

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.

Myanmar seaborne trade value swells to US\$25 bln last 2022-2023 FY



General view of the container yard at Yangon Port. Containers arriving at the port are being loaded by vehicles.

MYANMAR'S seaborne trade with international trade partners amounted to US\$25.35 billion in the previous financial year 2022-2023 (April-March), comprising exports worth \$10.489 billion and imports worth \$14.865 billion, the Min-

istry of Commerce's statistics indicated.

In the FY 2021-2022, maritime trade was estimated at \$22.599 billion, including exports worth \$10 billion and imports worth \$12.5 billion.

The figures showed an in-

crease of \$2.755 billion in the FY 2022-2023 compared to that of the year-ago period.

Myanmar carried out external trade with foreign trade partners through border channels and seaborne trade. Myanmar exports agricultural prod-

ucts, livestock, fishery, minerals, forest products, manufacturing goods and other goods to the external market while it imports capital goods, intermediate goods, consumer goods and raw materials imported by the CMP enterprises.—NN/EM

60 kW, 7 kW EV chargers arrive at Yangon Port

A total of 33 sets of EV chargers — three sets of 60 KW and 30 sets of 7 KW — for battery electric vehicles (BEVs) arrived at Yangon Port with the permission of the Steering Committee on National-Level Development of Electric Vehicles and Related Industries.

These Aoneng chargers were imported through Chindwin Shan Construction Co Ltd. The import of these chargers is exempted from Customs duties. — MNA/ MKKS



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39 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 19 April, total figure registers 634,213

MYANMAR'S COVID-19-positive cases rose to **634,213** after **39** new cases were reported on 19 April 2023 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 24 patients returned from foreign countries and 15 cases were infected locally.

Status of new COVID-19 patient (as of 19 April 2023) (8:00 pm)

New COVID-19 Patient	New Patient	Percentage (%)
People returned from foreign countries	24	61.5%
People infected in the country	15	38.5%
Total	39	100%

Therefore, a total of **10,246,714** laboratory samples were examined and the confirmed COVID-19 cases reached **634,213**.

The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **614,649** including **15** new recoveries.

The death toll from COVID-19 in the country remained unchanged at **19,490** on 19-4-2023 with no new death reported from the pandemic.

The country has vaccinated **30,991,933** people aged 18 and above for COVID-19 vaccines and **6,848,787** people aged under 18 till 18 April 2023.

Status of COVID-19 vaccination (as of 18 April 2023)

People aged 18 and above who received vaccines	30,991,933
People under 18 years old who received vaccines	6,848,787

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

As such, people need to follow the new normal way of living with COVID. Hence, all people above five have to fully receive COVID-19 vaccination inoculated by the Ministry of Health free of charge. Six months after the vaccination, they have to take booster jabs at relevant health centres and ward/village administration offices without fail. Moreover, they have to wear masks while in closed chambers and public places. They need to often wash their hands with soap and water or the hand gel containing alcohol (at least 60 per cent) for 20 seconds.

People need to follow the social distancing rule and avoid crowds as much as possible. While not wearing masks, if they cough and sneeze, they need to cover their mouth and noses with elbows in line with the personal hygienic ways.

COVID-19 information can be browsed on the internet page moh.gov.mm of the Ministry of Health. — MNA

Preparations made for animal feed for early arrival of summer

PREPARATIONS are being made to prevent the shortage of animal feed for the animals in sanctuaries due to the early arrival of summer this year, according to the All Myanmar Theravada Buddhists Federation and Sasana Nuggaha Association for Borders, Hilly Regions and Coastal Areas (Mandalay).

The officials fed them with vegetables donated by vendors from the nearby market as supplementary feed by using their

trucks previously and now the animals are kept on natural pasture due to high transportation charges.

There are 11 sanctuaries — Setawlay sanctuary in Patheingyi Township, Setawgyi sanctuary in Madaya Township, Marle Nat-taung sanctuary in Singu Township and Zayetkwin sanctuary in Thabeikkyin Township of Mandalay Region, Ywathitkalay sanctuary in Sagaing Kaunghmudaw, three sanctuaries in Dabayin,



Left and Above: Photos show carers are feeding geese, cattle among others at the animal sanctuaries.



Aunglan monastery sanctuary in Aunglan Township, Kathitwine sanctuary in Bago Township and Khit Aye Parahita sanctuary in Zeyathiri Township of Nay Pyi Taw — which are home to over 1,000 animals including cattle, goat, rabbit, duck, chicken, goose, guinea pig and pigeon.

“We collect straw in summer every year. The summer comes early this year. The grass dries out in wide sanctuaries. Therefore, we collect ration early. We also arrange to save more when the new paddy is produced,” said U Hla Win, chairman of All Myanmar Theravada Buddhists

Federation and Sasana Nuggaha Association for Borders, Hilly Regions and Coastal Areas (Mandalay).

Those who want to make donations can contact 09 975 764 323, 09 402 692 522 and 09 660 850 399.— Aung Kyaw Kha (Mandalay/KTZH)

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.

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

Tatmadaw guards and protects the interests of the people

IN any age and under any government, Tatmadaw has always regarded the people as their parents and itself as the guardian and protector of the interests of the people.

(Excerpts from the discussion of Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting 1/2023 of the National Defence and Security Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on 1 February 2023)

MoFA Union Minister receives Ambassador of Bangladesh

U Than Swe, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, received Mr Manjurul Karim Khan Chowdhury, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, who has completed his tour of duty in Myanmar, at

10 am yesterday at the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the call, they cordially exchanged views on the promotion of friendly bilateral ties, expansion of bilateral cooperation in areas of mutual interest as well as closer collaboration in regional and multilateral arenas.

— MNA



Union Minister U Than Swe receives Mr Manjurul Karim Khan Chowdhury, Ambassador of Bangladesh to Myanmar yesterday.



The Bangladeshi ambassador calls on Union Minister Dr Thet Khaing Win yesterday.

MoH Union Minister receives Bangladeshi Ambassador

UNION Minister for Health Dr Thet Khaing Win received the delegation led by Mr Manjurul Karim Khan Chowdhury, Ambassador of Bangladesh to Myanmar, who will return after completing his duties in Myanmar, yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

Both sides cordially exchanged views on the development of health, human re-

sources, medical education and the pharmaceutical sectors of the two countries, bilateral cooperation between Myanmar and Bangladesh, and preparations to provide healthcare for returnees of displaced persons from Rakhine State.

The meeting was attended by the deputy minister and responsible officials. — MNA/TS

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CBM says 65% of export earnings must be exchanged for Kyats

SIXTY-FIVE per cent of the amount of export earnings must be exchanged for Myanmar Kyats and the remaining 35 per cent will be allowed to be sold at the market price, the Central Bank of Myanmar announced on 18 April.

The announcement was made for the export declarations (ED) that were issued in the period before the issuance of Notification No 36/2022 of the Central Bank of Myanmar dated 5 August 2022, according to the decision of the Foreign Exchange Supervisory Committee (FESC) meeting 27/2023.



A merchant is seen making payments for goods in Rupees.

AD licenced banks dealing in foreign currencies must also comply with the decision of the FESC, said the statement. In addition, starting from April this

year, Myanmar-India bilateral trade payments have been allowed to be paid directly in Rupee-Kyat exchange, the statement continued. — TWA/CT

MoIC Union Minister receives Bangladeshi Ambassador

U Ko Ko Hlaing, Union Minister of the Ministry of International Cooperation of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, received Mr Manjurul Karim Khan Chowdhury, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, who has completed his

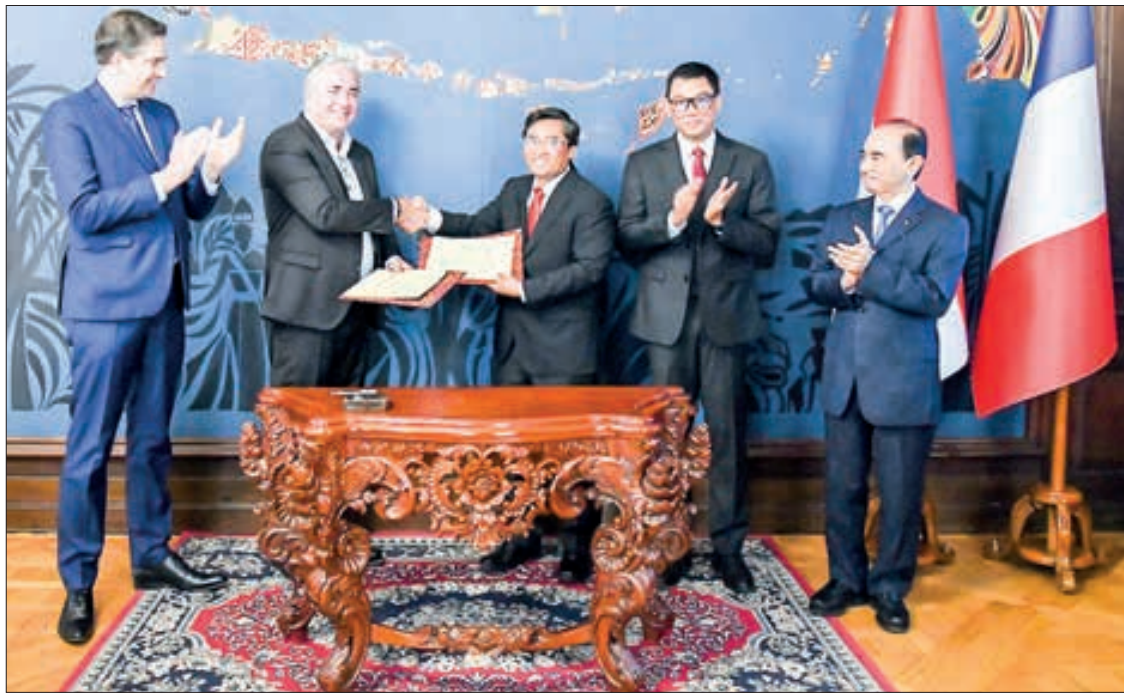
tour of duty in Myanmar, at 11 am yesterday at the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the call, they cordially exchanged views on the promotion of bilateral relations, expansion of cooperation particularly in the areas of trade and investment as well as closer collaboration in regional and multilateral fora. — MNA



The Bangladeshi ambassador calls on Union Minister U Ko Ko Hlaing yesterday.

PLN signs MoU with France-based hydrogen company; PLN ready to develop hydrogen power plant in Indonesia



The MoU was signed by PLN's Director of Corporate Planning, Mr Hartanto Wibowo, and HDF CEO Mr Damien Havard. **PHOTO: PT PLN (PERSERO)**

PT PLN (Persero), Indonesia's state-owned electricity enterprise, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Hydrogen de France SA (HDF Energy) to develop hydrogen technology in Indonesia on 18 April 2023.

This international collaboration is aimed at reducing carbon emissions of the electricity sector to contribute towards the 2060 Net Zero Emission Target.

During his speech, Mr Muhammad Oemar, Indonesian Ambassador to France, Monaco, Andorra and UNESCO, highlighted this cooperation between PLN and HDF as a way of addressing future increasing energy demand with renewable energy and innovative investment. French Minister of Foreign Trade Olivier Becht

asserted France's commitment to supporting Indonesia's energy transition and expressed his strong support for HDF and PLN's collaboration.

PLN's President Director, Mr Darmawan Prasodjo, stated that both parties have mutual commitments to ensuring clean, reliable and affordable energy.

Through this collaboration, PLN intends to accelerate hydrogen technology development, while reducing dependency on fossil energy.

HDF is a France-based company that is a pioneer in hydrogen-to-power solutions.

HDF develops and operates high-capacity infrastructures to supply energy demand by utilizing renewable energy. — PT PLN (Persero)

Public Notification

THE Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee was reconstituted under the State Administration Council's Order No 366/2021 dated 10.12.2021, and action is being taken effectively against illegal trade under the law.

The following telephone numbers, fax and email address can be reached to safely report information in connection with illegal trade.

Auto telephone number - 067 409 883
Mobile phone - 09 404339969
Fax - 067 409 886
Email address - antiillegaltradeinfo@gmail.com
Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee

Public Notification

THE Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee was reconstituted under the State Administration Council's Order No 366/2021 dated 10.12.2021, and action is being taken effectively against illegal trade under the law.

Regarding the "request for money from departmental organizations in conducting trade", the following numbers can be reached to safely report such information.

Auto telephone number - 067 409 881
Mobile phone - 09 699611116
Fax - 067 409 887
Email address - antiillegaltradeoffice@gmail.com
Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee

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

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

Coord meeting held for consecration, donation to 11,111 monks at Shwedagon

A coordination meeting on the holding of the consecration ceremony and rice donation ceremony for 11,111 monks at Shwedagon pagoda was held at the Ancient Tazaung (pavilion) of the pagoda yesterday.

The meeting was attended by the monks led by Yangon Region Sangha Nayaka Committee Chairman Presiding Sayadaw of Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Dwipitakadhara Tipitaka Linkara Buddhist Learning Centre Bhaddanta Agga Sami, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein, Yangon Command Commander Maj-Gen Zaw Hein, officials of ministries and departments concerned and invitees.

First, the Yangon Region

Sangha Nayaka Committee Chairman delivered Ovada Gatha and the region chief minister and the command commander gave opening speeches. Then, the secretary of the Yangon Region government explained the work processes.

The pro-rector (Admin) of the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University and attendees discussed the plans to hold a consecration ceremony and rice donation ceremony for 11,111 monks from All Order at the Shwedagon pagoda. The Yangon Region chief minister and the Yangon Command commander coordinated necessary matters in responding to the discussions.

— MNA/KTZH



The coordination meeting on holding consecration and alms donation ceremonies in progress yesterday.

CRIME NEWS

Illegal timbers, auto parts and vehicles seized



Confiscated illegal commodities and vehicles at the Yepu permanent checkpoint.

AN on-duty team under the management of the Customs Department at the Yepu permanent checkpoint in Shan State made inspections on 18 April.

Officials nabbed 1,300 kilograms of Dolphin wheel rim (which is a kind of motorbike part) worth K4,113,551 that exceeded the Import Declaration (ID) from a Mitsubishi Fuso truck (estimated value of K35 million). The action was taken under Customs procedures.

In addition, the combined teams led by the Forest Department of relevant districts and townships under the supervision of the Bago Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force conducted inspections.

Officials captured a total of 27.6256 tonnes of illegal teak, 21.222 tonnes of illegal hardwood and 11.741 tonnes of other illegal timbers worth K22,309,250 in DaikU, Pand-

aung, Paukhaung, Bago, Pyu, Minhla, Shwedaung, Yedashe, Lepadon, Thayawady, Thae-gon, Oktwin and Oakpho townships. The action was taken under the Forest Law.

In addition, a combined on-duty team seized an unregistered Nissan X-Trail vehicle (approximately K10 million) at the combined checkpoint in Shwebo township and the action was taken under the Export and Import Law.



Seized car in Sagaing Region.

The combined teams led by the Forest Department confiscated a total of 1.060 tonnes of illegal teak, and 2.721 tonnes of timbers worth K576,270 in Katha and Shwebo townships. The action was taken under the Forest Law.

Therefore, nine arrests (estimated value of K71,999,071) were made on 18 April, according to the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS

Public Notice

1. The Anti-Corruption Commission has established corruption prevention units within ministries to effectively curb corruption.
2. The ACC used SMS on the mobile phone to ask the public who seek services at an office of the department of the relevant ministries via Short Code No "1111" for feedbacks, including the Public Feedback Programme-PFP.
3. According to the PFP, the right replies of the citizens via Short Code No "1111" will provide the quality of services of each department and the requirements for corruption prevention to be fixed.
4. Therefore, the public should make a reply to the questions of the ACC and corruption prevention units of the ministries via SMS at Short Code No "1111" and such doing is a supportive measure for PFP, and the people are urged to cooperate in the operations.

*Anti-Corruption Commission
Answer "1111" to fight against corruption
Answer "1111" to improve services
Let's work together to eliminate corruption towards prosperity*

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09974424848

CURRENT AFFAIRS



An aerial view of the office building of the Central Bank of Myanmar

Union Government allowed to raise local/foreign loans with approval of SAC

IT is stipulated in the Union Budget Law of the 2023-2024 financial year that the Union Government can obtain local or foreign loans with the approval of the State Administration Council.

It is also mentioned that loans for work projects or expenditures included in the Union Budget can be raised by issuing bonds or securities or by other means.

According to the section on obtaining a loan, the interest rate and necessary terms and conditions for obtaining a loan can be determined after consultation with the Central Bank of Myanmar. — TWA/KZW

MoC issues 669 import licences in second week of April

MINISTRY of Commerce's statistics showed that 669 import licences have been issued at the Muse 105th mile trade zone in the second week of April.

Import/export and related business licences can be done through Myanmar Tradenet 2.0 and the three import licences for a value of 0.866 million yuan for construction goods were granted on 16 April.

Myanmar primarily exports dried chilli pepper, crab, muskmelon, watermelon, fresh chilli pepper, green gram, shrimp, plum, onion and mango to China via the Muse 105th mile trade post, while tangerine, excavator, fire extinguisher, battery, motorcycle, bicycle, cotton fabric roll, electric dryer and pears were allowed to be imported.

Between 1 and 16 April, 669 import licences were issued. China grants Form E (China-ASEAN Free Trade Certificate of Origin) tax re-

lief for some of Myanmar's import items.

On 27 November, 13 Form E certificates were granted for crab, eel, traga-canth, broken rice, and zinc ingot. A total of 319 Form E certificates were issued from 1 to 16 April 2023.

In the first two weeks of April, 2,135 trucks loaded with export goods and 2,000 trucks loaded carrying im-

port goods were witnessed at Muse border post.

Transactions for cross-border trade are done in Yuan and dollars. Bean, corn, sesame and peanuts are allowed to make payments in Yuan as well as dollars. For transactions of rice, broken rice, agricultural products and fisheries products (eel, crab) are available in Yuan payment. — TWA/EM



The photo shows trucks entering the Muse border trade zone.



Myanmar citizens can apply for ICCR Scholarship: Indian Embassy

MYANMAR nationals can apply for the scholarship for the 2023-2024 academic year on the A2A Portal of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations and the applications must be sent between 12 April and 15 May via the website <http://a2ascholarships.iccr.gov.in/>, according to the Indian Embassy in Myanmar.

There are four types of scholarships. Applicants for undergraduate and postgraduate courses must be between 18 and 30 years old and applicants for PhD programmes must not be above 45.

The Indian government will award scholarships to a total of 150 Myanmar nationals for this academic year, it is learnt. — TWA/ MKKS

Weekly market update of dry groceries at Bayintnaung Wholesale Centre

SOME commodity prices climbed on low supply at the Bayintnaung market in the post-Thingyan period. The price of palm oil declined.

Onion

Bayintnaung Wholesale market saw the entry of 210,000 visses of onions on 18 April and 90,000 visses on 19 April. The prices moved in the range of K1,150 and K1,400 per viss depending on the quality, size and producing areas (Seikphyu and Myittha) that day.

On 19 April, 59,456 visses of onions were supplied to the Pakokku market and the highest price of onion was K1,125 per viss in the wholesale market. The price of onions from the Seikphyu area was K1,300 per viss, following a supply of 9,000 visses of onions on that day.

Garlic

On 19 April, the prices stayed at K3,200-K4,100 per viss depending on varieties and qualities, whereas Kyukok garlic fetched K5,200 per viss.

Potato

The prices of local potatoes from Shan State moved in the range between K1,300 and 1,800 per viss. The potatoes from Heho and Aungban areas entered the



The photo shows a retail shop of dry groceries.

Yangon market and there is no inflow from the Sinphyukyun area.

Chilli pepper

The wholesale prices of chilli peppers were K10,000-K15,000 per viss for long chilli pepper and Moehtaung variety. The prices of bell peppers from the Sinphyukyun area and delta regions were K13,500-K15,000 per viss.

Rice

Low supply of rice to the Yangon market hikes up the Pawsan rice price. The price of sticky rice is K93,000-94,000 per bag. The prices stood at K53,000 per bag for summer rice grown under the intercropping system, K60,000 for low-grade short-matured summer rice (90 days), K67,000 for Pawkywe variety, K75,000 for Pawsan rice from

Bogale, K80,000 from Pyapon, K82,000 from Myaungmya and K105,000 for Pawsan rice from Shwebo area.

Palm oil

On 18 April, the wholesale market price of palm oil was K6,550 per viss. The price dipped to K6,400 at Bayintnaung market in Yangon on 19 April.

Pulses

The prices of various pulses stood at K2,070,000 per tonne of black gram (Fair Average Quality/RC), K2,315,000 per tonne of black gram (Special Quality/RC), K2,389,000 per tonne of pigeon pea (red gram) RC, K3,750 per viss of green gram and K4,700-K4,900 per viss of chickpea in Yangon markets. — TWA/EM

LOCAL BUSINESS

Rice fetches high price in post-Thingyan holidays

THE rice that is mainly consumed locally is priced high after the Thingyan holidays, according to the Wahdan Rice Wholesale Centre.

On 7 April, Pawsan rice prices moved in the range between K72,000 and K93,000 per bag depending on the producing areas (Shwebo, Myaungmya, Dedaye, Pyapon, and Pathein). New Pawsan rice fetched K72,000 per bag. Meanwhile, the prices stood at K77,000-K79,000 per bag for Kyapyan, K64,500 for Kunni, K54,000 for Ngasein, K60,000 for short-mature rice (90 days), K54,000 for Aemahta, K66,000 for Pawkywe, K53,000 for rice grown under intercropping season.

After Myanmar's New Year holidays, the prices of Pawsan rice climbed up to K75,000-K97,000 per bag on 18 April. The prices of various rice varieties were up by



The rice supply to the market is declining for now. The market is quite sluggish, Varieties of rice are seen at rice retail outlet in Yangon.

K1,000-K5,000 per bag within ten days.

Rocketing paddy prices

drove rice prices up.

Starting from 3 August 2022,

Myanmar Rice Federation, Myan-

mar Rice Producers and Planters Association, Myanmar Rice Millers Association, and traders

and brokers engaged in Wahdan Rice Wholesale Centre and Bay-intnaung Rice Wholesale Centre have been working together to offer fair prices for Shwebo Pawsan from K75,000-K77,000 per bag and other rice varieties to the consumers at the Wahdan Wholesale Centre.

The offer prices are K52,000-K55,000 per bag of Pawsan from the Ayeyawady area, K55,000-K60,000 per bag of Kyapyan, and K35,000-K37,000 per bag of short-mature rice varieties (90 days) at the Wahdan Rice Wholesale Centre.

Each household can buy only one bag. Those traders and retailers are not entitled to buy them.

The rice supply to the market is declining for now. The market is quite sluggish, according to the Wahdan Rice Wholesale Centre. — NN/EM

Gold price edges higher on spot gold price rally

THE pure gold price hit a high of K2.97 million per tical (0.578 ounce or 0.016 kilogramme) in the unofficial domestic market.

The domestic gold price spiked at K2,970,000 per tical as the spot gold price stayed high at \$2,004 per ounce.

YGEA hiked the reference rate to over K2,360,900 per tical tracking increase in the spot gold price.

Consequently, there is a price difference of over K600,000 per tical between the YGEA's reference price and the price in the unofficial market.

YGEA calculated the price depending on the Central Bank of Myanmar's reference exchange rate of K2,100, with some addition, while the US dollar is exchanged at K2,860 in the unofficial forex market.

The US dollar exchange rate weighs on domestic gold prices. Following the bankruptcy

of the US bank, the gold price soared. Despite the gold gain in the global market, Myanmar's forex market sees no movement at all. Consequently, YGEA requested its members not to buy them competitively, tracking the upward trend in the spot gold price, as per YGEA's statement released on 20 March.

Afterwards, the YGEA called for the members to make gold transactions with only immediate payment and avoid verbal transactions over calls without having any physical stocks.

The YGEA is not bound to have any responsibilities for market manipulation in the unofficial market. As a result of this, its members are asked to strictly adhere to the rules and regulations of the association while making gold transactions.

At present, the authorities concerned are attempting to deal with market abuse and inspect-

ing and prosecuting market manipulation is being undertaken.

Moreover, the Central Bank of Myanmar will inspect those manipulators to interfere with market stability through digital platforms, according to the notification dated 20 March.

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

For the gold price to decline, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation has been selling gold ingots under the competitive bidding system in Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw.

With an aim at reducing gold prices, the YGEA and Mandalay Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association sold gold bullion supplied by the executive members and the members as well. — NN/EM

Prices of fuel oil, gold and dollar on 19 April 2023

Fuel Oil Price (Yangon)

Octane 92	K2,145
Octane 95	K2,240
Diesel	K2,060
Premium Diesel	K2,140

All of the prices are based on per litre.

Gold Price

The reference price of high-purity gold set by YGEA	K2,345,600 per tical
High-purity gold in the gold market	K2,967,000 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	K2,840 to K2,855

The above prices may change from time to time.

Daily newspapers available online

FOR those who would like to read the Myanma Alinn, the Kyemon and the Global New Light of Myanmar, published daily by the Ministry of Information, please visit www.moi.gov.mm/mal, www.moi.gov.mm/km, www.moi.gov.mm/nlm and www.gnlm.com.mm/e-paper.

News and Periodicals Enterprise

OPINION

Correctly give a helping hand to overseas job seekers

EVERYBODY who has grown up has to seek jobs for earning income not only for themselves but for their families to fulfil their daily needs. Hence, people as well as citizens from global countries including Myanmar seek jobs in their motherlands and abroad.

On the other hand, those job seekers in overseas countries have a chance to go abroad systematically, apply their technologies and experiences obtained abroad in their respective sectors at home, and enjoy deserved entitlements of labour and rights without losing anything under the arrangements of the Ministry of Labour of Myanmar.

Moreover, the ministry helps the labours contact Myanmar embassies and labour attaches whenever they face difficulties at the jobs of their workplaces in the host countries or elsewhere and apply for Overseas Worker Identification Card-OWIC.

In truth, those Myanmar workers can be defined as income seekers of the nation. As a variety of taxes levied over their incomes benefit the nation and increase the State fund, licenced overseas employment agencies need to provide necessary assistance for those Myanmar workers to pass all processes in connection with relevant departments from abroad in a smooth manner without facing any difficulties and problems.

Those agencies need to help Myanmar workers enjoy deserved entitlements and rights at their workplaces in host countries. Those agencies need to collect set service charges from the workers. If not, they will face legal action – fine or imprisonment.

In sending workers abroad, the agencies and workers need to sign bilateral agreements. Moreover, the agreements on appointment must be signed in Myanmar/English and the relevant languages of the host countries. And, disciplines and provisions in the agreements must be clarified to the workers before signing the agreements.

During the period from 1 February 2021 to 28 February 2023, overseas employment agencies arranged to send Myanmar workers abroad. Some other workers who temporarily returned home after taking leaves and some PR holders as well as new workers sent by agencies, totalling 216,000 with OWIC went to 82 countries. In this regard, more than 120,000 workers left for Thailand, more than 24,000 for Singapore, over 8,000 for Korea, more than 15,500 for Japan and more than 39,900 for Malaysia.

Furthermore, those workers wishing to attend overseas employment courses and apply for the OWIC have to contact the Labour Department. Hence, Myanmar workers wishing to go abroad should avoid exploitation of brokers and illegal agencies in applying for attending overseas employment courses and OWIC and contact the relevant departments of the Labour Ministry as much as possible.

The Sabotage of Nord Stream Pipelines

By Win Myint Han

ON 26 September 2022, underwater gas leaks occurred on the Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 pipelines majority-owned by Russia, as they ruptured as a consequence of a bombing that Russia's President Vladimir Putin dubbed, "an unprecedented act of international terrorism". Those leaks happened in international waters but in the economic zones of Sweden and Denmark. These two countries and Germany conducted separate investigations into the cause of the damage to the pipelines without letting Russia, the aggrieved party join them in so doing. But they came up with the sole and same cause of the ruptures — explosion with explosive charges — sabotage pure and simple.

Russia first accused the UK and then the US of committing the sabotage. Both denied. In February 2023, Russia formally proposed to the UN Security Council to investigate the cause of the destruction.

As direct evidence to ascertain who was really responsible for the sabotage could not be available now or never, the culprit should be identified, based on the circumstantial evidence obtained so far, as there is no choice.

In doing so, we should make use of the famous Sherlockian maxim of exclusion whereby

those less likely accused are excluded one after another based on the more or less degree of probability and finally finding the lone likeliest party left – the real culprit.

1. Russia

Some unscrupulous people accused Russia of destroying its own pipelines in order to justify its reduced supply of natural gas to Europe before the sabotage. That allegation is as absurd and funny as a big joke because the seller has every right to sell its goods to whom and for how much. As no conclusive evidence was found that Russia was responsible, European and US officials no longer suspected Russia.

2. Ukraine

Despite being extremely willing to destruct any of the physical infrastructure and assets etc., of Russia, its adversary, Ukraine dare not destroy the pipelines, because if it did so, then Russia would be justified to terminate the agreement under which Ukrainian grains were allowed to be sent abroad from the black sea ports at best. And at worst Putin would be emboldened by the sabotage to recklessly resort to the use of tactical nukes against the Ukrainian forces.

3. Sweden, Denmark and

Norway

Even though those nations have nothing special either to like or dislike Russia before the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, Sweden, feeling unsafe by Putin's trigger-happiness, is seeking to join NATO. Norway is even called a "war profiteer" because of its huge sale of gas and petroleum, as Russia reduced its supply of energy to Europe. As they are, comparatively speaking rather rich and peaceful, they would never antagonize Russia by any means possible for no beneficial outcome to them.

4. UK

As one and only power to have been established and acclaimed as the empire where the sun never sets, the UK still maintains some sense of fairness and justice wherever possible and would not become so low and mean as to commit such a horrific crime against a nation with whom it is not in a state of war.

5. Germany

As it almost wholly relied on Russia before the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict for its supply of natural gas and petroleum, it is very unlikely to destruct the pipelines which used to carry the gas to it, even though just before the sabotage no gas was sent through them. Despite no



Picture taken on 8 October 2012 shows Nord Stream pipeline equipments before the opening ceremony of the North Stream second gas link in Portovaya bay, some 60 kilometers from the town of Vyborg in northwestern Russia. PHOTO: XINHUA/FILE

less sounding anti-Russian than the US President Joe Biden as regards, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz was a little bit reluctant to supply Ukraine with the most advanced weapons, even though finally he was pressured to send the latest model Leopard 2 tanks. As he could and would not forget how his nation (Hitler's Germany) was defeated and occupied by Russia, he would not venture a blunder which is not inevitable.

6. United States of America

The US, the great Satan, as named by Iran is the sole hyperpower on this planet even though not being superior in terms of military potential to Russia, the first Nation to possess intercontinental ballistic missiles and the only one to have test-exploded a 50 or so megatonne nuclear device. Millions and millions of people worldwide think very highly of the US as the Champion of Democracy and Human Rights and regard and

rely on it as the saviour of the weak. Following the end of the second world war, Germany and Japan achieved rapid economic growth due mainly to the all-out assistance from the US.

The US had many times contributed in very large amounts financially to international organizations under the UN for the promotion of education, health etc for the world people. Consequently is the US a good Samaritan? No, No, No never. It is the one

and only nation in the world to have used nuclear weapons as it caused more than 100,000 fatalities and injuries to innocent Japanese people by dropping two atomic bombs in 1945 over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In Viet Nam also hundreds of thousands of people perished owing to all kinds of bombs dropped by the US, capping it with the world-notorious Mylai Massacre. In that Village, many innocent, unarmed women and old people (as the able-bodied men went away to fight) were killed by a detachment of US soldiers commanded by Lieutenant William Calley. Atrocities committed and caused in Iraq by the US were not cited not to lengthen the essay.

Firstly, Seymour Hersh, an American Pulitzer-winning investigative journalist had openly accused the US of getting involved in the sabotage as ordered by President Biden. And it was also alleged that when Joe Biden and Olaf Scholz held a joint press conference on 7 February 2022 the former blatantly said "If Russia invades ... again there will no longer be a Nord Stream 2. We will bring an end to it". Accordingly, Biden is believed to have caused the sabotage to be done as he had warned.

Moreover, in addition to the foregoing mentioned above other nations like Germany, the

UK, Sweden, Denmark and Norway would not risk a very serious frontal confrontation with Russia for what they would gain nothing.

In summing up the facts and clues obtained and learnt so far, all fingers are pointing to Uncle Sam as the main culprit responsible for the Sabotage.

From the very beginning, the US was opposed to Nord Stream pipelines and placed obstacles to slow the completion of the pipe-laying.

Since Biden's administration is helping Ukraine with a massive supply of cash, advanced weapons etc., the sabotage would be most likely concerned with Biden's own personal motive. That is to improve and redeem his plummeting presidency approval rating, as the American people would come to learn this in due course.

As long as direct evidence is not available, the US would keep denying its involvement.

Despite the Russian proposal for the investigation by the UN Security Council, nothing would come out, even if the Council would like to condemn the US as the culprit with nine aye votes because the US itself and its allies UK and France have the veto power to annul the Council's resolution.



Brain fog, shortness of breath, loss of taste and smell are well-known long COVID symptoms. PHOTO: AFP

Covid-19 patients who suffer from loss of smell show different activities in brain: Study

A study has found that people living with long Covid who suffer from loss of smell show different patterns of activity in certain regions of the brain.

The study was published in the journal 'eClinicalMedicine'.

The research used MRI scanning to compare the brain activity of people with long Covid who lost their sense of smell, those whose smell had returned to normal after Covid infection, and people who had never tested positive for Covid-19.

Brain activity

The observational study found that the people with long Covid smell loss had reduced brain activity and impaired communication between two parts of the brain which process important smell information: the orbitofrontal cortex and the pre-frontal cortex. This connection was not impaired in people who had regained their sense of smell after Covid.

The findings suggest smell loss, known as anosmia, caused

by long Covid is linked to a change in the brain that stops smells from being processed properly. Because it's clinically reversible, as shown in some subjects, it may be possible to retrain the brain to recover its sense of smell in people suffering the side effects of long Covid. Dr Jed Wingrove (UCL Department of Medicine) the lead author of the study, said: "Persistent loss of smell is just one way long Covid is still impacting people's quality of life — smell is something we take for granted, but it guides us in

lots of ways and is closely tied to our overall well-being. Our study gives reassurance that, for the majority of people whose sense of smell comes back, there are no permanent changes to brain activity." Joint senior author Professor Claudia Wheeler-Kingshott (UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology), said: "Our findings highlight the impact Covid-19 is having on brain function. They raise the intriguing possibility that olfactory training — that is, retraining the brain to process different scents — could help the

brain to recover lost pathways, and help people with long Covid recover their sense of smell."

By boosting connections

Researchers say their findings also suggest that the brains of people with long Covid smell loss might be compensating for this lost sense by boosting connections with other sensory regions: their brains had increased activity between the parts of the brain that process smell and areas that process sight (the visual cortex).

SOURCE: ANI

SCI/ENVIRON WORLD

New satellite offers high-precision rainfall monitoring

HOW much rainfall will typhoons bring this year? Chinese scientists will be able to answer such questions more accurately in future thanks to the launch on Sunday of the Fengyun-3G (FY-3G), a satellite dedicated to measuring precipitation on Earth.

With a lifespan of six years, FY-3G is the country's first satellite allowing scientists to monitor the Earth's precipitation from space, one of only three such satellites in the world. It was developed by an institute of China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation, and its ground system will be built and operated by the China Meteorological Administration.



With a lifespan of six years, FY-3G is the country's first satellite allowing scientists to monitor the Earth's precipitation from space, one of only three such satellites in the world. **PHOTO: CGTN/XINHUA**

The 20th member of the Fengyun series, the FY-3G will highlight the strength of China's low-orbit meteorological satellite constellation and

significantly improve the early warning capability for global rainstorms, said Chen Zhenlin, head of the central meteorological observatory.

In the past, precipitation data was obtained mainly by ground-based rain gauges and radar. However, equipment shortages and uneven distribution made it difficult to acquire large-scale and high-precision information.

Ground devices have blind spots, but satellites in space can rectify this deficiency, making data available for places where ground-based measurements are sparse, said Zhang Peng, deputy director of the National Satellite Meteorological Centre.

To increase the accuracy of precipitation monitoring and early warning, scientists have also mounted dual-frequency precipitation measurement

radar on FY-3G, which will enable the satellite to accurately observe drizzle, even at an altitude of 407 km.

Qian Bin, the chief designer of the FY-3G, said the satellite adopts a low-inclination orbit, with an inclination of 50 degrees. It will provide precipitation data mainly within the range of 50 degrees north latitude to 50 degrees south latitude.

In the next six months, FY-3G will undergo in-orbit tests and meet the challenges of meteorological disasters such as rainstorms and typhoons in the upcoming flood season, according to the meteorological administration. — Xinhua

Spain vows to block farming near threatened wetlands

SPAIN has vowed to block a regional plan to legalize farming near one of Europe's largest and fauna-rich wetlands, where water supplies have plunged due to climate change and agriculture.

The proposal to rezone lands near the huge Donana National Park in the southern Andalusia region comes amid

a prolonged drought and it has drawn the ire of Brussels.

The area is home to many rare species such as the Iberian lynx and on the route of millions of migratory birds, including flamingos, spoonbills and ibis.

"Donana will not be touched, Donana is the heritage of Andalusians, of all Spaniards," Prime Minister Pedro

Sanchez warned.

Andalusia's parliament voted Wednesday to consider the plan proposed by the region's conservative Popular Party (PP) government.

If it becomes law, roughly 2,000 hectares (3,700 acres) near the park and its endangered wetlands will be declared irrigable.—AFP

Coastal shellfish 'colonize' Pacific garbage: study

SCIENTISTS found coastal species of shellfish and anemones living and breeding on floating islands of garbage in the Pacific thousands of miles from home, a study revealed Monday.

Environmentalists have for years been eyeing what

they call the "Great Pacific Garbage Patch" — masses of plastic rubbish combining bottles, fishing nets and much more.

US researchers who sampled rubbish from the northeastern Pacific between California and Hawaii said they

found 37 kinds of invertebrates that originated from coastal areas, mostly from countries such as Japan on the other side of the ocean.

"The high seas are colonized by a diverse array of coastal species, which survive and reproduce in the open ocean," they wrote in the study, published in *Nature Ecology and Evolution*. "Coastal species persist now in the open ocean as a substantial component of a neipelagic (new, sea-dwelling) community sustained by the vast and expanding sea of plastic debris," the study said.

More than two-thirds of the items examined had coastal species on them, including crustaceans, sea anemones and moss-like creatures called bryozoans.—AFP



Some 80 pieces of plastic rubbish weighing 17 pounds were found in the stomach of a whale that died in Thailand after a five-day effort to save it, a marine official said on 3 June 2018. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

EU lawmakers adopt vast carbon market reform



The EU is broadening an emissions trading scheme to more industries and lowering quotas of allowable polluting gases. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE European Parliament adopted sweeping climate measures on Tuesday aimed at massively cutting EU greenhouse emissions, and including the introduction of a carbon border tax on imports.

The legislative step crystallizes an ambitious EU plan to reform Europe's carbon market by broadening an emissions trading scheme to more industries and lowering quotas of allowable polluting gases.

"With today's votes, we reach another milestone," European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen tweeted.

She urged EU member states to give final approval to the laws so they can come into effect.

Under the incoming legislation, European Union carbon

emissions would be reduced by 62 per cent by 2030, compared to levels in 2005 — a big step up from a previous target of a 43 per cent cut. The 27 EU countries are collectively the third biggest global emitter of carbon dioxide.

The biggest by far is China, which is greatly expanding its fleet of coal-fired power plants despite a vow to have carbon emissions peak by 2030 then reduced to net zero by 2060.

Then comes the United States, historically the biggest carbon-gas emitter, which has a long-term strategy of reaching net zero by 2050. US President Joe Biden has brought in a \$370-billion Inflation Reduction Act providing hefty subsidies for US industry to drive the push for a greener America.—AFP

HEALTH/WELLNESS: WORLD

Gum disease might be cause of some arthritis flare-ups: Study

PATIENTS with gum disease are less likely to respond to rheumatoid arthritis treatments, according to a well-documented medical mystery. However, new research may help explain the connection between gum disease and an otherwise disparate condition.

The findings, published in Science Translational Medicine, suggests that breaches in damaged gums allow bacteria in the mouth to seep into the bloodstream, activating an immune response that ultimately pivots to target the body's own proteins and causes arthritis flare-ups.

"If make it harder oral

bacteria are getting in and repeatedly triggering immune responses relevant to rheumatoid arthritis, that could to treat," says Dana Orange, a professor of clinical investigation in the laboratory of Robert B Darnell at The Rockefeller University.

"When doctors encounter arthritis patients who do not respond to treatment, it would be worth it to make sure they aren't missing an underlying gum disease, which is quite treatable".

The Darnell lab had been following a small group of arthritis patients over the course of several years, collecting weekly blood samples and looking for



If make it harder oral bacteria are getting in and repeatedly triggering immune responses relevant to rheumatoid arthritis, that could to treat.

PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/AFP

changes in gene expression to help explain why painful flare-ups occur, when they noticed a

surprising trend.

Two of their patients, who had moderate to severe peri-

odontal disease, had repeated episodes of oral bacteria in their bloodstreams, even when they weren't having dental work. Orange knew that rheumatoid arthritis patients generally have autoantibodies in their bloodstream (rheumatoid arthritis is an auto-immune disease, wherein antibodies attack the body's own proteins and peptides).

In many cases, autoantibodies take specific aim at proteins bearing the signs of citrullination, a process by which one amino acid in the protein is converted into a different one. — ANI

'Kids spend more hours before screen on holidays than in school tenure'

RESEARCHERS have found that primary school children are less active, more likely to be on screens, and tend to have a worse diet than on holidays rather than during the school tenure.

The study was published in the journal 'Pediatric Obesity'.

Assessing responses for 358 primary school students (Grade 4 and 5), researchers found that on holidays, children were likely to be 12 minutes less active each day, 27 minutes more sedentary, and have more than an hour extra of screen time.

During the school holidays, children (aged 9-10) spent 39 per cent more time using screens than during the school year.

UniSA researcher Dr Amanda Watson says children exercise less and eat more unhealthy food



This file photo shows pupils using tablets during courses in a classroom at the Leonard de Vinci 'connected' middle school in Saint-Brieuc, western France. PHOTO: RERESENTATIVE IMAGE/DAMIEN MEYER / AFP

during the holidays, which may contribute to accelerated weight gain and poor health."Everyone is excited when school holidays come around – it's a break from

the daily routine, classrooms, and getting ready on time – but despite the obvious benefits, it can have some setback for kids," Dr Watson says.— ANI

'Patients with multiple tumours in one breast may not need mastectomy'

THE latest study suggested that patients who have multiple tumours in one breast may be able to avoid a mastectomy if the tumours can be removed while leaving enough breast tissue. The study was published in the journal, 'Journal of Clinical Oncology'.

Patients would receive breast-conserving therapy: a lumpectomy followed by whole-breast radiation therapy, rather than mastectomy.

"I am excited about these findings because it will empower patients and the multidisciplinary care teams caring for patients to be thinking about this option for women who may want to preserve their breasts," said Judy Boughey, M.D., lead author and breast surgical oncologist, and the W.H. Odell Professor of Individualized Medicine.

"Some patients may still prefer or require a mastectomy, and

that is a perfectly fine approach. But being able to provide more patients diagnosed with breast cancer with a choice is a great step forward." The prospective, single-arm trial, a study where all women enrolled in the trial are treated the same way, looked at data from 204 eligible women over 40 that had two or three separate areas of breast cancer in the same breast and were interested in breast conservation. — ANI

Early stages of Parkinson's disease can be traced through sensor: Study

RESEARCHERS at the Federal University of So Carlos (UFSCar) and the University of Campinas (UNICAMP) in Brazil invented an electrochemical sensor that can identify Parkinson's disease at various stages.

The gadget was created using a standard 3D printer and showed early disease detection capabilities, serving as a model for the detection of other diseases, according to the study.

Findings in the journal published in the journal Sensors and Actuators B: Chemical.

The sensor rapidly indicates the level of the protein PARK7/DJ-1 in human blood and synthetic cerebrospinal fluid.

The molecule is associated with Parkinson's at levels below 40 microgrammes per litre [40 mg/L]," said Cristiane Kalinke, first author of the article.

Kalinke is a postdoctoral fellow at UNICAMP's Institute of Chemistry (IQ) and a visiting researcher at Manchester Metropolitan University in the United Kingdom.

"It can be printed in various shapes and sizes. It can also be miniaturized to create a genuinely portable device that requires a very small sample," she explained.

To build the sensor, the researchers used a commercial filament made basically of polylactic acid (PLA), a biodegradable polymer, associated with a conductive material (graphene) and other additives.— ANI



Parkinson's disease is a degenerative condition of the brain associated with motor symptoms such as slow movement, tremors, rigidity and other complications.

PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ AFP

ECONOMY WORLD

Soaring inflation dampens Eid holiday spirit in crisis-hit Pakistan



With inflation soaring and political uncertainty leaving the country in turmoil, many Pakistanis are worried about meeting their monthly rent. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE holiday that marks the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan used to be a guaranteed earner for Pakistan's

small shops and businesses — a big-spending week that could match the take from the rest of the year.

This year, however, many worry they will not even make enough to pay their monthly rent, with inflation hitting its highest levels in decades and political turmoil mirroring the country in uncertainty.

"There are no customers, there are no buyers," said Shehzad Ahmed, who runs a shop selling bags, jewellery and other goods in the eastern city of Lahore.

The South Asian country of more than 220 million people saw year-on-year inflation hit 35.4 per cent in March. Food prices surged more than 47 per cent in 12 months, with transport costs rising by 55 per cent.

Pakistan is deeply in debt and needs to introduce tough

reforms to unlock a tranche of a \$6.5 billion bailout from the International Monetary Fund in order to avoid default.

The economy has been wrecked by years of financial mismanagement and political instability — a situation exacerbated by a global energy crisis and devastating floods that left a third of the country under water last year. The end of Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, is celebrated by Muslims around the world by feasting with relatives and friends, exchanging gifts, and dressing up in new clothes and shoes.

The dire economic straits have, however, cast a decidedly sombre mood across the country's normally vibrant markets.—**AFP**

Saudi Arabia transfers more Aramco oil shares to wealth fund

SAUDI Arabia has put a second four-per cent chunk of shares of the Aramco energy giant, worth tens of billions of dollars, under the control of the country's sovereign wealth fund, state media said Sunday.

The move underscores Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's campaign to use the Gulf kingdom's vast energy resources to open up the economy under his "Vision 2030" domestic reform agenda.

The official Saudi Press Agency said the shares had been transferred to Sanabil Investments, a firm controlled by the kingdom's Public Investment Fund (PIF), one of the world's biggest sovereign wealth funds



Aramco and its assets were once kept under vice-like government control, off-limits to outside investment. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

with more than \$620 billion in assets.

Last year, four per cent of Aramco shares, estimated at the

time to be worth \$80 billion, were transferred directly to PIF.

The latest shares are worth nearly \$80 billion, based on the

current market capitalization of Aramco, one of the world's most valuable companies.

Prince Mohammed, the kingdom's de facto ruler, "indicated that the transfer of part of the state's shares in Saudi Aramco is a continuation of Saudi Arabia's long-term initiatives to boost and diversify the national economy and expand investment opportunities", the report said.

"The transfer will also solidify PIF's strong financial position and credit rating," it added, noting Riyadh still owns 90 per cent of Aramco's shares.

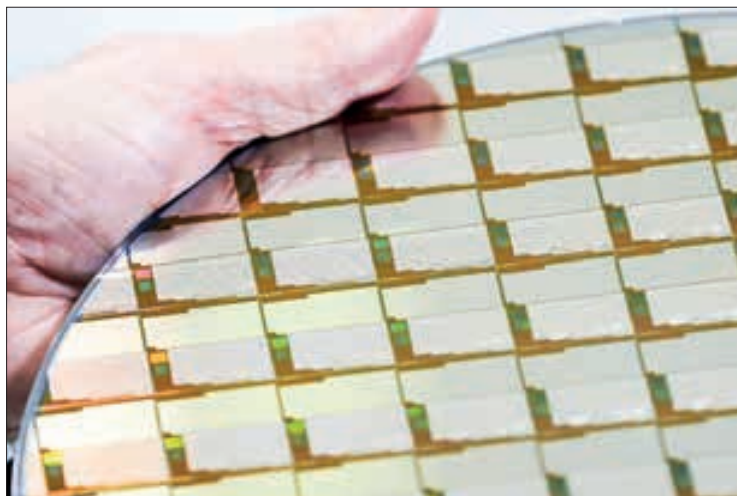
Sanabil's investments "include venture, growth capital and small buyouts", according to its website.—**AFP**

EU agrees plan to boost chip production

THE European Parliament and EU member states reached an agreement Tuesday on a plan to boost the supply of semiconductors in Europe, as the bloc races to reduce its dependence on Asian suppliers.

The European Union has prioritized local chip production after the coronavirus pandemic triggered supply chain shocks that led to significant shortages.

Asian industry, especially firms in China and Taiwan, currently dominate the manufacture and export of semiconductors. EU chief Ursula von der Leyen said the deal "will allow for a competitive chips industry and build the foundation for a global market share. It will power a clean tech industry made in Europe and strengthen our digital resilience and sovereignty."—**AFP**



The EU has made producing chips a strategic priority after the coronavirus pandemic caused supply chain shocks. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

NEWS IN BRIEF

UK unemployment rises as cost-of-living crisis bites

UK unemployment edged higher in the three months to the end of February, official data showed Tuesday, as the economy continues to be impacted by high inflation.

The rate increased to 3.8 per cent from 3.7 per cent in the three months to the end of January, the Office for National Statistics said in a statement.

The ONS said the increase "was driven by people unemployed for up to six months".

Darren Morgan, director of economic statistics, said the number of days lost to strikes picked up again in February.

Public and private sector workers have been striking since last year to try and win increases to pay, whose value has been eroded by elevated inflation.—**AFP**

Bangladesh's first green fertilizer factory built under China's BRI nears completion

WITH machines roaring, the construction work of Bangladesh's Ghorashal-Polash Urea Fertilizer Project (GPUFP), set to be the country's largest and first-ever green fertilizer factory in South Asia, is nearing completion.

More than 850 Chinese employees from the China National Chemical Engineering & Construction Corporation Seven Ltd (CC7), in collaboration with its Japanese partner Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI), have been working round the clock to complete the mega project as scheduled.

Since the project's start in August 2020, more than 90 per cent of the construction work has already been completed, GPUFP project director Mohammad Rajiour Rahman Mollick told Xinhua recently at the construction site, adding they can finish the project more than two months ahead of schedule, by December 2023.—Xinhua

UK financial services firm EY to cut 3,000 jobs in US



EY said the job cuts "are part of the ongoing management of our business and not a result of the recently concluded strategic review", the spokesperson said. **PHOTO: AFP**

BRITISH financial services giant EY, which last week dropped a plan to split its audit and advisory units, said Monday it will cut 3,000 US jobs, citing overcapacity at the firm. "After assessing the impact of current economic conditions, strong employee retention rates and overcapacity in parts of our firm, we have made the difficult business decision to separate approximately 3,000 US employees, representing less than five per cent of our US workforce," said an EY spokesperson.

The move comes after EY stopped its planned reorganization, called "Project Everest," which aimed to accelerate growth and avoid conflicts of interest.

The change was opposed by the firm's US branch. — AFP

Apple opens first India store in market push

APPLE opened its first retail store in India on Tuesday, underscoring the US tech titan's increasing focus on the South Asian nation as a key sales market and alternative manufacturing hub to China.

Apple CEO Tim Cook personally opened the doors to welcome customers as staff cheered.

Hundreds of admirers of the iPhone giant queued around the store in a swanky shopping mall in the financial capital Mumbai, some of them waiting overnight.

The California-based firm is betting big on the nation of 1.4 billion people — home to the second-highest number of smartphone users in the world, after China — with a second store to open in the capital Delhi on Thursday.

The world's biggest company in terms of market value is also expanding its manufacturing footprint in India as it seeks to diversify its supply chain away from a heavy dependence on neighbouring China.

Apple called the stores a "major expansion" of its presence in India in a statement on Monday.

"We're excited to build on our longstanding history," Cook said in the statement. — AFP

Fast Retailing unveils energy-saving concept Uniqlo store

FAST Retailing Co, the operator of the Uniqlo casual clothing chain, on Wednesday unveiled a concept store featuring various energy-saving and customer-focused features as the company moves to refresh the image of its stand-alone outlets.

The move comes as it faces a lagging growth in the domestic Uniqlo business as compared to its overseas operations. The new design is expected to help attract more customers in suburban areas where it has a sizable number of stand-alone roadside stores, the company said.

The store in Maebashi, Gunma Prefecture, northwest of Tokyo, boasts a coffee stand, flower shop, apparel repair studio and a kids' play area as well as massive Uniqlo logos on the corners of the building. It is scheduled to open Friday.

Fast Retailing expects the new store, designed by Japanese creative director Kashiwa Sato, will increase the amount of time customers are in its outlets and how much they spend on average, it said. The clothing retailer earlier this month unveiled a plan to achieve 10 trillion yen in annual sales over the next 10 years, a goal more than triple the 2.68 trillion yen expected for the year through August 2023.

It said the store will serve as a model for all its new stand-alone stores — those located outside of malls or not part of or connected to larger structures — adding that it hopes to undertake a future worldwide rollout. — Kyodo

Apple CEO Tim Cook and Deirdre O'Brien, Apple's senior vice-president of Retail and People greet people at the inauguration of India's first Apple retail store in Mumbai, India, on April 17. **PHOTO: AFP**



Apple CEO Tim Cook and Deirdre O'Brien, Apple's senior vice-president of Retail and People greet people at the inauguration of India's first Apple retail store in Mumbai, India, on April 17. **PHOTO: AFP**

<p>CLAIMS DAY NOTICE M.V JIN HANG FU ZHAN VOY.NO. (2303)</p> <p>Consignees of cargo carried on M.V JIN HANG FU ZHAN VOY.NO. (2303) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 19-4-2023 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MKH where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day. Phone No: 2301928</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Shipping Agency Department Myanma Port Authority</p> <p>Agent For: M/S UNI SPRING LOGISTICS HOLDING PTE LTD</p>	<p>CLAIMS DAY NOTICE M.V UNI ACCORD VOY.NO. (0291-746N)</p> <p>Consignees of cargo carried on M.V UNI ACCORD VOY.NO. (0291-746N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 20-4-2023 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AWPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day. Phone No: 2301185</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Shipping Agency Department Myanma Port Authority</p> <p>Agent For: M/S EVERGREEN MARINE (ASIA) PTE., LTD</p>	<p>CLAIMS DAY NOTICE M.V HAIAN BELL VOY.NO. (2308S)</p> <p>Consignees of cargo carried on M.V HAIAN BELL VOY.NO. (2308S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 20-4-2023 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of HPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day. Phone No: 2301185</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Shipping Agency Department Myanma Port Authority</p> <p>Agent For: M/S SITC CONTAINER LINE CO., LTD</p>
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GLOBAL AFFAIRS

N Korean leader orders final preparations for spy satellite launch

NORTH Korean leader Kim Jong Un has ordered the country's space agency to make final preparations for launching its first reconnaissance satellite, the country's state media reported Wednesday.

During his visit to the National Aerospace Development Administration on Tuesday, Kim said the satellite's production was "completed" this month, according to the official Korean Central News Agency, but the launch schedule was not mentioned.

The leader has ordered the deployment of "several reconnaissance satellites" in the future.

"Possessing and operating military reconnaissance means is the most crucial primary task for increasing the



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un (center L) visits the National Aerospace Development Administration on 18 April 2023. **PHOTO: KCNA/KYODO**

military effectiveness" in the face of strengthening US-South Korea ties, Kim was quoted by KCNA as saying.

The UN Security Council has attempted to bolster sanctions on North Korea as the country has stepped up missile testing since last year, amid growing concerns that its seventh nuclear test may be conducted anytime soon.

But given such efforts have been blocked by vetoes from China and Russia, approval is likely to be voted down again, even if a potential launch of the reconnaissance satellite increases calls for stronger sanctions. Photos carried by state media showed Kim was accompanied by his daughter during the visit to the space agency. — Kyodo



Migrants seeking asylum wait to board a bus at a checkpoint in Eagle Pass, Texas, the United States, on 10 October 2022. **PHOTO: NICK WAGNER/XINHUA**

US ignores warnings as migrant children put to work: New York Times

OVER the past two years, more than 250,000 migrant children have come alone to the United States, with thousands of them having ended up in punishing jobs across the country — working overnight in slaughterhouses, replacing roofs, operating machinery in factories — all in violation of child labour laws, The New

York Times reported on Monday, citing a recent investigation.

"After the article's publication in February, the White House announced policy changes and a crackdown on companies that hire children. But all along, there were signs of the explosive growth of this labour force and warnings that the (Joe) Biden ad-

ministration ignored or missed," noted the report.

Again and again, veteran government staffers and outside contractors told the Health and Human Services Department, including in reports that reached Secretary Xavier Becerra, that children appeared to be at risk, according to the report. — Xinhua

WORLD: TOP HEADLINES

Russia launches drone attack on Ukraine's Odesa

RUSSIA launched a drone attack on Ukraine's southern port city of Odesa early Wednesday but there were no reports of casualties, authorities said.

"At night, the enemy carried out an attack by UAVs of the Shahed-136 type on the Odesa region," Yuriy Kruk, head of the Odesa district military administration, said in a statement on Telegram.

Kruk said Ukraine's air defences had destroyed most of the attacking drones but some civilian infrastructure had been hit. — AFP

Kuwait crisis deepens as parliament dissolved

KUWAIT'S emir dissolved parliament on Monday and called a new general election, continuing a political crisis between parliament and the executive that has stalled reforms.

Despite being the only Gulf Arab state to have an elected government, the emirate — one of the world's largest producers of crude oil — remains mired in political turmoil. — AFP

New Zealand cat killing competition axed after backlash

A competition in New Zealand for children to hunt and kill feral cats has been scrapped following public outcry, with a major animal welfare group on Wednesday welcoming the decision.

Organizers of an annual unting competition caused an uproar when they announced a new category for children under 14 to hunt feral cats for a top prize of 250 New Zealand dollars (\$155).

The category, which came with a warning for youngsters not to kill pets, has been scrapped, organizers said in a statement on Tuesday.

New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals said it was "both pleased and



Organizers of an annual hunting competition caused an uproar when they announced a new category for children under 14 to hunt feral cats. **PHOTO: AFP**

relieved that the children's category which involved shooting

feral cats has been removed". — AFP

India population to surpass China mid-year

INDIA is set to overtake China as the world's most populous country by mid-year with almost three million more people, UN estimates showed on Wednesday.

India's population will be 1.4286 billion compared to China's 1.4257 billion at mid-year, the United Nations Population Fund's State of World Population report showed.

The number of people in China shrank last year for the first time since 1960, when millions starved to death under the disastrous agricultural policies of former leader Mao Zedong.

Many have blamed the slowdown on the soaring cost of living as well as the growing number of women going into the workforce and seeking higher education.

Beijing ended its strict "one-child policy", imposed



Commuters go past a hostel named 'Bollywood' in Mumbai on 16 September 2019. PHOTO: INDRANIL MUKHERJEE/AFP/FILE

in the 1980s amid overpopulation fears, in 2016 and started

letting couples have three children in 2021.

China faces a looming demographic decline as birth

rates plunge and its workforce ages.

Several regions have also announced plans to boost birth rates — but official efforts have so far failed to reverse the decline.

India has no recent official data on how many people it has because it has not conducted a census since 2011.

India's once in a decade census was due to be held in 2021 but was delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

It is now bogged down by logistical hurdles and political reluctance, making it unlikely the massive exercise will begin anytime soon.

Critics say the government is deliberately delaying the census to hide data on contentious issues such as unemployment ahead of national elections next year. — AFP

Thousands flee Sudan capital as clashes rage despite truce

THOUSANDS of residents fled Sudan's capital Wednesday as

fighting between the army and paramilitaries, that has killed

around 200 people, raged for a fifth day after a 24-hour truce collapsed.

The violence erupted on Saturday between the forces of two generals who seized power in a 2021 coup: army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his deputy, Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, who commands the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

It followed a bitter dispute between Burhan and Daglo over the planned integration of the RSF into the regular army — a key condition for a final deal aimed at resuming Sudan's democratic transition. — AFP



Smoke rises in the background as a car drives along an almost deserted street in Khartoum on April 16. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Uncertainty persists as Colombia seeks peace with FARC dissidents

COLOMBIA'S largest group of dissident guerrillas who rejected a 2016 peace deal with the state is asking for a new opportunity to negotiate with the government, but uncertainty reigns over how President Gustavo Petro will achieve his proposed "total peace".

On Sunday, the Estado Mayor Central (EMC), the largest dissident group from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), announced it was holding a massive meeting of rebels and villagers in an area it controls.

The EMC said it was ready

to discuss peace "with social justice" and would begin doing so from 16 May.

When FARC, which was the most powerful guerrilla group in the Americas and is now a communist political party, decided to disarm, most of its 13,000 members did so. — AFP



Armed FARC dissidents produced a show of force in their fiefdom in southern Colombia. PHOTO: AFP

WORLD: TOP HEADLINES

12 detained over Beijing hospital fire

TWELVE people, including the hospital chief, have been detained after the Beijing Changfeng Hospital fire that had left 29 dead as of Wednesday morning, according to a press conference.

The fire broke out Tuesday afternoon and was extinguished within an hour. The dead included 26 patients, one family member of a patient, one hospital caregiver and one nurse. — Xinhua

Indonesian fishermen saved after shipwreck off Australia

A group of Indonesian fishermen are recovering after being shipwrecked on a coral atoll off Australia's west coast for six days without food or supplies, authorities said Wednesday.

Ten men washed up on Bedwell Island, about 300 kilometres (186 miles) west of the resort town Broome, after their boat was battered by a severe tropical cyclone while fishing in the Indian Ocean. — AFP

N Korean leader orders final preparations for spy satellite launch

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SPORT

Myanmar to play Philippines in opener of SEA Games Women's Football Tourney



Myanmar team's Captain Khin Marlar Tun (No 10) tries to break through the Filipino backline players during the previous SEA Games women's football tournament. **PHOTO: MFF**

THE SEA Games women's football group matches have come out, and the Myanmar team will start playing against the Philippines.

Only eight teams will compete in the SEA Games Women's Football Tournament.

Indonesia, which was previously in Group A, withdrew, leaving only eight teams.

Team Myanmar is placed in Group A together with defending champion Viet Nam, the Philippines, and Malaysia while host Cambodia is in Group B with

ASEAN powerhouse Thailand, Singapore and Laos.

The group matches will be held on 3, 6, and 9 May and the Myanmar team, which is in tough Group A, will have to play the first and second matches against two big teams, and is expected to make more efforts to reach the semi-finals.

Myanmar will face the SEA Games women's football bronze medalist Philippines on 3 May, current champion Viet Nam on 6 May, and Malaysia on 9 May.

Team Myanmar is likely to

struggle as they are in the same group as the SEA Games Women's football defending champion Viet Nam and the Philippine team, which has improved significantly in just a few years, and won the SEA Games bronze medal in 2022, the ASEAN Women's Championship and a ticket to the 2023 Women's World Cup.

The Myanmar women's squad had a bad result in the first round of the Paris Olympic qualifiers in April, so they will likely try to get a good result in the SEA Games. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

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.

Chelsea's limp Champions League exit completes season from hell

AS Chelsea owner Todd Boehly surveyed the wreckage of his club's season from hell after their Champions League exit on Tuesday, the American might have pondered just how long it will be before they feature in the competition again.

Chelsea are left with nothing but pride to play for in the final weeks of a disastrous campaign after Real Madrid's 2-0 victory in the quarter-final second leg at Stamford Bridge completed a 4-0 aggregate success for the holders.

Appropriately, the troubled Premier League side once again paid the price for a lack of cutting edge as they

wasted a host of chances before succumbing to a pair of clinical Real moves finished by Rodrygo.

Since Boehly joined forces with co-owner Behdad Eghbali's Clearlake Capital to buy Chelsea last year, the west London club have suffered one self-inflicted wound after another.

They are languishing in 11th in the Premier League, will finish without a trophy and are unlikely to even qualify for the Europa Conference League, leaving Boehly and Eghbali facing a turbulent close-season as they try to repair Chelsea's tarnished reputation. — AFP

Rashford return to training gives Man Utd welcome boost



Marcus Rashford has returned to training for Manchester United. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

MARCUS Rashford has returned to training for Manchester United, giving the club

a major boost ahead of the second leg of their Europa League quarter-final against Sevilla on

Thursday.

The England international, who has scored a career-high 28 goals this season, suffered a groin strain in a 2-0 win over Everton on 8 April.

United said last week that Rashford would likely be absent for a "few games" but he could make a timely return in Spain, with Erik ten Hag's men in the hunt for a treble of cup competitions.

The tie is finely balanced at 2-2 after two late own goals conceded by United in the first leg at Old Trafford.

Luke Shaw and Marcel Sabitzer also took part in training on Wednesday to ease the Red Devils' injury crisis. — AFP