

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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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.

River water pumping projects benefit 27,818 acres of agricultural land



General view of the river water pumping project in Yangon Region. PHOTO: KANU

THE Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department (Water Resource) provides water to the agricultural sector of Yangon Region with the river water pumping projects under the guidance of the Prime Minister.

Twenty-six completed river water pumping projects supply water to 24,518 acres while the two uncompleted projects to 3,300 acres, totalling 27,818 acres of farmland.

In 2022-2023, it supplies water to 13,500 acres of summer

paddy from river water pumping projects in Yangon Region. The river water pumping projects are being implemented to supply water to 1,500 acres from the Thayetchaung water pumping project in Hmawby District and 1,800 acres from Hmawby District

Ahtetsu (Myitkyo) pumping project. It is slated to be completed in 2024-2025FY. Depending on the irrigation water need of farmers, the solar-powered river pumping projects such as Latpantin and Aingkalaung pumping projects are implemented in 2022-2023FY

using the regional budget.

To supply irrigation water using underground water, the solar-powered pumping systems are being carried out for 3,410 acres using the regional government budget

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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.

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Order No 26/2023

8th Waning of Tabaung 1384 ME
13 March 2023

Appointment and Duty Assignment of Chief Justice of Kayah State High Court

THE State Administration Council has appointed and assigned U Tun Tun Oo to the duties of Chief Justice of the Kayah State High Court under Section 419 of the Constitution.

By Order,

Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary
State Administration Council

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Order No 27/2023

8th Waning of Tabaung 1384 ME
13 March 2023

Appointment and Duty Assignment of Judge of Kayah State High Court

THE State Administration Council has appointed and assigned Daw Cherry Khin to the duties of Judge of the Kayah State High Court under Section 419 of the Constitution.

By Order,

Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary
State Administration Council

Application for registration, political party establishment rights ongoing

UNDER Section 25 of the Political Parties Registration Act, the Shan-Ni Solidarity Party (SSP), and the Party for People which are desirous of organizing political parties yesterday applied to the Union Election Commission for permission to

establish political parties under the law and rules.

To date, six parties have applied under Section 3 of the Political Parties Registration Law, and 15 parties under Section 25 of the Political Parties Registration Law, totalling 21.

Out of these 21 parties, five parties will organize the entire union and 16 parties only within a region or state.

The Union Election Commission continues verifying the right to establish and register these parties. — MNA

2 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 13 March, total figure rises to 633,957

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **633,957** after **two** new cases were reported on 13 March 2023 according to the Ministry of Health.

The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **614,453**, including **11** new recoveries.

The death toll from COVID-19 in the country remained unchanged at **19,490** on 13-3-2023 with no new death reported from the pandemic. — GNLM

Myanmar delegation departs to attend ASEAN senior officers meeting on health cooperation in prevention of infectious diseases

THE Myanmar delegation led by the director-general of the Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health, left Yangon for Indonesia via Malaysia to attend the ASEAN senior officers meeting on health cooperation in the prevention of infectious diseases to be held from 15 to 17 March in Bali, Indonesia.

In the meeting, they will exchange experiences on the integration of public health, animal health and environmental health with a one health approach, and



Myanmar delegates are seen before leaving for Indonesia.

the forthcoming 42nd ASEAN Summit to be held in May will encompass deliberations regarding the issue of the One Health Approach declaration. — MNA/KZW

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.

Products must be of better quality to attract consumers

— For successful production, efforts must be made to ensure good quality products and modern packaging to attract consumers.

— If products are the same, prices should be cheaper. If prices are the same, products must be of better quality. With these, our goods will be marketable.

(Excerpts from the discussion by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at a meeting with MSME businesspersons of Myeik District held on 5 November 2022)

DPM MoPF Union Minister receives Russian delegation of Fund RC-Investments

DEPUTY Prime Minister Union Minister for Planning and Finance U Win Shein received a delegation led by Mr Alexander Sergeevich Shatirov, Director of the Fund RC-Investments from the Russian Federation yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, both sides cordially discussed economic cooperation and mone-

etary and financial matters for mutual benefit between Myanmar and the Russian Federation.

The meeting was also attended by Deputy Ministers U Maung Maung Win and Daw Than Than Lin, departmental heads and officials from the Ministry of Planning and Finance. — MNA/TS



Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister U Win Shein holds talks with the delegation of the Fund RC-Investments from the Russian Federation yesterday.

MIFER Union Minister receives Russian delegation of Fund RC-Investments



Union Minister Dr Kan Zaw meets the Russian delegation of Fund RC-Investments yesterday.

UNION Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations Dr Kan Zaw received the delegation led by Mr Alexander Sergeevich Shatirov, Director of Fund RC-Investments from the Russian Federation at Office No 1, Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they cordially discussed the pro-

motion of bilateral trade and investment, mining, energy, transport and communications, agriculture, financial and tourism cooperation for mutual benefits according to the Memorandum of Understanding on Promoting Trade and Investment Cooperation between the Foreign Economic

Relations Department, Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations and the Fund RC-Investments.

The meeting was also attended by the deputy minister, senior officials and relevant officials from the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations. — MNA

River water pumping projects benefit 27,818 ...

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in 2022-2023FY in Kyaiktaw (north/south) Aukyaunggon, Utothahme, Wahthinkha and Puppa Hmawtaw of Thanlyin District under the tender system. It also organizes 43 water user groups (WUGs) and seven water user associations (WUAs) with 228 farmers and carries out participatory irrigation management (PIM) as per the guideline.

For summer paddy, beans and pulses and oil crops, it installed a 2.2 kW motor and solar system at the electric water pumping site at Bokgon, Village in Taikkyi Township and supplies water to 100 acres of summer paddy. The depart-

ment also provides the maintenance, techniques and heavy machinery to ensure the sustainability of agricultural equipment by cooperating with the departments concerned and residents.

For drinking water for Yangon, the Hlaing River-Hlawga water supply project and the Kankalay river water pumping project in Hmawby Township distributes 40 million gallons of water to the water pumping plant of Yangon City Development Committee. Currently, a total of 26 river water pumping projects supply water to 27,818 acres of farmlands in Yangon Region. — Nyein Thu (MNA)/KTZH



One of the river water pumping projects in Yangon Region.
PHOTO: KANU

Coord meeting held for Walking Thingyan in Nay Pyi Taw



Union Information Minister U Maung Maung Ohn chairs the coordination meeting to hold the Walking Thingyan in Nay Pyi Taw during the 2023 Myanmar Traditional Thingyan Festival, yesterday.

THE coordinating meeting for organizing Walking Thingyan in Nay Pyi Taw for the 2023 Myanmar Traditional Thingyan Festival took place at the meeting hall of the Ministry of Information yesterday.

The meeting was attended by Union Information Minister

U Maung Maung Ohn, Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee Chairman Mayor U Tin Oo Lwin, Deputy Ministers Maj-Gen Zin Min Htet, U Ye Tint and Daw Nu Mra Zan, Nay Pyi Taw Council member Colonel Min Naung, Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee Vice-Chair

Vice Mayor U Maung Maung, permanent secretaries, Deputy Director Brig-Gen Ye Yint Aung from the Directorate of the Public Relations and Psychological Warfare, directors-general, officials from Brilliant Aura Co Ltd and invitees.

Union Information Minister

U Maung Maung Ohn said that the Walking Thingyan will be included in 2023 and hoped that activity to bring unity and happiness to staff and their family members, and the people of Nay Pyi Taw. He expressed the anticipation that the ministries will also participate in

the celebration so that their employees can enjoy it happily.

Then, Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee Chairman Mayor U Tin Oo Lwin clarified that the committee will cooperate to successfully celebrate the Walking Thingyan which will be held in Nay Pyi Taw this year.

Next, the project director of Brilliant Aura Co Ltd gave a detailed presentation on the arrangements for the Walking Thingyan to be held in Nay Pyi Taw, followed by the discussions of deputy ministers, NPT council member, the vice mayor, departmental officials and attendees regarding the measures for access to water, entertainment, health and regulatory matters. The Union minister gave his closing speech after coordinating the matters put forward. — MNA/CT

122,568 students take Chemistry on 4th day of matric exam

A total of 122,568 students sat for Chemistry subject on the fourth day of the 2022-2023 matriculation examinations across the country.

There are five foreign exam centres and 838 local exam centres. Of 135,592 applicants, a total of 122,568 students took the Chemistry subject exam, accounting for 90.39 per cent. — MNA/MKKS



Taunggyi Township in southern Shan State.



Loikaw, Kayah State.

MoHT Union Minister receives Russian delegation of Fund RC-Investments



Union Minister U Aung Thaw meets the Russian delegation of Fund RC-Investments yesterday.

UNION Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Aung Thaw received the delegation led by Mr Alexander Sergeevich Shatirov, Director of Fund RC-Investments from the Russian Federation on the morning of 13 March 2023 at the Nilar Hall of the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, the director of Fund RC-Investments from the Russian Federation said that he wanted

complete package tours to be arranged for Russian tourists and that the Ross Congress would cooperate with Myanmar to develop the tourism sectors of the two countries and to extend assistance in promoting Myanmar.

The Union Minister said that the "Welcome Russia" programme for tourism in Myanmar is currently being drawn up, that a compre-

hensive package tour is being prepared for submission to the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation, that the Ministry of Transport and Communications is also taking measures to operate direct flights between the two countries and that necessary arrangements will be made to facilitate the purchase of health insurance by Russian tourists. — MNA/KZW



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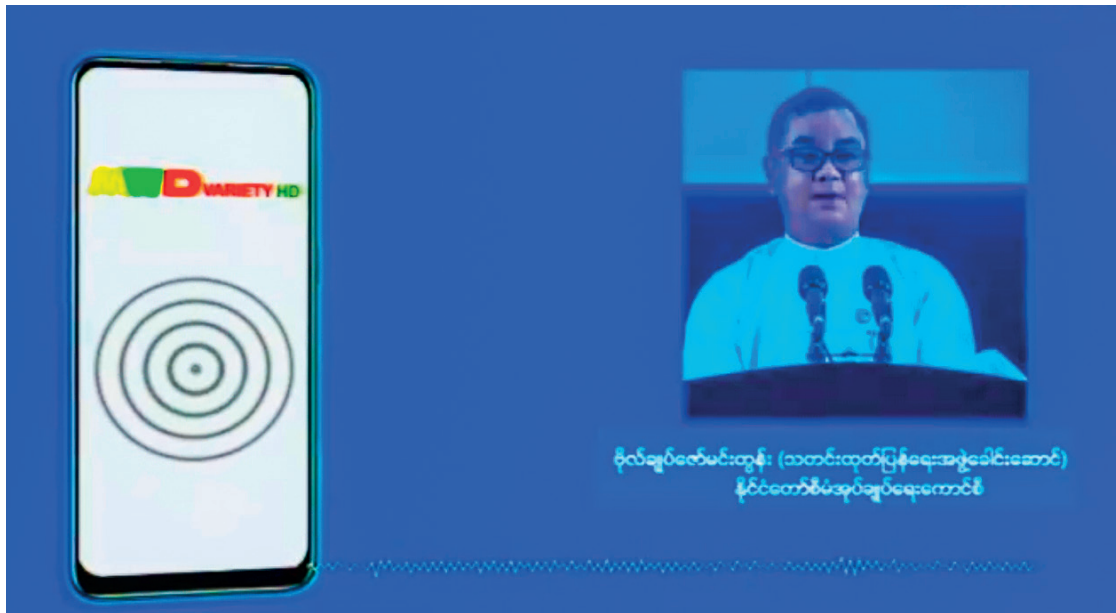
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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

Answer of Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun, leader of SAC Information Team, to accusations of media

Q: Some media recently mentioned that the military killed three members of the Sangha and the people at Namneim monastery in Pinlaung Township accusing them of Kayah PDF. I would like to know the reality about this incident.

A: Pinlaung region is included in the Pa-O Self-Administered Zone. It is peaceful and stable. For many years, Tatmadaw as well as the government on its part has been carrying out development tasks in the zone. Although some clashes happen in Kayah State with instability close to that region, Pa-O Self-Administered Zone is really enjoying the fruits of peace and stability and development. It is because the local people's militia, PNLO organization and Tatmadaw members cooperate with each other in the region. In early March, it was seen that KNPF/KNPP/PDF terrorist groups in the southern part of Pinlaung region disturbed and



State Administration Council Information Team Leader Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun.

attacked the Pa-O region. On 11 March, KNPF/KNPP terrorist groups entered Namneim Village of Pinlaung Township and committed posing threats to the village as well as the region. So, Tatmadaw in cooperation with the local people's militia took security measures for the region. At 9 am on 11 March,

KNPF/KNPP/PDF terrorists started attacks on Tatmadaw columns and local people's militia. They committed ambushes in the fighting. Then, those groups entered the peaceful and stable Namneim Village and then opened fire. We performed counterattacks on these groups and seized some dead bodies

and arms. After 3 pm, one more skirmish happened there. With regard to the incident, those terrorists came to the Pa-O region with the aim of destroying the peace and development of the region. They committed instigations between Pa-O local people, Pa-O people's militia and local security troops en-

joying fruits of stability and the Tatmadaw. We counterattacked KNPF/KNPP/PDF groups. But, misinformation was disseminated that villagers were killed. When KNPF/KNPP/PDF terrorist groups violently opened fire, it was seen that some villagers were killed and injured. Some villagers ran away. I mean as the Pa-O region has been peaceful and stable for years, KNPF/KNPP groups from the southern area spread such kinds of information among the government, Tatmadaw and local Pa-O people to destroy the peace and stability of the Pa-O region. I would like to point out that they are crime breakers and war crime breakers. I would like to disclose that our Tatmadaw will violently take further action against KNPF/KNPP/PDF groups which are committed to harming the peace and stability of the Pa-O region and the life and property of Pa-O people according to the security measures.

Call for Nominations for ASEAN Prize 2023

THE ASEAN Secretariat is calling for nominations for the ASEAN Prize 2023, a prestigious regional award, which aims to acknowledge the inspiring and outstanding achievements of an individual or organization in fostering the ASEAN identity, promoting the ASEAN spirit and championing the ASEAN way.

Nominees should have exceptional merit in contributing to the following designated focus areas: -

- Collaboration between ASEAN Member States;
- Collaboration between ASEAN and the world;
- People-to-people engagement among ASEAN Member States;
- Economic integration and promotion of standards between ASEAN Member States; or
- Excellent contribution to ASEAN Community Building.

A Judging Committee, consisting of eminent high-level members, including incumbent and former ASEAN Secretaries-General, will select a recipient who will be awarded the ASEAN Prize Trophy and a monetary prize of US\$20,000.

Submissions for ASEAN Prize 2023 are open from now until 28 April 2023. The nominee must be an ASEAN citizen or an ASEAN-based organization. The nomination form for ASEAN Prize 2023 can be downloaded at the ASEAN Secretariat website <https://asean.org/nomination-form/>. The nominee must submit the duly filled-in form to the ASEAN Affairs Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Office No 9, Nay Pyi Taw, or dgasean@gmail.com and arnns.mofa@gmail.com no later than the deadline.

CRIME NEWS

Illegal timbers, consumer goods, foodstuffs, sport equipment and vehicles confiscated

A combined team led by the Mandalay Customs Department under the supervision of the Mandalay Region Illicit Trade Eradication Task Force made inspections on 9 and 10 March.

Officials captured two kinds of goods (including frozen seafood) worth K5.1 million near 21st-Milepost on Mandalay-PyinOoLwin Road, seven kinds of goods (including sports equipment, PVC pipes and mini speakers) that exceeded the Import Declaration (ID) worth K47,182,583 from three tractor heads and three trailers (estimated value of K210 million) heading to Mandalay from Muse near 52/2-Milepost on Mandalay-Lashio Road. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

On 10 March, an on-duty team at the Naungnon combined checkpoint in Kengtung township seized two kinds of goods (including 60 cartons of shower cream) without official documents worth K3.6



Confiscated items in Kayin State.

million from a vehicle heading to Taunggyi from Tachilek. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

Similarly, an unregistered Toyota Velifire car (estimated value of K5 million) was seized in Latha township and the action was taken under the Export and Import Law.

A combined team under the management of the Kayin State Illicit Eradication Trade

Task Force conducted a surprise check and nabbed 15 TVs (used) and 10 refrigerators (used) worth K3.45 million without official documents from three shops in Myawady township on 11 March and 50 cartons of Spy wine cooler-black, 100 cartons of Singha beer and 50 cartons of Leo beer worth K4.95 million without official documents from a vehicle (estimated value of K13 million) at the Thanlwin bridge (Hpa-an) combined checkpoint on 12 March. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

On 11 and 12 March, a total of 19.8094 tonnes of illegal timbers worth K3,355,618 was captured in Bago and Kyaukdaga townships and the action was taken under the Forest Law.

Therefore, 21 arrests (estimated value of K295,638,201) were made on four consecutive days from 9 to 12 March, according to the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Trademark Law to be effective from 1 April 2023

THE Trademark Law enacted in 2019 will come into effect from 1 April 2023, according to the official notification.

The Ministry of Commerce will receive filing for a trademark from the effective date. The centers will be opened to receive trademark applications in Yangon city and Nay Pyi Taw.

This law will promote investment and

commerce by protecting the trademarks and interest and legal rights of the owners. It also helps elevate the brand's value and penetrate global markets, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein said at an awareness event for the Trademark Law.

Myanmar is a member of the World Trade Organization and World Intellectual Property Organization. — TWA/EM



The picture shows a hybrid meeting regarding coming into effect of the Trademark Law at the Ministry of Commerce on 28 February 2023.



YBS buses are pictured in the centre of Yangon city.

YBS buses banned to hike fares during Thingyan holidays: YRTC

ACCORDING to the Yangon Region Public Transport Committee-YRTC, YBS bus lines have been instructed to collect the bus fares as usual during the Thingyan holidays.

YRTC also collected a list of the bus lines and vehicles that will be running during the water festival. In addition, YRTC has informed passengers to complain about YBS drivers for drink-driving, reckless driving and not treating passengers well.

Complaints can be made not only to the Facebook messenger of YRTC but also to the phone number 09448147149.

Similarly, the Yangon Region Public Transport Committee-YRTC instructed express bus lines not to raise the bus fares during the Thingyan holidays. — TWA/MKKS

Two injured in truck accident on Yangon-Mandalay Expressway

ON 12 March, a truck loaded with coconuts overturned and fell over the bridge on Yangon-Mandalay Expressway, injuring two people.

The accident happened between Mileposts 38/6 and 38/7 at 6:30 am on 12 March. A Hino Ranger truck carrying coconuts from Yangon to Nay Pyi Taw collided with the concrete guard wall on the

side of the bridge and plunged.

Firemen from the Bawnetgyi Expressway Fire Station and Phayagyi Fire Station and members of the auxiliary fire brigade and the rescue team carried out rescue operations.

The truck driver and an extra hand sustained injuries and were taken to Bago People's Hospital. — TWA/CT



A scene of the accident is seen in the picture.

Edible oil prices vary in Yangon market despite reference price

YANGON'S edible oil market has seen two different prices since some news reports that there was no more oil in the oil tank and that people had to buy edible oil at the price of K6,600 per viss from oil hoarders came out in the market.

The wholesale price of edible oil was K7,000 per viss at the shops on 9 March while some wholesalers sold at K6,050 per viss to regular customers.

Even though the relevant authorities announce the reference wholesale price of palm oil weekly, the wholesale price was more than K2,000 higher than the reference wholesale price from mid-February to the beginning of March.

On 10 March, the palm oil was sold at K6,050 per viss at the Nyaungpinlay market and K6,400 per viss at the Bayintnaung market, a buyer said.

An oil trader said that the wholesale price of oil at the Bayintnaung market went up

to K6,800 per viss on 11 March.

The demand for palm oil is weak this week due to con-

sumers who bought palm oil at a price of more than K7,000 per viss. Therefore, it is known

that the price has not been increased yet.

The palm oil price was cheap in some regions while it was high in Yangon. The price of palm oil including the delivery fee to the store was just K6,400 per viss in some regions on 7 March and K6,350 per viss on 8 March, a grocery seller, Ma Than Myint told the Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM).

On 8 March, 10,326 tonnes of oil entered the Thilawa port and 5,500 tonnes of oil entered the Hteedan port in Kyimyindine Township. According to the information that the wholesale price will drop from over K7,000 to K6,000 per viss, the palm oil was sold at K6,050 per viss in the Yangon oil market. However, it is reported that only a few outlets sell at the above price. — TWA/CT



A vessel is seen carrying palm oil to Thilawa port.

LOCAL BUSINESS

MoC reports arrival of 53 more EVs at Yangon Port

THE Ministry of Commerce stated that 53 more Electric Vehicles (EVs) arrived at the Yangon Port.

Under the approval of the national-level steering committee on the development of electric vehicles and related businesses, 15 EVs were imported by Essential Motor Co Ltd and 38 by Grand Sirius Co Ltd. They have been picked up from the port in accordance with the rules and regulations on 11 March. The imports of EVs have been relaxed from Customs tariffs as well.

On 7 March, ten EV chargers (60 kW) made in China and imported by Asia Pacific Automaker Corporation Co Ltd were also collected at the Myanmar Industrial Port in line with the rules.

Myanmar has been bringing in battery electric vehicles (BEVs) under the Customs tariff relaxation by sea and through land borders, according to the MoC.

On 3 March, a fleet of 30 Dongfeng EVs imported by Asia Pacific Automaker Corporation Co Ltd arrived at the Muse 105th Mile trade zone in northern Shan State. They are allowed to be withdrawn as per rules and regulations. Furthermore, 19 EVs (BYD) imported by Earth Renewable Energy Co Ltd also arrived at the Hteedan



Imported battery electric vehicles are seen in front of the Thabyaygon Market in Nay Pyi Taw.

port. They were also claimed in line with the procedures.

Chindwin Shan Co Ltd also took out five 7 kW GB AC chargers for EVs on 21 February 2023 from the port terminal. The importation of the EV charger is exempted from Customs tariffs with a view to enhancing the EV sector in the domestic auto market.

Myanmar Investment Commission also mentioned that electric vehicles and related businesses will be promoted as the priority sector, as per its notification dated 15 February.

In the exercise of the power

conferred under Sections 43 and 100 (B) of the Myanmar Investment Law, the MIC issued this statement with the approval of the Union Government.

Enterprises executing installation, manufacturing and restoration services of EVs, renewable electricity generation, EV charging service businesses, electric vehicle battery production, EV battery and related service businesses, electric bus operation services, electric taxi and transport service businesses and scientific research development businesses are included in those priority sectors.

During the establishment and conceptualization phase for incorporation and operations, those businesses can seek permits from the MIC to enjoy tariff relief or zero-Customs tariff status and the exemption for other taxes levied in the country under Section 77 (A) of the Myanmar Investment Law and income tax exemption under Section 75 (C) of the Myanmar Investment Law for imports of machinery, essential equipment and accessories, spare parts and construction raw materials that cannot be found in domestic markets.

Battery electric vehicles

(BEVs) are entitled to the zero-Customs tariff status, according to the notification released in early November 2022 by the Ministry of Planning and Finance.

In order to encourage the number of EV users and improve related businesses, tariffs of battery electric vehicles (BEVs) imported under Completely Built Up (CBU), Completely Knocked Down (CKD) and Semi-Knocked Down (SKD) under the Customs Tariff of Myanmar 2022 were reduced to zero per cent according to the decision of the Union Government.

Types of BEVs include road tractors for semi-trailers, buses or motor vans for the transport of ten or more people including the driver, trucks, motor vehicles for personal use, three-wheeled vehicles for the transport of persons, three-wheeled vehicles for the transport of goods, electric motorcycles, electric bicycles, ambulances, prison vans and hearses. According to this directive, the imports of spare parts (for instance, charging station equipment and devices) with the recommendation of the Ministry of Electric Power and the Ministry of Energy and spare parts with the recommendation of the Department of Industry can be done between 2 November 2022 and 31 March 2023. — NN/EM

Palm oil reference price for Yangon Region persists

THE wholesale reference rate of palm oil for the Yangon market continued rising this week ending 19 March compared to that of the previous week, according to the Supervisory Committee on edible oil import and distribution.

The reference price stood at K4,600 per viss in the week from 6 to 12 March. For the week ending 19 March, the price was set higher at K4,635 per viss.

The Supervisory Committee on edible oil import and distribution under the Ministry of Commerce has been closely observing the FOB prices in Malaysia and Indonesia including transport costs, tariffs and banking services, and issuing the wholesale market reference rate for edible oil every week.

Regardless of the reference price, the current market price is too high at over K6,000-7,000 per viss.

If those edible oil retailers and wholesalers are found overcharging, storing inventory intentionally and attempting unscrupulous action to manipulate the market, they will face legal action under the Essential Supplies and Service Act, MoC released a statement.

The Ministry of Commerce is striving for consumers not to worry over the supply of edible oil. The ministry is also trying to secure edible oil sufficiency, supervise the market to offer reasonable prices to the consumers and maintain price stability.

At present, mobile market trucks operated by oil import-

ing companies, in coordination with Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association, were back to business in some townships on 17 July 2022 to offer palm oil at a subsidized rate. They offer palm oil at a fairer price to the consumers directly depending on the reference price. However, there are limited sources of supply although they directly sell palm oil at a reference rate depending on the volume quota.

The domestic consumption of edible oil is estimated at 1 million tonnes per year. The local cooking oil production is just about 400,000 tonnes. To meet the oil sufficiency in the domestic market, about 700,000 tonnes of cooking oil are yearly imported through Malaysia and Indonesia. — NN/EM

Prices of fuel oil, gold and dollar on 13 March 2023

Fuel Oil Price (Yangon)

Octane 92	K2,105
Octane 95	K2,190
Diesel	K2,110
Premium Diesel	K2,190

All of the prices are based on per litre.

Gold Price

The reference price of high-purity gold set by YGEA	K2,210,100 per tical
High-purity gold in the gold market	K2,868,000 per tical

US Dollar Vs Kyat

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

The above prices may change from time to time.

OPINION

Health staff, unique personnel in the society

NOT only the Ministry of Health and health experts but relevant departments, organizations, and entire people are to join hands in ensuring the longevity of all people and improving basic healthcare services. They all should strive for raising health awareness of the people and for them to have healthy lifestyles.

Health personnel including medical doctors and nurses play a key role in the enhancement of health standards for the people. Hence, the government, especially the Ministry of Health is taking responsibility for turning out qualified health personnel from medical-related universities and nursing and midwifery training schools.

On the other hand, curriculums being used at 16 medical-related universities and 53 nursing and midwifery training schools across the nation have been improved to meet international standards in teaching medical students and other students. Moreover, Students at relevant health institutions are under training through inter-professional education and initiatives on practical cooperation measures.

In fact, the performance of medical personnel is meritorious. In accord with their ethics, they always emphasize healthcare services for all people rather than their interests. Hence, they can be dubbed that they are strikers fighting against dangerous and fatal diseases on the frontline to be able to protect the life of the people.

To ensure the longevity and health of entire people, the government is striving for the development of the health sector with public healthcare activities such as maternal and reproductive health, infant and child health development, school health, and nutrition development, control of infectious and non-infectious diseases, surveillance and vaccination of Covid-19 pandemic, regular vaccination, workplace and environment health, and promotion of health condition so as to emerge a comprehensive health system for all the people.

Currently, conducting healthcare training emphasizes not only quantity but also qualification based on medical ethics as well as medical professional ethics. Moreover, a new school admission system was introduced in 2022 for universities of medicine and universities of dental medicine to select the students who have passed matriculation examinations by scrutinizing whether they are truly interested in medical science, abide by medical ethics, want to perform duties in the health arena and can provide medical services out of compassion and goodwill.

In fact, the performance of medical personnel is meritorious. In accord with their ethics, they always emphasize healthcare services for all people rather than their interests. Hence, they can be dubbed that they are strikers fighting against dangerous and fatal diseases on the frontline to be able to protect the life of the people.

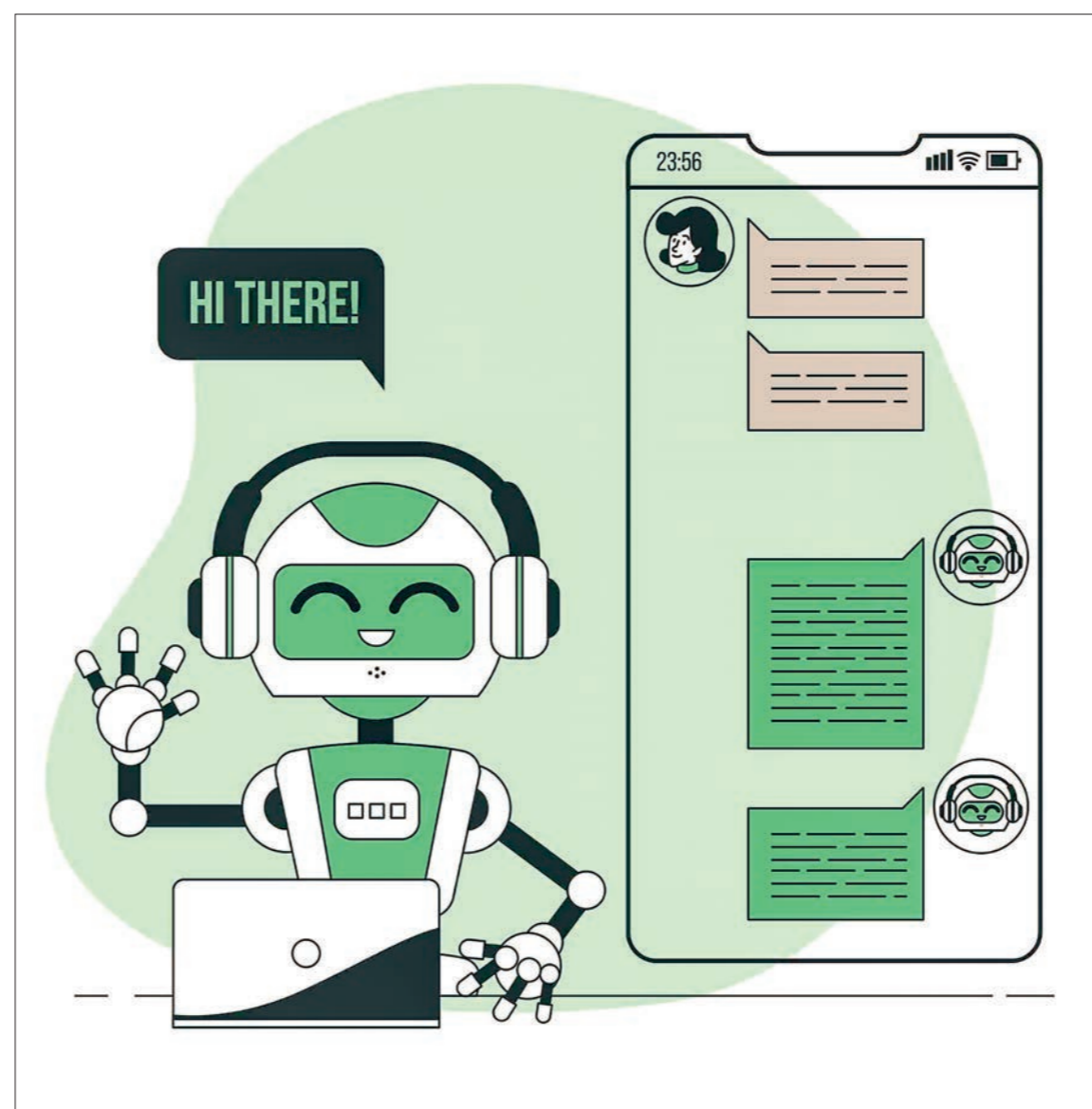
FOR the time being, we are passing the 1st quarter of the 21st century. During this period, we noticed that it is essential to know AI and digital technology. Chat GPT is a chatbot system which is based on an AI interface. "AI" stands for Artificial Intelligence and GPT stands for "Generative Pre-Trained Transformer".

Chat GPT is a computer program that uses advanced machine-learning techniques to generate human-like text. The possibilities of Chat GPT greatly impress and amazingly to us, it can comprehend and react to a variety of inquiries and conversations. It's a fantastic tool for learning and researching new subjects as a language model. The future development and advancement of Chat GPT and other AI technologies is something we are excited to observe. It outperformed Google's last few days; it gained one million subscribers in only 5 days. You can understand that these are very fast-growing and powerful AI tools. If you are a YouTuber, content writer, or blogger and you do write any script or notes and also do freelancing; you can do all that with the help of Chat GPT. Chat GPT was developed by Open AI, an Artificial Intelligence research laboratory consisting of a team of researchers and engineers. Open AI was founded by a group of individuals

in December 2015. The goal of Chat GPT is to make it easy for people to interact with computers using natural language, just like they would with another person.

Why we need Chat GPT- It is a type of language model that is trained to generate human-like text based on a given prompt or context. There are a number of reasons why chat GPT could be useful, i.e., to create virtual assistants that can answer questions and provide information to customers, to generate written content such as articles, blog posts, and product descriptions, to translate text from one language to another, to summarize large bodies of text into shorter, more condensed versions, to create personalized experiences for users based on their preferences and behaviour, to generate essays, research papers, and other types of written content in the Education and Research fields, and also can be used in Business and Industry for automating repetitive tasks, generating reports and proposals, providing customer service, and many more. Overall, Chat GPT has the potential to improve efficiency and productivity in a wide range of industries and applications. It can also help to reduce the need for human involvement in tasks that can be automated, freeing up time

for more important work. **Features of Chat GPT- (1) Natural Language Processing,** to understand natural language and can read and respond to the text input in a way that is similar to how people talk to each other. **(2) Large-scale Training,** which was trained with a huge amount of text data, such as books, articles, and web pages. Because it has been trained so much, it can respond like a person to a wide range of questions and prompts. Knowledge Base: Because Chat GPT trains on a large corpus of text, it has a large knowledge



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Brief Information on Chat GPT

By Dr Than Lwin Tun

base. It can answer questions about history, science, geography, current events, and many other things. **(3) Personalization:** can be customized in some ways by learning how a user has used it before. It can also be tweaked to focus on certain kinds of conversations or topics. **(4) Multilingual:** Chat GPT can talk to people in more than one language, but its level of skill in each language may be different. **(5) Continuous Learning:** As Chat GPT is exposed to more data and interacts with more users, it can continue to learn and get better. This lets it change along with changes in language and culture.

Advantages of Chat GPT- Chat GPT is a powerful language model that has several advantages, such as: Can understand and respond to human language in a way that feels natural and automatic, Can carry on a conversation and respond to prompts in a way that is similar to how a human would respond, Has been trained on a large dataset and can generate accurate and intelligible responses, Can be fine-tuned to a specific domain, allowing for more personalized responses, Can generate responses in real-time, making it useful for applications such as chatbots and virtual assistants, Can be trained on multiple languages and Can be trained on a very

large bulk of data and Can generate text on many different tasks.

Disadvantages of Chat GPT- Chat GPT, like any machine learning model, has some limitations and disadvantages, which include: Relying on patterns in the training data and may not always understand the context of a conversation or prompt, May not have the same level of common sense as a human and may generate responses that are not entirely logical or appropriate, Only as honest as the training data it was trained on. If the data contains biases, the model will likely reflect those biases in its responses, Chat GPT is limited to the information and patterns it learned during training, and may not be able to come up with entirely new and original ideas, Chat GPT may not perform well on tasks that are outside of the domain it was trained on, because of the large number of parameters, running Chat GPT models can be computationally expensive and because of the large amount of data used to train the model, there may be concerns about the privacy and security of the data used.

From a health personnel point of view, GPT can assist healthcare professionals in diagnosis, treatment and research by analyzing large amounts of medical data and

providing insights and recommendations. The Chat GPT interacts in a conversational way. The dialogue format makes it possible for chat GPT to answer follow-up questions, admit its mistakes, challenge incorrect premises and reject inappropriate requests. Other tech companies like Google and Meta have developed their own large language model tools, which use programs that take in human prompts and devise sophisticated responses. Open AI, in a revolutionary move, also created a user interface that is letting the general public experiment with it directly. Open AI has acknowledged as much, explaining on its own website that "Chat GPT sometimes writes plausible-sounding but incorrect or nonsensical answers."

In conclusion, we have mentioned the brief information on Chat GPT. We hope this is very helpful to all of us and it makes our life very easy. With the help of Chat GPT, you can do a lot of things also. Overall, the potential uses for GPT in the 21st century are vast and varied as well as AI continues to develop and evolve, the role of GPT is likely to become even more important in shaping the future of society.

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Potential new therapeutic target for inflammatory diseases such as lupus, sepsis

Scientists have found that an enzyme called Fumarate Hydratase is repressed in macrophages, a frontline inflammatory cell type implicated in a range of diseases including Lupus, Arthritis, Sepsis and Covid-19.

SCIENTISTS at Trinity College Dublin's School of Biochemistry and Immunology in the Trinity Biomedical Sciences Institute have made an important breakthrough in understanding what goes wrong in our bodies during

the progression of inflammatory diseases, uncovering a potential new therapeutic target in the process.

Scientists have found that an enzyme called Fumarate Hydratase is repressed in macrophages, a frontline inflam-

matory cell type implicated in a range of diseases including Lupus, Arthritis, Sepsis and Covid-19.

Professor Luke O'Neill, Professor of Biochemistry at Trinity is the lead author of the research article that has just

been published in the leading international journal, Nature. He said, "No one has made a link from Fumarate Hydratase to inflammatory macrophages before and we feel that this process might be targetable to treat debilitating diseases like

Lupus, which is a nasty autoimmune disease that damages several parts of the body including the skin, kidneys and joints." Joint first-author Christian Peace added, "We have made an important link between Fumarate Hydratase and immune

proteins called cytokines that mediate inflammatory diseases. We found that when Fumarate Hydratase is repressed, RNA is released from mitochondria which can bind to key proteins 'MDA5' and 'TLR7' and trigger the release of cytokines, there-

by worsening inflammation. This process could potentially be targeted therapeutically."

Fumarate Hydratase was shown to be repressed in a model of sepsis, an often-fatal systemic inflammatory condition that can happen during bacterial and viral infections. Similarly, in blood samples from patients with Lupus, Fumarate Hydratase was dramatically decreased.

"Restoring Fumarate Hydratase in these diseases or targeting MDA5 or TLR7, therefore, presents an exciting prospect for badly needed new anti-inflammatory therapies," said Prof O'Neill.

Excitingly, this newly published work is accompanied by another publication by a group led by Professor Christian Frezza, now at the University of Cologne, and Dr Julien Prudent at the MRC Mitochondrial Biology Unit (MBU), who have made similar findings in the context of kidney cancer.

"Because the system can go wrong in certain types of cancer, the scope of any potential therapeutic target could be widened beyond inflammation," added Prof O'Neill.

SOURCE: ANI

SCI/ENVIRON WORLD

Governments vet crucial UN climate science report



A flood-affected girl collects bricks from the debris of her damaged house in the flood-hit area of Dera Allah Yar in Jaffarabad district of Balochistan province on 9 January 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

DIPLOMATS from nearly 200 nations and top climate scientists began a week-long huddle in Switzerland on Monday to distil nearly a decade of published science into a 20-odd-page warning about the existential danger of global warming and what to do about it.

The United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's synthesis report — to be released on 20 March — will detail observed and projected changes in Earth's climate system; past and future impacts such as devastating heatwaves, flooding and rising seas; and ways to halt the carbon pollution pushing Earth toward an unliveable state.

"It's a massive moment, seven years since the Paris Agreement and nine years since the last IPCC assessment report," Greenpeace Nordic senior policy advisor Kaisa Kosonen, an official observer at IPCC meetings, told AFP.

Since its creation in 1988, the IPCC — an intergovernmental body staffed by hundreds of scientists who work for it on a volunteer basis — has released six three-part assessments, the most recent in 2021-2022.

"It is scientists telling governments how they are doing during these crucial defining years," Kosonen said.

The report card is not good. Global greenhouse gas emissions

have continued to grow, even as science has cautioned that deadly consequences are coming sooner and at lower levels of warming than previously thought.

Since the late 19th century, Earth's average surface temperature has risen more than 1.1 degrees Celsius, enough to amplify a crescendo of weather catastrophes on every continent.

This warming, the IPCC has concluded, is overwhelmingly caused by burning oil, gas and coal. In a video message on Monday UN secretary general Antonio Guterres urged world leaders who will gather in December at the COP28 climate summit "to accelerate the phasing out of fossil fuels". — AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Russia launches Proton-M rocket with Luch-5X relay satellite

RUSSIA launched a Proton-M carrier rocket with a Breeze-M upper stage on Monday, sending the Luch-5X relay satellite into space.

The Proton-M rocket was launched from the Baikonur Cosmodrome at 02:13 am Moscow time (2313 GMT Sunday), Russia's state space corporation Roscosmos said in a statement. — Xinhua

China's Shenzhou-15 astronauts to return in June

CHINA'S Shenzhou-15 crew is scheduled to return to Earth in June, the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA) said Sunday.

The space station combination is operating steadily, and the Shenzhou-15 astronauts are in good condition, said the CMSA.

China will launch three space missions for the space station application and development this year, including the cargo craft Tianzhou-6 and the crewed spaceships Shenzhou-16 and Shenzhou-17.

Tianzhou-6 has been transported to the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site in the southern province of Hainan and is scheduled to be launched in May. — Xinhua

Shetland sanctuary fights to save seals as pollution takes toll

ON the edge of a coastal pool on one of Scotland's Shetland Islands, Pixie, a plump grey seal grunts and rolls towards the water to retrieve a fish that's been left for its lunch.

Pixie is one of hundreds of rescued seals, many of which were sick and emaciated from ingesting food and sea water contaminated by micro plastics and chemicals when they arrived at a sanctuary on the north coast of the main island.

Others had severe neck wounds from getting entangled by plastic straps or fishing nets.

Pete and Jan Bevington — who run the sanctuary at Hillswick, a village north of Shetland's main town, Lerwick



This picture taken on 21 February 2021 shows gray seals and sea calves lying on a beach near Calais, northern France. **PHOTO: AFP**

— say pollution is taking its toll on seal populations on the archipelago, known for its rugged coastlines, dramatic cliffs and

diverse wildlife.

"It used to be a lot easier to look after seals," Pete Bevington, 70, told AFP. — AFP

Rise in ocean plastic pollution 'unprecedented' since 2005

PLASTIC pollution in the world's oceans has reached "unprecedented levels" over the past 15 years, a new study has found, calling for a legally binding international treaty to stop the harmful waste.

Ocean plastic pollution is a persistent problem around the globe — animals may become entangled in larger pieces of plastic like fishing nets, or ingest microplastics that eventu-

ally enter the food chain to be consumed by humans.

Research published on Wednesday found that there are an estimated 170 trillion pieces of plastic, mainly microplastics, on the surface of the world's oceans today, much of it discarded since 2005.

"Plastic pollution in the world's oceans during the past 15 years has reached unprecedented levels," said the study,

published in open-access journal PLOS One.

The amounts were higher than previous estimates, and the study found that the rate of plastic entering the oceans could accelerate several-fold in the coming decades if left unchecked.

Researchers took plastic samples from over 11,000 stations around the world focusing on a 40-year period between 1979

and 2019.

They found no trends until 1990, then a fluctuation in trends between 1990 and 2005. After that, the samples skyrocket.

"We see a really rapid increase since 2005 because there is a rapid increase in production and also a limited number of policies that are controlling the release of plastic into the ocean," contributing author Lisa Erdle told AFP.

The sources of plastic pollution in the ocean are numerous.

Fishing gear like nets and buoys often end up in the middle of the ocean, dumped or dropped by accident, while things like clothing, car tyres and single-use plastics often pollute nearer to the coast.

They eventually break down into microplastics, which Erdle said can look like "confetti on the surface of the ocean". — AFP

HEALTH/PANDEMIC WORLD

Japanese remain largely masked up on 1st day of eased COVID rules

JAPAN'S easing of coronavirus guidelines on mask-wearing had little apparent effect on Monday, with many people keeping their faces covered despite government efforts to normalize aspects of daily life that were subject to public health restrictions during the pandemic.

Even though the government no longer recommends mask-wearing in most cases under the relaxed rules, morning commuters in Tokyo and people at stations and other gathering places were appearing to take a wait-and-see approach.

Among them was 29-year-old Shiori Ogino, who said on the way to her office she would be staying

masked because the "risk of coronavirus infection and the rules on distancing are unchanged".

She said she wants to wait until the government downgrades the legal status of the coronavirus as an infectious disease in May as planned. The mask-wearing guidelines were eased ahead of the downgrading of the legal status of COVID-19 to the same category as common infectious diseases on 8 May. COVID-19 is currently designated as a special category equivalent to or stricter than Class 2, which covers infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis and severe acute respiratory syndrome or SARS.

On a shinkansen bullet

train platform at Tokyo Station on Monday morning, however, most businesspeople and travellers remained masked. Kiyoshi Watanabe, a 76-year-old headed on a trip to Kyoto Prefecture, said he was "still keeping an eye on how it goes".

"I hope I might be able to start taking it off by about the end of springtime," he said.

Although mask-wearing has never been legally mandated in Japan, the government had recommended wearing masks indoors while not suggesting doing so outdoors. But most of the Japanese public wore them regardless of whether they were indoors or outdoors. — Kyodo



People walk in front of JR Tokyo Station on 13 March 2023 with many still wearing masks even after the government eased its guidelines on mask-wearing the same day. **PHOTO: KYODO**

China's COVID-19 response completely right, highly effective: premier



A medical worker injects a booster shot of COVID-19 vaccine for a resident at Aoyuncun Subdistrict in Chaoyang District, Beijing, capital of China, 13 July 2022. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

CHINESE Premier Li Qiang said Monday that China's COVID-19 response strategies and meas-

ures are completely right and have delivered highly effective outcomes.

It took less than two months for China, a highly populous country, to achieve a smooth transition in COVID-19 response and resume normal economic and social order, which is indeed remarkable, Li told a press conference. Noting that there are still risks of virus transmission, Li said China will continue to follow the evolving epidemic situation and build up its capacity for early warning and forecast.

Efforts will also be made to strengthen medical and health service systems at all levels, speed up the development of new vaccines and medicines, and keep communication and cooperation with the international community, Li added. — Xinhua

Scientists propose new strategy to treat inflammatory bowel disease

CHINESE and foreign researchers have jointly proven an innovative drug effective in treating moderate and severe ulcerative colitis, an inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), bringing a new treatment option.

As a group of chronic inflammatory diseases, IBDs mainly include ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease. They are prone to recurrent attacks, with pathogenesis not fully understood yet. Interleukin-6 (IL-6) is believed to be a key mediator of their pathogenesis.

The existing drugs have shown poor curative effects on

IBDs, so the treatment strategy is to control symptoms and prevent their recurrence by suppressing overactive immune responses.

The innovative domestic drug, olamkcept, is a soluble fusion protein and can selectively inhibit the IL-6 trans-signalling. During its phase 2 clinical trials, a joint team led by researchers from the First Affiliated Hospital of Sun Yat-sen University (FAH), in collaboration with counterparts from 22 hospitals and research centres in East Asia, conducted a randomized, double-blind, and placebo-controlled study. — Xinhua

Thousands of hospital doctors walk out in latest UK strike

UK hospital doctors on Monday began a three-day strike over pay at the start of a week that will also see teachers, train staff and civil servants walk out, in the latest wave of industrial action.

The doctors say years of below-inflation pay increases mean they have effectively had a 26 per cent pay cut since 2008.

Ahead of the stoppage, the body that represents them, the British Medical Association (BMA), launched an advertising

campaign claiming a newly qualified doctor earned less than some coffee shop staff.

"Pret a Manger has announced it will pay up to £14.10 (\$17.13) per hour," the ad said.

"A junior doctor makes just £14.09. Thanks to this government you can make more serving coffee than saving patients. This week junior doctors will take strike action so they are paid what they are worth." On Wednesday, hundreds of thousands of workers are

expected to walk out, including teachers, London Underground train drivers, BBC journalists, and university staff.

Since last year the UK has been plagued by strikes across the economy from nurses and ambulance staff to lawyers and dock workers fuelled by soaring food, energy and housing costs.

They have all clashed with the government, which insists the country cannot afford inflation-busting pay hikes. — AFP



Healthcare workers hold placards at a picket line outside St Thomas' Hospital in London on 6 February 2023 as the UK faced the biggest round of health service strikes. **PHOTO: AFP**

ECONOMY WORLD



(FILES) In this file photo taken on 10 March 2023, a customer (L) reads a notice about Silicon Valley Bank's closure at the bank's headquarters in Santa Clara, California. **PHOTO: AFP**

US regulators close New York's Signature Bank following Silicon Valley Bank collapse

NEW York-based Signature Bank, a key lender in the crypto industry, was shut down Sunday by state regulators over a "similar systemic risk exception," the US Treasury Department, the Federal Reserve, and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) said in a joint statement.

The move came two days after California's Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) collapsed as depositors rushed to withdraw funds.

All depositors of Signature Bank "will be made whole", said the joint statement. "As with the resolution of Silicon Valley Bank, no losses will be borne by the taxpayer."

The authorities also said "shareholders and certain unsecured debtholders will not be protected."

Founded in 2001, Signature Bank is a New York state-chartered commercial bank and is FDIC-insured, with total assets

of approximately 110.36 billion US dollars and total deposits of approximately 88.59 billion dollars as of 31 December 2022, according to a separate statement released on Sunday evening by the New York Department of Financial Services.

California authorities closed SVB on Friday after the tech-focused lender reported huge losses from securities sales, sparking a run on the bank's deposits. — Xinhua

Employers warn EU to cut costs or see businesses flee

THE EU must urgently lower energy prices and ease regulations to stop industry fleeing the continent, European businesses said on Monday, as Brussels prepares plans to stimulate the green economy.

The European Union is racing to make Europe more attractive for the companies that could be tempted by massive US and Chinese subsidies and lower energy costs.

This week the European Commission, the EU's executive arm, will present plans to reform Europe's electricity market, to boost the green transition and guarantee the supply of critical raw materials.

But BusinessEurope, the EU's main business lobby group, said Brussels' efforts were insufficient and too slow.

"The risk of deindustrialization in Europe is real,"

warned Markus Beyrer, director-general of BusinessEurope.

Many companies are already "partially or totally relocating their production outside Europe", said BusinessEurope, which represents employers' associations from 35 countries.

The commission on Thursday loosened state aid rules for companies in sectors that help reduce carbon emissions as part of its response to subsidies offered elsewhere.

BusinessEurope however called for more action including cutting taxes on energy and keeping them low to reduce businesses' bills.

"Policy-makers should not be fooled by ... declining energy prices," Beyrer said, adding: "They will remain higher than for our main competitors." — AFP

Sri Lanka earned 169.9 million USD from tourism in February

SRI Lanka earned 169.9 million US dollars from tourism in February, the country's tourism minister said on Monday.

Tourism Minister Harin Fernando told the media that the figure represented an increase from the 169.4 million dollars a year earlier.

Over 210,000 tourists arrived in Sri Lanka in the first two months of 2023, and 331.7 million dollars were earned in the cited period, according to him.

The South Asian country recorded 102,545 visitor arrivals in January and 107,639 in February.

The cumulative number of visitor arrivals for the year until 8 March was 234,547, an increase of 9.6 per cent from the same period of last year, said the tourism minister.

Russia, India and Germany were Sri Lanka's top three



Tourists visit the Blackwater pond in Mihintale near Anuradhapura on 11 February 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

source markets of tourists so far in March, according to the Tourism Development Authority data.

Tourism, one of Sri Lanka's leading foreign exchange earners, has suffered a setback due

to the COVID-19 pandemic and domestic economic and political crises.

Sri Lanka aims to attract around 1.5 million tourists in 2023 and three million in 2024. — Xinhua

Analysts see Malaysia's palm oil prices to remain supportive in near term

MALAYSIAN analysts have foreseen palm oil prices to remain firm in near term, underpinned by festive demand and Indonesia's export restrictions.

Maybank Investment Bank Research said in a note on Monday that the Eid al-Fitr Festival demand coupled with Indonesia's export restrictions in place till end-April will continue to support crude palm oil (CPO) spot prices at about 4,000 ringgit (891.5 US dollars) per tonne in March and April.

Nevertheless, it maintained its view that CPO prices will ease

by mid-year on expectation of seasonal output recovery.

The Malaysian Industrial Development Finance (MIDF) Research also expects average local CPO delivery prices to climb by 13 per cent to 4,400 ringgit per tonne following distortion on Indonesia's palm oil level from March to April.

However, it also sees palm oil prices to decline by 11 per cent to 3,837 ringgit per tonne in May after the Eid Al-Fitr Festival as a result of the Indonesian government's decision of lifting its export restriction in a bid to re-

duce glutting stockpiles.

Meanwhile, Hong Leong Investment Bank Research maintained 2023-2024 CPO price assumptions of 4,000 ringgit per tonne and 3,800 ringgit per tonne, respectively.

On a year-to-date basis, CPO prices averaged at 3,990 ringgit per tonne.

"In our view, CPO price will likely remain well supported at above 4,000 ringgit in the near-term, supported by weak near term production outlook arising from recent heavy rainfall, and Indonesia's biodiesel mandate and

near-term restrictive export policies," said the research house.

But for now, it holds the view that CPO prices will weaken once Indonesia relaxes on its Domestic Market Obligation (DMO) policy.

UOB Kay Hian, on the other hand, expects CPO prices to linger between 3,500 ringgit to 4,300 ringgit per tonne for the first half.

"We expect strong production in the upcoming months as La Nina has ended. We also expect demand to improve in March, with Malaysia players benefitting from a slowdown in Indonesian exports," the research

house said.

As for 2023, it maintained its CPO price assumptions at 4,000 ringgit per tonne.

"We reckon that CPO price would be higher in the second half, with inventory level starting to normalize in destination countries. This will be coupled by lower-than-expected CPO output as we expect that yield recovery may not be as good given the prolonged rainy weather and reduction in fertilizer application over the last three years," it said. (1 ringgit equals 0.22 US dollar) — Xinhua

Mongolia's copper mine starts underground production



Mongolia's Prime Minister Luvsannamsrai Oyun-Erdene (L) shakes hands with CEO of Rio Tinto Group Jakob Stausholm at the Oyu Tolgoi copper mine in Khanbogd, Ömnögovı Province, in southern Mongolia. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE underground production of the Oyu Tolgoi copper-gold mining project in the southern Mongolian province of Umnugovi started Monday.

"The Oyu Tolgoi underground project is very important for the implementation of 'Vision 2050', which is the Mongolian

government's long-term development policy. Thanks to the development of the underground mining, our country's goal or dream of bringing per capita GDP to 10,000 US dollars can be realized," said Mongolian Prime Minister Luvsannamsrai Oyun-Erdene at a ceremony to mark the start of

the mine's underground production.

"With the start of underground mining today, Oyu Tolgoi is taking its first step towards becoming one of the world's most important copper producers," Chief Executive Officer of Rio Tinto Jakob Stausholm said at the ceremony. — Xinhua

Viet Nam scaling up sustainable and green coffee production

VIET Nam aims to shift the coffee industry towards more sustainable growth, so that it would ensure stable production and increase export revenue, Vietnam News Agency reported on Sunday.

Government officials and industry executives at the 2023 Buon Ma Thuot Coffee Festival, held in the central highland province of Dak Lak this week, said Viet Nam's coffee industry would turn to green and sustainable transition to address its environmental and economic vulnerability.

Viet Nam's coffee sector has to adapt quickly to a future when the suitable climate for coffee production changes, said Nguyen Tuan Ha, deputy chairman of the provincial people's committee of Dak Lak.

In an effort to maintain its position as a coffee powerhouse, Viet Nam is focused on growing

high-quality and environment-friendly coffee, building credible and traceable sustainable coffee supply chains, and further investing in modern coffee processing and better farmer livelihoods, Ha said.

Viet Nam aims to review plantation areas, putting a cap on nationwide coffee cultivation at 600,000 hectares, according to the government's sustainable coffee plan with vision towards 2030.

The Southeast Asian country's coffee farming currently covers an estimated area of 710,000 hectares, data released at the festival showed.

Intercropping of coffee and other crops, along with optimizing fertilizer use and applying water-saving irrigation methods, has proved to be viable strategies for Viet Nam's coffee sector, said industry experts.

As the coffee con-

sumption process includes an appreciation of its history, Viet Nam should explore the opportunities of its unique coffee culture to transform the sector into "a multi-valued industry", helping local farmers earn a larger and fairer share of profit in value chains, Le Minh Hoan, minister of agriculture and rural development, said.

Viet Nam aims to achieve six billion US dollars in export revenue by 2030. Last year, it exported 1.7 million tonnes of coffee, earning a record high of 3.9 billion US dollars, data from the agriculture ministry showed.

Viet Nam is the world's second largest coffee producer and exporter after Brazil, as well as the largest Robusta supplier with production on a steady rise from some 78,000 tonnes in 1990 to about 1.8 million tons in the 2021-2022 season. — Xinhua

European equities dive on fears of US banking crisis

EUROPEAN stocks tanked Monday as investors shrugged off global efforts to stem a fast-moving crisis emanating from the US banking sector.

Germany's finance watchdog insisted the collapse of Silicon Valley

Bank (SVB) posed no threat to financial stability, and France's economy minister declared US bank failures had no contagion risk.

However, European equities tipped deep into the red as the morning

progressed, with bank shares falling particularly hard in Italy and Switzerland.

Frankfurt and Paris stock markets dropped by about three per cent, while Milan dived almost five per cent at one stage and Zu-

rich shed 1.7 per cent.

London dipped 2.3 per cent with losses capped after HSBC agreed to buy SVB's UK division for a nominal £1 (\$1.2). The dollar fell as the turmoil sparked uncertainty over the US Federal Reserve's

plans to hike interest rates, while oil prices also slid.

"Far from calming nerves, fear of contagion has ramped up further with investors dumping risk assets across Europe," City Index analyst

Fiona Cincotta told AFP.

"Banks are leading the charge southwards with investors taking aim at Spanish and Italian banks, suggesting that these are considered the weakest links as fears rise." — AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V VASI STAR VOY.NO. (VS190E)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V VASI STAR VOY.NO. (VS190E)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **12-3-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AYIT** 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 VASI SHIPPING LINE PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ASIAN ACE VOY.NO. (308W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ASIAN ACE VOY.NO. (308W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **14-3-2023** 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

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BANDUNG VOY.NO. (776N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SINAR BANDUNG VOY.NO. (776N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **14-3-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINES

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

‘Everything Everywhere’ all-conquering at Oscars

SURREAL sci-fi film “Everything Everywhere All at Once” dominated the Oscars on Sunday, winning seven golden statuettes including best picture, Hollywood’s most coveted prize.

The unorthodox but beloved movie — which features multiple universes, sex toys and hot dog

said.

He thanked director Darren Aronofsky for “throwing me a creative lifeline and hauling me aboard the good ship ‘The Whale’”.

‘American Dream’

“Everything Everywhere”, comfortably the night’s biggest

Daniel Scheinert — two young filmmakers who were previously best known for an oddball comedy about a talking corpse.

Kwan thanked his “immigrant parents”, while his counterpart thanked his mother for never “squashing my creativity”, including when he had dressed in drag as a child.

“Which is a threat to nobody”, he added, to enormous cheers.

Vietnam-born Ke Huy Quan, 51, who was a major child star in the 1980s with “Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom” and “The Goonies”, completed a stunning comeback from decades in the Hollywood wilderness by winning best supporting actor.

“My journey started on a boat. I spent a year in a refugee camp. And somehow, I ended up here on Hollywood’s biggest stage... this is the American Dream,” said Quan.

After the show, he came



US director Daniel Scheinert (L) and US director Daniel Kwan (R) speak after winning the Oscar for Best Picture for “Everything Everywhere All at Once” onstage during the 95th Annual Academy Awards at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, California on 12 March 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

fingers — also won best director, best actress, best original screenplay, best editing, and both the best supporting actor and actress prizes.

Michelle Yeoh, who is Malaysian, becomes the first ever Asian woman to win best actress, for her portrayal of an exhausted Chinese laundromat owner embroiled in battle with an inter-dimensional supervillain — who happens to be her daughter.

“Thank you to the Academy, this is history in the making!” she said.

“Ladies, don’t let anybody tell you you are ever past your prime,” added the 60-year-old, whose career began decades ago with martial arts films in Hong Kong.

Brendan Fraser won best actor for playing a morbidly obese teacher in “The Whale”, capping a remarkable career comeback.

Fraser was a major action star in the late 1990s with films like “The Mummy”, before largely disappearing from the public view.

“I started in this business 30 years ago, and things -- they didn’t come easily to me,” he

winner, is a word-of-mouth smash hit that has grossed \$100 million at the global box office.

In a plot that is not easily described, Yeoh’s heroine Evelyn must harness the power of her alter egos living in parallel universes, which feature hot dogs as human fingers, talking rocks and giant dildos used as weapons.

The film, which features a predominantly Asian cast, was directed by Daniel Kwan and

bounding into the backstage press room, shouting “Wow, wow, wow... Can you believe I’m holding one of these?”

He shared that “Indiana Jones” director Steven Spielberg had grabbed him and said: “You are now an Oscar winner!”

Best supporting actress Jamie Lee Curtis paid tribute to her parents Tony Curtis and Janet Leigh, both Oscar-nominated actors who never won. — AFP



Malaysian actress Michelle Yeoh (L), winner of the Oscar for Best Actress in a Leading Role for “Everything Everywhere All at Once” and US actor Brendan Fraser (R), winner of the Oscar for Best Actor in a Leading Role for “The Whale”, attend the 95th Annual Academy Awards Governors Ball in Hollywood, California on 12 March 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**



A soldier stands in front of PATRIOT (Phased Array Tracking Radar to Intercept on Target) surface-to-air missile systems during a military exercise at Warsaw Babice Airport, Poland on 7 February 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

Fuelled by Ukraine, European arms imports double in 2022

ARMS imports into Europe almost doubled in 2022, driven by massive shipments to Ukraine, which has become the world’s third-largest destination, researchers said Monday.

With a 93-per-cent jump compared to the year before, imports have also increased due to accelerating military spending by European states including Poland and Norway, said the report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

And the rate of imports is expected to accelerate further, it said.

“The invasion has really caused a significant surge in demand for arms in Europe, which will have further effect and most likely will lead to increased arms imports by European states,” Pieter Wezeman, a senior researcher at SIPRI, told AFP.

Ukraine was until last year a negligible importer of arms.

But in 2022 it very quickly became the third-largest arms destination in the world, behind Qatar and India, as Western nations delivered arms following Russia’s invasion.

Ukraine alone accounted for 31 per cent of arms transfers to Europe and eight per cent of world deliveries overall, according to SIPRI’s data.

Ukraine’s imports, including donations, grew more than 60-fold last year, the institute found.

The deliveries to Ukraine

were mainly weapons lifted from stockpiles.

Among them were some 230 artillery pieces from the US; 280 Polish armoured vehicles; and more than 7,000 British anti-tank missiles, as well as more newly produced pieces such as anti-aircraft systems, SIPRI said.

‘Whole spectrum’

In its rankings of the global arms trade, the institute uses its own units of value, rather than dollars or euros.

Although it is difficult to put a dollar-value as many contracts are opaque, the global arms trade totals above \$100 billion a year, and SIPRI said last year that total military expenditures had exceeded \$2 trillion for the first time.

Estimated military expenditures for 2022 by SIPRI will be released in April.

The surge in imports to Ukraine accelerated an already rising trend, as European states had already begun re-arming in the light of rising tension with Moscow following its 2014 annexation of Crimea.

European states have either “already ordered or are planning to” weapons ranging from “submarines to combat aircraft, from drones to anti-tank missiles, from rifles to radars”, Wezeman said.

“Everything is being looked at, because the idea is to strengthen military capacity through the whole spectrum of available military technology.”

— AFP

N Korea launches missiles as US, S Korea kick off major drills

NORTH Korea said Monday it had test-fired two strategic cruise missiles from a submarine, as South Korea and the United States kicked off their largest joint military exercises in five years.

Nuclear-armed Pyongyang said the test verified its “nuclear war deterrence means in different spaces” as it slammed the drills — known as Freedom Shield — which will run for 10 days from Monday as part of the allies’ drive to counter North Korea’s growing threats.

“The two strategic cruise missiles precisely hit the preset

target on the East Sea of Korea,” the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said.

North Korea is not technically banned from firing cruise missiles under current UN sanctions — although tests relating to its nuclear arsenal are not allowed.

The KCNA report said the test was linked to the United States and South Korea “getting evermore undisguised in their anti-DPRK military manoeuvres”, referring to the North by its official name.

The South Korean military said it had detected the launch of

at least one unidentified missile from a North Korean submarine Sunday morning.

Photos and video released by North Korean state media showed the submarine, the “8.24 Yongung”, and a missile flying into the sky from the water, trailing white smoke and flames.

Analysts said “huge doubts” remain about how advanced the North’s submarine programme is. Park Won-gon, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul, said the state media images suggested the missile was fired from above the water. — AFP



US soldiers walk past military vehicles at a military training field in the border city of Yeoncheon on 13 March 2023. PHOTO: AFP

Flood water inundates Australia’s northern Queensland with crocodiles lurking underneath

WITH major flooding still occurring in Burketown and the Gregory River, the police force in the Australian state of Queensland on Monday reminded residents to limit movement in floodwaters due to unseen hazards and recent crocodile sightings.

“Police rescued a baby kangaroo from floodwaters behind a residential community in Burketown yesterday. A helicopter pilot flew over at the time and spotted two very large crocs nearby, a timely reminder to stay out of floodwaters as you never know what is lurking beneath,” Queensland Police Service warned on social media.

In an update on the severe weather event affecting north-western Queensland, the state police said sewage and water treatment plants in Burketown are now offline, with residents instructed to conserve water usage and continue to monitor advice from local councils.

As significant flooding is surging downstream of Urandangi to Roxborough Downs, police are closely monitoring the situation in Urandangi, with 16 people so far evacuated from the town in preparation for rising floodwaters.

According to the police, air assets are stationed nearby and on standby for emergency rescues and transport of food,

water and medical supplies.

Days of heavy rainfall led to major to record-breaking floodings through parts of northwestern Queensland.

“No observations are available for the Burketown Airstrip manual gauge. Based on anecdotal information from Burketown, the river level is expected to have peaked above the 2011 record flood level of 6.78 metres on Sunday,” said the Australian Bureau of Meteorology (BOM).

“Major flooding is expected to be easing slowly on Monday. The river level along the Albert River at Burketown Airstrip is expected to con-

tinue easing slowly over the next few days, but is likely to remain above the major flood level (6.00 m) during Monday and Tuesday, possibly longer,” the BOM added.

Burke Shire Mayor Ernie Camp told Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) on Monday morning that up to 100 people had been evacuated from Burketown, with another 120 across the shire.

Camp noted that the water levels dropped about 400 millimetres.

“So hopefully, there won’t be no any further rises and we’ll keep it positive.” — Xinhua



This handout photo taken on 10 March, 2023 and received on 11 March 2023 from the Queensland Police Service shows an aerial view of the flooded northern Queensland town of Burketown. PHOTO: HANDOUT / QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE / AFP

57% of Japanese back S Korea’s solution to wartime labour row: poll

A Kyodo News poll showed Monday that 57.1 per cent of respondents in Japan support South Korea’s solution to a wartime labour row between the two countries, announced last week.

The telephone survey, conducted over three days from Saturday, also found that 56.8 per cent will continue using protective face masks despite the government relaxing its COVID-19 guidelines on mask-wearing this week. The approval rating for the Cabinet of Prime Minister Fumio Kishida stood at 38.1 per cent, up from 33.6 per cent in mid-February.

As part of efforts to improve ties with Japan, South Korea

unveiled its plan for settling the wartime labour compensation dispute with its neighbouring nation.

Kishida has hailed the proposal, saying South Korea’s decision will help restore “healthy” relations between Tokyo and Seoul, while 33.3 per cent of the respondents did not appreciate the move, the survey showed.

Under the solution, a South Korean government-backed foundation will pay compensation to the country’s plaintiffs who won lawsuits over alleged forced labour during Japan’s 1910-1945 colonial rule of the peninsula instead of the Japanese companies that were sued. — Kyodo

Local govt in India’s Assam imposes ban on entry of poultry, pigs to prevent spread of disease

THE government of the north-eastern Indian state of Assam has imposed restrictions on the entry of poultry birds and pigs from other states in a bid to prevent the spread of bird flu and African swine fever (ASF), officials said.

The decision was announced by Assam’s minister of agriculture, animal husbandry and veterinary Atul Bora at a meeting on Saturday evening.

Bora has urged animal husbandry and veterinary department officials and pig and poultry farm associations to take measures to prevent the price rise of pork and chicken in the state in the wake of the ban.

This decision has been taken on a temporary basis following the outbreak of avian influenza in the states of Bihar and Jharkhand. — Xinhua

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SPORT

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.

Myanmar wins 2 silvers in 7th ASEAN Inline Freestyle Championships

ATHLETES from the Myanmar Skating Sports Federation have won two silver medals in the 7th ASEAN Inline Freestyle Championships held in Singapore from 8 to 15 March.

Myanmar players competed in Junior Battle Slide U-15 Women's and Junior Battle Slide U-17 Men's competitions.

A total of 30 players each competed in the Qualifiers, and Myanmar players qualified for the semifinals after passing the qualifiers.

In the final stage of the Junior Battle Slide U-15 Women's competition, the Indonesian player won first place while Ma Pyae Pyae Phy (alias) Hmwe Hmwe secured the second spot, and the Thai player bagged the third.

In the Junior Battle Slide U-17 Men's competition, an Indonesian player won first place while Myanmar's Maung Zwe Pyae Tun earned the second prize, and another Indonesian player got the third prize.

Head coach U Thet Khaing Oo from Myanmar Skating Sports Federation led the players: Maung Zwe Pyae Tun, Maung Htoo Lin Myat, and Ma Pyae Pyae Phy (alias) Hmwe



Myanmar skating athlete Ma Pyae Pyae Phy (alias) Hmwe Hmwe (left) is seen on the stage as she won the silver medal for the Junior Battle Slide U-15 Women's competition of the 7th ASEAN Inline Freestyle Championships held in Singapore starting from 8 March. **PHOTO: MSSF**

Hmwe during the tourney. In addition to ASEAN countries, players from India, China Taipei, South Korea and Japan also competed in the competition. — Bala Soe/KZL

Man City star Haaland is here to stay insists Guardiola



Manchester City's Spanish manager Pep Guardiola (L) celebrates with Manchester City's Norwegian striker Erling Haaland (R) after the English Premier League football match between Crystal Palace and Manchester City at Selhurst Park in south London on 11 March 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

AS Erling Haaland was mobbed by his Manchester City team-mates, the Norway star's broad grin gave Pep Guardiola renewed belief that his coveted striker is still happy at the club ahead of Tuesday's decisive Champions League clash with RB Leipzig.

When Haaland scored a late penalty to clinch City's 1-0 win against Crystal Palace in the Premier League on Saturday, he responded with a joyous slide across the rain-soaked Selhurst Park pitch.

Amid reports that Paris Saint-Germain and Real Madrid are plotting audacious bids for Haaland in the close season, the 22-year-old's ecstatic reaction to his winner was a welcome sight for Guardiola.

Haaland has scored 28 times in the Premier League and netted 34 goals in all competitions since arriving from Borussia Dortmund in May.

He remains on course to break the Premier League goal record for a single campaign, jointly held by Alan Shearer and Andy Cole, who netted 34 for Blackburn and Newcastle respectively.

Yet, although the raw numbers suggest all is well with the astonishingly prolific striker and his team, the eye-test has sometimes painted a different picture.

There have been pointed questions raised about Guardiola's ability to get City to adapt to Haaland's unique talents, and the striker's own issues with coming to terms with the champions' style of play.

At times, Haaland has ploughed a lone furrow in City's attack, left isolated and surrounded by defenders during his team's long spells of possession. — AFP