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

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

Religious titles offered to title recipient Sayadaws and nuns for 2023 together with rice offering ceremony



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing offers the Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru title and insignia to the Most Venerable Prof. Kumburugamuwe from Sri Lanka in Nay Pyi Taw on 5 March 2023.

A ceremony to offer religious titles for 2023 was held in conjunction with the rice offering ceremony at Sasana Maha Beikman in the precinct of Up-patasanti Pagoda in Nay Pyi

Taw yesterday afternoon, attended by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla.

Also present were Vice-Chairman of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Presiding Patron of Myingyan Koehsaungtaik Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Jotikapala

and Vice-Chairman Presiding Patron of Kyaukme Thiho Pariyatti Buddhist Learning Centre Agga Maha Pandita Dr Bhaddanta Candanasara, title recipient Sayadaws and nuns at home

and abroad, SAC Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win and wife Daw Than Than Nwe, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Don Pramudwinai of Thailand, SAC Secretary Lt-Gen Aung Lin Dwe and wife, Joint Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo and wife and officials.

The Senior General and wife, the congregation took the Five Precepts from the Myingyan Sayadaw. Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Presiding Patron of Bago Sasana Mandaing Pali Tekkatho Monastery Bhaddanta Sirinda delivered a Sammodaniya Ovada Katha and Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Ko Ko supplicated the religious affairs.

The Senior General offered Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru title and insignia to Most Venerable Prof. Kumburugamuwe from Sri Lanka, Somdet Phramahathirachan from Thailand and Shweminwun Sasana Yeiktha Sayadaw of Bahan Township Agga Maha Kammathanacariya Bhaddanta Sobhana on behalf of Mahasi Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sobhana.

The Vice-Senior General also offered Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru title and insignia to Sayadaw of Naga Monastery in Kyaukpyu of Rakhine State Bhaddanta Cakkinda Bhivamsa

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Objectives of 78th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day

- To serve primary duties of Tatmadaw for successfully safeguarding Our Three Main National Causes, and protecting the State Constitution and shielding the genuine disciplined multiparty democratic system
- To emphasize agreements in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) as much as possible for the restoration of the durable and perpetual peace across the nation as ceasing of armed conflicts is an actual requirement for realizing the multiparty democratic system
- To safeguard the national interest of the State, lives and property of people, and to put a strenuous effort on respective corners in times of natural disasters.
- To provide the necessary assistance by Tatmadaw for holding a free and fair multiparty democratic general election upon completion of undertakings in accord with the provisions of the state of emergency for the emergence of the Union based on democracy and federalism.

Yangon Region expands cultivation of summer paddy on 206,873 acres, oil crops on 16,794 acres, sunflowers and pulses on 8,969 acres

ACCORDING to the guidance of the Head of State, Yangon Region accelerates agriculture sector to ensure food and oil security. It is reported that 206,873 acres of summer paddy, cultivation of 16,794 acres of oil crops, 8,969 acres of sunflower and various pulse crops have been expanded more than last year.

Within the region, monsoon paddy was grown in nine districts and both summer rice and sunflower crops in eight districts. Summer rice was cultivated in 15 townships, oil crops in 16 townships and sunflower in 16 townships. A total of 4,608 tonnes

of fertilizer were distributed for monsoon paddy, summer paddy and winter crop areas. Sunflower seeds were provided for 8,963 acres as well. With the national economic promotion fund, contracts were signed for 3,034.68 acres of green bean in seven townships and 11,864 acres of summer paddy in nine townships, and inputs equal to K200,000 per acre were distributed by the Regional Department of Agriculture.

A total of 206,873 acres of summer paddy were able to be cultivated in Yangon Region, against the target of 205,554

acres. Summer paddy of 6,112 acres were harvested, yielding 76.32 baskets (holds 16 visses) per acre. In oil crops, 81 acres of monsoon peanuts and 2,799 acres of winter peanuts were planted, and monsoon peanuts yielded 27.89 baskets per acre while winter peanuts produced 50.23 baskets per acre from 115 acres of harvested areas. It has been grown 4,931 acres of winter sesame, 14 acres of summer sesame, six acres of monsoon sunflower and 8,963 acres of winter sunflower. In harvesting four acres of monsoon sunflower, 10.75 baskets were produced



Sunflower plants bearing flowers thriving in the farm. PHOTO: KANU



Photo depicts thriving paddy plantation. PHOTO : KANU

per acre.

Monsoon paddy was cultivated on 1,143,696 acres of farmlands in Dagon Myothit, Thanlyin, Twantay, Hmawby, Hlegu, Taikkyi, Mingaladon, Insein and Ahlon districts, and 1,140,339 acres were harvested, accounting for 98.21 per cent of cultivation in the Yangon Region. A total of 206,873 acres of summer paddy was planted in the townships of the eight districts except Ahlon district, and 6,112 acres were harvested, accounting for 100.64 per cent in cultivation. In the sunflower crop, 8,963 acres were grown in the eight districts except Ahlon district,

accounting for 105.99 per cent against the target.

Since summer rice has a better yield than monsoon rice, the government and farmers will get more income by being able to grow summer rice with almost a percentage of monsoon rice under the irrigation system. With the development of agricultural industries, the socio-economic life will improve, starting from the increase in income of individual farmers. It is reported that by planting summer paddy, oil crops, sunflowers and pulses more than last year, farmers' economic opportunities have blossomed. — Nyein Thu (MNA)/CT

Public Notice for Elimination of Violence

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

1 new case of COVID-19 reported on 5 March, total figure rises to 633,946

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **633,946** after **one** new case was reported on 5 March 2023 according to the Ministry of Health.

The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **614,410**, including **one** new recovery.

The death toll from COVID-19 in the country remained unchanged at **19,490** on 5-3-2023 with no new death reported from the pandemic.

The country has vaccinated **30,959,944** people aged 18 and above for COVID-19 vaccines and **6,836,784** people aged under 18 till 5 March 2023.

— GNLM

Government ready to disburse loans to MSME industries

A plan is underway to loan the MSME businesses and development of livestock sector through the remaining fund from the State economic promotion fund. The government is ready to disburse loans to MSMEs under the scheming rules and regulations.

(The excerpt from the speech made by Chairman of the MSME Development Central Committee Chairman of State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting 1/2022 of the central committee on 23 September 2022)

Religious titles offered to title recipient Sayadaws and nuns for 2023 together with rice offering ceremony

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and Thuwunna Theingi Mogok Meditation Dhamma Yeiktha Sayadaw of Thingangyun Township Agga Maha Kammathanacariya Bhaddanta Kissayana on behalf of Mogok Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vimala.

Lt-Gen Aung Lin Dwe presented Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru title and insignia to Sasana Mandaing Pali Tekkatho Buddhist Learning Centre of Bago Region Bhaddanta Sirinda and Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo, to Shwetaung Pali Tekkatho Monastery of Yenangyoung Township in Magway Region Bhaddanta Tejaniya.

SAC members, Union level officials, Union ministers, senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief and



The Senior General and wife offer alms to a title recipient Sayadaw.

one Tipitakadhara Dhammabhandagarika Sayadaw, 30 Agga Maha Pandita Sayadaws, 52 Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Sayadaws, 25 Agga Maha Ganthavacaka Pandita Sayadaws, 13 Agga Maha Kammathanacariya Sayadaws, three Agga Maha Ganthavacaka Pandita nuns and 14 Sasana Nuggaha title winner laypersons. Chief Ministers and officials presented titles to remaining recipient Sayadaws, nuns and laypersons in respective regions and states.

The Senior General and wife, the Vice-Senior General and wife, the Thai Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and officials paid homage to Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru title recipient Sayadaw



The Vice-Senior General offers the religious title to the Sayadaw of Naga Monastery in Kyaukpyu of Rakhine State Bhaddanta Cakkinda Bhivamsa.



Senior General's wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla presents the religious title to Nun Daw Yucanda.



The wife of the Vice-Senior General presents the religious title to Nun Daw Nandamala of Khemathiri Nunnery in Magway.

officials offered Tipitakadhara Dhammabhandagaika, Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru, Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika, Agga Maha Pandita, Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja, Agga Maha Ganthavacaka Pandita and Agga Maha Kammathanacariya titles and insignia to relevant Sayadaws.

The wife of the Senior General presented Agga Maha Ganthavacaka Pandita title and insignia to Nun Daw Khemacari of Dhamma Vihari Nunnery in Aungmyethazan Township and

Nun Daw Yucanda of Buddhist Missionary Candarama Nunnery in Mogaung respectively and the wife of the Vice-Senior General, Agga Maha Ganthavacaka Pandita title and insignia to Nun Daw Nandamala of Khemathiri Nunnery in Magway.

The Senior General also presented Agga Maha Thiri Thudhamma Mani Jotadhara title and insignia to U Aung Toe, Dr Khin Maung Tun, U Zaw Win and U Maung Maung.

The Vice-Senior General presented Thiri Thudhamma

Mani Jotadhara title and insignia to U Ye Tun (aka) U Ye Tin Htut, U Hla Aye (aka) U Ar Ti and U Berin Nel (aka) U Khin Maung Lwin.

The wife of the Senior General presented Agga Maha Thiri Thudhamma Theingi title and insignia to Daw Than Than Nwe, Daw Mya Thein and Daw Thin Thin and Thiri Thudhamma Theingi title and insignia to Daw Nang Myint Myint Win respectively whereas the wife of the Vice-Senior General presented Thiri Thudhamma Theingi title

and insignia to Daw Khin Mar Cho and Daw Aye Mya Lwin.

Vice-Chairman Kyaukme Sayadaw delivered a sermon, followed by sharing of merits gained.

In 2023, the State Administration Council offered religious titles to 403 members of the Sangha at home and abroad, 38 nuns and 42 laypersons. Yesterday's ceremony, titles were offered to 15 Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Sayadaws, 12 Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Sayadaws,

Somdet Phramahathirachan from Thailand at the Museum, Pitakat Chamber and Mawgun Chamber in the precinct of Up-patasanti Pagoda.

The Thai Sayadaw presented Buddha images as Dhamma gifts to the Senior General and party.

Later, the Senior General and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla and party offered rice and alms to title recipient Sayadaws and nuns at home and abroad for 2023 in the precinct of the pagoda. — MNA/TTA

Religious titles offered in Myitkyina in conjunction with dry ration offering ceremony



SAC member Daw Dwe Bu and officials offer alms to member of the Sangha at religious title offering ceremony for 2023 in Myitkyina on 5 March.

A ceremony to offer the religious titles for 2023 was held at Anndawshin Hilly Region Missionary Monastery in Myitkyina in Kachin State yesterday morning. The ceremony was honoured by State Sangha Nayaka Committee Secretary Dhamma Rekkhita Wuntho Monastery Bhaddanta Ketumala and the senior Buddhist monks, the title recipient monks and the senior nuns.

State Administration Council Member Daw Dwe Bu, Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs Jeng Phang Naw Taung, Kachin State Chief Minister U Khet Htein Nang, Northern Command Commander Maj-Gen Ko Ko Maung, and officials offered

the day meal to the Sayadaws.

A title conferee Sayadaw delivered Sammo Daniya Ovada Katha whereas State Minister for Social Affairs U Win Ye Tun supplicated religious affairs. Next, the State Chief Minister, the Commander and the responsible personnel offered Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja, Ganthavacaka Pandita, Saddhamma Jotikadhaja titles and insignia to the Sayadaws and nuns.

Afterwards, the Buddhist monks and the nuns were offered the dry ration by the Chief Minister and wife, the Commander and wife, the departmental officials concerned and well-wishers.—MNA /KMA

SAC member attends 74th Anniversary of Pa-O National Day

THE 74th Anniversary of Pa-O National Day ceremony was held yesterday morning at Pa-O National All-round Development Ground in Kangyi Ward of Taunggyi.

At the ceremony, the Pa-O people conveyed the Pa-O national flag and hoisted the flag and saluted.

Next, Shan State Chief Minister U Aung Zaw Aye said

that Pa-O National Day is celebrated every year until today for the 74th anniversary. Pa-O National Day is not an ordinary celebration but a significant day with essence, he said.

Under the guidance of the Pa-O Self-Administered Zone Leading Body, regional development and social welfare development activities are being carried out in a rapid pace,



Shan State Chief Minister U Aung Zaw Aye presents K10 million for holding the Pa-O National Day to organizing Committee Chairman U Khun Win Ko.



The 76th Anniversary of Pa-O National Day ceremony in progress in Taunggyi on 5 March.

and the Pa-O ethnic people are enjoying the fruits of peace and development, he continued.

He said that the national brethren of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar live in unity among all ethnicities, practice and maintain their religious customs, and therefore the cultural heritages and traditions of all ethnicities must be

preserved and protected by all ethnicities.

After that, the message sent by U Aung Hkam Hti was read by U Khun Min Kyaw, the vice chairman of Pa-O Literary and Culture Association, and Shan State Chief Minister U Aung Zaw Aye donated K10 million for the 74th anniversary of Pa-O National Day

Festival from the Shan State Government, and Chairman of the organizing committee, U Khun Win Ko, accepted and expressed his gratitude.

Next, SAC member U Khun San Lwin and the chief minister warmly greeted the Pa-O people at the festival. —Maung Maung Than (Taunggyi)/KZL

Religious titles offered to title recipient Sayadaws and nuns for 2023 in regions, states

CEREMONIES to offer religious titles for 2023 was held in conjunction with the rice offering ceremony at respective places in Nay Pyi Taw, regions and states yesterday, attended by State Administration Council members, Union ministers, Nay Pyi Taw Council chairman, chief ministers of regions and states, officials and well-wishers.

Firstly, SAC members, Union ministers and chairman of Nay pyi Taw Council, chief ministers of regions and states and officials offered the day meal to the Sayadaws, members of Sangha and nuns, and they took the Five Precepts from the Sayadaws. Next, Sayadaws delivered Sammo Daniya Ovada Katha whereas officials concerned who are now in var-



Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein presents the religious title to a layperson.



Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council U Tin Oo Lwin presents the religious title to a Sayadaw.

ious regions and states duplicated religious affairs. And then, title conferee Sayadaws, members of Sangha, nuns and persons were offered the religious titles. Sayadaws from

regions and states delivered a sermon, followed by sharing of merits gained.

Afterwards, the Buddhist monks and the nuns were offered the dry rations by the SAC

members, Union ministers, the chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council, Chief ministers, the military command commanders and departmental officials and well-wishers. — MNA/KZL

Kyaukpon villagers in Sedoktara Township having access to fresh water



Kyaukpon villagers are happy in successful sinking of tube-well in Sedoktara Township.

DURING summers, local people of Kyaukpon Village in Sedoktara Township, Minbu District, Magway Region, en-

counter problems accessing drinking water. To ensure year-round supply of fresh drinking water, the Dagodaw charity

group from Nyaungpinsauk Village, Pwintbyu Township sank a four-inch diameter tube-well in the village. The tube-well sink-

ing was completed successfully with contributions of the local residents, said U Kyaw San, a member of the charity group.

The cost of tube-well sinking amounted to K6 million, which was funded by donations. Ahba Htwar and their relatives from Mandalay donated K2 million, and remaining K4 million was contributed by local people.

On 26 January, U Kyaw San from the charity group led the borehole sinking work which resulted in the discovery of an aquifer at a depth of about 420 feet underground. Subsequently, related activities such as laying of water pipelines, installation a compressor motor and a water pump were completed successfully on 2 March.

According to the report, the villagers are currently obtaining and using drinking water from the well. In an effort to prevent waste of water and promote responsible water

usage, the village elders intend to build a 5,000-gallon-capacity water tank using community-centred project fund.

A total of 158 households with a population of nearly 800 people dwelt in Kyaukpon Village. The villagers rely on the rainwater stored in a pond for their drinking water. However, during the dry season, the pond dries up quickly, and they face the shortage drinking water every year. To handle with this challenge, locals have to travel about one and a half miles to Khepyit Village to collect water from hand-scooped holes.

As the village was reported to be undergoing from a shortage of fresh water, U Kyaw San from the charity group was able to successfully sink a tube-well with the contributions of generous donors and villagers. — Hlaing Win Lay (Pwintbyu Myay)/KZL

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CURRENT AFFAIRS



Freight workers seen at Bayintnaung brokerage in Yangon.

Some brokerage house reduces workers

IN Bayinnaung of Yangon, especially rice and oil business brokerage, this year, the number of freight workers is reduced, and only if necessary, outsider workers are recruited for freight handling, a person working at the Seinpan Street Rice brokerage told to the GNLN.

Although these processes happen in the rice and oil brokerages, similar events can be seen rarely at onion and potato brokerages. If there are around 100,000 visses of onions arriving at the brokerages on the opening days, it will be around 4,000 bags. The potatoes and onions freight workers are paid twice a day for loading and unloading the bags.

There is no reduction in the workforce in potato and onion brokerages. On busy days, each freight worker gets around K 20,000 of labour charge. In order to keep up with the increasing rate of daily wages in the brokerage that not doing well, it is seen that the brokerage's workforce is being reduced and odd-job workers are recruited for work. — TWA/KZW

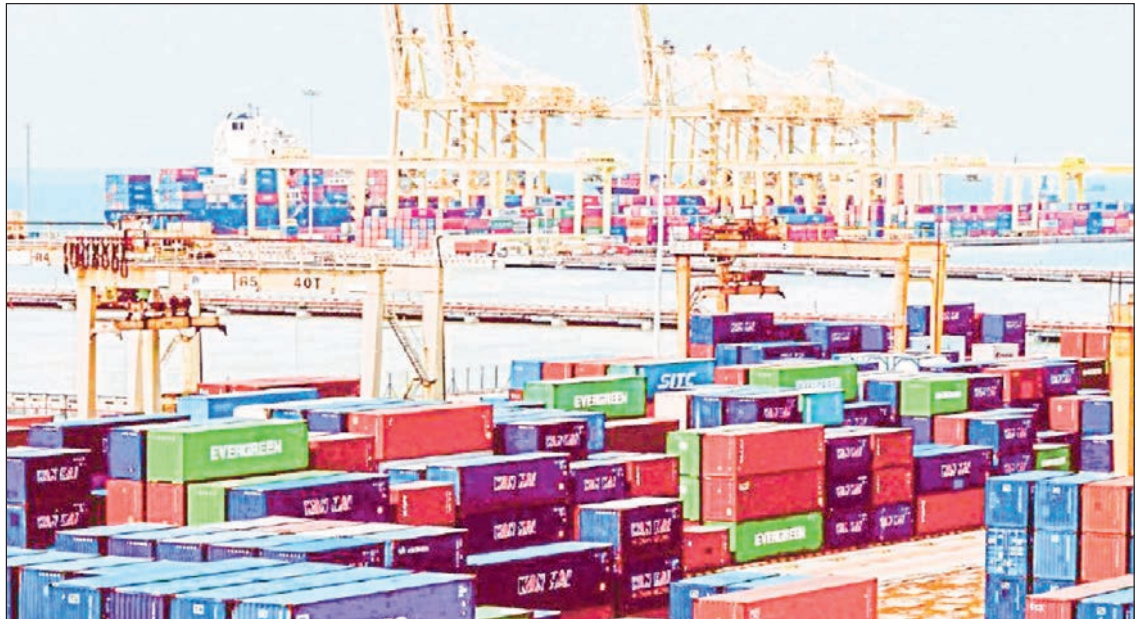
USD10 billion earned from export of finished industrial goods during 10 months of 2022-2023 FY

MORE than USD10.04 billion were earned from the export of finished industrial goods abroad during the ten months of the 2022-2023 fiscal year, according to the statistics of the Ministry of Commerce.

These are the rates that were exported according to the lists from 1 April 2022 to 24 February 2023.

This year's export earnings was exceeded by over USD2.28 billion, more than over USD7.76 billion of same period in previous year.

The export value of finished industrial goods from the private sector to foreign countries were more than USD6.43 billion and exports from the state-owned sector amounted to more than USD3.60 billion, according to the trade statistics.



Containers comprising export goods seen at the port.

Agricultural produce, animal products, aquatic products, minerals, forest products, finished industrial goods and other goods from Myanmar are being exported and the

maximum export income is obtained from the export of finished industrial goods.

Among the main export items of Myanmar, the export of finished garments, which

is an industrial product, takes the first position. The list of finished industrial goods comprises sugar, including ready-made cloth, jewellery and natural gas. — TWA/KZL

Licences temporarily banned for eight overseas employment agencies



Photo shows office of the Ministry of Labour.

THE Ministry of Labour announced on 3 March that the licence of eight overseas employment agencies was temporarily suspended.

Labour King Co., Ltd, Shwe Phyo Thar, Royal ABS Co., Ltd, Top Choice Manpower Co., Ltd and Phyu Sin May General Services Co., Ltd have been banned for one year. Myanmar Shwe Yanant Co., Ltd, Myint Myat Ta Khon Co., Ltd and Poe Poe & Phyo Thandar Tun Co., Ltd faced licence suspension for six months.

Currently, there are nearly 400 overseas employment agencies at home officially registered at the Ministry of Labour according to the statement from the Ministry of Labour. — TWA/KZW

Maungtaw border trade camp handles US\$15.758 million worth of trade volume in February

ACCORDING to the statistics of the Ministry of Commerce, the value of trade from Maungtaw border trade camp to neighbouring countries has reached US\$15.758 million, accounting for 137 per cent against the target for the whole year.

The Maungtaw camp set

the target in export of \$1 million and import of \$0.04 million in February. Trade volume reached \$1.040 million. Actual trade volume amounted to \$1.419 million, accounting for 136 per cent against the target.

The products exported in February 2023 were garlic,

apple, areca nut, jaggery, coconut, dry chilli, dried plums and mangoes.

Marine products such as rohu fish, fresh and dried fishes, dried shrimp, plum jam, shoes, Thanakha, coffee mix and rice vermicelli were also exported. — TWA/KZW



Photo shows Maungtaw border trade camp.

LOCAL BUSINESS

Monsoon onions enter Yangon market

NEW monsoon onions from various regions started arriving at the Yangon market as from 6 December 2022. A total of 3,510,000 visses of monsoon onions entered there during 22 depot-opening days in December 2022 and 4,428,000 visses on 25 opening days in January 2023, 4,200,000 visses on 23 opening days in February and 810,000 visses on three opening days in early March respectively. Thus, during the 73 opening days, 12,948,000 visses of onions were distributed from various regions, according to the daily onion import lists mentioned in the Yangon Commodity Depot's onion price statements.

The wholesale price of stored old onion was set at K5,100 per viss for large size at the Yangon market on 2 December 2022. Likewise, the price of large-size new monsoon onions rose to K4,400 per viss for

Myingyan onions and K4,800 per viss for Myittha onions on 8 December 2022.

As of 10 December 2022, the wholesale price of new monsoon onions is around K3,000 per viss for Myingyan onions and around K3,500 per viss for Myittha onions. The prices stood at K2,000 and K2,500 per viss respectively at the end of December.

Onions from Myingyan and Myittha were priced at the wholesale rate per viss of K1,500 and K1,800 in January 2023. In February, the wholesale prices of Myingyan, Seikphyu and Myittha onions were K1,100 and K1,400 per viss on average respectively, the onion price descriptions of Bayintnaung market, Yangon stated.

In 2021 and 2022, new monsoon onions fetched only up to K1,000 per viss. Therefore, it is reported that monsoon onion growers in 2022 have got rough-

ly double the price compared to that of previous years. The production cost of one acre of onion is around K1.5 million to K2 million, Ko Khin Maung Myint, an onion grower from Pale, said.

It is learnt that the cost of agricultural production has reached around K3 million per acre this year due to the increase in the input prices and daily wages of human resources. The onions yields between 4,000 and 6,000 visses per acre. Therefore, the export of 3.5 million visses of onion in December made an average profit per acre of around K5 million in December and around K2 million in February for this year's monsoon onion growers.

Among the monsoon onions exported to Bayintnaung market, Myittha onions are the most, fetching K300/400 per viss higher than other onions. The



Monsoon onions which flow into Yangon market.

wholesale price per viss of onions from Seikphyu area was fixed at K1,050 for small size and K1,175 for medium, large and extra-large sizes in the Bayintnaung market on 4 March. A viss of Myittha onion cost K1,400 in wholesale for small size, K1,650 for medium and large size, and K1,550 for extra-large size.

On 4 March, there were 35 truckloads loading 210,000

vissess of onions from various regions entering the Bayintnaung market, while 14 truckloads carrying 80,000 vissess of Myittha onions entered. Just as monsoon onions have earned the greater price than previous years, winter-planted summer onions have the potential to increase in both yield and price, according to the onion market. — TWA/CT

Palm oil price narrows between reference and market rates

THE price gap between the current reference price in Yangon Region and the actual market price shrank to K2,250 per viss on 3 March from 7,250 on 1 March.

On 1 March, the palm oil price jumped to K7,350 per viss in the Yangon wholesale market. The price declined to K6,850 per viss on 3 March, a trader who purchases edible oil at Bayintnaung Wholesale Market told the Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM).

However, the demand is still low. On 3 March, the price stayed below K7,000 per viss, a seller Ko Swe Myint told the GNLM. The market price of palm oil is positively related to the exchange rate and supply from the importing countries.



Palm oil is pictured being sold at a grocery shop.

The wholesale reference price for the Yangon market was set at K4,470 on 25 February, while the market price hit a high of K7,400 per viss.

The sellers did not expect a decrease of K500 per viss

within three days. Last month, it remained on the high side owing to the manipulation of some traders in possession of edible oil stocks. Price affects consumer buying behaviors. — TWA/EM

Mawtaung Trade Camp handles US\$1.42 million worth of trade value in February

MAWTAUNG trade camp was able to trade 1.420 million US dollars to Thailand in February, according to the statistics of the Ministry of Commerce.

Mawtaung trade camp is an en route to export goods to Thailand, 2023. In February, the export value was worth US\$1.329 million.

As the import value was worth US\$0.091 million, the total trade volume reached US\$1.420 million.

The main export items were various fishes, shrimps, crabs, banana, chilli, onion, betel leaves, Nipa leave, oil palm paste and brooms, and the main import items were fruits, empty canned fish, fish meals, brick tiles, and shrimp hatchlings. – TWA/KZL



Cargo trucks seen in Mawtaung trade camp compound.

Daily newspapers available online

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Combat cyberbullying to save victims in society

As an internet communication system which can share information among the global people flourishes throughout the world, it brings advantages to society. Globalization shrinks all processes such as relations, communications, transportation, etc., to cut time and expense for all. Currently, internet communication cuts time and expense more.

On the other hand, internet abusers bring disadvantages to societies. It is because most internet abusers commit mental disturbances to others, discrediting, extorting information and making fake news, and spreading hate speech in society with attempts to destabilize the daily life of innocent people.

Some internet abusers intend to cause discrimination in society based on race, skin colour, gender, language, politics or diverse opinion and cyberbullying for various reasons. Such acts never help society be peaceful and stable. As such, these acts push the world into the black days.

Currently, most of the social media are teenage girls and boys. Hence, cyberbullying cases of teenagers and children and bullying cases at schools occur at any place. Cases of cyberbullying comprise spreading negative, dangerous and wrong information to the target persons, posting or sharing statuses and distributing shameful profiles or data through various sorts of social media. Such inappropriate things intend that the victims of cyberbullying would suffer from depression, personal shamefulness, ruining of dignity, fright, mental suffering and so on.

Nowadays, as cyberbullying becomes a terrible problem in various societies of the world, leaders of the world are urgently tackling it to be solved in various ways and means. Even though the problems of cyberbullying are being tackled, such kinds of problems are worse on a daily basis. It is because the problem of cyberbullying becomes the case not only for teenagers but also for the global people of any age who use the internet for their daily work processes.

Some surveys stated that 95 per cent of teenagers apply the internet, and 85 per cent of them use social media. As such, a large number of student youths face cyberbullying in various means at a time. In this regard, girls become victims of cyberbullying, rather than boys.

To be able to solve the problems, global countries enact relevant laws to combat cyberbullying acts in cooperation with internal and international cyber technicians and law enforcement bodies. As such, parents and teachers are to pave the correct ways for the student youths not to be victims of cyberbullying in cooperation with the local authorities.

Time to Set the Car Policies Straight

By UAC

MYANMAR has come a long way from the brink of civil war and economic collapse to the solid foundation to restart the engines of economic growth. The current economic situation is somewhat stable now. Balance of trade is on the right track and with the West and ASEAN, especially turning against us, the situation is significantly better than the same time a year ago.

Finally, the imports are starting to come back, despite the fact that it is taking awfully long (more than four months) for my car's essential spare parts to arrive. The dealer said it is due to the delay in getting the import permit. Electric vehicles less than a year old can be imported with nil customs duty and normal vehicles less than a year old can also be imported by paying the normal duties and taxes.

Until now, Myanmar is addressing the congestion problem using import taxes and customs duties, controlling the flow of vehicles into the country. That makes the cost of the initial purchase of cars prohibitively expensive. Once people bought it, since they had paid for the car so much, they would tend to use more, so as to justify the cost. The end result is

traffic congestion. In a family of four, if they have four cars, it is most likely that each one would drive one to respective destinations.

Most of the developed countries these days are going for anti-car movements. Young people are going without cars. In 1983, 1 in 12 youngsters between 20 and 24 have no driving licences, in the USA. In 2020, the figure is 1 in 5, i.e., 20 per cent of the youth in their prime do not drive these days. In Britain too, the proportion of teen drivers has halved, from 41 per cent to 21 per cent over the past 20 years.

The rise in insecure and poorly paid jobs, decline in home ownership, longer education times, the rise of taxi apps such as uber, higher motor insurance premiums for youngsters, higher petrol costs and toll fees, and climate change concerns are all driving youth into life without their own cars.

Myanmar has not reached that level of development yet. Yet you see traffic jams and congestion all across Yangon on all days except Sundays. Even during non-rush hours, there is congestion downtown and along artery roads i.e., Kaba Aye Pagoda and Pyay

Roads. Other than occasional unsuccessful attempts to adjust traffic lights and alter parts of the roads, there is no serious attempt to curb congestion in Yangon. One of the policy tools used is through import taxes and customs duties to make the car price exorbitant. This tool itself has the serious counter incentive of being a de-motivator to young working adults and families to work hard to own a car. Because the price is not within their reach. They knew that at current wages, the dream would never be fulfilled. So why try?

If Myanmar did it right, it could kill two birds with one stone; keep the youth motivated to work harder to acquire better and more convenient things in life and at the same time, reduce congestion in major cities.

The smooth flow of traffic is very conducive to attracting foreign investment too. Assuming the CEO of Samsung comes to Myanmar. If he is stuck in a traffic jam from the Yangon Airport going to the Pan Pacific hotel downtown, would he be impressed with Myanmar or would he got fed up and decide against investing here?

So, what's the solution to the

congestion problems? One chat with the famous AI ChatGPT revealed quite comprehensive solutions to the question of "How to control traffic congestion". Keeping import taxes high is NOT one of them. Even the AI understood that it is not the ownership of vehicles that causes the congestion, but rather the use of them.

Answer from ChatGPT...

<<Traffic congestion can be a major problem in cities and urban areas, causing frustration, delays, and increased air pollution. Here are a few strategies that can help to control traffic congestion: Improve public transportation: One of the most effective ways to reduce traffic congestion is to provide more convenient and reliable public transportation options, such as buses, trains, and subways. By encouraging people to use public transportation instead of driving, cities can reduce the number of cars on the road and ease congestion.

Promote carpooling: Carpooling involves sharing a ride with others who are going to the same destination. Encouraging carpooling through incentives such as preferential parking or toll discounts can help reduce the

number of cars on the road and ease traffic congestion.

Implement congestion pricing: Congestion pricing involves charging drivers a fee to use certain roads or areas during peak traffic hours. By charging higher fees during rush hour, cities can discourage driving during these times and reduce congestion. Many cities have introduced congestion charging zones: London, Milan, Stockholm, Singapore, and probably New York City in the near future.

Improve traffic flow management: Improving traffic flow management through intelligent transportation systems (ITS) can help to reduce congestion. This involves using technology to manage traffic signals, monitor traffic flow, and provide real-time traffic updates to drivers.

Encourage active transportation: Encouraging walking, cycling, and other forms of active transportation can reduce the number of cars on the road and ease congestion. This can be done through infrastructure improvements such as bike lanes and pedestrian paths, as well as through education and aware-



Traffic congestion is a condition on road networks that occurs as use increases, and is characterised by slower speeds, longer trip times, and increased vehicular queuing. PHOTO: ILLUSTRATION: FOR REPRESENTATIONAL PURPOSE ONLY/FREEPIK

ness campaigns.

Implement flexible work arrangements: Employers can offer flexible work arrangements such as telecommuting, flexible hours, and compressed workweeks. By reducing the number of people

commuting during rush hour, cities can ease traffic congestion.

Overall, controlling traffic congestion requires a multi-pronged approach that includes a combination of infrastructure improvements, technological

solutions, and behaviour change initiatives.>>

After all, housing in walkable neighbourhoods (no cars pass through) costs 34 per cent more than it does in sprawling places, based on 2022 global statistics.

New compendium showcases positive examples in refugee and migrant health



A new WHO compendium of 49 country case examples, Promoting the health of refugees and migrants: experiences from around the world, developed by the Health and Migration Programme is released illustrating positive steps taken in countries towards better health outcomes for the one billion people on the move.

Based on voluntary submissions by governments and partners, the publication showcases how countries with varying health systems and challenges have implemented policies in line

with the WHO Global Action Plan (WHO GAP) on promoting the health of refugees and migrants 2019-2023.

"This new compendium highlights promising practices in delivering care to refugees and migrants to ensure they can enjoy the right to health wherever and whenever they go, like anyone else," said Dr Santino Severoni, WHO Director of Health and Migration Programme.

"Our work for better health outcomes for all is far from finished. The WHO GAP extension to be discussed at the upcoming

World Health Assembly provides us with a new opportunity and momentum to tackle public health challenges faced by populations' movement if we are to achieve universal health coverage for all, including refugees and migrants."

Refugee and migrant health initiatives from around the world

The impact of migration and displacement on the health of refugees and migrants is undeniable and leads to health inequities.

The compendium illustrates innovative examples from a range of countries that have formulated and adopted national health strategies, policies, and programmes tackling the root causes of ill-health for refugees

and migrants, including those critical social determinants that can negatively influence health. Some examples include:

- In Pakistan, COVID-19 mobile vaccination services in 2021-2022 increased vaccination uptake and access from 5% to 48% among refugees and marginalized populations.

- In Belgium, a video-remote intercultural mediation programme provided free intercultural mediation services in hospitals, primary care centres and medical services of reception centres for asylum seekers. These included access to over 100 intercultural mediators in 20 different languages. In 2021, intercultural mediation interventions via remote video rose by 40% reaching a total number of

12 456 sessions.

- The Sexual Reproductive Health Rights and HIV Knows No Borders project reached over 100 000 vulnerable young people, migrants and sex workers in Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa and Zambia in 2021. The project delivered health education on sexuality, HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy and contraception issues through door-to-door visits and events such as mobile clinics, outreach campaigns and community dialogues. Across all countries, over 14 000 vulnerable young people, migrants and sex workers were referred for health and non-health services.

Source : WHO

The Italian Coast Guard has rescued tens of thousands of migrants at sea in recent years. PHOTO: WHO/EUROPE

UN states agree ‘historic’ deal to protect high seas



Activists from Greenpeace display a banner outside the United Nations headquarters during negotiations on a treaty to protect the high seas. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

UN member states finally agreed Saturday to a text on the first international treaty after years of negotiations to protect the high seas. “The ship has reached the shore,” conference chair Rena Lee announced at the UN head-

quarters in New York shortly before 9:30 pm (0230 GMT Sunday), to loud and lengthy applause from delegates.

The exact wording of the text was not immediately released but activists hailed it as a breakthrough moment for the protection of biodiversity after more than 15 years of discussions.

The treaty is seen as essential to conserving 30 per cent of the world’s land and ocean by 2030, as agreed by world governments in a historic accord signed in Montreal in December.

“This is a historic day for conservation and a sign that in a divided world, protecting nature and people can triumph over geopolitics,” said Greenpeace’s Laura Meller.

Following two weeks of intense talks, including a marathon overnight session Friday into Saturday, delegates finalized a text that now cannot be significantly altered.

“There will be no reopening

or discussions of substance,” Lee told negotiators.

The agreement will be formally adopted at a later date once it has been vetted by lawyers and translated into the United Nations’ six official languages, she announced.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres commended the delegates, according to a spokesperson who said the agreement was a “victory for multilateralism and for global efforts to counter the destructive trends facing ocean health, now and for generations to come.”

‘Critical role’

The high seas begin at the border of countries’ exclusive economic zones, which extend up to 200 nautical miles (370 kilometers) from coastlines. They thus fall under the jurisdiction of no country. —AFP

World concerned over Japan’s nuclear-contaminated water disposal plan, says Turkish expert

THE Japanese government’s announcement to discharge Fukushima nuclear-contaminated wastewater into the sea has caused concerns across the world, a prominent Turkish expert on the Asia Pacific region has said recently.

“That is not something that will harm only Japan or the surrounding environment, but it is an action that concerns the whole world,” Merthan Dundar, director of Ankara University Asia-Pacific Studies Application and Research Center, told

Xinhua.

The Japanese government announced in January that it would release radioactive wastewater from the wrecked Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant into the Pacific Ocean in the spring or summer this year.

The spillage of contaminated material could largely affect fisheries and marine life, the scholar said. “In the globalized world, people eat fish caught in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. —Xinhua



People rally to protest against the Japanese government’s decision to discharge contaminated radioactive wastewater in Fukushima Prefecture into the sea, in Tokyo, capital of Japan, 13 April 2021. PHOTO: XINHUA/DU XIAOYI

Texas: Wind and solar stake claim to land of oil

MODERN Texas was built on oil, and its production has long been a source of immense pride. But now, areas that moved to the steady rhythm of oil derricks for more than a century are making the state a national leader in wind and solar energy.

A convergence of factors has led to this unexpected result: favorable weather (lots of wind and sun), relatively cheap land, the lure of federal clean-energy subsidies, and a desire to backstop a utility system that failed dramatically during a 2021 cold snap.

Two counties south of Dallas, Navarro and Limestone, symbolize this surprising shift. Inextricably part of the Texas petroleum



Employees of the French energy company Engie inspect wind turbines in a new project in Dawson, Texas, on 28 February 2023. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

industry since the late 19th century, they are now in the vanguard of the renewable revolution. Wind and solar projects “have Navarro

County leading the nation with renewables,” said the county’s economic development director, John Boswell. —AFP

Scientists make breakthrough in study of Antarctic krill genome

A research group led by Chinese institutes has made a breakthrough in the study of the genome of Antarctic krill, providing insights into the environmental adaptations and population evolution of the marine animal.

The findings were published online in the research journal Cell

on Thursday. According to the paper, the enormous biomass of Antarctic krill is vital to the Southern Ocean ecosystem. However, the large size and complexity of the genome have so far prevented its assembly and hindered research on the genetic underpinnings of Antarctic krill adaptations.

The research group led by the Yellow Sea Fisheries Research Institute of Chinese Academy of Fishery Sciences and BGI-Qingdao adopted new sequencing technology, and successfully achieved the assembly of the 48 Gb chromosome-level Antarctic krill genome. —Xinhua

HEALTH/PANDEMIC WORLD

White House unhappy after Walgreens bans abortion pill in some states

THE White House on Friday expressed regret at US pharmacy giant Walgreens' decision to not distribute abortion pills in some 20 states after "dangerous" pressure from anti-abortion officials.

"Elected officials targeting pharmacies and their ability to provide women with access to safe, effective and FDA-approved medication is dangerous and

just unacceptable," said White House spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre. The comments came following confirmation from Walgreens that it wouldn't sell the pill in states represented by 20 Republican attorneys general who advised Walgreens in a 1 February letter that the pill was illegal under state laws.

The battle over the so-called

"abortion pills" has become a focal point in states around the country following the Supreme Court's June decision outlawing a national right to abortion.

Walgreens does "not intend to dispense mifepristone in their respective states," Fraser Engerman, Walgreens senior director for external relations, said in an email to AFP. —AFP



The White House on Friday expressed regret at US pharmacy giant Walgreens' decision to not distribute abortion pills in some 20 states after "dangerous" pressure from anti-abortion officials. A pharmacist helps a customer at a Walgreens pharmacy in Wheeling, Illinois. **PHOTO: GETTY/AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Prince Hitachi, Emperor Naruhito's uncle, discharged from hospital

PRINCE Hitachi, an uncle of Emperor Naruhito, was discharged from hospital Sunday as his fever has subsided and his condition stabilized, the Imperial Household Agency said.

The 87-year-old prince will be readmitted to the Japanese Red Cross Medical Center in Tokyo in around two weeks to undergo surgery to crush stones in his ureter, which are believed to be the cause of the fevers he has suffered since late February, according to the agency.

He was hospitalized Wednesday evening after running a fever of around 38°C, and underwent surgery the following day to have a stent implanted in his ureter.

Prince Hitachi is the younger brother of former Emperor Akihito and third in line to the throne after Prince Hisahito, the teenage son of Crown Prince Fumihito. —Kyodo

Schoolgirls in 5 Iran provinces treated for new poisonings: media

DOZENS of Iranian schoolgirls across five provinces were hospitalised Saturday in a new wave of suspected poisoning attacks, local media reported.

Hundreds of cases of respiratory distress have been reported over the past three months among schoolgirls mainly in the holy city of Qom, south of Tehran, with some needing hospitalisation.

Tasnim and Mehr news agencies reported the latest spate of poisonings in the western Hamedan province, as well as Zanjan and West Azerbaijan in Iran's northwest, Fars in the south and Alborz province in the north.

Dozens have been transferred to local hospitals for treatment, the reports said, adding all students were in generally good condition.

On Friday, President Ebrahim Raisi said he had asked the ministers of intelligence and interior to follow up on the poisoning cases, dubbing them "the enemy's conspiracy to create fear and despair in the people".

Foreign ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani said a probe into the poisonings was "one of the immediate priorities of the government, to alleviate the concerns of the families and to hold perpetrators accountable".

On Wednesday, at least 10 girls' schools were targeted with poisoning attacks, seven in the northwestern city of Ardabil and three in the capital Tehran, according to media reports. —AFP

World Bank to provide 1 bln USD health loan to India



India, already implementing changes to make the nation healthier, has doubled down on its efforts to create a robust healthcare infrastructure after the pandemic took a massive toll. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ANI**

THE World Bank will provide a 1 billion US dollar loan to India to support the country's health sector for pandemic preparedness and enhanced health service delivery, a finance ministry

official said Saturday.

The agreement signed between the government of India and the World Bank on Friday consists of two complementary 500 million dollar loans, each

to support two projects, the Public Health Systems for Pandemic Preparedness Program (PHSPPP) and the Enhanced Health Services Delivery Program (EHSPP).

"The two projects are supporting India's decision to increase the resilience and preparedness of the country's health systems against future pandemics," Auguste Tano Kouamé, the bank's country director of India was quoted in a media release as having said.

According to the World Bank, the 500 million dollar PHSPPP will support the Indian government's efforts to prepare India's surveillance system to be ready to detect and report epidemics of potential international concern, ensure rapid response, and prevent emergence of pathogens. —Xinhua

Two Red Cross workers kidnapped in Mali: ICRC

TWO workers with the International Committee of the Red Cross were kidnapped Saturday in Mali, the organisation's Mali branch said on Twitter.

"We confirm the kidnapping of two of our colleagues this morning between Gao and Kidal", it said, adding that the agency had been present in Mali for 32 years, and was "a neutral, independent and impartial organization".

"We ask not to speculate on this incident so as not to hinder

its resolution", it added.

Aminata Alassane, a public relations officer with ICRC Mali, confirmed the kidnapping to AFP, saying it had taken place on the road between Gao and Kidal.

"The ICRC deplores (the incident) and demands the release of its collaborators," she said.

Since 2012, Mali has been in the grip of a serious security crisis. Violence, including kidnappings of foreigners and Malians, is common, the motives ranging

from ransom demands to acts of reprisal. In February, a World Health Organization (WHO) doctor who had been abducted in Mali in late January was freed.

In May, armed men kidnapped three Italians and a Togolese national in southeastern Mali.

Mali is in the throes of an 11-year-old security crisis triggered by a regional revolt in the north that developed into a full-blown jihadist insurgency. —AFP

ECONOMY WORLD

Japan, Australia to tie up on hydrogen supply for zero emissions Asia

JAPAN announced Saturday the launch of a hydrogen supply chain with Australia as the two countries and Southeast Asian nations gathered for their first ministerial meeting on the reduction of carbon emissions in the fast-growing region.

In a video message for the meeting on the Asia Zero Emission Community framework, an initiative proposed by Japan, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said he would like to expand hydrogen supply chain networks throughout the region by cooperating further with Asian nations.

“In Asia, we should hold as many energy options as possible, and hydrogen and ammonia are options,” he said, underscoring hydrogen could be a valuable source of energy in making clean energy transitions, especially in a region prone to natural disasters.



A 2,500 cubic-meter tank containing liquid hydrogen at Kobe Port Island plant in Kobe, Hyogo Prefecture. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

In a joint statement issued after the one-day meeting in Tokyo, a total of 11 nations joining AZEC said they “recognize that accelerating the energy transition in the Asian region is key to achieve the goals” of the Paris

international accord to tackle climate change.

Japan is pitching new decarbonization technologies, such as using hydrogen and ammonia in thermal power generation and carbon dioxide capture. It has

also called for carbon neutrality while securing a stable energy supply amid an energy crisis triggered by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

Hydrogen and ammonia can play a significant role in cutting

emissions from thermal power generation, the transportation sector and industries that heavily depend on fossil fuel, according to the Japanese government.

The bilateral hydrogen supply chain will connect the Australian state of Victoria and Kawasaki, a city located southwest of Tokyo in the Keihin industrial zone, according to Japanese officials.

In January last year, Kishida announced the Asia zero emission concept to promote regional decarbonization and cooperation in advancing the transition to clean energy. Australia and all members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations apart from Myanmar have joined the framework. ASEAN groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. — Kyodo

TV series creates tourism boom in China’s Yunnan



Yunnan Ethnic Village entrance in Kunming, southwest China’s Yunnan Province. **PHOTO: CGTN/XINHUA**

TOURISTS taking selfies have lined the roads of Fengyangyi Village in southwest China’s Yunnan Province since the soap opera Meet Yourself was filmed there, garnering more than 3.8 billion views.

The romantic drama tells the story of a woman who, after the death of her best friend, quits her job as an urban white collar worker and travels to Yunnan, a top tourist destination in China, where she enjoys a slow life and falls in love with an entrepreneur.

Scoring 8.6 out of 10 on China’s leading film rating platform Douban, the TV series, set in a beautiful mountainous landscape, satisfies its audience’s desire to watch rural life unfold and find inner peace. It has led scores of fans to visit the show’s filming locations and try everything that the main characters experience.

The Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture is home to many of the show’s filming locations, including Fengyangyi Village. Dali recorded nearly 4.24 mil-

lion tourist visits during this year’s Spring Festival holiday, up 219 per cent year on year, according to its culture and tourism bureau.

Its tourism revenues during the holiday hit 3.16 billion yuan (about 455 million U.S. dollars), up 162 per cent year on year. Rural tourism industries such as catering and hospitality in Dali have ushered in a new chapter of development.

“I watched every episode of the TV series, and my focus changed from the leading roles to the idyllic lifestyle in Yunnan,” said Li Hui, a tourist who traveled to Dali by high-speed train with her friends from the southwestern Chinese city of Chengdu.

“The TV series takes a slow lifestyle as its keynote, showing modern young people’s views on self-fulfillment and spiritual freedom from multiple aspects, such as returning home to start businesses to aid rural revitalization,” said Wang Yichuan, vice chairman of the China Literature and Art Critics Association. — Xinhua

France’s Macron takes Africa push to Brazzaville ahead of Kinshasa

FRENCH President Emmanuel Macron on Friday carried his African tour aimed at renewing frayed ties to the Republic of Congo after inking an economic accord with Angola.

Macron landed in the Congolese capital Brazzaville just before 5 pm (1600 GMT), on the third leg of his voyage after visiting Angola and Gabon.

He met with President Denis Sassou-Nguesso in Brazzaville before travelling to Kinshasa, the capital of the

Democratic Republic of Congo, which lies on the opposite bank of the Congo river.

At an appearance before journalists, Sassou-Nguesso listed sites Macron could visit on a longer trip in the future, likely to be seen as a barb at the short length of the French head of state’s stay.

In the Angolan capital Luanda, Macron held talks with his counterpart Joao Lourenco, calling the oil-rich country a “strategic partner in the region”. — AFP



People and vehicles along a Kinshasa street. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Japan local tourism “beauty” envoys get fresh look



Andre Matsubara (2nd from L) poses for a photo as a “Sunflower,” a special envoy for tourism in Isesaki, Gunma Prefecture, on 1 January 2023. PHOTO: KYODO

JAPANESE local governments have started scrapping or reforming events such as “beauty pageants” to select promotional tourism envoys, a sign of changing times of more people wishing to freely express themselves, regardless of age, gender or background.

Many beauty contests were suspended due to the coronavirus pandemic, but with their resumption, there has been a renewal of formats emphasizing diversity that speak to a city’s or town’s

individual characteristics.

For instance, the Isesaki Tourism & Products Association, located in Gunma Prefecture, northwest of Tokyo, altered the title of its tourism ambassador beauty contest from “Ms. Sunflower” to “Special Envoy,” while dropping the “unmarried women” requirement and opening the competition up to different genders.

Since Isesaki has the largest number of foreign residents of any city in the prefecture at 14,000, the application guidelines

also state that mentioning the nationality of contestants is not required.

Masahiko Shigeta, who serves as the association’s secretariat in the tourism and culture division, explained, “We want to recruit from a wide range of people and select those who can promote the city in this genderless and borderless era.”

Twenty-four people applied, including six men and three people in their 40s and 50s. Three were selected in September 2022. —Kyodo

US company successfully flies regional airliner using hydrogen fuel



Universal Hydrogen successfully completes first regional airliner using hydrogen fuel. PHOTO: BUSINESSWIRE/ANI

A US firm, Universal Hydrogen, has successfully flown a 40-passenger regional airliner using hydrogen fuel cell propulsion, Business Wire reported Thursday.

Hydrogen is the ideal fuel for flight and will power aviation’s new golden age, where planes are powered by renewables and emit nothing but water.

The airplane, nicknamed Lightning McClean, took off at 8:41 am PST from Grant County International Airport (KMWH) and flew for 15 minutes, reaching an altitude of 3,500 MSL, according to the report.

The flight, conducted under the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Special Airworthiness Certificate, was the first in a two-year flight test campaign expected to culminate in 2025 with entry into passenger service of ATR 72 regional aircraft converted to run on hydrogen. —ANI

China sets economic growth target of ‘around 5%’ for 2023

CHINA on Sunday set an economic growth target of “around 5 per cent” for 2023, one of the lowest in decades, as its annual National People’s Congress opened in Beijing.

The target was announced in a work report delivered by outgoing Premier Li Keqiang as the parliament opened at the capital’s Great Hall of the People.

The figure was slightly lower than the average of forecasts of economists surveyed by AFP, who predicted a goal of around 5.3 per cent.

Addressing thousands of amassed delegates, Li will say China will aim to add “around 12 million new urban jobs” this year and bring the urban unemployment rate to around 5.5 per



A China-Europe freight train loading containers at Dulaying Station in Guiyang, southwest China’s Guizhou Province, 9 February 2023. PHOTO: XINHUA

cent, according to the report released as he began speaking.

It also targets a rise in the consumer price index of around three percent.

China posted just three percent growth last year, missing its stated target of around 5.5 per cent by a wide margin as the economy strained under the impact of strict Covid

containment policies and a real estate crisis.

But the work report is bullish on the slowdown, saying that “under the strong leadership of the Party Central Committee, we carried out Covid-19 response and pursued economic and social development in an effective and well-coordinated way”. —AFP

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The Information about 58th Myanmar Gems Emporium 2023

- The significant **58th Myanmar Gems Emporium 2023**, under the supervision of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, will be held on March 17 to 23, 2023 at Maniyadana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw. Genuine Myanmar pearl, gems and rough jade lots will be sold at the Emporium.
- Under the Myanmar Gem Law, permit holders and licensees will be allowed to attend and purchase the Lots at **58th Myanmar Gems Emporium 2023** according to the terms and conditions.
- For further information in detail about granted admission to purchase Lots at **58th Myanmar Gems Emporium 2023**, can inquire and keep contact with Emporium Central Committee, Myanmar Gems Enterprise (Head Office), Myanmar Pearl Enterprise (Head Office) in Nay Pyi Taw.

Emporium Central Committee

GLOBAL
AFFAIRS

RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

Russian minister inspects troops,
US puts up new Ukraine aid

RUSSIA'S defence minister has inspected troops in frontline regions in eastern Ukraine, after the United States offered more support to Kyiv whose forces are struggling in Bakhmut.

Sergei Shoigu inspected an advance command post in the direction of the south of the Donetsk region, the defence ministry said, without specifying exactly where or when.

It put out a rare video of the Russian defence minister travelling in a helicopter and talking to a soldier in front of damaged buildings.

Shoigu handed state awards to servicemen and held a meeting with his deputies "on organising the uninterrupted provision of troops with armaments, military hardware and ordnance", his ministry later said.

The visit came with fierce



In his latest video, Prigozhin called on Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to abandon Bakhmut. **PHOTO: CONCORDGROUP OFFICIAL/AFP/FILE**

fighting ongoing around Bakhmut, the longest battle of the conflict, which has further exposed rivalries between the conventional army and the Wagner paramilitary group.

Wagner chef Yevgeny Prigozhin said Friday his fighters had "practically encircled" Bakhmut.

Well-versed in social media,

Prigozhin has for weeks been publicising the advances of his men towards the eastern city, whose symbolic importance outstrips any military significance.

Prigozhin regularly posts videos of himself alongside mercenaries, on the ground or even in a fighter jet, in contrast with Russian generals criticised for shirking the frontline. — AFP

A year on, Ukraine's embattled
nuclear plant turned Russian
'military base'

UKRAINE'S Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant no longer produces electricity and serves solely as a military base for Moscow's troops, the exiled mayor of the city of Energodar, which houses the facility, told AFP.

Moscow's troops seized the plant in the southern Zaporizhzhia region on 4 March last year, just days after the start of Russia's invasion.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has raised concerns about shelling near the plant, calling for a demilitarised zone around it.

"During a year under occupation, (Russians) have turned Europe's largest nuclear power plant into a military base," 37-year-old Energodar mayor Dmytro Orlov said in an interview to AFP. — AFP



Photo taken on 22 August 2022 shows the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. **PHOTO: VICTOR/XINHUA**

WORLD: TOP HEADLINES

China's 2023 defense budget to rise
by 7.2%, remaining single-digit for
8th year

CHINA'S annual defense budget will remain single-digit growth for the eighth year in a row, with an increase of 7.2 per cent in 2023, according to a draft budget on Sunday.

The world's second largest economy's planned defense spending will be 1.5537 trillion yuan (about 224.79 billion US dollars) this year, read the re-

port on the draft central and local budgets submitted to the ongoing session of China's national legislature.

The figure for last year was 7.1 per cent.

China's military spending has long been at the center of Western scrutiny, and so-called "China threat" has been hyped up almost every year. — Xinhua

Authorities ban Women's Day march
in Pakistan's Lahore

AUTHORITIES in Pakistan's eastern city of Lahore have refused permission for a rally to mark International Women's Day, which regularly meets a fierce backlash in the conservative, patriarchal country.

Marches have been held in major cities all over Pakistan since 2018 to bring attention to women's rights.

Lahore city authorities cit-

ed the "controversial cards and banners" commonly displayed by participants in the march and security concerns as reasons behind the decision, which were laid out in a notification to march organisers late Friday.

Counter-protests dubbed "Haya (modesty)" marches are commonly staged by religious groups to call for the preservation of Islamic values. — AFP

Bolsonaro gets rock star
reception from US conservatives

FORMER Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro won multiple standing ovations Saturday from US conservatives as he offered a glowing endorsement of his ally Donald Trump, sowed doubt over his own election defeat and attacked Covid vaccine mandates.

Speaking before one of the largest crowds so far at the four-day Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in suburban Washington, the right-wing populist described his relationship with the former US president as "simply exceptional."

"We can see here in America a migration of people going from Democrat states to Republican states. They're looking for a better life," he said.

The 67-year-old Bolsonaro — effectively a warm-up act for Trump's keynote address at the convention later Saturday —



Former Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro speaks during the 2023 Conservative Political Action Coalition (CPAC) Conference. **PHOTO: AFP**

touched on many of the favorite talking points of the US right wing, from transgender rights to the threat of socialism.

Dubbed the "Trump of the Tropics" for his brash manner and disdain of the media, Bolsonaro has also echoed his US ally in repeatedly casting doubt

on his October election defeat to leftist Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

"I had way more support in 2022 than I had in 2018, and I don't understand why the numbers said the opposite," he told the CPAC crowd, who booed in solidarity. — AFP

Xi attends opening meeting of NPC annual session



Xi Jinping arrives for the opening meeting of the first session of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, 5 March 2023. PHOTO: XINHUA/XIE HUANCHI

Xi Jinping attended the opening meeting of the first session of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) on Sunday morning in Beijing.

The first session of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC), China's national legis-

lature, is set to conclude on the morning of 13 March, a spokesperson said.

Apart from the reviewing of a series of reports including a government work report, NPC deputies will deliberate on a draft amendment to the Legislation

Law and a plan on the reform of the State Council institutions, Wang Chao, spokesperson for the session, said at a press conference in Beijing.

The session will also elect and decide on members of state organs, Wang said. —Xinhua

Five Mediterranean countries call for more EU solidarity on migration

INTERIOR ministers of five European Union (EU) Mediterranean countries on Saturday called for more EU solidarity on migration and more efforts to prevent irregular migration.

At the end of the so-called "Med 5" ministerial-level meeting held in Malta's capital Valletta on Friday and Saturday, ministers of Malta, Greece, Italy, Spain and Cyprus signed a joint declaration.

The meeting was held just days after a deadly migrant shipwreck off Italy. At least 64 migrants died on 26 February when their boat hit rocks near the coast of the southern Italian region of Calabria.

The five ministers agreed that more work needs to be

done at a European level to address the root causes of migration and prevent irregular migration, according to the joint declaration released by the Maltese Ministry for Home Affairs, Security, Reforms and Equality.

They reaffirmed their position on the need to "strike a balance between (EU) Member States' responsibilities on the one hand and the need for solidarity on the other," the joint declaration said.

They also called for more efforts for "the establishment of a permanent and mandatory solidarity mechanism that factors the real needs of frontline Member States and ensures that these needs are fully met through the solidarity contributions." —Xinhua

China opens "two sessions" with confidence for new modernization drive

CHINA'S top political advisory body kicked off its annual session on Saturday, marking the start of the "two sessions" in a crucial year as China gathers steam for building a great modern socialist country.

President Xi Jinping and other Chinese leaders attended the opening meeting of the first session of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

Wang Yang, chairman of the 13th CPPCC National Committee, delivered a work report to the CPPCC National Committee session, in which he said the political advisory body has built broad consensus and contributed wisdom and strength to achieving the two centenary goals.

The "two sessions" refer to the annual meetings of the



The opening meeting of the first session of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) is held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, 4 March 2023. PHOTO: XINHUA/ZHAI JIANLAN

National People's Congress (NPC), the country's top legislature, and the CPPCC National

Committee. The NPC session will open on Sunday. The "two sessions" are of great impor-

tance in the country's political calendar, during which the central government will deliver

a work report that usually reviews past achievements and sets development targets for the year and beyond. Thousands of national legislators and political advisors will review and discuss the report, as well as reports of the national legislature, the top court and the top procuratorate.

This year's political gatherings carry extra weight. The election of new leading officials of state institutions and the new leadership of the CPPCC National Committee is an important task of the "two sessions" this year. Also, the planned reform of the State Council institutions will be deliberated.

In addition, lawmakers will deliberate a draft amendment to the Legislation Law. The CPPCC National Committee session, meanwhile, will review and approve an amendment to the CPPCC charter. —Xinhua



Liverpool rewrite record books in 7-0 thrashing of Man Utd

CODY Gakpo, Darwin Nunez and Mohamed Salah all scored twice as Liverpool shrugged off a season of frustration to thrash Manchester United 7-0 at Anfield on Sunday.

Jurgen Klopp's men set a new record margin of victory in the clash between English football's two most successful clubs.

Just a second defeat in 23 games in all competitions realistically ends United's hopes of a first league title in a decade as they remain 14 points adrift of leaders Arsenal in third.

But there could even more lasting damage from the club's heaviest defeat since 1931.

Liverpool close to within three points of fourth-placed Tottenham with a game in hand



Liverpool's Egyptian striker Mohamed Salah celebrates after scoring their sixth goal during the English Premier League football match between Liverpool and Manchester United at Anfield in Liverpool, north west England on 5 March 2023. PHOTO: AFP

on Spurs still to come.

Klopp's side won the two league meetings between the teams by an aggregate score of 9-0 last season, but the tables had seemingly turned this sea-

son.

A 2-1 win over the Reds in August gave Erik ten Hag his first win as United boss and they started the day 10 points clear of Liverpool. — AFP

Paris Olympics tickets viewed as too pricey, poll finds

AROUND four out of five French people think tickets for the 2024 Paris Olympics are too expensive, a poll showed Sunday, underlining growing public frustration with organisers over the issue. A total 82 percent of respondents said that tickets for the games were "not accessible in terms of price", according to a survey from the Odoxa polling group for the RTL media group and

sports betting firm Winamax.

Around the same proportion of people (79 per cent) found the ticketing process to be "complicated," the survey found.

The president of the 2024 Paris organising committee Tony Estanguet has been forced on the defensive in the last fortnight after the first major release of tickets to the public under a lottery system.

Successful applicants have been obliged to buy places for three events at the same time, with many finding sports priced at a minimum 80 euros, meaning a family of four could face a bill of nearly 1,000 euros.

"We're not more expensive than London in 2012," Estanguet told RTL radio on 22 February. "It's the same for the football and rugby World Cups. These are the prices." — AFP

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

1. Political affairs

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

2. Economic affairs

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

3. Social affairs

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

Summer football training course offered free of charge for youths

THE Myanmar Football Federation is conducting the 2023 Summer Youth Football Courses No. (1) and (2) at the academies of the federation in

Yangon and Mandalay free of charge with the support of partners for the physical

and talent improvement of youths and for emergence of new generation young athletes.

The summer youth football course No. 1 is being conducted

from 1 March to 10 April 2023 with 200 trainees, and course No.2 from 19 April to 29 May 2023 with another 200 trainees. The courses are being su-

pervised and trained by Myanmar Football Federation trainers licensed by the Asian Football Confederation. — KZL



Youths under training with the basic football tactics on the pitch of the Myanmar Football Federation Academy in Yangon. PHOTO:MFF