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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.

Over US\$13 mln received from exports via Kawthoung border in March



Myanmar exports fishery products to neighbouring Thailand under the FOB system. The picture shows fishery products to be exported via the Kawthoung border.

MYANMAR carried out border trade worth US\$13.687 million with Thailand via the Kawthoung border between 1 and 19 March, statistics by the Ministry of Commerce indicated.

Kawthoung border saw

11,732 tonnes of export worth \$11.905 million and 1,097 tonnes of imports worth \$1.782 million, totalling \$13.687 million.

Myanmar exports fishery products to neighbouring Thailand under the FOB system. Ex-

ports surpassed imports at the Kawthoung border. The main export items are fisher products such as shrimp, dried fish, crab, dried and fresh squid, cuttlefish, fish meal, cashew and oil palm, and tapioca starch, ceramic tiles,

salt, steel wire, diesel, octane, silicon, Sulphur, aluminium, charcoal powder, water purifier, spare parts for swimming pool, nylon rope, fishing net, edible bird's nest and parts of a ship are imported. — TWA/EM

INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL

Commemorative event held to mark 7th Anniversary of Mekong-Lancang Cooperation

PAGE-3

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Rising oil prices elevate cuttlefish price

PAGE-10



NATIONAL

Approaching bridges, roads to Yangon-Dala Bridge slated to complete at 2023-end

PAGE-11



Increasing number of travellers visit Inlay region

INLAY Lake in Nyaungshwe Township of Shan State is a natural freshwater lake that attracts many local visitors and tourists.

Tourists are visiting the Inlay region this summer a few years after tourism had been stopped due to the outbreak of Covid-19.

"I came to the Inlay Lake because the children wanted to go on a pilgrimage to PhaungdawOo Pagoda during summer holidays. I visited Inlay Lake

several years ago. At that time, my visit coincided with PhaungdawOo Pagoda festival and it was quite crowded. Now I can see a vast expanse of clean water in the Inlay Lake and pay homage to PhaungdawOo Pagoda in a quiet atmosphere," said Ma Khin Cho Win, a visitor who came with her family.

"At present, visitors are coming gradually. I expect that more visitors will come when the matriculation

SEE PAGE-10



Visitors are seen in the Inlay Lake.

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 Article 3 of the Political Parties Registration Law, the Union Peace and Unity Party, and under Section 25 of the Political Parties Registration Law, the Karen National Democratic 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, eight parties have applied

under Section 3 of the Political Parties Registration Law, and 32 parties under Section 25 of the Political Parties Registration Law, totalling 40. Among these 40 parties, 10 parties

will organize the entire union and 30 parties only within a region or state. The Union Election Commission continues verifying the right to establish and register these parties. —MNA/KZL

Public Notice for Submitting Objection

1. The National Political Alliances League with its headquarters located at No 1010/B, Pyinya Street, 4th Ward, South Okkalapa Township, Yangon Region, applied on 22-3-2023 to be allowed to continue 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 below.
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.



The flag design of the National Political Alliances League.



The emblem of the National Political Alliances League

Union Election Commission

Public Notice for Submitting Objection

1. The Kokang Democracy and Unity Party (KKDUP) with its headquarters located at No Hta/19/764, Humon Street, West of the Mansu Shan Buddhist Monastery, Area 19, Ward 12, Lashio, Shan State, applied on 22-3-2023 to be allowed to continue 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 below.
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.



The flag design of the Kokang Democracy and Unity Party (KKDUP)



The emblem of the Kokang Democracy and Unity Party (KKDUP)

Union Election Commission

Public Notice for Submitting Objection

1. The National Democratic Force Party (NDF) with its headquarters located at No 47, 1st Floor, West Horse Race Course Road, near the Tamway Roundabout, Bo Sein Hman Ward, Bahan Township, Yangon Region, applied on 22-3-2023 to be allowed to continue 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 below.
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.



The flag design of the National Democratic Force Party (NDF)



The emblem of the National Democratic Force Party (NDF)

Union Election Commission

Public Notice for Submitting Objection

1. The Inn National League Party with its headquarters located at Yonegyi Street, near Teiknann Bridge, Kantha Ward, Nyaungshwe, Shan State (South), applied on 22-3-2023 to be allowed to continue 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 below.
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.



The flag design of the Inn National League Party



The emblem of the Inn National League Party

Union Election Commission

Tatmadaw's key responsibility to safeguard Our Three Main National Causes and Constitution

TATMADAW is mainly responsible for safeguarding Our Three Main National Causes and the Constitution. Tatmadaw is going to serve those duties as a Guardian for the betterment of the country and the ethnic people within.

(Excerpts from the speech delivered by State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Maha Thray Sithu Min Aung Hlaing at the Passing Out Parade of the 64th Intake of Defence Services Academy on 2 December 2022)

SAC Member DPM Union Home Affairs Minister receives Chinese Ambassador

STATE Administration Council Member Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Soe Htut received the delegation led by Ambassador Mr Chen Hai of the People's Republic of China to Myanmar at the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, both sides cordially discussed and frankly exchanged views on

the rule of law and cooperation in security affairs, border affairs, the Myanmar Police Force and the Chinese Police Force and further cooperation measures.

The meeting was also attended by Deputy Minister Maj-Gen Toe Yi and Permanent Secretary U Khaing Tun Oo from the Ministry of Home Affairs. — MNA/TS



Deputy Prime Minister Lt-Gen Soe Htut receives Chinese Ambassador Mr Chen Hai in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Commemorative event held to mark 7th Anniversary of Mekong-Lancang Cooperation



Deputy Prime Minister Admiral Tin Aung San poses for the documentary group photo at the event yesterday.

IN honour of the 7th Anniversary of the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation on 23 March, the Exhibition on the Achievements of Mekong-Lancang Cooperation Special Fund Projects in Myanmar was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs followed by the commemorative reception at M-Gallery Hotel yesterday.

Admiral Tin Aung San, Member of the State Adminis-

tration Council, Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Transport and Communications, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe, Union Ministers from the MLC Special Fund Projects implementation ministries, the Ambassadors and diplomats from the Embassies of Mekong-Lancang Cooperation Member States, the deputy ministers and senior officials attended the commemorative event.

Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe and the Heads of Mission from the Embassies of Mekong-Lancang Cooperation cut the ribbon to signify the opening of the Exhibition on the Achievements of Mekong-Lancang Cooperation Special Fund Projects in Myanmar. The dignitaries observed the exhibition on the outcome of 92 MLC Special

Fund projects implemented by seventeen ministries in 34 cooperation areas.

Afterwards, the reception for the 7th Anniversary of the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation was also held at the same hotel. At the reception, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe delivered a commemorative address in which he praised the benefits of the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation in pursuit of regional sustainable inclusive development as well as valuable assistance to the peoples of Myanmar through the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation Special Platform. He also highlighted the importance of MLC principles in the maintenance of regional peace and stability, and also for the promotion of the socioeconomic development of the Mekong-Lancang Region. The Union minister expressed his appreciation for the contribution of China to the MLC Special Fund.

Ambassador Mr Chen Hai of the People's Republic of China to Myanmar also delivered the commemorative speech.

The commemorative photo

was taken and the video clip presentation featuring activities of the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation in Myanmar was presented at the occasion. During the dinner, the cultural troupe from the Fine Arts Department of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture entertained the attendees with cultural performances. A flower bouquet was presented to the cultural troupe by Admiral Tin Aung San, Member of the State Administration Council, Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe and Ambassador Mr Chen Hai of the People's Republic of China to Myanmar.

Mekong-Lancang Cooperation was established on 23 March 2016 with the aim to cooperate for the regional sustainable inclusive development by the six member countries which are Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam. Myanmar and China have been taking responsibility as the current Co-Chairs of the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation. — MNA

SAC Member DPM MoTC Union Minister attends 63rd Anniversary of World Meteorological Day

THE ceremony of the 63rd anniversary of World Meteorological Day (WMD), organized by the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology (DMH), Ministry of Transport and Communications, was celebrated in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The ceremony was attended by State Administration Council Member Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Transport and Communications Admiral Tin Aung San, Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Min Naung, Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Khin Maung Yi, the deputy ministers, heads of departments, departmental officials and guests.

State Administration Council Member Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Transport and Communications Admiral Tin Aung San delivered the opening address. He highlighted that the memorial ceremony of World Meteorological Day has been celebrated annually every year on 23 March all over the world. The theme of this year 2023 is 'The Future of Weather, Climate and Water across Generations'. He also pointed out, due to climate change, Meteorological, Hydrological and Climatic Extremes events are becoming more frequent around the world, especially in the island and developing countries, which are the most affected by climate change. According to the statements of the World Meteorological Organization, 2016 was recorded as the hottest year in the world. Again, the La Niña process starting from 2020 up to 2022 was remarked as a "triple-dip" La Niña event. However, it has been observed that the La Niña processes are not as cool as they should be, because they cannot overcome the current global warming. According to the annual analysis of the World Meteorological Organization after 2022, the average temperature of the world has already exceeded the pre-industrial era by 1.06 degrees Celsius. Due to global warming, the melting of the icebergs and average sea level has already risen about 24 centimetres higher than the sea level of the year 1880s, so some island countries are encountered many challenges. In addition, the changing rainfall pattern, flooding due to untimely heavy rain, and in contrast, droughts and water shortages have been also experienced every year. In order to reduce the increase in temperature, the United Nations Convention on climate change which was held in Paris, France in 2015 agreed that the temperature limited to not more than 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to the level of the pre-industrial period. Now that the rate of climate change is accelerating, all people should collaborate to reduce the impact of natural disasters relevant to meteorology and hydrology. And therefore to be made sure that future generations can survive and thrive.

The Deputy Prime Minister and party enjoyed the video message of Prof Petteri Taalas, Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization, and the weather and climate change video clip. Then, the Deputy Prime Minister gave prizes to winners in the 2023 World Meteorological Day commemorative article contest. He also visited the exhibition to mark the World Meteorological Day 2023.

In the afternoon, the paper reading session continued, and nine research papers were presented on relevant meteorological, hydrological and seismological topics from the Ministry of Transport and Communications and the Ministry of Education.

— MNA



Deputy Prime Minister Admiral Tin Aung San views round the exhibition in marking World Meteorological Day 2023 yesterday.

SPTT continues 2nd-day meeting with UWSP, NDAA and SSPP



The second-day meeting between the State Peace talks Team and delegations from UWSP, NDAA and SSPP in progress in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

THE State Peace Talks Team-SPTT continued its second-day meeting with the delegations of the United Wa State Party-UWSP, the National Democratic Alliance Army-NDAA and the Shan State Progress Party-SSPP at the National Solidarity and Peacemaking Centre on 23 March morning.

The meeting was attended by State Administration Council Member Union Minister at the Government Office Chairman of National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee-NSPNC Peace Talks Team Leader Lt-Gen Yar Pyae, SAC Member Lt-Gen Moe Myint Tun, NSPNC Secretary Lt-Gen Win Bo Shein, NSPNC members and UWSP Vice-Chairman U Lau Yaku, NDAA Vice-Chairman U San Pae, and SSPP Central Committee member Sao Hsay Pein Pha and representatives of the peace talks.

At the second-day meeting, both sides mutually discussed the issues that were not completed yet in the first-day meeting, regional development and general issues. In addition, both sides approved and signed the bilateral agreements based on the two-day negotiations and exchanged the agreements.

Afterwards, Lt-Gen Yar Pyae and the UWSP vice-chairman gave closing remarks and then exchanged gifts. – MNA/MKKS

MoFA Union Minister receives Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar



Chinese Ambassador Mr Chen Hai calls on Union Minister U Than Swe in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

U Than Swe, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, received Mr Chen Hai, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, at the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they cordially discussed matters

pertaining to the Global Civilization Initiative proposed by President Xi Jinping, successful outcomes of Chinese People's political consultative conference (CPPCC) and the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) of the People's Republic of China in 2023, the maintenance of peace and stability along the border area between Myanmar and Chi-

na, and China's continuous constructive support towards Myanmar development endeavour and for the success of the repatriation and resettlement of displaced persons from Rakhine State as well as further enhancement of mutually beneficial cooperation both at regional and international arena. — MNA

Ad-Hoc Meeting of Task Force held to facilitate provision of Humanitarian Assistance to Myanmar through AHA Centre

THE Ad-Hoc Meeting of the Task Force to facilitate the provision of Humanitarian Assistance to Myanmar through the AHA Centre was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The meeting was chaired by U Ko Ko Hlaing, Union Minister for International Cooperation and Chairman of the Myanmar Task Force and attended by Dr Thet Thet Khine, Vice-Chairperson of the Task Force and Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and members of the Myanmar Task Force from respective ministries.

The meeting discussed the ways forward to facilitate the

completion of the Joint Needs Assessment in order to proceed with the provision of broader humanitarian assistance to people in need in Myanmar and coordinated among the concerned ministries to ensure effective and secure on-ground procedures for the interim arrangement of provision of humanitarian assistance to Myanmar. The meeting then reaffirmed Myanmar's commitment to the implementation of Point 4 of the Five-Point Consensus which is the provision of humanitarian assistance to Myanmar by enhancing the synergy between the existing mechanisms to meet the needs of people in need. — MNA



Foodstuffs providing ceremony for displaced people takes place in Pinlaung Township

IN collaboration with the Pa-O Self-Administered Zone Administration Body and the Pa-O National Organization-PNO, a ceremony for providing foodstuffs to temporarily displaced people was held at the multi-purpose hall in the Pinlaung Township of Pa-O Self-Administered Zone, Shan State (South), on 22 March.

At first, Member of Pa-O Self-Administered Zone Administration Body Lt-Col Nyi Nyi Tin gave an opening speech

and Town Elder U Khun Maung Thaung gave words of encouragement to the temporarily displaced people.

The commodities were presented to the displaced people by Lieutenant-Colonel Nyi Nyi Tin, U Khun Hla Thein, departmental staff of Pa-O Self-Administered Zone, the PNO, Chairman U Win Ko of Pa-O Literary and Cultural Association (Central), Town Elder U Khun Maung Thaung, Santa Kham (PNO), Major Khun Joseph

and Township Administrator U Tint Zaw Htet. On behalf of the temporarily displaced people, a resident gave a word of thanks.

There are 930 households and 3,855 displaced people in the Pinlaung Township. It is reported that the food commodities provided to the temporarily displaced people were 352 rice bags, 465 visses of edible oil, 930 visses of chickpeas, and 465 visses of salt with a total value of K29,610,000. — Township IPRD/CT



The ceremony to provide foodstuffs to displaced persons in Pinlaung Township is underway.

58th Myanma Gems Emporium winds up successfully



General view of the 58th Gems Emporium in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

THE 58th Myanma Gems Emporium came to a close at the Maniradana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

The bids for jade lots (from No 1,501 to No 2,150) were opened and examined by officials and the highest bidders for 430 jade lots were announced.

Out of 295 pearl lots on display, a total of 290 lots were sold on 18 and 19 March. Out of 120 gem lots on display, a total of 77 lots were sold on 20 March. Out of 2,150 jade lots on display from 17 to 21 March, a total of 1,544 lots were sold. — MNA/MKKS

"Our main aim is to make every effort for the peace, stability and development of Rakhine State"

Union Minister U Ko Ko Hlaing

UNION Minister for International Cooperation U Ko Ko Hlaing in his capacity as Vice-Chairman 1 of the Rakhine State Stability, Peace and Development Work Coordination Committee, accompanied by Rakhine State Chief Minister U Htein Lin, led a diplomatic team comprising ambassadors and diplomats of ASEAN countries, China, India and Bangladesh embassies and representatives of the AHA Centre to observe the preparations made for the repatriation of displaced persons from Rakhine State, relocation of IDP camps, issuance of NVC (National Verification Card) and vocational training schools in Rakhine State.

The words of the Union minister, the Rakhine State chief minister and departmental officials regarding the preparations for the repatriation of the displaced persons and relocation of IDP camps are as follows: -

U Ko Ko Hlaing (Union Minister, Ministry of International Cooperation)

We have arranged to repatriate the displaced persons from the Bangladesh side under a pilot project. In doing so, we invited the diplomatic missions of ASEAN countries, neighbouring countries and the Executive Director of the AHA Centre and party to show how the Myanmar government is preparing to accept the prospective returnees. First, we observed the Nga-

khuya reception centre and the Hlaphoekhaung camp which is a temporary transit camp for displaced persons after they have been checked at the reception centres.

We will place them at the transit camp for a short period and relocate them to the designated villages. I have been to Rakhine State three times, including this trip. I found progress in work each time. The ruined wards and shelters have been dismantled and rebuilt. The Assemble Board Houses (ABH) donated by the Government of China have been set up at proper locations in the transit camp. It also provides water and electricity. I feel satisfied with the current situation. Almost everything has been renovated. Although the families will have to stay here just for some time, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement will provide child-friendly places for kids, and vocational training for women, as well as kitchen utensils and clothing.

The diplomats who participated in this tour have not ever been here and this is their very first experience. They wanted to know what is going on here because foreign media outlets always express the repatriation issue from a negative perspective. Some are saying that the Myanmar government does not want to accept the displaced people and there is no cooperation from the Myanmar side. On the contrary, Myanmar is ready to



Union Minister U Ko Ko Hlaing



U Htein Lin



Mr Mongkol Visittstump



U Thein Htay Oo



Dr Ko Ko Naing



U Arkar Myint

receive the returnees. It has been ready for a long time, and extensive maintenance works for the infrastructure have to be conducted as no returnees have returned yet. The diplomats clearly witness these situations.

These processes for repatriation are not being carried out only by our ministry. The working committees under the Rakhine State Stability, Peace and Development Work Coordination Committee are coordinating and undertaking the preparatory works. The preparatory works are making progress through the collective efforts of ministries

concerned under the respective working committees. The Rakhine State government and regional administrators have also exerted their best efforts on these processes. I thank all for their relentless efforts. We will implement the necessary works as quickly as possible and make all efforts to repatriate the displaced persons under the bilateral agreements.

Upon their arrival, we will provide them with vocational training to support their livelihoods to improve their socioeconomic status. At the same time, the Rakhine State Stability, Peace and Development Work Coordination Committee will ensure proportionate and inclusive development in Rakhine State by equally prioritizing the development of local ethnic communities in Rakhine State. Our main aim is to make every effort for the peace, stability and development of Rakhine State.

U Htein Lin (Rakhine State Chief Minister)

The preparatory works for the repatriation processes by the Rakhine State government are achieving more progress than before. Regarding the current pilot project, it is being carried out under the guidance of the Union level and our Rakhine state government is assisting with the necessary things. As priorities, we have done

arrangements including roads, buildings, electricity, water and accommodation so that the reception processes will be in order. After they (the displaced persons) have been checked and received, they will be temporarily placed in the transit camp. Then, we will designate the villages for them to relocate and resettle. We have built housing in some villages for them to live in a proper standard of living. We have also prepared the necessary basic infrastructure in the designated 15 villages. We also have plans to provide other required infrastructure when the returnees settle in those villages.

We are working not only for stability and the rule of law in Rakhine State but also for the development of the region. In doing so, peace and tranquillity are indeed necessary for development, but development can also bring peace and tranquillity. Following the guidance of the Head of State, we are making efforts to develop the MSMEs based on agriculture and livestock which will bring benefits to our region and the country as our region is endowed with good water and land resources. The government also grants loans for socioeconomic development from the State Economic Promotion Fund. We are making arrangements to use the loans



Union Minister U Ko Ko Hlaing and the diplomatic team observe the preparations made for the repatriation of displaced people from Rakhine State.

FROM PAGE - 6
effectively. The Rakhine State government, social organizations and local ethnic people are cooperating and coordinating to fulfil the needs of our region in accordance with the instructions of the Union level.

Mr Mongkol Visitstump (Thai Ambassador to Myanmar)

It is my first visit to Myanmar. I arrived in Myanmar four months ago. With the generosity of Myanmar, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar organized a diplomatic tour this time. It helps open our eyes. And we have an opportunity to hear by our own ears. It is an excellent preparation by the Myanmar government for the returnees, and IDPs, so I wish Myanmar and Bangladesh, both countries can consult to move forward on preparations to materialize. The facilities were built some time; two or three years already and still can serve the returnees.

For Thailand, we have development projects here in Rakhine State. For example, the building of rice mills, capacity building on fish culture and agriculture technology by using advanced equipment. We have donated 16 tractors for machinery and even six motorcycles for the centre to use. Now we are in preparation for sending in technicians to install the rice mill in Maungtaw and for the construction of fish ponds. We can teach how to cultivate fish.

Thailand will support the joint efforts of the Myanmar and Bangladesh governments. I appreciate the Myanmar government's efforts on buildings, facilities and training, even taking care of villagers here (Ngakhuya village) is excellent.

U Thein Htay Oo (Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Border Affairs)

Arrangements for repatriations were made in 2018-2019. At that time, around 2,000 or 3,000 people were planning to return but they didn't for various reasons. So, I want them (the displaced persons) to know that the two countries have negotiated and, accordingly, necessary arrangements have been made for repatriation. In the previous attempts, we informed them (the displaced persons) in advance that we would accept them in accordance with the five criteria for eligibility to return and that they could return safely. However, they did not return as they were pressured and controlled not to return. Therefore, the international community thought that we did not want to receive them. We thus invited diplomats to show our preparations which have cost the government more than five billion kyats.

If they return under the pilot project, we will receive and check them at Taungpyo Letwae and Ngakhuya reception centres and then place them at the Hlaphoekhaung transit centre temporarily. We have arranged land plots in 15 villages just north of Maungtaw. There are also farmlands at the designed relocation sites and we have arrangements to facilitate their short and long-term livelihoods. I want them to know about our arrangements. However, those who do not want to return barred those who wish to return. We did not force those people out of the country but they left on their own decisions. Yet, foreign countries have reproached our country.

I want them to know about our efforts to receive them. We spent a large amount of funds on the repatriation process. The Rakhine State government, Ministry of Border Affairs and Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement will provide basic food



Union Minister U Ko Ko Hlaing and the diplomatic team view round the vocational training school.

provision to the returnees for one month. The world does not hear the ground truth of what we have done here. Therefore, we invited the diplomats to share the correct information. Under the pilot project, we will repatriate about 1,500 displaced persons. We have not received any response yet. After the pilot project, we will discuss repatriating over 5,000 people from 1,500 households in the northern part of Maungtaw.

We will accept those newborns in Bangladesh with official certificates from Bangladesh courts but their parents must have lived in our country. We plan to arrange about 750 land plots in 15 villages. If there are more returnees, we will make further plots of land and relocate them systematically. But, they must be the ones born and lived in Myanmar. We have our record of registered family households. If they match with the registered family household list and have not committed any crime, we will receive them. For their safety and security, we have police stations near the 15 villages. I would like to reiterate that we did not force them to leave the country and we always welcome the return-

ees if they abide by the laws of our country.

Dr Ko Ko Naing (Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement)

This is basic sewing training opened at the vocational training school in Sittway Township. The local ethnic women and the women from the temporary IDP camps are attending the training together. They will achieve vocational skills to sustain their livelihoods. Besides these skills, the training will support the social cohesion of communities as they work together in the workplace with the same mission. Social harmony and integration are a necessity for any community. Therefore, the training is meant not only for generating income for women but also to ensure social cohesion and integration among them. We launch this training for women and girls from different communities so that they will get acquainted with each other and could share their experiences. About 50 trainees – locals and women from IDP camps are attending the training.

U Arkar Myint (Assistant Director, General Admin-

istration Department)

We are arranging to complete the relocation of the Kyauktalone IDP camp by the end of March 2023. We will relocate a total of 375 households from that IDP camp. The houses were constructed in 2021-2022 FY. There are 396 houses in total. For the first phase, we will relocate those registered in the household lists of the IDP camp. Next, we will relocate those who cannot return to their own villages.

All people at the IDP camp are residents of Kyaukpyu Township. We built hospitals, clinics, schools, police outposts and water tanks at the resettlement site. Moreover, road access and electricity supply are already connected to their houses. The government arranges food and accommodation for the IDPs using billions of kyats from the government budget.

(This is an unofficial translation of the Myanmar version of the interviews which appeared in the daily newspapers (Kyemon-The Mirror and Myanmar Alinn Daily)

*Translated
Interviewer : Hein Min Soe
Photo : HMS*

Four new cases of COVID-19 reported on 23 March, total figure records 634,021

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases recorded **634,021** after **four** new cases were reported on 23 March 2023 according to the Ministry of Health.

The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **614,489**, including **one** new recovery.

The death toll from COVID-19 in the country remained unchanged at **19,490** on 23-3-2023 with no new death reported from the pandemic. — GNLM

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.

Eradicate malaria for saving the lives of global people

MALARIA, one of three life-threatening diseases namely tuberculosis, malaria and HIV/AIDS, triggered by parasites can be transmitted to human beings through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes. Till today, malaria has been posing threat to the global people.

Such a disease can break out through infection from one person to another based on mosquito bites. Mostly, Anopheles mosquitoes inhabit the swamps and other wetlands as well as thick foliage areas. Such a mosquito can be reproductive in various parts of Myanmar. So, parasites of such diseases can spread across the nation. Hence, most of the service personnel from the construction and forestry arenas suffer from malaria.

As a dutiful person, every citizen is responsible for informing relevant health departments about the findings of the malaria virus within 24 hours to cut off the chains of infection. Now, Myanmar joins hands with six countries of the Greater Mekong Sub-region in implementing the pledge to eradicate malaria in six GMS countries by 2030. Hence, all the people should actively participate in the malaria eradication measures together with the government.

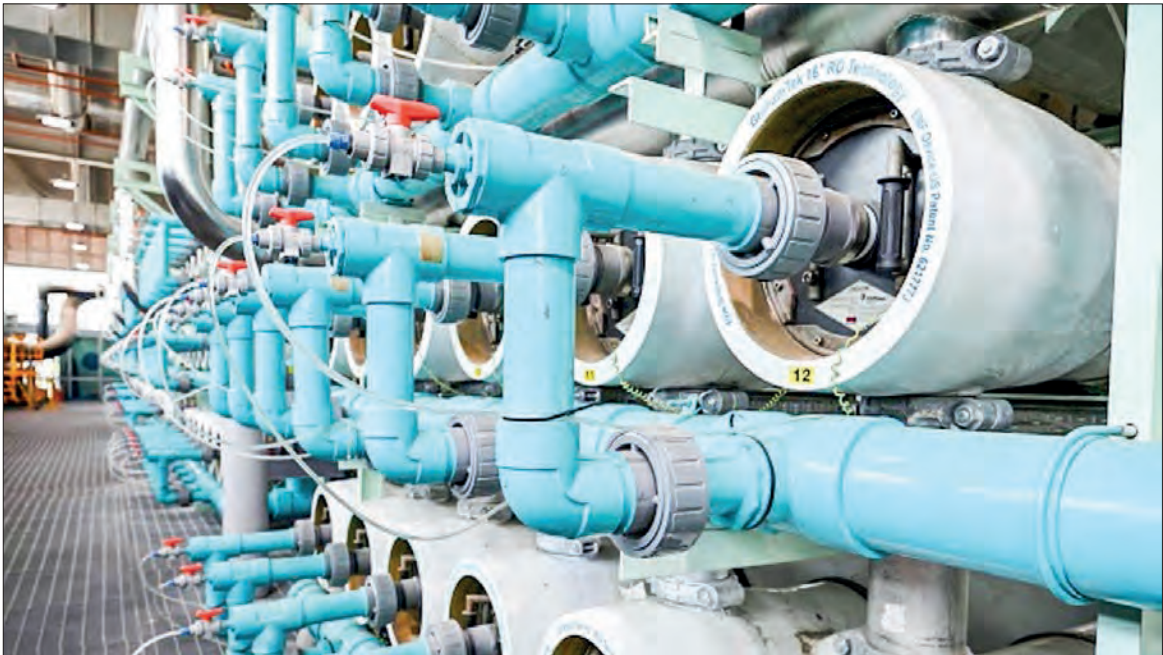
officials from the Ministry of Health need to raise public awareness about the dos and don'ts of the disease.

Myanmar's national malaria control project aims not to cause any patients with falciparum malaria virus in 2025 and not to have any malaria patients infected by people to people via mosquito bites in 2030. To do so, the government is implementing the Global technical strategy for malaria 2016-2030 of the World Health Organization for the sake of the global people. Hence, the government accelerates the important measures on disease surveillance to eradicate the infection of malaria.

As a dutiful person, every citizen is responsible for informing relevant health departments about the findings of the malaria virus within 24 hours to cut off the chains of infection. Now, Myanmar joins hands with six countries of the Greater Mekong Sub-region in implementing the pledge to eradicate malaria in six GMS countries by 2030. Hence, all the people should actively participate in the malaria eradication measures together with the government.

Gratitude to World Water Day 2023

By Dr Than Lwin Tun



This picture taken on 27 July 2021 shows the reverse osmosis treatment on used water equipment at the Bedok NEWater plant in Singapore. Giant pumps whirl deep underground at the plant in Singapore that helps transform sewage into water so clean it is fit for human consumption while reducing ocean pollution. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ ROSLAN RAHMAN / AFP**

bon storage can be improved by protecting environments like peatlands and wetlands, adopting sustainable agricultural practices can help reduce stress on freshwater supplies, and improving water supply and sanitation infrastructures can ensure that everyone has access to vital resources in the future.

Water must be at the centre of climate policies and action. Sustainable water management can help build resilience, mitigate the impacts of climate change, and protect societies and ecosystems. Sustainable, affordable, and scalable water solutions must become a priority.

In 2015, the world committed to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 as part of the 2030 Agenda – “the promise that everyone would have safely managed water and sanitation by 2030”. Nowadays, we all are seriously off-track. There is an urgent need

to accelerate change – to go beyond ‘business as usual.’ We are currently facing a global water crisis. Billions of people around the world still lack access to water. It is estimated that more than 800,000 people die each year from diseases directly attributed to unsafe water, inadequate sanitation, and poor hygiene practices. With water being so crucial to many aspects of life, it is important to ensure its protection and proper management to ensure that everyone has equitable access to this essential resource by 2023.

The interactive dialogues also support the five principles of the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework, an initiative to deliver fast results towards ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all by 2030. The five interactive dialogues are: (1) Water for Health: Access to safe drinking water, hygiene, and sanitation, (2) Water for Sustainable Development: Valuing Water, Water-Energy-Food Nexus and Sustainable Economic and Urban Development, (3) Water for Climate, Resilience and Environ-

ment: Source to Sea, Biodiversity, Climate, Resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction, (4) Water for Cooperation: Transboundary and International Water Cooperation, Cross-Sectoral Cooperation and Water across the 2030 Agenda, (5) Water Action Decade: Accelerating the implementation of the objectives of the Decade, including through the UN Secretary-General's Action Plan.

Water is a critical issue that affects everyone. As UN Member States, governments and stakeholders prepare to make their own water commitments; the UN is calling on everyone to take their own action. Any action – whether small or big – can help accelerate change and action towards achieving the goals and targets of SDG 6. Some simple actions can be incorporated into daily routines, which are (1) Take shorter showers and reduce your water waste in your home. With 44 per cent of household wastewater not being safely treated, taking shorter showers is a terrific way to save this precious resource. (2) Participate in clean-ups of local rivers, lakes, or

wetlands. Plant a tree or create your own water garden. These actions can help protect water ecosystems from pollution and reduce the risk of flooding and store water efficiently. (3) Raise awareness of the critical connection between toilets, sanitation, and menstruation. Break taboos by starting conversations in your local community, school, or workplace. Learn more about the goals and targets of SDG 6 and continue to advocate for solutions at the local and national levels. Support water-related campaigns and find out other ways you can incorporate simple actions that can help protect water resources.

In conclusion, celebrating World Water Day provides an opportunity to reflect on the importance of water and the challenges we face in managing this precious resource. By accelerating change, we can work towards a more sustainable future where water is managed in a way that supports human well-being and the health of our planet. Let us all join hands to protect and conserve this precious resource for future generations.

- References
- World Water Day | United Nations
 - UN 2023 Water Conference | UN News

Moderna rebuked over plan to hike Covid vaccine to \$130

MODERNA'S chief executive on Wednesday defended the US company's plan to quadruple the price of its lifesaving Covid vaccine to as



Moderna has so far charged between about \$15 and \$26 for doses of its vaccine, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation. **PHOTO: PATRICK T. FALLON/AFP**

much as \$130 per dose as soon as government stockpiles run out.

Democratic Senator Bernie Sanders lashed out at the price hike, denouncing the “unprecedented level of corporate greed” in the pharmaceutical industry. “And that is certainly true with Moderna,” Sanders said.

Moderna has so far charged between about \$15 and \$26 for doses of its vaccine, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.

The US government subsidized \$1.7 billion of Moderna's research at the start of the pandemic and then purchased \$10 billion worth of vaccine, Sanders said at a Senate hearing where the company's CEO Stephane Bancel was testifying.

Sanders said Moderna was “thanking the taxpayers of the United States” by more than quadrupling the vaccine's

price “at a time when it costs less than \$3 to manufacture”.

Sanders noted several times at the hearing that Moderna conducted buybacks of its own stock and paid its own executives at its Cambridge, Massachusetts, headquarters handsomely.

Bancel defended Moderna, saying the distribution system will change completely when the US government lifts a state of health emergency, perhaps as soon as May. Up until now, Moderna had only one customer; distributed its vaccine to only a few warehouses and did not have to pay for the cost of expired doses.

By switching to a more traditional marketing approach, “we're going to have 10,000 customers” and have to “manage to deliver to 60,000 pharmacies, doctors' offices and hospitals,” he added.

Currently distributed in multidose vials, the vaccine will be sold mostly in single-dose vials or directly in prefilled syringes. And Moderna will have to take care of the unsold doses.

The company expects a “90 per cent reduction in demand,” Bancel said. “We are losing economies of scale. We must assume the wastage risk and cost that the US government used to assume.”

Moderna also pledged to set up a program so that the uninsured or underinsured would not have to pay anything.

When pressed by Sanders about the possibility of the company lowering its price for government-run health insurance programs, Bancel said discussions were underway with all customers.

SOURCE: AFP

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CURRENT

AFFAIRS

Rising oil prices elevate cuttlefish price



Cuttlefish from the Myeik Archipelago.

FUEL prices weigh on cuttlefish prices in the Myeik area, said local traders.

“The cuttlefish was priced at K15,000 per viss before. The rising oil prices affected the fresh fish supply and hiked the price up to K25,000 per viss. They are mostly sent to China and India,”

said a trader.

The mating season of cuttlefish is April-May. Fishing of cuttlefish is suspended during the mating season. The fishing season is from the winter to early summer. Cuttlefish live in saltwater. The reproduction rate increases in warm environ-

ments. One-year-old cuttlefish can mate and reproduce. The life expectancy of the cuttlefish is three years at maximum. The female cuttlefish can spawn over 100,000 eggs.

Cuttlefish and squid are commercially valued fishery products. The cuttlefish of 1-10 inches caught in the Myeik area are sent to domestic fish markets. Those cuttlefish sized below 2 inches are dried, while those sized above 3 inches are frozen and processed. Frozen cuttlefish are exported to Thailand and China purchased the processed ones. Cuttlefish and squid are good sources of protein and are rich in protein and other minerals. They can be used in a variety of dishes (fried, steamed, roasted, curry and salad). It is a popular dish in hotels. — TWA/EM

225-MW of electricity in Yangon to be temporarily reduced for 4 days

THE Yangon Electricity Supply Corporation-YESC announced the maintenance and repair work of the Zawtika natural gas pipeline, which supplies gas to power plants in the Yangon region, will be carried out from 23 to 26 March.

During the process, pow-

er generators will be able to produce 225 megawatts of electricity less than normal. Therefore, hydroelectric power plants will supply the required electricity and YESC has said that it will have to reduce the workload if necessary. — TWA/MKKS



The maintenance and repair work of the Zawtika natural gas extraction project in Kanbauk village are underway.

Shan garlic price drops back to normal

THE price of some high-priced kitchen goods in the commodity market decreased before the Thingyan holidays. It soothes the daily food expenses, said housewives.

The regular price for large-size Shan garlic was around K4,000 per viss before, but the price of Shan garlic started to increase on 14 December 2022. It gradually rose to K5,100 per viss at the end of December and K6,300 per viss on 19 January 2023.

On 15 February 2023, new Shan garlic started to enter the market at the rate of K5,500 per viss for large sizes. On 23 March, the wholesale prices of new Shan garlic dropped to K2,850 per viss for S-2, K3,200 per viss for S-3, K3,400 per viss for S-4 and K3,600 per viss for S-5, returned to the price rates before mid-Decem-

ber 2022.

While garlic from Shan State fetched K6,300 per viss, the wholesale price of Kyukok garlic was only K3,700-K3,800 per viss. On 23 March, the large-size Shan garlic was wholesaled at K3,600 per viss and the Kyukok garlic at K4,000 per viss.

New Myanmar garlic grown around Pakokku and Mandalay has arrived at their markets, along with new Shan garlic. Myanmar garlic surpasses Shan garlic in price because the former is whiter in colour and lower in moisture. On 23 March, S-2 Shan garlic was priced at K2,850 per viss and Myanmar garlic at K3,700 per viss. Therefore, Shan garlic has a bigger demand than Myanmar garlic in the Yangon market.

Myanmar garlic can only be seen in the market for a few



Shan garlic is seen in the market.

months, while Shan garlic can be seen all year round. Two kinds of garlic – from the Taunggyi and Aungban areas in Shan State – entered the Yangon market, and the price of Aungban garlic

is higher than that of Taunggyi garlic.

Although onion, garlic and potato are the products of Myanmar, the same types of foreign products are taking the market

share. When the prices of Myanmar products go up, they enter the domestic market. Thus, Myanmar onion, garlic and potato have to be competing with foreign products. — TWA/CT

Increasing number of travellers visit Inlay region

FROM PAGE-1

examination is over and during the Thingyan holiday. The tourism industry and those who make their living in Inlay Lake

will be convenient only if more and more visitors come to visit the Inlay region. I wish more visitors to come here,” said U Shwe Tun, a boat operator.

The travellers who visit the Inlay region go round the surrounding areas of Nyaungshwe township such as Nyaungshwe-Hawnan, local traditional

restaurants, markets and souvenir shops, the Mongthauk Bridge and the ancient Shwe-anpyay monastery. Visitors come to Inlay Lake not only to

pay homage to PhaungdawOo Pagoda and other pagodas but also to visit weaving, silver-smithing and bakeries by boat. — Sai Elbe/MKKS

Approaching bridges, roads to Yangon-Dala Bridge slated to complete at 2023-end

THE Myanmar-Korea Friendship Bridge (Dala) project, which will become a prominent landmark of Yangon commercial hub and tourist spot, commenced in May 2019 and efforts are being exerted to complete the construction works on the bridges and roads approaching the Dala Bridge on both sides at the end of 2023.

The appearance of the bridge has become vividly clear. The aesthetic design of bridges with approaching bridges, including two-lane bridges connecting to Phoneygi Road from the Dala side, and one-lane bridge to Sule Road and Strand Road on the Yangon side is enchanting and it makes Yangon urban city more liveable.

That bridge will become the longest and largest steel cable-stayed bridge in the country, with bored piles foundation, four-metre-wide sidewalks and a maximum loading capacity of 75 tonnes. The approaching bridge on the Dala side is 577 metres long and the one on the Yangon side is 601 metres long. The total length of the bridge is 6,144 feet (1,868 metres). International cargo ships with 15,000 DWT can

pass under the bridge, with a clearance height of 49 metres (160 feet) and width of 301 metres (998 feet). Sub-contractor CML company constructs two towers in the middle of the river and a cable suspension bridge with Korean technology. The main bridge between two towers (pylons) is 370 metres long.

“The construction of the approaching bridges on the Yangon and Dala sides is underway with concrete slab works. The approaching bridges and road parts are soon to be completed. The PY1 is 50 metres high and PY-2 is 45 metres high. The main bridge is to be 130 metres high. The construction works are accelerated with double shifts. About 54 per cent of the project is finished for now. The cable will be installed in each part of the bridge span in September. The construction of the approaching bridges and roads is slated to be completed at the end of the year. The Ministry of Construction is endeavouring to complete the whole project in 2024,” said U Kyaw Kaung Cho, deputy director-general of the Department of Bridge.

This friendship bridge pro-



The construction of the Yangon-Dala Bridge is seen from the Yangon side on 23 March 2023. PHOTO : KANU

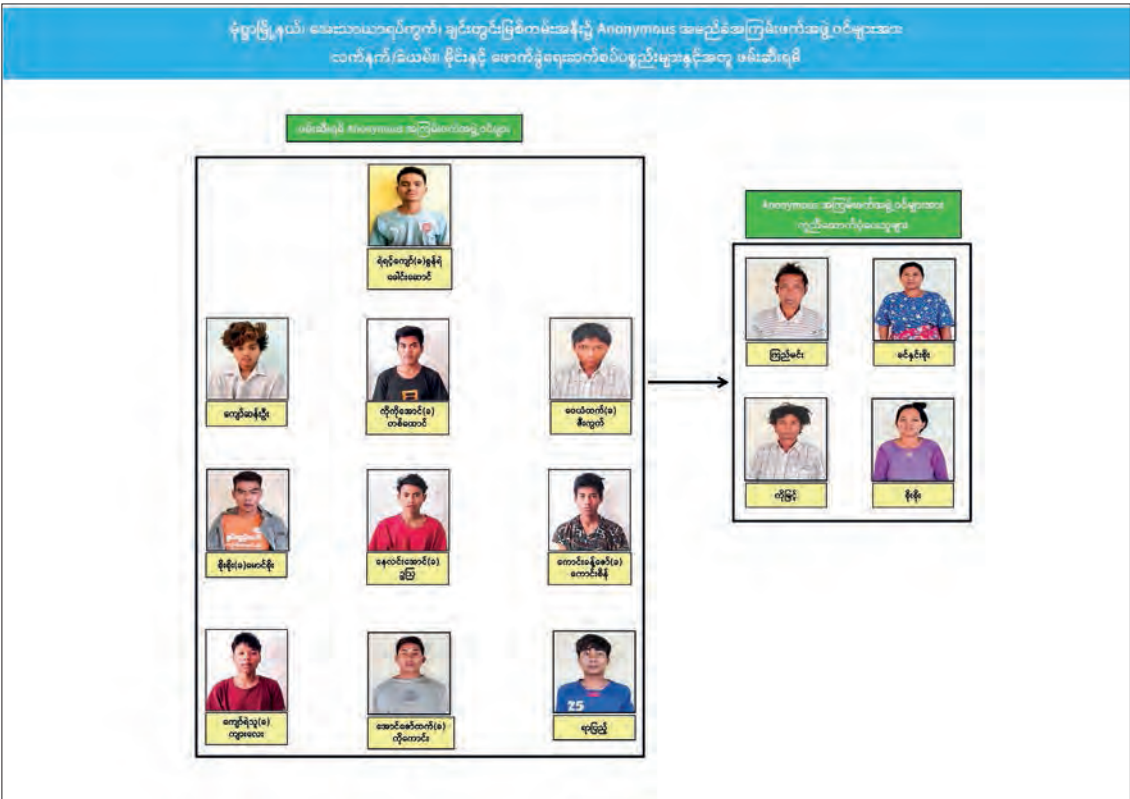
ject was initiated during former President U Thein Sein’s trip to the Republic of Korea. Under the agreement of the two leaders of the nations, the feasibility study was undertaken step by step from a pilot project with the assistance of the ROK. In 2015, the Ministry of Construction signed an agreement for the construction of the bridge with the EDCF loan of Korea.

The GS Engineering Group is the main contractor and developer of this bridge project, spending approximately US\$157.833 million. The interest on the loan is at 0.01 per cent and the repayment period is 40 years.

Upon completion of the bridge, it will bring about business opportunities for the local communities in Ayeyawady Region, linking with the commercial hub Yangon. It will enhance socioeconomic development, and facilitate transport.

The Myanmar-Korea Friendship Bridge will become the largest bridge with the highest clearance between the surface of the water and the bridge. – Nyein Thu (MNA)/EM

Security Forces arrest 14 members of Anonymous terrorist group with arms, ammunition in Monywa



THE security personnel arrested 14 members of the Anonymous terrorist group including the group leader together with seven homemade guns, five homemade mortars, 19 homemade mines, 176 round of ammunition and other explosives at the hut near Chindwin River in Ayethaya Ward of Monywa Township on 15 February.

During the arrest, the mem-

bers of Security Forces recused four innocent civilians — two males, one female and one child whom the terrorists abducted as hostages.

According to the confession of the suspects, they arrested that family as the male hostage removed their planted mine in Monywa Township.

The suspects also testified that five terrorists attended the three-month explosive training of the Monywa PDF group in the hilly area in front of Bawd-itahtaung Pagoda in April 2022.

After the training, they organized the 13-member Anonymous terrorist group to rob and kidnap innocent civilians and to ask for money in December 2022.

Moreover, it was found out that the Anonymous terrorist group launched bomb attacks four times with the financial and weapons assistance of CRPH and NUG terrorist groups – in Htantaw Kyunswal Ward of Monywa township in the first week of January 2023, at the junction of the industrial zone in the second week of January, at motor vehicle station at the corner of Pyidaungsu and Kyaukka roads in Alal Ward on 1 February and in Innsut street of Shwegon Ward of Monywa on 12 March.

According to the investigation, the Anonymous group killed three innocent civilians on 16 November 2022, on 10 January and in the first week of February 2023.

According to the tip-off, the police could remove the unexploded seven homemade mines planted on both sides of Pyidaungsu road and near Boe-bwayeiktha roundabout and two homemade mines planted near "Sein Yaung Sone" pub along Bogyoke street in Monywa Township.

The suspects were charged in the cases and further investigation was underway. — MNA/ KTZH

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Dated: 24 March 2023

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Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V KOTA HIDAYAH VOY.NO. (KHDY0339N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **24-3-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** 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 PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

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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 GOLD STAR LINES PTE LTD

Kyoto to introduce Japan's 1st empty homes tax

Japan's internal affairs ministry is set to approve a proposal by Kyoto to tax owners of empty homes and holiday houses, a source close to the matter said Wednesday, putting the western Japan city on track to be the first in the country to implement such a system.

The new tax, slated to be introduced in 2026 at the earliest, aims to boost the property market amid an exodus of young people struggling to secure housing in Kyoto. If effective, it could serve as a reference for other cities facing similar problems.

In addition to vacant properties, the non-statutory tax will also target vacation homes and unoccupied secondary residences, with property value and location to be used in calculating the amount of tax.—Kyodo

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Dated: 24 March 2023

Toshiba OKs Japan Industrial Partners-led consortium buyout: sources



Toshiba had been under strong pressure to increase its corporate value from activist investors since a buyout offer from British private equity firm CVC Capital Partners surfaced in 2021. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

TOSHIBA Corp has agreed to accept a buyout offer from a consortium led by Tokyo-based fund Japan Industrial Partners Inc., in a deal expected to be worth about two trillion yen (\$15 billion), sources familiar with the matter said Thursday. The JIP-led group is expected to launch a tender offer to buy Toshiba shares from existing shareholders and

delist the struggling conglomerate. It also plans to relist Toshiba after a turnaround, the sources said.

The consortium reportedly includes about 20 Japanese companies such as Orix Corp and Rohm Co. A group of banks including Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp is expected to finance the deal.

The agreement will conclude the long-running takeover process, which began in April last year after Toshiba said it was looking for new partners willing to invest in the company, in an effort to cut ties with activist shareholders seeking short-term shareholder returns.—Kyodo

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Dated: **24 March 2023**

People smugglers use
TikTok to promote
their services



Technology-savvy criminals using the popular video-sharing app are posing a growing challenge to Mexican and US authorities fighting a regional migration crisis.
PHOTO: AFP

A photo posted to TikTok shows a group of people dressed in camouflage, hoping to blend into the shadowy vegetation dotting the nighttime landscape of the Mexican desert. The picture was not uploaded by social media influencers on an adventurous vacation -- it's an advertisement by people smugglers.

Technology-savvy criminals using the popular video-sharing app are posing a growing challenge to Mexican and US authorities fighting a regional migration crisis.

"Departing this weekend. People from Mexico interested in crossing to the United States, leave your messages," the TikTok post said. — AFP

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Pabedan Township, Yangon, Myanmar
Dated: **24 March 2023**

Philippines aims to
export 54,000 tonnes of
durian to China in 2023

THE Philippines aims to export at least 54,000 tonnes of "premium" fresh durian fruits to China this year, the Department of Agriculture said on Wednesday.

"Stakeholders are now beefing up their production to meet the high demands entailed by the agreement," the department said, referring to a fruit export deal secured by Philippine President Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos during his visit to China in January.

The department said Davao City-based Eng Seng Food Products and Belviz Farms are two private durian growers preparing for the Chinese market for Philippine durians. "China is the biggest durian market, so we are very excited and looking forward to exporting durian there. Our target is to export containers of durian weekly," Eng Seng Food Products CEO John Tan said. — Xinhua

India’s Rahul Gandhi found guilty of defamation over Modi remark



Rahul Gandhi, the leading face of the opposition Congress party, was sentenced to two years imprisonment but immediately granted bail. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

AN Indian court Thursday found opposition leader Rahul Gandhi guilty of defamation for a three-year-old campaign trail remark implying that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was a criminal. Modi’s government has been widely accused of using the law to target and silence critics, and the case in the premier’s home state of Gujarat is one of several lodged against his chief opponent in recent years. Gandhi, the leading face of the opposition Congress party, was sentenced to two years imprisonment but immediately granted bail after his lawyers announced their intention to appeal.

The case stemmed from a remark made during the 2019 election campaign in which the 52-year-old had asked why “all thieves have Modi as (their) common surname”. — AFP

Israel strike damages Syria’s Aleppo airport: defence ministry

AN Israeli air strike hit Syria’s Aleppo airport on Wednesday causing damage, the defence ministry said, without mentioning any casualties, in the second such attack on the facility this month.

The airport in Syria’s second city has been a major conduit for relief flights since a 6 February earthquake devastated swathes of southeastern Türkiye and neighbouring Syria.

“Around 3:55 am (0055 GMT), the Israeli enemy carried out an air attack... targeting Aleppo international airport, leading to some material damage,” a defence ministry statement said.

“A number of missiles” were fired from the Mediterranean west of the coastal city of Latakia, it added.

Transport ministry official Suleiman Khalil told AFP technicians were assessing the damage. The Syrian Observatory for



Syria’s Aleppo International Airport on 7 February 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

Human Rights said the strike targeted “the airport compound and a weapons depot belonging to pro-Iranian forces on the airport’s perimeter.” The Britain-based war monitor said the depot had been “completely destroyed”.

On 7 March, three people were killed in an Israeli strike on the airport that brought air traffic, including relief flights, to a halt. The airport reopened several days later.

More than 80 aid flights have landed in Aleppo with relief supplies following the earthquake, according to the transport ministry. — AFP

‘Noose around your neck’: Colombia’s biggest drug cartel rules with fear

IN the cities and towns of northwest Colombia, the ubiquitous graffiti “AGC” signals the ominous presence of the powerful Gulf Clan drug cartel.

Spray painted onto walls, it is meant to instill fear in residents, and keep them mum, as the Clan embarks on a fast-escalating confrontation with the government in an area critical for its bustling cocaine trade, illegal mining and other lucrative criminal ventures.

“To speak about the Clan is to put the noose around your neck,” said a resident of Taraza, a town that has recently found itself at the cartel’s mercy.

Like many interviewed by AFP in the region, the resident would not divulge their name for fear of reprisal.

Also known as the Autodefensas Gaitanistas of Colombia or AGC, the Gulf Clan is the biggest drug cartel in the world’s largest cocaine producer.

It has a long history of violence in an area dubbed the “Bermuda triangle” by locals because of the many people who have gone missing there, only to

be found dead in the river nearby.

Authorities accuse it of fomenting violence and vandalism by illegal gold miners in the northwest region protesting a clampdown on their operations and the destruction of their dredging machinery.

In so doing, the Clan breached the terms of a ceasefire not even three months in, according to the government.

The miners have set up roadblocks, attacked government buildings, a bank and civilians — severely disrupting daily life and livelihoods.

On Sunday, a dozen assailants on motorcycles set fire to two buses and four trucks on the National Route 25 — a critical link between the Caribbean coast in Colombia’s north and the second city of Medellin in the east.

That prompted President Gustavo Petro to announce the “reactivation” of military operations against the cartel. — AFP



Some 10,000 soldiers have been deployed to Colombia’s northwest. **PHOTO: RAUL ARBOLEDA / AFP**

WORLD: TOP HEADLINES

Thai police shoot gunman dead after 15-hour standoff

THAI police shot dead a gunman who killed three people and wounded three others, a senior officer said Thursday, after a 15-hour standoff.

The shooter started firing in Phetchaburi, about 100 kilometres (60 miles) southwest of Bangkok, at around 3 pm (0800 GMT) on Wednesday, before police surrounded a house he was in.

The standoff ended early Thursday when armed police stormed the building and killed the gunman, who has not been named but was reported by local media to be a 29-year-old former national park official. — AFP

Australian PM calls on voters to back Aboriginal ‘voice’

AUSTRALIA’S prime minister on Thursday made a tearful appeal to voters, asking them to support the creation of an Aboriginal “voice” in lawmaking as he announced the wording of the referendum question. Anthony Albanese said that Australians had a chance to make up for centuries of injustice, to formally recognize Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island groups, and give them a voice in decision-making at a vote later this year. This is “about how our nation sees ourselves. Whether we have the confidence to embrace our history”, said Albanese, painting the vote as a chance for Australians to make their country fairer. — AFP



Myanmar women's U-20 team placed in group B of 2nd round Asian Qualifiers

AFC U20 WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP UZBEKISTAN 2024 QUALIFIERS ROUND 2 DRAW	
GROUP A	
A1	AUSTRALIA
A2	VIETNAM
A3	IR IRAN
A4	LEBANON
GROUP B	
B1	CHINA PR
B2	MYANMAR
B3	NEPAL
B4	CHINESE TAIPEI

PHOTO: MFF

THE drawing-lots ceremony for the 2024 Asian Women's U-20 Championship Qualifiers (second round), which includes the Myanmar women's U-20 team, was held at noon yesterday in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Teams from China, Australia, Viet Nam, Myanmar, Iran, China (Taipei), and Lebanon who have passed the first stage of the qualifiers have been divided into two groups. The Myanmar women's U-20 team is in Group

B along with China, Nepal, and China Taipei.

Australia, Viet Nam, Iran, and Lebanon are in Group A, and the 2024 AFC Women's Under-20 Championship second-round qualifiers are scheduled to be held from 3 to 11 June 2023.

The first and second-placed teams from the two groups for the second round will advance to the next stage along with Uzbekistan, Japan, North Korea, and South Korea.

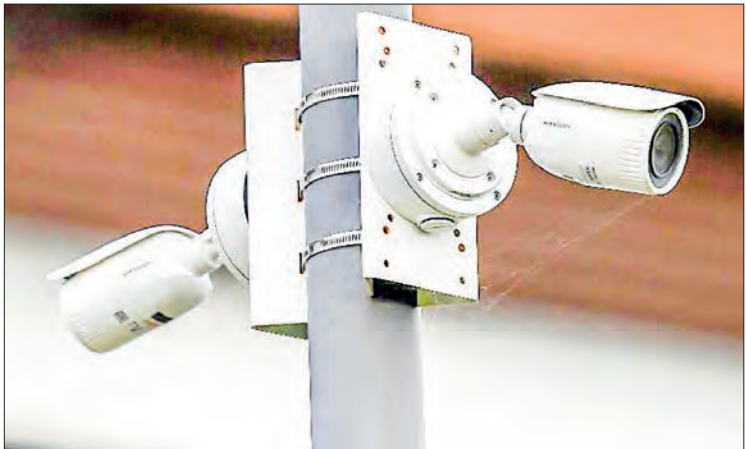
Uzbekistan will host the 2024 Asian Women's U-20 Championship. The winner, first-runner and second-runner-up teams will qualify for the 2024 FIFA Women's U-20 World Cup. — KZL

French MPs battle over AI-assisted Olympics surveillance

FRENCH government plans to trial surveillance cameras upgraded with artificial intelligence at the 2024 Olympics have opponents fuming at what they say is unnecessary and dangerous security overreach.

While the government says such systems are needed to manage millions-strong crowds and spot potential dangers, critics see the draft law as a gift to French industry at the cost of vital civil liberties.

Last week, around 40 mostly left-leaning members of the European Parliament warned in an open letter to French lawmakers that the plan "creates a surveillance precedent never



Artificial intelligence software would "detect in real time pre-determined events likely to pose or reveal a risk" of "terrorist acts or serious breaches of security", such as unusual crowd movements or abandoned bags.

PHOTO: AFP

before seen in Europe", daily Le Monde reported. Debates kicked off late Monday in the National

Assembly, France's lower parliamentary chamber, with discussions to continue Friday.—AFP

Man Utd owners await revised offers for Premier League giants



Manchester United are 20-time English champions. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

MANCHESTER United's owners were Thursday awaiting fresh bids from a Qatari banker and British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe after the deadline passed for revised offers to buy the Premier League giants. Reports said bidders were initially told they had until 2100 GMT on Wednesday to submit new bids, but that has now been extended. It is unclear when the new cut-off will be. Sheikh Jassim Bin Hamad Al Thani, the chairman of Qatar Islamic Bank, and Ratcliffe, the founder of chemicals giant INEOS, are the only bidders who have gone public with their intentions.—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.

Kane 'motivated' to break England goal record against Italy, says Southgate

HARRY Kane is ready to break the all-time England goalscoring record in his team's opening Euro 2024 qualifier against Italy, manager Gareth Southgate said on Wednesday. Tottenham striker Kane is locked with Wayne Rooney on 53 goals for his national team after missing a penalty in England's World Cup quarter-final defeat to France. But Southgate says he has put that disappointment behind him coming into Thursday's Group C clash in Naples.

"We've seen with his performances and goalscoring with his club he's put it behind him," Southgate told reporters.

"I know he's going to have added motivation tomorrow night to come back and show



Motivated: Harry Kane training ahead of England's international with Italy. PHOTO: AFP

everybody what he's about in an England shirt. For us that's a good position." England have a poor record against the world's top sides and Thursday will be an acid test against the team that snatched Euro 2020 triumph from them at Wembley before dumping them down to the second tier of the Nations League.—AFP