THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Myanmar categorically rejects fraudulent, biased and unilateral statements

AS 1 February 2023 marks the two-year term in office of the State Administration Council (SAC), some countries and some UN-mandate holders released unconstructive statements. Those statements fail to reveal the actual perpetrators of the violence in Myanmar, but put the blame on the government which has been coping with the situation. Besides, the statements mislead the public by covering up the brutal crimes committed by terrorist groups NUG, CRPH and their subordinates PDFs which claimed the lives of more than 5,000 unarmed civilians and civil servants.

The State Administration Council adopted the Five-Point Roadmap while performing the state responsibilities and steadfastly implementing it. Meanwhile, the international community should contribute to the Government's efforts in the democratization process in line with the will of its people by constructive means and respect the principle of the sovereign equality of member states as stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations rather than issuing such statements that would only exacerbate violence and sabotages.

Moreover, the Government has proven the voting fraud and abuse of power by the then authorities in the whole electoral process in the 2020 general election and it has been striving for all ethnic brethren to be able to cast votes nationwide without leaving any area unaccounted. Elections are fundamental and a prerequisite for a genuine democratic system. It is inconsistent to observe that approach of some countries and UN mandate holders although they call on Myanmar to restore democracy, they reprehend the endeavours of the Government to hold a free and fair election.

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Five-point roadmap of State Administration Council

1. An emphasis will be placed on peace and stability and the full prevalence of law and order throughout the Union to ensure the safety of the socioeconomy life of the people.
2. Public-centred development tasks will be undertaken for the development of socioeconomic life to ensure the prosperity and food sufficiency of the country.
3. Efforts will be made to continue cementing the genuine discipline-flourishing multiparty democratic system and building the Union based on democracy and the federal system.
4. An 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 general elections will be held in line with the Constitution (2008), and further work will be undertaken to hand over State duties to the winning party in accordance with democratic standards.

Maungtaw trade post outperforms trade target in Jan 2023

THE trade value at the Maungtaw border post with neighbouring country Bangladesh surpassed its trade target in January 2023, the Ministry of Commerce's statistics indicated.

It aimed to achieve a target of US$0.86 million with exports worth $0.8 million and imports valued at $0.06 million through the Maungtaw border.

Agricultural products, fishery products and manufacturing goods are primarily exported to Bangladesh via Maungtaw. Last month, the Maungtaw border checkpoint witnessed exports worth $2.534 million and imports worth $0.003 million. The actual trade value grew 295 per cent of the trade target.

Myanmar shipped areca nuts, ginger, jaggery, coconut, dried chilli pepper, dried jujube, mango, rohu, hilsa, anchovy, dried fish and some finished industrial goods to Bangladesh through the Maungtaw border, while consumer goods and industrial raw materials were brought in the country. —TWA/EM

Fisheries products are seen to be exported to Bangladesh.

National Objectives for 76th Anniversary of Union Day 2023

1. To strive for the perpetual existence of national solidarity and perpetuity of the Union through the internal strength
2. To make collaborative efforts of all ethnic nationals to restore perpetual and durable peace
3. To join hands in harmony for ensuring the prosperity and food sufficiency of the nation as two national plans through the Union spirit
4. To help develop all regions and states on equal terms and increase employment opportunities with ensuring the health and fitness of the entire National people
5. To practise the genuine, discipline-flourishing multiparty democratic system through fraternity, solidarity and united endeavours of all ethnic national brethren for building the Union based on democratic and federal systems

Myanmar categorically rejects fraudulent, biased and unilateral statements

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In terms of humanitarian assistance, Myanmar has been cooperating with and facilitating the works of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) and respective UN agencies. Indeed, the question of having access should not be raised in the first place since the UN agencies have already secured their field presence in many states and regions of the country.

Acknowledgement of the Government's effort to maintain state peace and stability and the prevalence of democracy through the five-point roadmap is imperative for Myanmar to return to normalcy. As certain overstepping UN mandate-holders and countries meddling in Myanmar's internal affairs clearly fail to comply with the purposes and principles of the United Nations, Myanmar categorically rejects all their immoral and irresponsible statements and acts.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
4 February 2023.

Public Notice for elimination of violence

1. SO called "CRPH", "NUG" and "PDF" terrorist groups are unlawfully committing killings of monks, teachers, civil servants and general people and looting under the pretext of saying "for the people".

2. Not rendering of encouragement, support and assistance to the "CRPH", "NUG" and "PDF" terrorists that are committing intimidations, killings and destructive activities could be construed as protecting lives and property of general public.

3. Giving information secretly relating to bearing of their arms, ammunition and terrorists to authorities could be tantamount to protecting lives and property of innocent people.

3 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 4 February, total figure rises to 633,840

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **633,840** after **three** new cases were reported on 4 February 2023 according to the Ministry of Health. The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **614,312**, including **five** new recoveries.

The death toll from COVID-19 in the country remained unchanged to **19,490** on 4-2-2023 with no new death reported from the pandemic. — MNA

State Administration Council
Press Release
Re-invitation to Myanmar citizens who reside in various regions for many reasons

1. Some student youths, State service personnel and citizens, with worries, have evaded to areas of EAOs and foreign countries due to the incitements and intimidation of NLD members, extremist followers, unlawful associations and terrorist groups such as CRPH and NUG, stimulation of CDM, and persons and organizations at home and abroad not wishing to restore peace and stability of the State since Tatmadaw assumed the State responsibilities on 1 February 2021.
2. They are further worried about the dictatorship statement and speeches of unlawful association and terrorist group CRPH and NUG, and some relevant persons. As they face no security guarantee and difficulties in socio-economic life in those areas, they wish to return to their native lands.
3. **The State Administration Council will specifically ease restrictions for service personnel, intellectuals and intelligentsia, and persons from various arenas and citizens who, with worries, absconded from the country except for persons who committed murders, robberies, setting fires, mine explosions and intentional attacks on security troops, those who crowded to attack public service personnel and some people, those who destroyed government and private-owned buildings and those who are highly involved in the CDM activities by providing monetary assistance and other means.**
4. As those who evade their native areas are also citizens, the State Administration Council will arrange their returns from the evaded areas to various parts of Myanmar.
5. As such, the information was released that if those who evaded to various areas, except for persons who committed any kinds of crime, wish to return to their native lands in Myanmar of their own accord due to multiple worries, the citizens abroad can contact nearby ward, village, township and district administration bodies and relevant embassies, military attaché offices and consulates in accord with the easing restrictions under the law.

Information Team
State Administration Council

THE State Administration Council will specifically ease restrictions for service personnel, intellectuals and intelligentsia, and persons from various arenas and citizens who, with worries, absconded from the country except for persons who committed murders, robberies, setting fires, mine explosions and intentional attacks on security troops, those who crowded to attack public service personnel and some people, those who destroyed government and private-owned buildings and those who are highly involved in the CDM activities by providing monetary assistance and other means.

Private sector and individual role — the main driving force for the State in the market economic system

ENCOURAGING MSMEs means encouraging the business centred on the private sector. The country is practising market economy and multiparty democracy. The private sector and individual role are the main driving force for the State in the market economic system.

(The excerpt from the speech made by Chairman of the MSME Development Central Committee Chairman of State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting 1/2022 of the central committee on 23 September 2022)

MoI Union Minister inspects preservation of ancient films with digital technology

UNION Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn attended a coordination meeting on the preservation of ancient films with digital technology held at the meeting hall of the Film Promotion Division of IPRD in Yangon yesterday.

Speaking at the meeting, the Union minister said it needs to preserve the history, culture and images of Myanmar through Myanmar films in the long run. Now, the films can be preserved digitally and the ministry purchased England-made Film Cleaner and Australia-made Film Scanner in the 2022-2023FY. Basic training courses on machines and maintenance were also conducted for the staff. Currently, it can carry out the cleansing, scanning and saving in digital format processes. More sessions of training are also being launched to conduct digital restoration systems just like the international countries.

Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn views the restoration of documentary films with digital technology at the National Film Archive in Bahan Township, Yangon yesterday.

Similarly, the film materials will be placed at the international standard National Film Archive.

Then, Myanmar Motion Picture Organization Chairman U Kyi Soe Tun and MRTV's Director-General U Ye Naing briefed the digitalization processes of the films and ongoing work plans.

The Union minister gave proper instructions and concluded the meeting.

The Union minister and party then went to the Film Archive in Bahan Township and inspected the work processes.

At noon, the Union Minister met with the officials of Tun Foundation at the Printing and Publishing Department in Botahtaung Township to discuss the publishing of Myanmar Encyclopedia Volume (II), and the experts of the National Literary Award Selection Committee and Sarpay Beikman Manuscript Award Selection Team to organize the prize selection team members.

The Union minister also visited the Tun Foundation Library on Bo Aung Kyaw Street.

The library offers over 100 types of books including over 40,000 foreign books and over 8,000 Myanmar books.

Then, the Union minister inspected the Media Development Department office that will be inaugurated soon.

The Union Minister watched the second episode of the "Unity Song" concert broadcast live by MRTV-HD to celebrate the 76th Anniversary of Union Day at Myanma Radio and Television in Yangon. Singer Yatha performed in companion with the Myanma Radio and Television modern band, ethnic singers from MRTV ethnic channel and Traru Aung, Zaw Min Oo, La La Sut, Hton Hlaing, Mya Nanda, Pa Pa Aung, Cho Thae Oo, Phway Su Htwe and May Phyu Khin from Tu Shin Hnwe Pyaw Gita Pwel Taw performed ethnic traditional songs.

The programme is presented as a new version of the Friday Night Live Show and will be rebroadcast at 10:30 am on 5 February. — MNA/KTZH/KZW

Russia-Myanmar Association for Friendship and Cooperation ink MOU with local companies, entrepreneurs

THE MoU signing ceremony on the cooperation of the leisure housing project and tourism service sectors in the Ngapali beach area of Thandwe in Rakhine State and the cultivation and exportation of coffee was held at Pan Pacific Hotel in Yangon yesterday.

Vice-President Mr Anatoly Bulochnikov of the Russia-Myanmar Association for Friendship and Cooperation-RMAFC and the delegation including Russian economists, the CEO and board of directors of Treasure of Ngapali Development Co Ltd and the Shwin Pyaw Pyaw Trading Co Ltd managing director and officials attended the ceremony.

After discussing further development of the Ngapali beach area, acceleration of tour promotion, initiation of the Russia-Myanmar Ngapali Beach Housing project and production and exportation of coffee, officials signed the MoUs. — MNA/KZW

The documentary group photo of the MoU-signing event yesterday in Yangon.

Devotees are pictured at the event yesterday. **PHOTO : KO KO ZAW**

Shwedagon holds 15th Myanmar traditional Htamane donation

THE 15th Myanmar traditional Htamane donation organized by the Shwedagon Pagoda Board of Trustees was held yesterday at Shwedagon Pagoda with offering alms.

First, members of the Shwedagon Pagoda board of trustees, religious associations and pagoda office staff donated alms, flowers, water, lights and fruits to the Shwedagon Pagoda and share Metta with devotees.

Afterwards, the board of trustees members, religious associations, pagoda office staff and pilgrims donated Htamane alms to Shwedagon Pagoda Ovadacariya Sayadaws and 62 invited Sayadaws. – Ko Ko Zaw/MKKS

Nay Pyi Taw Council Chair meets ethnic traditional culture troupe members from regions, states

CHAIRMAN of Nay Pyi Taw Council U Tin Oo Lwin, in his capacity as Chairman of the management Committee on Organizing the 76th Anniversary of Union Day 2023 met ethnic traditional culture troupes from regions and states at Nay Pyi Taw Training Camp in Zabuthiri Township yesterday.

During the meeting, the Nay Pyi Taw Council chairman said it should make efforts by joining hand in hand with the national brethren to ensure the sustainability of ethnic unity and perpetuation of the Union in line with the national objectives of Union Day. The collective strength of ethnic people can guarantee the proportionate development of regions and states.

He also added that it also makes efforts to develop, conserve and promote the language, literature, culture and customs of national people, and cordially greeted leaders and members of ethnic traditional culture troupes.

Then, he inspected the dormitories, sub-committee offices, clinic, library and Sarpay Beikman book shop.

A total of 292 members — 38 from Mandalay Region, 39 from Kachin State, 38 from Kayah State, 40 from Kayin State, 32 from Chin State, 34 from Mon State, 33 from Rakhine State and 38 from Shan State will participate in the ceremony marking the 76th Anniversary of Union Day.

The dance troupes will visit famous sites in Nay Pyi Taw such as the Maravijaya Buddha image, Uppatasanti Pagoda, Nay Pyi Taw Bodh Gaya, Hluttaw building, Defence Services Museum, National Museum, National Landmark Garden, Planetarium, Gem Museum, Nay Pyi Taw Myoma Zay, Zoological Garden, Nay Pyi Taw Water Fountain Park and Junction Centre. —Hein Min Soe (MNA)/KTZH

Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman U Tin Oo Lwin meets members of the ethnic traditional culture troupes yesterday. **PHOTO : KYAW YE SWE**

Illegal jade, lubricant, electronics, industrial materials and vehicles confiscated

THE on-duty team under the supervision of the Customs Department conducted inspections on 1 February.

Officials captured three goods including 3,834 litres of Aqua engine oil worth K8,404,200 that were different in the Import Declaration (ID) from a container at the Asia World Port Terminal container checkpoint, three goods including 60 electronic bulbs (200W) worth K3,507,000 that were not declared in the Import Declaration (ID) from a container at the Myanmar Industrial Port Terminal container checkpoint, four goods include 5 pairs of seal kits worth K8,691,696 without Import License at the Yangon International Airport (Import Counter) and 12 goods include 33 anaesthetic trolleys with drawers worth K27,709,500 that were not declared in the Import Declaration (ID) at the Hteedan container checkpoint. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

On 2 February, an on-duty team at the Yepu permanent checkpoint in Shan State seized 680 kilogrammes of raw jade, 650 kilogrammes of jade beads and three kinds of jade jewellery worth K179.5 million from a Mitsubishi Fuso car (approximately K70 million) heading to Muse from Mandalay. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

On 3 February, an inspection team from Tabayin Myoma Police Station captured an unregistered Honda Click-125 motorbike (approximately K1.5 million) in Phayahtyawt village in Tabayin township and a combined team seized an unregistered Toyota Mark II car (approximately K7 million) at the Sagaing Township entrance combined checkpoint. The action was taken under the Export and Import Law.

Therefore, eight arrests (at an estimated value of K306,312,396) were made on three consecutive days from 1 to 3 February, according to the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS

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www.gnlm.com.mm
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION
(+95) (01) 8604532,
Hotline - 09 454237515
ADVERTISING & MARKETING
(+95) (01) 8604530,
Hotline - 09 251022355
marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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gnlmnews@gmail.com
www.gnlm.com.mm

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Sham media outlets spread misinformation on Counter-Terrorism actions of security forces in Kayah State diverting from media ethics

THE KNPP and KNDF terrorists launched attacks on administrative buildings, religious buildings, hospitals, schools and houses using heavy weapons, small weapons and Drop Bombs. The local residents were not satisfied with their terror acts for killings of innocent civilians and injuries and so they reported to the officials including the exact base locations. Therefore, Tatmadaw conducted Counter-Terrorism Action with the help of airstrikes and artillery, and the media outlets spread misinformation about the cases without following the media ethics.

The KNPP and KNDF terrorists are launching various terror acts to disrupt the stability in Kayah State and opened fire on the passenger flight of MNA on 24 December 2021, Loikaw University and prison on 12 January 2022, Lawpita Thinbawbin base and Bilu Chaung 10-mile base on 6 July using heavy weapons, passenger flight ART-72 on 30 September, airport on 11 November, twice attacks on the airport on 3 January 2023 using Drop Bombs and regional military bases in Loilem Lay on 18 September 2022 and 13 January 2023 using heavy weapons and the attacks resulted in deaths and injuries.

Moreover, they also attacked from 4,000 metre of Loikaw Township at 7:15 am using heavy weapons while the local ethnic people were organizing the opening ceremony of the archway commemorating the 71st Anniversary of Kayah State Day in front of the state hall of Kayah State. In the attack, some security force members, six students, one male and one female civilian were wounded and one male civilian died. The terrorists committed 21 attacks between 1 December 2022 and 31 January 2023.

As they committed such terrorist attacks, the security forces conducted Counter-Terrorism Action against their bases and there were 55 clashes around Mal Taw Cave, Kyaiktiyo Lay, Lwaltamu region and Loikaw between 1 December 2022 and 31 January 2023, and some security force members were injured and it could seize the dead bodies of terrorists, arms and ammunition and other related materials.

Due to the brutal attacks of terrorist groups, the residents who do not want the killings and injuries of innocent people reported the exact information, and according to the ground inspection of security forces, it is known that the KNDF Brigade 10 base is located at Sin Sakhan (locally called) about 10 miles from northeast of Loikaw. Therefore, the security forces launched Counter-Terrorism action with airstrikes and artillery on 3 February and they (terrorists) lost their arms and ammunition and buildings, according to the on-ground information.

A location map of the KNDF Brigade 10 base at locally called "Sin Sakhan".

Regarding that case, the KNPP and KNDF terrorist groups made up the KNDF Brigade 10 base as refugee camps through untrue media outlets to spread rumours like Tatmadaw launched airstrikes on clinics, schools and ration warehouses of IDP without any armed engagements or for no reason.

It is here reported for the awareness of people regarding the spreading of false information by untrue media and the Security Force members keep conducting Counter-Terrorism actions by cooperating with the locals to ensure the peace and stability of the area. — MNA/KTZH

Thanaka sellers doing roaring trade in tourism peak season in NyaungU

HOMEGROWN pilgrims throng the temples in Bagan Ancient Cultural Zone (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) in NyaungU Township, Mandalay Region and tourism-dependent business such as Shinmataung Thanaka sees brisk sale during the high season.

Thanaka, a yellowish-white cosmetic paste made from ground bark, is commonly known as a natural cosmetic in Myanmar. It is a distinct feature of the Myanmar people's culture.

Women are seen shopping for Thanaka – a natural cosmetic in Myanmar. **PHOTO : YE WIN NAING**

"Temples in the Bagan cultural heritage zone are crowded with devotees in the tourism peak season. More than 20,000 pilgrims daily flock to the zone on public holidays and during the festival periods. The local Shinmataung Thanaka businesses are thriving depending on the visitors. The sellers make outright purchases of Thanaka farm and the prices of Thanaka are K500-K2,000 per piece depending on the quality. The 3.5-4 feet long Thanaka piece is worth K7,500-8,000. The affordable price attracts buyers. Some pilgrims purchase them as souvenirs. I distribute my business card to the customers as I sell them in the zone with Hijet cars. This way, they can contact me if they want to buy more. The high number of pilgrims makes tourism-dependent businesses flourish. The souvenir shops, restaurants, hawkers, temporary hand tattoo artists, street vendors and other businesses are doing a roaring trade," said a Thanaka seller from Bagan.

Tourists and local pilgrims are interested to observe the temples, stupas and mural paintings. Those pilgrimages helped revive small businesses such as horse-riding businesses, motorcycle and electric bike rental businesses, hotels, motels, guesthouses and souvenir businesses. — Ye Win Naing (NyaungU)/EM

Intellectual contests, fairs held to celebrate Myanmar Children's Day in Bahan Township

PHYSICAL and intellectual competitions and fairs were held as a pre-activity for Children's Day in Myanmar at No 1 Basic Education High School Bahan on Kambawza Street in Bahan Township in Yangon Region on 3 February.

As a prelude to Myanmar Children's Day celebration poems, music, storytelling contests, and physical ability competitions, 120 preschool children enjoyed playing games and having fun together.

Deputy Director Daw Khin Moe Wai of the Department of Social Welfare of Yangon West District and Chair of the Bahan Township Administration Body U Aung Ko Latt attended the ceremony. — Sanda Htay (IPRD)/KZW

Children are pictured taking the group photo at the event.

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Over 600 Myanmar migrants detained in Thailand arrive in Kawthoung

OVER Six hundred Myanmar migrants who are detained at the Immigration Detention Centre (IDC) in Ranong, Thailand, arrived back to Kawthoung township, Myanmar, from Ranong, Thailand, by motorboats on 2 February.

Returnees are seen in Kawthoung.

Although the Myanmar Embassy to Thailand stated on 30 January that detained migrants would be repatriated in three batches starting on 2 February after officials led by Myanmar Embassy Labour Attaché U Tin Aung and IDC officials negotiated with leaders of migrant workers who were detained at IDC, all detained Myanmar nationals were taken back on 2 February.

Kawthoung locals welcomed migrants, and health workers conducted health checks, took their body temperatures, and tested them for COVID-19. — TWA/MKKS

Entry of one-mln visses of onions to Yangon market drives price fall within 5 days

ABOUT one million visses of onion from various regions entered the Yangon market between 30 January and 3 February and the prices were falling, onion and potato seller Ko Swe Linn from Nyaungpinlay market told to the GNLM.

Onions are seen being conveyed to Bayintnaung Wholesale Centre.

On 3 February, the wholesale prices of onion stood at K1200-1300-1400-1300 per viss from the Myingyan area, K1800-2150-2100-1900 from the Myittha area, K1300-1400-1400-1400 from Seikphyu and K1000-1200-1200-1200 from Meiktila area on 3 February.

On 2 February, the unsold Myingyan onion entered the Pakokku market reaching 49,200 visses on 3 February and its highest price was K1,150 per viss. On 2 February, 92,000 visses of onion entered the market at K500 to K1,150 per viss, according to the daily prices of the market.

In the Yangon market, the new Myingyan onion prices were K4,400 per viss and K4,800 per viss of Myittha onion on 8 December 2022 and the prices dropped by half about over two months.

Despite the price fall, the new monsoon onion prices reached their highest on 3 February compared to the same period.

The onion production cost was between K2.5 million and K3 million per acre later in mid-2022. It produces about 4,000 visses per acre and fetches K2,000 per viss and makes about a K5 million profit per acre, according to onion farmers from Seikphyu Township.

In the onion market, the merchants save the summer onions and some onion farmers also keep the onions.

During the period of new onion, it fetches below K800 per viss while K500 per viss in certain years. The onion production cost is between K1.5 million and K2 million per acre and it produces from 4,000 visses to 6,000 visses per acre, said onion farmer Ko Khin Maung Myint from Pale township.

The onion merchants purchase the products in summer and resell them in the market within eight months until December. Sometimes, they face losses including their capital and 25per cent of reduced prices and original prices.

Despite the losses, it capital price of a viss including the reduced price is K1,000 and the reselling price is only about K700 per viss. In 2015,2019 and 2022, the capital price of a viss including the reduced price was K1,000 and the reselling price was about K3,000 per viss in 2015 and 2016 and K4,000 in 2022.

Therefore, the losses of merchants hit record during the prices reached a record high in three years. —TWA/KTZH

MNHRC inspects 18 prisons, 4 jails, 17 prison camps, 25 police station cells and 3 court cells in 2022

THE Myanmar National Human Rights Commission announced on 3 February that the commission inspected 18 prisons, four jails, 17 prison camps, 25 police station cells and three court cells in 2022.

In 2022, the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission received 229 complaints, and the investigation team held 32 meetings and scrutinized these complaints.

It is reported that there are 39 cases of notifying relevant government departments and organizations for verification, 47 cases of making recommendations to the complainant, and 143 cases of keeping records.

The 143 of the recorded complaints are cases pending before any court under the commission law and pending appeals or corrections against the judgment of any court.

The statement says that cases that have been finalized by a court and complaints that do not conform to the characteristics of complaints and complaints that have been processed in line with the Commission's procedures are complaints that do not require further action, so the record is kept in an orderly manner.

Under Section 43 of the Commission Law, the MNHRC inspects whether the people who are in prison or those who are in custody are being cared for with humanitarian aid under international provisions related to human rights and domestic laws in line with COVID-19 prevention instructions issued by the Ministry of Health.

In 2022, 18 prisons, four jails, 17 prison camps, 25 police station cells, three court cells, five youth training schools, one childcare centre, one nursing home and five disabled youth training schools were inspected.

The commission also, in 2022, met prisoners in prisons, detention camps and police station cells, and examined whether there was compliant with Article 41 of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission's Legal Procedures, and "Compliance with the minimum standards for the treatment of prisoners established by the United Nations".

The commission inquired about the availability of facilities that should be available for prisoners in the dormitories and individual prisoners, as well as healthcare and drinking water conditions.

In addition, the commission met prisoners in their dormitories and inquired about their living conditions, asked if they were tortured and if prison materials are fully received, and recorded if they had the equipment they deserve.

A total of 239 prisoners who wish to meet individually were interviewed and recorded by the inspection team.

The Myanmar National Human Rights Commission is investigating the complaints and inspecting prisons and detention centres to investigate human rights violations.

As such, the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission stated that measures to ensure that complainants are not retaliated against are notified under Section 38 of the Commission Law. — TWA/KZL

An aerial view of the Ohbo prison in Mandalay.

LOCAL BUSINESS

Truckers to get QR code-based Vehicle Pass in advance online

TRUCK drivers need to seek QR code-based Vehicle Pass permits beforehand on digital platforms in order to export goods in border trade, the Trade Department notified.

The department launched an online system to issue vehicle passes with a view to facilitating the exports of various pulses, corn, sesame and peanut in the border channel. Consequently, those truck drivers who have received vehicle passes digitally in advance are allowed to pass the border point.

The drivers of those aforementioned goods are required to seek it ahead.

This vehicle pass can be done on Myanmar Tradenet 2.0 portal. The applicants holding export licences have to fill in the classification of the vehicle in the Vehicle Monitoring System (https://vehicle.myanmartradenet.com). After screening the application, QR code-based Vehicle Pass will be issued. For those goods which do not need export licences, they can directly seek vehicle passes.

The trucks can pass the checkpoints with that QR code. Those drivers which fail to show the QR code are not entitled to leave.

That system will start on a trial run between 1 and 10 February along Muse, Myawady and Chinshwehaw border. There will be no charges for it during the trial period.

That system will be fully operational from 11 February. Each truck will be charged K5,000. For further information, people can dial the contact number of the Trade Department (067-408671, 408485, 408670, 408509, 408511) and email dotictygn@commerce.gov.mm/, dot.ict.tradenet@gmmail.com within office hours. – NN/EM

Lorries are seen on the Sino-Myanmar bordor.

Myanmar exports 1.9 mln tonnes of rice in ten months

MYANMAR has shipped over 1.9 million tonnes of rice and broken rice with an estimated value of US$700 million as of 31 January 2023 in the current financial year 2022-2023 since April 2022, according to Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

The export values were recorded at $82 million from 250,947 tonnes in April 2022, $51 million from 153,507 tonnes in May, $50 million from 146,094 tonnes in June, $66 million from 182,550 tonnes in July, $53 million from 156,893 tonnes in August, $37 million from 93,792 tonnes in September, $65 million from 163,189 tonnes in October, $106 million from 264,038 tonnes, $90 million from 228,445 tonnes in December and $107 million from 268,835 tonnes in January 2023, totalling $679 million from 1,908,288 tonnes in ten months in the current financial year 2022-2023.

During the April-January period, the export volume hit the lowest in September 2022 and the highest in January 2023.

Myanmar has been exerting concerted efforts to grow 10 per cent yearly in the rice export sector. To raise foreign income, it has been prioritizing the exportation of high-grade rice and boosting export volume, MRF stated.

Myanmar bagged over $700 million from approximately 2 million tonnes of rice export in the 2020-2021 FY.—NN/EM

Export rice bags are pictured being loaded onto the merchant vessel.

Prices of fuel oil, gold and dollar on 4 February 2023

Fuel Oil Price (Yangon)

Octane 92	K2,130
Octane 95	K2,195
Diesel	K2,270
Premium Diesel	K2,350

All of the prices are based on per litre.

Gold Price

The reference price of high-purity gold set by YGEA	K2,197,200 per tical
High-purity gold in the gold market	K2,830,000 per tical

Dollar Price

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

The above prices may change from time to time.

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OPINION

Keep ourselves on right track before criticizing others

ALL incidents in the secular world are formed with right and wrong things. As all human beings do not have supernatural power, it cannot be denied that every incident is unable to be beyond the right and wrong things. It is a natural truth.

No matter how all events of the world cannot be different from the natural truth, everybody needs to review all things objectively. In so doing, they have to conduct everything in an in-depth analysis without bias. To be able to do so, they have deserved the capability to analyze these events.

> Importantly, anyone holding up the bad concept will never face good experiences. If so, they will always see everything in a bad manner. Only when anybody understands things how to accept the good concept will they have the chance to embrace the good results of the secular world. As such, everybody needs to analyze themselves first before doing something.

First, every incident is based on the main theme. But everybody needs to verify the main theme whether it is confined or not. But those analysts must have a wide range of own knowledge and concept, perceptions and attitudes. If a railway does not have proper alignment, the train will derail from the route. Like this, capability is the most important for analysts.

If the analysts do not have the eligible capability to evaluate something, they never understand the comprehensive answer of such an event. If so, they may adopt the wrong decisions which will bring disadvantages to them along the analysis route. Consequently, the analysts may face something wrong in comparison with that of other persons. As such, they will embrace disputes and controversies with others. So, they never reach the right track because of their wrong concepts.

To have deserved capability, those analysts must accumulate a wider range of knowledge as well as the education they learned at the schools. They have to learn school education under the guidance of teachers. So, they have a chance to pursue knowledge, attitude and perception from their teachers. In their student lives, they have a chance to march towards the goal steered by teachers.

Only when they have the capability, good mindsets and good concepts, they can overview all events of the world without bias about what is really wrong or what is actually right. If they thoroughly understand the actual situation of the secular world, it can be said that they are qualified for marching forward on their own without relying on anyone.

Importantly, anyone holding up the bad concept will never face good experiences. If so, they will always see everything in a bad manner. Only when anybody understands things how to accept the good concept will they have the chance to embrace the good results of the secular world. As such, everybody needs to analyze themselves first before doing something.

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ARTICLE
BOOKRACK

Global vaccine accessibility urged as Western countries ditch expired doses

AS THE COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose a threat to global public health, the World Health Organization (WHO) last month calls for the momentum for vaccination to be maintained to better cover high-priority groups.

The vaccine uptake in low- and middle-income countries is still insufficient, which became a concern about the ongoing risk, according to the WHO.

The world has been struggling to tackle the problem of unequal distribution of COVID-19 vaccines between rich and lower-income countries. Yet, years after the outbreak of the pandemic, promises made by many rich countries have yet to be delivered.

"No one is safe until everyone is safe," said Seth Berkley, CEO of the global vaccine alliance Gavi.

EMPTY PROMISES

According to figures from Our World in Data, as early as two years ago, developed countries had already acquired enough doses to vaccinate their population more than one shot for each. But even now, many Western developed countries have not yet fulfilled their promises to deliver vaccines to low-income countries.

There are currently nearly 400 million doses of vaccines announced by the United States but not yet donated, according to the data. For the United Kingdom and Switzerland, the number is 41 million and 6.2 million.

Commenting on the low vaccination rates in low-income countries, Richard Hatchett, CEO of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, told Xinhua in an earlier interview that "the delay in vaccines getting to them has really been intolerable."

Last month at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2023 in Davos, Switzerland, Hatchett urged countries and manufacturers to prioritize vaccine supply to the global programme COVAX.

VACCINES DESTROYED

According to a report by qz.com last October, Canada destroyed nearly 14 million AstraZeneca vaccine doses in early 2022. Switzerland was also reported to destroy more than 14 million doses of vaccines, which was more than four times the doses it donated to low-income countries.

What also worsened the global accessibility of vaccines is that some low-income countries had to turn down the offering of vaccine doses that were due to expire soon, or had to destroy such doses.

In May 2021, Malawi destroyed nearly 20,000 doses of AstraZeneca vaccines, which arrived in the country at the end of March but would expire on 13 April.

SOURCE: Xinhua

An employee makes dry ice pellets at Capitol Carbonic, a dry ice factory in Baltimore in Nov. 2020. Dry ice helps keep COVID-19 vaccines cool during transport. **PHOTO: SAUL LOEB/AFP**

Book Title	-	Folk Tales (Bilingual) (English Version by Professor Than Tun)
Writer	-	Ludu U Hla
Publishing House	-	Htee Paung Kar
Publishing Date	-	December 2022 (1st Edition)
Price	-	K4,500

Folk Tales (Bilingual) (English Version by Professor Than Tun)

THIS book is a collection of extracts from 37 books written by Ludu U Hla and translated by Dr Than Tun. This book includes Myanmar folk tales surrounding pagodas and monasteries, up-country folk tales, Mon folk tales, Rakhine folk tales, Lisu folk tales, Kayin folk tales, eastern Kayin folk tales, Kayah folk tales, Tai Hkam Thi tales, Taung Yoe folk tales, Sumpra Naga tales, Kachin folk tales, Inlay stories, etc. The original writer is both a journalist and a writer. As a matter of fact, these folk tales were read out at the paper reading sessions by Ludu U Hla under the titles, "Lumyozu Ponpyin Hnit Tay Gabyar Myar (1962)" and "Myanmar Children Literature of Today (1965)". He also submitted a paper titled, "Taingyinthar Ponpyin Myar (1970) to the research paper reading session held under the sponsorship of the Myanmar Research Bureau at the Yangon Arts and Science University and the Institute of Economics. This book is now published together with the English translation by Professor Dr Than Tun. This book also marks the 100th Anniversary of Sayagyi Dr Than Tun. While serving time in Yangon Prison from 1953 to 1956, Sayagyi Ludu U Hla wrote the tales and sent them to his family at home. Starting to collect the stories and the tales as an inmate, Sayagyi continue to collect them and wrote the tales continuously. This is the reason why the people of Mandalay called him the Union Story Teller. The stories and the tales which are familiar to him since childhood continued to be to his taste. He said that he likes them because they reflect real life.

Usually, the tales are used to start with the phrase, 'Once upon a time.' It happens the same with people from around the world. All people or races have one thing in common—i.e. all nations have childhood tales. The writer explained why he wrote a lot of folk tales of the indigenous people. His noble aim was to contribute towards the building of national unity. He also said that he compiled the folk tales for keeping them as a record for the respective indigenous people. On the part of the readers, they can have a chance to know about the cultural mores and traditions of the indigenous races while enjoying the wonderful nature of these brethren. For example, readers will know the traditions of Kayah. Without knowledge of the traditions of the indigenous races, the people from the mainland will have difficulty understanding them, and as a result, communication with them will pose a problem. Knowledge of their traditions and customs will contribute a lot to building national unity.

Those who prefer to read English literature can enjoy the excellent composition by Professor Dr Than Tun.

Book Title	-	Thamaingwun Thadinzar Myar
Writer	-	Shwe Gaing Thar
Publishing House	-	Kyipwayay
Publishing Date	-	January 2023 (1st Edition)
Price	-	K3,500

Thamaing Wun Thadinzar Myar (Historical Newspapers)

PRESS freedom is not new to the people of Myanmar. The freedom of the press has really existed since the days of Myanmar monarchs. Once there was a Myanmar monarch who said, "If I behave wrongly, you can write the scandals about me if any, and if my queen has gone astray, you can speak evil of her, and if my children are doing things incorrectly, you can write stories about them. The same principle shall be applied when it comes to my ministers, magistrates and mayors. You will not have legal action taken for your writings. You are granted unconditional access to my royal court." This monarch is nobody but King Mindon, and the newspaper is nothing but Yadanabon. There are 26 points according to which the newspaper had the right to write about the scandals of the public officials without needing to fear being arrested and punished. As the journalists could enjoy impunity, they were highly respected by the ministers and the public administrators at different levels. Therefore, Yadanabon deserved to be called the fourth pillar.

This book was written by a Buddhist monk called U Thaw Bita. His pen name is Shwe Gaing Thar. He is a writer as well as a history researcher. He contributed articles towards Ludu Newspaper. His articles were written on the basis of the shreds of evidence obtained from the Yadanabon Newspaper. He wrote a series of articles in the Ludu Newspaper in 1962 under the title, "Historical Newspapers."

There are 13 episodes in this book. Commencing from The Morning Star published in the Karen Language in 1836 (1198 Myanmar Era) in Moulmein, the writer discussed the background history of the Yadanabon Newspaper, which was first published on 20 March 1875. This was a weekly newspaper. At that time, there was no section as the editorial. The newspaper carried the English/Myanmar calendar, the subscription rates, the telegram news, the general news, the city news, the news concerning the three Talais (Mons), the foreign news, the articles and the extracts from the newspapers. The front page carried mostly the telegram news. Most of the breaking news came from telegrams. At that time, the World War was imminent, and so, the Europe news was carried on the front page. The general news included foreign and local news and there was also news of people's interest. A very hot news was about an orchid plant from Bhamo town, which was sold to an English nobleman for 1,000 sovereigns. To put it in a nutshell, the short news of people's interest, the accidents, the popular news in addition to the government news and views.

As this book reveals the background history of the development of the newspapers, the readers will have a thorough knowledge of the printing industry, the distribution and circulation of the newspapers, the style of newspaper writing and the freedom of the press in those days.

ENVIRON WORLD

Protecting 30% of oceans a huge challenge for the planet

Weston-super-Mare, also known simply as Weston, is a seaside town in the North Somerset unitary area in the county of Somerset, England. **PHOTO: ADRIAN DENNIS/AFP**

HOW do we go from protecting eight percent of marine areas to 30 per cent in less than 10 years? This question is at the heart of a global forum in Canada this weekend aiming to save marine ecosystems under threat from overfishing, pollution and climate change.

On the heels of the historic biodiversity agreement signed at COP15 in Montreal late last year, about 3,000 officials, scientists, NGOs and Indigenous groups are meeting in Vancouver for the fifth International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC5), which opened Friday and runs until 9 February.

Scientists have said the meeting is crucial for setting up a framework to reach the agreed target at COP15 of protecting 30 per cent of the planet's lands and oceans by 2030. It's an immense step for ocean conservation, which will see a tripling of areas made off-limits to most human activities, with an aim to preserve sensitive ecosystems and species at risk.

The summit, usually held every four years, is taking place two years late due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"We must re-think our policies, economies, priorities, and processes in ways that reflect the important role nature plays in our own health, equity, well-being and economic sustainability," said host Canada, which has some of the world's longest coastlines.

Covering almost three-quarters of the earth's surface, oceans are home to a quarter of known species and absorb 30 per cent of CO_2 emissions from human activities. "COP15 marked a historic inflection point in conservation efforts for nature... but the pressure is on now not just to reach the numerical target, but to make sure that we do it right, that our marine protected areas are in the right places (and) that they're managed well," Pepe Clarke of the World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF) told AFP.—AFP

Endangered monarch butterflies face perilous storm

AS devastating storms pounded California, nature lovers feared for endangered monarch butterflies that winter there as part of a seemingly magical migration pattern.

The colorfully winged insects that travel vast distances over the course of generations have been closely watched in the US state since they neared extinction just three years ago.

As the sun rose one January morning, volunteers began counting monarch butterflies, finding them clustered atop cypress and eucalyptus trees in various sites along the California coast.

Monarchs have a remarkable long-distance migration. In North America, monarchs overwinter in both Mexico and along the California coast. A monarch can fly up to 2,700 miles (4,345 km). **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

The butterflies huddled in clusters of gray colonies until one spread its wings to reveal the orange spots for which they are known.

The sight provided a bit of reassurance for Stephanie Turcotte Edenholm, who counted more than a thousand monarchs at a sanctuary in the California coastal town of Pacific Grove.

The educator spent much of the morning explaining the lives of the butterflies to young school students. They got to watch as dozens of butterflies took flight, believing -- mistakenly -- that the mild temperature signaled the end of winter.

"It's too early for them to get so agitated, they're using up their fat reserves," Edenholm fretted.—AFP

Northeast US, Canada gird for 'epic' Arctic blast

THE northeastern United States and Canada steeled themselves Friday for an "epic" Arctic blast that could see some areas record their lowest ever wind chill temperatures.

America's National Weather Service (NWS) warned that parts of Maine might see wind chills of minus 60 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 51 degrees Celsius).

"This is an epic, generational arctic outbreak," the NWS office in Caribou, near Maine's border with Canada, wrote in an advisory.

It said the chills are "something northern and eastern Maine has not seen since similar outbreaks in 1982 and 1988."

"Most stations are forecast to see their lowest wind chills in decades or, in some cases, the lowest ever recorded," the service added.

It warned that frostbite to exposed skin can occur within five minutes in such conditions.

"The dangers of being caught unprepared without shelter from the elements and without proper winter survival gear cannot be stressed enough," the service wrote.

The most extreme conditions are forecast to occur Friday night into Saturday morning, with extreme weather warnings in effect across Quebec and much of eastern Canada.—AFP

Downtown Montreal, Canada, seen 27 January 2023, saw temperatures as low as minus 41 degrees Celsius the afternoon of 3 February 2023. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Kenya eyes more electric buses amid rising demand for green mobility

KENYAN public transport operators are embracing the use of electric buses as demand for eco-friendly transportation systems in the country expands.

The owners of public transport vehicles, popularly known as Matatus in Kenya, are increasing their uptake of electric buses to ferry passengers to their various destinations.

Christopher Muia, chairman of the Matatu Owners Association (MOA) in Nairobi County, told Xinhua Tuesday that so far three Chinese-made electric vehicles are operating on Kenyan roads.

"Electric buses are a new product on the Kenyan market but have received a positive reception from commuters," Muia said in Nairobi, the Kenyan capital.

He revealed that about 60 per cent of the population in Nairobi are dependent on public transport for their daily commute from home to their respective workplaces.

"We transport about two million passengers in a day between Monday to Friday," said Muia, adding that the use of electric buses has numerous advantages as compared to the fuel-based buses that traditionally ply Kenyan roads.—Xinhua

US proposes slashing salt, sugar in school meals

The US Agriculture Department proposed new standards on Friday aimed at tackling obesity and providing millions of American children with more nutritious school meals. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

THE US Agriculture Department proposed new standards on Friday aimed at tackling obesity and providing millions of American children with more nutritious school meals.

"Many children aren't getting the nutrition they need, and diet-related diseases are on the rise," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement.

"Research shows school meals are the healthiest meals in a day for most kids, proving that they are an important tool for giving kids access to the nutrition they need for a bright future," he said.

The proposed changes to federally funded school meals would gradually reduce the weekly amount of sodium, which can increase the risk of high blood pressure or heart disease.

They would also limit the amount of sugar, which can cause obesity or Type 2 diabetes, targeting high-sugar products like yogurts and breakfast cereals.

According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly 20 per cent — or 14.7 million — of American children and adolescents aged 2-19 are obese.

Younger children would be provided with more access to low-fat and non-fat milk while flavored milk would be allowed for older children "with reasonable limits on added sugars".—AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Demand for affordable Indian generic vaccines skyrocket in China amid Covid surge

THE world observed a brief pause in the Covid-19 insurgence after taking the vaccines, but it did not last for long. China reported a spike in the coronavirus mutated variant of "SARS-CoV-2" despite enforcing the draconian 'Zero-Covid Policy'. According to China's National Health Commission, nearly 248 million people contracted the virus in the first 20 days of December last year, accounting for nearly 18 per cent of the population.

Amid the resurgence in Covid cases, China's indigenous vaccines, "CanSino" and "BBIBPCorV", were heavily scrutinized based on their efficacy rates. There were concerns about the legitimacy of these vaccines raised concerns after certain documents were leaked online, labelled "extra urgent and non-disclosure to the public" detailing tests conducted on blood serum were positive results for IgM antibodies, despite being fully vaccinated by Chinese vaccines.— ANI

Research: Brain health can decline due to poor oral health

TAKING care of your teeth and gums may have benefits beyond oral health, such as increasing brain function, according to preliminary research to be presented at the American Stroke Association's International Stroke Conference 2023.

The meeting, which will be held in person and electronically in Dallas from 8 to 10 February, 2023, is the world's leading forum for stroke and brain health researchers and physicians.

Establishing good oral hygiene and dietary habits have been proven to be essential to achieving and maintaining, overall physical and emotional well-being throughout life. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ AAP.ORG/ANI**

Studies have shown that gum disease, missing teeth and other signs of poor oral health, as well as poor brushing habits and lack of plaque removal, increase stroke risk. According to the American Stroke Association, stroke is the number 5 cause of death and a leading cause of disability in the United States.—ANI

US patients see wider drug recalls, limited price rise

US pharmacy giant Walgreens Boots Alliance (Walgreens) store is seen in Washington, DC. **PHOTO: KAREN BLEIER / AFP /FILE**

MORE drugs were recalled last year in the United States and the annual price rise came with less impact this year, in the wake of three years of the COVID-19 pandemic with patients having to face a much paler health landscape.

LARGEST RECALL

More than 1,321 recalls were issued last year for human drug products that were defective or violated laws enforced by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), "the highest figure in the past three years," said USA Today upon its analysis of FDA data. Almost 90 per cent of 2022 drug recalls were for problems the FDA said could cause a temporary health issue and posed only a slight threat of a serious nature, said the report.

An additional 10 per cent of recalls were for products the FDA said are unlikely to cause any adverse health reaction but ran afoul of FDA labeling or manufacturing laws, it noted.

A total of 83 recalls last year were in the FDA's highest risk category, meaning they stemmed from drug problems the agency said "predictably could cause serious health problems or death," according to the report.

Most recalls happened because either a company discovered a problem, or the FDA raised concerns. Only on very rare occasions does the FDA take legal action, typically against manufacturers that persist in marketing a defective product, said the newspaper.—Xinhua

ECONOMY
WORLD

Young gen hit more by inflation, "excess" savings no savior: Japan

RISING prices are hurting Japanese consumers, especially young people, and around 64 trillion yen ($498 billion) in excess savings accumulated over the COVID-19 pandemic years have done little to support consumption, the Cabinet Office said Friday.

The recent bout of inflation, accelerating twice as fast as the Bank of Japan's two per cent target, is largely due to higher costs, the office said in its annual economic report, adding that the time is not ripe to change accommodative monetary policy as support from robust wage growth is still lacking.

Inflation at home and recession fears about the global economy are casting a pall over the world's third-largest economy, which unexpectedly shrank in the July-September quarter of 2022.

The economy has so far been supported by a recovery in the services sector hit hard by the pandemic but the office warned that private consumption, accounting for more than half of the economy, may take a lagged hit from the recent worsening of household sentiment.

File photo taken in September 2022 shows beer and other canned alcoholic drinks sold at a store in Tokyo, with posters notifying customers of price hikes the following month. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Spending on goods and services among people aged 34 or younger has been on the decline as a trend but its fall has been sharp during the pandemic, which began in 2020, the office said. On top of rising prices, the drop may reflect "growing concerns about future pension benefits and the sustainability of the nation's social security system due to the aging of its society".

The corresponding figures for those aged between 35 and 64 as well as those aged 65 and older have also been trending downward, the report said.

"Extra savings have been increasing, albeit at a slower pace than before. Even in the current phase of rising prices, it cannot be observed that (people) have been dipping into their savings," the document said. "Therefore, any boost to consumption is not clear at this point."—Kyodo

Egyptians hope to bag bargains at book fair as crisis bites

Egypt's publishers' association encouraged sellers to give readers the option of buying books in instalments. **PHOTO: AFP**

THOUSANDS of Egyptian bibliophiles weave through a labyrinthine display of books, reviving an annual tradition at the Arab world's largest book fair, but this year it comes at a steep cost.

The 54th Cairo International Book Fair was overshadowed by a punishing economic crisis that has seen Egypt's currency, the pound, halve in value and prices skyrocket in the past year.

Organizers say the fair lured more than half a million visitors on its opening weekend alone -- but with publishing houses already struggling to cover the rising cost of printing, many fear this will not translate to sales.

"We expected a much smaller turnout this year than we had," said Wael al-Mulla, one of more than 800 publishers at the fair.

Budgets are tight in Egypt, where inflation hit 21.9 per cent in December, forcing many to dip into their savings to cover ever-rising daily costs. "Books are a luxury product," said Mulla, who heads the Masr El Arabia publishing house. "They'll inevitably be less of a priority when people need to budget for the basics." A steep currency devaluation has compounded costs for import-dependent publishers, leading many to hike the price of books by up to double.—AFP

Türkiye's inflation slows for third month ahead of election

TÜRKIYE'S inflation rate slowed for a third successive month in January, official data showed Friday, after a record that threw the economy into chaos and imperilled President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's chances on 14 May polls.

Consumer prices grew at an annualised rate of 57.7 per cent in January compared to 64.3 per cent in December, according to the state statistics agency. It peaked at 85.5 per cent in October — the highest rate of Erdogan's two-decade rule. The reading delivers a welcome boost for Erdogan heading into a close presidential and parliamentary election in which he will seek to extend his mercurial rule until 2028.

Economists attribute the slowdown in part to a slide in the price of Türkiye's energy imports.

Natural gas prices have fall back to early 2022 levels after soaring in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

But a part of the slowdown is also linked to a statistical anomaly that compares the past months' prices to a meteoric pace that followed a late 2021 currency collapse.

The rate "will drop further this quarter, perhaps below 45 per cent year-on-year in March, as the surge in prices following the 2021 currency crisis falls out of the annual price comparison," Capital Economics said in a report.—AFP

Türkiye's inflation peaked at 85 percent in October before starting to slow down. **PHOTO: AFP**

BOJ's unrealized bond loss widens to 8.8 tril yen as yields jump

THE Bank of Japan's unrealized loss on its government bond holdings increased to about 8.8 trillion yen ($68 billion) at the end of December, after it decided to widen the yield trading band for 10-year Japanese government bonds, Governor Haruhiko Kuroda said Friday.

The loss was roughly 10 times larger than the end of September when it stood at 874.9 billion yen, as government bond yields rose on expectations that the BOJ would tighten its monetary policy.

The revelation underscores the challenge facing the central bank, which owns about half of outstanding state debt to keep borrowing costs at low levels. The unrealized loss does not immediately impact the BOJ as it makes a point of holding government bonds until maturity.

The market value of the central bank's bond holdings was 555.30 trillion yen at the end of December, compared with a book value of 564.10 trillion yen, Kuroda told a parliamentary session.—Kyodo

UN, German bank open new fish market in Lebanon to support fishermen

Lebanese fishermen collect the day's catch at the seashore in Dbayeh, north of Beirut. **PHOTO: RAMZI HAIDAR/AFP/FILE**

THE United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in partnership with Germany's KfW Development Bank, opened on Friday a new fish market in the northern Lebanese town of al-Qalamoun to support fishermen during the economic crisis.

The new fish market will allow fishermen to sell their products and serve more clients, especially in the hospitality sector, the UNDP said in a press release. It will support 150 households dependent on the fishery by increasing their income, creating jobs, enhancing food security, and improving their overall livelihoods, the UN agency added. As one of the most important sectors in Lebanon, the fishery employs about 6,500 persons whose income supports 100,000 people organized in five syndicates and 33 cooperatives, according to the Development Assistance Roadmap Portal in the Middle East (DARPE), a research portal.— AFP

US sees surprise hiring surge as unemployment edges down

US job gains surged unexpectedly last month as unemployment slipped to its lowest rate in more than five decades, government data showed Friday, indicating strength in the labour market despite efforts to ease economic activity.

This could prove concerning to policymakers, with risks that elevated wages could feed into inflation. While the US central bank has tempered its aggressive campaign to rein in prices on signs that the world's biggest economy is cooling, the latest figures could steer it towards more interest rate hikes than expected.

The United States defied expectations to add 517,000 jobs in January, nearly double the December figure, after a five-month slowdown in hiring, said the Labor Department on Friday. "Job growth was widespread, led by gains in leisure and hospitality, professional and business services, and healthcare," the report added. Employment in manufacturing and construction showed resilience as well, despite a slowdown in activity in both sectors.—AFP

Applicants arrive for a job fair at a Post Office in Los Angeles, California on 30 September 2021, as the US Postal Service looks to fill 40,000 seasonal-worker positions in preparation for the winter holidays. **PHOTO: FREDERIC J. BROWN / AFP/FILE**

Japan firms must address human rights in supply chains: UNDP director

JAPANESE companies need to do more in addressing human rights issues in their businesses as a failure to keep up with international ethical standards will be a serious risk to their operations in global markets, a UN Development Programme director said.

"If companies do not tackle this issue in the right way, they could be shut out from the European and US markets," Asako Okai, director of the UNDP's Crisis Bureau, said in a recent interview. —Kyodo

Sanofi forecasts lower earnings growth in 2023

French pharmaceutical giant Sanofi forecast slower earnings growth for 2023 on Friday after profits jumped in 2022 on the back of popular eczema and asthma drug Dupixent. **PHOTO: JOEL SAGET/AFP**

FRENCH pharmaceutical giant Sanofi forecast slower earnings growth for 2023 on Friday after profits jumped in 2022 on the back of popular eczema and asthma drug Dupixent.

The company's net profit rose by eight per cent to 6.7 billion euros ($7.3 billion) last year. Its earnings per share, or profits divided by outstanding shares, rose by 17.1 per cent to 8.26 euros, but Sanofi forecast "low single-digit" growth this year.

Sanofi shares fell following the announcement.

The company's Dupixent treatment has been a huge success for Sanofi, raking in 8.3 billion euros in sales last year.

"Dupixent and Vaccines continue to be our leading growth drivers," Sanofi chief executive Paul Hudson said in a statement. Sanofi is aiming for 10 billion euros in sales of Dupixent this year.— AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V NANTA BHUM VOY.NO. (528W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V NANTA BHUM VOY.NO. (528W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **5-2-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER SEA LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V GSS YANGON VOY.NO. (163N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V GSS YANGON VOY.NO. (163N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **5-2-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **HPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA SHIPPING PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V RICH SEAWAY VOY.NO. (045N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V RICH SEAWAY VOY.NO. (045N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **5-2-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **HPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

UK man pleads guilty in foiled 2021 crossbow attack on queen

Windsor Castle, the late queen's favourite residence, west of London. **PHOTO: AFP**

A Briton on Friday became the first person in decades to plead guilty to treason, after admitting trying to harm Queen Elizabeth II with a loaded crossbow in Windsor Castle in 2021.

Jaswant Singh Chail, 21, from southern England, was detained on the grounds of the royal residence on Christmas Day while the late queen was there.

He admitted to an armed officer at the scene that he was there "to kill the queen", and pleaded guilty to three charges at a criminal court hearing.

They include a section of the Treason Act, dating back to 1842 that outlaws attempts to "injure the person of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II or to alarm Her Majesty".

He also pleaded guilty to making threats to kill, and possessing an offensive weapon.

After his arrest, it emerged that he had stated his intent in a video recorded four days earlier, which he sent to his phone contacts list about 10 minutes before he was apprehended.

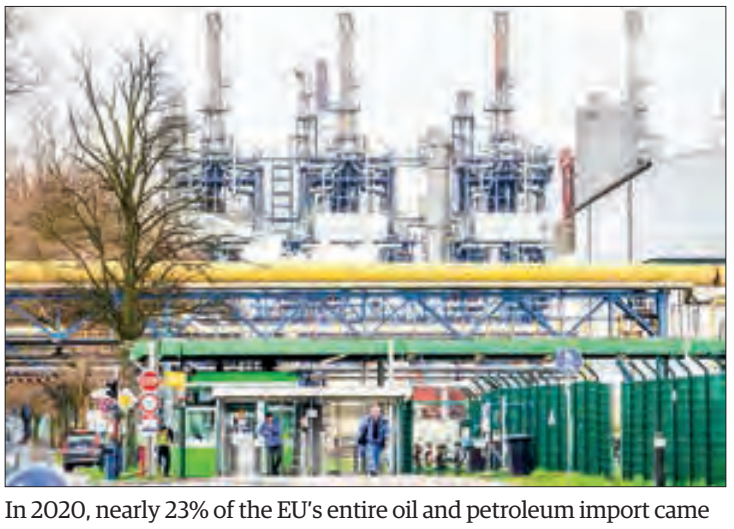
He planned the attack as revenge for the 1919 Jallianwala Bagh massacre of Indians by British colonial troops, previous court hearings heard.

Queen Elizabeth passed away peacefully nearly nine months later, on 8 September, aged 96, after a year of failing health.—AFP

EU reaches deal on price caps for Russian fuel

EU member states on Friday reached agreement on price caps for Russian petroleum products, ahead of an international embargo set to go into force over the weekend, Sweden said. "EU ambassadors today approved the price caps on petroleum products ahead of final adoption by the European Council (representing EU member states)," tweeted officials from Sweden, which currently holds the rotating EU presidency.

The move is the latest part of an international push to limit Russian President Vladimir Putin's war chest for his assault on Ukraine by targeting his key exports.



In 2020, nearly 23% of the EU's entire oil and petroleum import came from Russia, according to Eurostat. An oil refinery at Gelsenkirchen, western Germany. **PHOTO: INA FASSBENDER/AFP**

The EU in December imposed an embargo on Russian crude oil coming in by sea and — together with its G7 partners — set a $60-dollar-per-barrel cap for exports around the world.

The second EU-wide embargo, on Russian fuel, is set to come into force on Sunday. It targets Russian refined oil products such as petrol, diesel and heating fuel, arriving on ships.

At the same time, the EU and the G7 group of wealthy democracies have also agreed to impose a price cap on Russian shipments of those products to global markets.

The price caps work by establishing a ceiling for the cost of fuel that can be transported on EU ships.—AFP

Pakistan to appeal to Taliban leader over police mosque bombing

ISLAMABAD will ask the secretive supreme leader of Afghanistan's Taliban to rein in militants in Pakistan after a suicide bombing killed scores of police in a mosque, officials said Saturday. Since the Taliban returned to power in Kabul, Pakistan has witnessed a dramatic uptick in attacks in regions bordering Afghanistan, where militants use rugged terrain to stage assaults and escape detection.

Detectives have blamed an affiliate of the Pakistani Taliban — the most notorious militant outfit in the area — for the Monday blast in Peshawar which killed 84 people inside a fortified police headquarters. —AFP

Islamabad will ask the secretive supreme leader of Afghanistan's Taliban to rein in militants in Pakistan after a suicide bombing killed scores of police in a mosque. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Sri Lankan president pardons 588 prisoners on 75th Independence Day

Sri Lanka will release 588 prisoners on Saturday on presidential amnesty to mark the country's 75th Independence Day, a senior official said on Friday.

Commissioner of the Department of Prisons and Spokesman Chandana Ekanayake said 557 of them are those rehabilitated by courts on drug-related offences.

He said 31 inmates, who were jailed for other offenses but deemed to have displayed good behaviour during their imprisonment, will be released too.

The presidential amnesty was granted by President Ranil Wickremesinghe under the powers vested on him under Article 34 of the country's constitution.

The amnesty does not apply to those convicted of murder, serious drug offences, rape and armed robbery, Ekanayake said.—AFP

S Korea's ex-justice minister sentenced to two years in jail

A former South Korean justice minister who had once been a strong presidential hopeful was sentenced to two years in prison on Friday for falsifying academic documents of his children.

Cho Kuk, a former aide to ex-president Moon Jae-in, was once considered a rising political star who was expected to run to succeed his boss when he was named to lead the powerful justice ministry in 2019. But soon after the appointment he was engulfed in allegations of favouritism and hypocrisy over his children's schooling, involving forging academic documents for his son and daughter to give them an upper hand in college and graduate school admissions.

The Seoul Central District Court found Cho guilty of document forgery and sentenced him to two years in prison with a forfeit of six million won ($5,000).

"The nature of his crimes are grave since he committed them exploiting his stature as a college professor in obstructing admissions processes over many years," the court said in a verdict. —AFP

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Pope to meet war victims on South Sudan peace pilgrimage

POPE Francis on Saturday will meet victims of South Sudan's civil war, a day after delivering an impassioned plea for the country's leaders to recommit to peace for the sake of their long-suffering people.

Francis is making the first papal visit to South Sudan since it gained independence from Sudan in 2011 but then plunged into a brutal ethnic conflict that left the young nation divided and traumatised.

Some 380,000 people died in five years of bloodshed before the civil war formally ended in 2018, with a ceasefire between warring leaders who remain in power today.

But the country remains fragile and violent and Francis, who tried to broker peace between the rival parties, is visiting South Sudan as it lurches from one crisis to the next.

Crowds turned out early in Juba to catch a glimpse of Pope Francis. **PHOTO: AFP**

At his first event Saturday, the wheelchair-bound pope met South Sudan's religious leaders, who work with the poor and marginalized and are deeply respected in the devout country where 60 per cent of its 12 million people are Christian.

He said they must "step into the middle of (people's) sufferings and tears," adding that the Church had a duty to be "willing to dirty its hands for people".

Crowds numbering several thousands had turned out early to wait for the 86-year-old pontiff in the courtyard of the Cathedral of Saint Therese, many waving national flags and ululating as they gave him a jubilant welcome.— AFP

WORLD: TOP HEADLINES

US Democrats ready to battle for Biden as he mulls second term

It once looked like an outside bet, but US President Joe Biden's bid for a second term is being treated as a given among grassroots Democrats plotting the course to the next election at their winter get-together.

The octogenarian leader, who was due to deliver the headlining address on Friday at the Democratic National Committee's convention, is something of a rock star for activists eager to hear him speak at a plush hotel in historic Philadelphia.

"All of you have to be his... evangelist in the next two years," Ken Martin, the leader of the Minnesota Democratic Party, told a panel discussion ahead of Biden's speech, expected later in the afternoon.—AFP

German TV team quits Iraq after pressure: broadcaster

A television team from the Arabic-language channel of German broadcaster Deutsche Welle left Iraq at short notice on Thursday after "unacceptable" pressure from officials, the DW chief editor said.

Deutsche Welle has lodged a protest with Baghdad's embassy in Berlin, a statement from the broadcaster said.

Officials at Iraq's interior ministry and the state body overseeing media did not respond to enquiries by AFP on Friday.—AFP

Gibraltar accuses Spain of 'gross sovereignty breach' over customs incident

The incident happened when a small Spanish customs vessel lost power while pursuing suspected tobacco smugglers off Gibraltar. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

GIBRALTAR on Friday accused Spain of a "gross violation of British sovereignty" after an incident on one of its beaches involving Spanish customs agents who were attacked by smugglers, during which shots were fired. "The evidence surrounding this incident discloses a gross violation of British sovereignty and, potentially, the most serious and dangerous incident for many years," said Gibraltar's Chief Minister Fabian Picardo in a statement.

The incident happened early Thursday when a small Spanish customs vessel lost power while pursuing suspected tobacco smugglers off Gibraltar, a source from Spain's tax agency which is in charge of customs told AFP.

After choppy seas pushed their vessel to the shore, the two officers on board were surrounded by a group of people and pelted with rocks, some of them weighing over three kilogrammes (6.5 pounds), the source added.—AFP

India arrests 2,000 people in child marriage crackdown

MORE than 2,000 people were arrested Friday in India's remote northeast after a government crackdown on illegal child marriages, police said.

India is home to more than 220 million child brides, according to UN figures, but the number of child weddings has fallen dramatically this century.

The two-week police campaign in Assam state began Friday after chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma called on public help to abolish the "evil practice". Sarma said almost one in every eight women in Assam had to bear children before turning 18 which was contributing to high infant and maternal mortality rates in the state. State police director general GP Singh said 2,044 people were arrested in the first day, including 52 priests and legal authorities who had presided over marriages. Singh said girls as young as 12 were still being married to men in the state and police had come up with a total of 4,074 cases to investigate.—AFP

India is home to more than 220 million child brides, according to UN figures, but the number of child weddings has fallen dramatically this century. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

SPORT

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Pope to meet war victims on South Sudan peace pilgrimage

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Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council 12 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.
(d) To ensure peace and stability, rule of law and secure and smooth transport across the Union.

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 encourage micro, small and medium-scale enterprises based on domestic raw materials in order to substitute import goods and enhance export products to have long-term guarantees and create employment opportunities and increase domestic production.
(d) To develop the socioeconomic life of the people to ensure prosperity and food sufficiency of the country.

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 faiths, culture and national characteristics based on national spirit.
(c) To further strengthen basic healthcare services of the nation and to emerge the health system for enhancement of longevity and health of the entire National people.
(d) To promote multiple education systems in order to produce the necessary human resources for building a modern developed democratic nation.

Sylla's goal help Yangon United win against GFA

YANGON United earned a 2-1 narrow win over GFA in their friendly match played yesterday at Yangon United Sports Complex in Yangon.

The winning result for Yangon depended solely on Sylla's double goal.

The icebreaker for Yangon was found by Sylla over a corner kick from Okkar Naing in the early minutes. But GFA equalized the goal in 26 minutes by Than Toe Aung to finish the first half 1-1.

The second half saw an intensive match with both sides tackling.

At 64 minutes, Sylla doubled his score by header over David Htan's beautiful cross.

Yangon managed to control the game with a normal tempo plus massive defence so as to celebrate the victory at the final whistle.

Yangon United are on top form after beating Kachin United 3-0, Maha United 2-1, and GFA 2-1 in their friendly matches for the 2023 season, Yangon United officials said after the friendly match. — KZL

A Yangon United player (brownish yellow) tries to pass the GFA defender (blue) during their friendly match played at Yangon United Sports Complex in Yangon on 4 February 2023. **PHOTO: YUFC**

Former England star Lennon draws on mental battles to help others

AARON Lennon featured in two England World Cup finals squads and played alongside Luka Modric and Gareth Bale at Tottenham Hotspur but now retired his goal is to help footballers suffering from mental health issues.

The 35-year-old former winger told The Times on Saturday "this is a big passion for me" and a personal one too after he was detained in April 2017 by police over fears for his welfare and was hospitalized. Lennon was at Everton at the time and staying with his brother but was unnerved when a mental health worker visited the house.

"I said, 'I'm just going to the shop.' Even my brother was wary. 'No, I'm fine, don't worry.' I played it cool. I put on a mask for a long period of time," said Lennon, who retired from football in November last year. "I ended up trying to make my way back to my apartment but couldn't grasp which way to go.—AFP

Former England winger Aaron Lennon wants to draw on his battles with mental health issues to help professional footballers suffering similar problems he told The Times. **PHOTO: AFP**

Ten Hag warns against Greenwood distraction for Man Utd

MANCHESTER United manager Erik ten Hag told his players not to be distracted by Mason Greenwood's future on Friday, 24 hours after criminal charges against the 21-year-old forward were dropped.

Greenwood had been facing charges including attempted rape and assault, but prosecutors said the case had been discontinued following the withdrawal of key witnesses and "new material that came to light". United issued a statement on Thursday saying the club would now "conduct its own process before determining next steps".

In a short statement released on his behalf, Greenwood said he was "relieved the matter is now over". At a pre-match press conference on Friday, Ten Hag refused to be drawn on the subject. "I can't add anything," said the Dutch manager, in his first season at Old Trafford. "I refer to the statement of the club." Greenwood, who has two and a half years left on his contract, has been suspended from both training and playing for United since his arrest in January 2022.

But with United still involved in four competitions, Ten Hag is keen for his players to be focused on the job at hand.

"That's our job, not to get distracted by anything," Ten Hag added. "We are human beings and sometimes there are issues, we are not like robots, but we have to focus on our job.—AFP