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Crowds of shoppers and vendors gather for annual household clayware and joyful toy pot festival in Mandalay yesterday.

Clayware Festival draws avid travellers to Ohbo Ward in Mandalay

The clayware festival took place in the Ohbo-Shwegyin ward of Aungmyethazan Township, Mandalay, on 24 August where hordes of visitors flocked to procure earthen household utensils and delightful toy pots for children.

The festival held in a single day — the eighth waxing of Wagaung every year — was bustling with vendors and buyers who converged to exchange an array of wares such as toy pots, earthen pots, vases, drinking water containers, and bamboo utensils.

“The festival was thronged with a

larger number of visitors in the afternoon than in the morning. Visitors bought toy pots for their children. This year's prices of toy pots were higher than last year. Vendors sold a set of eight small toy pots for K1,000 last year but five pots for K1,000 this year. Prices of toy pots depended on heavy rains and other commodity prices,” said toy pot vendor Ko Myint Thein.

Two days ahead of the festival, vendors arrived at the festival venue and started selling various items of toys made of clay, fetching more than K1,000 to K2,500 per unit. Clay toy pots were made in the villages near Inwa of Man-

dalay, where they could take quality clay for making toy pots.

Some vendors sold flowers. Visitors kept these flowers on their heads and went round the festival. Other vendors sold traditional snacks and household utensils made of bamboo. Such a single-day festival has been held for many years, according to a resident from Ohbo Ward.

The clayware festival is one of the intangible cultural festivals of Myanmar. It is held on a single day every year, leaving indelible impressions on both locals and travellers alike. — Maung Aye Chan/TTA

Myanmar intensifies efforts in advancing coconut value chain project

Myanmar has been implementing the “Potential Product (coconut) value chain” project under the ACEMES-ROK Fund, according to the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization.

Under the supervision of the Mekong Institute, Thailand, the Quarterly Progress Report meeting for projects running under the ACEMES-ROK Cooperation Fund was

virtually held on 23 August.

Mr Madhurjya K Dutta, director of Mekong Institute's Trade and Investment Facilitation Department- TIF gave an opening remark and the representatives from the respective countries elaborated on the performance of the work plans during the quarter. A team led by Naw Mutakapaw, director-general of that project discussed

matters regarding the project completion of the “Potential Product (coconut) Value Chain” and further work plans and coordination to achieve the project goals.

More than 20 members of the Project Implementing Agency and officials from Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and Viet Nam were present at the meeting. — TWA/EM

NATIONAL

Nine Objectives of the State Administration Council

1. Political Affairs

- (a) To ensure a strong, disciplined and authentic multiparty democratic system and foster a Union founded upon democratic and federal systems.
- (b) To prioritize the attainment of enduring peace for the entire nation in alignment with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).
- (c) To emphasize the full restoration of peace and stability and the rule of law throughout the Union for the people to enjoy socioeconomic security.

2. Economic Affairs

- (a) To enhance agriculture and livestock production with modern technologies for the benefit of all National people and to promote growth in other sectors of the economy for achieving national prosperity and food security.
- (b) To invigorate Micro-, Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) for elevating the export sector, leveraging the momentum for sustained economic growth.
- (c) To spur the cultivation of oil crops to meet targeted production levels, thereby achieving domestic self-sufficiency in edible oil while striving towards the export of surplus oil.

3. Social Affairs

- (a) To implement a universally accessible and comprehensive education system in order to enhance the knowledge and skills base for the nation and nurture skilled technicians for the manufacturing sector.
- (b) To elevate the health and sports sectors crucial for all the people, thus improving the nation's life expectancy and health.
- (c) To nurture youth to become physically strong, intellectually capable, morally upright, socially adept and economically empowered young individuals poised to lead the nation's development efforts.

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council

Order No 77/2023

8th Waxing of Wagaung 1385 ME
24 August 2023

Appointment and Duty Assignment of Judge for Kachin State High Court

THE State Administration Council has appointed and assigned U Aung Myint to the duties of Judge for Kachin State High Court under Section 419 of the Constitution.

By order,

Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary
State Administration Council

Message from U Than Swe, Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to Mr Don Pramudwinai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand on the occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Kingdom of Thailand

It gives me immense pleasure to convey my warm felicitations and best wishes to Your Excellency on the momentous occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Kingdom of Thailand on 24 August 2023.

Myanmar has always attached great importance to and highly valued its good neighbourly relations and multi-faceted cooperation with Thailand which both countries have enjoyed for several decades. As we usher in a new chapter in our bilateral relations on this special occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, I look forward to working more closely with Your Excellency in both bilateral and multilateral contexts, for further enhancement of friendly relations and natural strategic partnership in the best interests of our two peoples and countries.

Taking this opportunity, I wish you good health, happiness and for the people of the Kingdom of Thailand, lasting prosperity.

Please accept, Excellency, the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.

Message from Mr Don Pramudwinai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand to U Than Swe, Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on the occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Kingdom of Thailand and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

On behalf of the People of Thailand, I have the honour to extend my sincerest congratulations and best wishes to Your Excellency and the people of Myanmar on the auspicious occasion of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Kingdom of Thailand and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Over the past seventy-five years, our bilateral ties have been cordial, friendly and robust. Our cooperation and partnership have grown from strength to strength. As "Natural Strategic Partners", Thailand and Myanmar have embarked on a shared journey aiming at addressing common challenges and fostering prosperity for our two countries and peoples.

As we commemorate this important milestone, I wish to reaffirm Thailand's commitment to further strengthening our bilateral cooperation to jointly pursue peace, prosperity, and development and to ensure that our people-to-people ties will continue to thrive in the years to come.

Accept, Excellency, the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.

Exchange of Messages of Felicitations

On the occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Kingdom of Thailand which falls on 24 August

2023, messages of felicitations were exchanged between Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the State Administration Council and Prime Minister of the Republic of the Union of My-

anmar, and General Prayut Chan-o-cha (Retd), Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, U Than Swe, Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of

Myanmar, and Mr Don Pramudwinai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand. — MNA

Message from Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the State Administration Council and Prime Minister of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to General Prayut Chan-o-cha (Retd), Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand on the occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Kingdom of Thailand

I take great pleasure in conveying my cordial greetings and warm felicitations to Your Excellency as we celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Kingdom of Thailand on 24 August 2023.

It is my conviction that the commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of our diplomatic relations offers us a great opportunity to renew our commitment to work together for the greater advancement of our existing amicable relations and close collaboration both bilaterally and multilaterally.

As our unique warm friendship and natural strategic partnership open a new chapter in our relations, I have every confidence that through our collective efforts, we shall be able to consolidate our bonds of friendship and expand our bilateral cooperation across many areas, including trade and investment, culture and tourism and people-to-people exchanges.

Taking this opportunity, I wish to convey my best wishes for your good health and personal well-being with the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.

Message from General Prayut Chan-o-cha (Retd), Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand to Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the State Administration Council and Prime Minister of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on the occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Kingdom of Thailand and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

As this year marks the auspicious occasion of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Kingdom of Thailand and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, it gives me great pleasure to extend my warmest congratulations and best wishes to Your Excellency and the people of Myanmar:

For the past 75 years, Thailand and Myanmar have enjoyed close and cordial relations. Our strong people-to-people ties, based on shared cultural traditions, have served as a solid foundation for our bilateral relations.

As neighbours sharing a long border and as “Natural Strategic Partners”, our two nations have worked together to address common challenges and collaborated across wide-ranging areas of mutual interest.

In the spirit of true neighbourliness, I wish to reaffirm Thailand’s steadfast support for Myanmar’s pursuit of a peaceful and prosperous democratic federal union. Our commitment to deepening bilateral cooperation for the mutual benefit of our two countries and peoples remains unwavering. It is my firm belief that our strong and enduring partnership will continue to flourish and guide our two countries towards a future marked by mutual peace, prosperity, and development.

Accept, Excellency, the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.

Myanmar calls for concrete collaboration at 17th AMMTC

Lt-GEN YAR PYAE, a member of the State Administration Council and Union Minister for Home Affairs, called for more concrete collaboration between ASEAN nations and other nations at the global level to combat transnational crimes at the AMMTC meeting on 21 August.

The Union minister made the call at a 17th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime and its Related Meetings held in Labuan Bajo, Indonesia, from 20 to 23 August. In the meeting, he presented Myanmar’s current operations against human trafficking resulting from online scams, crackdowns on cyber crimes and casualties by many forms of violence within the country. The minister also cautioned, referring to the Global Peace Index 2023, a future global threat posed by drone attacks as violent groups start committing crimes by using drones.

Lt-Gen Yar Pyae had a separate meeting with Mr Xu Datong, Vice-Minister for Public Security, China, on 21 August, to discuss matters pertaining to the convening of



Union Home Affairs Minister Lt-Gen Yar Pyae are seen (second from left) attending the 17th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Indonesia.

ministerial-level meetings under the MoU between the two countries, combatting online scams rampant in border areas, information sharing and bolstering collaboration on combatting narcotic drugs and controlling precursor chemicals.

Lt-Gen Yar Pyae encouraged the member countries of the 10th AMMTC + China Consultation meeting on 22 August

to strengthen their cooperation in combatting crimes using technological opportunities resulting from globalization. He also presented in the meeting the measures taken by Myanmar in the implementation of the 2017-2023 MoU between ASEAN and China to cooperate in the field of non-traditional security issues. A joint statement was issued in the 10th AMMTC + China

Consultation meeting.

At the 8th AMMTC + Japan Consultation meeting and the 3rd AMMTC + ROK Consultation meeting, while confronting a comment by Japan’s AMMTC leader on the current internal affairs of Myanmar Lt-Gen Yar Pyae notified that the current meeting was to share the views on transnational crime suppression and cooperation between the member nations and not a venue for discussing internal affairs of a country. The situation happening in Myanmar is not an issue of the countries within the region, but it is just an internal affair of Myanmar, he further explained.

He stressed that countries willing to discuss matters relating to political issues in Myanmar could seek a separate meeting. He also underscored that ASEAN countries can peacefully coexist without interfering with the internal issues of other member countries.

Myanmar AMMTC delegation led by Lt-Gen Yar Pyae arrived back home yesterday. — MNA/TH

NATIONAL



Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn is seen being interviewed by the China Global Television Net.

Interview of Union Information Minister to China Global Television Net (CGTN)

UNION Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn had an exclusive interview with China Global Television Net (CGTN) on 18 August 2023. The following is the transcript.

Q: Media cooperation plays a key role in public awareness-raising activities for the Belt and Road initiative. Some Western countries defame and smear the Belt and Road and the image of China and it causes misunderstanding between the people of China and Myanmar. What do you think about the promotion of the Myanmar people's understanding of the Belt and Road initiative to promote China-Myanmar cooperation? What is the role of media in creating an effective public perception community for maintaining better peace and tranquillity, development and prosperity?

A: Belt and Road is a great sector mainly comprised of culture and mutual communication among the people. If we can use it effectively, it will be a great operation for all. When I arrived at the UN, what I saw is that the world is just like a village as there is no discrimination and all human beings are standing tall in this world. If the countries work together, the world where human beings live will become a more stable and developing site.

Therefore, our country is interested in Belt and Road and willing to participate in it. During my tour

to Kunming, I visited the world's third largest market and the wholesale flower market. If these things are transported to the neighbouring countries and all over the world, it will be a very nice business. Similarly, transporting Myanmar's products to other countries vice versa the products from here are sent to Myanmar, which will facilitate the livelihood and living standard of people of the two countries.

The Head of the State, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, also emphasizes the MSMEs. We will export the surplus products if we have enough for local consumption. To do so, the Senior General set two national tasks such as national prosperity and food security. The scope of national prosperity is wide. Because, it refers to the food, clothing, accommodation and transport in addition to the prosperity of the people of the two countries. These are the national objectives and priorities of the Senior General. To carry out this objective, we need a good economy for State development as well as stability. If we consider the Belt and Road frankly, it is an effective sector for bilateral relationships and also for the world. It will bring benefits to our country, China and two governments and people of two countries. Therefore, the Belt and Road initiative brings a lot of good programmes. Therefore, we are also eagerly willing

to join in this sector.

Q: This year, President Xi Jinping proposed a global socio-cultural initiative and stressed that co-existence, exchanges and mutual learning among different civilizations accepting the different social cultures play an irreplaceable role in advancing humanity's modernization process and making the garden of world civilizations flourish. How do you understand that initiative? What is the media's role in promoting the cultures of two countries? What is your idea for media to become a bridge between people of two countries?

A: Myanmar and China have been good neighbouring countries for many years. Now, it reaches Pauk Phaw relationships and promotes bilateral relationships deeply. The National Theater of the country was constructed by China and also Thuwanna Stadium. Currently, the State Administration Council is also negotiating to launch many projects with the help of China.

The Art Centre and then Wazira Cinema. The country will recognize them as "National Red-Carpet Theatre" and plans are underway to renovate them with Chinese assistance. The Film Archive is one of these plans. These plans are offered as cultural and bilateral relationships. Being a neighbouring country, if the people have positive thinking, the two governments will be also like this and we are neighbouring countries... like the saying goes... a good nation can host its guests. If our neighbouring countries are weak, the powerful neighbouring countries should help them. Similarly, if a powerful nation faces certain problems, we, as good neighbouring countries should help it. We also appreciate the initiatives on cooperation of President Xi Jinping. Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing also makes concerted efforts day and night to ensure stability as much as he can. We sent three Union ministers to trade fairs in Kunming showing the

It reaches Pauk Phaw relationships and promotes bilateral relationships deeply.

deep emphasis on China in addition to the bilateral relationships and cultural exchanges that President Xi wants.

Our Prime Minister sent three Union ministers to China to promote the economy, social and media sectors. We will beef up the bilateral relationship in the coming years. The media sector is one of these plans. The media field is very wide. If we cooperate, it will develop the friendship between the two countries and reach a future with stability and development.

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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.

NATIONAL

Interview of Union Information Minister to ...

FROM PAGE -4

Q: What results did China and Myanmar media achieve under Belt and Road, and Lancang-Mekong Cooperation? The communicative devices are enormously developing and media is transformed into digital systems. So, what potential will the media cooperation of the two countries make in the future? What is your expectation of media cooperation be-

still needs to reach out to foreign countries. Therefore, when we were in Kunming, China, we were likely to cooperate with YMG. There will be steps to reach MoU. Currently, we discuss and exchange information. Then, we arranged to sign a MoU with CMG. If we complete the discussion with Yunnan TV in Yunnan, we will make two steps: one is an information exchange and the No 2 is a mutual



Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn views round the Yunnan TV.

tween the two countries?

A: It can be said media influences the world today. The world becomes a village. Each of the global citizens can instantly know what is happening in the world. Media is so swift. Previously, there was no such system and we didn't know what was happening in certain places of the country. Now, we can even know the current situation of the countries at the edge of the world in a timely manner. The online or internet era is so wide and it has become a key role.

When we look at the situation of Myanmar, the media influence can cause delays in the situation and development of our country. It means ... because of misinformation and disinformation. Some countries intentionally spread false information and news about the current situation in Myanmar covering the true news using techniques and other political ways to disable the neighbouring countries and other world countries to access the true information.

When the foreign countries do not know the actual situation of Myanmar, it can lead to misunderstanding and trust loss and it also weakens the bilateral relationships and friendship. Therefore, media is an important sector. The Ministry of Information rebuts false news and disinformation as much as we can and provides the people with true information to a certain extent. However, it

visit. We will provide the needed things to be able to study our media condition. Then, it concerns with Entertainment sector that also related to culture. If our people watch the movies featuring cultures and traditions of Chinese people, they will know the culture, nature and attitude of Chinese people. If the Chinese people watch Myanmar movies featuring Myanmar's culture, they can learn the traditions and culture of Myanmar people comprising different ethnic people. When the people of two countries have a mutual understanding, the bilateral relationship of two governments will become closer and closer.

Our country will not spread false news and misinformation to the world with the help of our neighbouring country, China. When we provide the world with true news and government-approved information on the current situation of our country via the Chinese media outlet, the world can know the actual situation of our country and it will bring stability and development to our country in the future sooner or later.

The visit to Kunming made me feel extremely satisfied. We can see that the media relation gets a proper acceleration. As we have mutual trust and understanding, we can beef up the cooperation in media way to the whole areas including China with closer media cooperation. Thank you. — MNA/KTZH



The group documentary photo captured at the event in Laos.

Myanmar's Minister attends ASEAN environment meetings

UNION Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MoNREC) U Khin Maung Yi led Myanmar's delegation at the 17th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Environment and the 18th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transboundary Haze Pollution Control. These meetings, aimed at enhancing ASEAN collaboration, were held in Laos from 22 to 24 August.

The event brought together environmental ministers from ASEAN member states and partners like Japan, South Korea, China, and the United States. The opening ceremony occurred on 23 August in Laos' National Convention Centre, attended by ministers, deputy ministers, and officials from the ASEAN Secretariat among others.

During the meetings, discussions revolved around crucial topics such as regional environmental cooperation, climate change declarations for UNFCCC COP28, ASEAN's Clean and Green School Award, and strategies for haze pollution and peatland management. Union Minister U Khin Maung Yi emphasized Myanmar's forest conservation efforts and the importance of renewable energy projects in rural

areas. The Union minister also expressed Myanmar's full support for the ASEAN Coordination Centre for Transboundary Haze Pollution Control. The evening witnessed award ceremonies and recognition of Myanmar's contributions, including the ASEAN Clean and Green School Award and the ASEAN Youth Environmental Protection Championship award.

Among the winners, Myanmar's Basic Education Primary School in Dauntkwe village of the Ayeyawady Region secured the ASEAN Clean and Green School Award (2023). Dr Kaung Htet Swan was honoured with the ASEAN Youth Environmental Protection Championship (2023) in the Senior Category.

As the meetings concluded, the Union minister participated in the handover ceremony for the ASEAN Centre on Climate Change and the ASEAN Coordination Centre on Transboundary Haze Pollution Control to the ASEAN Secretariat. Myanmar's involvement in these discussions highlights its commitment to regional environmental cooperation and sustainable practices. — MNA/TS

COVID-19 report, 24 August 2023

NEW TESTS	4,675
NEW CASE	1
CASUALTIES	0

CURRENT AFFAIRS

STUDENTS planning to sit for the 2024 matriculation examination can buy the exam application forms from 1 September 2023 at the Department of Myanmar Examinations, according to the release by the department.

The department will sell an exam application form at the price of K200 per exam form along with a deposit stamp at a price of K700, totalling K900. The application forms and cards are divided into two colours — green and pink — depending on the relevant subjects the students have taken to sit for the exam.

Students who passed Grade 10 in old format or curriculums and failed to sit for the exam for their own reasons and those who failed Grade 11 under old curriculums are also allowed to sit for the exam as external candidates, the release said.

The external students are required to purchase a deposit stamp worth K700 at the relevant township education offices stick it on the upper left corner of the exam forms and submit them between 1

2024 matriculation exam application forms available from 1 September



Students are seen sitting for the 2023 matriculation examination in a school.

and 29 September 2023 at the respective township education offices.

The headmasters of basic high schools, BEHS branch, affiliated BEHS and private schools are required to buy the K700 stamps and stick the stamps on the application forms for the students before submitting them to the Department of Myanmar Examinations between 1 and 29 September 2023.

The applicants are expected to submit the applications within the deadline and those who fail to do so will lose their opportunity to sit for the exam.

The release of the department also encourages students to check their combination of subjects as they are not allowed to take the exam for different subjects except for the subjects mentioned in the cards.

The application forms and stamps are available at the Department of Myanmar Examinations (head office), Nay Pyi Taw and the Myanmar Examinations Department (Yangon branch office), Yangon. — TWA/TH

Mobile medics provide healthcare services in Myitkyina, Lashio



A nun is pictured having eye examination from the mobile medical unit.

THE mobile medical unit of the Northern Command provided healthcare services to members of the Sangha at the Myo Oo Monastery in Myitkyina, Kachin State, yesterday morning.

A total of 101 monks received necessary healthcare services for surgical diseases, osteoarthritis diseases, and general illnesses. Arrangements were made for monks who needed a heart examination with an ECG machine, X-rays, and hospitalization to be admitted to the local military hospital for treatment.

Similarly, the local medical team

of the North-East Command delivered necessary healthcare services related to eye diseases, dental health, surgical diseases, ear, nose, and throat diseases, and general diseases to 21 residents and 91 nuns from the Sasana Hitakari Nunnery in Lashio, Shan State (North). They also provided diagnosis and examination to people with ECG and Ultrasound machines.

Military commanders and officials from the relevant commands observed the services and made offerings of food to the monks. — MNA/CT

HPV vaccination programme for girls aged 9-12 to begin in Aug-Sept

ACCORDING to the coordination meeting on human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination held at the Ministry of Health in Nay Pyi Taw on 22 August, the HPV vaccine will be administered to girls aged between 9 and 12 in August and September.

Activities such as compiling the list of girls eligible for HPV vaccination, sending invitation letters to girls who will receive vaccinations, obtaining consent from parents or guardians, assisting in the preparation of vaccination centers, and ensuring organized vaccination sites will be conducted through the cooperation between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health.

The Ministry of Health urges young women to prevent the virus by regularly getting the vaccine, as it will be admin-

istered to the public in October after a school-based vaccination programme.

The cervical cancer vaccine can reduce the rate of human papillomavirus (HPV) infection in young girls by 83 per cent. The vaccine to be given can protect against four types of HPV virus and will prevent 95 per cent of cervical cancer cases.

According to the World Health Organization's (WHO) announcement in August 2022, vaccination programmes are being implemented nationwide in Southeast Asian countries such as Myanmar, Bhutan, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives.

WHO statistics stated that the global incidence rate of cervical cancer is 130.3 cases per 100,000 women, with 6.9 deaths from the disease. — TWA/CT



A girl is seen receiving the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccination at the opening ceremony on 22 August.

LOCAL BUSINESS

Sugar, jaggery prices hit record highs



A glimpse of sugar and jaggery for market distribution.

THE prices of sugar and jaggery hit fresh new peaks in Yangon's commodity market.

The wholesale prices of jaggery rose to a record high of K3,950-K4,500 per viss depending on the producing areas (NyaungU, Yesakyo, Mahlaing and Pakokku). Sugar also fetched K3,600 per viss in the wholesale market.

Sugar price has been on an upward trend since 2021. Consequently, some

sugar factories said that they would offer K110,000 per tonne at the end of 2023, increasing from K90,000 per tonne in 2022.

The jaggery price is so strong that it did not even dip when the sugar price fell. The jaggery price is higher than the sugar price. Jaggery from NyaungU is whiter in appearance while the ones from other regions have brown colour.

The price of cane sugar, refined

sugar from sugarcane plants, is likely to be cheaper than those of jaggery and sugar in the coming cane sugar production season, trader U Hla Myint told the Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM).

High sugarcane prices prompted the growers to expand the plantations. The high yield of sugarcane is expected. Sugar mills will possibly ramp up production.

"Despite the potential increase in sugar production, there is nowhere to get any chance to boost jaggery production with palm trees being cut down amid the shortage of palm tree climbers," the GNLM quoted Daw Khin Win who was involved in a jaggery business.

As a result of this, the jaggery price will go higher than that of sugar for sure.

However, when the sugar price soared in 2018 and 2019, the jaggery combo mixed with sugar was sold at K300-K400 cheaper than the organic one. If the price gap between the jaggery and sugar widens, the jaggery combo will flood in the market, U Win Aung, a jaggery trader, shared his opinion to the GNLM. — TWA/EM



Kidney beans in Myanmar are grown in October and harvested in January and February. PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG (MANDALAY SUB-PRINTING HOUSE)

Kidney bean prices set for fourth consecutive weekly increase

THE price of kidney beans has gained constantly in the Mandalay market on the back of robust domestic and foreign demand.

China and India have been purchasing Myanmar's kidney beans in addition to high local consumption, causing the price to hit the highest in a decade.

The price stood at K3.85 million per tonne at the end of July and jumped to K4.31 million per tonne on 24 August, indicating a sharp increase of K450,000 per tonne in the past three weeks.

Myanmar exports kidney beans to China, India, Japan, Singapore and other foreign countries via border and maritime trade channels. Myanmar shipped 59,425.711 tonnes of kidney beans worth US\$50.31 million to foreign markets in the current financial year 2022-2023 (April-March), the Ministry of Commerce's statistics indicated.

Myanmar conveyed over 16,464 tonnes of kidney beans worth \$20.062 million to foreign trade partners between 1 April and 11 August of the current FY 2023-2024, with export volume of 7,784.861 tonnes worth \$7.605 million through maritime trade and over 8,680 tonnes worth \$12.457 million via border, as per the Ministry of Commerce's statistics.

Kidney bean cultivation begins in October-November and they are harvested in early February. They are grown in the upper Sagaing Region, Bhamo in Kachin Street, Kayin State and along Ayeyawady River. The beans produced from Katha and Bhamo townships are in high demand in the domestic market on account of their large size. — NN/EM

Myanmar's kyat devalues against US dollar, reaching K3,700 in grey market

KYAT against the greenback weakened to approximately K3,700 in the shady dealings although the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) set reference exchange rate at K2,100, the traders involved in the forex market said.

CBM has set the currency trading band at 0.3 per cent for the Kyat to fluctuate between these two specified upper and lower exchange rates for transactions, selling or buying, according to a directive issued by the CBM on 10 August 2022.

Therefore, financial institutions including the banks and informal money exchanges are instructed to set a dollar value at K2,094 for buying and K2,106 for selling. Nevertheless, the over-the-counter kyat-dollar exchange rate was K3,598 for buying and K3,688 for selling on 24 August. There is a large price difference between the reference rate of the CBM and the unofficial market rate. Yet, there is no way for the CBM to set the new price, as per the notification released in May 2023.

The exchange rate jumped to K4,000 against the US dollar on 19 August.

The CBM notified on 21 August 2023 that those holding foreign currencies without having a valid licence or permit will face legal action under the Foreign Exchange Management Law.

Under Section 9 of the Foreign Exchange Management Law, only those entities holding foreign exchange dealer licences are allowed to deal in foreign currency and travellers' cheques.

According to the notification No 7/2014 dated 30 September 2014 issued by the Central Bank of Myanmar, stating that under Section 15 of the Foreign Exchange Management Law, domestic residents are allowed to keep US\$10,000 in maximum or equivalent amount of foreign currencies for six months. If those foreign currencies that have been unused for over six months have to be exchanged in local currency at the market price through authorized dealers or deposited into



bank accounts.

Those illegally holding foreign currencies will be taken action under the Foreign Exchange Management Law, the CBM warned recently. Following that notification, the foreign exchange transaction calmed down and the rate dipped to K3,700. — NN/EM

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OPINION

Establish a health-safe society through authentic medicines

IN OUR modern world heavily reliant on the strides of medical science, a staggering 75 to 80 per cent of the global population leans toward medicines derived from herbal sources, as highlighted by the World Health Organization (WHO). This statistic underscores the imperative for nations to actively pursue optimal medicinal therapies to safeguard the well-being of their citizens.

Within this landscape of traditional remedies, the people of Myanmar have long entrusted their health to indigenous herbal-based medicines and those borne from ethnic traditions. Drawing wisdom from historical texts dating back to the era of Myanmar's monarchs, practitioners of traditional medicine diligently assess patients' constitutions and environmental conditions prior to prescribing treatments. This meticulous approach has borne witness to the remarkable healing capacities of potent traditional remedies. Indeed, the traditional medicines of Myanmar hold an invaluable position within society's wellness fabric.

In the digital marketplace, unscrupulous vendors knowingly or unknowingly distribute counterfeit medicines, often accompanied by alluring packaging and persuasive advertising. Furthermore, some individuals, capitalizing on public health naivety, administer unapproved treatments that defy established medical guidelines. This exploitation of limited health knowledge is detrimental to the well-being of the populace.

medicines are being passed off as authentic traditional remedies, exploiting the populace's limited knowledge about health matters.

Recognizing the urgency of the situation, the Department of Traditional Medicine, operating under the Ministry of Health, recently released a statement cautioning against the use of traditional medicines sold through online platforms, such as Facebook pages. These products lacked the necessary registration and production licenses, rendering them unfit for public consumption. This critical announcement was prominently featured in state-owned newspapers on August 16.

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The time has come to restore the credibility of Myanmar's traditional medicines and bolster their efficacy in safeguarding individuals from perilous diseases. This endeavour necessitates concerted efforts to cleanse the traditional medicine domain of disreputable practices. By elevating the potency of Myanmar's traditional remedies, everybody can progressively save more lives and construct a society fortified by health security.

By Yin Nwe Ko

AI, which stands for artificial intelligence, is a technological advancement where machines or robots mimic human intelligence to carry out tasks. As more and more online retailers, streaming services, and healthcare systems adopt AI technology, many people have likely experienced some form of it without even knowing.

While AI is still a relatively new technology, its impact has been swift. It makes shopping simpler, healthcare smarter, and daily life more convenient. Businesses are also recognizing its benefits: Nearly 80% of company executives say they're deploying AI and seeing value from it.

Recently, AI has come up in discussions about cybersecurity, information, and data privacy. This guide will dive deeper into how AI is affecting data privacy and how it can be protected.

What Privacy Issues Arise from AI?

Although AI technology has many benefits for businesses and consumers, it also gives rise to several data privacy issues. The most visible ones are:

Data Exploitation

The big draw of AI is its ability to gather and analyze massive quantities of data from different sources to increase information gathering for its users — but

performed on these systems, including personal data, can be exploited by businesses to gain marketing insights which they then utilize for customer engagement or sell to other companies.

Identification and Tracking

Some AI applications, such as self-driving cars, can track one's location and driving habits to help the car understand its surroundings and act accordingly. While this technology can help make cars safer and smarter, it also opens more opportunities for his/her personal information to become part of a larger data set that can be tracked across different devices in his/her home, work, or public spaces.

Inaccuracies and Biases

Facial recognition has become a widely adopted AI application used in law enforcement to help identify criminals in public spaces and crowds. But like any AI technology, it provides no guarantee of accurate results. In some instances, this technology has led to discriminatory or biased outcomes and errors that have been shown to disproportionately affect certain groups of people.

Prediction

AI can use machine-learning algorithms to assume what information you want to see on the internet and social media — and then serve up information based on that assumption. You may notice this when you receive personalized Google search re-

Balancing Data Utilization and Individual Rights

in the Age of Algorithms

Vulnerability to Attacks

While AI has been shown to improve security, it can also make it easier for cybercriminals to penetrate systems with no human intervention. According to a recent report, the impact of AI on cybersecurity will likely expand the threat landscape and introduce new threats, which could cause significant damage to organizations that don't have adequate cybersecurity measures in place.

These laws have required companies to provide more transparency about the way they collect, store, and share one's information with third parties. The lack of holistic regulations does not mean that every company out there is unconcerned about data privacy. Some large companies including Google and Amazon have recently begun to lobby for updated internet regulations which would ideally address data privacy in some manner. While the methods for the protection of data security that could be implemented as part of such an undertaking are unclear, data privacy is a topic that will continue to affect us all now and into the future.

Is this type of Data Collection Legal?
Data collection in most cases is legal. In fact, in some developed countries like The United States, there is no holistic federal legal standard for privacy protection of the internet or apps. Some governmental standards concerning privacy rights have begun to be implemented at the state level,

can be sold or not, and requires the business not discriminate against the user for doing so. The European Union also has a similar law known as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

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How is Digital Privacy Protected?

Both organizations and individuals can do their part to protect digital data privacy. For organizations, that starts with having the right security systems in place, hiring the right experts to manage them, and following data privacy laws. Here are some other general data protection strategies to help enhance one's data privacy:

Anonymous Networks

One way one can protect his/her digital privacy is to use anonymous networks and search engines that use aggressive data security while browsing online. Freenet, I2P, and TOR are some examples. These anonymous networks use end-to-end encryption



As AI continues to shape the future of industries, the symbiotic relationship between technological advancement and cybersecurity resilience will be pivotal in steering organizations towards success while maintaining the utmost security standards.

tion so that the data one sends or receives can't be tapped into. Another option is to use Duckduckgo, which is a search engine dedicated to preventing you from being tracked online. Unlike most other search engines, Duckduckgo does not collect, share or store one's personal information.

Encryption

Most legitimate websites use what's called "secure sockets layer" (SSL), which is a form of encrypting data when it's being sent to and from a website. This keeps attackers from accessing that private data. Look for the padlock icon in the URL bar, and the "s" in the "https://" to make sure one is conducting secure, encrypted transactions online.

Open-Source Web Browsers and Operating Systems

It's important to choose web

browsers that are open-source—such as Firefox, Chrome, or Brave. These browsers can be audited for security vulnerabilities making them more secure against hackers and browser hijackers.

Consider an Android Cellphone

Unlike Microsoft or Apple phones, Android smartphones use open-source software that doesn't require one's data for functionality. Therefore, many experts believe an Android phone comes with fewer privacy risks.

Stronger Security Systems

As AI advances, organizations need stronger security systems and more cybersecurity professionals to maintain those systems. For this reason, jobs in IT, data management, and data science are in demand like never

er before. If one is interested in being part of a security team that protects organizations and their data, getting an online degree in cybersecurity or computer science can put one on the right path.

Even with the best protections, a data breach can still happen. So it's important to be cautious about what information one is sharing online or on the internet and use secure passwords that are unique for each website that one chooses to share his/her information with. In the event of a data breach, this can minimize the amount of sensitive

Algorithms are powerful tools that enable organizations to process and analyze massive datasets, extracting valuable insights and making informed decisions. They have revolutionized various industries, including finance, healthcare, and marketing. By leveraging machine learning and artificial intelligence, algorithms can identify patterns, predict outcomes, and optimize processes. This has led to enhanced efficiency, cost savings, and improved user experiences. For instance, recommendation algorithms on e-commerce platforms can suggest products tai-

information that is exposed in the data breach.

Moreover, in the digital age, algorithms play an increasingly prominent role in shaping our lives. From personalized recommendations on streaming platforms to targeted advertising and even critical decision-making processes, algorithms have become ubiquitous. They rely on vast amounts of data to make predictions and automate tasks, offering numerous benefits to individuals and businesses. However, the rise of algorithms has also raised concerns about the potential infringement on individual rights and the need to strike a delicate balance between data utilization and privacy protection. This article explores the challenges and possible solutions to achieving this equilibrium.

The Power of Algorithms

lored to individual preferences, enhancing customer satisfaction and driving sales.

Data Utilization: The Double-Edged Sword

While the utilization of data and algorithms offers undeniable benefits, it also raises concerns about privacy, discrimination, and the potential erosion of individual rights. The vast amount of personal data collected from individuals, such as their online behaviour, preferences, and even biometric information, has become a valuable commodity. This raises questions about consent, data ownership, and the potential for abuse. Moreover, algorithms are not immune to biases present in the data they are trained on, which can perpetuate or even amplify existing societal inequalities.

SEE PAGE-11

NATIONAL

ASEAN meetings highlight regional health matters



Union Minister Dr Thet Khaing Win joins ASEAN Finance and Health Ministers for group photo at the event.

UNION Minister for Health Dr Thet Khaing Win attended the ASEAN Finance and Health Ministers Joint Meeting at Hotel Mulia Senayan, Jakarta, Indonesia yesterday morning as discussions based on health issues were made.

At the meeting, the co-

chairs, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Health of Indonesia, gave opening speeches, and the Asian Development Bank official discussed the financing needs of epidemic response activities and the ways to solve them.

ASEAN's COVID-19 and

public health emergency response financing issues were presented by an official from the ASEAN Secretariat, and the Finance Ministers and Health Ministers of ASEAN member countries had a friendly and open discussion.

Union Minister for Health

Dr Thet Khaing Win stressed the analysis of financing needs and gaps in public health emergency preparedness and response presented by the Asian Development Bank that can be used in the policy-making of ASEAN member countries.

During the epidemic, Myanmar's health system faced the great challenges of the epidemic like other countries across the globe. However, following the policy of the Chairman of the State Administration Council, which is "nothing is more important than human life", it has been able to overcome the epidemic.

The Ministry of Health in cooperation with the Ministry of Planning and Finance established the necessary budget for COVID-19 on time and arranged a special fund for the epidemic, as well as purchasing necessary vaccines, the Union minister said.

The Union minister focused on working together to strengthen the health system in coop-

eration with ASEAN member countries for epidemics.

Subsequently, the ASEAN Finance and Health Ministers approved and released the Joint Meeting Declaration.

In the afternoon, the first day of the ASEAN Health Ministers' Meeting was held at Hotel St Regis in Jakarta, Indonesia followed by the opening speech given by the Minister of Health of Indonesia.

Deputy Secretary-General and team on ASEAN Political-Security Community highlighted decisions of the ASEAN Coordination Council on the establishment of the ASEAN Public Health Emergency Task Force, ASEAN COVID-19 response fund renewal issues, ASEAN regional health care cooperation, and ASEAN funding issues.

In the evening, the Union minister and the Myanmar delegation attended a dinner hosted by the Indonesian Ministry of Health. — MNA/KZL

Illegal timber, fuel and crude oil, foodstuffs, consumer goods, industrial materials, and vehicles confiscated

SUPERVISED by the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee, effective actions are being taken to prevent illegal trade under the law.

On 20 August, the on-duty team under the supervision of the Mandalay Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force conducted inspections at the 16th Mile Kyaukchaw Checkpoint and seized 350 packs of chicken sausages and five types of electrical equipment, including 20 electric contactors without official documents (estimated value of K4,560,000) and a Nissan AD Station Wagon (approximate value of K15,000,000) carrying these goods. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

Additionally, inspections were carried out by on-duty customs teams under the management of the Customs Department on 21 August. They seized a DJI Mini 2SE drone with no official documents (estimated value of K1,600,000) at the Yangon International Airport (Import Desk) and 12 products, including 10 metres of badminton nylon string with no import declaration (approximately K10,401,446) at the Asia World Port Terminal Container Check-

point, accumulating an estimated value of K12,001,446. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

Similarly, a combined team under the instructions of the Ayeyawady Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force confiscated a total of 21.035 tonnes of illegal timber (approximately K3,129,610) in Kyangin, Pathein, and Nyaungdon townships on 21 August. The action was taken under the Forest Law.

A team tasked with the management of the Kayin State Illegal Trade Eradication Special Team performed inspections at the Kawkareik (Tadakyoe) checkpoint on 22 August and impounded four types of products, including 4,500 packs of vermicelli (blue) and 300 pairs of Indus lady slippers with no official document (estimated value of K9,050,000) from two vehicles departing from Myawaddy to Yangon. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

Under the management of the Yangon Region Illegal Trade Eradication Special Team, the unlicensed vehicle seizure team of No 2 Traffic Police Branch conducted inspections in Tamway and Bahan townships on 22 August and seized two unregistered



Confiscated illegal items.

vehicles worth approximately K10,000,000. The action was taken under the Export and Import Law.

Moreover, a combined team led by the District Forest Department under the management of the Bago Region Illegal Trade Eradication Special Team confiscated 0.532 tonne of illegal teak and 3.987 tonnes of other types of timber (estimated value of K630,516) in Nyaunglebin District on 23 August. The action was taken under the Forest Law.

In addition, a combined task force under the management of the Magway Region Illegal Trade Eradication Special

Team carried out inspections on 23 August and confiscated 10 gallons of illegal crude oil in Minbu, 40 gallons of crude oil, 40 gallons of fuel (diesel), and the carriers, a Mitsubishi Canter and three HIGO three-wheel motorcycles, in Minhla, one unlicensed Hijet in Seikphyu, and one unlicensed Toyota Wish in Pyaloh, accumulating a total estimated value of K40,130,000. Actions are taken under relevant procedural laws.

Additionally, inspections were carried out by combined teams under the management of the Taninthayi Region Illegal Trade Eradication Special Team, which seized one unlicensed Toyota Hilux Vigo worth approximately K5,000,000 in Yephyu Township on 23 August and 15.369 tonnes of various types of illegal timber, a motorboat, and three Chinese red engines (approximately K2,131,730) in Kyunsu Township on 24 August. The actions were taken under the Export and Import Law and the Forest Law.

Therefore, 20 arrests (approximately K101,633,302) were made from 20 to 24 August, according to the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/CT

TECH/ENVIRON/ARTICLE WORLD

Norway opens world's biggest floating wind park



A car drives past wind turbines of the Storheia wind farm, one of Europe's largest land-based wind parks, in Afjord municipality, Norway on 7 December 2021. **PHOTO: PIX FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSE/ JONATHAN NACKSTRAND / AFP**

NORWAY inaugurated the world's biggest floating wind park in the North Sea on Wednesday, an emerging technology considered promising for the transition from fossil fuels to green energy.

The Hywind Tampen field is made up of 11 turbines producing up to 8.6 megawatts each, providing five neighbouring oil-and-gas platforms with about 35 per cent of their energy needs.

The field located some 140 kilometres (87 miles) offshore began production at the end of last year, but was officially inaugurated Wednesday by Norwegian Crown Prince Haakon and Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store.

"We and Europeans all need more electricity. The war in Ukraine has reinforced this situation," Store said, quoted by

Norwegian agency NTB.

"This electricity must be from renewable sources if Europe wants to reach its climate goals," he said.

Unlike offshore wind turbines that are fixed to the seabed, floating turbines are, as their name suggests, mounted on a floating structure anchored to the seabed.

This makes it possible for them to be installed in deeper waters and further from the coast, where winds are more consistent and stronger.

They are however more expensive to build.

The construction of Hywind Tampen, in depths between 260 and 300 metres (853 to 984 feet), cost some 7.4 billion kroner (\$691 million). "Yes it's expensive, but someone has to lead the way," the prime minister said. — AFP

Balancing Data Utilization and Individual Rights in the Age of Algorithms

FROM PAGE-9

Preserving Individual Rights

Protecting individual rights in the age of algorithms is crucial to prevent undue influence and harm. Several key principles should be considered:

- **Informed Consent:** Individuals must have the right to know what data is collected, how it will be used, and the potential consequences. Transparent and understandable privacy policies are essential, ensuring that individuals can make informed decisions about sharing their data.
- **Data Minimization:** Organizations should collect and retain only the necessary data to achieve their intended purposes. Minimizing data collection can reduce the risk of potential harm and privacy breaches.
- **Anonymization and De-identification:** Personal data should be properly anonymized or de-identified to protect individuals' privacy. Removing identifying information makes it more challenging to link data to specific individuals, reducing the risk of re-identification.
- **Algorithmic Transparency:** The inner workings of algorithms should be made more transparent to external scrutiny. This allows for better un-

derstanding, accountability, and the identification of potential biases or discriminatory outcomes.

- **Fairness and Accountability:** Algorithms should be designed and regularly audited to ensure fairness, accuracy, and accountability. This includes addressing biases in training data, regularly testing for discriminatory outcomes, and providing mechanisms for individuals to appeal or challenge algorithmic decisions.

Regulatory Frameworks and Ethical Guidelines

Regulatory frameworks and ethical guidelines are necessary to strike an appropriate balance between data utilization and individual rights. Governments and regulatory bodies should establish clear laws and regulations that safeguard individuals' privacy rights and ensure algorithmic accountability. These regulations should be designed to keep pace with technological advancements and be adaptable to changing circumstances.

In addition to legal measures, industry-wide ethical guidelines should be developed. These guidelines can encourage responsible data practices, promote algorithmic transparency, and provide mechanisms for independent audits and certifications. Organizations should be encouraged to adopt these

voluntary standards, fostering a culture of responsible data utilization and respecting individual rights.

Education and Empowerment

To navigate the challenges of the age of algorithms, individuals must be educated and empowered. Public awareness campaigns, educational programs, and accessible resources can help individuals understand the implications of sharing their data and making informed decisions. Digital literacy should be prioritized, enabling individuals to protect their privacy rights, identify potential biases, and demand accountability from organizations utilizing algorithms.

In sum, the age of algorithms presents immense opportunities for innovation, efficiency, and personalization. However, it also demands careful consideration of individual rights and privacy protection. Balancing data utilization and individual rights requires a multi-faceted approach involving legal frameworks, ethical guidelines, and education. By prioritizing informed consent, data minimization, algorithmic transparency, fairness, and accountability, we can strive to harness the power of algorithms while preserving the fundamental rights of individuals in the digital age.

Reference: <https://www.wgu.edu/blog/>

Big tech to face full force of new EU law

THE world's biggest digital companies will have nowhere to hide starting Friday, when the toughest EU rules on online content since social media first burst onto the scene enter into force.

The landmark law is part of the European Union's legal arsenal deployed to bring tech companies to heel and enforce order in what officials have described as an online "Wild West". The Digital Services Act (DSA) forces companies to more aggressively police digital content and protect online users from disinformation and hate speech, or face the risk of heavy fines. From Friday, all eyes will be on how the platforms comply and on how the DSA will change online life in Europe, with experts predicting it could trigger a wave of change beyond the bloc.

"The DSA is part of a bigger strategy to give more power to individuals, to the regulators, to civil society," said Suzanne Vergnolle, a professor of technology law at the National Conservatory of Arts and Crafts in Paris. — AFP

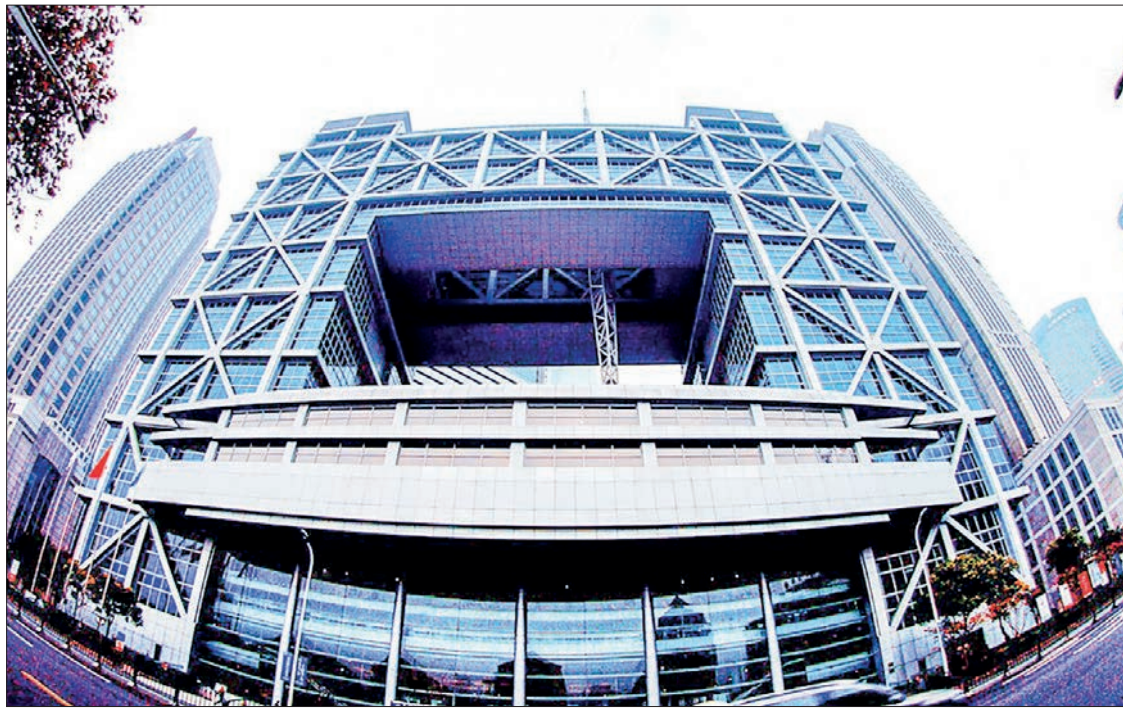
ECONOMY WORLD

China's securities regulator steps up efforts to boost market confidence

CHINA'S top securities regulator has specified an array of initiatives aimed at invigorating the capital market and boosting investor confidence to stabilize market expectations.

The China Securities Regulatory Commission said Friday it would accelerate reform at the investment end, make listed companies more attractive for investment, and optimize and improve trading mechanisms.

This will be done by implementing 25 measures including axing stock transaction fees, lowering the index fund registration thresholds, and advancing the development of equity funds. The launch of the latest policy mix aimed at boosting the capital market indicates that stabilizing capital market expectations is of



File photo provided by the Shanghai Stock Exchange (SSE) shows an outside view of the SSE in Shanghai, east China. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/XINHUA**

great significance for maintaining China's overall economic and social stability, said the commission.

Noting that the capital market is highly correlated with the economy and is known as an economic barometer, Herbert Zhang, chief executive officer of China Universal Asset Management, said investors and the whole society will be able to build stronger confidence and expectation for the country's economic development if a stable and active capital market is in place.

A capital market with a virtuous cycle of investment and financing will contribute to high-quality economic development and is an effective way to expand domestic demand and promote consumption, said Zhang. — Xinhua

Brazil Congress passes Lula's new govt spending rules



This legislative move stands as a victory for President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, aligning with his efforts to allocate funds towards social and infrastructure projects. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/NELSON ALMEIDA/AFP/FILE**

BRAZIL'S Congress passed new fiscal rules Tuesday ending the government's spending cap, a win for President Luiz Inacio

Lula da Silva in his bid to free up money for social and infrastructure spending.

Veteran leftist Lula, who re-

turned to office in January after leading Brazil through a boom in the 2000s, needed Congress to pass the bill to allow his administration to keep its promises of expanded social programmes and an ambitious 1.7 trillion reais (\$340 billion) infrastructure investment programme unveiled earlier this month.

The lower house of Congress, which had passed a first version of the bill in May, adopted the final text by a vote of 379 to 64, after an amended version passed the Senate in June.

The new rules end the rigid government spending cap put in place in 2016 under the centre-right administration of then-president Michel Temer. — AFP

Biden to push IMF and World Bank reforms at G20 summit: White House

US President Joe Biden will urge reforms to the IMF and World Bank that will better serve developing country needs at the G20 summit in New Delhi next month, the White House said Tuesday.

White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said that the two need to offer a better alternative for development support and financing to what he called China's "coercive and unsustainable lending"

through Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative. "We have heard loud and clear that countries want us to step up our support in the face of the overlapping challenges they face," Sullivan told reporters. — AFP

Canada to challenge latest US duties on softwood lumber

OTTAWA announced Tuesday it will challenge the latest US duties on Canadian softwood lumber that it called "unfair, unjust and illegal".

At the same time, Canada offered to try to negotiate terms with the United States to bring an end to the long-standing trade dispute that has often flared up over the past 40 years.

A previous quota agreement expired in 2015, and in late July of this year Washington imposed a 7.99 per cent

levy on Canada's timber sector.

"For years, the United States has imposed unfair, unjust and illegal duties on Canadian softwood lumber, hurting Canadian industry and increasing housing costs in both countries," Trade Minister Mary Ng said in a statement.

"Yesterday, Canada filed notices of intent to commence judicial review regarding the latest US decision maintaining these unwarranted duties on our softwood lumber products," she said. — AFP



The Canadian government, on Tuesday, declared its intention to challenge the most recent round of US-imposed duties on Canadian softwood lumber. **PHOTO: WOODWORKING NETWORK**

China halts Japan seafood imports after water release, HK protest

CHINA suspended Thursday imports of all seafood products from Japan shortly after Tokyo began releasing treated radioactive water from the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant into the Pacific Ocean.

Chinese customs authorities said they are highly concerned about the risk of radiation contamination following the water release and have strengthened restrictions for food imports from Japan to “protect the lives

and health of the people”.

Food items other than marine products imported from Japan are expected to be subject to the tighter controls. Prior to the total import ban announced Thursday, Beijing had introduced blanket radiation testing on seafood from the neighbouring country.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry has strongly condemned the ocean discharge and lodged a serious protest, calling it “an extremely selfish and irresponsible act”.



People protest outside the building housing the Japanese Consulate-General in Hong Kong against Japan's release of treated radioactive water from the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant into the sea on 24 August 2023. PHOTO: KYODO

Earlier in the day, China's Ecology and Environment Ministry, which oversees the unit in charge of nuclear safety, pledged to track and evaluate the possible impact of Japan's water release in its sea areas.

In Hong Kong, about 30 demonstrators protested the water discharge in a rally held in front of the Japanese Consulate General, with participants saying Japan is “selfish” and that “the ocean belongs to all world.” — Kyodo

Sandwich chain Subway nears deal to be bought for more than \$9 bln: source

THE Subway sandwich chain is near a deal to be acquired for more than \$9 billion in a transaction that could be announced as soon as Wednesday, a person familiar with the matter said.

Bids for the sandwich chain were due Tuesday, the person said, with competing offers from Roark Capital and a consortium that includes private equity firms TDR and Sycamore. The winner is expected to be the high bid in an all-cash deal.

Originally founded in 1965 as an Italian-style submarine sandwich shop, Subway today has nearly 37,000 restaurants in more than 100 countries. The fast-food chain announced in February it hired JPMorgan to advise it on a possible sale, while saying it “remains committed to the future,” according to a February 14 press release.

A Subway spokesperson said Tuesday there would be no comment “until the transaction has

been completed,” according to an email to AFP.

Atlanta-based Roark is well-known in the fast-food and prepared foods space, already owning Buffalo Wild Wings, Baskin-Robbins and Seattle's Best Coffee, as well as other assets including Orange Theory gyms. Roark “has shown that it knows how to nurture restaurant brands and help them to grow, including through expansion,” said Neil Saunders of GlobalData Retail. — AFP

Viet Nam internet firm VNG files for US IPO

VIETNAMESE internet firm VNG has filed to list in the United States, soon after electric vehicle maker VinFast made its debut in New York.

Founded in 2004, VNG operates a wide range of services, including music streaming, mobile payment, online games and messaging.

Its Zalo is one of the most popular messaging platforms in the country, with 75 million monthly active users.

VNG plans to sell nearly 22 million shares in the initial public offering



A man uses Zalo, a messaging app owned by Vietnamese internet startup VNG, on his mobile phone in Hanoi. PHOTO: AFP

(IPO), according to a US Securities and Exchange Commission filing, with the proposed price range not yet set.

The company, head-

quartered in Vietnam's business capital Ho Chi Minh City, is one of Vietnam's leading game publishers and also has an office in Thailand. — AFP

UK retailer Wilko's administrators warn of job losses

THE administrators of British household goods company Wilko warned of “likely” redundancies and store closures after they were unable to find a buyer for the whole business.

The discount retailer, selling cleaning and garden products as well as other small household items, entered administration in early August, putting about 12,500 jobs and its 400 UK stores at risk.

Wilko has appointed PricewaterhouseCoop-



Wilko (formerly Wilkinson) is a British high-street retail chain that specializes in household goods, homeware, and general merchandise. PHOTO: AFP

ers as administrators of the distressed company, founded in 1930 with headquarters in the town of

Worksop, central England.

“While discussions continue with those interested in buying parts of the business, it's clear that the nature of this interest is not focused on the whole group,” PwC said in a statement on Wednesday evening. “Sadly, it is therefore likely that there will be redundancies and store closures in the future and it has today been necessary to update employee representatives,” PwC added. — AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY.NO. (105N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY.NO. (105N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25-8-2023 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.

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

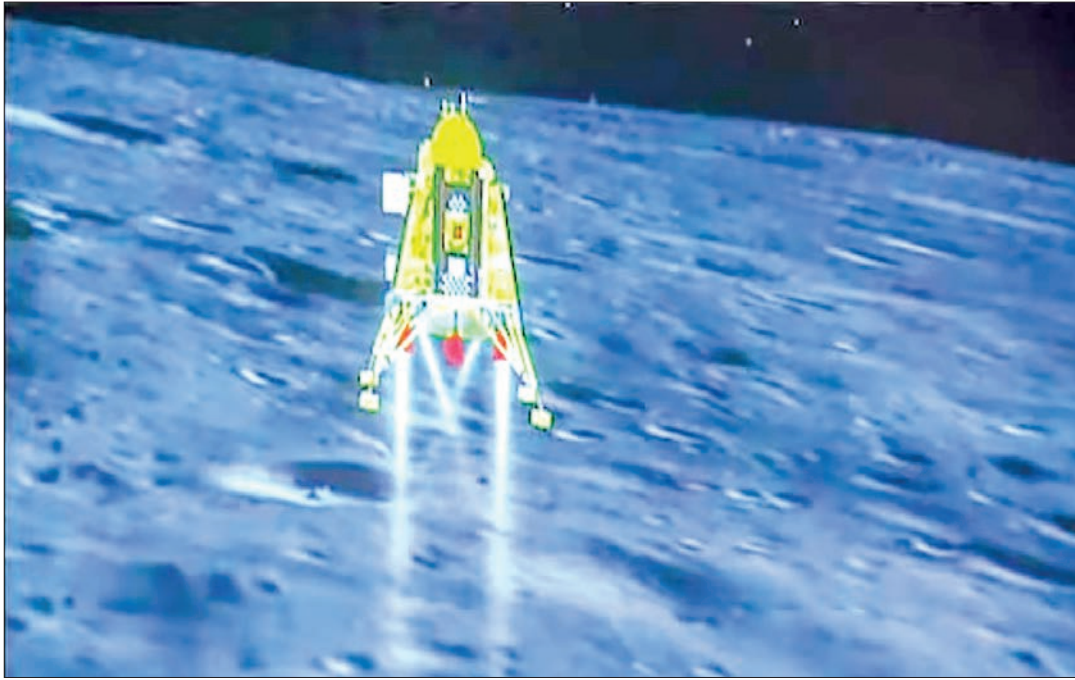
Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD



This handout screen grab taken and received from the live feed of Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) website on 23 August 2023 shows the Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft seconds before its successful lunar landing on the south pole of the Moon. **PHOTO: ISRO / AFP**

India shows lunar surface images after spacecraft's landing on Moon

The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) achieved a significant milestone by successfully landing its spacecraft on the unexplored south pole of the Moon. This makes India the fourth country to achieve a successful lunar landing, after the United States, the Soviet Union, and China.

THE Indian Space Research Organization has released images of the lunar surface after its spacecraft became the first to land on the unexplored south pole of the Moon on Wednesday.

The images from the Chandrayaan-3, whose arrival also made India the fourth country to successfully land a spacecraft

on the Moon after the United States, the Soviet Union and China, showed Wednesday a pockmarked surface along with a landing leg and a shadow.

The ISRO also released images taken during the spacecraft's descent to the lunar surface.

Prime Minister Naren-

dra Modi watched the landing from South Africa where he was attending a summit of the BRICS grouping that includes Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. "India is now on the Moon. This is a moment to cherish forever...We are witness to the new flight of new India," he said. — Kyodo

TOP HEADLINE

Wagner chief Prigozhin was aboard crashed private jet

AN Embraer Legacy business jet with three crew members and seven passengers aboard crashed in Russia's Tver Region while en route to St Petersburg from Moscow earlier on Wednesday. PMC Wagner boss and businessman Evgeny Prigozhin was aboard the aircraft that crashed Wednesday near a village about 300 kilometres away from Moscow, according to the Russian Federal Air Transport Agency.

Prigozhin is considered a notable Russian businessman who is primarily known abroad as the founder of Wagner Group, a private military company.

According to information released by the government agency, the plane was carrying the following passengers: Prigozhin, Evgeny Markaryan, Aleksandr Totmin, Valery Chekalov, Sergey Propustin, Nikolay Matuseev and Dmitry Utkin, who served as a Wagner deputy and co-founder.

The plane's three crew members were commander Aleksei Levshin, co-pilot Rustam Karimov and flight attendant Kristina Raspopova. — SPUTNIK



Yevgeny Prigozhin on 25 May. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

US doubles imports of Russian uranium to largest amount since 2005



Russia supplies the US only with uranium-235 enriched fuel, which is the country's main "radioactive" imports. **PHOTO: SPUTNIK**

THE United States bought 416 tonnes of uranium from Russia in the first half of 2023, which is 2.2 times bigger than in the

same period last year and the largest amount since 2005, Sputnik has calculated using data of the US federal statistical system.

In the first six months of 2022, the US bought 188 tonnes of uranium from Russia, and 418 tonnes in January-July 2005.

Russia supplies the US only with uranium-235 enriched fuel, which is the country's main "radioactive" imports. However, the analysis also took into account data on imports of natural and depleted uranium, which the US purchases from other countries. — SPUTNIK

NEWS IN BRIEF

Musk to sue Soros-funded NGO over 'suppression' of free speech

ELON MUSK said he intends to sue the Open Society Foundations of renowned George Soros to stop its suppression of free speech.

"Exactly. X (formerly known as Twitter) will be filing legal action to stop this. Can't wait for discovery to start!" Musk wrote on his X account.

The tweet was published as a commentary on an article by US journalist Ben Scallan, in which he reported that Soros-funded NGOs promote censorship across Ireland and Scotland. This, according to the article, includes police searches of homes, as well as checks of citizens' personal phones and computers. The basis for such measures, according to the article, is the thesis planted by Soros organizations and politicians about the alleged increase of hate crimes among the local population in these regions.

As the journalist writes, "the purpose of spreading hate disinformation is to justify draconian measures to stifle free speech." — SPUTNIK

SPORTS

Neymar, Benzema to get first taste of Asian Champions League action

SAUDI Pro League superstar Neymar will get his first taste of Asian Champions League football after last season's runners-up Al-Hilal were drawn against Iran's Nassaji Mazandaran FC, Mumbai City FC of India and Uzbekistan's Navbahor in the group stage on Thursday. Al-Nassr's Cristiano Ronaldo and Al-Ittihad's Karim Benzema will also debut in the group stage of Asia's premier club football competition, where they will seek to power their clubs to victory against sides from central to east Asia. With billions of dollars in oil wealth, Saudi Arabia has been on a buying spree of sports assets as part of plans to diversify its economy and attract tourism and investment.

Al-Hilal leads the AFC Champions League for most title wins, with four to its name. With the flamboyant Brazilian playmaker Neymar in their ranks for the 2023-24 season, Al-Hilal hope to win the title for a record fifth time. — AFP



Myanmar youth players (white) try to tackle against Barcelona player during their friendly match. PHOTO: MFF

Myanmar youths test Barcelona and Japanese junior clubs

MYANMAR U-12 team played friendly matches against Spanish Barcelona and Japanese JEF United Ichihara Chiba on the first day of the U-12 Junior World Challenge 2023 yesterday.

Team Myanmar lost 0-4 to Barcelona and 1-3 to the Japanese Juniors.

A total of 32 teams are competing in this competition, which is divided into eight groups of four teams. The partici-

pating teams include the Spanish top club Barcelona U-12 team, Barcelona Academy Team, Italy's top club Juventus U-12 team, Under-12 teams from Japanese and Chinese clubs are competing, and only a Myanmar team from Southeast Asia has been invited. Team Myanmar will compete with Japanese U-12 Daiwa House Dream FC as the final group match today. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

Messi into another final after inspiring Miami comeback

LIONEL Messi inspired Inter Miami to come back from 2-0 down to beat Cincinnati on penalties after their thrilling US Open Cup semi-final ended 3-3 after extra-time in Ohio.

Miami, who won the Leagues Cup on penalties against Nashville on Saturday, are now one win away from their second trophy since Messi joined the club last month.

The US Open Cup is American soccer's oldest and most important knockout competition, dating back more than a century to 1914 and is similar to England's FA Cup or Spain's Copa del Rey. Miami will host the Houston Dynamo in the final on 27 September after the Texan side beat Real Salt Lake 3-1 after extra-time.

A month ago Cincinnati, who are top of Major League Soccer's standings while Miami are bottom, would have



Lionel Messi's two assists led Inter Miami to a comeback victory over Cincinnati in the US Open Cup semi-finals on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

been clear favourites.

But the Florida team are now a very different side to the one which was winless in their 11 league games before the arrival of the Argentine.

In the intense heat, with temperatures over 100 degrees fahrenheit (38 Celsius) at kick-off, Miami's unbeaten run since the signing of Messi and Spanish pair Sergio Busquets and Jordi Alba looked to be coming to an end.

Inter trailed 2-0 with 22 minutes remaining before the Argentine delivered two perfect assists to striker Leonardo Campana to take the game into extra-time.

Messi's compatriot Luciano Acosta had put Cincinnati ahead in the 18th minute and American striker Brandon Vazquez doubled the home side's lead with a fine strike from the edge of the box in the 53rd minute. — AFP

Shan United settle for AFC Cup Group F



Shan United players are seen celebrating in an international match. PHOTO: MNL

MYANMAR'S Shan United is placed in Group F of the 2023-2024 season of the AFC Cup Championship, following the drawing-lots event held on 24 August.

The Asian Football Confederation will hold the tournament divided by zone, and Myanmar club Shan United will compete in the ASEAN zone.

According to the Asian Football Confederation, there will be three groups in the West Asia zone, three groups in the ASEAN zone, and one group each in the South Asia zone, East Asia zone, and Central zone.

Group F sees Myanmar's Shan United FC, Dynamic Herb Cebu FC of the Philippines, Macarthur FC of Australia and Phnom Penh Crown FC of Cambodia while Group G features Malaysia's Terengganu FC, Bali United of Indonesia, Philippines Stallion Laguna FC and Central Coast Mariners of Australia.

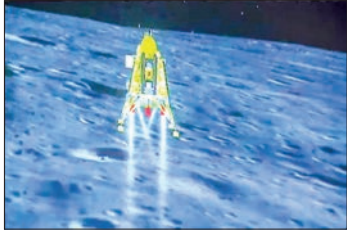
Vietnamese Haiphong FC, Hougang United of Singapore, Malaysia's Sabah FC and Indonesia's PSM Makassar will be vying for Group H.

The group matches will be held in a home-and-away format from September to December. According to the format of the tourney, the top three teams from the three ASEAN zone groups and the best one of the second-placed teams (four teams in total) will be allowed to participate in the ASEAN zone semi-finals.

Shan United is expected to struggle to advance to the next stage according to the group position. Shan Team has the opportunity to compete in the AFC Cup for the fourth time. Two Myanmar clubs have been allowed to compete in this season's AFC Cup, but Yangon United failed to qualify in the group stage. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

India shows lunar surface images after spacecraft's landing on Moon

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WORLD

UK PM Sunak rapped for breaking MPs' code of conduct

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak should have declared his wife's stake in a company that was set to benefit from government cash, a parliamentary watchdog declared on Thursday.

Sunak vowed "integrity, professionalism and accountability at every level" when he came to power, after the short-lived tenure of Liz Truss and the scandal-hit premiership of Boris Johnson.

But in a year in office, he has received a police fine for not wearing a seatbelt, on top of another for breaking Covid lockdown rules when he was finance minister under Johnson. House of Commons Standards Commissioner Daniel Greenberg began a probe in April after receiving a complaint about Sunak's comments to a committee of senior MPs the previous month. — AFP

Trump to be arrested in Georgia election racketeering case

DONALD Trump is to surrender on racketeering charges at a Georgia jail on Thursday, setting the stage for a fourth criminal trial next year as he campaigns to recapture the White House.

The 77-year-old former president will be arrested at Atlanta's notorious Fulton County Jail, accused of conspiring with 18 co-defendants to try to overturn the 2020 election result in the key southern state. — AFP

Six countries invited to join BRICS

- The six countries invited to join BRICS are Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- The new member countries are set to officially become part of BRICS on 1 January 2024.



(L-R) Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, China's President Xi Jinping, South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov during the BRICS Business Forum in Johannesburg.

PHOTO: AFP

BRICS leaders agreed on Thursday to invite six countries, namely Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, to join the group.

The six countries' membership will take effect on 1 January 2024, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa announced at a press conference during the 15th BRICS Summit.

"We value the interests of other

countries in building the partnership of BRICS," said Ramaphosa.

BRICS leaders met here from 22 to 24 August to discuss issues including deepening BRICS cooperation and the group's expansion. — Xinhua



People take part in a rally held by South Korea's main opposition Democratic Party to oppose Japan's decision to start releasing nuclear-contaminated wastewater in Seoul, South Korea, 23 August 2023. PHOTO: WANG YILIANG / XINHUA

S Korean opposition party chief calls Japan's nuke wastewater dumping "act of terror"

Despite facing widespread criticism domestically and internationally, the Japanese government announced its intention to proceed with the discharge of nuclear-contaminated wastewater from the Fukushima power plant.

LEE Jae-myung, chief of South Korea's main opposition Democratic Party, on Wednesday called Japan's decision to start dumping nuclear-contaminated wastewater on Thursday from the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant an "act of terror".

"Japan, which threatened the right to life of neighbouring countries in the past with the imperialist war of aggression,

is about to bring another irreversible disaster to South Korea and countries around the Pacific Ocean by discharging nuclear-contaminated wastewater," Lee said during a party meeting.

Lee strongly condemned Japan's act of terror with radioactive wastewater, stressing that Japan's wastewater release would go down in history as the "Second Pacific War". — Xinhua