was only K4,360 this week. It is known that there is speculation in the oil market that palm oil may fall below K5,000 per viss in the external market.

Between 15 and 31 August 2022, the wholesale reference price of palm oil was K4,140 per viss, while the retail price in the external market fetched around K9,500 per viss. At the end of December, the reference price stood at K4,360, the DO price at K5,100 and the retail price at only K5,150 per viss.

Therefore, during the two periods when the reference price was decreased by K200 per viss, the external exchange price fell by around K4,500 per viss. It is reported that the oil business operators are trading by paying special attention to the market and price situation this month. — TWA/CT



Palm oils are syphoned from the tank to the barrel.

CCTVs installed on 15 YBS lines



A CCTV unit is seen on the YBS bus.

ACCORDING to the Yangon Region Public Transport Committee (YRTC), 15 passenger YBS lines operating in Yangon Region have been installed with CCTVs under the instructions of the Yangon Region government. As CCTVs have been fixed on 15 bus lines, whatever happened or what is happening on YBS vehicles will be able to be watched through the YBO Control Centre.

YRTC joint secretary U Lyan Cint Mang said that YRTC in collaboration with the police will

be able to expose the cases of pickpocketing and robbery on YBS vehicles.

In addition to the installation of CCTVs, the telematics system has been also fitted on some bus lines. As a result, drivers can inform the YBO direct by pressing the SOS button.

YRTC is working to install the telematics system in all the remaining YBS passenger vehicles, an official said.

Passengers riding on YBS vehicles are also encouraged to contact YRTC if they find any unusual occurrence on the vehicle.

Currently, officials continue installing CCTVs on the remaining YBS vehicles on five YBS lines.

More than 3,200 YBS vehicles from 116 passenger YBS bus lines in Yangon Region are transporting about 1.4 million passengers daily. — TWA/KZW

LOCAL BUSINESS

Legitimate export of sugar to China yet to happen

IT seems unlikely to export Myanmar's sugar to China through a legitimate channel, said U Win Htay, vice chair of Myanmar Sugar and Sugarcane Related Products Association.

Myanmar officials and Chinese counterparts are negotiating for Myanmar's sugar to have a quota for a legitimate export.

Last September, a company located in Hebei province proposed to purchase Myanmar's sugar through an embassy.

That company wanted to buy about 30,000 to 50,000 tonnes of refined sugar, sugar syrup, and white and brown sugar from Myanmar annually, with an estimated volume of 3,000 tonnes per month.

"We are not ready to accept the proposal," U Win Htay continued.

"We cannot export the

sugar yet. We need to seek a certificate from the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC) to legally export Myanmar's sugar to China. That being so, the legal export is yet to happen," U Win Htay elaborated.

Earlier, Myanmar exported surplus sugar to China via border routes. The export was conducted under the border state-level Memorandum of Understanding. However, sugar export to China came to a halt suddenly due to the COVID-19 policy of China. At present, it is delivered to Viet Nam only by sea, as per the association.

Sugarcane started to be harvested for the 2022-2023 season and some local companies offered the sugarcane price at K90,000 per tonne.

There are around 450,000 acres of sugarcane in Myanmar



Sugar bags are stacked at the warehouse.

this year, with an estimated production of 450,000 tonnes of sugar per year, the association stated.

Sugarcane is commonly found in the upper Sagaing Re-

gion, followed by the northern Shan State. It is also found in the western and eastern Bago Region, Yangon Region and Mandalay Region.

The sugarcane is grown

in December-January. It can be harvested from November to February of the following years. The sugarcane growing rotation cycle lasts four years in Myanmar. — NN/EMM

Corn price regains up to K1,170 per viss



At present, corn is cultivated in Shan, Kachin, Kayah and Kayin states and Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway regions.

THE price of corn has risen again from K1,130 per viss on 17 December to K1,170 on 26 December, showing an increase of K40 per viss within 10 days.

Strong foreign demand pushed up corn prices. At present, Myanmar ships corn to China, Viet Nam and the Philippines, according to Myanmar Corn Industrial Association.

A total of 112 companies have been given the go-ahead for maize export and some companies started exporting.

Thailand gives green light to corn imports under zero tariff (with Form-D), between 1 February and 31 August. However, Thailand imposed a maximum tax rate of 73 per cent on corn imports to protect the rights of their growers if the corn is imported during the corn season of Thailand.

The directive released on 30 June said that transactions for the exports of agricultural products including corn, rice, bean and oil crops are to be made in dollars instead of Yuan-Kyat/Baht-Kyat.

Therefore, the export earnings of the corn

have to be exchanged for US dollars according to the reference rate of the Central Bank of Myanmar (K2,100). Nonetheless, there is a large gap between the regulated rate and the unauthorized rate of the US dollar (over K2,850), making the traders tough financially.

According to a meeting 66/2022 of the Foreign Exchange Supervisory Committee, export earnings of some items can be made in Chinese Yuan and Thai Baht in addition to the US dollar.

The CBM's notice dated 18 November takes effect on those export items; various pulses (green gram, black gram, chickpea, pigeon pea), edible oil crops (peanut, sesame seeds), corn, rubber, fishery products (fish, shrimp, crab, eel) and livestock products (live cattle, hides, frozen meat, dried meat).

The traders need to apply for a licence to make Yuan or Baht payments. According to the US dollar policy, 65 per cent of earnings must be exchanged for local currency at the CBM's reference foreign exchange rate, while exporters can use 35 per cent of export earnings or transfer or sell them to authorized dealers (AD) or others with an over-the-counter rate within one month. This directive came into effect starting on 21 November, the CBM stated.

Myanmar exported 2.3 million tonnes of corn to foreign trade partners in the 2020-2021 financial year. The majority of them were sent to Thailand and the remaining went to China, India and Viet Nam.

At present, corn is cultivated in Shan, Kachin, Kayah and Kayin states and Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway regions. Myanmar has three corn seasons – winter, summer and monsoon. The country produces 2.5-3 million tonnes of corn every year. — NN/EMM

Prices of fuel oil, gold and dollar on 26 December 2022

Fuel Oil Price (Yangon)

Octane 92	K1,970
Octane 95	K2,055
Diesel	K2,300
Premium Diesel	K2,380

All of the prices are based on per litre.

Gold Price

The reference price of high-purity gold set by YGEA	K2,118,000 per tical
High-purity gold in the gold market	K2,685,000 per tical

Dollar Price

A US dollar set by the Central Bank of Myanmar	K2,100
A US dollar in the forex market	K2,825 to K2,845

The above prices may change from time to time.

ADVERTISE
with us / Hot Line :

0 9 9 7 4 4 2 4 8 4 8

OPINION

Enhance railway service for public transport

THE Myanma Railways under the Ministry of Transport and Communications plays a key sector in Myanmar transporting commodities and passengers with the most convenience and cheapest service.

Although the Myanma Railways is the 145-year-old most long-lasting rail transport facility among Southeast Asian countries, it is necessary to strive for providing transport services to people from all parts of the nation through the rail network.

In fact, rail transport is crucial in the economic driving force of the nation. As transport services are smooth and swift at home, commodity flow can be speeded up to contribute a great deal to the development of the country. So, the government is striving for greater improvement of rail transport than now with upgrading and maintenance of rail tracks along relevant sections. So also, technicians and engineers need to emphasize the betterment of passenger coaches, locomotives, and wagons with maintenance and service measures.

Employees of the Myanma Railways must dutifully serve their assignments for the regular running of trains without any delays triggered by communication and rail track faults. Even if the trains are damaged on the tracks due to terror acts of terrorists, skilled labourers, technicians, and engineers need to try hard for operating the regular running of trains so as to give transport services to the people on time.

Currently, various branches of the Myanma Railways are being functioned for the improvement of rail transport services. In this regard, locomotive factories are assembling the parts of coaches and locomotives to be in conformity with the railway type being used at home.

Indeed, Myanmar has grasped many chances to run electric trains. But the country missed the opportunity to generate electricity from existing natural resources for various reasons. If electricity can be efficiently generated to have thousands of megawatts on a yearly basis, it is easy to operate the running of electric trains for serving the interests of the people.

In this regard, everybody needs to understand the successful operation of rail transport relies on sufficient consumption of electricity in various sectors such as communications, rail track, mechanical engineering, transport, traffic, and so on.

That is why employees at various levels need to study the advancement of rail transport facilities at all times to be provided to the people, based on their technologies and experiences while exchanging invaluable experiences among them at workplaces so as to improve their services not only for the State but for the people.

as to give transport services to the people on time.

Currently, various branches of the Myanma Railways are being functioned for the improvement of rail transport services. In this regard, locomotive factories are assembling the parts of coaches and locomotives to be in conformity with the railway type being used at home.

Indeed, Myanmar has grasped many chances to run electric trains. But the country missed the opportunity to generate electricity from existing natural resources for various reasons. If electricity can be efficiently generated to have thousands of megawatts on a yearly basis, it is easy to operate the running of electric trains for serving the interests of the people.

In this regard, everybody needs to understand the successful operation of rail transport relies on sufficient consumption of electricity in various sectors such as communications, rail track, mechanical engineering, transport, traffic, and so on.

That is why employees at various levels need to study the advancement of rail transport facilities at all times to be provided to the people, based on their technologies and experiences while exchanging invaluable experiences among them at workplaces so as to improve their services not only for the State but for the people.

RECENTLY, the local population have lost nearly US\$4 million through a Ponzi scheme run via Facebook, in the pretext of investing on behalf. The scheme was apparently run by Myanmar people residing in Singapore and getting funds through promotion via the infamous reservoir of illegal activities on the famous social media platform.

Many hundreds of thousands have been duped within the last year or so, buying NUG (Part of NNCP Terrorist Groups) Bonds and CRPH Lotteries, falling into the trap for PDF donations and some even buying the properties that NNCP illegally sold - the properties that they do not own.

Not to mention the loss of some hard-earned cash by secretive spinsters, who have been cheated by online princes of love, or victims of advance fees fraud or those who had lost everything they had in mobile wallets after they told strangers their passwords, Myanmar people seem very gullible in the context of recent frauds happening in the

country. Let us examine the reasons behind this impressionability.

Lack of Education

This table shows the percentage of the population who has completed up to middle school in the respective states:

Kayah	67%
Kayin	72%
Chin	65%
Sagaing	71%
Magway	79%

All these states and regions are below the national average for the country. Just consider which states and regions have the most NNCP terrorists and their followers! Which states and regions could be most influenced by fake news and NNCP propaganda? These five states even now still have pockets of these

terror cells, following orders from exile terror instigators, believing that they are fighting the war for democratic freedom and they are winning all the time. You can see now that there is a direct correlation between the level of terrorist activity (believing in and acting on fake news and instigators) and education level.

The lower your educational level, the poorer your analytical and critical thinking skills and you could fall victim to most of the duping on Facebook.

The Only Reading Done is on Facebook

For Myanmar people, the internet is Facebook. Most do not know how to create or check emails, let alone googling or fact-checking. In a country where the number of internet users is

Lowering indoor air concentrations

Lowering indoor air concentrations of commonly-found chemicals known to pose a risk to human health is a way to improve occupant health, according to lead author Joseph Braun, an associate professor of epidemiology at Brown.

Gullible and Easily Impressionable Populace Contributing to the Downfall of Myanmar

BY UAC

country.

Let us examine the reasons behind this impressionability.

Lack of Education

This table shows the percentage of the population who has completed up to middle school in the respective states:

Kayah	67%
Kayin	72%
Chin	65%
Sagaing	71%
Magway	79%

All these states and regions are below the national average for the country. Just consider which states and regions have the most NNCP terrorists and their followers! Which states and regions could be most influenced by fake news and NNCP propaganda? These five states even now still have pockets of these

terror cells, following orders from exile terror instigators, believing that they are fighting the war for democratic freedom and they are winning all the time. You can see now that there is a direct correlation between the level of terrorist activity (believing in and acting on fake news and instigators) and education level.

The lower your educational level, the poorer your analytical and critical thinking skills and you could fall victim to most of the duping on Facebook.

The Only Reading Done is on Facebook

For Myanmar people, the internet is Facebook. Most do not know how to create or check emails, let alone googling or fact-checking. In a country where the number of internet users is

approximately equal to the number of Facebook accounts, it is extremely damaging that most people read only the postings on that social platform. Most of the posts by the way are fake news and without developing a sense of scepticism, one would not have the skills and mindset needed to seek the truth.

Poor Yet Generous

Myanmar ranked consistently among the top three in global generosity ranking (WGI - World Giving Index). Because of our Buddhism-based culture, we would donate whenever possible. There is even a Burmese proverb - You will regret not bringing along a slipper and umbrella during the hot season and you will also regret not having sufficient Dhana and Sila (Thila) when you

die. Dhana refers to being generous and Thila refers to having good morals.

This generosity also resulted in giving unnecessary donations away e.g., to terrorists and their sympathizers, who are good-for-nothing activities including bombing campaigns and killing innocent civilians. The hard-earned cash of the poor and middle class ended up in fraudulent schemes as such and in activities that do not contribute to the economic development of the nation.

Lack of Investment Opportunities

It is typical of every family and household that once they have accumulated a certain amount of savings, they would look for ways to grow the money. Lack of knowledge of finance,

financial planning, investments and the stock market leads to the only possible options of either doing illegal money lending or buying gold. Buying land or property cannot be thought of at the very low level of savings that most local population is accustomed to.

Under these circumstances, some got persuaded through online ads or through friends and relatives, to participate in illegal investments and Ponzi schemes, with the little money that they have got. The end results have never been sparkling.

Law Enforcement

As recently as a couple of months ago, a cyber police crackdown on a team of fake currency sellers on Facebook. Many people seemed to have ordered

online to acquire fake currencies, oblivious to the harm they are causing to the nation's economy and stability.

The massive land mass of Myanmar and the lack of reach by Myanmar law enforcement along border regions are inspiring fraudsters from overseas to foster the continued expansion of cheating through Facebook.

Lack of Severity of Punishment or Publicity Thereof

With just a slap on the wrist, the deference would not be sufficient to prevent others from committing similar crimes. Even if the punishment is grave, lack of publicity over mainstream and digital media, would not scare anyone away from this type of

criminal activity.

We heard of and sometimes saw news of criminals being shot at for death sentences in our neighbouring country China. Yet where is the publicity of punishments for evildoers in Myanmar?

We definitely need more publicity and should probably introduce caning too, in order to prevent fraud, cheating and other criminal activities. The status quo is no longer an option.

Lottery tickets from overseas are still illegally being sold. 2D 3D gambling rings are still rampant. Besides the destruction of people's morals and ethics, these underground economic activities do not contribute to our nation's development.

"If it is on Facebook, it must be right! If someone with a blue tick said, it must be true!" The reality cannot be further from the truth. The sooner we realize that the quicker we can prevent our own gullible populace from destroying the country ourselves - economically, socially and culturally.

Scientists discover inexpensive air purifiers that can be effective to filter out indoor air pollutants

RESearchers from the Silent Spring Institute, Brown University's School of Public Health, and Brown University's School of Engineering discovered that inexpensive air filtration systems known as Corsi-Rosenthal boxes are successful at lowering indoor air pollutants.

The study, which analyzed the effectiveness of Corsi-Rosenthal boxes installed at the School of Public Health to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, is the first peer-reviewed study of the efficacy of the boxes on indoor pollutants, according to the authors.

Lowering indoor air concentrations

Lowering indoor air concentrations of commonly-found chemicals known to pose a risk to human health is a way to improve occupant health, according to lead author Joseph Braun, an associate professor of epidemiology at Brown.



The global smart air purifiers market reached a value of US\$ 5.77 billion in 2021. PHOTO: FOR REPRESENTATIONAL PURPOSE ONLY/XIAOMI/ANI

"The findings show that an inexpensive, easy-to-construct air filter can protect against illness caused not only by viruses but also by chemical pollutants," Braun said. "This type of

highly-accessible public health intervention can empower community groups to take steps to improve their air quality and therefore, their health."

Corsi-Rosenthal boxes, or cubes, can be constructed from materials found at hardware stores: four MERV-13 filters, a cardboard box. As part of a school-wide project, boxes were assembled by students and campus community members and installed in the School of Public Health as well as other buildings on the Brown University campus.

Removing chemicals

To assess the cubes' efficacy at removing chemicals from the air, Braun and his team compared a room's concentrations of semi-volatile organic compounds before and during the box's operation.

The results, published in Environmental Science & Technology, showed that Corsi-Rosenthal

boxes significantly decreased the concentrations of several PFAS and phthalates in 17 rooms at the School of Public Health during the period they were used (February to March 2022). PFAS, a type of synthetic chemical found in a range of products including cleaners, textiles and wire insulation, decreased by 40 per cent to 60 per cent; phthalates, commonly found in building materials and personal care products, were reduced by 30 per cent to 60 per cent.

PFAS and phthalates have been linked to various health problems, including asthma, reduced vaccine response, decreased birth weight, altered brain development in children, altered metabolism and some cancers, said Braun, who studies the effect of these chemicals on human health. They are also considered to be endocrine-disrupting chemicals that may mimic or interfere with the body's hormones. What's more, PFAS have been associated with reduced

vaccine response in children and also may increase the severity of and susceptibility to COVID-19 in adults.

"The reduction of PFAS and phthalate levels is a wonderful co-benefit to the Corsi-Rosenthal boxes," said study co-author Robin Dodson, a research scientist at Silent Spring Institute and expert in chemical exposures in the indoor environment. "These boxes are accessible, easy to make and relatively inexpensive, and they're currently being used in universities and homes across the country."

Cost-effective tool

"The Corsi-Rosenthal box was designed to be a simple, cost-effective tool to promote accessible and effective air cleaning during the COVID-19 pandemic; the fact that the boxes are also effective at filtering out air pollutants is a fantastic discovery," said Richard Corsi, one of the inventors of the boxes and dean of the College of Engineering at the University of California, Davis. "I am thrilled that researchers at Brown University and Silent Spring Institute have identified a significant co-benefit of the boxes with respect to reduced exposure to two harm-

ful classes of indoor pollutants: PFAS and phthalates.

The sentiment was echoed by Jim Rosenthal, Corsi's collaborator and CEO of Air Relief Technologies, the company that manufactures the MERV-13 filters used in Corsi-Rosenthal Boxes.

"This interesting research showing that the air filters not only reduce particles carrying the SARS-CoV-2 virus but also reduce other indoor air pollutants could be very significant as we continue to work to create cleaner and safer indoor air," Rosenthal said.

The researchers also found that the Corsi-Rosenthal boxes increase sound levels by an average of 5 decibels during the day and 10 decibels at night, which could be considered distracting in certain settings, such as classrooms. However, Braun said, the health benefits of the box likely outweigh the audio side effects.

"The box filters do make some noise," Braun said. "But you can construct them quickly for about \$100 per unit, with materials from the hardware store. They are not only highly effective but also scalable."

SOURCE: ANI

SCI/ENVIRON WORLD

Philippines floods force tens of thousands to flee homes

CHRISTMAS Day floods in the Philippines forced the evacuation of nearly 46,000 people from their homes, civil defence officials said Monday.

Two people were killed and nine others were missing after heavy seasonal rain inundated parts of the southern region of Mindanao, the officials added.

The disaster dampened celebrations on the mainly Catholic nation's most important holiday.

"The waters rose above the chest in some areas, but today the rains have ceased,"



The flooding hit the south on Sunday, with the disaster dampening celebrations on the mainly Catholic nation's most important holiday. **PHOTO: AFP**

civil defence worker Robinson Lacre told AFP by phone from Gingoog city, which accounted for 33,000 of the 45,700 people evacuated from their homes.

The coastguard said it rescued members of more than two dozen families in Ozamiz city and Clarin town at the height of the flooding.

Photos released by the coastguard showed its orange-clad rescuers cradling toddlers plucked from homes in waist-deep floodwaters.

Two deaths were reported in the town of Jimenez.

The central and southern Philippines have been hit with bad weather as the disaster-prone nation of 110 million people began a long Christmas holiday.

Millions of people travel to their hometowns for family reunions during this period.

The coastguard also said strong winds and big waves sank a fishing boat on Christmas Day off the coast of the central island of Leyte. Two crew members were killed, while six others were rescued.—AFP

Extreme weather events in Europe sound alarm on climate change

FROM scorching sun and drying rivers to devastating floods, another year of extreme weather gripped Europe in 2022, warning about the impact of climate change and sending a cautionary note that more human efforts are needed for a greener future.

"LIVE PICTURE OF A WARMING WORLD"

When a cold snap gripped Northern Europe in mid-December and snow, a rare occurrence, blanketed London, memories of the extreme summer heat still lingered. In July, the United Kingdom (UK) recorded its highest ever temperature. Hungary this year also endured its hottest summer since 1901.

Amid the scorching heatwaves, natural disasters ensued. A wildfire caused by a lightning strike in June be-

came the worst ever recorded in Spain. Several parts of Italy also saw wildfires, including a massive one that burned over 850 hectares of land and forced more than 1,000 residents to evacuate.

In late August, Europe was experiencing its worst drought in at least 500 years, with almost two-thirds of the continent in a state of alert or warning. Water levels of the river Drava in eastern Croatia dropped to a historic low.

Floods have posed another threat. A storm hit the northern Adriatic port of Rijeka in Croatia in September, with the downpour flooding the city centre and damaging buildings. Intense rains early this month in Portugal also led to disturbances to road traffic and flooding at Lisbon Airport.—AFP



A woman walks a dog through the snow in Glasgow on 9 February 2021. - Cold weather swept across northern Europe bring snow and ice. **PHOTO: ANDY BUCHANAN / AFP / FILE**

Deadly blizzard leaves US in Christmas weekend deep freeze

A fearsome winter storm continued to pummel parts of the United States with blizzard conditions Saturday evening after its powerful Arctic winds left over a million customers without power earlier in the day and caused Christmas travel nightmares.

At least 17 weather-related deaths have been confirmed across eight states as heavy snow, howling winds and dangerously frigid temperatures kept much of the nation, including the normally temperate south, in a frozen grip for a third straight day.

In hard-hit New York state, Governor Kathy Hochul deployed the National Guard to Erie County and its main city Buffalo, where authorities said emergency services have essentially collapsed in the face of extreme blizzard conditions.

The National Weather Service warned that blizzard condi-



Ice adorns a fountain in Charleston, South Carolina, on 24 December 2022, as a deadly winter storm blanketed much of the United States with frigid temperatures, fierce winds and blinding snow. **PHOTO: AFP**

tions in the Great Lakes region caused by lake-effect snow will continue into Saturday night, including in Buffalo. One couple in the lake-side city, which sits across the border from Canada, told AFP that with the roads completely impassible, they would

not be making a 10-minute drive to see their family for Christmas.

"It's tough because the conditions are just so bad... a lot of fire departments aren't even sending out trucks for calls," said 40-year-old Rebecca Bortolin.—AFP

China sees improved air quality in November

AIR quality in Chinese cities improved in November, data from the Ministry of Ecology and Environment showed Monday.

For 339 cities monitored by the Ministry, the share of days with good air quality stood at 91.9 per cent last month, up 3.8 percentage points, year on year.

The average PM2.5 density, a key indicator of air pollution, dropped 5.6 per cent year on year to 34 microgrammes per

cubic metre, and the average density of PM10 shrank 13.6 per cent year on year to 57 microgrammes per cubic metre.

From January to November, the share of good air quality days in these 339 cities stood at 86.8 per cent, edging down 0.8 percentage points from a year earlier.

A key region for air quality improvement, the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, along with the

neighbouring areas, saw its share of good air quality days increase one percentage point year on year to 68.3 per cent last month.

Lhasa, the capital of Tibet Autonomous Region, topped the country in terms of good air quality in November. It was followed by Haikou in south China's Hainan Province and Fuzhou in the eastern province of Fujian.—Xinhua

HEALTH/PANDEMIC WORLD

Christmas reborn in Bethlehem after pandemic years

WITH a giant evergreen tree, colourful balloons in the streets and selfies in the Church of the Nativity, Christmas tourism has returned to Bethlehem after two years of Covid-related restrictions.

Revered in Christian tradition as the birthplace of Christ, the town of Bethlehem welcomes thousands of pilgrims and tourists for Christmas every year — a windfall that dried up over the past two years due to the coronavirus pandemic and travel restrictions.

Now with restrictions lifted in the Palestinian territories and Israel, where the closest international airport with access to Bethlehem is located, the southern West Bank town has taken on a festive air. Scouts marched



Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, leads a Christmas day mass at the Church of Nativity during celebrations in Bethlehem in the Israeli-occupied West Bank on Saturday. **PHOTO: AFP**

with bagpipes as thousands of onlookers lining the streets held

balloons and cotton candy. The Latin Patriarch of Jeru-

salem, Pierbattista Pizzaballa, greeted worshippers upon his ar-

rival to the town, ahead of leading the annual Christmas eve procession at the Church of the Nativity.

“Christmas is the town’s celebration, and we put in a lot of time and effort to prepare for it,” Bethlehem mayor Hanna Hanania said.

“We wanted to have international participation, and organized children’s songs and shows with singers from France, South Africa and Malta,” he added.

Tourists converged on the streets, shops and stone buildings of this Palestinian town, where Christians and Muslims live side by side.

It was “wonderful to be here”, said Paul Wittenberger, a 40-year-old American from Michigan who was visiting with his father and siblings.—AFP

A new page of Chinese medicine in Hong Kong rolling out



TCM academic education and research have flourished. Students learn to dispense traditional Chinese medicinal materials under the instruction of a pharmacist in Shijiazhuang, north China’s Hebei Province, 21 October 2020. **PHOTO: JIA MINJIE/XINHUA**

MANY herbal teas sold around Hong Kong have Chinese herbal medicines as their major ingredients and have long proved to protect health from the local hot and damp weather.

The herbal teas, mostly based on recipes, are considered an outstanding example of the homology of medicine and food, a conception in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM).

Drinking homemade herbal teas to feel fit is a childhood memory of Cheung Chun Hoi. “Certain herbal teas have me-

dicinal value,” he said, professionally, as a registered TCM practitioner.

Cheung in 2014 graduated with a second degree from School of Chinese Medicine of Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU). The 34-year-old is now an assistant professor at the school’s clinical division.

The HKBU school of Chinese medicine was founded in 1998, a year after Hong Kong’s return to the motherland, and was the first of its kind among local universities.

“The event marks the

commencement of the TCM academic education in Hong Kong,” commented Li Min, associate dean of the school.

PASSING ON TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

“The TCM development in Hong Kong would have been impossible were it not for the policy support from the central government and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region’s (HKSAR) government,” Li stressed.

Regulations including a practitioner registration system and Chinese herbal medicine standards have been introduced in Hong Kong after its return to the motherland in 1997 to turn a wilderness of TCM into order. The moves have ensured higher quality TCM healthcare service for local residents.

Meanwhile, TCM academic education and research have flourished.

According to Li, over 900 students have graduated so far from the HKBU school of Chinese medicine after also receiving adequate Western medicine education, working as doctors, pharmacists, acupuncturists or nutritionists among others.—Xinhua

Several foreign NGOs stop work in Afghanistan after Taliban ban on women staff

SEVERAL foreign aid groups announced on Sunday they were suspending their operations in Afghanistan after the country’s Taliban rulers ordered all NGOs to stop women staff from working.

Their announcement prompted warnings from international officials and from NGOs that humanitarian aid would be hard hit.

“We cannot effectively reach children, women and men in desperate need in Afghanistan without our female staff,” said Save the Children, the Norwegian Refugee Council and CARE in a joint statement.

“Whilst we gain clarity on

this announcement, we are suspending our programmes, demanding that men and women can equally continue our lifesaving assistance in Afghanistan.”

The International Rescue Committee, which provides emergency response in health, education and other areas and employs 3,000 women across Afghanistan, also said it was suspending services.

“For IRC, our ability to deliver services rely on female staff at all levels of our organization,” the New York-based group said in a statement. “If we are not allowed to employ women, we are not able to deliver to those in need.”—AFP



‘We cannot effectively reach children, women and men in desperate need in Afghanistan without our female staff,’ Save the Children, the Norwegian Refugee Council and CARE said in a joint statement. **PHOTO: AFP**

ECONOMY WORLD

Dutch king says slavery apology start of 'long journey'

DUTCH King Willem-Alexander welcomed the government's apology for the Netherlands' role in 250 years of slavery in his Christmas address on Sunday, saying it was the "start of a long journey".

Prime Minister Mark Rutte on Monday officially apologised for the Dutch state's involvement in slavery in its former colonies, calling it a "crime against humanity".

"Nobody today bears respon-

sibility for the inhumane acts that were inflicted on the lives of men, women and children," Willem-Alexander said from the palace of Huis ten Bosch in The Hague.

"But by honestly facing our shared past and recognizing the crime against humanity that is slavery, we lay the ground for a shared future — a future in which we stand against all modern forms of discrimination, exploitation and injustice."

"The apology offered by the

government is the start of a long journey." The Netherlands funded its "Golden Age" of empire and culture in the 16th and 17th centuries by shipping around 600,000 Africans as part of the slave trade, mostly to South America and the Caribbean.

The Dutch government says several major commemorative events will be held from next year and has announced a 200-million-euro (\$212-million) fund for social initiatives.—AFP



King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands (left). PHOTO: AFP

Pakistan witnesses surge in digital payments



A mobile phone shop is pictured in southern Pakistani port city of Karachi on 24 December 2022. PHOTO: STR/XINHUA

WITH increased use of mobile phones and the internet, Pakistan witnessed a surge in digital payments during fiscal year 2021-22 (July 2021-June 2022), according to officials of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The SBP has taken appropriate measures to strengthen payments system infrastructure and regulatory framework in the country in recent years, resulting in increased accessibility and lower costs of financial services for customers especially through digital channels, the officials said on Saturday quoting a report from the SBP.

According to the report, the number of mobile phones and internet banking users reached 8.4 million and 12.3 million, respectively, during fiscal year 2021-22, adding that in terms of transactions, mobile phone banking increased by 100.4

per cent to 387.5 million, while internet banking grew by 51.7 per cent to 141.7 million during the year.

By value, mobile phone banking and internet banking growth was 141.1 per cent and 81.1 per cent, reaching 11.9 trillion rupees (52.8 billion US dollars) and 10.2 trillion rupees, respectively, said the report.

E-commerce transactions also witnessed similar trends as the volume grew by 107.4 per cent to 45.5 million and the value by 74.9 per cent to 106 billion rupees, the report said.

Similarly, e-commerce merchants registered with banks increased to 4,887 from 3,003 merchants during the period. The Automated Teller Machines (ATM) network in the country also grew by 4.8 per cent during the last fiscal year, reaching 17,133 ATMs.—Xinhua

20 million people in China aged 16 to 24 out of jobs: Report

CURRENTLY, in China, about 20 million people aged 16 to 24, are out of work in cities and towns, according to CNN calculations based on official statistics. The official data put the urban youth population at 107 million. The data does not include rural unemployment.

According to The Hongkong Post, "The youth unemployment rate in China has hit new highs this year, rising from 15.3 per cent in March to a record 18.2 per cent in April. It continued to climb for the next few months, reaching

19.9 per cent in July. The rate fell slightly to 18.7 per cent in August, but still remains among the highest ever, data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed."

About one out of five able Chinese are out of jobs due to severe unemployment which can be attributed to COVID. The country faces an economic down-spiral as top companies operating in China lay off their employees. One of the world's largest smartphone makers, Xiaomi, has also been laying off its employees.

Recently, a Xiaomi spokesperson told CNN that Xiaomi conducted a "routine personnel optimization and organizational streamlining". He added that the measure affected less than 10 per cent of the company's workforce.

"Chinese state media outlets have, however, reported that Xiaomi would cut thousands of jobs across multiple departments, including its smartphone and internet business units," according to The Hongkong Post.—ANI

Toyota global output record high for November as supply-crunch eases



Toyota's global sales grew 2.9 per cent to 796,484 vehicles, marking the fourth consecutive month where its year-on-year increases were higher than the same month the previous year. Propelled by its bestselling Highlander SUV, Japan's Toyota last year overtook General Motors (GM) for the first time in US auto sales. PHOTO: AFP

TOYOTA Motor Corp said Monday that its global output for November rose 1.5 per cent from a year earlier to 833,104 vehicles,

hitting a record high for that month.

Marking a fourth straight month of increases, Toyota said

the supply-chain crunch for automobile parts caused by COVID-19 has now eased.

Domestic output of new vehicles shrunk by 3.3 per cent to 266,174 units because persistent semiconductor shortages dampened the production of new units.

Overseas output rose 3.8 per cent to 566,930, also a record figure for November, with North American production increasing by 5.9 per cent.

Production in China fell 11.1 per cent due to parts shortages.

Toyota's global sales grew 2.9 per cent to 796,484 vehicles, marking the fourth consecutive month where its year-on-year increases were higher than the same month the previous year.—Kyodo

China's telecom industry reports steady expansion in Jan-Nov

CHINA'S telecommunications industry logged steady expansion in the first 11 months of this year, with emerging businesses and new infra-

structure rapidly growing, official data showed. The combined business revenue of firms in the sector topped 1.45 trillion yuan (about

207.66 billion US dollars), up eight per cent year on year, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

The total business volume of the sector was 21.4 per cent higher year on year if calculated at the constant price of last year, said the ministry.

China's three telecom giants — China Telecom, China Mobile, and China Unicom — saw their revenue from emerging services, such as internet data centres, big data, cloud computing, and Internet of Things, surge 32.6 per cent year on year to 281.1 billion yuan. —Xinhua



Visitors try out 5G-enabled games during an expo in Guangzhou, Guangdong province. **PHOTO: LI ZHIHAO/ FOR CHINA DAILY**

Industry Leaders Call 2023 to be a Year of the Technology Revolution

AS India witnessed the launch of much-awaited 5G services in the last leg of 2022, the coming year is likely to see a fast rollout of its services leading to numerous opportunities for mass adoption. As per Industry leaders, the coming year will be a bedrock for future innovations across sectors and can prove to be a milestone year.

Jagdish Mitra, Chief Strategy Officer and Head of Growth of Tech Mahindra says, "Powered by India's promising growth roadmap, 2023 has the potential to provide the impetus required for



A wind farm under construction at Vankusawade in Satara district, in the western state of Maharashtra, India. **PHOTO: SEBASTIAN D'SOUZA/AFP**

India to become digitally ready and lead technological advancements for the rest of the world to follow. I believe in 2023, we will see significant progress

in autonomous systems, 5G, and green technology, as well as a quantum leap in technological skilling to digital transformation-related skilling."—ANI

Chinese-built underwater tunnel to benefit Bangladeshi people

LIAKAT Ali Chowdhury, a resident of Bangladesh's port city of Chattogram, is delighted to see a Chinese-built transport project will drive local economic development and promote regional connectivity under the Belt and Road Initiative.

"My place of birth is at Bandar village under Anwara Upazila (sub-district) of Chattogram district," Chowdhury, who

lives on the eastern side of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel, told Xinhua.

He said people from Anwara in the southern part of Chattogram, some 242 kilometres southeast of the national capital Dhaka, will be immensely benefitted by the tunnel as there is going to be another export processing zone (EPZ) in Anwara.

There has already

been a South Korean EPZ with roughly 50,000 people working there, he added.

"We expect more local people to get employment when the Chinese will set up factories in the new EPZ," said Chowdhury.

He thanked all the Chinese people who are working for the construction of the 9.3-km tunnel.

"We express our deepest gratitude," he



The entrance of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel, which is located at the estuary of the Kanapuri River in Bangladesh. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

said. The tunnel built by China Communications Construction Company Limited (CCCC) marked the completion of its south tube last month.

Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina joined a celebration virtually from her official residence in Dhaka on 28 November, appreciating all efforts involved in the construction of the project.—Xinhua

Uzbek, Saudi companies sign purchase agreement on wind farm

UZBEKISTAN'S National Power Grid company and Saudi Arabia's ACWA Power have signed a power purchase agreement on a wind power plant in northwestern Uzbekistan, the Uzbek Energy Ministry said on Friday.

The power plant, located in Karakalpakstan region, has a capacity of 1,500 megawatts, the ministry said.

It will be built and operated by the ACWA Power and will be commissioned in 2026. The plant is expected to produce 5.2 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity annually, it said.

The plant will have a Battery Energy Storage System to smooth out the intermittent power output from the wind turbines.—Xinhua

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V VINA SHIP SEA VOY.NO. (12.2022)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V VINA SHIP SEA VOY.NO. (12.2022)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **26-12-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **SPW7** 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: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S BEN LINE AGENCIES (S'PORE) PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V TORRES STRAIT VOY.NO. (249W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V TORRES STRAIT VOY.NO. (249W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **27-12-2022** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE., LTD.

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

WORLD: TOP STORIES

Former guerrilla leader Prachanda returns as Nepal PM



Nepal's former guerrilla leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal (R), better known by his nom de guerre Prachanda, waves next to Communist Party Nepal-Union Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) chairman KP Oli, in Bhaktapur on the outskirts of Kathmandu on 25 December 2022. **PHOTO: DIPESH SHRESTHA / AFP**

NEPAL'S president appointed Kamal Dahal prime minister for former guerrilla leader Pushpa the third time on Sunday, after his

Maoist party cobbled together a coalition following elections last month. Dahal, better known by his nom de guerre Prachanda or "the fierce one", hid out for years in the jungle during Nepal's 1996-2006 civil war that killed nearly 17,000 people and led to the end of the monarchy.

Sagar Acharya, a spokesman for President Bidya Devi Bhandari, told AFP that Dahal, 68, has been appointed as the new prime minister and would be sworn in on Monday at 4:00 pm (1015 GMT).

Following the 2006 peace accords, Dahal transformed his Maoist revolutionary movement into a political party and served briefly as prime minister in 2008-9, and again in 2016-17.—AFP

Rail travel in SW China on fast track as new line opens

A railway linking Chengdu and Kunming, two major cities in southwest China, is now fully operational with the opening of its last section on Monday.

With a designed speed of 160 kilometres per hour, the 915-km new line, which runs almost parallel to an existing railway link between Chengdu and Kunming, cuts the travel time from 19 hours to 7.5 hours.

The railway traverses various mountains and rivers, which posed challenges during its construction.

The new Chengdu-Kunming Railway features seven long tunnels — with each measuring more than 10 km — and 11 long-span bridges, said Wang Wei, a chief engineer from China Railway Eryuan Engineering Group Co Ltd, which undertakes the designing work of the railway.

As a key project for China's West Development Strategy, the railway is expected to promote economic growth and the high-quality opening up of southwestern Chinese regions.—Xinhua



A Fuxing bullet train travels by Emeishan city in Sichuan province on Friday on the new Chengdu-Kunming rail line. **PHOTO: HE HAIYANG/FOR CHINA DAILY**

Brazilian man arrested for bomb plot ahead of Lula inauguration

BRAZILIAN police have arrested a man after he allegedly placed explosives in a fuel truck near Brasilia's airport, hoping to sow "chaos" ahead of president-elect Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's inauguration, local media reported Sunday.

The man, identified as George Washington de Oliveira Sousa, was arrested on Saturday

on terrorism charges and is a supporter of Brazil's far-right outgoing president Jair Bolsonaro.

The arrest came after the truck's driver found the device Saturday morning in the capital city, where Lula will be sworn in on January 1.

And although there was an attempt to activate the device, it did not explode, Robson Candi-

do, civil police general delegate of Brasilia, said in a press conference, according to the news portal G1.

Oliveira Sousa confessed to authorities that the bomb was part of a plan to "start chaos" and "prevent the establishment of communism in Brazil," according to statements by the civil police published in local media.—AFP

RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT



Russian servicemen in Melitopol, Ukraine, on 14 June 2022. **PHOTO: YURI KADOBNOV/AFP**

Putin says West wants to 'tear apart' Russia

PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin has blasted the West for trying to "tear apart" Russia and said in an interview aired on national television that his offensive in Ukraine aimed to "unite the Russian people".

About 100 kilometres from the Ukrainian border, Russian air defence troops shot down a Ukrainian drone early Monday as it approached a Russian airbase, with the debris killing three, news agencies reported.

"As a result of the fall of the wreckage of the drone, three

Russian technical servicemen who were at the (Engels military) airfield were fatally injured," the defence ministry announced, according to TASS news agency.

Monday will also see a call from Ukraine for Russia to lose its veto-wielding permanent seat on the powerful UN Security Council, said Kyiv's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba.

It comes a day after Putin accused his country's "geopolitical opponents (of) aiming to tear apart Russia, the historical

Russia".

Putin has used the concept of "historical Russia" to argue that Ukrainians and Russians are one people — undermining Kyiv's sovereignty and justifying his 10-month offensive in Ukraine.

"Divide and conquer, that's what they have always sought to accomplish and are still seeking to do," Putin said in an interview.

"But our goal is different: it's to unite the Russian people."—AFP

Drones from N Korea fly over S Korea territory: military

MULTIPLE drones from North Korea crossed into South Korea on Monday and flew over its territory, South Korea's military said.

After crossing over the Military Demarcation Line, the unmanned aircraft flew over the vicinity of Ganghwa Island and the Gimpo area in the western part of the country, according to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Meanwhile, AFP news agency reported that South Korea accused North Korea of flying "several" drones across their border on Monday, prompting Seoul's military to deploy warplanes and fire warning shots to ward them off.

"Our military first detected a North Korean unmanned aerial vehicle around the Gimpo airspace at 10:25 am," the Joint



A South Korean soldier checks a drone equipped with rifles on 27 October 2022. PHOTO: AFP

Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said in a statement.

"Several North Korean unmanned aerial vehicles invaded our airspace" in the border areas around Gyeonggi province, it added.

The incursion prompted Seoul to fire warning shots and deploy fighter jets and attack helicopters.

One of the warplanes, a KA-1 light attack aircraft, later crashed in Hoengseong County, Yonhap news agency reported.

Flights were temporarily suspended at Gimpo and Incheon international airports near the capital for about an hour at the request of the JCS, according to Yonhap, which cited an official from South Korea's transport ministry. —Kyodo/AFP

Demonstration for Belgian held in Iran calls for his release

SUPPORTERS of a Belgian aid worker being held in Iran staged a Christmas Day protest in Brussels to demand his immediate release, with a

spokesman questioning why a prisoner swap treaty was stalled.

Around 50 people took part in the demonstration under

constant rain in the centre of the Belgian capital, brandishing pictures of the aid worker, Olivier Vandecasteele.

A spokesman for the campaign to free Vandecasteele, Olivier Van Steirtegem, said the gathering took place because "it's the first year that Olivier is marking Christmas as a hostage in Iran".

He said the situation was "unthinkable for his family," who did not even know where Vandecasteele was being detained.

Vandecasteele, 41, was seized in February and has since been held in conditions that Belgium's government has described as "inhumane". —AFP



Olivier Vandecasteele, 41, has been held in conditions that Belgium's government has described as 'inhumane'. PHOTO: AFP

WORLD: TOP STORIES

Charles pays tribute to struggling Britons

KING Charles III has hailed the "heartfelt solidarity" of people across the recession-hit UK struggling with a worsening cost of living crisis, in his first Christmas Day message as monarch.

Addressing the country from the Windsor Castle chapel where his mother, Elizabeth II, was interred in September, the 74-year-old also thanked people for the "love and sympathy" expressed following her death.—AFP

Three dead in Ecuador after tourist boat capsizes

THREE people, including two young children, died in central Ecuador on Sunday when a tourist boat capsized, local authorities reported.

Authorities said they were investigating what caused the capsizing of the boat on the Colta Lagoon, in the Andean province of Chimborazo around 200 kilometres (120 miles) south of Quito.

Among the deceased were "a five-month-old newborn, a three-year-old minor and a 53-year-old woman," said the ECU-911, the South American country's integrated security service, in a statement.

Officials added that "about 40 other passengers were rescued from the lagoon" on Sunday.—AFP

51 poisoned by ammonia after train derails in Serbia

SOME 51 people have been poisoned after a train carrying ammonia derailed, spilling its cargo in southeastern Serbia, officials said Sunday.

The ammonia leak caused "51 cases of poisoning", said Vladan Vasic, the mayor of the city of Pirot where the accident occurred.

"Seven people were taken

to (hospital) in Nis," the nearest big city, Vasic told a news conference.

The train derailed in the evening, causing "the leakage (of ammonia) and the dispersion of a large amount of gas into the atmosphere," the interior ministry said in a statement.

A state of emergency was

called in the affected part of the city of 60,000, and authorities called for residents to remain inside their homes.

The 20-carriage train was transporting toxic materials from neighbouring Bulgaria, officials said.

The derailment did not result in any other casualties. —AFP



Seven people were taken to hospital in Nis, the nearest big city. PHOTO: AFP

Drones from N Korea fly over S Korea territory: military

PAGE-15



SPORT

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

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

2. Economic affairs

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

3. Social affairs

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

Myanmar National League new season to start in 2nd week of Feb 2023



File photo shows the Shan United team holding the Myanmar National League 2022 trophy. PHOTO: MNL

ACCORDING to the decision of the Myanmar Football Federation and the Myanmar National League Committee meeting 3/2022, the upcoming 2023 football season will be held from the second week of February.

According to the approval of the league committee meeting, the 2023 MNL 1 competition will be expanded with a total of 12 clubs, so the bottom two teams in the 2022 MNL competition will not have to be relegated to MNL 2.

Dagon Star United and

Kachin United, who qualified for the 2022 MNL 2 tournament, will qualify for the 2023 MNL 1 tournament.

To make the 2023 MNL 2 competition even more intense than now, the clubs that can enter the competition will be screened and accepted, and the number of teams will be expanded.

New clubs that want to compete in the 2023 MNL 2 competition will also be invited and allowed to be screened.

According to the approval

decision of the league committee meeting, the 2023 MNL 1 tournament will be held from the second week of February to September 2023 with 12 clubs.

The 2023 MNL 2 tournament will be held from March to September 2023 with 10 or 12 clubs, and the 2023 Myanmar Women's League will also be held from 20 July to November.

The number of competing teams and the details of the schedule will be announced soon, Myanmar Football authorities stated. — KZL

Haaland can score 800 goals, says De Bruyne

KEVIN De Bruyne believes Manchester City teammate Erling Haaland can go on and score 800 goals before his career ends.

Haaland, who will return to the city of his birth when the champions resume their Premier League title defence at Leeds on Wednesday, has scored 24 goals in just 19 appearances since his summer move from Borussia Dortmund.

"He already has about 200 goals, so he can probably go to 600, 700 or 800 if he stays fit and does the things that he does,"

said De Bruyne.

The Belgian international has played with a host of top strikers in his career and is well-placed when it comes to 22-year-old Haaland's place in the pecking order.

De Bruyne enjoyed a fruitful relationship with the club's record goalscorer Sergio Aguero before the Argentinian left the Etihad Stadium in 2021.

He has also combined with Romelu Lukaku on international duty, former City teammate Gabriel Jesus and new World Cup-winner Julian Alvarez, a current fellow City player.—AFP



800 goals?: Manchester City's Norwegian striker Erling Haaland. PHOTO: AFP

Conte hails Kane, Newcastle cruise as Premier League returns

ANTONIO Conte hailed Harry Kane's character after the England captain recovered from his World Cup heartache to help Tottenham rescue a 2-2 draw at Brentford, while Newcastle climbed to second place with a 3-0 win at Leicester on Monday.

In the first Premier League fixture since the World Cup break in mid-November, Tottenham were in danger of a damaging defeat after Vitaly Janelt and Ivan Toney put Brentford in command at the Community Stadium.

Janelt fired home after 15 minutes with a close-range finish after Tottenham keeper Fraser

Forster spilled Mathias Jensen's shot.

Toney struck from close-range in the 54th minute from Christian Norgaard's flick on.

But Kane netted with a 65th minute header to start the Tottenham recovery in his first game since missing a crucial penalty in England's World Cup quarter-final defeat against France.

Brentford have not beaten Tottenham since 1948 and their long wait for a victory over the north Londoners goes on after Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg curled home with 19 minutes left. Tottenham boss Conte praised England

captain Kane for his contribution following his World Cup disappointment. "When he came back he was good. We know the importance of Harry for us, his personality, his character. He's the best player we have. I'm happy that he scored today," Conte said.

"Since last season we have made a good step. Now we have to continue to push ourselves. It is not easy. We have shown big character," Conte said.

Tottenham stay fourth in the table, four points ahead of fifth-placed Manchester United in the race to qualify for the Champions League.—AFP