THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

1. The Union Election Commission will be reconstituted and its mandated tasks, including the scrutiny of voter lists, shall be implemented in accordance with the law.
2. Effective measures will be taken with added momentum to prevent and manage the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Actions will be taken to ensure the speedy recovery of businesses from the impact of COVID-19.
4. Emphasis will be placed on achieving enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the agreements set out in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement.
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.

SAC Vice-Chairman Vice-Senior General Soe Win visits Myanmar Theravada Buddha Vihara (Moscow), meets Russia's Deputy Defence Minister

State Administration Council Vice-Chair Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win meets Colonel General Alexander Vasilyevich Fomin, Deputy Defence Minister of the Russian Federation in Moscow on 26 August 2022.

THE Myanmar Tatmadaw delegation led by Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win went to the Myanmar Theravada Buddha Vihara (Moscow) in Moscow where they paid homage to Residing Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Issariya on the morning (local time) of 26 August. The Vice-Senior General and party took Five Precepts and donated offertories to Sayadaws.

Then, the Vice-Senior General met Russian Deputy Defence Minister Colonel General Alexander Vasilyevich Fomin and frankly discussed the plans to be carried out with mutual respect, trust and support between the two armed forces.

After the meeting, the two leaders exchanged gifts. —MNA

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Those wishing to enter the legal fold can contact respective townships' Red Cross Society, Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation, Social Welfare Office and social welfare organizations authorized by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in addition to reception centres in border areas, Tatmadaw units and police stations

THE Information Team of the State Administration Council has released the statement inviting CDM staff, students and youths, who are in border areas and ethnic armed groups, they can contact the nearest reception centres in border areas, Tatmadaw units and police stations if they want to enter the legal fold and the government will guarantee their lives following the rules and regulations.

In order to prevent the unnecessary loss of human resources, the State Administration Council has publicly invited the basic education staff who are absent from duty to resume their duties and those who take part in armed resistance under various names of groups, including PDFs. Meanwhile, 3,156 education workers, who were absent from their duties, another 1,009 people, who want to withdraw the cases that were opened against them, and 231 PDF members have contacted and returned to the legal fold.

Then, they were given back to their parents systematically and the numbers of people who enter the legal fold and those who wish to are rising. Therefore, the government is making efforts to accept more numbers of those people.

The government opens reception centres in border areas for those who would like to return to the legal fold.

Moreover, those wishing to return home can contact respective townships' Red Cross Society, Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation, Social Welfare Office and social welfare organizations authorized by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement. It is guaranteed that they will be able to lead their daily lives peacefully.

Information Team
State Administration Council

41 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 27 August, total figure rises to 614,929

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 614,929 after 41 — five imported and 36 local transmission — new cases were reported on 27 August 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 593,429 have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll still stands at 19,437 without more casualties.—MNA

Trade Mark Ads Call 09251022355, 09974424848

Action to be taken to foreign currency dealers online: CBM

THE Central Bank of Myanmar is working with banks and major fuel companies to facilitate easy access to foreign currency for fuel importers in addition to coordinating with other relevant ministries. CBM notified that the public should not trust foreign currency price manipulators and online illegal forex dealers. Effective action shall be taken, under the Foreign Exchange Management Law and regulations, against those who are doing illegal foreign currency trading businesses online.

Central Bank of Myanmar

Rakhine's marine products directly exported to Bangladesh via Yangon

THE suppliers of quality rohita fish of Rakhine State transport the products to Yangon from where they export to Bangladesh directly.

The marketable rohita fish weighing one viss and 30 ticals and one viss and 50 ticals from the fish farms of Ayeyawady, Yangon and Bago regions are packed at Yangon's ports and exported to Bangladesh via the Kanyin Creek border trade post in Maungtaw township.

"A truck carries 17 tonnes of marketable rohita fish from Twantay, Maubin, Sarmalauk of Ayeyawady Region and other areas to export to Bangladesh via Sittway, Buthidaung and Maungtaw trade camps daily. We export a fish weighing one viss and 30 ticals and three visses. Now, we find some difficulties. We used vessels for fish trucks in Maungtaw to shorten the duration in the past. Now, we have to go via Buthidaung. It takes us two or three nights. We start the engines the whole night to keep the fish quality in cold storage. It does not take much time if we go via Sittway. Maungtaw lies on the other side of the creek from Bangladesh and we can export easily despite the bad weather. Although we are unable to export like in the past currently, we are running as usual and so the merchants and fish farmers are in good condition," said supplier Daw Maw Lizer of the Mayyu Tawwin Marine Products Company in Rakhine State.

Rohita fish are seen being prepared to export them to Bangladesh. **PHOTO: KANU**

Due to the current situation in Rakhine State, the marine product suppliers from Sittway, Buthidaung and Maungtaw communicate with the entrepreneurs of Yangon to export the products to Bangladesh. As the production costs for feed and transport charges are high, the fish are sold before their adult stage. Therefore, the quality of fish from Rakhine State becomes lower and there are not enough marketable fish at Shwepadauk and Sanpya fish markets, so the suppliers are sent there to examine the size and quality of fish to export.

It takes three days to export rohita fish from Yangon to Bangladesh and sometimes it takes between five days and one week if delays occur.

A six-wheel truck carries 175 boxes containing 30 visses of fish transported from the lower part of Myanmar to Maungtaw of Rakhine State daily and the bilateral trade between Myanmar and Bangladesh is running as usual. — Nyein Thu(MNA)/GNLM

"Keep Moving Forward to Achieve Our Goal"

IN line with the theme "Keep Moving Forward to Achieve Our Goal" our government will build a better nation and improve the socio-economic conditions to serve the interests of the State and ethnic national people. In line with the theme "The Strength of the Nation Lies Within", I would like to conclude by calling for unity and cooperation.

(The excerpt from the speech delivered by Chairman of State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on the occasion of the Eighteen Months of the Assumption of State Duties by the State Administration Council on 1 August 2022.

SAC Vice-Chairman Vice-Senior General Soe Win meets families of Myanmar Embassy, Military Attaché Office, trainees and visits Ethnomir world culture city in Russian Federation

The Vice-Senior General meets families of the Myanmar Embassy and the Myanmar Military Attaché Office and trainees in Moscow on 26 August.

THE Myanmar Tatmadaw delegation led by Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win visited the Myanmar Embassy in Moscow of the Russian Federation and met families of the embassy and military attaché office and trainees at local time 12:55 pm on 26 August.

Then, the Vice-Senior General presented gifts to officers, officials and staff of both offices and trainees through Ambassador U Lwin Oo and his wife, Brig-Gen Moe Kyaw and his wife and officials. Afterwards, they enjoyed the lunch hosted by Ambassador U Lwin Oo and his wife.

Next, the Vice-Senior General paid homage to the Shwezigon Pagoda (replica) in Ethnomir world culture city and went sightseeing in the city.— MNA

Tu Shin Hnwal Pyaw Gita Pwal Taw singing competition Season 2 to be held in marking Diamond Jubilee Independence Day

MoI Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn views the singing demonstration and preparation for the music festival in Studio-A yesterday.

UNION Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn inspected the preparations to hold the Tu Shin Hnwal Pyaw Gita Pwal Taw singing competition (Season -2) marking the Diamond Jubilee Independence Day at MRTV on Pyay Road of Yangon yesterday.

Firstly, the Union minister cordially met the chairman and members of the Myanmar Music Association (Central), judges and presenters of Season 2, guests, contestants from regions/states for matches (1/2) and members of MRTV modern band.

He then inspected the video-making sessions and preparations at Studio-A.

The Union minister said the ministry is making efforts to entertain the people by holding the singing competition (Season-2) and it is time for the artists to serve the people with their art skills. Season 1 jointly conducted by the ministry and regional governments including Nay Pyi Taw Council was popular among the people. Now, Season 2 will be held to mark the 75th Anniversary of Independence Day.

He then called on the officials to participate in holding the event successfully.

The Tu Shin Hnwal Pyaw Gita Pwal Taw singing competition Season 2 will be held between 2 September and 30 October. A total of 45 contestants – three each from Nay Pyi Taw and Regions/States will participate in the competition. There will be 10 matches for five groups containing nine contestants each for the first round and they will have to sing the designated songs and the ones they like. In the second round, they have to compete with the fixed songs and the ones they like for seven matches. The process is the same for the final match for the first, second and third prizes.

Then, the Union minister checked the Graphic Design course at MRTV and met the news announcers and presenters of MRTV HD, MRTV News and MITV Channel and provided cash assistance. — MNA

NSPNC meets working group of political parties

THE meeting between the National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee-NSPNC and the working group of political parties was held at the National Solidarity and Peacemaking Centre's meeting hall yesterday morning.

SAC Member Union Minister at the Union Government Office National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee Chairman Lt-Gen Yar Pyae and committee members, leader of the working group of political parties Shan Nationalities Democratic Party (SNDP) Chairman U Sai Aik Pao and representatives of the working group attended the meeting.

The meeting between the National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee and the working group of political parties is in progress.

National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee Chairman Lt-Gen Yar Pyae and SNDP Chairman U Sai Aik Pao gave opening remarks at the meeting.

Afterwards, each point of NSPNC's findings on proposals of the working group of political parties concerning amendment points to the 2008 Constitution was discussed throughout the meeting and participants exchanged their views.

Then, the NSPNC clarified the findings on the practice of federalism in Germany and presented the lists of pending legislation from Table 1 and Table 2 provided in the 2008 Constitution.

Afterwards, mutual views from both sides were collected and documented before the chairpersons of the NSPNC and SNDP made closing speeches. — MNA

Leaders of Ethnic Armed Organizations depart from Nay Pyi Taw

AS Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing called for peace talks with ethnic armed organizations-EAOs, the PNLO, LDU and ALP delegations who conducted peace talks in Nay Pyi Taw left Nay Pyi Taw on the morning of 27 August. The PNLO peace delegation led by Chairman Khun Thurein, the LDU peace delegation led by Chairman Kyar Solomon and the ALP delegation team led by Vice-Chairperson Saw Mra Raza Lin went back to Taunggyi, Tachilek of Shan State and Sittway, Rakhine State, respectively.

The PNLO, LDU and ALP delegations were seen off by officials and members of the National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee, ethnic people of the Department of Fine Arts, departmental officials and locals by holding miniature National flags and posters bearing: "Perpetual peace is the real aspiration of the people", "Achieving peace is the true desire of all citizens", "Let's hold talks for peace in the Union", "Only the ethnic nationalities are in unity, stability, peace and tranquillity will be achieved" at the Horizon Lake View Resort, Nay Pyi Taw and the Nay Pyi Taw Airport. — MNA

PNLO Delegation.

LDU Delegation.

ALP Delegation.

Situations that require mandatory wearing of face masks announced

1. The Ministry of Health has been urging people to wear face masks to prevent the spread of the disease since the beginning of the outbreak of COVID-19.

2. As part of the personal protection rules for the COVID-19 disease that the public has to follow in their daily lives, they are informed that it is necessary to wear a face mask in the following situations: -
   (a) being close to one person in a room;
   (b) being with people in crowded places such as travelling in vehicles used by the public, railways, ships, planes; hospitals/health centres used by the public; offices, schools, markets, shopping centres, and nursing homes;
   (c) Having any suspected symptoms of COVID-19 such as illness, cough, sneezing, stuffy nose, sore throat, physical discomfort, body pain, sudden loss of smell and taste.

Ministry of Health
25-7-2022

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Union Health Minister attends opening ceremony of Secretariat of ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies in Bangkok

AT the invitation of Thailand Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Health Mr Anutin Charnvirakul, Union Minister for Health Dr Thet Khaing Win attended the opening ceremony of the Secretariat of the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies held at the Bangrak Medical Centre Building in Bangkok, Thailand yesterday afternoon.

The Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand and Minister of Public Health, ASEAN Secretary-General Mr Lim Jock Hoi, health ministers, deputy ministers and officials from ASEAN countries attended the ceremony.

The MoH Union Minister meets the Thai Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Health yesterday.

At the ceremony, Thailand Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Health Mr Anutin Charnvirakul gave the opening speech. Along with the deputy prime minister, the representatives of the ASEAN countries pressed the button to open the centre.

Secretariat of the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED) were opened with the support of Japan and it can respond to public health emergencies in ASEAN countries. ASEAN countries can cooperate more closely with each other for treatment activities, preventing outbreaks of infectious diseases, exchanging public health information within ASEAN countries, and opening and delivering courses.

After the ceremony, Union Minister Dr Thet Khaing Win met Thai Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Health Mr Anutin Charnvirakul.

During the meeting, they discussed more cooperation in Myanmar-Thailand healthcare activities, raising prevention and control measures against infectious diseases including COVID-19 in the border areas of the two countries and issues of medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to be donated to Myanmar from Thailand. — MNA

Knowledge Sharing Programme on "Compliance Audit" held

The Knowledge Sharing Programme on "Compliance Audit" is in progress both online and offline on 25 August.

THE Knowledge Sharing Programme No 20 on "Compliance Audit" was held at 2 pm on 25 August at the Assembly Hall of the Office of the Auditor-General of the Union, Nay Pyi Taw.

At the ceremony, Union Auditor-General U Tin Oo delivered an address, saying that Knowledge Sharing is the best opportunity to obtain one's knowledge and experience; Compliance Audit is the independent assessment of whether activities, financial transactions and information are, in all material respects, in compliance with the authorities which govern the audited entity.

He urged the participants to absorb carefully the experience and knowledge about the audit process and observations of the presenter who conducted the compliance audit to apply that knowledge in the fieldwork.

Then, Daw Myo Myo Khaing, Assistant Director, Audit Division 6 (Audit Department) presented and discussed completely into two sessions: the theory and audit observations related to the compliance audit.

Afterwards, the attendees raised questions and exchanged knowledge and experience.

The ceremony was attended by the permanent secretary, the director-general (Audit Department), the deputy permanent secretary, the deputy directors-general (Admin/Audit), directors, deputy directors, assistant directors, staff officers, and senior auditors, totalling 402, not only from the Assembly Hall but also virtually from one training school room, the Myanmar Accountancy Council Office and Region/State Auditor-General Offices, in line with COVID-19 rules and regulations. — MNA

MoNREC designates Gyogyar Inn as forest protection area

THE Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation has designated the area of 4,087 acres in Tatkon Township, Uttara District in Nay Pyi Taw, as "Gyogyar Inn forest protection area" as of 26 August 2022, under Notification No 129/2022 by exercising the authority conferred under Sub-section (e) of Section (6) of the Forest Law promulgated in 2018.

The Gyogyar Inn protected forest is intended to develop and sustain natural forests that will effectively fulfil the need for water and land conservation and balancing climates, good soil and a green environment.

The Gyogyar Inn protected forest is not only a place where various kinds of wood and valuable trees such as timbers, sal trees, Myanmar pinak, Shorea oblongifolia, Chukrasia tabularis but also the herbs such as Menispermum and Shatavari as well as a habitat for wild animals such as jungle cat, red junglefowl, Phasianidae, rabbit, Chinese francolin, Columbidae. It is also a watershed area of the Sinthay Dam. Thus, the area is declared a forest protection area.

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation

LOCAL BUSINESS

YRIC endorses 4 foreign manufacturing projects on CMP basis with 2,369 jobs

A garment factory running on a Cutting, Making, and Packing (CMP) basis is seen in Yangon Region.

THE Yangon Region Investment Committee (YRIC) endorsed four foreign enterprises in the manufacturing sector at the meeting held on 25 August, with an estimated capital of US$5.143 million. Those enterprises will create 2,369 jobs for residents.

They will execute the production of HDPE, PP woven and non-woven bags and sacks, production and selling of clothes, fabric and garments, and production and selling of plastic bags on a Cutting Making and Packing (CMP) basis.

In the first half of 2022 (Jan-June), foreign direct investments of over $159 million were given the go-ahead to invest in the country. The FDIs stood at over $41 million from China, over $59 million from Hong Kong, over $21 million from Singapore, over $17 million from the Republic of Korea, over $6 million from Japan, and over $7 million from Chinese Taipei and over $5 million from Indonesia. Only the Asian countries have pumped foreign investments into the country so far, according to the statistics released by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration. — TWA/GNLM

CBM directs banks to report FX sales data from 29 August

THE Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) directed the Authorized Dealers (banks) to forward daily reports of the foreign exchange sales from 29 August, according to the CBM's notification dated 25 August.

According to the statement, the banks must submit the Foreign Exchange transaction data to the CBM when they buy foreign currency from those entities (companies, institutions) that are exempted from foreign currency conversion regulation for 35 per cent of export earnings, and sell them to the fuel oil importers. The daily report is to be sent by 5 pm effective 29 August.

Regarding foreign accounts of the exporters at the banks, 65 per cent of earnings must be exchanged for local currency within one working day. Banks must conduct transactions out of the remaining 35 per cent for the use of exporters or remittance or selling to the ADs or use themselves within 30 days of earnings.

The CBM set the reference exchange rate for the US dollar at K2,100, while the dollar is valued at over K3,000 in the unofficial FX market. — TWA/GNLM

Prices of palm oil, potato extend drop; prices of onion, sugar stable; rice price slightly rises

THE wholesale price of palm oil in the commercial hub Yangon continued to decline to K8,900 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes) on 26 August, Ko Thet, a trader who delivers the goods to regions other than Yangon, told the Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM).

On 25 August, it fetched only K9,100 per viss. The prices of grocery items including palm oil slightly decreased in recent days on the demand slump, traders shared their opinions.

Last week, palm oil transactions did not see in some regions outside Yangon amid the volatile market. On 26 August, palm oil wholesale price was estimated at K9,500 there.

"The palm oil was priced at K105,000 per jerry can (10 visses). On 25 August, the price declined to K97,000-98,000 per 10 visses," the GNLM quoted Daw Kyin, a buyer who made an order from Myingyan town, as saying.

Onion bags are seen being carried at the Bayintnaung wholesale centre.

On 26 August, potato prices also continued to drop. The prices of local Shan potatoes were K1,300-2,100 per viss while Chinese potatoes were offered at K1,850-1,900 per viss, according to the potato warehouse on Yetama Street.

Meanwhile, onion prices were quite stable on 26 August, Ko Thet said.

The prices of onions were just K2,200-2800 for onions from Seikphyu Township and K2,350 -2,900 for Monywa township yesterday.

The popular branded sugar prices also remain unchanged for a few days, Ko Ta Yote from the sugar warehouse told the GNLM.

The branded sugar price reached the maximum of K2,240 per viss in the wholesale market, while other branded sugar was priced at K2,220-2,230 per viss. There is only a small price gap between the popular brand and other brands, Ko Thet stated.

Sugar mills will restart their operations soon so the trading is quite slow-moving. There is a low chance for the sugar sellers to raise the price as they need to sell off the old stocks and sugar is a local product, Daw Yee, a sugar manufacturer explained market conditions to the GNLM.

The price of sugar has been relatively stable at K2,220-2,240 per viss in the past two months (14 June-26 August), Ko Phyo Ko, a seller from Pathein city, told the GNLM.

The retail price of high-grade Pawsan from Myaungmya and Pyapon areas moved in the range of K60,000 and K63,000 per bag in mid-July 2022. The price slightly rose to K70,000-72,000 per bag in the third week of August. — TWA/GNLM

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Shwedagon to raise rate for gold leaf donation in September

THE Shwedagon Pagoda board of trustees said the rate for gold leaf will be increased starting from 1 September.

The rates to be raised are K10.8 million for a six-tical plate, K5.4 million for a three-tical plate, and K1.8 million for a tical plate. Although the gold price hits K2.8 million per tical in the market Shwedagon Pagoda set K1.8 million per tical, it is reported.

The previous rates since 1 December 2021 are K9.6 million for a six-tical plate, K4.8 million for a three-tical plate, and K1.6 million for a tical plate.

It is planned to buy 10,000 two-inch industrial gold plates and 5,000 traditional handicraft gold plates totalling 15,000 through a tender system for the Shwedagon Pagoda. — TWA/GNLM

Gold plates were pictured being offered to the Shwedagon Pagoda in 2019.

53 Bengalis without official documents arrested in Rakhine State

IN the third week of August, 53 Bengalis without official documents were arrested in Thandwe Township of Rakhine State.

A total of 23 men and five women of Bengalis were arrested on 19 August and 16 men and nine women of Bengalis on 26 August, respectively.

They are residents of Maungtaw Township, and they paid K3.5 million for each as a brokerage fee to work in Yangon.

While they were travelling by boat, due to a storm they docked on the beach of Thandwe Township. They were detained while they hid in the nearest forest.

The action was taken against them under the Immigration Law and efforts are also being made to arrest suspected transporter and related persons. — TWA/GNLM

Oil Mills Development Loan Management Task Force organized to expand modern oil mills

THE Oil Mills Development Loan Management Task Force has been formed to expand to build Modern oil mills, according to officials.

The management task force was formed in line with Notification No 118/2022 issued by the State Administration Council.

It was formed by 12 members of the Ministry of Planning and Finance led by the deputy minister as chairman.

Oilseeds including sunflowers need to produce more to reduce the import of edible oil from abroad and ensure self-sufficiency in domestic edible oil.

To produce good quality edible oil, installation of advanced equipment and oil machines, construction of new modern oil mills and upgrading of existing oil mills are major requirements.

The task force was formed to meet the investment needs.

The task force will help people to apply for a loan to upgrade oil mills in Myanmar with advanced equipment as it is necessary to expand and install new modern oil mills.

Verification and authorization will also be provided by the task force.

In addition, loan management, loan criteria, interest rates and terms, and loan criteria must be specified according to the coordination agreement of the relevant ministries.

Similarly, monitoring and reviewing plus pre-designation for credit risk management parameters will be conducted whether the loan is effectively used or not

Likewise, a report of the operations of the Oil Mills Development Loan Management Task Force must also be prepared and submitted.

In addition, development loan management sub-groups are formed in each Region/ State for field inspections. — TWA/GNLM

University of Technology Nay Pyi Taw to open 6 degree courses

ACCORDING to the Ministry of Science and Technology, those who passed the 2022 matriculation exam can apply for admission to the University of Technology, Nay Pyi Taw.

The university will open courses on civil engineering, electronic engineering, electric power engineering, mechanical engineering, computer engineering and IT, and architectural engineering.

Therefore, the candidates will be selected based on the minimum marks in English, Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry.

The courses aim to improve vocational opportunities for the youths in the socioeconomic development of the State and produce qualified engineers for the benefit of the country.

For detailed information, candidates can contact the Student Affairs Division of the Department of Science and Technology through phones 067-3404570, 067-3404652 and 067-3404642 during office hours. — TWA/GNLM

OPINION

Create best-performing works to win the hearts of audiences

MYANMAR'S traditional fine arts have been based on sound foundations with full essence as their own cultural form. Some of the songs were born in Myanmar's monarchical eras and some were among the farmers, specializing the songs illustrating crop planting, sounds of large drums as well as pounding paddy to be rice.

Various forms of traditional cultural performing arts are sweet music which wins the hearts of audiences, singing and dancing. Hence, it is necessary to preserve singing, dancing, playing music and composing songs for long-term existence. It is because these artistic performances depict the life and nature of ancient Myanmar people as well as current citizens.

> Only when various forms of Myanmar's performing arts flourish will nationals have a wider knowledge of preventing the infiltration of alien cultures. But the people should not discard all forms of foreign culture. Performers need to seek the best things from foreign cultures appropriate for the nation and add them to the traditional culture as part of creating the best performing work. It will be beneficial for the nation and the nationals.

In Myanmar's cultural heritages, musical instruments are made of bronze wares, strings, leather, blowing and clapping of hands. These five kinds of basic instrumental forms create the masterpieces of performing arts in Myanmar history. It is visible that these artistic works preserve the prestige and integrity of the nation and nationals, cultural heritages and national characteristics. Hence, today all Myanmar citizens are responsible for preserving the cultural heritage of Myanmar and its national characteristics for long-term existence.

In fact, music and performing arts can lure the minds of audiences to handle how to do and what to do. The artistic works can give birth to the spirits of adoring the nation and the national. That is why all need to contribute to flourishing the performing arts as much as they can.

The 23rd Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions for 2022 will take place in Nay Pyi Taw in accord with the national objectives: (a) To uplift national prestige and integrity and to preserve the cultural heritage and national characteristics (b) To discover, preserve and uplift the traditional cultural heritage of performing arts of ethnic nationals and national cultural characteristics (c) To preserve traditional cultural performing arts in order to further revitalize adoration of the State and hand it down to new generation youths (d) To contribute much to the restoration of perpetual peace.

Only when various forms of Myanmar's performing arts flourish will nationals have a wider knowledge of preventing the infiltration of alien cultures. But the people should not discard all forms of foreign culture. Performers need to seek the best things from foreign cultures appropriate for the nation and add them to the traditional culture as part of creating the best performing work. It will be beneficial for the nation and the nationals.

ARTICLE
BOOKRACK

Foreign IT company that was reluctant to register as a company. The people/companies need to refer to the US headquarters even though it is a Japanese case

By Suzuka YOSHIDA

ANYONE can send a wide variety of messages and opinions on social networking services (SNS) that exchange information on the Internet. However, among them, there are cases of deceiving others with false information, attacking specific individuals by slandering, and even driving them to suicide. In such a case, you will try to ask the information sender to delete it. But what do you do when the sender is anonymous, with no name, no face, or no address?

Senders whose names, addresses, and faces are unknown may spread false rumours in some cases

Anyone can easily obtain and transmit information through SNS (social networking services: Internet tools) such as Twitter and Facebook. Since no permission is required to publish content, strangers are free to post their opinions and actions without restrictions. And because it can spread quickly, it has now become an important tool for shaping public opinion.

However, some people use SNS accounts without revealing their real names or addresses. In addition, some of the sent messages include malicious false information, such as "that person is doing such a terrible thing", without consideration for others and without considering human rights. There are also many slanders. Alternatively, somebody with malicious intent may follow the behaviour of a specific user and use it for crimes, such as breaking into a burglary while the user is away. It can be said that it is a tool whose merits and demerits depending on how it is used.

In Japan, there is no end to the number of cases in which people's social reputation has been damaged by malicious comments, and they have been traumatized emotionally.

Let's take a typical example. Female professional wrestler Hana Kimura was slandered by several people. Many hateful messages which were much stronger than bullying had been posted and drove Hana Kimura to commit suicide. After her death, Hana Kimura's mother tracked down the person who wrote the malicious message and demanded it is deleted and filed a lawsuit. The information disclosure request is directed to Twitter Inc., a prominent IT company located in California, USA. However, since there is no concept of "insult" in the United States, it is said that Twitter Inc., was uncooperative with the Japanese police investigation at the beginning of the investigation.

Why is the US headquarters involved in the incident that happened in Japan?

Some IT companies were fined for not registering in Japan.

The reason is that they are not registered in Japan.

Companies born in foreign countries must register with the Ministry of Justice under the Japanese Company Law in order to continue to operate in Japan, just like Japanese companies. Submit the name and address of the place of business, the name and address of the representative, the URL of the homepage, the balance sheet, etc. At the same time, IT companies must separately submit a notification to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications as a telecommunications carrier. By making such notification, the administrative side can inform the laws and regulations, and foreign IT companies can enquire about Japanese laws. Necessary routes can be established in both directions by the register.

However, foreign IT companies have only notified the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, which is directly related to their business, and most of them have not notified the Ministry of Justice until early 2022.

Japan's Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications notified the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications in March of this year that they were telecommunications carriers while requesting foreign IT companies that had not yet registered with the Ministry of Justice to register based on the Companies Act. Those were. 48 foreign companies, including world-famous companies such as Google, Twitter and Meta.

Japan's Ministry of Justice explained to media reporters that eight of those companies completed registration in response to their requests in March, with 31 showing a willingness to register, but seven replied that they would not register. Here, the problem finally became clear to the world. Nevertheless, seven companies refused to apply for registration. On 1 July, the Ministry of Justice notified the Tokyo District Court that the seven companies should be fined (about a million yen ≒ $7,400) for violating the Companies Act. This is the first time that the Ministry of Justice has issued such a notice to a foreign company.

If you lose your social reputation due to malicious writing, you must first make a request for information disclosure in order to identify the message sender. Then you have to request deletion of the message.

If they do not comply, they will have to take legal action and bring it to court.

During legal proceedings that cost time and money, the other party may delete the message on the SNS, leaving no evidence. Prompt legal action is critical.

Simple procedure

The procedure for registering a company under the Companies Act is not very complicated.

(1) The law governing the establishment of a foreign company;

(2) The name and address of the representative in Japan;

(3) Public notice method if the most similar company in Japan is a stock company;

(4) If an electromagnetic public notice is used for the public notice of financial results, its address;

SEE PAGE-10

Book Title - Recognizing New States and Law and Philosophy-related Essays
Author - Dr Myint Zan
Publishing House - Myanmar Heritage
Publication Date - May 2022 (1st Edition)
Price - K6,000

Recognizing New States and Law and Philosophy-related Essays

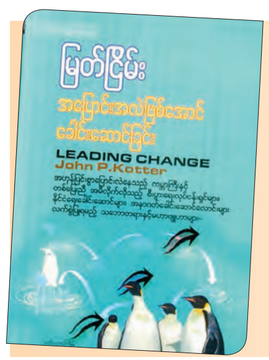
THE Myanmar Heritage Publishing House collected a total of nine articles including six articles on law and legal philosophy published in various journals and three new articles that have not been published written by Dr Myint Zan, a retired Professor of Law.

In the Part on law and legal philosophy, there are Chapters on a comparative study of the apex courts of Myanmar and Malaysia, a discussion and commentary on a few cases decided by the Supreme Court of the United States from 1857 to the year 2000. An article dealing with translation into English of selected legal documents written in Myanmar from the early 17th to early 21st century is included in this Part of the book. The author also introduced the book Legal Education and Legal Traditions published (in English) by Springer Link in 2020 which he edited. These articles should be useful for lawyers, law teachers and law students.

In the Part on 'Philosophy of Life and Ancient Philosophy', there is an article on 'Differences between having a good life and responsibility to live well'. It discusses the late philosopher Ronald Dworkin's views on living a good life.

Also included in this Chapter are biographical snippets of Stalin, dictator of the Soviet Union; Mother Teresa who led the Missionaries of Charity; Ngwe Tar Yi, a poet; U Ne Win, Chairman of the Burma Socialist Programme Party; Alfredo Stroessner, dictator of Paraguay and Alfred Wegener, a meteorologist, geophysicist and polar researcher.

An article entitled 'Recognizing a new State from the perspective of International Law' explains the concept of the State according to contemporary International Law. In the conclusion of this article, the author states that International Law is related to geopolitics, power politics and extra-legal factors.



Book Title - LEADING CHANGE by John P. Kotter
Translator - Myat Nyein
Publishing House - Seikku Cho Cho
Publication Date - January 2021 (2nd Edition)
Price - K3,500

LEADING CHANGE by John P. Kotter

LEADING CHANGE is the award-winning business and management book, listed among 25 best-selling books, according to Time Magazine. Yet the author John P. Kotter cited it as a part of his research paper at Harvard University.

There are 16-year gaps between the first and second editions of this book. However, the content still keeps up with the trend. The author believed that the ideas and suggestions to make changes in management and leadership can adapt more to current situations as it is in an era of increasingly rapid change.

The author mentioned in his introduction that intelligent people choose to overcome challenges. However, they make the same and common mistakes until now, especially in strategies or new projects with costly consequences.

The book consists of change challenges and problem-solving in Part 1, management and eight-step change model in Part 2 and suggestions for the 21st century in Part 3, totalling 12 chapters.

The book illustrates leading successful organizational change stating the chapter: Why businesses do not succeed, successful change and driving force of change, establishing a sense of urgency, creating a guiding coalition, developing a change vision, forming a strategic vision, communicating the vision, empowering employees for action, creating short-term wins, consolidating gains and strengthening change by anchoring change in corporate culture, driving organizational change, future leadership and lifelong learning.

The readers can learn about the events that happened in the past century and explore how the history of the past events can benefit the process in the 21st century.

ARTICLE/SCI/ENVIRON
WORLD

Russia's only female cosmonaut says 'ready' for Crew Dragon flight

RUSSIA'S only active female cosmonaut, Anna Kikina, said Friday she was ready for her upcoming flight to the International Space Station aboard Space X's Crew Dragon.

The flight, scheduled for 3 October, is set to go ahead despite soaring tensions between Moscow and Washington over Russia's military intervention in Ukraine.

Kikina, a 37-year-old engineer, will be only the fifth professional woman cosmonaut from Russia or the Soviet Union to fly to space. She will also be the first Russian to travel aboard a Crew Dragon spacecraft, as part of a cross-flights deal between NASA and Russia's space agency Roscosmos.

Russia's only active female cosmonaut, Anna Kikina, 37, will be only the fifth professional woman cosmonaut from Russia or the Soviet Union to fly to space. **PHOTO: RUSSIAN SPACE AGENCY ROSCOSMOS/AFP/FILE**

"Yes, of course I am ready for the flight. I will leave for America on 8 September for the final training session, pre-flight activities and procedures," Kikina told a press conference broadcast by Roscosmos.

Speaking of her role as the first Russian to fly with a Space X mission, she said "this is a great responsibility". —AFP

Europe electricity prices soar as tough winter looms

The shutdown of several nuclear reactors due to corrosion issues has contributed to the French electricity price increase. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

EUROPEAN electricity prices soared to new records on Friday, presaging a bitter winter as Russia's invasion of Ukraine inflicts economic pain across the continent.

The year-ahead contract for German electricity reached 995 euros ($995) per megawatt hours while the French equivalent surged past 1,100 euros — a more than tenfold increase in both countries from last year.

In Britain, energy regulator Ofgem said it would increase the electricity and gas price cap almost twofold from 1 October to an average £3,549 ($4,197) per year.

Ofgem blamed the increase on the spike in global wholesale gas prices after the lifting of Covid restrictions and Russian curbs on supplies. —AFP

Dry summer puts squeeze on French Alps cheese

FRANCE'S record heat and drought have not spared the majestic pastures under the snow-capped Alps, where cows are struggling to find enough grass to produce milk for reblochon and other prized cheeses.

"Everything's yellow and parched, so we'll have to bring them down from the pastures a month early," said Theo Bargetzy, 28, as cowbells rang out in a field some 1,600 metres (5,250 feet) above sea level.

Crowds of tourists in search of cooler climes have flocked to the Alps this summer where buying local raw-milk reblochon and other hand-made cheeses directly from local producers is a cherished ritual.

But this year, some heading to Bargetzy's Lorettes farm perched above La Clusaz are coming away empty-handed — cows are not getting their usual fill of fresh grass, and their milk is less rich as a result.

July was the driest month on record for France overall since 1961, and heat waves pushed temperatures near La Clusaz above 30 degrees Celsius (86 Fahrenheit) on several days, unheard-of on the steep slopes.

"We're losing one reblochon per cow per day, so in a week that's 300 fewer cheeses," Bargetzy says later, while molding fresh curds into discs that will be carefully aged on wooden planks in a cellar until the distinctive orange-gold rind forms.—AFP

'It's going to be hard to make up for what we've already lost,' says Felix Gallet at the reblochon cooperative in Thones. **PHOTO: AFP**

Foreign IT company that was reluctant to register ...

FROM PAGE-9

(5) If the public notice method is electronic public notice, its address;

(6) If there is no provision for the method of advertisement, the Official Gazette shall be the method of publication.

The governing law is, for example, the law of the State of California, USA, which reveals the nature of the company. The place to be registered is the location of the business office if it is set up, or the address of the representative in Japan if it is not set up, and the period is within three weeks. The registration and licence tax are 90,000 yen (= $666) per office if you set up a business office, and 60,000 yen if you don't. It's a small amount. Amazon Japan G.K. did not recognize sales in Japan, but in 2019 decided to record sales due to a policy change. In other words, they decided to adopt a Japanese tax policy. In December 2019, and paid a total of 30 billion yen (= $222 million) in corporate taxes for 2017 and 2018.

Japan is the country with the most deletion requests in the world

Twitter released its transparency report on 25 January 2022. Japan accounted for the highest number of requests for deletion of tweets from countries in the first half of 2021, at 43 per cent, most of which were related to drugs, obscenities, and financial crimes. Russia, Turkiye, India, and South Korea followed Japan in number, with these five countries accounting for 95 per cent of the total.

It is ashamed for Japanese users who are trying to avoid the application of the law because there are no regulations. Considering that there are countries where problems tend to occur, it seems that the morals of users are also involved. We must correct the information literacy of the people who take actions that violate the law even when their faces cannot be seen. It is required to conduct civic education so that the people will not be affected by rumours.

Sources:

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hana_Kimura

■

HEALTH/PANDEMIC WORLD

APEC meeting focuses on efforts to balance health, economy

HEALTH ministers, high-level officials and experts from the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) economies on Friday agreed on joint efforts to improve the health and wealth of people in the region.

During the 12th APEC High-Level Meeting on Health and Economy held from Thursday to Friday, attendees exchanged insights about the region's resilience against future pandemics and reaffirmed commitments to fostering quality growth in society as a whole, Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Health Anutin Charnvirakul said in his chair's statement.

Delegates discussed on promoting public and private investments into health technology such as vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics.

They also encouraged further efforts to create an inclusive digital economy to foster new technologies that allow businesses to thrive and cooperate particular in the health industry.

US-based Pfizer said it has not received the lawsuit and declined to speak further, while Germany's BioNTech did not immediately reply to a request for comment.

The mRNA technology used in the Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech shots differs from that in traditional vaccines, which rely on injecting weakened or dead forms of a virus to allow the immune system to recognize it and build antibodies.

Instead, mRNA vaccines deliver instructions to cells to build a harmless piece of the spike protein found on the surface of the virus that causes Covid-19.

After creating this spike protein, cells can recognize and fight the real virus, hailed as a major advancement in development of vaccines.—Xinhua

Vendors sell flowers in front of Erawan Shrine in Bangkok, Thailand, 12 July 2021. In an effort to curtail the spread of the virus, the Thai government on 9 July announced new curbs in hard-hit regions, including Bangkok and five nearby provinces. **PHOTO: XINHUA/ RACHEN SAGEAMSAK**

COVID-19 SITUATION UPDATE

Pandemic sets back poverty reduction efforts in Asia by 2 years: ADB report

THE COVID-19 pandemic has set back the fight against poverty in Asia and the Pacific by at least two years, and many in the region will likely find it harder than before to escape poverty, according to an Asian Development Bank (ADB) report. The Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2022 said the region's economic growth this year is expected to reduce extreme poverty, defined as living off less than 1.90 US dollars a day, to a level that would have been achieved in 2020 had the pandemic not happened.

The report said the pandemic interrupted a long trend of poverty reduction in Asia and the Pacific, "mainly driven by significant job losses and limited access to social safety nets".

The ADB, whose head office is seen here in Manila, said some risks had become more acute over the past two years, such as job uncertainty, mental health deterioration, extreme weather, cybersecurity failures and infectious diseases. **PHOTO: ADB**

The ADB has warned that the region has posted a marked slowdown in achieving many of its Sustainable Development Goals, meaning unavoidable delays in reaching targets for reducing poverty and social inequality and improving social mobility. "The recovery process may not be linear for many economies of Asia and the Pacific," the report said, adding that the pandemic may have worsened poverty beyond income, such as food insecurity and inadequate access to health services and education.—Xinhua

Study by Pfizer/BioNtech finds its COVID-19 vaccine 73.2% efficient in children

THE COVID-19 vaccine from BioNTech and Pfizer provides 73.2 per cent protection for young children aged six months to four years, according to a study published by the vaccine makers.

Three doses of three micrograms each provide infants with a "high level of protection at a time when the Omicron BA.2 strain is highly prevalent," said Ugur Sahin, CEO and co-founder of BioNTech. German vaccine developer BioNTech and its US partner Pfizer are also developing a bivalent vaccine for this age group which is adapted to the current Omicron BA.4/ BA.5 subvariants, Sahin added. —Xinhua

2022 MONKEYPOX OUTBREAK

Rwanda bolsters preparedness against monkeypox

THE Rwandan Ministry of Health on Friday launched a national monkeypox preparedness and response plan, following the spread of the diseases in some parts of the world.

The plan provides a great foundation to detect and effectively respond to an outbreak of monkeypox, according to the Ministry of Health.

"Even though we have not yet recorded a case in Rwanda, previous pandemics have taught us that it is important to activate preparedness and response plans to epidemics before they break out," said Tharcisse Mpunga, minister of state in the Rwandan Ministry of Health in charge of Primary Healthcare at the launch of the plan in the Rwandan capital city Kigali.

He added that there is an urgent need to increase surveillance after the disease spread to other parts of the world including Rwanda's immediate neighbour Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Mpunga said that Rwanda is working closely with partners to monitor the evolving situation of the monkeypox outbreak in different parts of the world.—Xinhua

Workers are seen applying signage at the Kigali Convention Centre on 21 June 2022, the venue hosting the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) till 26 June. **PHOTO: SIMON MAINA / AFP**

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Cambodia to issue first-ever sovereign bond worth US$300 mln in September

CAMBODIA will issue the first-ever sovereign bond worth 300 million US dollars in September, according to a news release from the Ministry of Economy and Finance on Thursday.

Par value of a bond is 1 million riels (about 245 US dollars), the news release said, adding that bond maturities are one year, three years and five years.

Investors will enjoy a 50-per cent deduction of withholding tax on the interest earned from possessing and trading sovereign bonds, and tax exemption on capital gains from purchasing and trading the sovereign bonds for three years, it said. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Finance Aun Pornmoniroth said sovereign bonds will allow the government to raise funds for socioeconomic development projects.

He said the bonds will serve as a new financial instrument for institutional investors such as banks, insurance companies, the National Social Security Fund and pension fund, among others.

"The government bonds are expected to be popular for trading on the Cambodia Securities Exchange (CSX) and will provide benchmark data for corporate securities trading and financial analysis as implemented in countries with an advanced securities sector," he said.— Xinhua

Photo taken on 8 November 2018 shows a view of central Phnom Penh, Cambodia. **PHOTO: PHEARUM/ XINHUA/FILE**

Australian tourism industry waiting for international market to rebound

Tourists take a cruise boat for whale watching in Jervis Bay, south of Sydney, Australia, 23 September 2020. **PHOTO: XINHUA/BAI XUEFEI**

AUSTRALIAN tourism operators have revealed the international market still need time to rebound about half a year after the country's border reopened.

It recently marked six months since Australia opened up to international visitors almost two years after the border was closed to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

According to data published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) earlier in August, there were 730,400 total international arrivals to Australia in June.

Of those, 275,300 were travelers visiting Australia for short-term holidays.

By comparison there were 660,340 short-term overseas arrivals in Australia in June 2019.

While an increase in Australians holidaying domestically has offset some fall in international visitors, the tourism industry is still waiting for international visitors and also facing staffing problems.— Xinhua

Finns urged to take fewer saunas amid energy crunch

FINNS are being urged to turn down their thermostats this winter, take shorter showers and spend less time in their beloved saunas, as Europe faces an energy crunch following Russia's war in Ukraine.

The nationwide power saving campaign was announced this week Russia has cut gas supplies to Finland and other European countries in recent months, causing energy prices to soar. Called "A degree lower", the campaign will be launched on 10 October, Kati Laakso, a spokeswoman at state-owned company Motiva which promotes sustainability, told AFP on Friday. The company is behind the campaign together with the Finnish government and energy authority. In addition to lowering their heating and taking shorter showers, Finns will be encouraged to cut back on sauna time.

With an estimated three million saunas for 5.5 million people, the steam bath is a traditional Finnish institution. Bathers gather together in the nude in temperatures of around 85 degrees Celsius (185F).—AFP

Lights out? Swiss brace for looming power shortages

SWITZERLAND is among the world's wealthiest countries, but its reliance on Russian gas and French nuclear power — both in short supply — has it bracing for power shortages and even blackouts this winter.

With hundreds of hydropower plants spread across the Alps, Switzerland produces more than enough power in the summer months. However, the landlocked nation is forced to turn to imports when the cold sets in.

That is not usually a problem, but this year, with the war in Ukraine, and Russia slashing gas deliveries to much of Europe, the threat of severe power shortages is looming.

While other European countries are also feeling the sting, the situation is particularly precarious in Switzerland, which lacks its own gas storage installations.

It usually depends on imports from the surrounding European Union, and especially of gas-derived electricity from Germany, but with the bloc wary about its own power supply, non-member Switzerland finds itself at the back of the queue. Compounding the problem, neighbouring France has been forced to halt production at half of its reactors, mainly due to corrosion problems, Stephane Genoud, an energy management professor at the Swiss HES-SO university, told AFP.—AFP

Switzerland's launch next month of a powerful pumped-storage hydroelectric plant is unlikely to help avoid problems this winter. **PHOTO: AFP**

Tunisia hosts Japan-Africa investment conference

TUNISIA and Japan launched a pan-African investment conference on Saturday, seeking to counter the influence of rival China whose economic imprint on the continent has steadily grown.

The conference takes place amid a "complex" international environment caused by the coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine, the Japanese foreign ministry has said.

Some 30 heads of state and government are attending the event in the capital Tunis, at a time when the import-dependent North African nation is grappling with a deepening economic malaise.

Attendees walk outside the Congress Palace, hosting the eighth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD8). **PHOTO: POOL/AFP**

In his opening speech, Tunisian President Kais Saied urged delegates to "search together for ways for African peoples to achieve the hopes and dreams of the first generation after independence".

He praised Japan's success in "achieving development at the same time as preserve its culture and social traditions".

"The world cannot continue as it was. With all its wealth and assets, Africa cannot watch its people live through poverty," he said.

The eighth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD8) also comes as Beijing cements its influence on the continent with its "Belt and Road" infrastructure initiative.

It is the first TICAD — held every three years either in Japan or an African country — since the pandemic began.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida will be attending remotely after testing positive for Covid-19.—AFP

China's telecom sector sees stable growth in Jan-July

CHINA'S telecommunications sector logged steady expansion in the first seven months of this year, official data showed.

The combined industrial revenue rose 8.3 per cent year on year to 944.2 billion yuan (about 137.87 billion US dollars), according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

Emerging businesses, such as big data, cloud computing, internet data centers and Internet of Things, expanded rapidly during the period. The emerging business revenue of China's three telecom giants — China Telecom, China Mobile and China Unicom — surged 35.1 per cent year on year to 184.3 billion yuan.

In breakdown, the revenue for cloud computing services soared 131.7 per cent year on year, while that for big data and Internet of Things surged 60.3 per cent and 25.9 per cent, respectively.

Steady progress was also made in the construction of 5G base stations. By the end of July, the number of 5G base stations in China had reached a total of nearly 1.97 million.—Xinhua

Solomon Islands refuses to allow US ship to make port call

THE Solomon Islands has refused to allow a US Coast Guard cutter to make a routine port call — a further sign of the deteriorating relations between Washington and the Pacific nation, which is pursuing deeper ties with China.

The USCGC Oliver Henry had been scheduled to make a "routine logistics port call" in Honiara, the Coast Guard said Friday in a statement.

But the Solomons government "did not respond to the US government's request for diplomatic clearance for the vessel to refuel and provision" in the capital city, said the Coast Guard. The State Department has contacted the Solomons government and expects "all future clearances will be provided to US ships", concluded the brief statement.

The Coast Guard did not say when the expected port call was rejected, but it published a photo of the Oliver Henry arriving in Papua New Guinea on 14 August. It said the cutter was "part of a patrol headed south to assist partner nations in upholding and asserting their sovereignty while protecting US national interests." The Solomon Islands recently signed a secretive security pact with Beijing and has threatened to ban or deport foreign journalists for "disrespectful and demeaning" coverage. —AFP

Dozens of flights cancelled in Portugal, Spain due to strikes

NEARLY 180 flights in Portugal and Spain have been cancelled because of strikes by cabin crew and baggage handlers, airlines and airport officials said Friday, leading to further disruption in the busy summer season.

Portugal's airport operator ANA said almost 150 flights planned for Friday and Saturday were cancelled, affecting Lisbon and Porto airports as well as other smaller airports because of a strike over pay by ground crew that will last until Sunday evening.

Budget airline Ryanair — already affected by strikes in Spain — was forced to cancel around 100 flights over the two days.

Passengers wait in Barcelona's El Prat airport during the first wave of Ryanair strike action in July. **PHOTO: PAU BARRENA/AFP**

Staff at airport handling company Portway want "an immediate increase in wages" to allow workers to "regain their purchasing power", Portugal's Civil Aviation Workers' Union (SINTAC) said in a statement.

Portway, which employs around 2,500 people, is a subsidiary of ANA.

But Portway said in a statement the strike was "irresponsible" because it was taking place at an "intense time for aviation and tourism", one of the main drivers of the Portuguese economy. In Spain, Iberia Express, the low-cost arm of the country's national carrier, said it was cancelling 24 domestic flights from Sunday when its cabin crew starts a 10-day strike seeking higher pay. —AFP

Diamond magnate appeals Swiss corruption verdict

FRENCH-ISRAELI diamond magnate Beny Steinmetz will be back in court in Switzerland on Monday to appeal against a corruption sentence linked to mining rights in Guinea.

A Geneva court convicted the 66-year-old businessman in January 2021 of setting up a complex financial web to pay bribes to ensure his company could obtain permits in an area estimated to contain the world's biggest untapped deposits of iron ore.

He was sentenced to five years in prison and also ordered to pay 50 million Swiss francs ($52 million) in compensation to the canton of Geneva.

Steinmetz maintained his innocence throughout that trial and immediately appealed against the ruling, decrying it as a "big injustice".

Two of his alleged co-conspirators, who were slapped with shorter jail terms, are also appealing.

Steinmetz has changed his legal and communications team for the appeal, and they are preparing to argue that the lower court had not fully heard his arguments and had misunderstood the situation.—AFP

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Peak Tram back on track in tourist-devoid Hong Kong

THE Peak Tram, Hong Kong's famed public transport and a popular tourist draw, reopened Saturday after a year-long $102 million facelift even as the city's coronavirus curbs continue to keep overseas visitors at bay.

The historic funicular, which dates back to 1888 and offers panoramic views of Hong Kong Island's famous skyline as it ascends to Victoria Peak, used to draw over six million visitors a year, according to its operator.

The latest makeover brought more spacious tramcars that accommodate 210 passengers, a full overhaul of its rail systems and a redesigned terminus at the heart of Hong Kong's central business district.

The Peak Tram closed for upgrades in June 2021, a period when the Chinese finance hub's strict border controls — in line with Beijing's zero-Covid strategy — all but wiped out its tourism industry.

The redevelopment went overbudget by around $15 million, which its operator attributed to supply chain difficulties during the pandemic, such as bringing the custom Switzerland-made tramcars to Hong Kong.

An adult return ticket now costs HK$88 ($11.20), a nearly 70 per cent jump from before the makeover.

"I hope all visitors will feel it's worth the price," May Tsang, general manager of tram operator the Peak Complex, said on Wednesday.

"We have to consider the increase in our operating costs and the long-term sustainability of our business." On Saturday morning, a woman surnamed Kwok and her young daughter were among a crowd of around a hundred waiting in line to try out the refurbished tram.—AFP

The Peak Tram reopened Saturday after a year-long $102 million facelift even as the city's coronavirus curbs continue to keep overseas visitors at bay. **PHOTO:AFP**

RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

Staff work to reconnect Ukraine nuclear plant

Ukrainian Emergency Ministry rescuers attend an exercise in the city of Zaporizhzhia on 17 August 2022, in case of a possible nuclear incident at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant located nearby. **PHOTO: DIMITAR DILKOFF / AFP**

STAFF at Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant occupied by Russian soldiers were on Friday working to reconnect its reactors to the national power grid, the state energy operator said.

The plant — Europe's largest facility — was cut off from Ukraine's power network for the first time in its history on Thursday due to "actions of the invaders", Energoatom said.

Early Friday, the operator said on Telegram that all reactors remain "disconnected from the electrical grid" as of 9:00 am local time (0600 GMT).

However, a severed power line — the cause of the outage — has been "restored" and "work is ongoing to prepare the connection" of two of the plant's six reactors.

Zaporizhzhia has been cause for mounting concern since it was seized by Russian troops in the opening weeks of the war. In recent weeks, Kyiv and Moscow have traded blame for rocket strikes in the vicinity of the facility.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said late Thursday the cut-off was caused by Russian shelling of the last active power line linking the plant to the network. —AFP

TotalEnergies says Russian partner denies fuelling Ukraine strikes

FRANCE'S TotalEnergies said Friday that its Russian joint venture partner had confirmed it was not supplying Moscow with jet fuel to carry out strikes in Ukraine, following an investigative report by French daily Le Monde.

While most global energy giants have quit operating in Russia since its invasion of Ukraine, TotalEnergies has kept its lucrative natural gas operations in the country, though it has vowed to wind down purchases of Russian oil.

In particular it owns 49 per cent of Terneftegaz, a company that extracts gas from the Termokarstovoye field, according to its 2021 annual report.

The other 51 per cent is held by Russian company Novatek, in which the French firm also owns a direct 19.4 per cent stake.

Le Monde reported this week that Termokarstovoye is a source of natural gas condensates — a liquid hydrocarbon recovered when extracting the gas itself — that are sent by pipeline to a Novatek processing plant in Purovsky.— AFP

While most global energy giants have quit operating in Russia since its invasion of Ukraine, TotalEnergies has kept its lucrative natural gas operations in the country, though it has vowed to wind down purchases of Russian oil. **PHOTO: AFP**

Russians, Belarusians caught in the crossfire in Ukraine

BELARUSIAN political refugee Karyna Patsiomkina thought she would be out of harm's way when she moved into a flat in Bucha, a lush suburb north of Kyiv, in early February.

She felt comfortable in Ukraine, she said, a country "100 times more democratic" than her homeland, whose strongman leader has ruled with an iron fist for more than two decades.

The 31-year-old had fled Belarus six weeks earlier for what she expected to be a safe haven because she was facing arrest for anti-government posts.

Some of her friends were already in jail. But, within only two weeks, on 24 February, Moscow had attacked her new home country — using Belarus as a staging ground. Patsiomkina and most of the hundreds of thousands of Russians and Belarusians living in Ukraine watched in horror. Many assisted Ukraine but are now facing mounting administrative challenges that may force them out of the country.—AFP

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Pope creates new cardinals who may choose successor

POPE Francis will on Saturday create 20 new cardinals picked from the four corners of the world, most of whom could one day end up choosing the pontiff's successor.

Francis has raised the possibility of retiring due to his declining health, a path taken by his predecessor Benedict XVI. If he were to do so, a conclave involving all cardinals aged under 80 would be called to pick a successor.

Sixteen of the 20 cardinals created Saturday would be eligible for that conclave based on their ages. The ceremony at St. Peter's Basilica is the 85-year-old pope's eighth since being elected in 2013 and includes clergy known for their pastoral work and, in some cases, progressive views.

All parts of the globe are represented, including new cardinals from Brazil and Nigeria, Singapore and East Timor, among others.

After this weekend, Francis will have chosen 83 out of the 132 cardinals currently qualified to elect a new pope.

That is nearly two-thirds of the total and precisely the percentage needed for any proposed name to pass. In recent months, the pope has been forced to rely on a wheelchair due to knee pain, which he has said is inoperable.

He also suffers from sciatica, a chronic nerve condition that causes pain in his hip.—AFP

A general view shows cardinals as Pope Francis speaks during a consistory to create 13 new cardinals, on 28 November 2020 at St. Peter's Basilica in The Vatican. **PHOTO: AFP**

Mexico lures visitors on new age tourism trail

Alizbeth Camacho leads a meditation session at her holistic centre in Tepoztlan, Mexico. **PHOTO: AFP**

WITH restorative rituals, yoga retreats and psychedelic experiences, Mexico has become a magnet for spiritually minded tourists seeking an alternative vacation far from the troubles of the modern world. While many visitors head straight to the beach, a different type of tourist chooses the village of Tepoztlan, a haven for artists and intellectuals an hour's drive from the capital.

Some of its residents once came for a short stay and found it hard to leave. "I love the vibes here," said Ania Bitiutskaia, a 31-year-old Russian living at the foot of the Tepozteco Mountain, the legendary birthplace of the Aztec feathered serpent god Quetzalcoatl. "People are more relaxed, more spiritual," she added, browsing an organic market where the sound of a folk guitar and drum beats filled the air. "I don't see much news. I almost live in the mountains," Bitiutskaia said, adding that she prefers to know as little as possible about the war in Ukraine.

The special vibes come at a price: costing upwards of $50-60 a night, Tepoztlan's hotels are more expensive than those in many parts of Mexico, which welcomed nearly 32 million foreign tourists last year.

Visitors can also stay in holistic centres offering yoga and meditation. "Since the pandemic, many people have come to live in Tepoztlan... foreigners as well as people from Mexico City who realized that their energy would be blocked," said Alizbeth Camacho, of the Luz Azul (Blue Light) holistic centre.—AFP

Macron calls for 'new pact' with Algeria in reconciliation visit

PRESIDENT Emmanuel Macron called Friday for a "new pact" with Algeria and "truth and recognition" of the past, on day two of a visit to France's former colony aimed at mending troubled ties.

The trip follows months of tensions between Paris and the North African country, which earlier this year marked six decades of independence following 132 years of French rule.

The three-day visit also comes as European powers scramble to replace Russian energy imports — including with supplies from Algeria, Africa's top gas exporter, which in turn is seeking a greater regional role.

Macron had proclaimed a "new page" in relations on Thursday, after meeting President Abdelmadjid Tebboune and announcing the creation of a joint commission of historians to examine the colonial period and the devastating eight-year war that ended it, at a cost of hundreds of thousands of lives.—AFP

US creates Arctic ambassador as Russia, China competition rises

THE United States said Friday it will create a position of Arctic ambassador to step up diplomacy as Russia and China increase their presence in waters opened up by climate change.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken will soon name an ambassador-at-large who will engage with other Arctic nations, indigenous groups and other stakeholders, State Department spokesman Vedant Patel said.

"An Arctic region that is peaceful, stable, prosperous and cooperative is of critical strategic importance to the United States and a priority for Secretary Blinken," Patel said.

Warming has been rising in the Arctic at levels well beyond the rest of the planet, raising the prospect that once impenetrable waterways will open up for both commercial and military vessels.

Russia has been stepping up its presence near the North Pole, both with submarines and warplanes, while China has been building Arctic research stations, widely seen as a prelude to a larger presence.

Blinken, at an Arctic Council meeting last year in Iceland, said that nations in the region had a "responsibility" to ensure "peaceful cooperation". —AFP

An exhausted-looking she-bear has been spotted wandering through the industrial zone of the Artic city of Norilsk. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

SPORT

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Pope creates new cardinals who may choose successor

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MGF shares Rules of Golf Knowledge in Yangon

THE Rules of Golf Knowledge Sharing programme jointly organized by the Myanmar Golf Federation and Myanmar Golf Club Association was held yesterday morning at the Myanmar Golf Club in Yangon.

The ceremony was attended by officials led by Chairman U Zarni Win Oo of the Myanmar Golf Federation and those interested in the rules of golf.

At the ceremony, Myanmar Golf Federation Chairman U Zarni Win Oo and Myanmar Golf Club Association Captain U Thaung Hlaing gave introductory remarks, and a member of the Rules of Golf Subcommittee U Zaw Myint Naing explained the rules of golf jointly enacted by the R&A and the United States Golf Association (USGA).

Afterwards, the federation officials, club executives and attending guests discussed the issues related to the golf rules.

They also exchanged views on the development of Myanmar golf and closed the event successfully. — GNLM

Former boxing champion Foreman accused of sexual assault in 1970s

Former heavyweight boxing champions George Foreman (L) and Larry Holmes (R) strike boxing poses for the media following a press conference 01 December in Beverly Hills announcing their upcoming `"The Birthday Bash" bout. The fight, which will take place in Houston, Texas 23 January 1999, is to honor both their upcoming 50th birthdays. **PHOTO: MIKE NELSON/AFP/FILE**

A lawsuit filed in Los Angeles alleges that former Olympic gold medallist and two-time world heavyweight boxing champion George Foreman sexually assaulted at least two women in the 1970s, loca media reported on Friday.

The two women accused Foreman of sexually abusing them when they were teenagers and below the age of consent in the 1970s, KABC-TV, the West Coast flagship station of the ABC network, reported.

The lawsuit, filed Wednesday in the Los Angeles Superior Court, does not identify Foreman by name, but identifies the alleged abuser as a former professional heavyweight boxer who defeated Joe Frazier in 1973 to become the heavyweight champion of the world, said the report, adding that Foreman became champion after defeating Frazier on 22 January 1973. Foreman, 73, has denied the allegations in a statement to ABC News, alleging people are "trying to extort millions of dollars each from me and my family."

According to the report, Foreman said in the statement that he will work with his lawyers to "fully and truthfully expose my accusers' scheme and defend myself in court. I don't pick fights, but I don't run away from them either". —Xinhua

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine 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 emphasize 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.

2. Economic affairs

(a) To enhance production based on agriculture and livestock through modern techniques and 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 promote and support local businesses to create employment opportunities and increase domestic production.

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 peoples and preserve and safeguard their cultural heritage and national characteristics.

(c) To enhance the health, fitness and education quality of the entire nation.

Schauffele charges within two of Scheffler at Tour Championship

TOKYO Olympic champion Xander Schauffele fired a seven-under par 63 to charge within two strokes of top-ranked Scottie Scheffler after Friday's second round of the US PGA's Tour Championship. Scheffler, the reigning Masters champion, began the day with a five-stroke lead and stretched his edge as high as eight in the season-ending showdown at East Lake in Atlanta.—AFP

Gabriel atones with winner to keep Arsenal perfect

GABRIEL made amends for a dreadful error by scoring the winner in a 2-1 victory at home to Fulham on Saturday as Arsenal won their fourth straight game to start the Premier League season.

Aleksandar Mitrovic punished a mistake by Gabriel to give Fulham a surprise lead on 56 minutes, but Martin Odegaard equalized with a deflected effort just past the hour.

Gabriel bundled in after a scramble at a corner with five minutes to play to keep Mikel Arteta's side two points clear of reigning champions Manchester City at the top.

"Big boost, winning like this is really nice," Arteta told Sky Sports.

"We made a mistake and they punished us but then how we reacted against adversity... the way we went about it, the team believed. They wanted to win the match, they went for it and we managed to do it." Asked if Arsenal were primed to make a title challenge, Arteta downplayed expectations.

"No, this is just the start of the season. We are in a long, long marathon," he said.

Fulham suffered their first defeat in four outings on their top-flight return.

Having won their opening three games for the first time in 18 years, Arsenal made two changes to the team that beat Bournemouth with Thomas Partey and Oleksandr Zinchenko out injured. Kieran Tierney came in at left-back and Mohamed Elneny lined up alongside Granit Xhaka in central midfield.

Former Arsenal goalkeeper Bernd Leno faced his old club on just his second start for Fulham, and the Germany international spread himself well to deny Bukayo Saka in the first half. —AFP

Arsenal's Brazilian defender Gabriel Magalhaes (R) celebrates scoring a late goal during the English Premier League football match between Arsenal and Fulham at the Emirates Stadium in London on 27 August 2022. **PHOTO: GLYN KIRK / AFP**