

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. IX, No. 336, 13th Waning of Tabaung 1384 ME

www.gnlm.com.mm

Saturday, 18 March 2023

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council: Five-Point Road Map

1. Priority will be given to fully realizing peace, stability and rule of law throughout the Union to safeguard the socioeconomic life of the people.
2. People-centred development work that enhances socioeconomic well-being will be undertaken to ensure the country's prosperity and food security.
3. Processes will further continue to consolidate a genuine, disciplined multiparty democratic system and build a Union based on democracy and federalism.
4. Priority will be accorded to work aligned with the agreements set out in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, in order to achieve enduring peace for the entire nation.
5. Upon accomplishing the provisions of the state of emergency, free and fair multiparty democratic elections will be held in line with the 2008 Constitution, and further work will be undertaken to hand over State duties to the winning party in accordance with democratic standards.

SAC Chairman PM Senior General Min Aung Hlaing attends opening of 58th Myanmar Gems Emporium for 2023



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing attends the opening ceremony of the 58th Myanmar Gems Emporium 2023 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

lowed payments in US dollars, euros, yuan and baht and for local gem merchants, kyat is equal to the market price. The floor prices of gems and jade lots are set at euros. Foreign merchants are allowed payments in US dollars, euros, yuan and baht and for local merchants, kyat is equal to the euro currency. With regard to jade lots, local and foreign gem merchants are allowed to pay US dollars, euros, yuan and baht for purchasing the jade lots. Moreover, local merchants are allowed to pay kyat equal to euro in buying jade lots and foreign merchants, US dollars or yuan or baht equal to the euro currency. These lots will be sold to local and foreign merchants through open tender under the rules and regulations. The 58th emporium will last from 17 to 23 March. — MNA/TTA

CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing attended the opening of the 58th Myanmar Gems Emporium for 2023 at Maniradana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

The Senior General and attendees watched a video clip on the production and sale of Myanmar's pearls, the production of jewellery items, and preparations for organizing the 58th Myanmar Gems Emporium for 2023.

The Senior General viewed round jade, gems and pearl lots displayed for sale at the hall and gave necessary guidance to officials. The Senior General

viewed round the private jewellery showrooms and looked into a 35-tonne jade stone excavated from Metlinchaung joint venture-2 in Lonkhin/Phakant gems land and lots of uncut jade stones displayed outside the hall.

The Myanmar Gems Emporium has been held since 1964 for selling gems and jewellery items to earn foreign exchange for the State and to benefit the citizens. This emporium will sell 295 lots of pearls, 120 lots of gems and 2,150 lots of jade to local and foreign gem merchants through open tender under the rules and regulations. The floor prices of pearl lots are set at US dollars. Foreign gem merchants are al-



The opening event of the 58th Myanmar Gems Emporium for 2023 in progress.

INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL

Over 39,000 examinees take History on 8th-day matric exam

PAGE-4



LOCAL BUSINESS

Myanmar black gram price regains on India's demand

PAGE-7

CURRENT AFFAIRS

EV taxis allow people free rides for one month

PAGE-10



Objectives of 78th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day

- To serve primary duties of Tatmadaw for successfully safeguarding Our Three Main National Causes, and protecting the State Constitution and shielding the genuine disciplined multiparty democratic system
- To emphasize agreements in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) as much as possible for the restoration of the durable and perpetual peace across the nation as ceasing of armed conflicts is an actual requirement for realizing the multiparty democratic system
- To safeguard the national interest of the State, lives and property of people, and to put a strenuous effort on respective corners in times of natural disasters.
- To provide the necessary assistance by Tatmadaw for holding a free and fair multiparty democratic general election upon completion of undertakings in accord with the provisions of the state of emergency for the emergence of the Union based on democracy and federalism.

Application for registration, political party establishment rights ongoing

UNDER Section 25 of the Political Parties Registration Law, the People's Workers Party and Akha National Development Party which are desirous of organizing political parties yesterday applied to the Union Election Commission for permission to establish political parties under the law and rules.

To date, six parties have applied under Section 3 of the Political Parties Registration Law, and 23 parties under Section 25 of the Political Parties Registration Law, totalling 29.

Among these 29 parties, seven parties will organize the entire union and 22 parties only within a region or state.

The Union Election Commission continues verifying the right to establish and register these parties. — MNA/KZL

The Global New Light of Myanmar

www.gnlm.com.mm

သတင်းစာ ဂန္ထဝင်မြန်မာ ဆက်သွယ်နိုင်ပါတယ်

09 454 237 515

Public Notice for Submitting Objection

1. Myanmar Farmers' Development Party with its headquarters located at No C/10, 2nd Myotaw Street, 10th Ward, Chantha Shwepyi Housing, Dagon Myothit (East) Township, Yangon Region applied on 16-3-2023 to be allowed continuity to exist and register as a political party under Section 25 of the Political Parties Registration Law. It is reported that the party name, flag and emblem will be used as described.
2. Under Rule 14 (d) of the Registration of Political Parties, it is hereby announced to the public that those who wish to object to the name of the party, the flag and the emblem to be used by that organization may submit their objection to the Union Election Commission with valid evidence within seven days from the date of this announcement.

Union Election Commission



The flag design of the Myanmar Farmers' Development Party



The emblem of the Myanmar Farmers' Development Party

58th Myanmar Gems Emporium opens in Nay Pyi Taw



Pearl lots are displayed at the Emporium (left) and gem merchants are keen on the display (right). PHOTO: KO KO AYE

THE 58th Myanmar Gems Emporium began at the Maniradana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, crowded with local and foreign jewellers.

From the morning, local and foreign gem merchants viewed pearl lots and jade lots displayed in the hall and jade lots on display outside the hall in the designated areas. Then, they put proposed prices for

desired gems and jade lots into tender boxes.

At the emporium, 295 pearl lots, 120 gem lots and 2,150 jade lots will be sold to all jewellers through an open tender system. The pearl lots were displayed on 17 March and the gem lots will be on display from 17 to 19 March while jade lots will be exhibited from 17 to 20 March. The pearl lots will be sold on 18

and 19 March, the gem lots on 20 March and the jade lots from 21 to 23 March.

In this emporium, pearl lots are priced in US dollars and the reserve price for gems and jade lots is set in euros. Nevertheless, local and foreign jewellers can purchase pearl lots, gem lots and jade lots in specified currencies such as US dollars, euros, yuan, baht and kyat.

Gems and jewellery shops are opened in the Maniradana Jade Hall as well and are alive with shoppers.

The gem emporiums have been held successfully since 1964 to achieve foreign income and economic benefits for citizens. It is reported that the 58th gems emporium will be held from 17 and 23 March. — Aung Ye Thwin/CT

11 new cases
of COVID-19
reported on
17 March, total
figure rises to
633,986

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **633,986** after **eleven** new cases were reported on 17 March 2023 according to the Ministry of Health.

The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **614,463**, including **four** new recoveries.

The death toll from COVID-19 in the country remained unchanged at **19,490** on 17-3-2023 with no new death reported from the pandemic. — GNLMM

Ethnic national brethren to seek solution without external interference

IN restoring the peace of our country, only when all ethnic national brethren hold meetings to seek the solution without the interference of external elements will success be achieved. In this regard, I'd like to urge you all to especially take care of the danger posed by internal and external saboteurs who commit destruction against the peace process with the unwillingness to serve the interests of our country.

(Excerpts from the message sent by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to 67th Anniversary of Kayin State Day ceremony which falls on 7 November 2022)

SAC Chairman PM Senior General Min Aung Hlaing attends opening of 58th Myanmar Gems Emporium for 2023

NEWS ON PAGE-1



The Senior General looks into the exhibits at the Emporium.



The Senior General views the jade stone displayed outside the Maniradana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw.

Daily newspapers available online

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

News and Periodicals Enterprise

Councilmember attends ceremony to hoist new golden umbrella atop ancient Sutaungpyae Pagoda in Sutaungpyae Phayasu



SAC Member Mahn Nyein Maung, Ayeyawady Region Chief Minister U Tin Maung Win, officials and well-wishers are pictured at the event yesterday.

THE ceremony to mount the new golden umbrella atop the ancient Sutaungpyae Pagoda built in the Phayagon Monastery of Sutaungpyae Phayasu Village, Sutaungpyae Village-tract, Pantanaw Township, Maubin District in Ayeyawady Region, was held at the pagoda yesterday, and State Administration Council member Mahn Nyein Maung was present on the occasion.

Ayeyawady Region Chief Minister U Tin Maung Win, the commander of South-West Command, regional ministers, donors and residents participated in the ceremony.

Donors paid the Sutaungpyae Pagoda a circulatory tour, after a three-time recitation

of Namo Tassa and the Metta Sutta by members of the Sangha at the opening ceremony.

Then, SAC Member Mahn Nyein Maung, officials and donors offered the golden umbrella, the pennant-shaped vane and the diamond orb atop the pagoda by a decorated float.

Afterwards, the sermons were recited by members of the Sangha and they performed the rituals of golden and silver showers to mark the successful completion of the ceremony.

Later, the ceremony was concluded by sharing merits after the SAC member and officials offered donations to Sayadaws. — MNA/CT

State Economic Promotion Fund Management Committee holds 2/2023 meeting

THE State Economic Promotion Fund Management Committee held its second coordination meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, Committee Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Planning and Finance U Win Shein said the committee allotted a total of K330 billion – K230 billion to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, K10 billion each to Kayah, Chin and Rakhine states, K8 billion each to Kachin State, Kayin State, Taninthayi Region, Mon and Shan states and K5 billion each to one Self-Administered Division and five Self-Administered Zones from K400 billion fund.

Officials of the committee inspected the operations launched

under the State Economic Promotion Fund in respective regions/states and Self-Administered Division/Zones last two months.

Currently, it is estimated allocation of K50 billion to establish a fund for oil mill development loan and K20 billion for the livestock breeding sector using the remaining K70 billion fund.

The government is providing from every sector to promote the State economy and the relevant officials should make efforts to increase the capital of funds and spend effectively.

Then, the committee members coordinated the discussion and the committee chairman concluded the meeting. — MNA/KTZH



Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister U Win Shein chairs the second coordination meeting of the State Economic Promotion Fund Management Committee yesterday.

Over 39,000 examinees take History on 8th-day matric exam



A total of 39,043 students sat the History subject on the eighth day of the 2022-2023 matriculation examination across the country.

A total of 778 examination centres — 777 at home and one abroad — are opened and a total of 39,043 students took the exam out of 44,354 applicants, accounting for 88.03 per cent. — MNA/MKKS

Councilmembers inspect coffee factory, resort in Hopong township

MEMBERS of the State Administration Council Porei Aung Thein and Khun San Lwin together with Shan State Chief Minister U Aung Zaw Aye, the deputy ministers and officials conducted inspections in Hopong as the government is carrying out the development of the MSMEs sector.

Firstly, SAC members and party inspected a coffee

factory and viewed choosing coffee beans, peeling coffee beans with the machine and drying coffee beans in the sun in Tongkham Ward. In addition, SAC members and officials inspected the Hopong Yay Htwet Gyi Resort near Lonkhok village-tract regarding the tourism industry development.

— MNA/MKKS



SAC members and party are pictured during their inspection tours at the coffee factory.

76th anniversary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs commemorative events held

TO commemorate the 76th anniversary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a rice donation ceremony was held yesterday morning at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Five Buddhist monks led by patron Sayadaw U Kosalla from the Masoeyin Monastery, Tatkon Township, Nay Pyi Taw attended the event.

Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe, Union Minister for International Cooperation U Ko Ko Hlaing, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Myo Htut, the permanent secretary, ambassadors, directors-general, deputy directors-general and officials attended the event.

In the evening, the 76th anniversary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was celebrated with a dinner party and an award ceremony.



The commemorative ceremony of the 76th anniversary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in progress in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Member of the State Administration Council U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister U

Than Swe, Union Minister U Ko Ko Hlaing, Deputy Minister U Kyaw Myo Htut, the permanent

secretary, ambassadors, retired ambassadors, directors-general, deputy directors-general and

staff attended the event.

After the speech given by Union Minister U Than Swe, awards were presented to employees who excelled in the courses of the Civil Service Academies opened in Upper Myanmar and Lower Myanmar, those who won prizes in the sports competitions held by the ministry in January, and the Independence Day sports competitions, and the Union Day commemoration essay, poetry and article competitions, and employees who won prizes in the singing competition.

The State Administration Council member, Union ministers, deputy ministers, the permanent secretary, ambassadors, retired ambassadors, and directors-general had dinner together with the employees. — MNA/KZL

Myanmar delegation attend Shanghai Cooperation Organization's medical workshop online

SUPERVISED by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of India, a medical workshop of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was held online. Members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, observer countries, experts from discussion partner countries, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Medical Services under the Ministry of Health Dr Moe Khine, subject representatives, and a specialist from the Mandalay General Hospital attended the workshop.

The workshop aims for medical tourism among member countries to ensure that treatment is available at a

reasonable cost, and access to quality healthcare and carry out the exchange of national cultural values by combining tourism activities and treatment activities.

The workshop focused on the themes “Strengthening medical value travel through partnerships”, “Rebuilding



medical tourism and the pandemic”, “Promises and hurdles of medical value travel industry”, and “Bringing a paradigm shift in medical tourism through insurance”. —MNA/KZW

Write for us

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

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

Union Information Minister meets staff of Media Development Department



Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn meets the staff of the Media Development Department yesterday.

UNION Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn met the staff of the Media Development Department yesterday.

During the meeting, the Union minister said the newcomers of the new department will have to serve the key duties. The department is formed with outstanding staff from departments and enterprises under the ministry. There will be three divisions under the department — Media Development Division, the Local and Foreign Cooperation Division and Administration and Financing Division.

The duties of the Media Development Department are to support the activities of the Myanmar Press Council in maintaining journalists to keep in line with media ethics, draft the plans to develop Myanmar's media sector and work with the organizations, ensure access to information for citizens while carrying out the media development programmes, arrange for the participation of international media organizations representing the country and its people and cooperate with relevant organizations under the existing law for the survival and development of private media outlets.

— MNA/KTZH

Pauk-Phaw scholarship given to 111 university students of Naypyitaw State Academy for 2022-2023 academic year

A ceremony to award the Pauk-Phaw scholarship to 111 university students of the Naypyitaw State Academy for the 2022-2023 academic year was held at the Functional Hall of the academy yesterday.

First, Director-General U Kyaw Win of the Department of Alternative Education under the Ministry of Education and Country Director Ms Lin Yuan of the China Foundation for Rural Development (CFRD) made opening speeches and Pro-Rector (Admin) Dr Nu Nu Lwin of the Naypyitaw State Academy explained the Pauk-Phaw scholarship.

Then, officials presented the scholarship to students of 12 different branches of study.

Next, Pro-Rector (Training) Dr Soe Soe Aung of the Naypyitaw State Academy gave the certificate of honour to Country Director Ms Lin Yuan of CFRD.

The ceremony was jointly organized by the CFPA Myanmar Office and the Naypyitaw State Academy. CFPA Myanmar Office launched the Pauk-Phaw Scholarship Project by cooperating with the affiliated departments of the Ministry of Education in 2015. Scholarship awards were presented to a total of 1,348 students from 14 universities to date. For the current 2022-2023 academic year, 800 students from East Yangon University, Yangon Education

University, Yangon University of Foreign Languages, Dagon University and Naypyitaw State Academy will receive K500,000 each for one academic year and a total of 111 students from the Naypyitaw State Academy were presented one-year scholarship award with the fund of the Alibaba Philanthropy.

CFPA Myanmar Office was registered as a non-governmental organization at the Ministry of Home Affairs in July 2015. It implements 14 projects such as the Bank of China (BOC) Scholarship Programme, Pauk-Phaw Scholarship Project, China-Myanmar Friendship Scholarship Project, Panda Pack Project, Smiling Children Project, WASH



The ceremony of awarding the Pauk-Phaw scholarship is underway yesterday.

Programme, COVID-19 protective gears donation project, International Bicycle Project and Solar Lantern Project.

During seven years of its establishment, it provided US\$11.82 million benefiting 497,608 people from 144 townships in 13 states and regions.

— MNA/KTZH

Illegal jade, consumer goods, electronics, raw materials, auto parts and vehicles seized

AN on-duty team at the Yepu permanent checkpoint in Shan State made inspections and confiscated three various goods including 8,500 LED lights worth K20,161,963 that were different from the Import Declaration (ID) from a Chenglong truck (estimated value of K50 million) heading to Mandalay from Muse on 12 March and five different commodities including 50 kilogrammes of suspected jade worth K187,900,000 without official documents from a Nissan Diesel condor truck (estimated value of K22 million) heading to Muse from Mandalay on 14 March.

The action was taken under Customs procedures.

In addition, the on-duty team captured eight kinds of goods including a total of 4,164 CV-joint car parts worth K121.95 million that needed an import licence and did not declare in the Import Declaration (ID) from a container at the Myanmar International Terminals (Thilawa) on 14 March, 39 kinds of goods including 100 LED street lamp fixture and LED panel lamps worth K199,844,400 that were different from the Import Declaration (ID) from two containers, 40,500 rechargeable electric

LED bulbs worth K81,648,000 that were taken over 61 days of valid for prior arrival (VPA) from a container and five kinds of goods including 292 child bicycles (JGCW) worth K26,762,400 that were taken over 61 days of VPA at the Myanmar Industrial Port Terminal container checkpoint on 14 and 15 March. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

On 15 March, the on-duty teams seized three kinds of goods including 14,266 kilogrammes of Canopy Tents and 1,092 kilogrammes of ready-made tent cloth worth K24,815,616 that were

taken over 61 days of VPA from a container at the Asia World Terminal container checkpoint and two kinds of goods including 72 small remote control toy cars that were not declared in the Import Declaration (ID) worth K1.8 million from a container at the Hteedan Port container checkpoint. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

On 15 March, a combined team conducted surprise checks and captured 28,000 kilogrammes of shrimp (chaff) worth K29.4 million without official documents from a Dongfeng tractor truck (estimated value

of K35 million) which stopped in the three-floor bus station compound in Muse township and 26 kinds of goods including 90 kilogrammes of the plastic bowl and 444 kilogrammes of chain cover without official documents from a Dongfeng tractor truck (estimated value of K20 million) on the Union highway in Muse township. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

Therefore, 17 arrests (estimated value of K896,115,247) were made on 12, 14 and 15 March, according to the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. —MNA/MKKS

LOCAL BUSINESS

Myanmar black gram price regains on India’s demand

THE price of black gram bounced back to over K2 million per tonne from an over two-week drop in the domestic market on the back of strong demand by India.

On 1 March, the price was K1,858,500 per tonne. It jumped to K2,008,000 per tonne on 17 March, showing a sharp increase of 150,000 per tonne within three weeks.

India’s demand strongly influenced Myanmar’s black gram price, traders elaborated.

At present, the price of black gram (urad in India) is slightly increasing in India’s market on regular demand. India imported approximately 35,000 tonnes of Myanmar’s black gram in February and 28,000-30,000 in March, according to the Ayeya Trade Centre.

At present, Myanmar’s black gram markets see an upward trend in prices. The export is like-

ly to climb in April. The price will remain high depending on the stocks of India. The price of black gram (urad in India) is expected to be around Rs 8,500-9,000 per quintal in Chennai until August, Agri World Mumbai forecasted.

India notified on 28 December that the free import policy of black gram (urad) and pigeon pea (tur) extended up to March 2024, pushing black gram prices down in the domestic market.

Additionally, the price of black gram is positively related to the exchange rate. Kyat devalued at K2,870 against the US dollar.

Last August 2022, the price of black gram peaked at K2.1 million per tonne when Kyat weakened to K4,500 against the US dollar.

Myanmar earned over US\$1.2 billion from over 1.6 million tonnes of pulses over the past 11 months of the current

financial year, the Ministry of Commerce said.

Of them, black gram export earned \$499.491 million from 608,673.819 kilogrammes, while pigeon pea export pocked \$157.909 million from 202,557.35 kilos, the Ministry of Commerce’s statistics showed.

Myanmar primarily exports black gram, green gram and pigeon peas. Of them, black gram and pigeon peas are mainly sent to India while green grams are shipped to China and Europe.

India has growing demand and consumption requirements for black grams and pigeon peas. According to a Memorandum of Understanding between Myanmar and India signed on 18 June 2022, India will import 250,000 tonnes of black gram and 100,000 tonnes of pigeon peas (tur) from Myanmar for five consecutive years from 2021-2022 financial



Sample of black gram is seen at the brokerage.

year to 2025-2026 F.Y.

This G-to-G pact will not affect the pulses’ annual quota set by India. Myanmar’s exporters are also entitled to deliver the pulses to India under that annual quota.

Myanmar yearly produces approximately 400,000 tonnes of black gram and about 50,000 tonnes of pigeon peas. Myanmar is the top producer of the black gram that is primarily demanded by India, while pigeon peas, green grams and chickpeas are cultivated in Australia and African countries besides Myanmar.

— NN/EM

CBM revokes forex licences of 20 companies including Myanmar National Airlines



The Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM).

TWENTY money changers including Myanmar National Airlines have got their forex licence revoked starting from 14 March as they failed to comply with the rules and directives issued by the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM), according to its Board of Directors meeting. They are Oake Khaung Travels & Tourism Senjo Royal Myanmar, Dawei Popular, Zam Myo, Phyo Thet, Sky Bound, Myanmar MCG Corporation, Htwe and Htwe Family, Won Won, United Eleven, Tun Yama, Myanmar Alinka Hotel Group, Cartel, Super Phoenix, Golden Falcon Shipping, Fairness Travels & Tours, Yadana Bon Travels & Tours, Myanmar National Airlines, Dewant Financial Loan Microfinance and Treasure Su.

The CBM set the reference

exchange rate at K2,100, while a US dollar was exchanged at K2,880 in the unofficial market.

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

Therefore, financial institutions including banks and informal money exchanges are instructed to set a dollar value at K2,094 for buying and K2,106 for selling. However, the over-the-counter Kyat-dollar exchange rate was K2,865 for buying and K2,880 for selling on 17 March.

There is a large price difference between the reference rate of the CBM and the unofficial market rate. However, there is

no way to set the new price, as per the notification released on 15 January.

Investigation and Prosecuting of market manipulation to hike the exchange rate in the local forex market with the malicious rumours will be undertaken, according to the Central Bank of Myanmar’s statement released on 10 February.

Some exporters, importers and banks are attempting to raise the exchange rate owing to the rumours. The statement called for bank institutions to govern the market and investigate those fraudsters who circulate rumours.

The CBM released a notice that the exporters, importers and banking institutions are asked not to elevate the exchange rate. Those banking institutions that will not abide by financial regulations will face legal action as well.

Last August, a dollar value hit an all-time high of over K4,500 in the grey market. Consequently, the CBM sold dollars at its auction market for the sectors in need, to control the soaring dollar, injecting a total of \$443.8 million in the markets in 2021.

— NN/EM

Prices of fuel oil, gold and dollar on 17 March 2023

Fuel Oil Price (Yangon)

Octane 92	K2,010
Octane 95	K2,095
Diesel	K2,020
Premium Diesel	K2,100

All of the prices are based on per litre.

Gold Price

The reference price of high-purity gold set by YGEA	K2,273,700 per tical
High-purity gold in the gold market	K2,892,000 per tical

US Dollar Vs Kyat

A US dollar set by the Central Bank of Myanmar	K2,100
A US dollar in the forex market t	K2,860 to K2,875

The above prices may change from time to time.

ADVERTISE

with us / Hot Line :

0 9 9 7 4 4 2 4 8 4 8

Do best for boosting agricultural produce

AS MYANMAR is striving for transforming manual farming into mechanized farming, it is necessary to improve the farmlands for boosting the manufacturing of agricultural produce. On the other hand, relevant authorities and organizations need to uplift the socioeconomic life of local farmers.

Myanmar farmers using the traditional farming system did not have the skills to improve their farmlands. As such, local authorities and relevant departmental personnel contributed modern agricultural techniques and necessary inputs to those farmers to develop their lives as well as boost their production.

On one hand, relevant ministries and local authorities helped those farmers overcome agricultural difficulties and challenges such as agricultural water, manufacturing roads, quality seeds of crops and other necessary inputs. Thanks to their endeav-

Hence, all farmers need to emphasize systematic reclamation of farmlands, efficient use of agricultural water, timely harvesting to minimize loss and waste of crops and increase production of quality crops based on regional situations, geographical conditions and favourable weather with skills of applying modern agricultural techniques to thrive crop plants and combat pests and sharing their experiences to new generation farmers.

these bodies are keen to improve their society. Transformation of mechanized farming depends on the systematic reclamation of farmlands in conformity with geographical conditions, regional situations and climatic conditions.

Indeed, farmers must have the capacity to do the best operation of their farmlands by overcoming challenges whenever they face them. They have to apply their initiatives how to improve the farmlands and how to boost the per-acre yield of relevant crops and how to cut time and cost in agricultural measures. If they have the best solutions for aforesaid points, they are able to thumb up with wonderful success in their farmlands.

Hence, all farmers need to emphasize systematic reclamation of farmlands, efficient use of agricultural water, timely harvesting to minimize loss and waste of crops and increase production of quality crops based on regional situations, geographical conditions and favourable weather with skills of applying modern agricultural techniques to thrive crop plants and combat pests and sharing their experiences to new generation farmers.

HAVING learnt to read enables most readers to initiate their reading habit, as I see it. After beginning to read in my primary student life, I would like to read as many words as I could see, even signboards, directions, and Buddhist chants. First of all, young readers will just be able to read out something rather than trying to comprehend it. When readers have got a longer reading age, they start reading up on anything whether critically or logically though. Even a smart reader can know well which takes aim at what if its writer drops only a narrow hint or clue to him. Of course, a time for reading is, metaphorically speaking, the very creature comforts that give a reader knowledge, pleasure, peace and quiet to their utmost, costing a small fortune. Only if anyone has never taken up reading will he think it boring to read for sure. So far as I am aware, the first step towards lifelong reading may be simply the comics. But here, I want to share my excellent reading experience with future readers as much as I can.

Step-by-step reading

For starters, readers should look at what sort of writing piece they may like, for instance, the comics mentioned above. As my great teacher U Hla Kyi said, the reader fears thinking books but loses thin ones quite often. To my mind, young readers prefer fiction to non-fiction since the former type of literature usually makes them laugh, smile, or even cry to a certain degree. If they wish, they could set up their long-term reading journey with literature. Whichever type of literature they embark on ought to interest readers through tragedy, comedy, tragicomedy or something new. And every single time any reader

picks up a book, he needs to know 1) what it is about in detail, including its contents, chapter, index, foreword, thanks and bibliography, 2) which subject matter it is based on, 3) what time or place it is set in, and 4) its main purpose at least. As advanced readers and writers, they will have to see even the author's distinctive writing style and main theme. After all, a clever reader must be able to hold a grasp of the essence and aesthetic of a book.

Overcoming the trouble with a few resource books in hand

Only occasionally have readers been having difficulty getting a few resource books in hand as one of their major problems regarding reading work. However, the readers can make potential resource substitutes for books by going to the nearest libraries, attending and holding literary talks, watching television, or listening to the radio as regards literary programmes. It would be better for readers to read books for the simple reason that before a book is published widely, both its writer and publisher have got to cogitate on distribution costs and profits even if the book would become a best-seller here, there and everywhere; in other words, whether or not it is worth purchasing and reading. So, the writer must have thrown heart and soul into his book. Last but not least, readers could even read their textbooks or the books which they have finished in depth over and over again. It

How to begin reading

By Hu Wo (Cuckoo's Song)



Newspaper reading improves writing and reading skills of an individual as many difficult words come while reading a passage that might confuse a reader. Making a habit of reading newspaper daily increases the chances of better reading with good vocabulary. **ILLUSTRATION: FOR REPRESENTATIONAL PURPOSE ONLY/FREEPIK**

should be remembered that the textbooks described in a nation's education will probably cast light on the most fundamental knowledge, skills, and attitudes for a citizen's life.

Facing thematic difficulty and linguistic barriers

Readers tend to meet subject matter difficulty and language barriers while reading. Sometimes they read reading material that is by far higher than their literacy skills according to the theme or the language. At that time, they can easily get neither the literal meaning nor connotation of a good read. An average

reader could manage to resolve those difficulties and barriers by reading the reading matter which might be suitable for their literacy levels or by looking new words up in multi-lingual dictionaries patiently and industriously. But these tasks will be driving them bored or disappointed sometimes. In general, classics look totally boring to inexperienced little readers, mainly because of archaisms. In actual fact, they may find it really interesting to study the archaisms after having read dictionaries a lot. Another solution to thematic difficulty and linguistic barriers is literature in translation. Strange to say, some

the beginning of some stories in me after reading it sounds like a knock on the door; a voice such as a monologue, or action, for example, fighting – as a descriptive writing style, not a narrative structure. Quite frankly, I was highly sceptical about that writing style, thinking of whether the stories should be written like this. Much later on, I got to notice that stories are written chiefly relying upon the only plot of a whole narrative, the writer's theoretical concepts or significant story writing style. As to the writing form of stories, they are composed of the central written word, the emphasized spoken word or a balanced mixture of these two words. And again, articles are of various genres; apparently, the articles can be classified into two categories – directly informative writings and food for thought. The way I see it, readers would prefer thought-oriented articles instead of information-based ones as they are getting aged.

Getting to know extended reading

As we all know, there is a lot to study in the world, and for my money, people's professional achievement will not point out adequate knowledge necessary for their entire life. Thus, extended reading should be required for wide-ranging and enough study on universal truths so as to find their feet in life. I want to divide the extended reading into two parts, namely extensive reading and intensive reading. What I mean

is that the first term `extensive reading` refers to the study of all other things apart from professional studies for a long time, and the second term `intensive reading` denotes the study of shortcuts to the subject matter in hot pursuit for current affairs. What is more, extensive reading calls for newspapers, journals, and magazines in addition to books whereas intensive reading entails attending courses, workshops, programmes, and seminars if need be. Those reading styles have a great deal to offer readers in the way of colourful knowledge such as seeing different lives and situations. Just because of that knowledge, they may come to terms with strangers from all walks of life in future.

Beneficial effects of reading

Having had a lot of reading enables readers to express their readiness for discussion and writing, at least I think it does. By the time the topics that have been read by them link up with the studies they are carrying out at school. These topics will definitely double their abilities to understand school lessons. Conducting a classroom presentation in my university life, bibliophiles stand head and shoulders above the other students with bibliophobia. As always, bibliolaters are perfectly capable of speaking out trenchantly by means of standing jokes, words of wisdom, facts and figures in virtue of their reading knowledge. It is probable that writers take the most advantage of reading, that is, they can

dig up linguistic effects and usages which may contribute to their effective and efficient writing, and so do translators or interpreters. Readers like to instil a noble spirit to sympathize with others, a keen spirit to realize human nature, a sound spirit to beat life's sufferings, and a constructive spirit to preserve the natural environment thanks to literature.

Remarks on the very reading

I have always loved reading and it has come to my knowledge that not everyone has such easy access to as many books as they need, with many not being able to afford them. Actually, reading should not be a privilege. There ought to be any accessibility or affordability of books for all bookworms to read more. In order to get into extra reading, well-read persons do not put pressure on themselves, listen to podcasts or audiobooks that are still a form of reading, try long articles, set aside 10 minutes in the morning, and read anthologies which are a collection of writing or poems in terms of a writer and cultural historian's tips. Whatever is read, this can be called authentic reading on condition that readers have devoted all their attention to reading, especially in a noise-free reading room, or so long as their ideas, views and opinions from reading have been applied in real-life circumstances or provided their reading developmental stage never stops at light reading, i.e., reading for pleasure, or only if they are able to evaluate the typical norms of some grand literature. Rarely are authorities in any field of study such as doctors, engineers, and teachers lacking in a pre-reading task.

Viet Nam welcomes 1st Chinese tour groups in three years



V IETNAM'S tourism authority and northern provincial people's committee of Lang Son held a ceremony on Wednesday to welcome the first batch of Chinese tour groups in three years since

the COVID-19 pandemic.

The tour groups of 120 Chinese travellers were greeted at the Huu Nghi International Border with beautiful gifts and traditional art performances.

The tour groups of 120 Chinese travellers were greeted at the Huu Nghi International Border with beautiful gifts and traditional art performances. **PHOTO: HU JIALI/XINHUA**

Deng Guilin, a 67-year-old visitor who came from central China's Hubei province, said this was the first time he came to Viet Nam. He would visit Hanoi, the capital of Viet Nam, and Halong Bay in Quang Ninh province "to experience the beauty of 1,000-year-old city and the UNESCO World Heritage Site in Viet Nam."

Peng Shituan, cultural coun-

selor of the Chinese Embassy in Viet Nam, said that the ceremony marked a historic moment in the resumption of tourism cooperation between China and Viet Nam.

"Every Chinese tourist is a people-to-people ambassador of China-Viet Nam friendship," Peng said, noting the tourism industry's significant role in promoting people-to-people exchanges between

the two neighbours.

"Tourism cooperation is an important part of the cooperation between Viet Nam and China. The tourism industry means a lot to Viet Nam as the return of Chinese tourists will contribute greatly to the Vietnamese economy in 2023," Ha Van Sieu, deputy head of the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, told Xinhua.

Tourism, one of Vietnamese leading foreign exchange earners, has suffered a setback due to the pandemic. The Southeast Asian country targets to receive over eight million international visitors this year, according to the Viet Nam National Administration of Tourism.

SOURCE: Xinhua

CURRENT AFFAIRS

UMFCCI discusses bilateral Agri-trade promotion with China



The meeting between the UMFCCI officials and the Chinese delegation took place on 16 March 2023.
PHOTO : UMFCCI

UNION of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) president U Aye Win met with a Chinese agribusiness delegation led by Mr Tan Shufu, Chinese commercial attaché of the Chinese Embassy to Myanmar on 16 March and highlighted bilateral trade and investment promotion in agriculture and livestock sector during the meeting.

Mr Tan Shufu addressed the matters regarding the co-operation in agribusiness, fishery trade and investments, the exportation of Myanmar’s rice, broken rice, corn, fish and livestock products and microbial safety of the fishery products. He also focused on the Sino-Myanmar business cooperation in those sectors and cross-border trade.

“UMFCCI is supporting private organizations and businesses. The federation is assisting the business in registration with the General Administration of Customs of the People’s Republic of China (GACC), investment sector, fishery and agro exports, and importation of fertilizer and agricultural machinery from China. U Ye Min Aung, vice-president of the UMFCCI also raised matters

related to export and import opportunities, the milestone of Chinese-Myanmar cooperation in agriculture and fisheries sectors like the Hybrid Rice Research Centre project with the assistance of Chinese Grant, Cattle Quarantine Centre in northern Shan State, calling for research and development assistance, trade financing programmes to expand those fisheries and agribusinesses and facilitating Yuan-Kyat direct payments for export/import.

Also, the chairmen of the relevant associations presented matters concerning the smooth process in GACC registration, export promotion, Myanmar’s agribusinesses and contributions of agricultural machinery, oil seed production, construction of oil mills and areca nut exportation. — TWA/EM

Daw Myint Myint Khin receives medical treatment at hospital

DAW Myint Myint Khin, 89 years old and patron of the Myanmar Motion Picture Organization who has won many Academy Awards and received the Motion Picture Lifetime Achievement Award from the Ministry of Information, is undergoing medical treatment at the Grand Hantha Hospital. Patrons and chairpersons visited the Grand Hantha Hospital and paid their respects. – TWA/MKKS



MMPO patrons and chairpersons are seen encouraging Daw Myint Myint Khin. **PHOTO : U AYE KYU LAY**



An advert for free rides on EV taxis.

EV taxis allow people free rides for one month

PEOPLE can ride EV taxis for one month free according to the Myan Tickets Company. The free riding period starts from 14 March to 13 April and to obtain a free ride chance, certain conditions will need to be met.

This programme aims to gain public attention during the test period of the transition to electric vehicles, to inform that the use of EV cars can protect the environment from pollution, for the rapid emergence of private charging stations. — TWA/KZW

New Kunlong bridge construction underway

THE Kunlong bridge is under construction across the Thanlwin River in northern Shan State. It will be completed this year according to the Chinese Embassy to Myanmar. The bridge has reached the important part where the two sides of the bridge are connected.

Upon its completion, it will play an important role in the Hsenwi-Kunlong-Chinshwehaw on the China-Myanmar border trade route. It is constructed with the help of China and will be finished in 2023.

As of 6 March, the completion percentage of the main bridge is 87 per cent, and it is estimated that it will be completed by 1 June 2023. In addition, the socioeconomic life of the people in Kunlong, Laukkai, Chinshwehaw and Hopang will improve.

The bridge is 286 metres long and 12 metres wide with an allowed weight of 75 tonnes per vehicle. The project duration takes 36 months and the project costs 137 million yuan. — TWA/KZW



The general view of the new construction of the Kunlong Bridge.

Over 1,300 foreign tourists visit Kyaiktiyo Pagoda

THE board of trustees of the Kyaiktiyo Pagoda stated that more than 1,300 international travellers paid visits to the pagoda.

Between last February and this March, more than 1,300 foreign tourists visited the pagoda, and 1,859 domestic pilgrims paid homage to the pagoda in February and 11,739 in March.

According to the board of trustees, there are more tourists from neighbouring Thailand visiting the Kyaiktiyo Pagoda. Compared to previous years, the number of visitors to the pagoda decreased.

The board of trustees reported planned hotels, lodgings and restaurants at the pagoda for the convenience of pilgrims. — TWA/CT

HEALTH/PANDEMIC WORLD

NEWS IN BRIEF

Tanzania probes mystery illness after five die

TANZANIA has dispatched a team of health experts to investigate a mysterious disease that has claimed the lives of five people, the government said.

The illness was detected in “a total of seven people (with) symptoms including fever, vomiting, bleeding in various body parts and kidney failure”, the health ministry said in a statement released late Thursday.

The government has sent a rapid response team to the north-western region of Kagera which borders Uganda to investigate the “communicable disease”, Tanzania’s chief medical officer Tumaini Nagu said in the statement. “Samples have been taken from the patients and the dead in an effort to identify the source and type of illness,” she said, urging the public to remain calm but take precautions to avoid contagion.— AFP

Philippine social media users face barrage of bogus medical posts

PHILIPPINE vlogger Rosanel Demasudlay holds a heart-shaped “virginity soap” bar in front of the camera and assures her hundreds of YouTube followers it can be safely used to “tighten” their vaginas.

The video is part of a barrage of bogus and harmful medical posts on social media platforms where Filipinos rank among the world’s heaviest users.

Even before Covid-19 confined people to their homes and left them fearful of seeing a doctor, many in the Philippines sought remedies online because they were cheaper and easier to access.

During the pandemic, AFP’s Fact Check team saw an explosion of misinformation about untested cosmetic

products and quick-fix treatments for chronic illnesses.

The majority appear as free posts or paid advertisements on Facebook, the most popular social media site among the 76 million internet users in the Philippines.

They can circulate for weeks or even months without detection as Facebook struggles to keep up with the torrent of misinformation flooding its platform.

While there is no vetting of posts before they go live, Facebook has a multi-stage, largely automated, review system to check ads before they are published.

Many of the products are promoted in videos that have been doctored to make it look like real medical professionals are endorsing them. —AFP



Philippine doctors worried about misinformation during the pandemic began posting educational videos online, but the move backfired as promoters of spurious treatments inserted the clips into their own posts. **PHOTO: JAM STA ROSA / AFP**

Japan targets 85% of male workers to take paternity leave by FY 2030

JAPANESE Prime Minister Fumio Kishida pledged Friday to implement the necessary measures to allow 85 per cent of male workers who have a child to take paternity leave by fiscal 2030 to tackle the falling birthrate.

Kishida said at a press conference that his government will also take steps to push up wages for young workers and boost economic assistance to them to create an environment conducive to raising their children free of concerns.

In Japan, 85.1 per cent of women took maternity leave in fiscal 2021, but only 13.97 per cent of men did so. Many workers worry taking the time off may increase their colleagues’ workload.

The number of babies born in Japan in 2022 fell to a new record low for the seventh consecutive year, dropping below 800,000 for the first time since records began in 1899, government data showed late last month.



A local government employee in Ryugasaki, Ibaraki Prefecture, takes care of his daughter during his child care leave last year. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ KYODO**

Kishida has expressed an eagerness to increase spending to fight the declining birthrate, saying that focusing on child policies is this year’s most pressing agenda item, but he has stopped short of clarifying how to secure the budget.

Japan’s public expenditures related to family support stood at around 10 trillion yen (\$75 billion) in fiscal 2020, ac-

counting for 2.01 per cent of gross domestic product in the year and underscoring that the country has lagged behind developed European economies.

Sweden spent 3.46 per cent, Britain 2.98 per cent and France 2.81 per cent of their GDPs on child care, according to data released in fiscal 2018 by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research in Tokyo.—Kyodo

Half of women scientists worldwide sexually harassed

HALF of all women scientists worldwide have been the victim of workplace sexual harassment at some point during their career, according to a survey published on Thursday.

In the survey, which included more than 5,000 researchers across 117 countries, 49 per cent of women scientists reported that they had “personally experienced at least one situation” of harassment.

Nearly half of the cases took place after the MeToo movement emerged in 2017, according to the survey, which was conducted by the Ipsos polling firm on behalf of the L’Oreal Foundation. For 65 per cent of the women, the harassment had a negative impact on their careers. Just one in five of the victims reported the harassment to their institution.



In the survey, which included more than 5,000 researchers across 117 countries, 49 per cent of women scientists reported that they had “personally experienced at least one situation” of harassment. **PHOTO: FOR REPRESENTATIONAL PURPOSE ONLY/ANNE-CHRISTINE POUJOULAT/AFP**

The respondents to the questionnaire worked in fields including science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The respondents said they had

been in a situation where someone was “inappropriately and repeatedly referring to me as a girl... doll, babe or chick”, or otherwise insulting them. —AFP

ECONOMY WORLD

Fallout from collapse of US banks causes more trouble in Europe



Employees stand outside of the shuttered Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) headquarters in Santa Clara, California, US, 10 March 2023.

PHOTO: AFP

BANKING giant Credit Suisse lost nearly a fourth of its value Wednesday, amid the growing fallout from the collapse of two regional banks in the United States.

Wednesday marked the second time in three trading sessions since the collapse of California's Silicon Valley Bank (SVB), and the subsequent failure of Signature Bank from New York, that European financial stocks were severely battered.

Nevertheless, the dramatic impact on Credit Suisse in trading Wednesday was largely

unexpected, since the institution is so large.

According to 2022 data from Insider Intelligence, Credit Suisse was the second-largest bank in Switzerland and the 17th-largest in Europe, with an estimated 730 billion euros (772 billion US dollars) in assets under control.

The Swiss institution saw its share price plummet by 24 per cent in trading Wednesday, ending the day at 1.7 Swiss francs in heavy trading. Earlier in the session the shares were down by more than 30 per cent. Wednesday's fall was the tenth consec-

utive losing session for the company's shares. They have lost nearly 40 per cent of their value since 3 March, when shares traded at 2.78 Swiss francs.

The latest developments have also increased volatility for the Swiss franc compared to the euro, the US dollar, and other leading currencies.

Stock exchanges across Europe were also impacted by Wednesday's losses.

The DAX blue-chip index on Germany's Frankfurt Stock Exchange fell by 3.3 per cent; in Paris, the CAC-40 index fell by 3.6 per cent; shares slipped 4.6 per cent in Milan; in Madrid they were down by 4.3 per cent; and in Amsterdam by 2.9 per cent.

In most cases, financial sector stocks led the retreat as investors worried about further impacts on banking institutions.

The Credit Suisse sell-off was reportedly triggered by a weaker-than-expected annual financial statement, followed by the announcement that a leading shareholder — the Saudi National Bank — would not provide new financial support through the acquisition of more shares. —Xinhua

Push for carbon-free hydrogen accelerates in US

A source of renewable and storable energy, hydrogen is experiencing a breakthrough in the United States after years of sluggish growth as Biden administration climate policies spark major investments. "America came from nowhere and now they're in the lead," Mark Hutchinson, CEO of Fortescue Future Industries, said of America's ascent in renewable energy in general and hydrogen more specifically, at last week's CERAWeek energy conference in Houston, Texas. US hydrogen production already amounts to around ten million tonnes per year, about 10 per cent of world volumes. But that output mostly consists of so-called "grey" hydrogen, which is produced from natural gas without capturing carbon dioxide emissions.

Thanks especially to the 2021

infrastructure bill and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), signed into law last year, US President Joe Biden has pledged to increase production capacity for low- and zero-carbon emission sources, which are known as "blue" and

"green" hydrogen.

Blue hydrogen is produced from natural gas in which the carbon dioxide from the manufacturing process is captured. Green hydrogen is produced through renewable sources. —AFP



Attendees at the CERAWeek energy conference in Houston, Texas, on 7 March 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

Sweden rediscovers poverty as inflation soars

IT'S not yet 6 am and dozens of homeless people are already queuing outside Stockholm's central station for breakfast, their numbers bigger than ever, charities say.

Hit by the highest inflation in more than 30 years and poised for recession, Sweden's visible signs of poverty are mounting amid rising inequality. "So many people are coming here to breakfast," said Kavian Ferdowsi who runs a charity helping the homeless.

"In the 13 years that I've run this, we've never had so many people," he told AFP as his colleagues served up cinnamon buns and coffee.

Sweden has been hit hard by the effects of the war in Ukraine. Its currency, the krona, is weaker than it has

ever been against the euro, and aggressive interest rate hikes have left many households with hefty mortgage payments.

Long stable and prosperous, Sweden's economy is now one of the worst performers in Europe. After a spike in electricity prices at the start of the winter, food prices are now Swedes' main concern, up 20 per cent from a year ago.

Inflation has hovered stubbornly around 12 per cent since November, according to official statistics on Wednesday.

"The first wave of inflation was just energy prices and some import prices. But now it has spread to the entire economy," said Annika Alexius, a Stockholm University economist. —AFP



Bread and potatoes: a man buys food at a cut-price Red Cross shop. **PHOTO: AFP**

Hong Kong sees over 1 mln visitors in February, first in 3 years

HONG Kong saw 1.46 million visitors last month, exceeding the monthly 1-million mark for the first time since February 2020, as the share of tourists continued to grow, official data showed Wednesday. The number of Chinese mainland visitors jumped to more than 1.1 million in February, up from 280,000 in the previous month, according to data from the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTb). The rebound comes after normal travel between Hong Kong

and the Chinese mainland fully resumed on 6 February. Last month, non-mainland travellers to Hong Kong rose from 220,000 to 350,000, with short-distance visits mainly made by people from Southeast Asia, the data showed. The HKTb said the MTR Corporation will give away 100,000 Airport Express tickets, 100,000 Tourist Day Passes and 100,000 coupons each worth 30 yuan (4.3 US dollars) for high-speed rail tickets to attract visitors to Hong Kong. —Xinhua

Beijing launches first direct China-Europe freight train service

A cargo train loaded with 55 containers left Beijing Thursday morning for the Russian capital Moscow, marking the launch of the first direct China-Europe freight train service from the Chinese capital.

The freight train carrying goods such as construction materials, household electrical appliances and clothing departed from the logistic hub of Pinggu District in the northeast of the city and will exit the country via Manzhouli Port in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous

Region. The train is expected to reach Moscow in 18 days, covering a distance of approximately 9,000 kilometres.

"In the past, we needed to send the products to Henan or Hebei provinces before they were shipped to Europe," said Chu Yixiao, general manager of the Taitong International Transportation Co Ltd.

"With the launch of this freight train service, goods can now be sent directly from Beijing to Europe, reducing logistics costs and



A China-Europe freight train heading for Moscow departs from Mafang railway station in Pinggu District of Beijing, capital of China, on 16 March 2023. PHOTO: XINHUA/REN CHAO

boosting transportation efficiency," he said, adding that the development presents new opportunities for businesses to thrive.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). According to Liu Zhenfang, chairman of the board of the China State Railway Group Co., Ltd, China-Europe freight trains have linked 108 Chinese cities with 208 cities in 25 European countries, with the cargo routes having handled 65,000 freight train trips.—Xinhua

Wall Street giants move to rescue First Republic Bank

AMERICA'S largest banks moved Thursday to shore up First Republic, easing fears that the regional lender could be the next domino to fall after collapses including Silicon Valley Bank.

A consortium of 11 US private banks, including Bank of America, Citigroup and JPMorgan Chase, announced they would deposit \$30 billion into First Republic.

The move marks a dramatic initiative by the lenders to bolster the system following failures of three midsized lenders in the last week.



With First Republic Bank wobbling, major Wall Street lenders swept in to shore up the regional-size bank in a bid to prevent a broader crisis. PHOTO: AFP

"This action by America's largest banks reflects their confidence in First Republic and in banks of

all sizes," the group said in a joint statement.

"Together, we are deploying our financial

strength and liquidity into the larger system, where it is needed the most," the banks said.

Shares of First Republic reversed earlier losses to close 10 per cent higher on Wall Street Thursday. "This show of support by a group of large banks is most welcome, and demonstrates the resilience of the banking system," said leaders of the Treasury Department, US Federal Reserve, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and Office of the Comptroller of the Currency in a joint statement.—AFP

Rome's Pantheon to charge for tourist entry

One of Rome's oldest and best loved monuments, the Pantheon, will soon start charging for entrance, officials said Thursday — drawing a mixed reaction from tourists.

The price for entry, which is currently free, has yet to be fixed but would not exceed five euros (\$5), while minors and Rome residents would be exempt.

The change was "based on common sense", Culture Minister Gennaro Sangiuliano said, and the price "modest" for Italy's most visited cultural site.

The 2,000-year-old

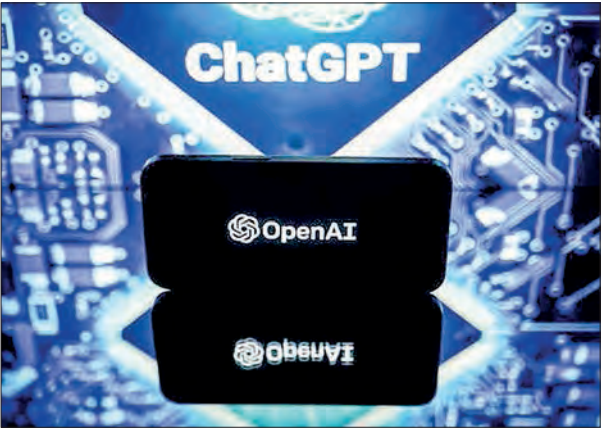
building is currently a consecrated church and part of the proceeds from ticket sales will go towards the diocese of Rome.

Most of the money — 70 per cent — will go to the culture ministry, which will bear the costs of cleaning and maintenance.

Among the tourists visiting the Pantheon on Thursday, reaction to the news was mixed.

"It makes sense. Conservation requires money, and it doesn't shock me to make tourists contribute," said Gustavo Rojas, a 37-year-old from Chile.—AFP

Microsoft applies AI powers to Excel, Outlook



OpenAI is backed by Microsoft, which earlier this year said it would finance the research company with billions of dollars of financing. PHOTO: LIONEL BONAVENTURE / AFP

MICROSOFT pressed on with its AI revolution on Thursday, announcing that it would apply the powers behind ChatGPT to its iconic Excel, Word and Outlook programmes.

The Redmond, Washington giant has been swiftly adopting language-based AI, showing less caution than its rivals despite early problems such as chatbots giving disturbing responses or blatantly inaccurate information.

Microsoft's latest chatbot, called Copilot, will put ChatGPT-like abilities to work in offices, churning out meeting transcripts, calendar entries or PowerPoint slides almost instantaneously.

The thrust of the new release is that generative AI, the term for ChatGPT style capabilities, will function as an assistant for users of Microsoft's popular workplace software and not unilaterally take over office tasks.—AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V NEGAR VOY.NO. (SCY1148)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V NEGAR VOY. NO. (SCY1148)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **18-3-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT** 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 LAND AND SEA INTERMODAL LOGISTICS
SDN BHD LINE**

China’s Xi to go to Russia on first visit since Ukraine invasion

CHINESE President Xi Jinping will make a state visit to Moscow next week, where he will hold talks with his strategic ally Vladimir Putin just over a year into Russia’s war in Ukraine.

Xi will be in Russia from Monday to Wednesday, Beijing’s foreign ministry and the Kremlin said on Friday.

China’s foreign ministry called Xi’s trip “a visit for peace” that aimed to “practice true multilateralism... improve global governance and make contributions to the development and progress of the world”.

The two leaders would exchange views on bilateral relations and major international and regional issues, ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said at a regular press conference.

“At present, changes not seen in a century are rapidly evolving, and the world has entered a new period of turmoil,” he said.

“China will uphold its objective and fair position on the Ukrainian crisis and play a constructive role in promoting peace talks.”

The Kremlin said the two



The Russian Foreign Ministry building is seen behind a billboard showing the letter Z—a tactical symbol of Russian troops in Ukraine—and reading “Victory Is Being Forged in Fire” in central Moscow on 13 October 2022. **PHOTO: ALEXANDER NEMENOV/AFP/FILE**

presidents would speak about “strategic cooperation” and “discuss deepening the exhaustive partnership and strategic cooperation between Russia and China”.—AFP

NEWS IN
BRIEF

French PM deploys constitutional power to force passage of pension reform bill

FRENCH Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne on Thursday activated an article of the country’s Constitution that allows the government to force passage of the controversial pension reform bill without a vote at the National Assembly.

“We cannot gamble on the future of our pensions, this reform is necessary,” Borne told the National Assembly, where the government does not have an absolute majority.

“Because I am attached to our social model, and because I believe in parliamentary democracy, it is on your reform that I am ready to engage my responsibility,” Borne said.—Xinhua

Argentina to hold general election in October

ARGENTINA will hold the general election for the 2023-2027 presidential term on 22 October, the National Electoral Chamber announced Thursday. Mandatory primary elections are scheduled for 13 August. Political parties can present one list of primary candidates and voting is mandatory for citizens.

Primary candidates must obtain at least 1.5 per cent of the total votes in order to be eligible for the October election.—Xinhua

N Korea says it launched Hwasong-17 ICBM as “warning to enemies”

NORTH Korea said Friday it conducted a launch drill for a Hwasong-17 intercontinental ballistic missile the previous day to give “a stronger warning to the enemies” amid a large-scale military exercise being conducted by the United States and South Korea.

The launch drill, guided by leader Kim Jong Un, confirmed the war readiness of an ICBM unit and “the exceptional militancy” of the North’s strategic forces and verified their reliability, the official Korean Central News Agency said.

The ICBM test took place just hours before the Japanese and South Korean leaders held a summit in Tokyo to discuss issues, including cooperation in responding to Pyongyang’s threats.

In response to the missile



A Hwasong-17 intercontinental ballistic missile is launched from Pyongyang International Airport on 16 March 2023. **PHOTO: KCNA/KYODO**

firing and to ensure their readiness to respond to emergencies, Japan’s Air Self-Defence Force and US Air Force conducted a joint fighter jet drill over the Sea of Japan on Friday, Japan’s Defence Ministry said.—Kyodo



The handout picture released by the Venezuelan presidency shows Venezuelan troops during a military ceremony in Caracas on 4 February 2019. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Venezuela Supreme Court decriminalizes homosexuality in armed forces

VENEZUELA’S Supreme Court on Thursday annulled a controversial article of the military justice code that had criminalized homosexuality within the armed forces.

The court annulled the provision, which had provided for a penalty of up to three years in prison, “for lacking sufficient clarity and legal precision with regard to the conduct it intended to punish,” the court stated on its website.

It had called for punishment against members of the military who committed “sexual acts against nature” but failed to define what that meant, the statement said.

The article was not compatible with the constitution or progress in human rights, the court added.—AFP

Cambodia celebrates return of ‘priceless’ stolen Angkor jewellery

CAMBODIAN leader Hun Sen unveiled a collection of stolen Angkor crown jewellery on Friday which was recently returned to the kingdom after decades in Britain, pleading for other long-lost treasures to be handed back.

Gold crowns, necklaces and amulets were among the trove of treasures from the Angkor period, which ran from the ninth to 14th centuries AD when the Khmer empire dominated vast parts of Southeast Asia.

The Cambodian culture ministry characterized the items — expected to go on display at the national museum — as “priceless cultural heritage”.

“I appeal to museums, institutions and Khmer artefact collectors to continue to return those items voluntarily to Cambodia,” Hun Sen told the ceremony.

“Heritage items should be returned to their country of origin.” The culture ministry last month discreetly received



Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Sen inspects some of the returned treasures. **PHOTO: CAMBODIA'S GOVERNMENT CABINET/AFP**

77 pieces from the family of the late, disgraced British art dealer Douglas Latchford.

Two 10th-century sculptures recently returned by the United States were also displayed on Friday.

Dominic Williams, the British ambassador to Cambodia, tweeted that it was an “extraordinary privilege to see these previously stolen artefacts displayed in their ancestral home”.

When he died in 2020, Latchford was awaiting trial in the United States for art trafficking, and the same year his family agreed to return the antiquities to Cambodia.

The family returned five stone and bronze artefacts in 2021. Thousands of antiques and artefacts were stolen from Cambodia during the conflict and genocide of the Khmer Rouge regime in the 1970s.—AFP

Uranium said missing by IAEA in Libya recovered: military

SEVERAL containers of natural uranium reported missing by the UN's nuclear watchdog in war-scarred Libya have been found, a general with one of the country's two rival camps said Thursday.

General Khaled al-Mahjoub, commander of eastern strongman Khalifa Haftar's communications division, said on his Facebook page that the containers of uranium had been recovered “barely five kilometres (three miles)” from

where they had been stored in the Sabha area of southern Libya. “The situation is under control. The IAEA has been informed,” Mahjoub told AFP.

On Wednesday the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna reported that 2.5 tonnes of natural uranium had gone missing from a Libyan site.

Following the announced discovery on Thursday, the IAEA said it was trying to verify the information.—AFP



Libyan special forces in charge of illegal migration assemble in the southern region of Bani Walid on 14 January 2023, ahead of their mission as part of a security plan to enforce inspections at points of entry through the desert borders. **PHOTO: AFP**

20 years after US Iraq invasion, Senate acts to end war authorization

ALMOST exactly 20 years after US forces invaded Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein from power, the US Senate moved Thursday to revoke the law that authorized then-president George W. Bush to launch the war.

In a procedural vote that came over a decade after the war's official end, senators from both parties strongly supported cancelling the 2002 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF), which empowered Bush to send US forces to Iraq.

The same bill also revokes the 1991 AUMF that empowered Bush's father president George HW Bush to attack Iraq after Saddam's forces invaded Kuwait.

“The Iraq War has itself long been over. This AUMF has outlived its purpose and we can



The coalition officially concluded its combat mission in Iraq in December 2021, but US troops remain in Iraq to advise, train, and assist Iraqi security forces against the ongoing ISIL insurgency, including providing air support and military aid. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

no longer justify keeping it in effect,” said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer.

“Every year we leave these AUMFs on the books is another year that a future administration can abuse them,” he said.—AFP

N Ireland peace deal saved ‘thousands’ of lives: ex-Irish PM

THE success of the 1998 peace accords in Northern Ireland can be measured in thousands of lives saved, said former Irish prime minister Bertie Ahern, as new tensions simmer ahead

of the agreement's 25th anniversary.

The former Taoiseach played a pivotal role in negotiating and implementing the Good Friday Agreement with the UK

government under Tony Blair.

“The last 25 years, thankfully, we've had some problems but small (ones),” Ahern, 71, told AFP in an interview.—AFP

Cambodia celebrates return of 'priceless' stolen Angkor jewellery

PAGE-15



A Myanmar team player (red) tries to penetrate the Cambodia team during their friendly match played in Kunming City, China on 17 March 2023. PHOTO: MFF

Team Myanmar trounce Cambodia 4-0 in friendly match

THE Myanmar women's national team, which will compete in the first round of the Asian Zone qualifiers for the 2024 Olympic women's football tournament played a friendly match against Cambodia in Kunming City, China yesterday and celebrated a 4-0 victory.

The Myanmar women's squad used the main roster in the starting lineup and also used up-and-coming young players as substitutes.

The winning goals for the

Myanmar team were scored by Yupar Khaing in the 24th minute, Khin Mar Lar Tun in the 35th and 67th minutes, and Shwe Yi Tun in the 43rd minute.

The Myanmar women's national team will train in China with 24 preliminary players until 24 March and will continue to play friendly matches against Sichuan FC on 19 March and Changchun FC on 22 March.

In preparation for the 2024 Olympic qualifiers, team Myanmar began training with 35

preliminary players starting in November after the 2022 Women's League.

A preliminary 24 players were then selected for the Olympic qualifiers.

Team Myanmar is falling in the Group B of the 2024 Paris Olympic Women's Football Asian Zone Qualifiers First Phase together with Iran, Bangladesh, and Maldives and Myanmar is planning to host the event, the Myanmar Football Federation stated. — KZL

Real face Chelsea in Champions League quarters, Man City meet Bayern

HOLDERS Real Madrid will play Chelsea in the quarter-finals of the Champions League while Manchester City were paired with Pep Guardiola's former side Bayern Munich in Friday's draw.

Serie A leaders Napoli take on AC Milan in an all-Italian showdown and Inter Milan face Portuguese league leaders Benfica.

The winners of Real's tie against Chelsea will go on to face either City or Bayern in the semi-finals, throwing open the possibility of an all-English last-four tie.

That also increases the



The draw for the quarter-finals and semi-finals of the Champions League took place at UEFA headquarters in Nyon, Switzerland on Friday. PHOTO: AFP

chances of seeing an Italian team reach the final for the first time since Juventus in 2017, as Inter

will play either Milan or Napoli in the last four should the Nerazzurri beat Benfica.—AFP

Arsenal seek to pull clear of City as Premier League strugglers battle

ARSENAL have a golden chance to stretch their lead at the top of the Premier League this weekend with Manchester City distracted by the FA Cup as the scramble to avoid the drop intensifies.

Tottenham will leapfrog third-placed Manchester United if they beat struggling Southampton while Newcastle can strengthen their push for a

Champions League place by seeing off Nottingham Forest.

At the other end of the table, just five points separate 12th-placed Crystal Palace from basement club Southampton. AFP Sport looks at some of the key talking points ahead of the weekend's action in the English top flight.—AFP

SPORT

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council: Twelve Objectives

1. Political affairs

- (a) To build a Union based on democracy and federalism, through a disciplined and genuine multiparty democratic system that is fair and just.
- (b) To prioritize the achievement of enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).
- (c) To continue implementing the principle of peaceful co-existence among countries through an independent, active, and non-aligned foreign policy.
- (d) To ensure peace, stability, rule of law, and the safe and smooth functioning of transport networks across the Union.

2. Economic affairs

- (a) To enhance development based on agriculture and livestock using modern production techniques and to strengthen all-round development in other sectors of the economy.
- (b) To develop a stable market economy and promote international investment in order to enhance the economic development of the entire National people.
- (c) To assure support for the sustainability of Micro-, Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) that prioritize import substitution, export production, and the use of domestically produced raw materials, in order to increase domestic production and generate employment opportunities.
- (d) To advance the socioeconomic life of the people, in order to ensure the country's prosperity and food security.

3. Social affairs

- (a) To ensure a strong and dynamic Union spirit, the genuine spirit of patriotism.
- (b) To respect and promote the customs and traditions of all National people and preserve and safeguard their faiths, beliefs, culture, and characteristics of patriotic nationalism.
- (c) To strengthen basic health care in order to achieve the emergence of a health system that enhances the longevity and health of the entire nation.
- (d) To comprehensively promote the education sector to make it capable of producing the human resources necessary for building a modern, developed, and progressive democratic nation.

Vieira sacked by Crystal Palace after winless run

CRYSTAL Palace sacked manager Patrick Vieira on Friday after a miserable run of one win in 14 Premier League games pulled them into a relegation battle.

The London club, without a win in 2023 under the former Arsenal and France midfielder, are 12th in the table but are just three points above the drop zone.

"It is with enormous regret that this difficult decision has been made," said chairman Steve Parish.

"Ultimately, results in recent months have placed us in a precarious league position and we felt a change is necessary to give us the best chance of retaining Premier League status."

Palace said in a statement that "the process to appoint a new manager is under way".

Three members of Vieira's coaching staff — Osian Roberts, Kristian Wilson and Said Aigoun — have also left Selhurst Park.

Parish added: "Patrick has given his all to the club, and we all thank him and his team for their service."

Vieira, 46, replaced Roy Hodgson before the start of the 2021/22 season and led Palace to a 12-placed finish.

But this season they have scored just 21 goals in 27 games — only three clubs have scored fewer.

Their 1-0 defeat by Brighton on Wednesday was their third loss in a row.—AFP