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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.

As strength can make good changes and better progress, united strength must be forged: Senior General

CURRENTLY, the Tatmadaw focuses on holding a free and fair election and restoring peace and rule of law across the nation, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting with Tatmadaw members and families from Monywa Station at Zeyathiri Hall of the North-West Command Headquarters yesterday afternoon.

Speaking on the occasion, the Senior General said as strength can make good changes and better progress for the State as well as the Tatmadaw, military unity and the united strength of the State must be built without fail.

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SAC Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing inspects poultry farm of integrated farm of North-West Command on 19 March.

Political progress of the State

The Senior General explained leading of the Tatmadaw for implementing the multiparty democratic system the entire people aspire to, initiating the

multiparty democratic system as from 2011, political changes of the State in successive eras, difficulties in period of Covid-19 in its tenure of the Tatmadaw in serving the State responsibilities, and endeavours of the

Tatmadaw for development of political, social and all-round development measures, policies for peace and stability and objectives amid the destructive acts of those not wishing to restore peace and stability of the State.

Ensuring peace and stability of entire nation, holding a free and fair election

The Senior General continued to say that the Tatmadaw is primarily to serve safeguarding

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Action taken against 1,263
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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.

Public Notice for Elimination of Violence

1. Declaring themselves to be “for the people”, the so-called CRPH, NUG and PDF terrorist groups are lawlessly killing Buddhist monks, civil servants including schoolteachers, and members of the general public, as well as looting and robbing.
2. Not encouraging, supporting, or assisting “CRPH”, “NUG”, and “PDF” terrorists, who are intimidating and killing people and committing destructive activities, is to protect the lives and property of the general public.
3. Giving information secretly to the authorities on terrorists and on the possession and transport of weapons/ammunition is tantamount to protecting the lives and property of innocent people.

One new case of COVID-19 reported on 19 March, total figure registers 633,992

MYANMAR’S COVID-19 positive cases registered **633,992** after **one** new case was reported on 19 March 2023 according to the Ministry of Health.

The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **614,473**, including **one** new recovery.

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

The country has vaccinated **30,974,343** people aged 18 and above for COVID-19 vaccines and **6,844,741** people aged under 18 till 19 March 2023. — GNLM

58th Myanma Gems Emporium continues for third day



THE third day of the 58th Myanma Gems Emporium continued yesterday at Maniradana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw. Foreign and local gem merchants observed pearl, gems and jade lots on display at the event.

They inspected pieces of pearl from lot 151 to lot 295 for sale at the emporium and placed bids inside the tender boxes. The tender proposals for pearl lots No 151 to 295 were opened, and officials announced a total

of 143 lots were auctioned off. On the third day, gems lot 120 will be sold to international and domestic gem merchants through the open tender system.

Jewellery and gem ornament shops are bustling with buyers.

So far, 290 lots of 295 pearl lots were sold to local and foreign gem merchants. Moreover, 120 gem lots and 2,150 lots of jade will be sold in auction system. — MNA/KZW

Gem merchants check jade stones at 58th Myanma Gems Emporium in Nay Pyi Taw on 19 March.



A merchant puts tender proposal into tender box.



Gem merchants checking quality of pieces of pearl.

COVID-19 vaccine drive continues in Aungmyethazan Tsp

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

Yesterday, doctors and nurses from public hospitals, medical teams from the Tatmadaw, and relevant healthcare workers in collaboration with volunteers gave COVID-19 vaccines to 186 monks and 126 people from Aungmyethazan Township in Mandalay Region.— MNA

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United strength is the strength of the country

AMICABLE cooperation between the people and the Tatmadaw is the best for the future of the country. Both the Tatmadaw and the people will always exist. United strength is the strength of the country. The Tatmadaw is striving to ensure non-disintegration of national solidarity.

(Excerpts from the speech delivered by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to the SAC meeting 9/2022 held on 11 November 2022)

As strength can make good changes and better progress, united strength must be forged: Senior General

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the sovereignty against the foreign dangers and serving national interests of the State and the citizens. Currently, the Tatmadaw focuses on holding a free and fair election and restoring peace and rule of law across the nation.
In order to successfully hold the election, the country needs to restore peace. So, an emphasis is being placed on ceasing the armed conflicts and peace talks are being held with ethnic armed organizations. In this regard, the Tatmadaw adjusts the peace talks for having deserved measures for the State based on the wishes of meeting participants. Ethnic must have the rights to participate in the political platform so



SAC Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets Tatmadaw members and families of Monywa Station at the hall of North-West Command Headquarters on 19 March.

cus on military unity. A fair and united administrative system can fortify the military unity. All Tatmadaw members need to be loyal to each other, their families, the Tatmadaw and the State.
Encouraging education promotion
During the summer holidays, Tatmadaw members are to manage their offsprings to efficiently use their spare time by reviewing their school lessons, attending cultural, computer and other training courses.
Self-control needs to manage drinking, indulgence and betting
Individual indulgence and



The Senior General views round livestock farms of integrated farm of North-West Command on 19 March.



The Senior General and wife cordially converse with families and Tatmadaw members from Monywa Station at North-West Command HQ on 19 March.

as to demand their entitlements under the law as the Hluttaw is the highest political platform in the democratic system.
The peace talks with ethnic armed organizations could bring positive results to the State, and remaining measures to be talked in detail are being discussed.
Sharpening military capacity under disciplines
Only when the Tatmadaw members fully apply their military tactics and martial arts will

Currently, the Tatmadaw focuses on holding a free and fair election and restoring peace and rule of law across the nation.

they have the upper hand in the battlefields with lack of losing casualties. Hence, they have to be fit for duty on a daily basis. They have to follow the rule of engagement and obey military disciplines to be good soldiers.
As endeavours will bring success in all jobs, all Tatmadaw members need to culture strength. Only when they forge the military unity will they can unite the strength in order to achieve success in all assignments. Hence, they have to fo-

betting without rationality may affect daily needs of families, so they have to control themselves. Officials should supervise subordinates not to commit betting.
Welfare for all
Military owned agriculture and livestock farms aim to initiate welfare of Tatmadaw families, not focusing on profits. Tatmadaw has fulfilled the requirements of Tatmadaw members at different ranks as much as possible.
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As strength can make good changes and better progress, united strength must be forged: Senior General

FROM PAGE-3

If Tatmadaw members and families in individuals make efforts for forging the strength, military unity will improve with securing success.

The Senior General presented foodstuffs for Tatmadaw members and families to the commander and the wife of the Senior General, cash assistance for the station maternal and child welfare association to the wife of the commander. After the meeting, the Senior General fulfilled the needs of Tatmadaw members and families.

Inspection at agriculture and livestock farms

The Senior General inspected poultry farm, DYL pig, goat and cattle farms and greenhouse plantations at the integrated farm of the command headquarters and viewed sales of military owned meat, fish, milk and vegetables to Tatmadaw members at reduced prices.

After hearing the reports, the Senior General pointed out that agricultural and livestock farms must be purposed for the majority but for the minority. The Senior General viewed round progress of the integrated farms of the command and left necessary instructions.

Yesterday morning, the Senior General, wife and party visited the local military hospital in Monywa. The Senior General asked injuries of officers and other ranks in serving duties on stability of the State, security and rule of law, recovering of their injuries and medical treatment and the wife of the Senior General comforted Tatmadaw members, families and local people's militia receiving medical treatments for injuries triggered attacks of PDF terrorists without any reason and local people for their health conditions.— MNA/TTA

SAC member, Union Minister overview development activities in Sagaing Region

STATE Administration Council member U Maung Ko and Union Minister for Cooperatives and Rural Development U Hla Moe yesterday met with departmental personnel at the Rural Road Development Department in Monywa, Sagaing Region.

The SAC member said that those staff members have to successfully implement the market economy and study the techniques of other foreign countries in agricultural and livestock farms. He also called for high enhancement of socio-economic life of rural people, and successful operation of MSME businesses based on agriculture and livestock farms.

Further, the Union Minister said that employees have to produce quality hybrid species for seeking the livestock market. It is necessary to conduct the value-added production manufacturing courses using domestic raw materials. He also pointed out rural water supply, lighting, street and bridge development works must be completed on time with quality according to the fiscal year, and establishment of smart villages.

Further, officials of the departments explained the working processes and their needs were fulfilled. — MNA/KZL



SAC member U Maung Ko and Union Minister for Cooperatives and Rural Development U Hla Moe meet departmental personnel in Monywa on 19 March.

Union Energy Minister inspects new well drilling, sites for new wells in Magway Region

UNION Minister for Energy U Myo Myint Oo inspected No 883 well drilled in Htaukshabin-Kanni oilfield and the site for drilling No 671 well in Mann oilfield in Minbu Township, Magaway Region on 18 March.

At the well No 883 in Htaukshabin oilfield, the oilfield general manager reported on drilling of No 883 well with the use of National 55/8 drilling machine to reach the depth of 3,650 feet, and plans to drill more wells for extraction of crude oils.

The Union Minister said that in order to reduce the import of oil and oil products from abroad and in accordance with the plan to improve domestic oil production, efforts should be made to explore and produce oil from oilfields by all means.

As the employees are handling crude oil and natural gas in the oilfields, it is necessary to take care to avoid the risk of fire. The Union Minister said that it is necessary to pay special attention to occupational safety and security of oilfields and plans to develop oil and natural gas exploration and production in oilfields.

After that, the Union Minister inspected the oil test production at No 883.

At Htaukshabin oilfield, the Union minister approved the sites for new wells PK-3901, 3902 and 4801.

The general manager and officials of Mann oil field explained the process of drilling at well 671 with up to a target depth of 8,000 feet using the ZJ7L SR 1 drilling machine. — MNA/KZL



Union Minister for Energy U Myo Myint Oo views drilling of oil well in Minbu on 18 March.

SAC member Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Defence attends 49th Mon State Day celebration

THE 49th Anniversary of Mon State Day commemoration ceremony 2023 and state honorary awarding ceremony were held at Mawrawady Park in Mawlamyine yesterday morning.

Firstly, State Administration Council member Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Defence Gen Mya Tun Oo read the message sent by SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to the 49th Anniversary of Mon State Day 2023. After that, Mon State Chief Minister U Aung Kyi Thein extended greetings.

Next, the General and officials attend the honorary award ceremony to mark the 49th Anniversary of Mon State Day. Officials presented honorary awards to the winners.



SAC member Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Defence General Mya Tun Oo meets Tatmadaw members and families at the hall of South-East Command HQ on 19 March.



The General handed over 100 sets of solar kits to the Chief Minister of Mon State for electrifying villages in Mon State. Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung handed over K36 million for sinking three tube-wells to the

chief minister.

Next, Deputy Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Dr. Soe Win presented the sports equipment to the State Minister of Social Affairs. Then, Kyaukphyingu Pagoda Board of Trustees of Pawn Township handed over an ancient bronze bell to Mon State Department of Archeology and National Museum.

After that, SAC members General Mya Tun Oo and U Yan Kyaw and State Chief Minister U Aung Kyi Thein presented

flower baskets to the ethnic cultural dance troupes.

They also met with Tatmadaw members and families at the Aung San Hall of the military command headquarters and provided them with supplies and foodstuffs. — MNA/KZL

Opening of concrete bridge, beach resort honours 49th Anniversary of Mon State Day



SAC member Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Defence General Mya Tun Oo poses for documentary photo at opening of concrete bridge on Chaungzon- Muiyitkalay-Kamakay road in Chaungzon on 18 March.



Cultural dance troupe perform dance at opening of beach resort in Mawlamyine Township on 18 March.

STATE Administration Council member Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence General Mya Tun Oo, SAC member U Yan Kyaw, Union Ministers Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung and Jeng

Phang Naw Taung, Mon State Chief Minister U Aung Kyi Thein and Commander of South-East Command Maj-Gen Myat Thet Oo on 18 March attended the inauguration of a concrete bridge

on Chaungzon-Muiyitkalay-Kamakay road in Chaungzon Township of Mon State as a gesturing of honouring the 49th Anniversary of Mon State Day.

The concrete bridge built of reinforced concrete beams and rails is 80 feet long and 31 feet wide with a 24 feet wide motor way.

They also joined the ceremony to open the beach resort on the extended strand road in Mawlamyine.

Officials sprinkled scented water on the signboard of Yaman-ya beach resort. They presented cash award to the ethnic dancing troupes which performed entertainments. Then, they visited the beach. — MNA/TTA

Mon literature textbooks given, vocational training course opened to mark 49th Anniversary of Mon State Day

MON literature textbooks giving and vocational training course opening ceremonies honoured the 49th Anniversary of Mon State Day at the Mon State Ethnic Affairs Department in Mawlamyine on 18 March, attended by State Administration Council member Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence General Mya Tun Oo, SAC member U Yan Kyaw and union ministers.

Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs Jeng Phang Naw Taung extended greetings and Mon State Minister for Ethnic Affairs U Khin Maung

Oo reported on purposes of Mon literature textbook giving and vocational training course.

Officials gave the Mon Language textbooks to Mon Literature and Cultural Committee members.

Next, officials presented cash assistance and ethnic rights protection bylaw books to officials of Mon Literature and Cultural Committee. The attendees enjoyed Hintha dance performed by Mon Cultural dance troupe and had documentary photo taken.—MNA/KZL



The Mon language textbooks presentation ceremony in progress in Mawlamyine on 18 March.

DPM MoTC Union Minister inspects riverbank erosion prevention works in Nyaungdon, Lemyethna



SAC member Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Transport and Communications Admiral Tin Aung San views preventive measures of bank erosion in Nyaungdon Township on 19 March.

STATE Administration Council Member Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Transport and Communications Admiral Tin Aung San and officials inspected the site of riverbank erosion prevention work at downstream Yankin Sanyar jetty in Nyaungdon, Ayeyawady Region yesterday,

and riverbank erosion prevention workplace in Lemyethna Township. At the site of riverbank erosion prevention work between 14th and 16th Streets, downstream Yankin Sanyar jetty in Ward 3, Nyaungdon, and the Admiral heard the reports by

head of Region Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems-DWIR on the preventive measures. Then, the Union Minister said that the preventive measures need to meet the standards of the current technology and design and make it sustaina-

ble for the long term, in order to ensure that the danger of the riverbank erosion does not occur again. The preventive works need to be done during the set period before the river water rises in rainy season. For workplace safety and riverbank erosion prevention activities

along the city's shores, annual plans should be established and continued to be implemented, he added.

At the site for prevention of bank erosion near Satumuka Stupa due to the Ngawun River erosion, an official of DWIR presented the implementation and completion of the diversion water walls construction for maintenance of water course in Ngawun river, dredging of sandbanks, construction of bored piles and placing of geo-bag on the bank.

The Union Minister inspected the workplaces, after instructing officials to use high-quality equipment for the projects and closely supervise the State budget for minimizing loss and waste, use sustainable designs and methods for preventive measures, and put an emphasis on workplace safety. — MNA/CT

Illegal timbers, electrical accessories, industrial materials, car parts, vehicles seized



Jfresh LED UFO light bulbs.

A Custom inspection team performed inspection on Yangon-Hpa-an-Myawady highway and they seized 5,000 kilogrammes of High Density Polyethylene valued over K 9 million more carried than declared in ID and a Nissan Diesel Tractor-Head and one trailer estimated at K 70 million on 15 March. The total value worth over K 79 million was confiscated and the action was taken under the Customs Procedures.

In addition, on-duty Customs teams under the management of the Customs Department carried out inspections on 15 and 16 March at the Asia World container checkpoint and seized four products estimated of over K 18 million, including 13,080 Jfresh LED UFO light bulbs from five containers which

import licence has expired. And they also nabbed 288 Toy small Remote Control cars that were not declared in the import declaration (estimated value of K4.32 million) and 20,680 thread rolls that exceeded the Valid for Prior Arrival (VPA) for 61 days, 28,729 ceramic tiles estimated value of more than K71 million and on 16 March, 300 kilogrammes of Potassium Hydroxide (estimated value of K2.14 million, which was not declared in the import declaration form, was found in one container at the Myanmar International Port (Thilawa). On 17 March, at the container checkpoint of Myanmar Industrial Port, officials seized two containers containing 27,500 kilogrammes of Plastic Sheet MATTE (estimated value of K57.75 million) and 50 kilogrammes of Balancing shaft gear which was not declared in the import declaration estimated value over K11 million, totalling over K164 million, and the action was taken under the Customs Procedures.

Then, on 16 March, under the management of the Customs Department, on-duty customs team performed inspection at foreign (departure) terminal of

Mandalay International Airport and seized one Dji Mini 2 Drone (estimated value of K1 million) from inside the passenger's luggage, which was unable to show official documents.

Similarly, on 17 March, under the supervision of Bago Region Illegal Trade Eradication Special Task, a joint team led by each township Forestry Departments seized 4.5 tonnes of illegal sawn teak timber and more than 3 tonnes of illegal Dipterocarpus (estimated value of K3,423,174 in Nyaunglebin and Padaung townships, and the action is being taken in accordance with the Forest Law.

In addition, inspections were carried out under management of the Yangon Region Illegal Trade Eradication Special Force, No 2 Traffic Police Branch seized one unlicensed Toyota Probox (estimated value of K3 million near the junction of Insein Road and Kan Road according to the relevant procedures. A combined team led by the Forest Department of Hlegu Township seized more than 7 tonnes of illegal teak (estimated value of more than K4.7 million) and a Nissan Diesel Truck carrying these logs (estimated value of

K25 million). Action was taken under the Forest Law.

In addition, on 18 March, a combined team led by the Otathiri Township Forest Department nabbed 3.206 tonnes of illegal teak (estimated value of K277,520) from a vehicle near Nay Pyi Taw-Magway-Kanpya

intersection, and the action is being taken in accordance with the Forest Law.

Therefore, 18 arrests (estimated value of K281,408,796) were made from 15 to 18 March, according to the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/KZW



Photo shows seized Dji Mini 2 Drone.



3D Beautiful lights.

LOCAL BUSINESS

Red pigeon pea fetches K2.4 million per tonne within a day

RED pigeon peas price rose from K2,278,000 per tonne on 17 March 2023 to K2.4 million per tonne on 18 March.

Similarly, a tonne of black gram dropped below K2 million on 20 September 2022, and bounced back to above K2 million on 17 and 18 March 2023, trading 85 containers of black gram weighing 2,040 tonnes during these two days.

In the Yangon pulses market, a tonne of black gram RC and SQ/RC were priced at K2,008,000 and K2,293,000 on 17 March, and K2,049,000 and K2,334,000 on 18 March.

Although transaction prices have risen in the Yangon pulses market, the foreign currency exchange rate is high, and the price of a tonne of exported FOB

pulses is still around USD900 for pigeon peas and around USD800 for black gram (RC). Pigeon peas (red) price on 18 March 2023 is the highest price in the term of the pigeon pea market currently.

Due to the needs of India, which mainly imports Myanmar beans and pulses, Myanmar is allowed to export until the financial year 2025-2026. In 2015, the black gram price hit the record high in India, resulting more yield of pulses after that. Thus, beans and pulses imports from foreign countries into India were temporarily closed in mid-August 2017 until the end of March 2018.

Because of that, there were some days in the Yangon pulses market where the prices of black gram and red pigeon peas



Red pigeon peas seen in the Yangon pulses market.

dropped to between K300,000 and K400,000 per tonne at the end of 2017 and before mid-2018. After around five years, black gram

and red pigeon peas earned six- and eight-fold the lowest prices, a beans and pulses price analyst stated. Therefore, there is a need

to encourage the cultivation of domestic beans and pulses as well as paddy and oil crops. — TWA/CT

Abundant supply of peanut pushes down peanut oil price to K12,000 per viss



A peanut plantation in Yenangyoung Township. PHOTO: SAN NYUNT

PEANUTS from various regions entered the Mandalay Market these days and it has driven the peanut oil price down to K12,000 per viss, according to the traders in Mandalay.

Although the peanut oil price fetched up to K14,000 per viss in previous month, the price has fallen to K12,000 per viss currently, so did the prices of other edible oil.

“Peanuts from all over the regions are arriving at the

Mandalay market and the peanut price reached the highest price for the past two weeks. The prices of red peanut and white peanut S-1 dropped down from K7,600 and K7,000 per viss to K7,000 and K6,300 per viss respectively. Since the border gates have been opened, the stocks faced local and foreign demands in the market. These days, Chinese buyers are mainly buying red peanuts. The currency of Chinese Yuan is also

falling in forex rate again. Because of that, edible oil prices are decreasing and it benefits the consumers,” said U Soe Win Myint of the Soe Win Myint Depot in Mandalay.

Peanut is an oil crop that is cultivated all year round, and is grown in Mandalay, Sagaing, Magway and Ayeyawady Regions not only for domestic consumption but also for export purpose. — Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-Printing House)/CT

Plan to form working groups for gold price calculation methods and quality determination

THE Central Bank of Myanmar announced on 18 March that working groups will be formed to determine gold price calculation methods and quality and set international weight standards that are fundamental in the domestic gold market.

The Monitoring and Steering Committee on Gold and Currency Market led by the Central Bank of Myanmar and includes representatives from various departments discussed issues of standard qualities, refined gold production and how to determine the price of gold regarding the domestic gold market.

It is presented in the discussion that the gold price calculation in Myanmar is seen based on rumours, foreign currency changes in neighbouring countries, and traditional calculation methods without standardized weighting calculations as traded in global gold markets. Measures to make Myanmar gold exporting and trading more efficient, set quality and weight standards that local buyers and investors can assure, take legal action against those trading without licence, and eliminate price manipulation activities were also discussed. — TWA/CT



Pieces of gold on sales at the domestic gold market.

Seek incomes for the nation and the people in gems emporia

IN successive eras, the relevant governments have been organizing the Myanmar Gems Emporium on a yearly basis for selling lots of jade, gems and pearl produced under and aboveground and water natural resources to earn incomes not only for the State but also for the private gem merchants.

Since 1964, these emporiums have been staged to attract local and foreign gem merchants. State-run Myanma Gems Enterprise and Myanmar Pearl Enterprise produce quality jade and gem lots as well as pearl lots to display at the emporiums.

This year's emporium plans to sell 295 lots of pearls, 120

This year's gems emporium which lasts for seven days from 17 to 23 March will be a source for the State and the local gem merchants to earn foreign exchange which can be spent on operating businesses of the private sector as well as on development undertakings of the nation. If so, only when both the government and private sectors boom in jewellery trading will it help develop the State economy.

of jade set at foreign currencies or kyat. This year's gems emporium which lasts for seven days from 17 to 23 March will be a source for the State and the local gem merchants to earn foreign exchange which can be spent on operating businesses of the private sector as well as on development undertakings of the nation. If so, only when both the government and private sectors boom in jewellery trading will it help develop the State economy.

Every country has to earn income from various sources. So, they have to seek ways and means to seek sources of income and have to try hard to improve their products for earning greater incomes.

lots of gems and 2,150 lots of jade to local and foreign gem merchants through open tender under the rules and regulations. As dates will be set for the sale of jade, gems and pearl lots, local and foreign gem merchants will be allowed to check relevant lots of jewellery as they chose.

Significantly, the floor prices of pearl lots are set in US dollars. Foreign gem merchants are allowed payments in US dollars, euros, yuan and baht currencies in buying lots of pearls whereas local gem merchants can spend Kyat equal to the market price in the purchase of pearl lots.

So also, the floor prices of gems and jade lots are set at Euro. Foreign merchants are allowed to spend US dollars, euros, yuan and baht on buying gem and jade lots and local merchants can use kyat equal to euro currency in the emporium. Some jade and gem lots are set in foreign currency. So, local and foreign gem merchants need to spend US dollars, euros, yuan and baht currencies for aforesaid jade and gem lots. Myanmar merchants need to spend foreign currencies or kyat on the purchase of lots

Timeline

Timor Press Council, with funding from UNDP, organized the Dili Dialogue Forum in the capital city of Dili from 25 and 26 August 2022. The Forum is titled Media Challenges in Timor Leste and South East Asia. Representatives from members of the South East Asia Press Council (SEA-PC) were also invited to participate. I was selected to represent Myanmar Press Council (MPC).

SEA-PC comprised five countries – Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Timor Leste.

The trip was long and arduous as Timor does not have much international flight connectivity. From Yangon to Bangkok, overnight in Bangkok, then to Bali and overnight again in Bali. An early morning flight from Bali landed me in the capital of Timor on the 24th. After checking into the hotel, I together with other participants from Thailand and the Philippines were picked up to visit the offices of the Timor Press Council.

The change from panel to presentation meant I have to work through the night to gather data and sufficient content for presentation slides. I was representing the country and MPC and was determined to do my very best to ensure that all the falsehoods and misinformation about my country are addressed in the presentation.

We had a brief meeting, took a few photos and discussed the agenda for the upcoming two days of the forum. Timor Press Council did say they together with attendees long to hear about the happenings in Myanmar. The agenda was also altered from being a panel concept to one where each country represents their own state of affairs.

The return trip was as long, with an overnight stay in Bangkok, through Bali, Indonesia. A couple of weeks after arrival, a press conference was organized to brief the local media on the work done by MPC during the World Press Councils assembly in Kenya and Dili Dialogue Forum.

The Forum

I have a chance to present in the middle of the first day of the forum. The presentation comprised of the events leading to the change of government, terror statistics of 2021,

the reasons why terrorism would fail, NLD as the party of the corrupt, the negative impact of Facebook and fake news, the current state of the economy and the analytics to show things are on the uptrend.

Some of the participants did congratulate me for speaking out on the facts that they never expect to read from fake news media outlets or anti-Myanmar propaganda groups.

Ex-forum

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The Aftermath

A few days after the press conference, unlawful news channels outside of Myanmar started producing

fake news and slanders, regarding especially, my factual presentation in Timor. Probably as a result of a few press conference invitees, reporting back to their rebel and terrorist counterparts outside of Myanmar, a few of my quotes were taken out of context, especially since the presentation was in English.

Then a series of fake news invaded the internet, led by illegal outlets such as Kit Thit, Mizzima, etc. Not being able to counter facts, they went on to attack the person delivering the content, putting in lies and slanders to diminish my character. This also resulted in lots of death threats to me in the comments section as well as on subsequent sharing pages. Ensuing misinformation included myself running away, being banned from certain countries and calling me and not picking up the calls. None of that was true, of course. I have forwarded these death threats, fake news and false personal slanders with evidence to international press

councils as well as some established Asia media channels.

Where Timorese Get it Wrong

These illicit media groups and terror supporters did write to Timor Press Council and persons such as Jim Nolan, who has fallen prey to lies from fake news channels. They decided to believe in the fake news outlets, exile groups and their agenda and wrote and issued statements raising objections to the presentations and proceeding to the extent of barring me from future forums and invitations in Timor.

As Martin Luther King said, 'The arch of the moral universe is long, but in the end, it bends towards justice'. Now with time passed by, history has been written. Cheating in the 2020 elections is undeniable. The corrupt officials of the previous administration are now in jail. Terrorist activities supported by fake news agencies above and exile groups are now at rock bottom. I just hope that

in five- or ten-years' time, those who supported these groups and rejected the present Myanmar government's facts, would be courageous enough to stand up and said, they supported these specific exiled terrorist groups and did as they were told.

Final Analysis

One famous Chinese philosopher (Xun Zi) during the late Warring States Period has said, "One should not be seduced by praise, nor should one fear opprobrium". By speaking out the truth, I believed I have given my country the honour it deserved. To be able to stand tall and speak with our fear or favour. The international community deserved to know the truth about Myanmar, regardless of the impact on me. I can cower by talking about covid and the training that we have been giving to Myanmar journalists and avoid all the hammering, or I can choose to honour and prioritize the truth, the whole truth and nothing

but the truth. (The former contents were still presented in the last slide of my presentation)

Democracy is the right of the people of all countries, not the prerogative of a few nations. Whether a country is democratic should be judged by its own people, not by a handful of meddlesome outsiders. There is no uniform or single model of democracy; it comes in many forms. It is undemocratic itself to measure the world's diverse political systems against a single criterion or to view the colourful political civilizations of humanity from a single perspective. (Xi Jinping)

The video recording of the presentation and PowerPoint slides at the forum, as well as the presentation slides at the subsequent press conference, can be found at <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1WR-BEYw0iHsYEmfE4vpIMPmMNBI-UaKjkn?usp=sharing>.



Timor Experience

By UAC

Study reveals pandemic stress had more impact on pregnant women



A pregnant woman wears a face mask as a preventive measure against the spread of the new coronavirus, COVID-19, as she waits for the bus in Bogota, on 16 March 2020. PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/AFP

ACCORDING to a new study, COVID-19-related stress had a larger impact on the mental health of pregnant women during the pandemic than

on those who were not.

Dr Susanne Schweizer from UNSW Science, together with colleagues in Europe and the United States, collected data on mental

health at several time periods during and after pregnancy in a longitudinal research of 742 pregnant individuals.

Their analysis found COVID-19 related stress had the

greatest impact on pregnant people who had a tendency to worry, felt lonely, or had a low tolerance for uncertainty.

A follow-up study, published today in JAMA Network Open, looked at COVID-19 related stress in the postpartum period, 1.5 years after the first investigation. The team found that feeling stressed about the pandemic during pregnancy not only had a lasting effect on participants' own mental health, but was also associated with an increase in negative mood in their infants.

A vulnerable group

"The Centre for Disease Control identifies pregnant women as a vulnerable group in terms of physical health during pandemics and disease outbreaks," says Dr Schweizer. "Based on these findings, and those of others, we should also identify pregnant women as a vulnerable group in terms of mental health."

Mental health vulnerability factors

Importantly, the research team compared the pregnant women who took part in the study to gender, age and country matched controls. "So, you have someone who's as similar as possible, but who isn't pregnant at that point in time. And we looked at the impacts of pandemic related stress on their mental health," says Dr Schweizer.

Pandemic stress was measured using the Pandemic Anxiety Scale, which measures individuals' concerns about the pandemic, including worries about contracting the virus, having enough food and job-related impacts.

Unsurprisingly, COVID-19 related stress was associated with more mental health problems in both women who were pregnant and those who weren't. "But not all women were affected in the same way.

Lack of social support

There were vulnerability factors, such as lack of social support, increased loneliness, worry and intolerance of uncertainty,

which had a greater impact on mental health in the context of pandemic related stress in pregnant women, compared to their non pregnant counterparts," says Dr Schweizer.

Effect on infant behaviour

At the final timepoint, on average 18 months after the initial assessment, the team administered the same set of measures to the cohort.

"But this time, we also administered a measure on postpartum distress, which captures mental health symptoms that are related to the postpartum period, such as thoughts of harm befalling the child or inflicting harm on a child, and we also measured infant mood and behaviour."

The follow-up study found that COVID-19 related stress during pregnancy, captured in the first paper, was significantly associated with poor postpartum maternal mental health outcomes.

"What's always going to predict your mental health best is your mental health at a previous

timepoint," says Dr Schweizer. "So I was surprised that pandemic related stress during pregnancy adversely impacted maternal depression, anxiety and distress that far into the future, even when we controlled for their previous levels of mental wellbeing."

Negatively impacted

But it wasn't just the mothers who were negatively impacted. For those who were stressed by the pandemic, there was a higher chance of what researchers call 'negative affectivity' in their infants.

Negative affectivity includes the infant being more likely to cry and less easily settled, as well as less likely to venture into an unknown situation.

"Negative affectivity is a measure of infant mood. But it's been associated with a range of behavioural problems, and importantly, also cognition. It has also been associated with developmental outcomes across the lifespan."

While there is already a ro-

bust literature showing that maternal postpartum mental health is significantly associated with infant behaviour, this is one of the first studies to examine the association of stress during pregnancy with mother and infant mental health outcomes during the pandemic.

Bringing mental health to the forefront

Dr Schweizer herself has lived experience of being pregnant during the pandemic.

"I was very lucky in that I knew I was in a position that I could continue working, so I didn't have those economic pressures, but I was a high-risk pregnancy. And then my child was born premature," said Dr Schweizer.

"That's a distressing experience anyway, even under normal circumstances, but it was very much compounded by the fact that I was separated from my other children. I was never able to see my daughter with my husband together until much later.

Source : ANI

CURRENT
AFFAIRS

MoNREC designates Gahe II as
protected public forest



A distant view shows Hanlintaung protected public forest designated on 11 March 2022 in Ywangan Township of Southern Shan State.

THE Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation has designated the area of 1,363 acres in Indaw Township, Katha District in Sagaing Region, as “Gahe II Protected Public Forest” as from 14 March 2023, the Forest Law (2018).

The Gahe II protected pub-

lic forest is designated with the aim of fulfilling the basic needs of local people residing near the protected public forest and preserving and protecting the water and land areas and protecting the natural environment and biological species.

In the area, valuable trees

such as teak, Shorea obtusa, sal, Indian laurel and Dipterocarpus tuberculatus are thriving with habitations of wild animals in the safe and sound natural forest. Consequently, the protected public forest will benefit the local people with woods and fuel for daily life. — TWA/KZW

Myanmar Theatrical Association
(Central) announces one-year
extension of Covid-19 loans,
repayment issues

THE Myanmar theatrical Association (Central) issued a notice regarding the one-year extension of the Covid-19 loans lent to theatrical artists and the repayment issues.

In the statement, the working committee to address the impact of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) on National Economy has extended the repayment period of the loans issued to the theatrical-film-music-press and media sectors by one more year on 8 March.

Artistes and organizations under the management of the Myanmar Theatrical Association (Central) are informed that they must comply with the following information.

They have to pay one per cent of interest rate to the Myanma Economic Bank they drew the loan on the day of loan period or a day before the set date, according to the paragraph 4-a of the statement. In order to comply with the regulations stipulated in paragraph 4-b, it is imperative to present the recent mentioned licence of the Myanmar Theatrical Association (Central) to the bank, which is valid until 31 December 2023. If an updated establishment permit has not yet been granted, it is vital to renew the establishment permit in a timely manner.

They may pay back parts of loans. If they cannot pay back the loans at the set period, they will face action under the civil law in line with the rules and regulations of the bank. — TWA/KZW

Directive
suspended to
change mini-
Oway taxis to
yellow

ALL mini-Oway taxis operating in Mandalay were instructed by the Mandalay Region Vehicle Supervisory Committee (Mandalay City) to change their colour to yellow by 30 March.

The directive was temporarily suspended due to recent difficulties reported by owners and drivers of mini-Oway cars. They face rising fuel prices, fewer passengers and monthly instalment payments to companies.

The Mandalay Region Vehicle Supervisory Committee (Mandalay City) instructed all mini-Oway taxis to change their colour to yellow in order to maintain cleanliness according to city characteristics, abide by traffic rules and regulations, ensure convenience of passengers and systematically develop transport sector. — TWA/KZL

Action taken against 1,263 YBS buses driving in city
for undisciplined acts within two months

YANGON Region Public Transport Committee-YRTC has taken action against 1,263 YBS buses that were rolling in the city without disciplined acts within two months of 2023.

In January and February this year, 1,263 YBS buses driving without discipline in Yangon were taken into action.

Action was taken in this cases such as arresting under notes, public complaints, Facebook complaints, driving through red lights, driving excessive speed, derailment in prescribed routes, reckless driving, separate case, beyond the restricted routes, long stoppage time, and overtaking another vehicles.

On 15 March, a campaign was staged for YBS buses not to overtake other buses with putting stickers on the buses, to ensure the safety of the passengers.



Officials put stickers on YBS buses with the warning “Don’t overtake each other” on 15 March.

Drivers have been warned that if they commit overtaking each other once, he will face a fine of K10,000 according to discipline-138 of the YRTC rules.

Last year, there were 7,953 cases of undisciplined YBS bus-

es, and they faced banning CNG supply.

In addition, in order to ensure that YBS bus lines drive under the discipline, YBS buses have been equipped with a telematics system, and Yangon Bus

Operator is conducting monitoring and action.

A total of 117 YBS bus lines in Yangon Region to operate them daily with 3,650 buses and serves transport of some 1.4 million passengers. — TWA/KZL

HEALTH/PANDEMIC
WORLD

Lacking health workers, Germany taps robots for elder care

THE white-coloured humanoid “Garmi” does not look much different from a typical robot — it stands on a platform with wheels and is equipped with a black screen on which two blue circles acting as eyes are attached.

But retired German doctor Guenter Steinebach, 78, said: “For me, this robot is a dream.”

Not only is Garmi able to perform diagnostics on patients, it can also provide care and treatment for them. Or at least, that is the plan.

Garmi is a product of a new sector called geriatrics, a discipline that taps advanced technologies like robotics, IT and



This picture shows the humanoid Garmi and a person interacting with each other. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

3D technology for geriatrics, gerontology and nursing.

About a dozen scientists built Garmi with the help of med-

ical practitioners like Steinebach at the Munich Institute of Robotics and Machine Intelligence.

Part of the Technical Uni-

versity of Munich, the institute based its unit specialising in geriatrics in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, a ski resort that is home to one of the highest proportion of elderly people in Germany.

Europe’s most populous country is itself one of the world’s most rapidly ageing societies. With the number of people needing care growing quickly and an estimated 670,000 carer posts to go unfilled in Germany by 2050, the researchers are racing to conceive robots that can take over some of the tasks carried out today by nurses, carers and doctors.

“We have ATMs where we can get cash today. We can im-

agine that one day, based on the same model, people can come to get their medical examination in a kind of technology hub,” said Abdeldjalil Naceri, 43, the lead scientist of the lab.

Doctors could then evaluate the results of the robot’s diagnostics from a distance, something that could be particularly valuable for people living in remote communities.

Alternatively the machine could offer a more personalised service at home or in a care home — by serving meals, opening a bottle of water, calling for help in case of a fall or organising a video call with family and friends. — AFP

Study suggest new strategy to treat cause of sudden cardiac arrest in athletes

SCIENTISTS from the University of Utah Health have corrected abnormal heart rhythms in mice by restoring healthy levels of a protein that heart cells require to connect with one another.

GJA1-20k is a protein that is underproduced in people with arrhythmogenic cardiomyopathy, a genetic condition that is one of the leading causes of sudden cardiac arrest in athletes under the age of 35.

The finding of the study published in the journal Circulation Research, suggests a new strategy for treating the abnormal heart rhythms

caused by arrhythmogenic cardiomyopathy.

The results may also have implications for treating dangerous arrhythmias associated with more common conditions, such as those that can develop soon after a heart attack.

“This is really a new paradigm for the treatment of heart rhythm disorders,” says Joseph Palatinus, M.D., Ph.D., an investigator at the Nora Eccles Harrison Cardiovascular Research and Training Institute (CVRTI) and critical care cardiologist at Intermountain Healthcare. — ANI



The results may also have implications for treating dangerous arrhythmias associated with more common conditions, such as those that can develop soon after a heart attack. PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ANI

Garbage piles up in Paris as refuse workers continue strike



A woman passes by garbage left on the street near the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France, 17 March 2023. PHOTO: GAO JING/XINHUA

OVER 10,000 tons of garbage has piled up in the streets of Paris due to the municipal sanitation workers’ strike against the government’s controversial pension

reform bill, the City Hall said on Friday.

Refuse collectors have been on strike in Paris for 12 days. On Thursday, Prime Minister

Elisabeth Borne announced she is activating a special constitutional power to force passage of the pension reform bill, leading demonstrators to set garbage on fire in the French capital.

Striking sanitation workers are also blocking the three waste incinerators in the Paris suburbs. However, not all the city’s 20 arrondissements (quarters) are invaded by garbage, since ten are serviced by private companies. Mayor of Paris Anne Hidalgo supports the social movement against the pension reform bill. “The claim of the garbage collectors of the City of Paris who legitimately wish not to work two more years is fair,” she said at the beginning of the strike. — Xinhua

Africa CDC says multi-country cholera outbreak tally reaches 53,660; toll at 1,282

A total of 53,660 cholera cases have been confirmed in a multi-country outbreak of the disease since February 2023, the Africa Center for Disease Control (Africa CDC) has said.

A total of 13 member countries have reported cholera cases since the beginning of the year, with five southern African

nations reporting evidence of cross-border spread of the disease, the Africa CDC told a press briefing on Thursday.

Cross-border cholera spread is also likely in eastern African countries, the specialized healthcare agency of the 55-member African Union (AU) warned.

It said 1,282 people have died from cholera across the 13 AU member countries in the latest outbreak.

“Malawi accounts for over 70 percent of the cases reported on the continent this year, with the outbreak reported in all 29 districts of the country,” the Africa CDC said. — AFP

ECONOMY
WORLD

Japanese brokerage, schools work to improve kids’ financial literacy

MITSUBISHI UFJ Morgan Stanley Securities Co has recently signed agreements with Japanese junior and senior high schools to help them offer a curriculum that will improve the financial literacy of students.

The move comes after financial education was made compulsory in public senior high schools last year along with the country lowering the age of adulthood to 18 from 20.

The government of Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has made an effort to encourage people to invest their wealth as it seeks to double the amount of investment income generat-



An official of Mitsubishi UFJ Morgan Stanley Securities Co gives a lecture at Toshimagaoka Joshigakuen Junior and Senior High School in Tokyo on 31 May 2022. PHOTO: TOSHIMAGAOKA JOSHIGAKUEN JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL /KYODO

ed by each household. Toshimagaoka Joshiga- kuen Junior and Senior High School in Tokyo signed the

agreement on 15 February, followed by Edogawa Gakuen Toride Junior High School and Senior High School in Ibaraki Prefecture on 22 February, and Seigakuin Junior and Senior High School in Tokyo on 9 March.

Under the agreements, the securities firm and the schools will jointly hold classes from April to give students basic knowledge about the stock market, including its history, as well as information about how to go about selecting and buying company shares, according to an official from the brokerage.

“We would like to enhance the financial literacy of students, who will lead the next generation, and help shift their minds from saving to making investments when they become adults,” said Aoi Moriyama, a senior manager in charge of the program at the brokerage. Japanese households tend to hold much more of their financial wealth in cash savings than people in other countries. According to the Bank of Japan, cash and deposits accounted for 54.3 percent of financial assets held by Japanese people in March 2022, against 13.7 percent in the United States and 34.5 percent in Europe. — Kyodo

OECD predicts fragile economic recovery



Vehicles wait to be loaded on the pure car and truck carriers in the Yantan Port, east China’s Shandong Province, 11 December 2022. PHOTO: CFP /XINHUA

THE world is in the midst of a “fragile economic recovery” in the wake of the impacts from the coronavirus pandemic and the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) said on Friday.

In its “Economic Outlook, Interim Report” released on Friday, the OECD predicted the global economy to grow by 2.6 percent this year and then speed up to 2.9 percent in 2024 as the lasting impacts of the Ukraine crisis, such as energy supply issues and inflation, diminish.

“Declining energy prices have contributed to a modest improvement in the global outlook,” the OECD said in a statement.

The report predicted that China’s economy would be the fastest growing in the world this year, increasing by 5.3 percent, while the U.S. economy to grow by 1.5 percent this year and 0.9 percent in 2024. — Xinhua

NEWS IN BRIEF

Norway rejects electricity cable project with Scotland

NORWAY’S government on Thursday rejected plans for an undersea electricity cable with Scotland amid a debate on the Scandinavian country’s energy independence and whether it should be exporting electricity.

The Norwegian oil and energy ministry said it was saying ‘no’ to the NorthConnect project because the country needed to meet its own energy needs at competitive rates.

“It is important for the government to ensure that we have a power system that can at all times fulfill the basic needs of power supply,” Oil and Energy Minister Terje Aasland said in a statement.

“We need this hydro power and do not want to open it up for more exports,” he said.

The project had been proposed by three Norwegian municipal groups — Lyse, Agder Energi and Hafslund — and Swedish state-owned electricity group Vattenfall. — AFP

Green tech boom looms but poor nations risk being eclipsed: UN

THE green technology industry could be worth several trillion dollars by 2030 but developing countries will miss out on the boom unless they jump in now, the UN said Thursday.

From a roughly equal position three years ago, green technology exports from the most advanced countries are already racing ahead of developing nations, warned the United Nations’ trade and development agency, UNCTAD.

And without intervention to close the gap, early adopters will build in lasting advantages, making it even harder for developing countries to catch up, UNCTAD said.

“We are at the beginning of a technological revolution based on green technologies,” said the agency’s chief Rebeca Grynspan.

“Missing this technological wave... would have long-lasting negative implications.”



An electric vehicle is plugged into a charging station at a Walmart parking lot in Duarte on 14 September 2018. PHOTO: FREDERIC J. BROWN / AFP / FILE

UNCTAD estimated that 17 key frontier technologies, which are at the leading edge of green innovation, could create a market worth more than \$9.5 trillion by 2030 — up from \$1.5 trillion in 2020.

The technologies include artificial intelligence, electric vehicles, green hydrogen, bio-fuels, nanotechnology, 5G, gene editing, robotics, 3D printing, wind energy and blockchain. — AFP

Huawei has replaced thousands of US-banned parts with Chinese versions: founder

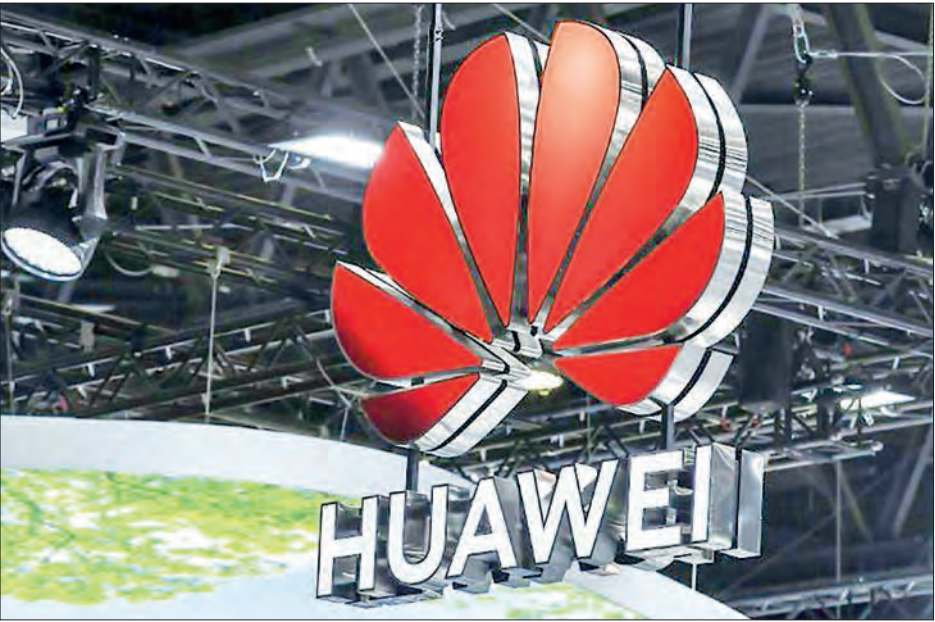
CHINESE technology giant Huawei has replaced thousands of product components banned by the United States with homegrown versions, its founder has said, according to a transcript of a recent speech released

by a Shanghai university. A leading supplier of telecom gear, smartphones and other advanced equipment, Huawei has been repeatedly targeted by Washington in recent years over cybersecurity and espionage concerns.

The administration of former president Donald Trump effectively barred American companies from doing business with the firm, and his successor Joe Biden has imposed further

sanctions including a ban on sales of new Huawei equipment in the United States. The moves have forced the firm to find new ways to obtain semiconductors and other parts, with founder Ren Zhengfei saying Huawei has replaced more than 13,000 components with domestic versions in the past three years, according to the transcript posted by Shanghai Jiao Tong University on Friday.

The company has also redeveloped more than 4,000 circuit boards for its products, Ren said during the talk, which took place 24 February. "As of now, our circuit board (production) has stabilised, because we have a supply of domestically produced components," he said. — AFP



Chinese tech giant Huawei has been repeatedly targeted by Washington over cybersecurity concerns. PHOTO: AFP



The closed Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) headquarters in Santa Clara, California. PHOTO: AFP

Interest rate risk: SVB's nemesis a well-known foe in banking

AMONG the mysteries surrounding the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank, finance experts have fixated on the California lender's failure to practice basic risk management. A catalyst for SVB's demise was the Federal Reserve's shift from near-zero interest rates to large interest rate increases to counter inflation, a reversal that immediately lowered the value of SVB's holdings linked to long-term US Treasury bonds.

Within the world of risk management, this issue — referred to as "interest rate risk" — is well known and relatively straightforward to address. Banks manage this risk by hedging, purchasing futures contracts or

other financial vehicles that rise in value in case a bank's holdings are devalued due to policy changes. SVB's meager hedging operation "astounds me," said Clifford Rossi, a former risk management executive at Citigroup and a professor at the University of Maryland. Rossi estimates SVB's hedging program should have been twice its size. At the end of 2022, SVB reported \$120 billion of these investment securities, or 55 percent of total assets, more than double the average of US banks. A precipitating event in SVB's collapse was the March 8 disclosure that it sold \$21 billion in securities at a loss of \$1.8 billion to raise cash to fund operations. — AFP

Dutch gear up for colorful, productive tulip season

AS spring arrives along with the highly anticipated tulip season, the Dutch are

ready to welcome visitors and showcase the country's wide tulip fields with

vibrant colors. In the Netherlands, which is dubbed as the land of tulips, the tulip season typically runs from mid-March to mid-May, when the flowers gradually blossom till April.

"Our farm now produces up to 150,000 tulip flowers every day," Arjan Smit, owner of Smit Flowers, a fourth-generation Dutch family business focusing on the cultivation of tulips, told Xinhua. Germany and the United Kingdom are among top export destinations of

the tulips produced on his farm, he said, adding that many of the flowers also go to the Dutch domestic market. Meanwhile, Keukenhof, the most popular place to see tulips in the Netherlands, is scheduled to open its gates to global tourists on 23 March. More than 1 million visitors from around the world are expected to visit the most well-known tulip garden during its eight weeks of exhibition, according to a press release of Keukenhof. — Xinhua



Employees prepare bouquets of tulips for the tulip season at a workshop in Spierdijk, the Netherlands, 17 March, 2023. PHOTO: SYLVIA LEDERER/XINHUA

UBS against the clock in Credit Suisse takeover talks

LIKE UBS, Credit Suisse is one of 30 banks around the world deemed to be Global Systemically Important Banks. UBS was up against the clock Sunday in talks to

finalise a mammoth takeover of its troubled rival Swiss bank Credit Suisse and reassure investors before the markets reopen. Switzerland's biggest bank UBS is being urged

by the authorities to get a deal over the line in a bid to avoid a wave of contagious panic on the markets Monday, according to several media reports. The wealthy Alpine

nation's largest banks have been in urgent negotiations throughout the weekend, with the government, central bank and financial regulators all involved. — AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V FILOTIMO VOY.NO. (311S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V FILOTIMO VOY.NO. (311S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 20-3-2023 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 SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD

Russia’s Asia pivot spurs boom in Chinese classes

EVERY Sunday, Chinese tutor Kirill Burobin begins work in the early morning and is kept busy until midnight.

As Russia seeks to tighten ties with China amid Moscow’s military campaign in Ukraine, the number of Burobin’s students has tripled over the past year.

“Sunday is the busiest,” 20-year-old Burobin, who makes a good living with his online lessons, told AFP.

“I have 16 hours of classes virtually without a break.”

The boom in demand for Chinese lessons in Russia illustrates the country’s pivot towards Asia as tensions build between Moscow and the West.

Chinese President Xi Jinping’s three-day visit to Russia beginning Monday aims to deepen what the two countries

have called a “no-limits” relationship, which is increasingly important for Russia as its international isolation deepens.

Pummelled by multiple rounds of Western sanctions, Russia’s economic and technological development is becoming more dependent on China.

Natalia Danina, a manager at HeadHunter, the country’s top online recruitment company, said that last year there were nearly 11,000 vacancies requiring knowledge of the Chinese language, a 44 percent increase compared to 2021.

Over the same period, the number of jobs for Chinese speakers in Russia has doubled in sales, transport and logistics, said Danina, pointing to an “accelerated transition” to Chinese-made equipment and spare parts. — AFP



ChineseFirst language centre co-founder Wang Yinyu teaching a Chinese class for adults in the town of Reutov, outside Moscow. **PHOTO: AFP**

Russia’s Vladimir Putin visited Mariupol after Crimea: Kremlin



A handout photograph taken and released by the Russian presidential press office in Sevastopol on 18 March, 2023, shows Russian President Vladimir Putin in Crimea. **PHOTO: HANDOUT / AFP**

PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin has toured the city of Mariupol, Russian state news reported Sunday, almost one year after Moscow claimed to have captured the strategic port city.

This is the Russian leader’s first trip to the Donbas region since the beginning of the Ukraine conflict in February last year.

Putin flew to Mariupol by helicopter before driving a car around the city, Tass news agency reported, citing the Kremlin.

The announcement of Putin’s visit to Mariupol comes after his surprise stop in Crimea on Saturday to mark the ninth anniversary of the peninsula’s annexation. In Mariupol, he visited different sites, spoke with

residents, and was presented with a report on the reconstruction work of the city, according to state-run media.

Russia launched a scorched-earth campaign against Mariupol at the start of its offensive last year, destroying the Azovstal steel works, which was the last holdout of Ukrainian forces in the city. — AFP

WORLD: TOP HEADLINES

Vatican closes Nicaragua embassy amid escalating row

THE Vatican representative to Nicaragua has left the country and closed its embassy there amid continuing tensions between Managua and the Holy See, the Vatican News portal has reported.

Bilateral relations had been on the brink of collapse after Pope Francis in an interview last week referred to the government of socialist president Daniel Ortega as a dictatorship.

The portal said the diplomat, Monsignor Marcel Diouf, had traveled on Friday to Costa Rica.

The closure of the embassy

“occurred as a result of a request from the Nicaraguan government,” Vatican News said.

It said custody of the apostolic nunciature in Managua had been “entrusted to the Italian Republic,” under terms of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

In an interview with Argentine portal Infobae on March 10, Francis described Ortega’s government as a “gross dictatorship” led by an “unbalanced” president.

In the interview, the Argentine pope also expressed

concern, without naming him, for Nicaraguan bishop Rolando Alvarez, who in February was sentenced to 26 years in prison for “undermining national integrity,” among other charges.

Alvarez has been under house arrest since August and refused to be deported along with 222 political dissidents to the United States.

Soon after, the Nicaraguan Foreign Ministry issued a statement saying that “a suspension of diplomatic relations (with the Vatican) has been proposed.” — Xinhua

Seven die in Mexico shootout as gunmen ambush soldiers

AT least five suspected criminals and two soldiers were killed in a shootout after gunmen ambushed a military unit in southwest Mexico, authorities reported on Saturday.

The confrontation occurred Friday afternoon in the community of El Pescado, in a mountainous area of the state of Guerrero that is difficult to access and the scene of conflicts between criminal groups.

A military unit “was the target of an attack by approx-

imately 18 armed civilians aboard two vehicles,” after which a shootout broke out, according to an army report.

Five gunmen and two soldiers were killed while two people suffered gunshot wounds.

According to local authorities, the attackers were likely members of La Familia Michoacana, which was formerly one of the most powerful drug cartels in Mexico but lost much of its influence after the capture of its leaders. — AFP

France’s Borne: resilient technocrat under pressure

FRANCE’S Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne, who has pushed through a controversial pensions overhaul without a parliament vote, is an experienced technocrat known for her resilience.

The 61-year-old engineer in May last year became the first woman to head a French government in three decades.

When she took office, she dedicated the moment to “all the little girls”.

“Follow your dreams, nothing must slow the fight for



Borne evaded an interview question about whether she was ready to sacrifice herself for the pensions overhaul. **PHOTO: AFP**

women’s place in our society,” she said. Borne had proven her loyalty to President Emmanuel Macron during his first term, serving as transport, environment and finally labour minister from 2020.

During Macron’s second and last stint in office, she has as premier staunchly defended his flagship pensions reform to raise the retirement age from 62 to 64.

She has championed the bill both in parliament and several television interviews, while

the centrist president has made very few public comments on the topic.

On Thursday, she stoically withstood boos and jeers in parliament as she deployed a controversial executive power to force through the legislation without a vote in the hung lower house. She invoked article 49.3 of the constitution, despite previously saying she did not want to use it and after two months of nationwide demonstrations protesting against the reform. —AFP

Kazakhstan kicks off snap parliamentary polls

KAZAKHSTAN holds snap parliamentary elections Sunday as the leader of the Central Asian country pushes political reforms that critics say are designed to consolidate power one year after deadly protests.

Polling stations opened at 7:00 am (0100 GMT), according to AFP reporters in the capital Astana and Almaty, Kazakhstan’s largest city. Around 12 million voters have until 8:00 pm to cast their ballots.

The huge, oil-rich nation is wedged between its former Soviet master Russia and China, which is gaining status in Central Asia as an economic powerhouse.

President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev announced the early vote as part of a “modernisation” drive introduced months

after protests against fuel prices erupted in January last year. They were brutally crushed and 238 people died, according to the official toll.

Tokayev, a former diplomat, was hand-picked in 2019 by his predecessor and mentor Nursultan Nazarbayev to take the helm after a nearly three-decade rule. But Tokayev purged vestiges of that era after the demonstrations.

He promised to reform government institutions and in January dissolved parliament, saying early polls would “give new impetus to the modernisation”.

The ex-Soviet country’s elections now feature a wider array of candidates but there was scepticism in Almaty over the changes. — AFP



A man votes during parliamentary elections in Almaty on 19 March 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

Protesters denounce UK plan to halt migrants’ Channel crossings



Britain wants to prevent people arriving illegally from seeking asylum before they are sent to a third country. **PHOTO: JUSTIN TALLIS**

ANTI-RACISM protesters marched in London on Saturday to denounce the government’s controversial plan to tackle cross-Channel migrant crossings by preventing arrivals from applying for asylum.

Around 2,000 protesters, many carrying signs reading “no human being is illegal” and bear-

ing trade union logos, marched towards Downing Street, the prime minister’s official residence.

Organisers said the demonstration was partly a response to the government’s “inhuman” and “illegal” migration bill.

“People in this country are decent... and they’re willing to

open their arms to people who are fleeing terrible circumstances,” said the protest’s planning officer Mark Daly.

“The government is trying to make these people not only unwelcome but illegal. We cannot classify people as illegal,” he said. “It’s a racist policy from a racist government.”

Other protests took place in Glasgow, Scotland, and the Welsh capital Cardiff.

The Conservative government wants to outlaw asylum claims by all illegal arrivals and transfer them to “safe” third countries, such as Rwanda, in a bid to stop thousands of migrants from crossing the Channel on small boats. The bill proposes preventing people who have arrived in the country illegally from seeking asylum before they are sent to a third country deemed safe. — AFP

Trump says expecting ‘arrest’ on Tuesday, calls for protests

FORMER US President Donald Trump said he expects to be “arrested” on Tuesday over hush money allegedly paid to a porn star before the 2016 election, calling on his supporters to protest.

Citing a “leak” from the Manhattan district attorney’s office, Trump wrote on his Truth

Social platform on Saturday morning: “Leading Republican candidate & former President of the United States of America will be arrested on Tuesday of next week. Protest, take our nation back!”

The investigation centers on \$130,000 paid weeks before the

2016 polls to stop Stormy Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, from going public about an affair she says she had with Trump years earlier.

Prosecutors are weighing whether to charge Trump in the case, and speculation is rife that an indictment is likely. — AFP

Russia's Vladimir Putin visited Mariupol after Crimea: Kremlin

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SPORT

Lineker loses his voice after BBC return

GARY Lineker will not present the BBC's FA Cup coverage on Sunday after losing his voice following his on-screen return.

The former England striker was restored to his presenting role for live coverage of Manchester City's 6-0 thrashing of Burnley on Saturday, a week after being taken off air in an impartiality row.

Lineker was criticised for comparing the launch of the UK government's new asylum policy to the rhetoric of Nazi-era Germany. However, his removal sparked chaos across the BBC's sporting coverage as presenters, pundits and commentators showed their backing for Lineker by refusing to work. A compromise was reached on Monday as the two sides said they had agreed that Lineker would return to screens while the corporation launches an independent review into its social



Gary Lineker returned to the BBC studios on Saturday. PHOTO: AFP

media guidelines. Lineker, who is the BBC's highest paid presenter, said "it's great to be here" as he fronted live coverage from the Etihad.

But the BBC said on Sunday he would not present Brighton's

quarter-final clash with fourth-tier Grimsby due to illness. "Due to illness, we've got a line-up change for today's live FA Cup coverage of Brighton v Grimsby on BBC One," BBC Sport tweeted. — AFP

Griezmann-inspired Atletico crush sinking Valencia

ANTOINE Griezmann pulled the strings for Atletico Madrid as they shredded Ruben Baraja's helpless Valencia 3-0 in La Liga on Saturday.

The French forward opened the scoring for the hosts at the Metropolitano and continued his own superb form with another fine display at the heart of Diego Simeone's side.

Yannick Carrasco doubled Atletico's lead early in the second half and Thomas Lemar sealed the win, with the Rojiblancos, third, moving six points clear of fourth-placed Real Socie-

dad, having played a game more.

The defeat leaves the troubled Los Che 17th, level on 26 points with Getafe, 18th, who host Sevilla on Sunday.

Atletico recorded a fifth win in six La Liga games and tightened their hold on third place with a confident display, the kind they could not find in the first half of the campaign.

"Before the World Cup nothing was going for us, and now everything is," Atletico midfielder Marcos Llorente told DAZN. — AFP

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.

Team Myanmar holds draw in friendly match against Chinese Sichuan FC



THE Myanmar national women's team, which will compete in the first phase of the Asian Zone qualifiers for the 2024 Olympic women's football tournament, is currently in China for a pre-tournament training programme, and taking exercises in Kunming City.

As the second friendly match, they yesterday played against the Sichuan FC team, and the result was a 1-1 draw.

The Sichuan FC ranked 8th in the last 2022 Chinese Women's Super League, and is playing a friendly match against the Myanmar team as a pre-competition preparation for this season.

The Myanmar national women's team used veteran players in the starting lineup, and substituted with young players with little experience.

The goals for Sichuan FC was scored by forward player Tang Han No 10 in the 53rd minute of the match, and the equalizer for team Myanmar was scored by Pont Pont Pyae Maung in the 82nd minute.

The Myanmar women squad will take training in China with 24 preliminary players until 24 March, and will continue to play against Changchun FC on 22 March as the third warm-up match. —KZL

Myanmar team Captain Khin Marlar Tun (white) approaches the Sichuan FC player to clear the ball during their friendly match held in Kunming City on 19 March 2023. PHOTO: MFF