

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR



Pro Tem President U Myint Swe presides over the meeting 1/2024 of the National Defence and Security Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in Nay Pyi Taw on 31 January 2024.

Meeting 1/2024 of National Defence and Security Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar held

THE National Defence and Security Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar held meeting No 1/2024 at the office of the State Administration Council Chairman in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Also, present at the meeting were Pro Tem President U Myint Swe, Vice-President U Henry Van Thio, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U T Khun Myat, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Union Minister for Defence Admiral Tin Aung San, Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Yar Pyae, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe, Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung, specially invited SAC Secretary Lt-Gen Aung Lin Dwe and Joint Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo.

Speaking on the occasion, the Senior General explained the undertakings



Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing puts forward wide-ranging clarifications to the meeting 1/2024 of the National Defence and Security Council in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

in the six-month period of the State's responsibilities and future tasks. With regard to the State security measures, he said that some EAO and PDF terrorists used various ways and means for the deterioration of the socioeconomic life of the people and peace and stability of the nation within six months. Regarding the incidents in Shan State (North), MNDA insurgents launched attacks on Chinshwehaw with the use of drones starting on 27 October. To do so, MNDA had made preparations by holding several meetings with its alliances since 2022. Alliances provided arms and ammunition, electronic technologies and monetary assistance. MNDA primarily aimed to rebuild its power in the Kokang region as Special Region-1. At present, MNDA robs the property of the people in the towns they occupied, destroys public property and recruits new members from families of local ethnicities.

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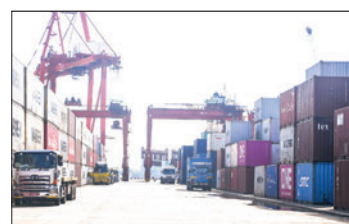
Myanmar-made peanut shellers, corn harvesters gain popularity among farmers

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Aungbarlay Lottery switches to automated draw on 1 Feb

BUSINESS PAGE-11



Yangon Port: 53 container vessels slated to arrive in Feb

NATIONAL

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Order No 9/2024
6th Waning of Pyatho 1385 ME
31 January 2024

Retirement from duty allowed

THE State Administration Council has allowed U Thein Soe to retire from the duties of the Chairman of the Union Election Commission, on the grounds of his health conditions, under Section 419 of the Constitution.

By Order,
Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Order No 10/2024
6th Waning of Pyatho 1385 ME
31 January 2024

Appointment and Duty Assignment of Chairman of the Union Election Commission

THE State Administration Council has appointed and assigned U Ko Ko to the duties of Chairman of the Union Election Commission under Section 419 of the Constitution.

By Order,
Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Order No 11/2024
6th Waning of Pyatho 1385 ME
31 January 2024

Substituted appointment of State Chief Minister

THE State Administration Council has substituted Shan State Chief Minister U Aung Zaw Aye with U Aung Aung as Shan State Chief Minister under Section 419 of the Constitution.

By Order,
Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Order No 12/2024
6th Waning of Pyatho 1385 ME
31 January 2024

Retirement from duty allowed

THE State Administration Council has allowed U Than Win to retire from the duties of a Union Civil Service Board member under Section 419 of the Constitution.

By Order,
Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Order No 13/2024
6th Waning of Pyatho 1385 ME
31 January 2024

Appointment and Duty Assignment of member of Union Civil Service Board

THE State Administration Council has appointed and assigned U Kyaw Myo Htut to the duties of a Union Civil Service Board member under Section 419 of the Constitution.

By Order,
Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Order No 14/2024
6th Waning of Pyatho 1385 ME
31 January 2024

Appointment and Duty Assignment of member of Union Election Commission

THE State Administration Council has appointed and assigned U Myo Hlaing to the duties of a member of the Union Election Commission under Section 419 of the Constitution.

By Order,
Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Order No 15/2024
6th Waning of Pyatho 1385 ME
31 January 2024

Appointment and Duty Assignment of Deputy Minister

THE State Administration Council has appointed and assigned U Htein Lin to the duties of Deputy Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs under Section 419 of the Constitution.

By Order,
Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Order No 16/2024
6th Waning of Pyatho 1385 ME
31 January 2024

Retirement from duty allowed

THE State Administration Council has allowed Dr Kyaw Tun to retire from the duties of a State Administration Council Central Advisory Board member under Section 419 of the Constitution.

By Order,
Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary



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Meeting 1/2024 of National Defence and Security Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar held

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MNDAA follows the armed struggle line to grasp power without abiding by the law of Myanmar, which exercises a democratic system. The 2008 Constitution guarantees equal rights to all ethnicities in all regions and states in addition to self-administered zones. The Constitution designated the Kokang region in the eastern part of Thanlwin River as the Kokang Self-Administered Zone. Before the Constitution (2008), it was a special region. Kokang armed groups led by U Pheung Kya-Shin, which split from the Burma Communist Party, joined hands with Tatmadaw till 2009. Since then, the airbases of Tatmadaw were stationed to administer the region together. Although they were warned several times not to produce narcotic drugs in 2009, the group did not heed the warning. So, military action was taken against them. Kokang Self-Administered Zone was administered by elected persons in 2011. Then, Myanmar-China border trade was opened in Yanlonkeng of Laukkai, and Myanmar-China trade measures in Chinshwehaw were under both governments' agreements until the period before the attacks. Tatmadaw will allow the desires of ethnic armed organizations under the Constitution, and some matters will be decided under the voting. Tatmadaw had disclosed that it agreed to amend some appropriate facts in the Constitution at the meetings with ethnic leaders and political leaders. According to country's history and official relations process, all things will be done under the law in the Kokang Special Region. Tatmadaw representatives hold the meeting. If these facts are ignored, renewing the warlord system can be accepted for some background reasons.

MNDAA insurgents attacked Chinshwehaw and Kunlong, whereas its allied TNLA insurgents attacked Hsenwi on the Lashio-Muse route and disturbed Kutkai. TNLA insurgents attacked the Muse trade zone in 2016 and people's militia camps and security outposts in Muse in 2018. So, clashes happened between Tatmadaw and TNLA. TNLA continued attacks on Namhkam, Namhsam, Mantung, Namtu and Mongngaw regions. It aims to grasp the Palaung region. The Constitution sets the Palaung Self-Administered Zone for the Palaung region. TNLA commits attacks to seize the greater power. They extremely rob and destroy the property of residents and recruit new troops, causing plight to residents. So, tea production in the Palaung region has declined. All basic education schools were closed. Up to



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing puts forward wide-ranging clarifications to the meeting 1/2024 of the National Defence and Security Council in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

now, the Palaung region has faced more economic and educational problems. If it accepts the multiparty democratic system, it has many opportunities to hold political dialogues. But TNLA turned a blind eye to such a point and used its arms to struggle. The insurgents buy drones from the neighbouring countries, and some drones can be prepared to be military used and equipped with large bombs. Insurgents interrupted main union highways to hamper the development of the socioeconomic life of the ethnic people and blocked the border trade route. Border trade is initiated under agreements of relevant countries. So, Myanmar is holding meetings with China to operate the regular process of border trade measures in the Muse region.

Tatmadaw takes all measures under the Rules of Engagement for Self-Defence and the Rules of Engagement for Counter-Terrorism and Counter-Insurgency Operations to restore normality and not to cause misunderstandings with other countries. So, Tatmadaw manages restricted operations for shells not to fall beyond the border line and not harm the people. Insurgents intentionally launch heavy weapons into other countries to cause misunderstanding. So, officials of both sides held talks to solve it. As insurgents attacked the military with technology and excessive strength, Tatmadaw retreated from some posts due to the possibility of harming the military families.

The complications in Shan State (North) were rooted in online scams. Kokang region has been using drug trafficking and gambling measures for many years. During the outbreak of Covid-19, online gambling was committed, and

its supporting staff were brought there. Then, foreigners illegally arrived in the Laukkai region. At present, most illegal businesses are based on border regions of Myanmar, China and Thailand to commit online scams and online gambling on a broader scale. So, Myanmar, China, and Thailand effectively negotiate to combat such acts. Most of them are foreigners under the protection of ethnic armed organizations. As they can do illegal businesses relying on arms, it is necessary to cease the armed struggle. Severe action is being taken against those involved in the cases.

During the period from 5 October 2023 to 29 January 2024, a total of 48,210 Chinese and 1,810 other foreigners, totalling 50,020 who illegally reside in Myanmar, were handed over to relevant countries. On 23 January 2024, 1,002 male and 36 female Chinese, totalling 1,038 who fled from Pansang, Laukkai, Mongpauk and Mongla regions, were handed over to the relevant country under the law.

With regard to AA insurgents, AA insurgents violated the temporary ceasefire agreed with Tatmadaw in 2020 and participated in incidents in Shan State (North) in October 2023. Mainly, it wishes to take arms assistance from its alliances. From the time of the Tatmadaw government to date, development tasks have been undertaken in Rakhine State. So, Rakhine State can see unprecedented development at present. At a time when Rakhine State faced the impacts of storm Mocha, Tatmadaw and the government made utmost efforts for rehabilitation in Rakhine State. The Senior General himself arrived in Sittway and inspected the loss and damage in the natural disaster and took necessary measures. The

SAC Vice-Chairman and senior military officers were sent to other townships to manage quick rehabilitation tasks. So, these regions regained improvements. Now, all storm-hit areas have greater progress. All universities and basic education schools were opened in Rakhine State 17 days after the storm, with the largest enrollment rate.

However, AA insurgents launched their attacks on the Donpaik police outpost of the border guard police force in Rakhine State at 5 am on 13 November 2023. Then, it used drones to attack two security posts in the Paletwa region and Pauktaw. At present, AA is attacking some regions of northern Rakhine State. Local Rakhine ethnics are suffering the impacts of the acts of AA insurgents, which commit instability in the region. Basic education school and university students are learning education for the 2023-24 academic year. At the start of 2023-24 AY, 573,000 students attended the basic education school in Rakhine State. Due to threats of AA insurgents, only 279,392 students are attending the schools, with more than 48.76 per cent of absentees suffering the impacts of AA insurgents. AA insurgents now recruit new student youth members and agitate hatred of other ethnicities. Only when Rakhine State restores durable peace can it hand over a good future life to new generations. So, the region will have greater progress. So Tatmadaw strives to ensure peace and stability and people in Rakhine State must cooperate with Tatmadaw.

NCF, which has signed the NCA, cooperates with CDF terrorists in committing terrorism in Chin State.

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On 29 October 2023, Tatmadaw re-occupied Thantlang, where CNF/CDF terrorists took positions. These terrorists attacked Reedkhorda in Falam Township and Lailinpi and Rezwa of Matupi Township in Chin State in November 2023. At present, CNF insurgents commit instability in Tiddim, Kanpetlet and Cindwe of Chin State.

KNPP/KNDF insurgents attacked Loikaw with excessive strength as of 11 November 2023. Due to information from residents, Tatmadaw assaulted a large number of KNPP/KNDF insurgents. These insurgents tried to accumulate arms and ammunition for attacks. On 17 December 2022, their arms and ammunition were seized in Sawta Village of Hopong Township. A total of 1,133 small arms and heavy weapons, 10 RPGs, more than 100,000 rounds of ammunition, more than 7,600 grenades, six 107-mm rockets and related accessories were seized in Panmont Village of Panglong on 16 November 2023 and Sanphu Village in Hopong Township on 20 January 2024. These arms and ammunition were taken from their allied ethnic armed organizations.

Seizing trafficking arms and ammunition to Kayah State could hinder the terrorism of KNPP/KNDF insurgents in Kayah State to some extent. At a time when the country is being built with democracy and federalism, unfaithful EAOs committing more conflicts and deterioration to the State are very dangerous for the country.

KNU insurgents, due to political changes in 2021, trained PDFs and disturbed small military posts in Myawady and Kawkaeik. On 24 November 2023, KNU attacked a Tatmadaw camp with

excessive strength. On 27 November 2023, the Chaunghnakhwa bridge in Kyaikmaraw Township was blown up. KNU insurgents and PDF terrorists attacked eight places in Kawkaeik at 3 am on 1 December 2023, and Tatmadaw launched counterattacks on them. Based on different political attitudes, firm evidences showed that KNU commits regional terrorism by all means and online scams and gambling near Myawady of the Thai-Myanmar border. So, Myanmar will cooperate with neighbouring countries in combating these acts to forge the rule of law. KNU's attacks harm the socioeconomic progress of local ethnic people in Kayah State, so Tatmadaw strives to ensure peace and stability in the region.

PDF terrorists committed terrorism across the nation within the six months from 1 August 2023 to 29 January 2024, killing three members of the Sangha, 438 innocent civilians and 79 State service personnel, totalling 520. They destroyed 11 electric/telecom towers, 97 bridges, roads and tollgate buildings, six health buildings, 13 schools and educational buildings, public houses and other buildings. PDF terrorists killed 77 members of the Sangha, two nuns, 5,677 innocent people and 1,124 State service personnel, totalling 6,880 from 1 February 2021 to 29 January 2024. They destroyed 559 telecom/electric towers, 53 health buildings, 670 schools and educational buildings, and public houses. They rudely threatened the education staff 413 times. At 5.50 pm on 13 November 2023, KNPP insurgents and PDF terrorists intentionally attacked Loikaw University and abducted educational staff and students.

Insurgents and terrorists taking advantage of instability in the country produce narcotic drugs and commit drug



Vice-President U Henry Van Thio supports the six-month extension of the State of Emergency.

trafficking to earn income. Drug production contributes to money laundering, arms smuggling and terrorism, causing a challenge to the peace and stability of the State. As no chemicals and related accessories exist in the country, insurgents take these materials from other countries in various ways.

Concerning seizures of narcotic drugs, during the six months from 1 August 2023 to 29 January 2024, more than 1.1 tonnes of heroin, more than 117 million stimulant tablets, and more than 14.665 tonnes of Ice were seized in 3,272 cases worth K781.02 billion. In these cases, 4,373 males and females were arrested. During the period from 1 February 2021 to 29 January 2024, authorities seized 6.05 tonnes of heroin, more than 629 million stimulant tablets, more than 53 tonnes of Ice, and drug-related accessories in 21,098 cases worth more than K3,354 billion. A total of 29,486 males and females were arrested in these cases. According to the information related to the trafficking of AA insurgents, from 3 to 9 December 2023, more than two tonnes of Ice (methamphetamine) and 800 kilogrammes of restricted chemical Caffeine were seized together with a drug gang of AA insurgents.

Drug productions were based on the areas with poor transport facilities and the remote regions from administrative mechanisms in successive eras. Due to the Kuomintang invasion of Shan State and poppy cultivation and drug production by BCP and other insurgents, Shan State was notorious for being the largest opium producing area in the world.

UNODC mentioned in its annual report in 2023 that narcotic drugs from Shan State were smuggled to other countries via land borders and water courses. As

UNODC and CCDCC of Myanmar cooperated in measuring poppy cultivation and production, production gradually declined from 2012. The annual report of UNODC in 2023 mentioned that 40,100 hectares of poppy were cultivated in Myanmar in 2022, compared with 30,200 hectares in 2021, increasing 33 per cent of poppy cultivation in 2022. So, China, Myanmar, Thailand, and other international organizations will effectively cooperate in the investigation, measuring and destruction of poppy and narcotic drugs.

Myanmar is eradicating narcotic drugs as a national duty. It cooperates with the United Nations, neighbouring countries, ASEAN countries, Mekong region countries, BIMSTEC countries and international drug control organizations in eradicating narcotic drugs. Only when all countries strive for the eradication of narcotic drugs in all aspects as a national duty will such a mission be achieved.

As terrorists attempt to deteriorate peace and stability in the nation, arrangements are being made to beef up the public defence and security system, including local people's militia. Only when the country is peaceful and stable can it march towards the goal with a firm democratic system. So, the State Administration Council is implementing the adopted objectives and roadmap. So, not only security forces but all people have to prevent terrorism for the peace and stability of the nation. With regard to the public security system, relevant regions are implementing such a system and striving to take security measures in cooperation with people. And then, the public defence system will be implemented. It is necessary to give information about anti-government groups to the security troops. Those informants



Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U T Khun Myat supports the six-month extension of the State of Emergency.

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will be secretly kept. So, all ethnic people who are forging patriotic and national spirit must cooperate with the government in these measures. As these terrorists insult religions and lineage in addition to disturbing the peace and stability of the State, the State Administration Council will apply various ways and means to forge peace and stability in the State.

In the education sector, 8,108,227 students enrolled at basic education schools across the nation in the 2023-24 academic year. Now, 6,767,763 students are attending the schools, with 1,340,464 absentee students for various reasons, accounting for 16.53 per cent, mostly in some areas of Kayah, Chin, Kayah, Rakhine and Shan State (North). It shows the results of clashes with a lack of peace. A total of 112,968 students attended the universities in 2023-24 AY; now, 86,687 students are attending the universities, with 26,281 absentees, accounting for 23.3 per cent. Loikaw University sees no students at 100 per cent, whereas a large number of absentees can be seen at universities in Chin, Rakhine and Shan State (North). Acts of terrorists directly harm the learning of youths of new generations. As such, all people and international organizations need to oppose their acts.

As Myanmar exercises a multiparty democratic system, all should not be different from political, racial, and religious attitudes, and they all have to strive to reach the democratic system and Hluttaw's path peacefully. On 15 October 2015, the government, the Hluttaw, Tatmadaw and ethnic armed organizations signed the NCA in the presence of international and local witnesses, including those from the United Nations. Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approved the NCA as a Union Accord. So, such a historical pact never annuals.

The 8th Anniversary of signing NCA was celebrated on 15 October 2023 with the attendance of stakeholders at home and abroad with essence.

The Senior General said he has been severally urged NCA signatory EAOs and non-signatory EAOs to demand their aspirations at the Hluttaw via peace talks not to derail from the democratic system if they require their aspiration by holding arms. Some groups from NCA signatory KNU and KIA, SSPP/SSA and KNPP, among other 11 non-signatory organizations, supported PDF terrorists to commit terrorism across the nation.

Since its establishment, SAC has been implementing two political visions: strengthening a genuine, disciplined multiparty democratic system and building a union based on democracy and federalism. To do so, all citizens have to participate in the implementation process. All must avoid the acts of derailing from the democratic system and abide by existing laws under the Constitution. It is necessary to choose the appropriate system related to the democratic system and federalism in



Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Vice-Senior General Soe Win seconding the submission of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.

building the Union based on democracy and federalism the entire people aspire to. No region or state is resided by a single ethnic in Myanmar. All ethnics are scattered in all regions and states. So, the political system is being implemented as a multiparty democratic system, and the administrative system will be based on the Union system rooted in democracy and federalism. The 2008 constitution allows Union level, region/state, and self-administered division and zones for the federal authorities.

Tatmadaw often agreed to amend necessary points of the Constitution (2008). Many provisions could be amended in previous terms of government, but some amended provisions have not been approved yet due to referendums.

Chapter XII of the Constitution mentions the provisions for amendment, so it is necessary to amend things under the Constitution through the Hluttaw process. So, the government needs to hold a multiparty democratic general election in line with the roadmap and amend some points inappropriate with the current eras through Hluttaw. NCA signatory EAOs have to contribute to the election to strengthen the nation's democratic system.

Only when an election is free and fair will it show off the genuine aspiration

of the people and implement the democratic system. As the NLD carried out undisciplined acts in the 2020 multiparty democratic general election, such an act cannot be removed from history. So, it is necessary to learn from past events not to cause similar occurrences and to strengthen a genuine, disciplined multiparty democratic system.

The Union Election Commission held meetings with political parties four times, and they agreed to exercise the Closed-List PR system instead of the First Past The Post-FPTP system in the elections. So, coordinations are being made to issue the election law and bylaws for relevant Hluttaws in conformity with the PR system. New political party registration law and bylaw were issued to ensure political parties were strong so as to take State responsibilities. So far, 50 parties have reapplied for registration as political parties under the law and bylaw, and 15 more parties have applied to establish new political parties, totalling 65. A total of 40 parties did not reapply for their registration under the law, and these have been automatically annulled under Section 25 of the Political Parties Registration Law. The UEC allowed registration for 47 of 65 political parties that submitted applications for re-registration and establishment of

new ones. The registration of two political parties was cancelled. As such, a total of 45 parties are in operation.

The Senior General continued that the matters related to the political changes, widespread terrorist attacks launched by the PDF terrorists, efforts to promote the State economy and social sector and plans to hold elections were clarified while meeting the Chairpersons and Vice-chairs of the registered political parties on 6 January. They also reported their perspectives on the current political situation and difficulties. Moreover, the Law Amending the Political Parties Registration Law was issued. Section 429 of the Constitution (2008) states, "The National Defence and Security Council shall hold the general election in accord with the provisions of the Constitution within a duration of six months commencing from the day on which the ordinance is annulled under Section 426". Therefore, the SAC will spare effort to hold the multiparty general election as per the No 5 of the Five-point Roadmap.

He noted that the ultimatum vision of the SAC is to hold a free and fair multiparty democratic general election. Therefore, the SAC will make concerted efforts to safeguard the rights of the public to cast votes and ensure a systematic general election despite the challenges.

The Hluttaw is the highest platform in political trends in democracy, and more ethnic representatives must join the political platform in the Hluttaw so as to demand the rights of their regions under the law. Selecting the designated representatives to attend the meeting is mandatory to make it a dignified Hluttaw meeting. Participation of parties from different regions and states in Hluttaw can represent the large community and give them a chance to speak out on matters that the people aspire to. About 28 per cent of the country's population reside in the city, and approximately 72 per cent live in rural areas. The gap between some states and regions is more significant than that digit. Therefore, it should consider the rights of rural people to cast votes,

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Union Defence Minister Admiral Tin Aung San (L) and Union Home Affairs Minister Lt-Gen Yar Pyae (R) discuss during the meeting 1/2024 of the National Defence and Security Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar yesterday.

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not only focus on the wishes of people living in cities.

Moreover, preparations are being made for the election, emphasizing the regional tranquillity in Sagaing Region, Kayah, Chin, and Rakhine states, where there is a lack of peace and stability to a certain extent. Places with no peace cannot be left while elections are being held. An election must be held to have the Hluttaw sessions, and so if such places are gone, democracy will cease to exist in these regions, and there might be dictatorships and warlords that can affect the local ethnic people. Therefore, the political parties should participate in holding a free and fair election if they genuinely want a democratic system.

The voter lists should be carried out systematically in compiling them so as not to cause further stigma like the 2020 general election poll errors. Therefore, the enumeration of the 2024 census will be conducted. The pilot census was collected in 20 townships in October 2023 as a trial to prepare for data collection. Myanmar's population was estimated at 56.2 million on 1 October 2023, based on the 2014 Myanmar population and housing census.

Meanwhile, the Union Election Commission conducted demonstrations of Myanmar Electronic Voting Machine at 42 organizations, including Central Level organizations, ministries, Nay Pyi Taw Council, Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee and universities, eight townships in Nay Pyi Taw and all the townships of Yangon Region, and the processes keep going in the townships of Mandalay Region.

The Senior General added that the SAC is serving the state's duties to strengthen the democratic pathway of the country under the Constitution. Section 425 states the permit for two extensions of the prescribed duration for a term of six months for each extension typically. However, law enforcement has become weak, and the local ethnic people face losses in their socioeconomic sectors due to the armed conflicts in Shan State (North), some areas of Sagaing Region, Chin and Kayah states. Moreover, the NUG and PDF terrorists launch attacks across the nation, taking advantage of such a situation, and so it needs to be carried out to attain peace through utmost efforts. That should be considered as an unusual or exceptional situation. The ethnic armed organizations also cooperate with online scam groups and launch attacks in border areas due to the lack of rule of law. Therefore, it also needs to ensure stability, security and the rule of law in border areas and combat online scams with the relevant countries. Therefore, the public security system will be upgraded to implement a public protec-



Union Border Affairs Minister Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung (L) and Union Foreign Affairs Minister U Than Swe (R) discuss during the meeting 1/2024 of the National Defence and Security Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar yesterday.

tion system with the public participation to carry out such operations effectively.

He also urged the council members and parties to make utmost efforts to be a nation with peace and stability, the rule of law, and the successful holding of multiparty democratic general elections.

The government took over the State's responsibilities due to the voting fraud in the 2020 general election. It protected the genuine and disciplined multiparty democratic system that the people desired. Since serving the State duties, the government has focused on holding free and fair multiparty democratic general elections as per the roadmap to date. It can also be seen that the opposition groups are accelerating destructive actions daily to make the country unpeaceful and destroy the socioeconomic status of the public, neglecting the multiparty democracy that the people aspire. They also worry that their destructive plans to grab the State's power unlawfully will be destroyed when the country returns to a peaceful and normal situation. Therefore, the government is making efforts to hold multiparty elections across the nation, will overcome the challenges and difficulties, and pledges to provide the essence of democracy for every citizen in accordance with stability, rules, and regulations.

He continued that Tatmadaw, Police Force and militia in the frontline are bravely preventing the destructive activities that undermine the state stability and security, so their actions are historic. They should be provided more. Similarly, the public participation in security measures is appreciated, and it will manage to cooperate systematically under the law.

He added that the required actions should be taken to ensure the normal situation in the country. Therefore, an extension of six months is necessary to carry out the duties for the unusual or exceptional situation under Section 425 of the Constitution.

Then, Vice-President U Henry Van Thio and Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U T Khun Myat agreed to the submission of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services to extend six months of the State of Emergency under Section 425 of the Constitution.

Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win also agreed to the submission of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.

He then discussed two facts — security measures to promote the State stability and socioeconomic status of people, including nationwide peace and the rule of law, and compiling the census that is the primary requirement to receive correct voter lists to be able to hold a multiparty democratic general election, the ultimatum vision of SAC.

Union Minister for Defence Admiral Tin Aung San said that the SAC is accelerating the actions to strengthen the genuine and disciplined multiparty democratic system and building a Union based on democracy and federalism and a nationwide ceasefire.

However, some ethnic armed organizations committed destructive actions and attacks with the cover of NCA and insulted the perpetuation of the sovereignty of the country. Therefore, the six-month extension of the State of Emergency is agreed upon to implement the five-point roadmap of SAC and to hold free and fair multiparty democratic elections across the nation, upholding the Our Three Main National Causes.

Similarly, Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Yar Pyae, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe and Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung participated in the discussion and agreed to submit a six-month extension of the State of Emergency.

Then, the Senior General said the cases that occurred within six months are

discussed, and the government is leading to a multiparty democracy pathway under the Constitution. Tatmadaw also agreed to amend some stipulations of the Constitution that should be amended. In certain areas where EAOs are in the situation, there is a lack of peace and law enforcement, and there are drug smugglings. Tatmadaw emphasizes State stability, whereas the abilities of Tatmadaw and police members are also improved.

Some of the political parties and ethnic groups made talks regarding public security. There are still requirements to implement a national military service system to serve public protection services where EAOs are in situations and in places lacking stability.

Moreover, the government works closely with all the countries, including the neighbouring countries. It also follows the foreign policies laid by the Constitution.

He continued that efforts should be made to get a typical situation before 1 February 2021. The protests and those launched armed attacks destroyed the expected situation. A free and fair election is needed to attain the normal situation. It also arranges to hold dignified elections and Hluttaw sessions. The number of elected Hluttaw MPs should be more than Tatmadaw representatives. Only then will it be a dignified election. The check and balance is also needed in Hluttaw. The council members should know these facts.

Then, the Pro Tem President said the six-month extension is needed under the Constitution based on the submissions of council members. He agreed to extend six months of the State of Emergency to carry out anti-terrorist activities and for unusual situations.

He then declared the extension of a further six-month State of Emergency in the entire nation, informed the National Defence and Security Council, and concluded the meeting 1/2024. — MNA/TTA/KTZH

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National Objectives of 77th Union Day 2024

- To protect the perpetuity of the Union by the entire ethnic people through the Union spirit
- To join hands in harmony with the government, Tatmadaw, and the entire people to ensure the state stability and the rule of law
- To promote all-inclusive livestock breeding-based manufacturing industries and MSMEs, ensuring the socioeconomic development of the entire ethnic people
- To make collaborative efforts of all ethnic nationals to ensure the prosperity of the nation and food security which are the two national visions
- To strive to emerge a modern and developing country, as well as a Union based on democratic and federal systems, by all ethnic nationals

Mottos of 77th Union Day 2024

1. Unity is strength
Power of Union
2. Drifting in one boat, on the same voyage we float
Ethnic brethren of the land joining hand in hand
3. Marching towards with unity
Ensuring the destination of the Union
4. Let's firmly join hands among ethnic national brethren of the Union
5. Let's go forward with unity of the ethnic nationals

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Announcement of Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

6th Waning of Pyatho 1385 ME
31 January 2024

IT is necessary to control Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) infection continuously. So, it is now announced that public requests, orders, notifications and directives (except for easing restrictions) released by Union-Level Organizations and Union Ministries up to 31 January 2024 have been extended to 29 February 2024 for prevention, control and treatment on Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19).

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Working Committee to address the economic impact of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Announcement 1/2024

31 January 2024

Announcement on one-year extension of COVID-19 loan repayment period for movie, music, theatrical industry, journalism and media sectors

1. The Working Committee to address the economic impact of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) disbursed loans to the worst COVID-hit movie, music, theatrical industry, journalism and media sectors for one year at a one-per-cent interest rate using the COVID-19 Fund to recover the COVID-hit businesses as one of its duties on 28 January 2022, and granted K13.1325 billion loans to 879 companies/industries.
2. It has already been announced that the government extended the repayment period of loans granted to 879 companies/industries further one year when the loan period reached one year on 8 March 2023 under the guidance of the State Administration Council Chairman.
3. At present, businesses are still hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the State Administration Council instructed for an extension of another one year starting its due date to streamline the circulation of currency flows of local businesses.
4. Therefore, it is here announced that the loan repayment period will be extended for another year from the date it reaches two years to 879 companies and industries from the movie, music, theatrical industry, journalism and media sectors that received COVID loans if they meet the following conditions:
 - (a) they must have paid the first interest of the first year
 - (b) they must have paid the second interest of the second year on the due date
 - (c) they must be the companies/industries that perform their operations using the loans effectively
5. The notices of the working committee for loans stated, "If it fails to repay, action will be taken under the law." So, if the companies and industries that took loans from the Myanmar Economic Bank fail to pay back the principal and interest, they will face legal action as per the terms and conditions of the loan contract. They must repay the outstanding loan entirely within the period of extension.

Working Committee to address the economic impact of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Myanmar-made peanut shellers, corn harvesters gain popularity among farmers

THANKS to locally made peanut shelling machines and corn combine harvester, the farmers can now save time, and the number of users is increasing, according to the Nan Ko Ko Peanut Sheller and Corn Harvester Manufacturing.

These machines are made of iron frame and powered by 22 horsepower engines.

"Farmers can save time. They are fast. After threshing and shelling with this machine, seeds can grow again. When the ears of corn are inserted, kernels are produced. And if you put in peanut pods, you get peanut kernels. These machines are being sold well in the market. The number of users has increased," an official said.

When a peanut sheller runs for one hour, it produces 30 baskets of kernels while a corn combine harvester produces 70 baskets of corn kernels. Since these are time- and labour-saving agricultural machines, many farmers have chosen to use them. A corn combined harvester costs K4.5 million and a peanut sheller K7.5 million. —Thit Taw/ZN



The photo shows peanut shelling machines and corn combine harvester.

OPINION

Nurture a sustainable world by combatting climate change

THE challenge of climate change is intrinsically linked to the escalating global temperature and the release of greenhouse gases, primarily carbon dioxide, into the atmosphere. A crucial factor exacerbating this issue is the gradual disappearance of forests, which are vital for absorbing atmospheric carbon dioxide.

With the global population steadily increasing, efforts to meet the rising demand for food, goods, and fuel inadvertently contribute to a significant surge in carbon dioxide emissions. Consequently, the world grapples with adverse climatic conditions, experiencing extremes of heat and cold.

In response to this pressing global concern, leaders, intellectuals, and scientists are actively seeking effective strategies to prevent climate change and mitigate the risks of natural disasters.

The pathway to a sustainable future lies in recognizing the interconnectedness between environmental conservation and human well-being. We can shape a world that thrives in harmony with its natural surroundings through strategic reforestation efforts and a collective commitment to reducing carbon emissions.

Encouragingly, individuals can play a pivotal role by committing to planting a perennial tree annually, significantly contributing to carbon dioxide reduction. This application of environmental knowledge holds the promise of revitalizing the world's health within a few years.

In this critical endeavour, collaboration between intellectuals, thought leaders, and governments is paramount to motivating global citizens to refrain from activities contributing to carbon dioxide emissions. By fostering awareness and encouraging environmentally responsible practices, we can collectively build a clean environment for current and future generations, ultimately nurturing a healthier world.

The pathway to a sustainable future lies in recognizing the interconnectedness between environmental conservation and human well-being. We can shape a world that thrives in harmony with its natural surroundings through strategic reforestation efforts and a collective commitment to reducing carbon emissions.

As such, intellectuals and intelligentsia are to seek contributions from relevant governments in motivating the global people to avoid acts of emitting carbon dioxide into the atmosphere so as to build a clean environment for present and coming generations and a healthy world.

DESPITE a staggering one in four people in the UK experiencing a mental health problem each year, the invisible nature of it means there's often a tendency to ignore problems and just get on with it. But, as Stephen Buckley, head of information at mental health charity Mind, says, "Mental health is just like our physical health: everybody has it, and we need to take care of it."

He adds, "Thankfully, we've seen the national conversation on mental health move forward, but those with mental health problems still face barriers." The topic remains taboo, especially for older generations - a YouGov survey revealed that 25 per cent of over-55s think it's more difficult for them to discuss mental health than younger people. Some 71 per cent felt this was because, in the past, anxiety and depression were seen as weaknesses rather than health conditions.

ROAD TO RECOVERY

These figures are no surprise, especially after the recent pandemic. But it's how we deal with it that's important. Thankfully, there are things we can do. "Eating healthily, sleeping well, exercising, and seeking help are all key," says Stephen. "Different treatments work for different people, and the journey to recovery won't always be easy." Here, Mind shares its advice on three common mental health issues.

DEPRESSION

What is it?

In its mildest form, it means being repeatedly in low spirits - at its most severe, it can be life-threatening, making you feel suicidal.

The impact?

Symptoms can include "feeling low, numb, worthless or without hope," says Stephen. "You may sleep too much or too little and withdraw from social contact."

Help yourself

List activities, people, and places that make you feel good, and try to find ways to bring these things into your daily routine.

Do something new

This can boost your mood and break unhelpful patterns of thinking. You could try volunteering - it makes you feel better and less alone. Try self-help. Explore cognitive behavioural therapy.

Some Comprehensive Guides to Mastering Mental Health

By Yin Nwe Ko

"We look after our physical health, but our emotional well-being often gets neglected. It's time to make it a priority."

ANXIETY

What is it?

Feeling anxious is a natural response when we feel under threat. But if you regularly experience anxiety, including strong panic attacks, which last a long time and are difficult to control, you may need help.

The impact?

You avoid situations that may make you feel anxious. You'll find it hard to go about your everyday life or do things you enjoy.

Help yourself focus on breathing, especially during a panic attack. Inhale through your nose and out through your mouth, counting from one to five.

Try complementary and alternative therapies, including meditation, aromatherapy, massage, yoga, and reflexology, to aid relaxation.

OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER (OCD)

What is it?

An anxiety disorder with obsessions (unwelcome thoughts, urges, and worries that appear in your mind, making you feel anxious) and compulsions (repetitive activities to reduce anxiety, such as checking a door is locked or repeating phrases)

The impact?

You might avoid situations that trigger it, including work or seeing friends or family. You may feel ashamed of your thoughts or feel the need to hide your OCD.

Help yourself

Talk to someone you trust or write down feelings to discuss together.

Learn to relax

Manage stress and try techniques such as deep breathing or mindfulness.

Try peer support

This brings together people

who have had similar experiences. It helps you feel accepted and confident.

NO MORE FEELING ANXIOUS!

Millions of us are experiencing anxiety often without even realizing it. Most of us probably think we know what anxiety feels like. Your heart races, you're short of breath, and your body is bathed in a sheen of sweat. But there are plenty of hidden signs, too. Follow this advice on how to spot the hidden signs and do something about it.

"Anxiety is what we feel when we are worried, tense, or afraid," says Nicky Lidbetter, CEO of Anxiety UK. It can be caused by several factors, including feelings of uncertainty, physical health problems, stress, and childhood experiences. It's thought that around three million people in the UK have an anxiety disorder, and while clammy hands and a pounding heart could signal anxiety, some signs are less obvious. Here are the more subtle symptoms to look out for:

YOU OVER-DRAMATIZE SMALL FAILURES

"There's a catastrophizing nature to anxiety that makes you perceive things being much worse than they actually are," says Nicky. If you're over-dramatic, you may have an over-the-top reaction to a small failing, which could lead to a meltdown or cause you to stay at home for the next few days, unable to face the world.

YOU'RE CRITICAL OF YOURSELF AND OTHERS

"Being anxious leads to you being hard on yourself. It thrives on the lack of self-esteem you have for yourself, and, as a result, you become self-critical and

critical of those around you," says Nicky.

YOU CAN'T SLEEP

When we're in an anxious state, it can be hard for our body and mind to relax, and we can have trouble sleeping, which can lead to bouts of insomnia.

YOU'RE DISTRACTED

"We may be preoccupied with our thoughts and easily distracted," says Nicky. Experiencing racing thoughts is common with anxiety, but this attention to the 'inner dialogue' can result in others perceiving us as distant.

YOU OVERTHINK

"When you're anxious, you're desperately trying to make sense of a situation. Overthinking and labouring over every eventuality is a way of protecting yourself and gaining control," says Nicky.

YOU'RE AFRAID TO TAKE RISKS

Sticking to your 'comfort zone' means you won't have to face frustration, embarrassment, sadness, anger, or disappointment - all extreme feelings for someone with anxiety. "When we are anxious, we want to protect ourselves and can see risks as threats, so we become risk-averse," says Nicky.

YOU TALK TOO MUCH

You may be 'high-functioning' when you're anxious, meaning your mind is going at 100 mph. As a result, your actions - such as talking a lot - may follow suit.

YOU'RE UNWILLING TO MAKE FRIENDS

Opening yourself up emotionally can make you feel vulnerable and exposed. You may already be imagining losing that friendship before it's even started. "Anxiety may isolate us by way of protecting ourselves from



Stephen Buckley from Mind emphasizes that mental health is as vital as physical health and requires attention. **PHOTO CREDIT: LIVE YOURSELF HAPPY**

YOU FEEL UNWELL

Constant anxiety has a big effect on the immune system, and trying to hide symptoms from others can impact physical health. "Anxiety can make us tired and even sick. Plus, adrenaline released can harm our stomachs, as well as other parts of the body," explains Nicky.

When it's more serious

Seek additional help and support if anxiety is disrupting your day-to-day life and stopping you from doing activities you previously enjoyed.

SHORTCUTS TO SERENITY

These quick tips can help, so make sure you practice them daily:

A person who feels they are not worth listening to will speak

quickly because they don't want to keep others waiting on something not worth listening to.

A person in authority speaks slowly; even if you don't feel very confident, try slowing down and see how it feels.

Too much to do? Write down each task you can't do right now on a separate piece of paper. Then, every other day, take a random one and do it. You'll soon get through the list.

Learn to recognize negative self-talk (I can't run anymore, I've got to stop). Visualize it as an irritating bug, stamp on it, kill it, then replace it with a positive one ('Come on, I can do this! Only half a mile left!').

Laugh often. Watch a funny film or a YouTube video and have a good belly laugh. Science shows it helps to lower the stress

hormone cortisol and can shift a low mood.

You are what you do, so if you change what you do, you change what you are. Act in a positive way. Take action instead of telling yourself you can't. Positively talk to people. You'll soon start to notice a difference.

If you choose to say 'no' to something, mentally rehearse the conversation beforehand, saying it simply and directly, giving no more than one key reason. Do not get into explaining or arguing: just repeat 'No, because...' quietly and firmly.

Before always saying 'yes' to demands, take a deep breath so you can touch base with yourself to discover what you would truly, honestly, prefer to do.

Have a list of useful apps that benefit your mental health.

Try Headspace, Stress & Anxiety Companion, and Catch It.

Don't aim too high. Set a goal you know you can achieve, then achieve it. You'll feel good. Now, set another and achieve that. Soon, you'll be setting bigger goals and achieving those, too.

Visualize yourself at your most confident, then link this feeling to a physical action, such as pinching your thumb and forefinger together. Next time you need to feel confident in a situation, pinch your thumb and finger together to get back to that positive mental state.

Keep talking. Having a chat with a loved one, sending a text to a friend, or asking your colleague to go for a walk is the best tonic for a low mood.

Standing tall and straight makes you feel better about yourself. Imagine a piece of string pulling the top of your head towards the sky, and the rest of your body straightens accordingly.

Immerse yourself in nature. So-called 'green therapy', being outdoors is a powerful mood-lifter. A Stanford University study showed that a 90-minute walk in nature reduced ruminations, which is a risk factor for mental illness.

In brief, taking care of our mental health is just as important as looking after our physical well-being. Despite the invisible nature of mental health issues, it is crucial to prioritize and address them. As the head of information at mental health charity Mind, Stephen Buckley emphasizes the need to break the taboo surrounding mental health, acknowledging that everyone has mental health that requires care. The road to recovery involves various strategies, including healthy habits, seeking help, and understanding common mental health issues like depression, anxiety, and OCD. By recognizing hidden signs of anxiety and adopting simple daily practices, we can work towards improving our mental well-being. Remember, seeking support and taking positive actions can make a significant difference in our mental health journey.

Reference: *Live Yourself Happy*

NATIONAL

Acceleration of rabies control, addressing public health issue

THE Ministry of Health has announced its intention to accelerate rabies control, a significant public health issue.

“Measures will be expedited to ensure that no one dies of rabies by 2030,” stated Deputy Minister for Health, Professor Dr Aye Tun, during the coordination meeting on rabies control held on 29 January.

Myanmar has devised a national plan (2018-2030) to reduce the incidence of rabies in dogs. Mass vaccination campaigns against dog rabies are underway in Lewe township of Nay Pyi Taw, NyaungU township of Mandalay Region and Hmawby township of Yangon Region as part of the One Health Strategy.

The deputy minister emphasized that rabies constitutes a significant public health challenge, and its prevention and control are crucial aspects of public health management.

Rabies infection carries a high risk



The photo shows stray dogs in Sangyoung Township.

of fatality for individuals. According to WHO, one person dies from rabies every 15 minutes globally. Annually, between 55,000 and 70,000 people succumb

to rabies, with the majority of deaths occurring in impoverished villages in Asian and African nations. — TWA/KZW

Aungbarlay Lottery switches to automated draw on 1 Feb

IN the commencement of the 59th Aungbarlay Lottery on 1 February 2024, Air Blow Digital Machines will replace humans in selecting the winning numbers for both the ticket Aungbarlay lottery system and the online Aungbarlay lot-

tery system, as announced by the State Lottery Directorate of the Internal Revenue Department.

The report indicates that Air Blow Digital Machines and RFID balls, which are identical in weight and size,

will represent both letters of the alphabet and numbers. Sales of tickets for the 59th Aungbarlay Lottery have generated over K5.52 billion.

For the opening day of the 59th Aungbarlay Lottery, a total of 552,276 ticket books priced at K1,000 each have already been sold. Prizes for the 59th Aungbarlay Lottery will include one award of K500 million, one award of K200 million, one award of K100 million, four awards of K50 million, five awards of K20 million, nine awards of K10 million, twelve awards of K5 million, sixteen awards of K2 million, fourteen awards of K1 million, and thirty awards of K300,000 under the Waiwai Sarsar Padaytha category. There will also be 300 awards of K200,000, 5,000 awards of K100,000, 20,000 awards of K50,000, and 100,000 awards of K10,000. Furthermore, there will be four additional awards of K1 million, twenty awards of K300,000, two hundred awards of K200,000, and two thousand awards of K100,000 from the confiscated prizes of K250 million.

The report also mentions that the public will be able to observe and verify the RFID balls before the lottery draw. — TWA/TMT



The photo depicts State Lottery Directorate of the Internal Revenue Department.

147 construction permits granted in YCDC area in H1 Jan

A total of 57 building permits were issued within the boundaries of the Yangon City Development Committee in the second week of January.

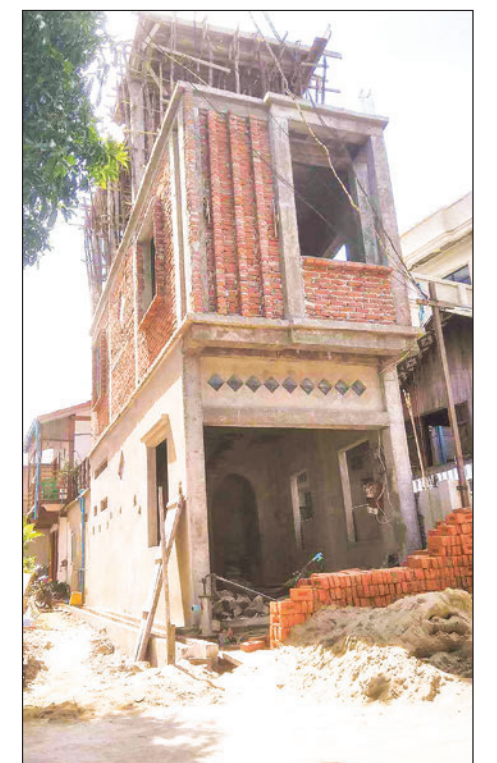
In addition, regarding Building Complete Certificate (BCC) applications, 147 construction permits were issued within two weeks.

The building completion certificate (BCC) has been approved for 41 buildings, and the list of 25 buildings that have applied for building permits from four to 17 rooms has been sent to the Yangon Electricity Supply Corporation (YESC).

Endorsements have been sent to related departments, such as one letter to the Fire Services Department, 34 letters to the Engineering Department (Water and Sanitation), and 12 to the Urban Land Planning Department to allow building construction.

When applying for building construction permits, it is necessary to include the Standard Operation Procedure (SOP) to be communicated with the Electricity Corporation by the landowners and licensed contractors for obtaining electricity.

This week, licensed contractors will be invited to a meeting to get the BCC and install electricity meters for the buildings. Yangon Electricity Supply Corporation takes the responsibility of installing the electricity meters. — TWA/KZL



A building under construction within the municipality area of Yangon City Development Committee.

Black gram market poised for late-January upswing

THE black gram market heads for a strong upswing in late January 2024 on the back of a surge in foreign demand after it has remained unchanged at around K3 million per tonne starting from the end of December 2023.

The price stood at only K3.17 million per tonne on 25 January and then rallied to a new record high of K3.285 million per tonne on 31 January 2024. The figures reflected a sharp rise of K115,000 per tonne within one day.

Additionally, the Kyat devaluation against the greenback and the large volume of shipments contribute to the fresh new peak of the black gram price.

India, the primary buyer of Myanmar's pulses, is crucial in elevating the prices. It also imports the black gram (urad) from Brazil and other countries. Nonetheless, they prefer Myanmar's black gram because of its

better quality and easy access to ample supply. India extended the free import policy of black gram (urad) and pigeon pea (tur) until March 2025.

Next, India's pulse output dropped more than expected due to erratic weather in India, prompting them to import a large quantity. India was reportedly to bring in 400,000 tonnes of pigeon pea (tur) and 1 million tonnes of black gram (urad) from Myanmar in two months (January-February) 2024, citing reports by foreign agencies.

Myanmar shipped over 1.25 million tonnes of various pulses worth over US\$1 billion over the past nine months of the current financial year 2023-2024, the Ministry of Commerce stated.

Myanmar mainly exports black gram, green gram and pigeon peas to foreign markets. Black gram and pigeon peas are



The picture shows the quality of black grams before being delivered to the market. PHOTO: XINHUA

primarily shipped to India, while green grams are exported to China and Europe.

India has growing consumption requirements for black grams and pigeon peas. According to a Memorandum of Understanding between Myanmar and India signed on 18 June 2021, India will import 250,000

tonnes of black gram and 100,000 tonnes of pigeon peas (tur) from Myanmar for five consecutive years from 2021-2022 financial year to 2025-2026 FY. This G-to-G pact will not affect the pulses' annual quota set by India. Myanmar's exporters are entitled to deliver the pulses to India under that yearly quota.

Black grams that India primarily purchases are commonly found only in Myanmar, whereas pigeon peas, green gram and chickpeas are grown in African countries and Australia, as stated by the Myanmar Pulses, Beans, Maize and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association. — NN/EM

Yangon Port: 53 container vessels slated to arrive in Feb



File photo shows lorries waiting for loading and unloading containers at Yangon Port.

A total of 53 container vessels are scheduled to call at the Yangon Port in February 2024, the Myanma Port Authority announced.

In February, six container vessels each run by Maersk Line, Cosco Shipping Line and Samudera Shipping Line, five each by CMA CGM Line and SITC Shipping Line, four by MSC Line, three each by BLPL Shipping Line, Evergreen Line, ONE Line, RCL Line and Ti2 Contain-

er Line, two each by IAL Shipping Line and PIL Line and one each by BAY Line and Land and Sea are slated to enter the Yangon Port. In January, 49 vessels docked at the Yangon Port.

Yangon Port handled 629 container vessels in 2023. Thanks to the draft extension, the international ocean liners can access the inner port for now, according to the Myanma Port Authority's statement on 22 June 2022.

After the new navigation channel (Kings Bank Channel) accessing the inner Yangon River had been found, the draft extension work was accelerated. After that, the port can now handle larger ships. The container vessel (185.99 m LOA, 35.25 m Beam, 29,232 GRT and 2,698 TEU) Hong Kong-based SITC Shipping Line docked at Asia World Port Terminal for the first time on 22 June, which is the largest ship that AWPT Port handled.

From May 2021, the arrival of ships at terminals in Yangon has increased again. Three new container vessels by Maersk Line Myanmar (SeaLand Maersk) started to run to fulfil the sea-borne trade requirements in 2021.

Earlier, the larger ships had draft problems preventing sailing on the Yangon River. With the draft extending up to 10 metres, more giant ocean liners can enter the Thilawa Port. — NN/EM

Betel leaves prices rise amid yield drop in winter

THE betel vine farms have braced for output drops in winter, yet the prices increased to over K20,000 per viss in Pwintbyu Township, Magway Region, said locals engaged in betel farms working on a manageable scale.

"The yield dropped this winter. The betel leaves can be plucked after three months of cultivation. The betel vine cultivation needs systematic management and practices with antifungal activity. Moreover, betel vines need soil, yet they should not be soaked wet with excessive moisture to prevent them from dying and foot and root rot disease. The prevailing prices move between K15,000 and K20,000 per viss depending on the varieties. High prices benefit the betel farmers," a farmer from Pwintbyu Township said.

There is an adequate irrigation water supply for



A customer checks betel leaves at the market.

residents in the arid Pwintbyu Township throughout the three seasons (summer, monsoon and winter). The intercropping system is also adopted in the area to raise the income. The betel vine cultivation is a labour- and income-intensive business suitable for small-scale farmers. Locals from Dedaye, Waedauk, Thamanyin, and Monchaung villages in Pwintbyu Township rely heavily on this business for their livelihood. — Hlaing Win Lay/EM

ECONOMY WORLD

Germany's mine-to-motor lithium supply chain takes shape

Starting production in May, the plant's output is a crucial element in the EU's strategy to reduce dependence on foreign imports.



Germany's first large-scale lithium refinery is setting up in Bitterfeld-Wolfen. PHOTO: AFP

ONCE a byword for environmental disaster due to its heavy industry and mining, the city of Bitterfeld-Wolfen is poised to become a key site for Germany's ambitious green transition.

It is here that the country's first large-scale lithium refinery has been set up, with an aim to play a pivotal role in a European plan to mine and refine its own supplies of raw materials needed to

power a fleet of new-generation vehicles.

The white powder the plant will start pumping out from May is a key ingredient in electric car batteries and part of the European Union's recipe to reduce its dependency on foreign imports.

The take-off in demand for batteries was "foreseeable", said AMG's CEO Stefan Scherer, and his company has been "able to ride the wave".

Bitterfeld-Wolfen in eastern Germany had been picked to house the new factory because of its "proximity to clients", Scherer said.

The plant's installation closer to battery makers could counter supply risks for Europe, whose reliance on imports has come to be seen as a liability amid rising geopolitical tensions — most notably with China. — AFP

Europe's economic recovery momentum remains dented

Despite GDP readings slightly surpassing expectations, Europe's economic recovery momentum remains subdued.

IN the ECB's view, the eurozone economy will continue to be weak in the near term but is expected to pick up momentum later this year.

Both the EU and the eurozone narrowly avoided a technical recession in the last quarter of 2023 as Q4 GDP stagnated, the statistical office of the EU announced on Tuesday.

GDP readings were better than what market observers had expected but provided little relief as Europe's economic recovery momentum remains dented.

A narrow escape

After shrinking by 0.1 per

cent in the third quarter of 2023, the GDP in the EU and the 20-member eurozone was flat in the last quarter, figures from the Eurostat showed.

The stable GDP figures in Q4 enabled the European economy to escape a technical recession, which is defined as two consecutive quarters of economic downturn.

Compared with 2022, the eurozone economy grew by 0.5 per cent in 2023. The rate is markedly lower than estimations from market observers at the beginning of 2023. — Xinhua



People walk past a store in Brussels, Belgium, on 5 January 2024. PHOTO: ZHAO DINGZHE/ XINHUA



The travel and tourism sector's total contribution to Pakistan's GDP was 5.9 per cent in 2022 and 4.2 million jobs. The 7,788-metre-tall (25,551 ft) Rakaposhi mountain towers over Hunza Valley. PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/WIKIPEDIA

IMF lowers Pakistan's economic growth forecast to 2% for current financial year

THE International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Tuesday lowered Pakistan's economic growth forecast to two per cent for the current financial year, down 0.5 percentage points from its October estimate of 2.5 per cent, Dawn newspaper reported.

The global lender in its latest World Economic Outlook (WEO) report released on Tuesday, revised the next fiscal year's growth forecast to 3.5 per cent, down by 0.1 per cent. The revised growth

estimates are based on the IMF's recent detailed quarterly review of Pakistan's macroeconomic position as part of the ongoing USD 3 billion Standby Arrangement (SBA), which is set to expire in March.

The IMF's growth forecast is significantly lower than the Pakistan government's 3.5 per cent GDP growth target for the current year but generally in line with the State Bank of Pakistan's expectation of two per cent to

three per cent announced a day earlier as part of the monetary policy statement.

The global lender noted that the growth forecast for both years (2024 and 2025) was below the historical (2000-19) average of 3.8 per cent, with elevated central bank policy rates to fight inflation, a withdrawal of fiscal support amid high debt weighing on economic activity, and low underlying productivity growth. — ANI

Explosion occurs at thermal power plant in central Japan

The incident at the Jera Co facility involved an explosion inside a boiler facility and a fire in a fuel conveyor system.

AN explosion occurred Wednesday at a thermal power plant in Aichi Prefecture, central Japan, police and other sources said, with no immediate reports of injuries due to the incident.

Firefighters received

an emergency call at around 3:10 pm reporting an explosion and that black smoke was rising at the plant in Taketoyo run by Jera Co, a joint venture between Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings Inc and Chubu Electric

Power Co.

The explosion apparently occurred inside a boiler facility on the 13th floor of a building, according to the local fire department. A conveyor system used to transport fuel also caught fire. — Kyodo



Black smoke rises from Jera Co's Taketoyo Thermal Power Station in Taketoyo, Aichi Prefecture, on 31 January 2024. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Weight-loss drug maker Novo Nordisk's profit surges as sales boom

Novo Nordisk, the Danish pharmaceutical giant, reported robust 2023 profits, making it Europe's most valuable company.



Pharma group Novo Nordisk has become a key driver of the Danish economy. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

DANISH pharmaceutical giant Novo Nordisk posted bumper profits for 2023 on Wednesday, driv-

en by blockbuster sales of diabetes and obesity treatments that helped it become Europe's most

valuable company.

The century-old company has also turned into a major driver of Denmark's economy as sales of diabetes medication Ozempic and obesity drug Wegovy have boomed.

Novo Nordisk said its net profit rose 51 per cent to 83.7 billion kroner (\$12.1 billion) last year — more than 1.5 billion kroner higher than forecast by analysts surveyed by financial data firm FactSet. — AFP

H&M shares tumble as CEO steps down

H&M chief executive Helena Helmersson announced Wednesday she was stepping down, sending shares in the fashion retailer tumbling as the Swedish company reported lower-than-expected profits in the fourth quarter.

Helmersson, who has spent four years at the

helm and said the job had been "very demanding at times for me personally", will be replaced by Daniel Erver, who has worked for the group for 18 years in various roles and most recently as head of the H&M brand. The group's shares plunged by nine per cent on the Stockholm stock ex-

change after the announcement. The Swedish group, the world's second biggest fashion retailer after Zara owner Inditex, posted a net profit of 8.75 billion kronor (\$840 million) in 2023, a 2.5-fold increase from a year earlier, citing higher sales and improved margins. — AFP

Changing Trade Name For Registered Pesticide

The pesticide manufactured by Anhui Byter Agriculture Technology Co.,Ltd and distributed by Myanmar Golden Byter Co.,Ltd is changing trade Name as follow,

No	Previous Name	New Name	Registration No
1	Super-Ema 5% WDG	Byter Dinga Plus	F2023-4065

Any Objection regarding to this changing can notify at Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board within (14) days.

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BAJO VOY.NO. (V.016N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SINAR BAJO VOY.NO. (V.016N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **1-2-2024** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V IAL 001 VOY.NO. (W169)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V IAL 001 VOY. NO. (W169)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **1-2-2024** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S INTER ASIA LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V HANSA HARBURG VOY.NO. (402W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V HANSA HARBURG VOY.NO. (402W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **1-2-2024** 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**

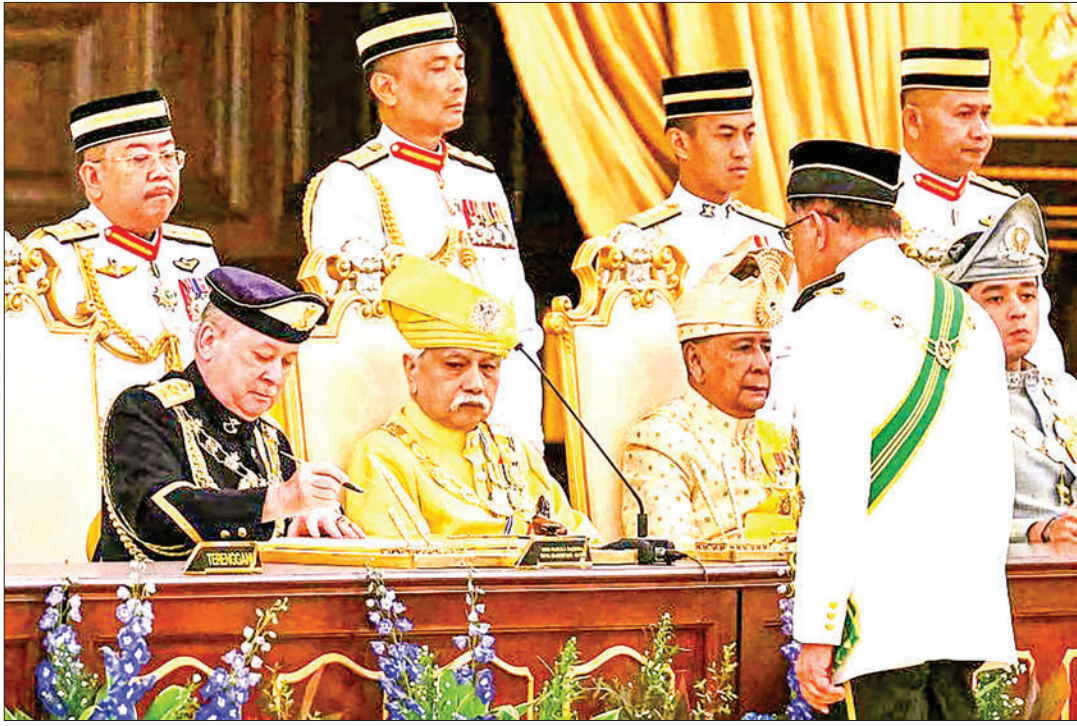
Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD.

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD



Sultan Ibrahim Iskandar (left) signing the documents received from PM Anwar Ibrahim (right) at the ceremony. **PHOTO: AFP**

Malaysia installs Sultan Ibrahim Iskandar as new king

Wearing royal blue attire, the 65-year-old took the oath of office in Kuala Lumpur, with a formal coronation ceremony scheduled in the coming months.

MALAYSIA installed an outspoken motorcycle-riding king on Wednesday in an elaborate ceremony steeped in centuries of tradition, with the billionaire determined to play a key role in ensuring political stability.

Sultan Ibrahim Sultan Iskandar's new position is

largely ceremonial but has in recent years featured heavily in the country's fractured political landscape.

In addition to overseeing major political appointments, the king serves as the official head of Islam in the Muslim-majority country and commander-in-chief of its

armed forces.

Bloomberg estimates Sultan Ibrahim and his family, rulers of southern Johor state, are worth at least \$5.7 billion, including land in Singapore and investments in various companies including in palm oil, real estate and telecommunications. — AFP

Ex-Pakistani PM Khan gets 14-year prison sentence in corruption case – Reports



Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi have been sentenced to 14 years in prison in a corruption case related to the sale of valuables from the state treasury. **PHOTO: ANI/FILE**

PAKISTANI Prime Minister and chairman of Pakistan's Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) opposition party Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi have been sentenced to 14 years behind bars in a corruption case related to the sale of valuables stored in the state treasury of Toshakhana, GEO, a Pakistani TV channel, reported on Wednesday.

Both were also banned from holding any public office for 10 years and given a fine of 787 million rupees (\$2.8 million) each. — SPUTNIK

Thai court orders end to royal insult law reform campaign

THAILAND'S progressive Move Forward Party, which won most seats at the last election, was Wednesday ordered to stop campaigning to reform the kingdom's tough royal defamation laws, as a top court ruled the policy was unlawful.

The Constitutional Court on Wednesday ruled that the party's campaign pledge to reform Thailand's strict laws protecting King Maha Vajiralongkorn amounted to an attempt to "overthrow the monarchy".

The unanimous ruling by

nine judges could pave the way for MFP to be dissolved under laws governing political parties.

The court said MFP's attempts to amend the royal defamation law showed "an intent to separate the monarchy from the Thai nation, which is significantly dangerous to the security of the state".

"There are prohibitions on the exercise of rights and freedoms that affect the country's security and peace, order of the state, and good morals," it said.

— AFP



Pita Limjaroenrat was cleared last week of breaching Thai election laws. **PHOTO: AFP**

TOP NEWS

Israeli military confirms diverting water in suspected Hamas tunnels

THE Israeli military officially acknowledged on Tuesday that it has been employing a unique strategy of pumping "large volumes of water" into suspected Hamas tunnels in Gaza.

This confirmation comes after weeks of speculation and reports suggesting the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) were testing the method of seawater pumping into tunnels.

The IDF, which initially remained silent on the matter, released a statement outlining the use of "new capabilities" to target Hamas infrastructure in the Gaza Strip by channelling substantial amounts of water into the tunnels.

"The IDF has implemented new capabilities during the war with the aim of neutralizing underground terrorist infrastructure, including by channelling large volumes of water into them," the statement read. "This method was developed in cooperation with the @Israel_MOD, and is only utilized in locations where it is suitable. The IDF takes into consideration the soil and water systems in the area, matching the method of operation to each specific case," the statement added.

"This is a significant tool in combating the threat of Hamas' underground terrorist infrastructure," it also said. — ANI

SPORTS

Tajikistan wrestles with football fever after Asian Cup exploits

Tajikistan, known for traditional wrestling, surprises in football's Asian Cup.

TAJIKISTAN'S national sport is traditional wrestling but the poorest country in the former Soviet Union is now just two wins away from football's Asian Cup final.

The Central Asian nation are making their debut in the tournament and coach Petar Segrt said there were "no limits" after beating the United Arab Emirates on penalties in the last 16.

On Friday in Qatar they

face Jordan in the quarter-finals, something few outside the world's 106th-ranked team expected before the competition began.

Alovidin Buriev, a commentator for Tajikistan's TV Varzish and who has reported on football for over 35 years, said the players were "already heroes".

"Until this Asian Cup, we didn't have stars. Now all our players are stars," he told AFP in Doha. — AFP



Tajikistan have reached the Asian Cup quarter-finals in their tournament debut. **PHOTO: AFP**

Real Madrid youngster Peter joins Valencia on loan with option to buy

REAL Madrid youngster Peter Federico has joined La Liga rivals Valencia on loan until the end of the current season to help boost their attacking options.

Valencia announced the deal, which also includes a clause that allows them to make the move permanent at the end of the current season for an estimated two million euros, on its website on Wednesday morning.

"The 21-year-old footballer arrives on loan until the end of the season and Valencia CF will have an option to buy," explains the club, adding that Peter has spent his "entire career with Real Madrid" and made his official de-

but in December 2021. The youth international with the Dominican Republic made two further first team appearances last season, but has since not returned to the first team, where his progress has been blocked by players such as Vinicius Jr and Rodrygo.

He has made 114 appearances for Real Madrid's B-team (Real Madrid Castilla) and scored 13 goals, while providing numerous assists with his left foot. Although Peter will strengthen Valencia's attack, it does look as if they will end the transfer window weaker in defense, with experienced Brazilian stopper Gabriel Paulista set to join Atletico Madrid. — Xinhua



The traditional parade on the river Seine will host around 300,000 ticketed spectators on 26 July, a significant reduction from earlier estimates of 600,000. **PHOTO: PARIS 2024/OLYMPICS**

France crops crowd numbers for Olympics opening ceremony

The French government has reduced the number of spectators for the Paris Olympics opening ceremony due to security and organizational challenges.

THE French government announced Wednesday that it had slashed the number of spectators attending the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics amid security and other organizational challenges.

The traditional opening parade of Olympic sporting delegations is set to take place in boats on the river Seine on 26 July the first time the ceremony

has been held outside the main athletics stadium.

After months of speculation about the size of the crowd permitted to watch the flotilla, Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin told the France 2 channel on Tuesday "around 300,000" ticketed spectators would attend.

He had earlier referred to around 600,000 when speaking in the Senate in October 2022,

while other members of the government and organizers had spoken of 400,000-500,000.

"I know that we have the best security forces in the world and that we will succeed in showing that not only that we can win medals (at the Olympics) but that we can play host to the world without any problems," Darmanin told the channel. — AFP

McIlroy sees PGA wins as cheapened without Rahm, LIV's best

RORY McIlroy says PGA Tour triumphs at venues such as Pebble Beach and Riviera will be devalued in the absence of two-time major winner Jon Rahm and other star players following their defection to LIV Golf.

And the four-time major champion from Northern Ireland says it's more important to complete a merger between



Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland says PGA Tour titles are cheapened when many of the world's top players are banned after jumping to rival LIV Golf and merging the tours is more important than punishing defectors who seek a return. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

LIV and PGA Tour than it is to sort out punishments for defectors to the Saudi-backed upstart circuit.

Speaking on Tuesday ahead of Thursday's start of the Pebble Beach Pro-Am, McIlroy was asked if wins at the California venues were cheapened

without Rahm, Dustin Johnson and other top players who jumped to LIV.

"Yeah," McIlroy said. "I'd like to win here and stand up with a trophy on 18 green and know that I've beaten all of the best players in the world, so yeah." — AFP



World leaders given treaty jolt on Covid anniversary



While many governments are still holding enquiries into their Covid-19 action they cannot agree international action to prevent a new pandemic. PHOTO: HENRY NICHOLLS/AFP

Negotiations for the treaty began in December 2021, aiming for completion by May this year. However, progress has slowed, and disagreements persist among the 194 WHO member states.

make it work, including greater access to vaccines and treatments.

The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response, headed by former New Zealand prime minister Helen Clark and Liberian ex-president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, recommended in May 2021 creating a new pandemic treaty. Clark, Sirleaf and a host of other former heads of state released a letter Tuesday calling for greater action.

“There are worrying signs of stalemate on several issues which go to the heart of a transformative and equitable international system for pandemic preparedness and response,” the signatories said.

“A new pandemic threat is inevitable. A new pandemic is not — if we act now,” they warned. — AFP

WAVERING world leaders were told Tuesday to speed up efforts to agree a global treaty on avoiding a new pandemic catastrophe — four years to the day since Covid-19 was declared an international emergency.

Countries have spent more than two

years working out an accord on making sure countries are better prepared to deal with, or head off, the next pandemic.

The 194 World Health Organization member states wanted a treaty finalized by May this year when they started negotiations in December 2021 — when the Covid-19 death toll was in millions

and health systems had been crippled.

But the momentum has sagged, time is running out and countries are still at loggerheads. The WHO executive board heard last week that European countries want more money invested in pandemic prevention, while Africa wants the knowledge and financing to

THE SNOWY WEATHER

China issues blue alert for blizzards

CHINA'S meteorological authority on Wednesday renewed a blue alert for heavy snow in certain regions of the country.

From Wednesday morning to Thursday morning, snowstorms will hit parts of Shaanxi, Shanxi, Hebei, Henan, Shandong, and Jiangsu, with the snowfall expected to reach 2 centimetres to 5 centimetres, the National Meteorological Centre said. The meteorological centre advised authorities to take note of the influence of extensive rain, snow and freezing weather on the ongoing Spring Festival travel rush, also known as “chunyun,” which will see hundreds of millions of people return home to reunite with their friends and families.

It has advised pedestrians and drivers to be extra careful during the snowy weather, and urged local authorities to take precautions with regard to roads, railways, electricity and telecommunications.

China has a four-tier, colour-coded weather warning system, with red representing the most severe weather, followed by orange, yellow and blue. — Xinhua

German State Secy invites Indian professionals to explore opportunities in Germany

GERMAN State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to India, Leonie Gebers, extended an invitation to Indian professionals to Germany's labour market during her visit to Delhi's Don Bosco Technical Institute. Leonie Gebers emphasized the great potential of India and expressed Germany's interest in collaborating across different sectors. “So I would like to welcome Indian professionals to our country and to our labour market,” she said in an interaction with ANI.

The German delegation, led by German Secretary of State at the Federal Foreign Office



Germany's strengths, such as a robust industry, excellent infrastructure, and rich cultural heritage, were highlighted. PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/

Susanne Baumann and Leonie Gebers, engaged in discussions to explore avenues for cooperation. — ANI