

# 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.

## Taninthayi Region needs an int'l fish auction market for taking leading role in export of finished marine products

**I**T is necessary to establish an international fish auction market for leading the domestic marine product markets where Taninthayi Region can produce finished marine products, according to the Taninthayi Region Fisheries Federation.

Taninthayi Region is an origin of producing Panamei white shrimp with high demand of the international market. The region authorities manage export of marine products weighing some 400,000 tonnes per year. According to the market demand, the region can expand the capturing of fish and prawn at the sea and



increasing the fishery farming products. As such, the relevant departments and the Fisheries Federation are joining hands in keeping abreast of neighbouring countries in producing finished marine products.

Myeik Archipelagoes of Taninthayi Region produces more than 6,000 tonnes of the



Employees are working at marine product processing workplace. **PHOTO: KANU**

international marketable Panamei white shrimp on a yearly basis exported to some foreign countries, especially to Japan. In the international market, Panamei white shrimp fetches US\$5,500 to \$6,000 per tonne. As such, arrangements are being made to export such kind of shrimp to Russia.

"The largest volume of marine products from Taninthayi Region flows out into Thailand but it is just raw materials. Hence, Thailand leads the market due to production of finished goods. If we can produce finished marine products, the market can be kept under our

control. So, we formed the Myeik Public Company Ltd to emerge the fish auction market. If so, we can produce the finished marine goods made of raw fish at cold storage and factories. Consequently, we can earn a larger amount of foreign exchange. Myanmar migrant workers will have a chance to return home for seeking jobs in the country. Currently, Myanmar primarily needs electrification, As such, we will strive for development of the region and the State as much as possible," said Secretary of Taninthayi Region Fisheries Federation U Thet Soe.

More than 1,000 offshore

trawlers and some 10,000 on-shore trawlers are running to operate their functions in Taninthayi Region. Export of some 400,000 tonnes of marine products helps earn more than \$300 million foreign exchange per year. Manufacturing of finished fish products with the use of raw materials produced in the region can take a leading role of Myanmar products in the international fishery market in the neighbouring countries. In order to develop the fishery sector, it is necessary to establish an international fish auction market in Taninthayi Region.—Nyein Thu (MNA)/GNLM

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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 statements 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

158 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 23 October, total figure rises to 630,603

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 630,603 after 158 new cases were reported on 23 October 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, 604,318 have recovered from disease. Death toll reaches 19,476 after one death.

Up to 22-10-2022, 30,683,666 people aged 18 and above and 6,677,634 people aged 18 and under were vaccinated.

According to the study of people who had COVID-19 and people who died of COVID-19 from 28-1-2022 to 15-10-2022, it has been found that 90.4 per cent of Covid patients and 80.9 per cent of Covid deaths are not vaccinated at all or fully vaccinated, respectively.

| Status of COVID-19 injection                                   | COVID-19 Patient | Death with COVID-19 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| People have no vaccination and have not been fully inoculated. | 90.4%            | 80.9%               |

According to the international study, it is found that people who have been vaccinated do not suffer severely from the disease, need not to be hospitalized and are unlikely to die. If they have received booster shots, the death rates can be reduced more. Therefore, it is a must for people aged five and above to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

The Ministry of Health is giving free vaccinations to all people aged five and above. Booster shots of vaccine are being given to students between the ages of 12 and 18 and people aged 18 and over.

Therefore, people should contact local health centres and village/ward administration offices to receive vaccinations. The information about COVID-19 disease can be seen on the Ministry of Health official website [www.moh.gov.mm](http://www.moh.gov.mm). —MNA

New white elephant lives happy and healthy with mother mammal



Recently-born male white elephant seen with mother elephant.

A 33-year-old female elephant called Zar Nan Hla kept by the Myanma Timber Enterprise in Taungup Township of Rakhine State has given birth to one white male elephant at 6:30 am on 23 July 2022. The baby elephant is two feet and five inches in height, three feet and one inch in girth, two feet in back length and has a one foot and six inches long tail with its birth weight of

180 pounds.

The newly born white elephant has pearl-coloured eyes, a plantain branch-shaped back, white hair, a distinctive tail, auspicious plot signs on the skin, reddish-brown or pinkish skin, five claws on the front legs and big ears. Therefore, these features conform with seven out of eight characteristics.

At three months old, the baby white elephant is two feet and nine inches in height, and four feet in girth and weighs about 260 pounds. He stays healthy and happy under the human friendly training system with his mother elephant, according to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation. —MNA



# The Tatmadaw will carry out these responsibilities as a guardian for the benefit of the nation and the ethnic people

IN our country, we must continue to strengthen the “genuine and disciplined multi-party democratic system” which is the desire of the people. The Tatmadaw has firmly guaranteed a union based on a multi-party democratic system and a democratic federal system. According to Section 20 (f) of the basic principles of the constitution, Sections 6, 7, 8, which include three responsibilities, Tatmadaw has the main responsibility to protect the multi-party democratic system and the federal system. The Tatmadaw will carry out these responsibilities as a guardian for the benefit of the nation and the ethnic people.

*(The excerpt from the speech made by Chairman of State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting (2/2022) of the National Defence and Security Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on 31 July 2022)*

## UEC Chairman returns from South Africa’s 5<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB)

AT the invitation of Electoral Commission of South Africa and the Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB) South Africa, a delegation led by U Thein Soe, Chairman of the Union Election Commission (UEC), attended the 5<sup>th</sup> General Assembly held in Cape Town, South Africa from 17 to 22 October, and returned to Yangon by air yesterday.

UEC members U Than Tun, U Aung Saw Win, U Saw Ba Hlaing, U Aung Lwin Oo, U Ko Ko Lwin, and officials of Yangon Region Election Sub-Commission welcomed back the delegation at the Yangon International Airport.

The UEC Chairman and party, more than 140 represent-



The 5<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB) in progress in South Africa from 17 to 22 October.

atives from electoral organizations from 63 countries, South African Electoral Commission and A-WEB officials attended the General Assembly. The former General Assembly president from Indian UEC handed over the A-WEB flag to the newly assigned president from South African UEC. Voting and confirmation for the appointment of the up-

coming A-WEB vice president country and Executive Board Members were also conducted.

Also, “Safeguarding Election Management Bodies in the Age of Global Democratic Recession” was discussed with five topics.

The good practice of democracy in elections in different countries, action to help promote good practices, the role of electoral management bodies in a democratic system, conditions to be able to cooperate for high progress were also discussed.

A-WEB and attendees had a chance to observe the electoral processes supervised by electoral bodies, cultural heritage of South Africa and landmarks.—MNA

## Press Release Concerning Two Lady Dolls Viral on Facebook

CONCERNING the video clip files posted on 22 October morning on social media (Facebook), which showed a person placing the two lady dolls on a pedestal within the precinct of Shwedagon Pagoda, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture has scrutinized the video clip files.

Upon scrutiny, it is found that the video clip files were first posted on the page “Lawka Weikzado Meinmahla Dewi Ahtet Gaing Gyokgyi”. The page account is found to belong to U Shine Zarni Aung, who has placed the two lady dolls on a pedestal.

At about 7 am on 22 October, a group of about eight people inclusive of U Shine Zarni Aung arrived with a black colour Alphard car bearing the number plate 6M/6648 at the car parking lot at the southern entrance of the pagoda. They brought with

them two big dolls and one small doll measuring seven inches in height. The small doll represents Surassati goddess, and it is a glaze idol.

As the security personnel did not allow them to bring the big dolls onto the pagoda platform, they left the idols in the parking lot. The group led by U Shine Zarni Aung went up to the pagoda platform using the escalator. They circumambulated the pagoda clockwise, bringing the glaze idol representing Surassati goddess, and arriving at the southwest corner, they held the ritual incantations with a bowl of the offertory and the glaze image placed in front of the goddess image there.

Afterwards, they came down via the southern stairway, and they put the two lady dolls on a pedestal near the stone inscription in the car parking lot.

While performing their ritual incantations, pagoda security personnel called them for interrogation, and rid the pagoda precinct of the dolls.

Regarding this matter, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture has issued an announcement, which says that the ministry will file a case against U Shine Zarni Aung and the group for defamation of the Buddhist Religion and that the staff member who has permitted the ritual incantations without seeking the approval of the Shwedagon Pagoda Board of Trustees will have severe action taken as decided by the departmental enquiry commission, it is learnt.

*Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture*

## Daily newspapers available online

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

*News and Periodicals Enterprise*

# Union Health Minister inspects traditional medicine factories in Yangon

UNION Minister for Health Dr Thet Khaing Win visited the factory of Fame Pharmaceuticals in Hlinethaya Township yesterday morning, and inspected the store of raw materials, quality control room, laboratory and drug manufacturing conditions. In meeting with factory



Union Minister for Health Dr Thet Khaing Win meets Managing Director Dr Khin Maung Lwin at traditional medicine factory of Fame Pharmaceuticals in Hlinethaya Township on 23 October.

Managing Director Dr Khin Maung Lwin, the Union minister said that as the SME business develops, the State economy will increase. By growing and producing necessary raw materials locally, the country will be able to reduce the spending of foreign exchange. As traditional medicine contributes to public healthcare on one hand, the development of the traditional medicine sector is important. It is necessary to especially control quality of export products. The research and development section is particularly important in order to export and sell international-level pharmaceutical products.

Next, the Union Minister inspected Satkyar Min Traditional Medicine Manufacturing Industry in Mingaladon Industrial Zone, and met with U Myint Wai, Managing Director of Satkyar Min Company Limited.

During the meeting, the Union Minister said that the government is continuously encouraging the traditional medicine sector, and has also increased the remuneration of traditional medicine practitioners. It is necessary to conduct scientific research at every stage of production and sale, depending on the research results, the products must be upgraded. Production must be evidence based, and document based.

After that, the Union Minister inspected U Thayin Traditional Medicine Manufacturing Industry in Dagon Myothit (South) Township Industrial Zone (2).—MNA

# Fifth day of 2022 Mid-Year Gems Emporium proceeds with sale of 665 gem lots

THE 2022 Mid-Year Gems Emporium continued its fifth day at the Maniradana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Jade lots, gem lots and uncut jade lots were showcased in designated areas throughout the emporium, and local and foreign gem traders observed them in the morning. Then, gem dealers evaluated gem lots from No 1 to No 750 on sale and inserted bids into tender boxes. Then, officials declared the bids

and that 665 gem lots were sold out.

Jade lots from No 750 to No 1,500 will be put on sale on the sixth day of the emporium under an open tender system.

At noon, Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Patron of Central Committee for Myanmar Gems Emporium U Khin Maung Yi and committee members viewed sale of jade lots through an open tender sys-



Gem merchants check jade stones at 2022 Mid-Year Myanmar Gems Emporium on 23 October.

tem at the Maniradana Jade Hall.

The 2022 Mid-Year Gems Emporium lasts between 19 and 25 October, and 362 of 400 pearl lots and 55 of 120 gem lots have been sold out so far.

The floor price for gem and jade lots is set in Euro, and all merchants can make a payment in USD, Euro, Yuan, Baht and Kyat currencies. —MNA

# Deputy Information Minister inspects workflows in Mandalay, Magway regions

THE Deputy Minister for Information, U Ye Tint, inspected the office of the Department of Information and Public Relations in Kyaukpadaung Township, Mandalay Region, yesterday morning and met with the head and staff of the township IPRD and the head of Popa retransmission station.

In the afternoon, the Deputy Minister gave instructions on work process to the heads and staff of NyaungU and Pakokku District IPRDs and officials.

At the meeting, he urged them to emphasize information and education measures, cooperate with relevant departments in improvement of youths, and attract the people to public libraries for raising reading habit and increasing readers.

He added that as most of them are local employees, they have to focus on development of the region with goodwill more than just dutiful efforts.

Next, the Deputy Minister donated robes and cash for nine prerequisites to monasteries in Lanywa Village-tract of Pakokku Township, Magway Region, visited libraries of the villages, and donated books. After that, he met with the village administrator and the headmistress of the middle school and the teachers and discussed peace and tranquility of the area, development and improvement of youths.—MNA



Deputy Minister for Information U Ye Tint meets head and staff of NyaungU District IPRD.

## COVID-19 vaccine drive continues in various states, regions



A health staff administers Covid vaccines to locals in Kyaukpyu Township.

VACCINATION is being carried out in full swing in various regions and states as the vaccination programmes are one of the most important activities in the prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 disease.

Yesterday, doctors and nurses from public hospitals, medical teams from the Tatmadaw, and relevant healthcare workers in collaboration with volunteers gave COVID-19 vaccines to 4,190 people from twenty-six townships in Ayeyawady Region, 353 people from Kyaukpyu and Thandwe townships in Rakhine State and 5,500 people from seven districts in Mandalay Region, respectively.

Similarly, on that day healthcare officials gave the vaccines to 550 students from seven districts in Mandalay Region.

In addition, to assist in the control and prevention of the COVID-19 disease, military officials from various military commands in collaboration with district and township administrative officials, departmental personnel and members of civil society organizations (CSOs) conducted educational campaigns such as

prevention of COVID-19, wearing of masks in public places and distribution of masks to the locals at schools, markets, streets, city entry points and crowded areas in 44 townships in Yangon Region, Khamti Township in Sagaing Region and PyinOoLwin and Tabeikkyin townships in Mandalay Region yesterday. — MNA



A health staff distributes face masks to local people in PyinOoLwin on 23 October.

### Public Notification

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

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

|                       |                                  |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Auto telephone number | - 067 409 883                    |
| Mobile phone          | - 09 404339969                   |
| Fax                   | - 067 409 886                    |
| Email address         | - antiillegaltradeinfo@gmail.com |

Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee

### Public Notification

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

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

|                       |                                    |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Auto telephone number | - 067 409 881                      |
| Mobile phone          | - 09 699611116                     |
| Fax                   | - 067 409 887                      |
| Email address         | - antiillegaltradeoffice@gmail.com |

Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee

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# CURRENT AFFAIRS



Flocks of Myanmar pilgrims seen in pilgrimage to Bodh Gaya in India.

# Number of pilgrims to Bodh Gaya to rise in Tazaungdine period

**THERE** were many tickets booking to the trip of Bodh Gaya, India in Tazaungdine period, according to the Myanmar Tourism Federation.

About 500 to 700

pilgrims are scheduled to go on these trips per week, and pilgrims who have already purchased tickets for the trips that will be released on 4 and 6 November.

Myanmar National Airlines has been planning the Yangon-Bodhi Gaya route and it will be start on 4 November. Furthermore, Union Minister for Transportation and Communications Admiral Tin Aung San and the Nepalese Ambassador discussed arrangements for a direct flight between Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and

Mandalay international airports and Lumbini International Airport, expansion of the route of Lumbini-Gaya-Yangon/Mandalay/Nay Pyi Taw flights based on the tourism business, signing of new agreements for aviation services, bilateral exportation of domestic products and cooperation in inland water transport in Nepal.—TWA/GNLM

## Some fibre internet services continue slowing in Yangon

SOME townships in Yangon are facing low internet speed. The speed was recovered on 22 October night but still slowing, according to the users.

Internet operators announced internet fibre problems happened near Myawady and Kawkaireik townships.

“They announced the connection speed will be back on 22 October but we get it at 10 pm. The internet speed is not as fast as it used to be, and as of 23 October, there are still delays,” one of the Myanmar Net users told. Now, officials from Myanmar Net are working hard to recover as soon as possible, announced by Myanmar Net.

“When using the internet, disconnect the line we regret to inform you that delays may occur. Therefore, the engineering team are repairing the connection as soon as possible so that the internet lines can be used again as usual, and when it returns to its original state, it will be notified via the UNILINK Facebook page,” said an official of the UNILINK. — TWA/GNLM



## Rural solar electrification projects to cover 49,966 households in over 1,000 villages this FY

RURAL solar electrification (mini-grid) projects have so far brought green electricity to 49,966 households in 1,056 villages in the current financial year 2022-2023, according to a workshop to spur rural electrification.

Between 2016-2017 FY and 2021-2022 FY, this rural electrification project through a household solar power system provided electricity access to 418,363 households in 9,163 villages and the solar mini-grid electrified 38,913 households in 162 villages with 126 projects. Those projects contributed adequate power supply to 2.3 million people of 457,276 households in 9,325 villages. Additionally, 16,088 public solar power projects expand electric city access to the roads with 53,922 lamp posts.

Furthermore, power distribution reached 1,338 small and medium scale enterprises as well.

The Department of Rural Development under the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development has covered 35.6 per cent of remote places under off-grid rural electrification projects.

According to a survey of the Energy Sector Management Assistance Programme (ESMAP), a global knowledge and technical assistance programme administered by the World Bank, Myanmar supplied electricity to households from tier 1 to tier 5. This FY, there is a plan to reach 48,751 households and three mini-grid projects are planned to cover 1,215 households in eight villages.—TWA/GNLM

## Operators notified of licence extension for storage of petroleum and petroleum products

**RENEWING** a licence for the storage of petroleum and petroleum product can be done between 1 November and 31 December 2022, according to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

The licence has been issued in line with the rules and regulations. The licence will expire on 31 December this year. According to Petroleum and Petroleum Product bylaw 119, the extension of licence must be done two months before the expiry. The ministry released the advance notifications so that the operators of the petrol station, tank and tank farms can renew the licence for the coming years.

According to the Petroleum and Petroleum Product Law, the licence for the opera-

tions of Petroleum and Petroleum Product is granted in accordance with the provision of Sections 7, 8, 9 and 10. In compliance with (the Chapter 6, para 30 of the Law), anyone shall not be allowed to engage in the operation of the petroleum and petroleum products without holding a valid licence. The para 31 stated that entities shall not be allowed to violate or fail to follow the bylaws, notifications, directives, rules and regulations, warning signs shall



be put on the vehicles or pipelines and on the flammable petroleum substances to avoid the explosion hazards, the import, transportation, storage and distribution of the dangerous petroleum and petroleum products or non-dangerous standard petroleum and petroleum products shall be done only in accordance with the rules of that Law.

Those who fail to renew the licence during the set period must be fined two per cent of licence fees per day starting from 1 January 2023.

The application for licence extension, storage licence permit, the copy of the last survey record of the Department of Mines and the documentary photos of the condition of tank farms must be presented while renewing licence, the ministry stated.—  
TWA/GNLM

# LOCAL BUSINESS

## Various sesame prices slid tracking sluggish market

THE prices of various sesame seeds significantly moved down in the third week of October as the market is slow-moving, said traders.

The price of black sesame seeds hit over K235,000-280,000 per 45-viss bag in the third week of October 2022, while it was priced approximately K255,000-K320,000 per bag on 7 September, indicating a decrease of about K40,000 per bag.

In the third week of October 2022, the black sesame fetched K3,946,513 per tonne, which declined from K4,354,773 per tonne in the second week, showing a decrease of K408,260 per tonne.

Similarly, the prices of white and brown sesame also dropped in the third week of October respectively.

The slide in the Kyat-dollar exchange rate in the third week

is also another reason for the price decrease.

Those sesame seeds which pass the acid test level are primarily traded. It is hard to maintain sesame quality in the monsoon season, the growers from Sagaing Region said.

Additionally, after Myanmar's export ban on oil crops reversed, the prices of peanut and sesame prices inflated in the mid-year, according to the commodity depots.

Myanmar's sesame was earlier exported to China, South Korea, Japan, Singapore and China Taipei (Taiwan). However, it is now relying solely on China and the shipments to other foreign countries have certain difficulties.

Sesame is cultivated in the country throughout the year. Magway Region, which has gained a reputation as the oil

pot of Myanmar, is the main producer of sesame seeds. The seeds are also grown in Mandalay and Sagaing regions.

Of the oil crops grown in Myanmar, the acreage under sesame seed is the highest, accounting for 51.3 per cent of

the overall oil crop plantation. Approximately 600,000-800,000 tonnes of sesame seeds are produced yearly.—KK/GNLM



Farmers prepare winnowing of sesame in the farm.

## GACC nods 112 companies for maize exports, some companies start exporting



Farmers are loading maize onto truck before sending them to the market.

A total of 112 companies have been given the go-ahead for maize export and some companies commence exporting, said U Aye Chan Aung, chair of Myanmar Corn Industrial Association.

At present, more than 1,000 tonnes of maize has started exporting to China on a trial run.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation and the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC) signed a SPS Protocol (Sanitary and

Phytosanitary Protocol) agreement on 31 January in order to have a legitimate maize export to China.

According to the agreement, Myanmar's maize is exported to China for processing.

The fresh monsoon maize starts flowing into the markets. Myanmar delivers maize to the Chinese market on a trial run and the maize is also shipped to Viet Nam and the Philippines.

The prices of maize rebounded to K1,080 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kilogrammes).

Thailand gives green light to corn imports under zero tariff (with Form-D), between 1 February and 31 August. However, Thailand imposed the maximum tax rate of 73 per cent on corn imports to protect the rights of their growers if the corn is imported during the corn season of Thailand.

The directive released on 30 June said that transactions for the exports of agricultural produce including corn, rice, beans and oil crops are to be made in dollars instead of Yuan-Kyat/Baht-Kyat.

Therefore, export earnings of the corn have to be exchanged at US dollar according to the reference rate of the Central Bank of Myanmar (K2,100).

Myanmar exported 2.3 million tonnes of corn to foreign trade partners in the 2020-2021 financial year. Majority of them were sent to Thailand and the remaining to China, India and Viet Nam. The country produces 2.5-3 million tonnes of corn every year.—NN/GNLM

## Myanmar foreign trade surges to over \$18 bln as of 14 October

MYANMAR'S external trade between 1 April and 14 October in the 2022-2023 Financial Year tremendously climbed to US\$18.26 billion, reflecting a sharp increase of \$3.2 billion as against the year-ago period, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The figures soared from \$15.04 billion in the corresponding period last year.

Myanmar's export was worth over \$9 billion whereas the country's import was valued at \$9.147 billion this FY.

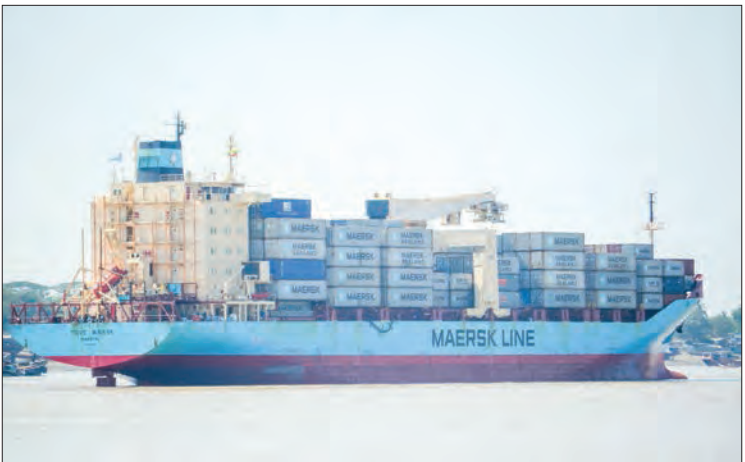
During the six-and-half-month period, both the seaborne trade and the border trade showed an increase in trade compared with the year ago period, comprising \$13.9 billion from the maritime trade and \$4.344

billion from the border channels.

Myanmar exports agricultural produce, animal products, minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods, while it imports capital goods, raw industrial materials, and consumer goods.

The country's export sector relies more on the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. The Ministry of Commerce is focusing on reducing trade deficit, export promotion, import substitution and market diversification.

The external trade stood at \$15.5 billion in the past mini-budget 2021-2022 (Oct-March) period and \$29.58 billion in the 2020-2021 FY, as per the Commerce Ministry's statistics.—KK/GNLM



# Save the planet Earth to be free from plastic bags

Everybody should notice that the planet Earth is facing gradual deterioration in all sectors. As such, everybody needs to protect the globe to stop deterioration as much as possible.

The global peoples should leave a good legacy for new generations. They must exercise disciplinary acts to be idols for posterity. They have to avoid acts supporting climate change which causes global warming destructing the globe. It is because warming temperature directly melts the glaciers, then flooding various parts of the world.

Everybody should change their mindsets. Today is the best time for them to amend their acts of unsystematically discarding dangerous materials to the world. Their individual acts will be effective in saving the planet Earth. They should not be disappointed in anyone who does not change their mindsets to avoid the unsystematic use of dangerous materials and goods.

Everybody should change their mindsets. Today is the best time for them to amend their acts of unsystematically discarding dangerous materials to the world. Their individual acts will be effective in saving the planet Earth. They should not be disappointed in anyone who does not change their mindsets to avoid the unsystematic use of dangerous materials and goods.

Undisciplined usage of plastic and other dangerous materials such as chemicals, uneasy decayed products and too much use of pesticides and fertilizers will be a danger for all living beings across the world. Disposable used products must be systematically destroyed but other products must be used several times to lessen the volume of garbage across the world. It is not difficult. So, it is easy to exercise the acts for saving the planet Earth for its healthy existence. The planet Earth is monitoring the global peoples.

# New XBB Covid variant is immune evasive says WHO’s Soumya Swaminathan

As the virus evolves, it is going to evolve more and become transmissible. As of now, there is no data from any country to suggest these new sub-variants are more clinically severe. While the virus is causing an increasing infection in some countries the severity seems to be similar.

WITH India reporting a highly infectious new COVID-19 variant, World Health Organization Chief Scientist Soumya Swaminathan on Friday said that there were over 300 sub-variants and XBB being a recombinant virus is a matter of concern.

She also highlighted that the new variant is immune evasive. “There are over 300 sub-variants of Omicron. I think the one that is concerning right now is XBB which is a recombinant virus. We had seen some recombinant viruses before. It is very immune evasive which means, it can overcome the antibodies. So slightly we may see another wave of infections in some countries because of XBB,” said Swaminathan.

Her remarks came while addressing a media briefing in Pune.

### Other derivatives of XBB

Stressing on the tracking of other derivatives of XBB, she noted, “We are also tracking de-

rivatives of BA.5 and BA.1 which are also more transmissible and immune evasive. As the virus evolves, it is going to evolve more and become transmissible. As of now, there is no data from any country to suggest these new sub-variants are more clinically severe. While the virus is causing an increasing infection in some countries the severity seems to be similar.”

She also underlined the importance of monitoring and said, “We need to continue to monitor and track. We have seen that testing has gone down across countries, the genomic surveillance has also gone down over the last few months. We need to maintain at least a strategic sampling genomic surveillance so that we can keep tracking the variants as we have been doing and studying.” The senior scientist also called for available tools and highlighted the positives.

### For vaccine coverage

“The good thing is that we



XBB, a recombinant lineage between two Omicron sublineages BJ.1 and BA.2.75, is a fast-spreading variant, which was seen to have caused a spike across Singapore recently. PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ANI

have many tools and the most important thing is vaccines. For vaccine coverage, our goals are 100 per cent of people over the age of 60 and 100 per cent of health-care and frontline workers. We

have a goal of achieving 70 per cent of the country but subgroups are more important because they are the groups that are most likely to face morbidity and mortality,” she added.

Earlier on Tuesday, Maharashtra recorded a 17.7 per cent rise in coronavirus cases compared to last week, according to a state health department bulletin. The state has reported new

Covid cases including the XBB, a new sub-variant of the Omicron variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which has been detected in parts of India, including Kerala.

Apart from this, Maharashtra has reported cases from other sub-variants of Omicron - BA.2.3.20 and BQ.1 variant, which was detected for the first time in India on Monday from the sample of a patient in Pune.

### XBB, a recombinant lineage

XBB, a recombinant lineage between two Omicron sublineages BJ.1 and BA.2.75, is a fast-spreading variant, which was seen to have caused a spike across Singapore recently.

On Tuesday, a high-level meeting of Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya with the senior health officials regarding the emergence of Omicron’s new sub-variants concluded with the decision to continue masks and COVID19-appropriate behaviour across the country.

SOURCE : ANI

# Researchers in Japan develop a soft robot to help people afraid of needles

Robots may soon replace humans as our go-to companions, just as most of us never leave home without our smartphones.

According to recent experiments by Japanese researchers who created a hand-held soft robot that can enhance patients’ experiences during potentially unpleasant medical procedures, like injections, it appears to be the case.

Public health officials realised that some people simply fear needles, which contributed to lower vaccination rates, during the campaign to promote vaccination against COVID-19. There is still a need to test and put into practice solutions to help patients,



Researchers from the University of Tsukuba have created a wearable soft robot that patients can use during treatments in an effort to lessen their discomfort. PHOTO: UNIVERSITY OF TSUKUBA

even though the issues of patient anxiety and pain during medical procedures have been thoroughly studied.

Researchers from the University of Tsukuba have created a wearable soft robot that patients can use during treatments in an

effort to lessen their discomfort, according to a study that was just published in Scientific Reports. The study participants who wore the robot felt less pain during tests where they were exposed to a moderate heat stimulus than those who did not. According to senior author Professor Fumihide Tanaka, “our results imply that the use of wearable soft robots may reduce fear as well as alleviate the perception of pain during medical treatments, including vaccinations.”

The soft, furry robot, which the researchers called Reliebo, had tiny airbags that could inflate in response to the movements of the participant’s hand. It was made to be attached to the par-

ticipant’s hand. The participant’s hand was clenched as the researchers tested its effectiveness under various scenarios, while the other arm, which wasn’t being used to hold the robot, was subjected to the painful thermal stimulus. From the saliva samples of the patients, the researchers also measured the concentrations of oxytocin and cortisol, which are biomarkers for stress. A survey test was also conducted to assess the patients’ fear of injections and psychological state before and after the experiments, and subjective pain ratings were recorded using an assessment scale.

Regardless of the experimental setup, the researchers discovered that holding the robot

helped patients feel better. They hypothesised that the robot may also have triggered the feelings of well-being that the human touch can produce. According to Professor Tanaka, “it is well known that human touch can lessen feelings of pain and fear, and we think that this effect can be achieved even with nonliving soft robots.” This could be helpful in situations where direct human contact is impractical, like pandemics. Future iterations of the robot might employ augmented reality (AR) technology or even a controlled gaze to engage patients or divert their attention from their pain in various contexts.

SOURCE: ANI



## Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 23 October 2022)

**BAY INFERENCE:** According to the observations at (17:30) hrs MST today, the Deep Depression over Westcentral Bay and adjoining Eastcentral Bay of Bengal has moved North-westwards and centred at about (370) Nautical miles West of Hainggyigyun, (390) Nautical miles Southwest of Thandwe, (365) Nautical miles Southwest of Sittway (Myanmar), (300) Nautical miles South of Sagar Island (India) and (390) Nautical miles South-Southwest of Barisal (Bangladesh). Weather is partly cloudy to cloudy over the Andaman Sea and South and cloudy elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 24 October, 2022:** Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Kachin, (Southern and Eastern)Shan, and Kayah states, scattered in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Bago, and Yangon regions and Northern Shan, Kayin and Mon states, fairly widespread in Sagaing, and Magway regions and Chin and Rakhine states and widespread in Ayeyawady, and Taninthayi regions with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls in Magway Region and Chin and Rakhine states. Degree of certainty is (100%).

**STATE OF THE SEA:** Frequently squall with rough to very rough seas will be experienced Deltaic, off and along Rakhine Coasts. Surface wind speed in squall may reach (50-55) mph. Squall with rough seas are likely at times elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (13-16) feet in Deltaic, off and along Rakhine Coasts and (9-12) feet in Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts.

**OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS:** Increase of rain in Sagaing, Mandalay, and Magway regions and Kachin, Chin and Rakhine states.

**FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24 October 2022:** Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

**FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24 October 2022:** Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

**FORECAST FOR Mandalay AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24 October 2022:** Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

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# ENVIRON WORLD

## French chateaux brace for huge winter heating bills



The Chateau de Chambord's energy bill is expected to reach the cost of two temporary exhibitions and a festival. **PHOTO: AFP**

INSIDE his French chateau on the riverbanks of the Loire, Xavier Leleve dreads to find out how much it will cost to heat the 12<sup>th</sup>-century building this winter.

Energy bills in France are expected to soar compared to last year, partly as a result of a hike in gas prices following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The prospect is particularly worrying owners and directors of large historical buildings dotted along the Loire.

Usually, Leleve pays 15,000

to 20,000 euros (\$14,800 to \$19,700) in heating, electricity and gas each winter to keep the Meung-sur-Loire castle up and running.

But this year, "it'll be five to ten times more expensive. You simply can't start spending that much on energy," he said.

It would divert funds from other projects, including the much-needed conservation of some parts of the listed building.

In a wing of the castle closed off to the public, he

pointed to the windows.

Some looked in bad shape, with duct tape covering some wooden frames and barely keeping out the outside cold.

Other windows were brand new, put in place after long discussions with the regional cultural authority on what they should look like to best respect the castle's original aesthetics.

"A window costs around 10,000 euros and we have 148 of them, so you can imagine how much the window budget is," said Leleve.— AFP

## Climate activists target sports cars at Paris motor show

CLIMATE activists glued themselves to sports cars Friday evening at the Mondial de l'Auto, a major car show in Paris.

Video from the group's Twitter account showed around a dozen campaigners crouching next to the front of a line of red sports cars or holding up a banner, and shouting slogans.

"They are denouncing a polluting industry that is trying to 'greenwash' its image with the help of 'green' vehicles, but which continues to promote individual car ownership as the transport of the future," said a statement from the group.

They called for an end to advertising for individual

ownership of private vehicles and improvements in public transport.

The group said 11 people had been arrested.

Extinction Rebellion is one of a new wave of environmental campaigners using direct action and civil disobedience to draw attention to their cause.

Activists from the group have also been travelling around Paris at night to switch off store signs and advertising screens at a time when the government has called on people to cut back on electricity use.

Activists from another group, Just Stop Oil, targeted an Aston Martin showroom in London, spraying it with orange paint last Sunday.— AFP

## Farmers in US Midwest struggle amid prolonged drought

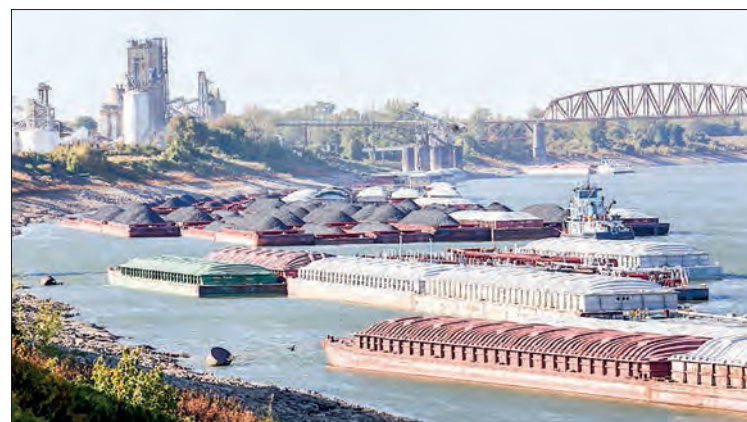
MONTHS without rain have left farmers across the vast US Midwest, part of the country's essential "breadbasket," seeing crop yields in freefall, with some fields too damaged to harvest.

At the 4,000-acre (1,600-hectare) Tucker Farms in Venango, Nebraska, "we were only able to harvest... around 500" acres, most of it wheat, said Rachel Tucker.

Much of the rest had shriveled up under a relentlessly hot sun.

The drought has attracted grasshoppers, which threatened the flowers the Tuckers also grow — until they brought in praying mantises to control the winged pests.

If the American West has been suffering through water



A drought is spreading across the US Midwest, drying up the Mississippi River and its tributaries that serve as a critical freight artery for the country. Barges are tied up along the bank of the Ohio River at the confluence of the Mississippi River in Cairo, Illinois, US, on 17 October 2022. **PHOTO: CFP/CGTN**

shortages for years, the Midwest has not seen conditions this bad since 2012.

"It's even worse than 2012," said Tucker. "Much worse."

Her husband, whose grandfather farmed these same fields, says things have not been this bad since the so-called Dust Bowl days of the 1930s.— AFP

## Relief efforts put in Aussie states to minimize flood impacts

SOME eastern states of Australia have started recovery measures to minimize the negative impacts of the flood crisis.

The state government of New South Wales (NSW) on Friday announced a new agricultural commodities permit, under which farmers can apply to have heavy vehicle access to all local roads in regional NSW. Noting that the recent rain wreaked havoc on the feed supply network and damaged pastures, NSW Minister for Regional Transport and Roads Sam Faraway said this initiative will better ensure ac-



Members of State Emergency Service load medical supplies during a rescue operation at a flooded residential area in Windsor suburb of northwestern Sydney on 23 March 2021. **PHOTO: SAEED KHAN/ AFP**

cess for heavy vehicles carrying larger loads to efficiently move fodder supplies to the farming community. In Victoria, the state government rolled out specialized funding on Thursday to improve the healthcare staffing levels in the affected areas, noting that 200 hospital staff would be assigned to flood-affected areas for three months, 20 locum pharmacists to support small local pharmacies, and extra air ambulance transfers for patients and staff.

"Inundation isn't the only risk a flood brings — it poses a serious threat to human health, so

we're supporting our flood-affected communities to stay safe now and in the months of recovery to come," said Victorian Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes. Meanwhile, the island state of Tasmania has waived the waste levy for 17 affected areas until 31 December to ensure the timely disposal of flood waste and the health of local communities.

While the relief efforts have been carried out, residents are still warned to prepare for widespread rain, thunderstorms and flood emergency in the coming days.— Xinhua

# HEALTH/PANDEMIC WORLD

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Experts discuss traditional Chinese medicine quality, digital credit in Macau

EXPERTS from China and overseas have gathered online and offline at the Macau Special Administrative Region (SAR) to discuss the quality control and digital credit of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM).

At the two-day forum from Friday to Saturday, the State Key Laboratory of Quality Research in Chinese Medicines under the Macao University of Science and Technology established a digital center in partnership with an institute involving experiencing the treatment of traditional Chinese medicine. — Xinhua

### US CDC warns of respiratory syncytial virus outbreak in children

LATEST data from the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show cases of Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), a common respiratory virus, are spiking in the United States.

RSV usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms, but can be dangerous for some infants and young children, according to the CDC.

Surveillance data collected by the CDC clearly shows a rise in RSV cases nationwide in recent weeks, with cases detected by PCR tests more than tripling over the past two months. — Xinhua

## Cambodia reports zero COVID-19 death since April: PM

CAMBODIA has seen no new deaths from COVID-19 since April, Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen said Friday.

“This is a success that resulted from our joint efforts in the fight against COVID-19,” he said in a speech during a visit to thousands of families, who had agreed to move their illegal buildings out of the famed Angkor Archaeological Park.

He said the Southeast Asian nation reported zero COVID-19 cases for the first time on Friday after daily cases had been detected since late June.

“Today, Cambodia found no even a single case of COVID-19,” Hun Sen said.

However, Cambodia is not COVID-19-free yet, as it still has



A staff member takes a customer's temperature at a shopping mall in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

53 active cases, according to the Ministry of Health (MoH).

Thong Mengdavid, a research fellow at the Phnom Penh-based Asian Vision In-

stitute, attributed the success in the pandemic fight to the kingdom's strong leadership and high vaccination rates. — Xinhua



Three people among the 60 under quarantine at a Ugandan national referral hospital in Kampala, the capital of Uganda, have tested positive for Ebola virus disease, a top official said here Saturday. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

## Three people test positive for Ebola virus disease in Ugandan capital

THREE people among the 60 under quarantine at a Ugandan national referral hospital in Kampala, the capital of Uganda, have tested positive for Ebola virus disease, a top official said here Saturday.

Minister of Health Ruth Aceng in a tweet said the three who were at an isolation facility at Mulago National Referral Hospital tested positive Friday.

She said they were contacts to a confirmed case that had ear-

lier passed on at the hospital.

The minister said the three will be transferred to Entebbe Isolation Unit, 40 km south of Kampala, since the Mulago unit still has contacts under quarantine.

“Let's remain vigilant and report anybody with symptoms similar to Ebola. Together we can end this epidemic,” Aceng said. The government has already put Kampala under a high response alert in case cases start

increasing.

The ministry on Thursday gave envoys accredited to the country a guided tour of the Ebola treatment units, in a show of preparedness that the country is ready to combat and win the battle against the disease.

The Ministry of Health figures on Thursday showed that the country has so far registered 65 positive cases and 27 deaths since the outbreak was reported on 20 September. — Xinhua

## Hong Kong to let Covid-hit participants of banking summit leave on own flights: official

FOREIGN participants at a high-profile financial summit in Hong Kong next month would be able to skip isolation and leave via “appropriate flight arrangements” if they catch Covid, a top health official said Friday.

The comments followed media reports that attendees — expected to include top executives from some of the world's most powerful financial institutions — would be allowed to leave on private jets if they test positive for the coronavirus.

Hong Kong is aiming to re-

assert its position as a global financial hub with the summit, organized by the city's central bank, after being effectively cut off because of its strict Covid policies — especially for international travellers.

If a summit participant tests positive for the coronavirus, “we will adopt the same isolation arrangements as with other inbound visitors,” Permanent Secretary for Health Thomas Chan told a press conference when asked if any rules would be relaxed for the event.

“But at the same time we will also provide facilitation should there be appropriate flight arrangements for leaving Hong Kong.”

Commercial airlines are restricted from transporting virus-positive passengers to and from Hong Kong.

Bloomberg News had reported Thursday that the Hong Kong government was considering allowing participants at the two-day summit to leave by private jet if they test positive. —AFP



A general view of the Central financial district in Hong Kong. **PHOTO: AFP**

# ECONOMY

## WORLD

### Eurasian Economic Union member states gather to promote economic integration



From left, Chairman of the Eurasian Economic Commission Board, Mikhail Myasnikov, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Belarusian Prime Minister Roman Golovchenko, Kazakh Prime Minister Alikhan Smailov, Kyrgyz Prime Minister Akybek Japarov and Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin pose for a photo before the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council meeting in narrow format, in Yerevan, Armenia, 20 October 2022. **PHOTO: CFP/CGTN**

THE five member states of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) vowed to enhance their economic cooperation in various fields on Friday in Armenia’s capital of Yerevan.

During the two-day meeting of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council kicked off Thursday, which brought together the prime ministers of the five post-Soviet states, including Armenia, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the participants reached several agreements in the fields of agriculture, energy and e-commerce, local Armenpress reported.

During the session, issues concerning the formation of a common natural gas market, further lowering customs and the promotion of closer economic integration were discussed among the prime ministers.

According to the Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin at the meeting, the volume of trade between the union’s countries surpassed 73 billion US dollars in 2021, up 33 per cent from the previous year.

The next session of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council will take place in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in early 2023. —Xinhua

#### NEWS IN BRIEF

##### Pro-Draghi League moderate named Italy economy minister

GIANCARLO Giorgetti, named Italy’s new economy minister on Friday, is considered one of the more moderate, pro-Europe members of Matteo Salvini’s League party.

He was a loyal supporter of outgoing prime minister Mario Draghi, serving as his minister of economic development.

The 55-year-old has spent most of his political career in the League, but does not hesitate in disagreeing with Salvini — even if publicly, he denies any rift.

His political mentor was Umberto Bossi, who founded the party when it was the regionally focused Northern League. —AFP

##### UK retail sales fall, consumer confidence nears record low

RETAIL sales have been falling and consumer confidence has hit record low levels in the United Kingdom (UK) due to the country’s persistently high inflation rate, fresh surveys showed on Friday.

The volume of retail sales fell in all the main sectors (food stores, non-food stores, non-store retailing and fuel) by 1.4 per cent in September, making it 1.3 per cent below pre-COVID-19 February 2020 levels, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said on Friday. —Xinhua

### Growing ‘Davos in the Desert’ a sign of Saudi clout



Participants watch a movie highlighting the Red Sea project at the Future Investment Initiatives conference in Riyadh on 23 October 2018. **PHOTO: FAYEZ NURELDINE/AFP/FILE**

HUNDREDS of CEOs and finance moguls are expected in Riyadh from Tuesday for a Davos-style investment conference that analysts say will highlight Saudi Arabia’s geopolitical muscle despite strained ties with the US.

The Future Investment Initiative (FII) was launched in 2017 as an economic coming-out party

for the world’s largest crude exporter, which is trying to diversify away from oil under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

The following year’s edition, however, was largely overshadowed by the killing several weeks prior of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, and many would-be delegates from outside the region

stayed away.

Attendance picked up in 2019, even if some executives sought to fly under the radar, flipping their name cards behind their coats or hiding them behind their ties, underscoring fears of a reputational cost for doing business in the kingdom.

This year’s FII, often referred to as “Davos in the Desert”, comes after a months-long process of re-engagement with the West by Prince Mohammed, who US intelligence agents determined approved the operation against Khashoggi — a charge Riyadh denies.

The kingdom’s de facto ruler has received visits this year from then-UK prime minister Boris Johnson, French President Emmanuel Macron and even US President Joe Biden, who had previously vowed to make Saudi Arabia a “pariah”. —AFP



79 per cent of Thai poor people lived in rural, agricultural households, with the rural poor outnumbering the urban poor by nearly 2.3 million. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

### Thailand’s poverty reduction slows down: report

THAILAND’S poverty reduction has slowed since 2015, reflecting a weakening economy, stagnant incomes and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, a World Bank report said Friday.

According to the report, Thailand made significant progress in poverty reduction with the number of the poor dropping

to 6.8 per cent in 2020 from 58 per cent in 1990, thanks to the country’s high growth rates and structural changes.

However, 79 per cent of Thai poor people lived in rural, agricultural households, with the rural poor outnumbering the urban poor by nearly 2.3 million.

The report showed that

rural Thais faced more than 3 percentage points higher poverty rates than those who lived in urban areas.

It also found that the poverty rates were unevenly distributed across the country, with the South and Northeast having rates that were almost twice as high as the average. —Xinhua

# Celebrations of Hindu festival Diwali in India

AS one of the most popular festivals of Hinduism, Diwali, or the festival of light, symbolizes the spiritual “victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance”.

A bazaar in Bangalore is bustling with crowded people as they celebrate the festival by cleaning their homes and making decorations such as Ran-

goli and colourful lanterns. Diwali, the great Indian festival, the festival of lights, the festival of joy, is around the corner and people can be seen all geared up for celebration.

On this festival day, courtyards are decorated with colourful rangoli, and lamps are lit, people dress in new clothes, eat delicacies, share gifts, light lamps, and as the sun sets,

they burst crackers. From feasting to fireworks, the festival brings friends and families together in innumerable ways.

For many this year, Diwali is a four-day long weekend with enough time on their hands to tick the checkboxes on all Diwali traditions and still be left with hours to spare. —Xinhua /ANI



Indian Hindus were shopping for colourful lanterns and clay lamps ahead of Diwali Festival in Bangalore, on 22 October 2022. **PHOTO: XINHUA/STRINGER**

# US budget deficit halves to \$1.4 trl on less COVID-19 spending



A security guard walks outside a branch of the Wells Fargo bank in West Hollywood, California. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/AFP/FILE**

THE US budget deficit in fiscal 2022 fell by half from a year earlier to \$1.38 trillion, due to less spending

to address the coronavirus pandemic and record revenues as the economy picked up, Treasury De-

partment data showed Friday.

The \$1.40 trillion dive in the deficit for the fiscal year through 30 September is the largest one-year drop in US history, the department said. With the US midterm elections looming on 8 November, Democratic President Joe Biden used the release of the data to pitch his administration’s efforts to help improve the country’s fiscal health, while attacking Republicans for having done little to tackle deficits.

“Congressional Republicans love to call Democrats ‘big spenders,’ and

they always claim to be for less federal spending. But let’s look at the facts,” he said in a speech at the White House. “The federal deficit went up every single year in the (former President Donald) Trump administration.”

Total outlays were \$6.27 trillion for fiscal 2022, down 8.1 per cent from a year before. Total revenues stood at \$4.90 trillion, up 21.0 per cent from the preceding year, with the Treasury Department attributing the increase partly to higher individual and corporation income tax collections. —Kyodo

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### India’s forex reserves plummet to 528 bln USD in October

INDIA’S foreign exchange reserves continued the downward trajectory, falling 4.5 billion US dollars to 528.37 billion US dollars for the week ending 14 October according to data released by the South Asian country’s central bank late Friday.

In the previous week ending 7 October the forex reserves had unexpectedly improved for the first time in 10 weeks, as gains in gold reserves lifted the forex reserves by 204 million US dollars.

India’s forex reserves had fallen to their lowest since July 2020, to 532.66 billion US dollars for the week ending 30 September. The erosion in forex coffers was an outcome of the Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI) intervention to stem the depreciation of rupee, which hit an all-time low earlier this week, according to experts.

On 14 October the rupee ended at 82.35 per US dollar, compared with 82.345 in the previous session and 82.32 in the prior week. The fall in the forex reserves can be attributed to a drop in the Foreign Currency Assets, a major component of the overall reserves, according to the Weekly Statistical Supplement released by the RBI.—Xinhua

### Toyota lowers full-year production forecast amid semiconductor shortages

TOYOTA Motor Corp expects its full-year production forecast for the fiscal year ending March 2023 to be lower than its planned 9.7 million units, showed its official announcement.

The company is examining the exact number of units it will produce. The adjustments to its production plan were due to parts shortage resulting from the spread of COVID-19, the Aichi Prefecture-based automaker said in the latest announcement.

Toyota said its global production volume for November is expected to be approximately 800,000 units, with about 250,000 to be produced at home and 550,000 units overseas.

The automaker will also suspend operations of 11 production lines in eight plants in Japan out of 28 lines in 14 plants, according to the statement.—Xinhua

# Japanese yen rebounds amid signs of new forex intervention

THE Japanese yen jumped against the US dollar on Saturday after days of falling and local media reported that Japanese authorities intervened again to buoy the currency.

Nikkei Asia citing unidentified sources reported that Japan’s government and central bank intervened in the currency market early Saturday to stop a falling yen, triggering a dramatic rebound against the dollar.

The currency surged about 7 yen in an hour during New York trading to touch the 144 level, after hitting a fresh 32-year low of 151.95 on Friday, the Japanese newspaper website said.

Masato Kanda, Japan’s vice finance minister for international affairs, told the press that he would not comment on whether an intervention had taken place. Analysts here pointed out that the yen is likely to weaken further amid expanding



File photo taken 2 October 2020, shows the Tokyo Stock Exchange. **PHOTO: KYODO**

inflation, and that any intervention would have limited impact as long as the Bank of Japan maintains its ultra-loose monetary policy.—Xinhua

WORLD: TOP HEADLINE

UK’s Johnson, Sunak meet amid private battle for Tory leadership

CONSERVATIVE rivals Boris Johnson and Rishi Sunak held face-to-face talks late Saturday, reports said, as the feuding pair who once headed Britain’s government were poised to battle for the leadership of their fractured ruling party.

Former prime minister Johnson, who returned from a Caribbean holiday earlier in the day aiming to launch an audacious political comeback just weeks after leaving office, met ex-finance minister Sunak to discuss the race, the BBC and others reported.

Both are yet to declare they will run to replace outgoing leader Liz Truss, who announced Thursday she would stand down — just 44 tempestuous days into her tenure.

It is thought to be their first in-person discussions in months, following a spectacular falling out after Sunak’s July resignation helped trigger the government mutiny that ultimately prompted Johnson’s ousting.— AFP



The Sunak and Johnson camps are reportedly seeking talks to see if there is scope for a unity deal. PHOTO: POOL/AFP

RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

Leave ‘immediately’, pro-Russian officials tell Kherson residents



People arrived from Kherson wait for further evacuation into the depths of Russia at the Dzhanikoi’s railway station in Crimea on 21 October, 2022. The Moscow-installed authorities of the southern Ukrainian Kherson region said on 20 October, 2022 that around 15,000 people have been pulled from the territory that Russia claims to have annexed in the face of a Ukrainian advance. PHOTO: AFP

PRO-RUSSIAN authorities on Saturday urged residents in the southern Kherson region, which Moscow claims to have annexed, to leave the main city “immediately” in the face of Kyiv’s advancing counter-offensive.

It comes as President Volodymyr Zelensky said Russia had launched 36 rockets overnight in

a “massive attack” on Ukraine, following reported strikes on energy infrastructure that resulted in power outages across the country.

And Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida became the latest world leader to reproach Moscow for its talk of using nuclear weapons.

Kyiv’s forces have been advancing along the west bank of the Dnipro river, towards the Kherson region’s eponymous main city.

Kherson was the first major city to fall to Moscow’s troops, and retaking it would be a major prize in Ukraine’s counter-offensive.

In recent days, Russia has been moving residents in the region — which Moscow claims to have annexed in September — east to Russia, in efforts Kyiv has denounced as “deportations”. —AFP

Iran urges US to abide by int’l shipping law

A top Iranian military commander on Friday urged the United States to comply with international shipping law wherever it conducts maritime activities, official news agency IRNA reported.

Iranian Navy Commander Shahram Irani made the remark at a ceremony held in the southern port city of Bandar Abbas to welcome back the navy’s 84<sup>th</sup> Flotilla from its 86-day mission in international waters.

Irani noted that the flotilla seized two American unmanned surface vehicles during its mission of escorting Iranian ships on the high seas, particularly in the Red Sea.

“Iran will respond decisively and crushingly to any action that would compromise shipping security in regional waters,” he warned.—Xinhua

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

Zelensky meets EBRD chief on Ukraine’s post-conflict recovery

UKRAINIAN President Volodymyr Zelensky on Friday met with visiting President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) Odile Renaud-Basso to discuss Ukraine’s post-conflict recovery, Zelensky’s press service said.

Noting the significance of Renaud-Basso’s visit to Ukraine, Zelensky said that the cooperation between Kiev and the EBRD is now “more relevant than ever.”

“Now due to the large amount of destruction caused by missile strikes and kamikaze drone attacks, we need to work on the rapid recovery of our country,” Zelensky said. —Xinhua

Over a million Ukraine households without power after Russian strikes: presidency

MORE than a million households in Ukraine were left without electricity following Russian strikes on energy facilities across the country, the deputy head of the Ukrainian presidency said Saturday.

“As of now, 672,000 subscribers have been disconnected in Khmelnytskyi region, 188,400 in Mykolaiv region, 102,000 in Volyn region, 242,000 in Cherkasy region, 174,790 in Rivne region, 61,913 in Kirovograd region and 10,500 in Odessa region,” Kyrylo Tymoshenko said on social media. —AFP

Ski federation maintains ban on Russian, Belarusian athletes

THE International Ski Federation (FIS) on Saturday agreed to maintain a ban on athletes from Russia and Belarus from all competition in light of the former country’s invasion of Ukraine.

“The FIS Council decided, with due regard to the integrity of FIS competitions and for the safety of all participants, and in line with IOC recommendations, to continue its policy to not allow Russian and Belarusian teams and athletes, to participate in all FIS competition,” the FIS said after meeting at the venue for the opening event of the alpine ski calendar.

The FIS ban means Russian and Belarusian athletes will not be able to compete in

alpine skiing, nordic skiing, freestyle and snowboard. They are already suspended by the International Biathlon Union (IBU).

Their absence signifies little for alpine skiing, but Russia is a powerhouse in cross-country skiing, having won a third of all medals available at the last Winter Olympic Games in Beijing in February. —AFP

# Xi Jinping elected general secretary of CPC Central Committee: communique

XI Jinping was elected general secretary of the 20<sup>th</sup> Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) at the committee's first plenary session held on Sunday, according to a communique.

The session, presided over by Xi, was attended by 203 members of the 20<sup>th</sup> CPC Central Committee and 168 alternate members.

Xi was also named chairman of the CPC Central Mili-

tary Commission at the session.

The members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee elected at the session are Xi Jinping, Li Qiang, Zhao Leji, Wang Huning, Cai Qi, Ding Xuexiang and Li Xi.

Also elected were members of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee at the session, which endorsed the members of the CPC Central Committee Secretariat nomi-

inated by the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee.

The session named the members of the Central Military Commission.

The session approved the secretary, deputy secretaries and members of the Standing Committee of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) elected at the first plenary session of the 20<sup>th</sup> CCDI.—Xinhua



Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, addresses the press at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, 23 October 2022. Xi Jinping and the other newly elected members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the 20<sup>th</sup> CPC Central Committee Li Qiang, Zhao Leji, Wang Huning, Cai Qi, Ding Xuexiang and Li Xi met the press on Sunday. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

# Israeli court clears way for Lebanon maritime border deal



A tugboat and a gas pumping facility in the Suez Canal on the way to the Karish oil field, about 80 km (50 miles) west of the Israeli city of Haifa in May. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

ISRAEL'S Supreme Court on Sunday paved the way for the signing of a maritime border deal with Lebanon, after it rejected appeals that the pact requires parliamentary approval.

The signing is expected later this week.

Israel and Lebanon, who are technically at war, agreed to terms earlier this month on a US-brokered deal to demarcate their disputed maritime border, a step likely to unlock production at Mediterranean gas fields.

Four right-wing Israeli

groups mounted legal challenges against the deal, claiming that centrist Prime Minister Yair Lapid was giving away "sovereign" Israeli territory, which requires parliamentary approval.

Israel holds elections on 1 November, and the petitions additionally argued that agreements to cede territory should not be concluded during an election period. Opponents of the deal also sought to force the government to hold a referendum on the terms.

But a three-judge panel at Israel's top court threw out all arguments against the deal in a decision Sunday, with the full arguments to be released later.

The ruling means Lapid's cabinet, which has also endorsed the terms of the agreement, can give final, binding approval.—AFP

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Former Trump adviser sentenced to 4 months in prison for contempt of Congress

US right-wing figure Steve Bannon was sentenced to four months in prison on Friday for contempt of Congress.

Federal district court Judge Carl Nichols also ruled that Bannon, onetime chief strategist for former US President Donald Trump, would have to pay a fine of 6,500 US dollars.

Nichols said that Bannon, 68, "has expressed no remorse for his actions" but agreed to stay the ruling while he appeals his guilty verdict.—Xinhua

### Berlin rally for Iran draws 80,000

SOME 80,000 people joined a Berlin rally Saturday in solidarity with women-led protests in Iran sparked by the death in custody of Mahsa Amini, a police spokesman told AFP.

"Today, thousands of people are showing their solidarity with courageous women and demonstrators in Iran," tweeted Germany's Green Party minister for family affairs, Lisa Paus. "We are by your side," she added.

Some marchers joining a rally called by a women's collective brandished slogans such as "Women, Life, Freedom" with some waving Kurdish flags.

Participants peacefully made their way towards the city centre in radiant autumnal sunshine, as police followed their progress from helicopters.—AFP

# Bolivian protest over census date turns deadly

BOLIVIAN government supporters and protesters who want the 2024 national census brought forward by a year clashed Saturday in the country's economic hub of Santa Cruz, leaving one person dead.

The protests were part of a strike called in Santa Cruz.

Skirmishes broke out starting early in the morning as government backers and detractors came out armed with stones, sticks and explosives in Puerto Quijarro, a city of

some 20,000 bordering Brazil, according to images broadcast on social media.

A man who was trying to stop anti-government protesters from blocking a bridge in Puerto Quijarro was reportedly attacked with sticks and admitted to a city hospital, where he died.

"We condemn the violence exercised during a civic strike that caused the irreparable loss of a human life in Puerto Quijarro," said leftist President

Luis Arce.

Though the census is scheduled to be taken in 2024, some want it brought forward to next year, so that the booming Santa Cruz area's influence in the legislature will be reflected sooner.

"We need more resources. This department, Santa Cruz, is very large and the resources are very limited, for health, education," Claudia Lopez, a 35-year-old shopkeeper, told AFP.—AFP



Blocked street in Santa Cruz, as part of a protest to demand the government move up a population census set for 2024. **PHOTO: AFP**



## 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.

ment 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.

## Futsal League qualifiers conclude

QUALIFIERS for the teams to compete in the 2022-2023 season Futsal League-1 and Futsal League-2 were held from 17 to 23 October. Starting next season, the Myanmar Football Federation will divide the futsal league into two classes. The Futsal League-1 tournament will be held with 12 teams while the Futsal League-2 tournament with 10 teams. Only seven teams are allowed to compete in the Futsal League-1 tournament, and qualifiers were conducted for the remaining five places for the league-1 and 10 teams

for the Futsal League-2 tournament. The Futsal League-1 qualifier was held with 10 teams and divided into two groups of five teams.

In group A, Future of Dagon team stands first in group (A) with 12 points and Futsal 19 FC second with nine points. In group B, AKG team stands first in the group with 10 points and Futsal Lovers second with eight points and they were directly qualified for the qualifiers.

According to the qualifying fixtures, the top two teams with the most points

from the two groups will qualify directly, and the two third-placed teams will play a play-off again. In the play-off match, the Generations defeated the Tawwin Nann 8-6 and entered the Futsal League-1. In the Futsal League-2 qualifiers, seven teams competed and were divided into two groups.

After the group matches, in group A, Yoma team stands first in the group with nine points and Red Eagles FC second with six points. In group B, NY stands first in the group with six points and Maryar

with three points and qualified.

After qualifying of the 2022-2023 Futsal League-1 tournament, the VUC team, including the defending champion MIU, MFF U-18, Myoma, AMM, Winner and Dream Team were allowed to compete directly. Qualifying teams such as the Future of Dagon, Futsal 19 FC, AKG, Futsal Lovers and Generations will be held with a total of 12 teams.

Futsal League-2 will be held with ten teams along with the disqualified teams.—Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM

## Ten Hag hails Man. United's fighting spirit after Chelsea draw

ERIK ten Hag hailed Manchester United's "spirit" as Casemiro grabbed his first goal for the club in stoppage-time to salvage a dramatic 1-1 draw at Chelsea on Saturday.

Ten Hag's side were seconds away from defeat after Jorginho's 87<sup>th</sup> minute penalty put Chelsea ahead in United's first match since Cristiano Ronaldo was sent into exile.

But former Real Madrid midfielder Casemiro ensured United left west London on a six-match unbeaten run as he netted with a header that was awarded by goal-line technology after crossing the line by millimetres. "I have to make a big compliment to my team. To fight back with a fourth game in 10 days, you see the spirit and how they deal with setbacks. Really good," Ten Hag said.—AFP

## Saw Shwe Lay defeat Golden Belt Champion Saw Ba Hain in Myanmar Traditional Boxing Challenge

SHWE AUNGLAN winner Saw Shwe Lay beat Golden Belt Champion Saw Ba Hein in the Myanmar Traditional Boxing Challenge held at Theinbyu Indoor Stadium in Yangon yesterday afternoon.

The challenge fights, organized by Lethwei Journey Group, were held with five bouts. Saw Shwe Lay and Saw Ba Hein were in the same weight.

Saw Shwe Lay landed continuous punches and kicks on Saw Ba Hein. Saw Ba Hein got injuries in the first round and asked for a break.

Referees filled up the remaining seconds in the first round due to the injury time.

In the second

round, Saw Ba Hein fell due to a left kick by Saw Shwe



Lay, and as Saw Ba Hein could not continue to compete and Saw

Shwelay won by knockout.

Next, another Golden Belt Champion Win Tun (Mandalay) fought against Thura Ye Aung (Mudon). They proved their endurance with punch skills and became the audience's favourite.

In addition, as a special three-round event, Wan Chone(Smart Fight) won by knockout in the first round due to smart kicks.

In a special four-round event, Saw John (Naga Marn) and Saw William (Doh Yoyar) did not make mistakes in the first round, but in the second round, Saw John punched and knocked out.

In the new generation event, the thrilling fights were fan favourite as well.—Bala Soe

Saw Shwe Lay (left) and Saw Ba Hein (right) land their punches on each other during the Myanmar Traditional Boxing Challenge held at Theinbyu Indoor Stadium in Yangon on 23 October 2022. PHOTO: BALA SOE