

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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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.

Senior General: Academic measures to be undertaken for knowledge and skill development and life improvement of new generations with goodwill



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets faculty members of Sittway University on 30 March 2023.

AS the university is a focal point for sharing subject-wise knowledge and social experiences, faculty members and students need to emphasize national cause than politics, said State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting with faculty members at Sittway University yesterday afternoon.

At the convocation hall,

Sittway University Rector Dr Khin Maung Zaw reported to the Senior General on academic measures at the university, plans of conducting doctoral courses from 2023-24 AY, construction of student hostels, requirements of more buildings at the university and upgrading sports grounds.

Union Minister for Education Dr Nyunt Pe reported on the appointment of faculty members at the university in

the tenure of SAC, the connection of the internet, the construction of buildings and plans to build more lecture halls.

Speaking on the occasion, the Senior General said that, in its tenure, the government provided cash awards and residential allowance to faculty members as an impetus for academic matters. Cash assistance depends on relevant subjects and professional measures.

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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.

No new case of COVID-19 reported on 30 March, total figure records 634,078

MYANMAR’S COVID-19 positive cases recorded 634,078 after no new case was reported on 30 March 2023 according to the Ministry of Health.

The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached 614,553, including 20 new recoveries.

The death toll from COVID-19 in the country remained unchanged at 19,490 on 30-3-2023 with no new death reported from the pandemic. — GNLN

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission joins 1st Working Group Meeting of Southeast Asia National Human Rights Institutions Forum (SEANF)



MNHRC joins the first Working Group Meeting of SEANF virtually,

THE National Human Rights Commission of Thailand organized the 1st Working Group Meeting of Southeast Asia National Human Rights Institutions Forum – SEANF in a hybrid format between 29 and 30 March. Chairman of Myanmar Na-

tional Human Rights Commission (MNHRC) U Hla Myint, Vice-Chair Dr Nanda Hmun, commission members, Deputy Director-General of MNHRC’s Office, Director of International Relations joined the event via video conference while the representatives of SEANF countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Timor-Leste attended in person. The meeting discussed the activities and progresses of SEANF member countries after the 19th annual form meeting held in November 2022, implementation of priorities mentioned in five prioritized sectors of SEANF

Strategic Plan (2022-2026) by focal members, approval of SEANF Annual Plan 2023, cooperation work between AICHR and SEANF, drafting ASEAN Environmental Rights Framework, Action Plan for Safety of Journalists, Campaign to make international agreement on the rights for the elderly, holding of the 2nd working group meeting of SEANF and the 20th annual meeting, cooperation of SEANF and FORUM-ASIA/ANNI, group actions of Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines on the issue of nationless like Sabah and further cooperation of SEANF and OHCHR. Then, MNHRC Chairman U

Hla Myint and member U Paw Lwin Sein discussed the activities of MNHRC on promotion and protection of human rights after the 19th annual meeting held in November 2022. Deputy Director-General of the MNHRC office Dr Khine Khine Win, the implementations concerning the issue “promoting and protecting human rights in business” from the SEANF Strategic Plan 2022-2026. The meeting also initially set to hold the 2nd working group meeting of SEANF in July 2023 and the 20th annual meeting of SEANF in November 2023. — MNA/KTZH

Two new projects under Mekong-Lancang Cooperation Special Fund completed in Myanmar

THE workshop on the completion of the Vegetable Germplasm Collection and Seed Projection Project and Packaging of Fruits and Vegetables to Maintain the Quality and extend the Shelf Life Project was held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. The event was attended by the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Kyaw Min Oo, Director-General of Agriculture Department Dr Ye Tint Tun, Vice-Chair of Mekong-Lancang Cooperation National Coordination Unit (Myanmar) U Win Zeyar Tun, agriculturalists, officials of Mekong-Lancang Projects, farmers and invitees. The Agriculture Department implemented 19 projects under Mekong-Lancang Special Fund. The two newly completed pro-



The documentary group photo of the projects completion event held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

jects were launched between October 2021 and March 2023 as the third batch of Mekong-Lancang Projects. The first project was conducted at VFRDC in Hlegu Township of Yangon Region, VFDC in Htonbo of Mandalay Region, PyinOoLwin and Heho of Shan State. The project included taking records of five vegetables at VFRDC, seed production and code registration, comparison of collected Germplasm, seed selection, training for vegetable production and establishment of

cold storage at VFRDC. The second project included lecture to maintain the quality and extend the self life of fruits and vegetables, talks and workshops, packaging training to maintain the quality of mango and watermelon in Mekong-Lancang regions, monthly inspection on proper packaging, sharing the findings, educating programmes at the fields of farmers and market. The rural people of Myanmar prioritize fruits and vegetable cultivation as a second crop and so the projects benefit the production rate per acre, easy use of quality seedlings within the relevant seasons to promote quality, and food safety and the application of post-harvest technology to reduce wastage. — MNA/KTZH

The people are urged to receive vaccination of Covid-19 without fail as full-time vaccination of Covid-19 and receiving booster shots can effectively mitigate infection of the virus, severe suffering from the disease and increasing of death rate based on the disease.

Tatmadaw—guardian of the nation

The Tatmadaw will always be the guardian to the nation in any era or any time of a government.

(Excerpts from the discussion by State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at a meeting with officers, other ranks and family members of Myitkyina Station held on 13 December 2022)

Senior General: Academic measures to be undertaken for knowledge and skill development and life improvement ...

FROM PAGE-1

The Senior General pointed out that the promotion of learning by students from grade to grade was down in Rakhine State. It is a challenge to the country, harming development of the nation. Weakness in encouraging education may cause impacts on the State in all aspects and it cannot secure a cent per cent success. As residences are included among faculty members of Sittway University, they all have to give systematic training to students to become educated.

Teaching must comprise subject-wise knowledge and social experiences for students. As the university is a focal point for sharing subject-wise knowledge and social experiences, faculty members and students need to emphasize national cause than

politics.

The Senior General highlighted that students must have knowledge about legal affairs and economic measures. Hence, law subject and basic economic subject are being lectured at all universities. The government set an aim that graduates must be capable of improving their socioeconomic life and environment.

The appointment of faculty members must be in line with the ratio of students to faculty members. The Senior General pledged to build student hostels and lecture halls for the university. The football ground will also be upgraded. The Senior General stressed the need to improve the education qualification and general knowledge of students of Sittway University.

The Senior General and par-



The Senior General cordially greets the faculty members of Sittway University.

ty viewed round the university and buildings in a motorcade.

At the Viewpoint in Sit-

tway, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, his wife Daw Kyu Kyu

Hla and party viewed the relaxa-

tion of the local people and gave instructions on the beautification

of the viewpoint. — MNA/TTA



The Senior General views from the Viewpoint in Sittway on 30 March 2023.



Daily newspapers available online

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News and Periodicals Enterprise

SAC Chairman PM Senior General Min Aung Hlaing inspects arrangements to provide water to Kandawgyi Lake in Sittway

CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing yesterday afternoon inspected providing of water to Kandawgyi Lake in order to supply water to Sittway of Rakhine State.

Officials reported on providing underground water to Kandawgyi Lake and water requirement of Sittway.

In his response, the Senior General instructed officials to conduct tests for tapping underground water in order to provide water into the Kandawgyi Lake which plays a key role in supplying water to Sittway.

The Senior General launched the supply of water through the underground water pipeline to Thinganet Dam and Kandawgyi Lake.

The Senior General viewed the upper soil, pieces of stone and shale layer which came out



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing presses the electric button to launch the supply of water through the underground water pipeline to Thinganet Dam and Kandawgyi Lake.



from the soil test in Kandawgyi Lake.

At the site where the underground water tapping process by the tube well in Sittway

Quality Strain Farm, the Senior General heard reports on the sites chosen for sinking in tube wells in the 40-acre farm, pouring out of freshwater from tube

wells, the content of seawater mixed with freshwater in some sites and preparations to send water to Kandawgyi Lake by pipelines via the water collecting tanks from the already sunk tube wells and the sinking wells by Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Min Naung and officials.

The Senior General stressed the need to systematically calculate the possible volume of underground water. Reliance should not be put on underground water alone, and rainwater needs to be collected for supplying fresh water.

The Senior General viewed round sinking tube wells and gave necessary guidance.

In accord with the guidance of the Senior General, geophysical feasibility studies are being conducted at the

possible sites of tube wells to provide underground water to Kandawgyi Lake. In so doing, the 4,400 feet long water pipeline was laid from Thinganet Dam to Kandawgyi Lake to supply water to the lake from yesterday. Moreover, preparations are being made to lay water pipelines and install water pumps for providing more water to the lake from other tube wells. The lake has a storage capacity of 481.10 million gallons of water, Kandawng-1 and 2, Kandawlay and Triangle Lake, 62.37 million gallons of water, the extended lake, 119.59 million gallons of water and Satyoekya Lake-1 and-2 120 million gallons of water. Providing underground water to Kandawgyi Lake will greatly contribute to a sufficient supply of water to Sittway. — MNA/TTA



The Senior General hears the report on the provision of water into the Kandawgyi Lake and the status of water consumption for Sittway.

MoFA Union Minister receives Sri Lankan Ambassador

U Than Swe, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, received Mr J M Janaka Priyantha Bandara, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, at 10 am yesterday at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw. During the call, they cordially exchanged views on matters pertaining to the further enhancement of the friendly bilateral relations and mutually beneficial cooperation in the areas including education, health and IT sectors between the two countries, as well as closer collaboration in regional and multilateral contexts such as the BIMSTEC and the United Nations. — MNA



Ambassador Mr JM Janaka Priyantha Bandara of Sri Lanka calls on Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe yesterday.

MoST Union Minister receives Russian delegation of Rusatom International Network



Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Kyaw holds talks with Russian delegation from the Rusatom International Network yesterday.

UNION Minister for Science and Technology Dr Myo Thein Kyaw received President Mr Vadim Titov of the Rusatom International Network from the Russian Federation yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw. Both sides cordially discussed the strengthening of long-term collaboration of bilateral relations between the

two countries, human resource development activities, nuclear technology for peaceful purposes under implementation in the socioeconomic development, the procedures to be carried out at the Nuclear Technology Information Centre for positive opinions from the public and future programmes between Myanmar

and the Russian Federation's State Atomic Energy Corporation-Rosatom. The meeting was attended by Deputy Minister for Science and Technology Dr Aung Zeya, the permanent secretary, directors-general, officials and representatives from Rosatom of the Russian Federation. — MNA/TS

ASEANSAI holds 5th Executive Committee Meeting in Nay Pyi Taw

THE 5th Executive Committee Meeting of the Association of Auditors-General of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEANSAD) was held by the Office of the Union Auditor-General in a virtual format yesterday. The meeting was attended by the Myanmar delegation led by Union Auditor-General U Tin Oo from the Office of the Union Auditor-General in Nay Pyi Taw, delegations led by ASEANSAD Vice-Chair Auditor-General of the Philippines Mr Gamaliel A Cordoba, Secretary-General of ASEANSAD Mr Bahtiar Arif and the delegation from the Office of the Auditor-General of Thailand. Union Auditor-General U Tin Oo delivered an opening speech and explained the preparation of the ASEANSAD's

7th high-ranking officials' meeting as the host country. Furthermore, the auditor-general of the Philippines informed that the Office of the Auditor-General of the Philippines is preparing to host the ASEANSAD's 7th Summit. ASEANSAD Secretary-General discussed and presented issues of ASEANSAD's financial statements, the extension of the Secretary-General's term of office and a brief account of Timor Leste, which will become a new ASEAN member state. Next, the Union auditor-general clarified future programmes before giving a closing speech. Then, representatives took documentary photos and the meeting was concluded. — MNA/TS



The fifth Executive Committee Meeting of the Association of Auditors-General of Southeast Asian Nations in progress online.

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Coord meeting held for Walking Thingyan in Nay Pyi Taw

THE coordinating meeting for organizing Walking Thingyan in Nay Pyi Taw was held yesterday.

First, Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn in his capacity as Chairman of the Organizing Committee for Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan said arrangements are being made to hold Nay Pyi Taw Thingyan on a grand scale by cooperating with the Nay Pyi Taw Council. Measures are being taken to make the Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan like the ones held in Yangon and Mandalay. The festival aims at civilians as well as departmental staff and their families. It will include Thanaka Thingyan, Ethnic People's Thingyan, Youths' Game



Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn chairs the coordination meeting for organizing Walking Thingyan in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Thingyan and so on. Then, Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee Chairman U Tin Oo Lwin, who is also vice-chair of the committee, said the council will participate in

holding the Walking Thingyan with its own Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee Pavilion this year.

Next, Committee Secretary Deputy Minister U Ye Tint, the Project Director of Brilliant Aura Co Ltd and Coordinator for the Walking Thingyan Deputy Director-General of MRTV U Myo Myint Aung reported on preparations for the Walking Thingyan and locations of pandals of ministries concerned.

The vice mayor, attendees and officials of the Subcommittee also discussed security measures, access to water, electricity, regulatory matters and healthcare services. — MNA/KTZH

Meeting held on electric power projects between MoEP and Rosatom of Russian Federation

THE meeting on the projects to be jointly implemented by the Ministry of Electric Power and Rusatom International Network-Rosatom of the Russian Federation was held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

First, Union Minister for Electric Power U Thaung Han said that it was the second meeting on the bilateral cooperation in wind power and small hydropower projects and the Russian-Myanmar Coordinating Group also had rounds of discussions.

He added that he visited the Barsuchkovskaya small hydropower plant and the Kochubeevskaya wind power plant in Moscow and Sochi, Russia, in November 2022 and that the project proposals of Popa Region (200 MW), Minhla Region (116

MW) and Mindon Region (56 MW) will be submitted to the office of the State Administration Council so that feasibility study can be made and MoU signed.

The Union minister went on to say that small hydropower projects can be carried out in the PutaO region either between Rosatom and MoEP or between Rosatom and Myanmar's private investors to meet the power requirements of Myanmar people as soon as possible.

President of the Rusatom International Network Mr VadimTitov from the Russian Federation responded that the work programmes on thermal power projects will be implemented in June and 20-Megawatt hydropower projects reviewed and presented in April.



Union Minister U Thaung Han holds talks with Russian delegation of Rusatom International Network yesterday.

Afterwards, the Union minister and the Russian delegation discussed in detail the bilateral cooperation matters on wind power and small hydropower projects. — MNA/MKKS

Illegal teak, foodstuffs, consumer goods, industrial materials and vehicles seized

THE on-duty Customs team under the Customs Department made inspections on 29 March and captured 116 sets of dressing tables worth K8.12 million that were not mentioned in the Import Declaration (ID) from a container at the Asia World Port Terminal container checkpoint and three kinds of goods (including three sets of compressor air filters) worth K2,195,182 that were different

from the Import Declaration (ID) from a container at the Ywathagyi Dry Port. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

Similarly, a combined team under the Mandalay Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force at the Letpanhla-Singu temporary checkpoint confiscated two kinds of goods (including 3,000 baby backpacks) worth K14.55 million without

official documents from a Nissan Diesel car (approximate value of K30 million) heading to Mandalay from Myitkyina. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

In addition, the Muse District Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force conducted a surprise check on a Dongfeng truck (approximate value of K20 million) that was parked on Pyidaungsu Highway in Muse

township and seized 85 kinds of goods (including two travelling suitcases) worth K55,071,960 without official documents and various kinds of foodstuffs (made in China) without FDA approval. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

An unregistered Toyota Mark II car (approximate value of K3.5 million) was captured near the junction of Waizayanta and Laydauntkan roads in

Thingangyun township.

A total of 6.3070 tonnes of illegal teak worth K4,162,620 was seized in the Pyukun protected public forest in Pyu township and the action was taken under the Forest Law.

Therefore, nine arrests (estimated value of K164,435,762) were made on 29 March, according to the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS

LOCAL BUSINESS

Pulses' prices likely to remain on upward trajectory in coming months

THE prices of black gram and pigeon peas are expected to move onwards in the coming months in the domestic pulses market.

The prices stood at K2,160,000 per tonne of pigeon pea and K1,858,500 per tonne of black grams on 1 March. The prevailing price climbs to K2,385,000 per tonne of pigeon pea and K2,056,000 per tonne of black gram. The figures indicated an increase of K225,000 per tonne of pigeon pea and K197,500 per tonne of black gram.

Foreign demand pushed up the prices. They are currently delivered to India and China.

India forecast Myanmar's black gram output is estimated at 650,000 tonnes. This year, the yield rate is likely to fall by a half owing to a reduction

in sowing acres and threats of invasive pests, the growers said.

Afterwards, the growers can generate a profit only if the black gram is priced at K60,000-70,000 per basket amid the high cost of agricultural inputs.

The price of black gram (urad in India) increased slightly in India as well. India imported 35,000 tonnes of Myanmar's black gram in February. It is expected to bring in 28,000-30,000 tonnes in March. At present, supply weakens on the Myanmar side. The export is likely to go up in April. The price of black gram (urad in India) is expected to be around Rs 8,500-9,000 per quintal in Chennai until August, Agri World Mumbai forecast.

Myanmar earned over US\$1.3 billion from over 1.8



Merchants are seen evaluating beans and pulses in the Mandalay market.

million tonnes of pulses in the current financial year 2022-2023, the Ministry of Commerce said.

Of them, black gram export earned \$516.308 million from 630,199.477 kilogrammes, while pigeon pea export pocked \$171.573

million from 219,831.328 kilos, the Ministry of Commerce's statistics showed.

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

are shipped to China and Europe.

India has growing demand and consumption requirements for black grams and pigeon peas. According to a Memorandum of Understanding between Myanmar and India signed

on 18 June 2022, India will import 250,000 tonnes of black gram and 100,000 tonnes of pigeon peas (tur) from Myanmar for five consecutive years from 2021-2022 financial year to 2025-2026 FY. This G-to-G pact will not affect the pulses' annual quota set by India. Myanmar's exporters are also entitled to deliver the pulses to India under that annual quota.

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

Gold shines as global spot gold price rallies

THE pure gold price hit a high of K2,918,000 per tical (0.578 ounce or 0.016 kilogramme) in the unofficial domestic market.

The domestic gold price hovered on the high side as the spot gold price stayed high at \$1,962 per ounce.

YGEA hiked the reference rate to over K2,311,400 per tical tracking increase in spot gold price.

Consequently, there is a price difference of over K600,000 per tical between the YGEA's reference price and the price in the unofficial market.

YGEA calculated the price depending on the Central Bank of Myanmar's reference exchange rate of K2,100, with

some addition, while the US dollar is exchanged at K2,870 in the unauthorized forex market.

Following the bankruptcy of the US bank, the gold price soared. Despite the gold gain in the global market, Myanmar's forex market sees no movement at all. Consequently, YGEA requested its members not to buy them competitively, tracking the upward trend in the gold spot price, as per YGEA's statement released on 20 March.

Afterwards, the YGEA called for the members to make gold transactions with only immediate payment and avoid verbal transactions over calls without having any physical stocks.

The YGEA is not bound to have any responsibilities for market manipulation in the unofficial market. As a result of this, its members are asked to strictly adhere to the rules and regulations of the association while making gold transactions.

At present, the authorities concerned are attempting to deal with market abuse and inspecting and prosecuting market manipulation is being undertaken.

Moreover, the Central Bank of Myanmar will expose those manipulators to interfere with market stability through digital platforms, according to the notification dated 20 March. — NN/EM

Prices of fuel oil, gold and dollar on 30 March 2023

Fuel Oil Price (Yangon)

Octane 92	K2,150
Octane 95	K2,240
Diesel	K2,095
Premium Diesel	K2,175

All of the prices are based on per litre.

Gold Price

The reference price of high-purity gold set by YGEA	K2,316,200 per tical
High-purity gold in the gold market	K2,930,000 per tical

US Dollar Vs Kyat

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

The above prices may change from time to time.

50 container vessels scheduled to call in April

A total of 50 container vessels are slated to arrive at Yangon Port in April, according to the Myanma Port Authority.

This month, 11 container vessels run by Sealand Maersk Asia, seven by RCL Line, four each by Cosco Shipping Line, MSC Line and Samudera Shipping Line, three by SITC Line,

two each by Ever Green Line, IAL Line, MITT Shipping Line, ONE and X-Press Feeder Line and one each by BLPL Shipping Line, CMA CGM Line, Gold Star Line, Land & Sea, PIL Line and VASI Shipping.

This year, 52 container vessels each in January and February and 55 in March arrived

at Yangon Port.

Yangon Port handled a total of 620 container vessels this year, according to Myanma Port Authority.

The number of container vessels entering Yangon Port stands at 49 in January, 48 in February, 50 in March, 52 in April, 54 in May, 53 in June, 49 in July, 55

each in August and September, 50 in October, 51 in November and 54 in December.

From May 2021, the arrival of ships at terminals in Yangon has increased again. To fulfil the seaborne trade requirements, three new container vessels by Maersk Line Myanmar (SeaLand and Maersk) started to run in

2021.

Earlier, the larger ships had draft problems preventing their sailing on the Yangon River. The draft extension is up to 10 meters with the new navigation channel accessing the inner Yangon River and the international ocean liners can access the inner port for now. — NN/EM

OPINION

Share business knowledge with new generations

OPERATION of manufacturing at home in full swing is crucial to develop the State economy. Only when manufacturing process boosts at home will it supply food to the people for ensuring the local food security. On the other hand, boosting production at home can reduce import volume while increasing export volume. The acceleration of manufacturing industries can generate jobs for local people, benefiting those along the production chains.

Myanmar's economic growth rate declined to -5.9 per cent during the period from October 2020 to September 2021. But, it regained improvement with 2.4 per cent in the six-month interim period and 3.4 per cent on the first six-month period of 2022-23 financial year. At the end of this financial year, the economic growth rate reached 3.4

per cent, according to the statistics of relevant departments.

The economy treats the daily lifestyle of people. Different sorts of businesses directly affect the socioeconomic life of the people. As some 70 per cent of people reside in the rural area, agriculture and livestock farms which are basic economy of rural areas should be improved with modern techniques to produce quality products.

Moreover, an emphasis must be placed on increasing incomes for rural people. Local authorities need to encourage rural people to cultivate quality strains of cash crops potential for booming economy in the rural area.

Consequently, the development gap between rural and urban areas can be narrowed gradually. If so, people from both urban and rural areas can enjoy the fruits of equitable development across the nation. Hence, the government pledged to continue enhancement of people-centred development undertakings in all parts of the nation not to lag all citizens behind the development.

Everybody needs to vow for overcoming challenges in doing business. They have to analyze weakness of their businesses and try to widen their scopes to know efficient spending and wasting the incomes. They all have the business knowledge and the skills to calculate prospects of economic arena. If so, they will have the chances for comprehensively managing their businesses while solving the business problems and overcoming challenges conveniently.

The businesspersons must have a widened scope of knowledge on a locally and internationally basis so as to comprehensively manage their businesses for keeping abreast of businesses from other countries. Only when they uphold global outlook in the economic sector will their businesses boom in order to benefit both the State and the citizens. Consequently, they will have the capacity to hand over their valuable experiences on doing businesses to new generation economists.

ONE summer night in a seaside cottage, a small boy felt lifted from the bed. Dazed with sleep, he heard his mother murmur about the lateness of the hour and heard his father laugh. Then, with the swiftness of a dream, he was borne in his father's arms down the porch steps and out onto the beach.

Overhead the sky blazed with stars. "Watch!" Incredibly, as his father spoke, one of the stars moved. In a streak of golden fire, it flashed across the astonished heavens. And before the wonder of this could fade, another star leapt from its place, then another, plunging towards the restless sea.

"What is it?" the child whispered.

"Shooting stars. They come every year on a certain night in August. I thought you would like to see the show."

That was all: just an unexpected glimpse of something haunting and mysterious and beautiful. But, back in bed, the child stared for a long time into the dark, rapt with the knowledge that all around the quiet house, the night was full of the silent music of the falling stars.

Decades have passed, but I remember that night still because I was the fortunate seven-year-old boy whose father believed that a new experience was more important for a small boy than an unbroken night's sleep.

No doubt I had the usual quota of childhood playthings, but these are forgotten now. What I

remember is the night the stars fell. And the day we rode in a caboose [back car on the train], the time we tried to skin the alligator, the telegraph we made that really worked.

I remember the 'trophy table' in the hall where we children were encouraged to exhibit things we had found - snake skins, seashells, flowers, arrowheads, anything unusual or beautiful. I remember the books left by my bed that pushed back my horizons and sometimes actually changed my life. Once my father gave me the classic story of undergraduate life at the university. I liked it and told him so.

"Why don't you think about going there yourself?" he said casually. A few years later with luck and a scholarship, I did.

My father had, to a marvelous degree, the gift of opening doors for his children, of leading them into areas of splendid newness. This subtle art of adding dimensions to a child's world does not necessarily require a great deal of time. It simply involves doing things more often with our children instead of for them or to them.

One woman I know keeps a 'Why not?' notebook, and in it, she scribbles all sorts of offbeat and fascinating proposals: 'Why not take kids to police headquarters

and get them fingerprinted?' 'Why not visit a farm and attempt to milk a cow?' 'Why not arrange a ride on a tugboat?' 'Why not follow a river dredge and hunt for fossilized shark's teeth?'

And so, they do.

I asked her where she got her ideas. "Oh," she said, "I don't know. But when I was a child, I had this wonderful old ne'er-do-well uncle who..."

Who used to open doors for her; just as she is opening them now for her own children.

Aside from our father, we had a remarkable aunt who was a genius at suggesting spur-of-the-moment plots to blow away the dust of daily drudgeries.

"Can you stand on your head?" she would ask us, children. "I can!" And, tucking her skirt between her knees, she would do so. "What shall we do this afternoon?" she would cry, and answer her own question instantly: "Let's go pawn something!" Or, "There's a palm reader on the edge of town. Let's have our fortunes told!"

Always a new dimension, always a magic door opening, an experience to be shared. That's the keyword: we shared.

The easiest door to open for a child, usually, is one that leads to something you love yourself. All good teachers know this. And they know the ultimate reward:

the marvellous moment when the spark you are breathing on bursts into a flame that henceforth will burn brightly on its own.

At a Badminton Association tournament a few years ago in our town, a pigtailed ten-year-old played creditably in the junior girls' championship.

"How long have you been interested in badminton?" someone asked. "I got it for my ninth birthday," she said.

"You mean your father gave you a set of clubs?"

"No," she said patiently, "he gave me just badminton."

The possessor of a wonderful realm had wanted his child to share the magic kingdom. No doubt it took some time and effort, some patience, and some mystical transference of enthusiasm. But what a reward for both of them! And it might equally well have been music or astronomy or chemistry or collecting butterflies - any world at all.

Children are naturally inquisitive and love to try new things. But someone must offer them the choices. Years ago, when the Quiz Kids were astonishing radio audiences with their brilliance, a writer set out to discover what common denominators there were in the backgrounds of these extraordinary children.

He found that some were

from poor families, some from rich, some had been too superior schools, and some had not. But in every case investigated there was at least one parent who shared enthusiasms with the child, who watched for areas of interest, who gave encouragement and praise for achievement, who made a game of searching out the answers to questions, who went out of his way to supply the tools of learning.

No doubt the capacity for outstanding performance was already there, but it took the love and interest, and companionship of a parent to bring it out.

I have a friend, a psychiatrist, who says that basically there are two types of human beings: those who think of life as a privilege and those who think of it as a problem.

The first type is enthusiastic, energetic, resistant to shock, and responsive to challenge. The other type is suspicious, hesitant, withholding, and self-centred.

To the first group, life is hopeful and exciting. The second, it's a potential ambush.

And, he adds, "Tell me what sort of childhood you had and I can tell you which type you are likely to be."

By Yin Nwe Ko

The Stars Falling Night



That was all: just an unexpected glimpse of something haunting and mysterious and beautiful. But, back in bed, the child stared for a long time into the dark, rapt with the knowledge that all around the quiet house, the night was full of the silent music of the falling stars. **ILLUSTRATION: FOR REPRESENTATIONAL PURPOSE ONLY/FREEPIK**

South Africa welcomes 1st group of Chinese tourists since COVID-19 outbreak

Nomasonto Ndlovu, chief operations officer with South African Tourism, said the flight carrying Chinese tourists is a positive move that will make the country's tourism sector recover more quickly and help grow the economy.

SOUTH Africa's tourism authority on Wednesday welcomed the first group of tourists from China since the outbreak of COVID-19.

A welcoming ceremony with local traditional dances was held at the OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg for

the 13 Chinese tourists, who arrived at the airport on an Air China flight, becoming the first group of Chinese tourists into the country after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nomasonto Ndlovu, chief operations officer with South African Tourism, said the flight

carrying Chinese tourists is a positive move that will make the country's tourism sector recover more quickly and help grow the economy.

"China is our strategic tourism source market.

This flight marks a significant milestone, and South Af-

rican Tourism will continue to work with all partners to make sure we grow this market," said Ndlovu.

Judy Nwokedi, the board chairperson of Gauteng Tourism Authority, said the arrival of Chinese tourists will help the country employ more tour

guides and fight its unemployment and poverty, promising that they will continue to train tour guides in Mandarin to help them better communicate with Chinese travelers.

SOURCE: Xinhua



Dancers interact with tourists from China during a welcoming ceremony at the OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg, South Africa, on 29 March 2023. **PHOTO: ZHANG YUDONG/XINHUA**

CURRENT
AFFAIRS

Human trafficking persists amid growing illegal migration

CHAIRMAN of Implementation Committee on the Five-Year National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Chief of Myanmar Police Force Maj-Gen Zin Min Htet stated at the working group's meeting on 28 March that the number of people who migrate to neighbouring countries has been increasing and they are being educated and sent back to their home.

The deputy minister added that human trafficking can be prevented in time only by carrying out a thorough and systematic inspection at the checkpoints in relevant regions and states.

Some foreigners came to Myanmar's border towns through neighbouring countries and persuaded the would-be victims by saying that they would get well-paid jobs.

It is vital to conduct awareness campaigns among the public since public participation in reporting is important in identifying criminals.

From January 2006 to 31 December 2019, the anti-trafficking police force exposed 2,054 cases, prosecuting approximately 6,000 suspects, and rescuing more than 4,500 victims of human trafficking. — TWA/CT



Shwedagon to hold Myanmar New Year ceremony

THE Myanmar New Year celebration will be held at the Shwedagon Pagoda on the first day of the Myanmar New Year, according to the board of trustees.

The ceremony will start at 5 am on the Myanmar New Year Day and food, fruits, flowers, water, lights and fragrance will be offered to the Pagoda, the Shwedagon Pagoda Board of Trustees said.

In addition, the dawn meals will be offered to venerable Sayadaws and monks at 5:30 am, and the celebration of Myanmar New Year will be held at the prayer hall of ancient Buddha statues located on the southern square of the Pagoda at 6:30 am. Then, venerable Buddhist monks will recite the Paritta and offerings will be donated to them. — TWA/CT

The Paritta recitation ceremony at the Shwedagon Pagoda on 17 April 2019.

Yangon-Bagan express train set to run from April

MYANMA Railways stated that the schedule of Yangon-Bagan express train trips will be changed starting in April.

Previously, Yangon-Bagan Up and Down express trains operated every Friday and Sunday, but starting in April, they will run every Tuesday and Friday.

The 61-up express train running from Yangon to Bagan will leave Yangon station at 4:15 pm and arrive at Bagan station at noon the next day.

In addition, 62-down express train that will return from Bagan to Yangon will leave Bagan Station at 4:15 pm and arrive at Yangon Station at noon the next day, according to the Myanma Railways.

The train will stop at 23 stations named Thayawady, Letpadan, Minhla, Okpo, Gyobingauk, Zigon, Nattalin, Paungde, Patigon, Thegon, Sinmyeswe, Shwetaga, Aunglan, Setthwa, Taungdwingyi, Myothit, Natmawk, Layein, Thahmya, Pinchaung, Kyaukpadaung, Ngaminmay and Suti. — TWA/KZL

New chilli pepper enters Yangon market with wholesale price of K10,000 per viss

NEW long chilli peppers from the delta region have recently started to enter the Yangon market with a wholesale rate of K10,000 per viss.

New bell peppers from the delta region in addition to the new long chilli peppers from Wakema, Shwelaung, Pantanaw and Einme areas, and new Moehtaung chilli peppers from Shwelaung, Chaungphya, Layeinsu and Maubin regions came into regional markets as well as the Yangon market.

In the days when there was no cold storage, chilli peppers were stored in pots and barrels almost without damaging the quality at the time of distribution to the market.

When cold storage facilities emerge in Yangon industrial zones, not only aquatic products but also fruits, vege-

tables and peppers are stored in them. Some chilli pepper cold storage facilities can hold tens of thousands of 20-viss bags of chilli peppers. The cold storage charge for peppers is around K75 per viss.

Most of Yangon's chilli storage rooms are almost full of chilli peppers when new long chilli peppers from the delta region are in season, according to an owner of a chilli pepper depot in Bayintnaung market.

The buying price of chilli pepper for cold storage is only one-third (30 per cent) of the selling price of chilli pepper processed in cold storage. In 2022, the profit earned by the hoarders of cold storage chilli peppers set a new record.

Not only chilli pepper but also rice, palm oil, peanut oil, onion and sugar prices have rarely risen to the highest lev-



A cold storage room.

els throughout the life of the Yangon commodity market. Thus, in 2022, those stockpiling these commodities have reaped unprecedented profits. — TWA/CT



23 trafficked Myanmar nationals repatriated by Thailand

A total of 23 Myanmar citizens who were trafficked to Thailand were repatriated to Myanmar on 29 March, it is learnt.

The trafficked Myanmar people — six children, six women and 11 men — were handed over by Thai authorities to Myanmar officials.

The money, belongings and related documents of the returnees were also handed over by Thai officials to Myanmar counterparts.

Returnees were brought to a temporary shelter in Myawady township through the Myawady-Mae Sot Friendship Bridge I and they will reportedly be sent back to their home. — TWA/MKKS

Pope Francis in hospital for respiratory infection



Pope Francis blesses a guest on 29 March 2023 during the weekly general audience at St Peter's square in The Vatican. **PHOTO: VINCENZO PINTO/AFP**

POPE Francis, 86, was admitted to a hospital in Rome on Wednesday with a respiratory infection that will require a stay of a few days, the Vatican said.

“In recent days Pope Francis has complained of some breathing difficulties,” Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said in a statement.

The pontiff was admitted to Rome’s Gemelli hospital for medical checks, which revealed “a respiratory infection... that will require a few days of appropriate hospital medical treatment”, Bruni said.

Covid had been excluded, he added.

A Vatican source confirmed the pope’s engagements on Thursday were cancelled, with others likely to follow in what is a very busy period for the pontiff ahead of the key Christian holiday of Easter.

Francis, who marked a decade as head of the Catholic Church earlier this month, spent 10 days in the Gemelli hospital in July 2021 after undergoing colon surgery.

He has also suffered pain in his knee, which has forced him to use a wheelchair, although he continues to travel widely.

“Pope Francis is touched

by the many messages received and expresses his gratitude for the closeness and prayer,” Bruni added in his statement.

Rapid recovery

At his weekly audience at the Vatican earlier Wednesday, the pope appeared in good spirits, smiling as he greeted the faithful in his popemobile.

However, he was seen grimacing as he was helped into the vehicle.

Dozens of journalists gathered late Wednesday outside the hospital, where a statue of the late pope John Paul II stands by the entrance.—AFP

New Zealand reveals first-ever rabies death

NEW Zealand revealed its first-ever rabies case Thursday, saying the viral disease had killed a patient who caught it abroad but there was no risk to the public.

Doctors used “full infection control measures” at the two hospitals where the case was treated, first in Whangarei on the North Island, then in nearby Auckland, the health ministry said. “Person to person transmission of rabies is extremely rare, almost unknown, so there is no risk to members of the public,” the

ministry said in a statement.

Rabies is usually spread by the saliva of an infected animal that bites someone. The patient, who was not identified, was suspected of having the disease when first admitted to hospital in early March. Laboratory results later confirmed it was the first-ever case of rabies in New Zealand, home to five million people. “New Zealand does not have rabies in its animal or human populations, and this case does not change our rabies-free status,” the health ministry said.—AFP



Rabies is usually spread by the saliva of an infected animal that bites someone. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/AFP**

Losing weight may be beneficial to your heart, even if some weight is regained: Study

A systematic review of research published in Circulation: Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes, a peer-reviewed American Heart Association journal, found that losing weight with lifestyle changes in an intensive behavioural weight loss programme was linked to a decrease in risk factors for cardiovascular disease and Type 2 diabetes for at least five years - even if some weight was regained.

People affected by obesity or who are overweight are at increased risk for high cholesterol and high blood pressure – factors that heighten risk of cardiovascular disease; as well as insulin resistance, a precursor to Type 2 diabetes. Globally, overweight and obesity contributed to 2.4 million deaths in 2020, according to the American Heart Association’s 2023 Statistical Update.

Behavioural weight loss programmes can help people lose and maintain a healthy weight by encouraging lifestyle and be-



Behavioural weight loss programmes can help people lose and maintain a healthy weight by encouraging lifestyle and behaviour changes, such as eating healthy foods and increasing physical activity. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ANI**

haviour changes, such as eating healthy foods and increasing physical activity. Regaining some weight is common after behavioural weight loss programmes. Some observational studies suggest this weight change pattern of weight loss followed by weight regain may increase cardiovascular risk. However, according to the authors of this analysis, data from randomized trials and long-

term follow-up studies is lacking.

“Many doctors and patients recognize that weight loss is often followed by weight regain, and they fear that this renders an attempt to lose weight pointless,” said study co-senior author Susan A Jebb, PhD, a professor of diet and population health at the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom.—ANI

US in sad state of life expectancy: NPR

JUST before Christmas, US federal health officials confirmed life expectancy in the United States had dropped for a nearly unprecedented second year in a row, down to 76 years, reported the National

Public Radio (NPR) on Saturday. “While countries all over the world saw life expectancy rebound during the second year of the pandemic after the arrival of vaccines, the US did not,” noted the report. Then, last

week, more bad news: Maternal mortality in the US reached a high in 2021.

Also, a paper in the Journal of the American Medical Association found rising mortality rates among US children and

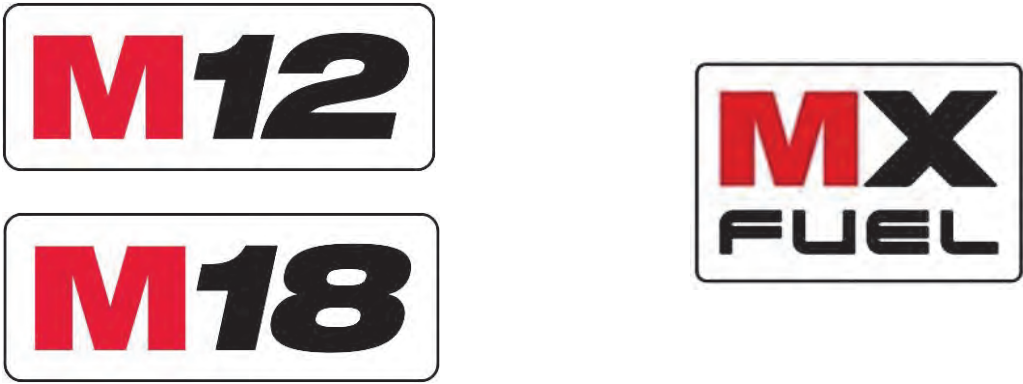
adolescents.

“Across the lifespan, and across every demographic group, Americans die at younger ages than their counterparts in other wealthy nations,” said the report.

In a country that prides itself on scientific excellence and innovation, and spends an incredible amount of money on healthcare, the population keeps dying at younger and younger ages, it said.—Xinhua

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machines and apparatus for carpet shampooing, electric; cleaning appliances utilizing steam; brushes for vacuum cleaners; steam mops; suction nozzles for vacuum cleaners; vacuum cleaner attachments for disseminating perfumes and disinfectants; vacuum cleaner bags; vacuum cleaner hoses; vacuum cleaners; pumps [machines]; washing apparatus; high pressure washers; mechanized livestock feeders; tracks being part of power tools; sewer cleaning machines; drain cleaning machines; drainage machines; electric drain unblocking devices; electric pipe evacuators; riveting machines; electric soldering irons; holders for machine tools; parts and fittings for the above goods." in **Class 7**; "Scientific, research, navigation, surveying, photographic, cinematographic, audiovisual, optical, weighing, measuring, signalling, detecting, testing, inspecting, life-saving and teaching apparatus and instruments; apparatus and instruments for conducting, switching, transforming, accumulating, regulating or controlling the distribution or use of electricity; apparatus and instruments for recording, transmitting, reproducing or processing sound, images or data; batteries, electric; solar batteries; cells; battery boxes; battery chargers; power sources; converters, electric; distance measuring apparatus; distance recording apparatus; Global Positioning System [GPS] apparatus; height measuring instruments; lasers, not for medical purposes; levels [instruments for determining the horizontal]; locks, electric; loudspeakers; measures; measuring devices, electric; remote control apparatus; rulers [measuring instruments]; squares for measuring; headphones; radios; clothing, footwear and gloves for protection against accidents, irradiation and fire; body harnesses for support when lifting loads; protective goggles; protective helmets; protective masks; protective harnesses; protective headwear for industrial use, including hard hats, face shields, safety visors; glasses and glass storage; computer software applications, downloadable; application software and mobile app for tool control, inventory management and tool reporting; downloadable virtual goods (metaverse); MP3; USB (Universal Serial Bus) adapters; memory stick; rotating inspection scopes; digital inspection cameras; laser markers; body cooling gear; body cooling gear namely vests, towels, head bands and caps that cool down body temperature; pet cooling gear; pet vests that cool down body temperature; parts and fittings for the above goods." in **Class 9**; and "Apparatus and installations for lighting, heating, cooling, steam generating, cooking, drying, ventilating, water supply and sanitary purposes; air purifying apparatus and machines; humidifiers; air-conditioning installations; sterilizers; disinfectant apparatus; electric fans for personal use; fans [air-conditioning]; fog machines; light tubes being parts of insect killing apparatus; head torches; portable headlamps; electric torches; electric flashlights; lamps; electric lights for Christmas trees; blankets, electric, not for medical purposes; electrically heated clothing; heating cushions, electric, not for medical purposes; heating pads, electric, not for medical purposes; laundry dryers, electric; laundry room boilers; refrigerators, freezers, wine cellars, electric; wine coolers; cooling installations for liquids; coolers, electric; dish sterilizers; gas condensers, other than parts of machines; coffee capsules, empty, for electric coffee machines; coffee machines, electric; coffee percolators, electric; coffee roasters; food dehydrators, electric; kettles, electric; hand dryers; hand drying apparatus for washrooms; hand and face dryers; electric hand dryers; hair dryers; hair dryer attachments namely hair diffusers, smoothing nozzles, concentrator nozzles, hot air comb nozzles; stands for hair dryers; filters for hair dryers; mats for hair dryers; heat guns; cases, boxes, bags, and stands specially adapted for all for the aforesaid goods; parts and fittings for the above goods." in **Class 11**.

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Dated: 31 March 2023

China, Brazil strike deal to ditch dollar for trade

CHINA and Brazil have reached a deal to trade in their own currencies, ditching the US dollar as an intermediary, the Brazilian government said Wednesday, Beijing's latest salvo against the almighty greenback.

The deal will enable China, the top rival to US economic hegemony, and Brazil, the biggest economy in Latin America, to conduct their massive trade and financial transactions directly, exchanging yuan for reais and vice versa instead of going through the dollar.

"The expectation is that this will reduce costs... promote even greater bilateral trade and facilitate investment," the Brazilian Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (ApexBrasil) said in a statement.

China is Brazil's biggest trading partner, with a record \$150.5 billion in bilateral trade last year.

The deal, which follows a preliminary agreement in January, was announced after a high-level China-Brazil business forum in Beijing.

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva was originally scheduled to attend the forum as part of a high-profile China visit, but had to postpone his trip indefinitely Sunday after he came down with pneumonia.

The Industrial and Commercial Bank of China and Bank of Communications BBM will execute the transactions, officials said.—AFP



File photo shows a worker counting Chinese currency Renminbi at a bank in Lianyungang, east China's Jiangsu Province. PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/SI WEI/XINHUA

ECONOMY: TOP HEADLINES

Biden, Argentine president affirm 'economic integration'

US President Joe Biden on Wednesday hailed an "enormous opportunity" to increase economic integration with Argentina as he hosted the South American country's President Alberto Fernandez at the White House.

"This meeting is a chance to reaffirm that nothing is beyond our reach if we work together," Biden said seated next to his counterpart in the Oval Office.—AFP

Angola: Luanda trade, industry fair kicks off, business climate growing - companies

DESPITE imports of raw materials, Portuguese-Angolan companies consider that the business environment in Angola "is growing satisfactorily" and want to expand their business, businesspeople present at Expo-Indústria 2023 told Lusa.

The Portuguese-Angolan companies Cipritex - Confeções & Design and Quinta de Jugais Angola have been taking part since today (Wednesday) in Expo-Indústria - 5th Angolan trade and industry fair, which was inaugurated by the Angolan president, João Lourenço.—AFP

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PACKOUT

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Dated: **31 March 2023**

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SUKI-YA

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Dated: **31 March 2023**

H&M beats expectations by staying in the black

SWEDISH clothing giant H&M said Thursday its net profit more than doubled in the first quarter, defying expectations as analysts were expecting a loss.

Shares in H&M surged following the announcement, rising nine per cent in the early hours of trading on the Stockholm stock exchange.

"Although the world around us remains challenging, we are seeing several areas where developments are going in the right direction," chief executive Helena Helmersson said in a statement.

The world's second largest clothing retailer posted a net profit of 540 million kronor (\$51.9 million) for its first quarter —

which runs from December to February.

Analysts surveyed by Bloomberg were expecting an average loss of more than one billion kronor. A year earlier, the company reported a first quarter profit of 217 million kronor.

Net sales rose 12 per cent to 54.9 billion kronor for the quarter, but the growth was strongly driven by currency effects and in local currencies the growth was instead three percent.

Growth was driven by its two main markets, western Europe and the Americas, which more than offset a decline in eastern Europe owing to the closure of H&M's Russian shops after the invasion of Ukraine.—AFP



The world's second largest clothing retailer posted a net profit of 540 million kronor (\$51.9 million) for its first quarter. **PHOTO: TT NEWS AGENCY/AFP/FILE**

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Dated: **31 March 2023**

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The above Trademark is used in respect of "Computer application software for streaming media content via the internet; software for social networking; computer software platforms for social networking; computer software to enable uploading, downloading, accessing, posting, displaying, tagging, blogging, streaming, linking, sharing; downloadable software in the nature of a mobile application for social networking; application software for social networking services via internet; cell phone straps; selfie sticks; sunglasses; magnets; magnets (Decorative -); mouse pads; wrist rests for use with computers; none of the aforesaid goods being goods which are related to test reports." in **Class 9**; "Advertising, marketing and promotional services through a social networking platform; artist management; management of sports people; market research; marketing studies; modelling for advertising or sales promotion; news clipping services; rental of advertising space; rental of advertising time on communication media; sponsorship search; business networking through a social networking platform; online business services for connecting social network users with businesses; none of the aforesaid services being services which are related to test reports." in **Class 35**; "Electronic transmission of messages, graphics and images; instant messaging services in connection with social networking; providing on-line chat rooms for social networking; information, advisory and consultancy services relating to all the aforesaid; none of the aforesaid services being services which are related to test reports." in **Class 38**; "Platform as a service [PaaS] featuring computer software platform for uploading, streaming and gathering analytics; platform as a service [PaaS] featuring software platforms for transmission of digital content and messages; software as a service [SaaS] for social networking; providing a platform to allow users to stream files via website and mobile application; application service provider featuring application programming interface [API] software for uploading, sharing, managing, and streaming digital files; research in the field of social media; application service provider (ASP) featuring software to enable or facilitate the uploading, downloading, streaming, posting, displaying, blogging, linking, sharing or otherwise providing electronic media or information over communication networks; providing temporary use of non-downloadable software applications for social networking, creating a virtual community, and transmission of digital content; information, advisory and consultancy services relating to all the aforesaid; none of the aforesaid services being services which are related to test reports." in **Class 42**; and "Internet based social introduction and networking; online social networking services accessible by means of downloadable mobile applications; licensing of technology and software; providing online computer databases in the fields of social networking; information, advisory and consultancy services relating to all the aforesaid; none of the aforesaid services being services which are related to test reports." in **Class 45**.

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Putin says sanctions could have ‘negative’ impact on Russia

PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin conceded Wednesday that sanctions imposed on Russia for its intervention in Ukraine could bring about “negative” consequences for the country, after insisting Moscow was adapting to the penalties. “The sanctions imposed against the Russian economy in the medium term could really have a negative impact,” Putin said in a televised meeting with the government.

Western capitals have imposed unprecedented sanctions on Moscow after Putin launched his operation in Ukraine over a year ago. Putin has repeatedly said that Russia is weathering the barrage of



Russia said that its gas exports plummeted by 25 per cent in 2022 after the Ukraine conflict brought turmoil to Moscow’s ties with key buyers in Europe. **PHOTO: GAZPROM**

economic sanctions, which in particular targeted its oil and gas exports. The Russian leader said Wednesday that unemployment in the country “remains at an all-time low,” while inflation is expected to “drop below four per cent” by the end of March after soaring in spring last year. He added however that “the return to a growth trajectory should not make us feel relaxed.—AFP

Finland heads for elections under new iron curtain



Finland has started fencing off 200 kilometres of its border with Russia. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

WHEN Russia invaded Ukraine, a new iron curtain severed once-close ties between Moscow and Helsinki — something Ari Joronen can see with his own eyes from his farm in eastern Finland. “The trees have been cleared because of the new border fence,” he says, overlooking part of his property in the town of Imatra that adjoins the Russian border, a few hundred metres from his house. Finland — which holds legislative elections on Sunday — unveiled

plans in November to fence off 200 kilometres of its 1,300-kilometre (800-mile) border with Russia. “The war in Ukraine has been a turning point. Finns have had to rethink their relationship with Russia,” said Johanna Vuorelma, a researcher at University of Helsinki. So close to the border he can hear a firing range on the other side, Joronen’s property is currently separated from Russia by just light wooden livestock fences, like the rest of the Finnish-Russian border.—AFP

WORLD: TOP HEADLINES

31 killed after fire rips through Philippine ferry

AT least 31 people died and 230 were rescued after a fire engulfed a ferry in the southern Philippines, authorities said Thursday.

The Lady Mary Joy 3 was travelling from Zamboanga City on Mindanao Island to Jolo Island in Sulu province when the fire broke out late Wednesday, prompting passengers to jump overboard, disaster officer Nixon Alonzo said. Rescuers, including the Philippine Coast Guard and fishermen, saved 195 passengers and 35 crew as the blaze ripped through the ferry off Baluk-Baluk Island in Basilan province. —AFP

French court jails man for 2020 cathedral arson attack

A French court on Wednesday handed a four-year jail term to an arsonist for starting a fire that severely damaged a Gothic cathedral in the city of Nantes in 2020.

Emmanuel Abayisenga, a 42-year-old Rwandan, is also facing legal action for a separate incident in which he allegedly killed a priest in western France in 2021.

The court ruled that Abayisenga was not mentally sound at the time of the fire at the Cathedral of Saint Peter and Saint Paul when it handed down the sentence.

The court also banned Abayisenga from bearing weapons and staying in the western Loire-Atlantique region, where Nantes is located, for five years.—AFP

Charles III to address German parliament on first state visit

BRITAIN’S Charles III will address the German parliament on Thursday, becoming the first monarch to do so, on the occasion of his inaugural state visit as king.

Germany marks the first trip abroad for Charles since ascending the throne, which is being interpreted as a “strong gesture” to build post-Brexit ties with the continent.

Arriving for his three-day trip on Wednesday, he and Queen Consort Camilla were greeted with military honours at the Brandenburg Gate, the first time the iconic site had lent the backdrop for such a ceremony.

Speaking at a state banquet hosted by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Charles hailed the “enduring value” of the UK’s relations with Germany.

The two countries’ joint support for Ukraine in its battle against Russia’s unprovoked aggression epitomised their commitment to “protecting and advancing shared democratic values”, he added.

After the ceremonial pomp marking Wednesday’s arrival, Charles will undertake key political engagements on the second day of his trip.

He will start the day with



Britain’s King Charles III (2ndR) and Britain’s Camilla (2ndL), Queen Consort pose during a welcome ceremony with German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier (R) and his wife Elke Buedenbender at Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, on 29 March 2023. **PHOTO: RONNY HARTMANN / AFP**

talks with Chancellor Olaf Scholz, before addressing the Bundestag.

Reconciliation

Thursday will not be the first time Charles finds himself standing at the lectern of the German lower house. In November 2020, the then-crown prince addressed German lawmakers on the occasion of Remembrance Day in a highly symbolic gesture marking post-war reconciliation between the two countries. “We have you and your family to thank for the work of reconciliation, the deep friendship between our two people,” said host Steinmeier.—AFP

Bolsonaro returns to Brazil, complicating life for Lula



Bolsonaro seeks to regain his political footing as he returns to Brazil after three months in the United States to become the face of the country’s opposition. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

THREE months after leaving for the United States in the final hours of his term, Brazil’s ex-president Jair Bolsonaro is returning home Thursday to reenter politics -- complicating life for his successor and nemesis, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

The far-right ex-army captain, who skipped town two days before Lula’s inauguration on 1 January, is due to arrive back in Brasilia on a commercial flight from Orlando, Florida at 7:10 am (1010 GMT).

It is a high-stakes bet for

the former president, who is facing legal trouble on various fronts in Brazil — notably for his alleged role in inciting supporters who rioted through the halls of power on 8 January in a failed bid to oust Lula, the veteran leftist who beat him in a divisive election in October.

It threatens to be a tense day in Brasilia, where authorities vowed to block supporters from holding a huge welcome rally at the airport.

Bolsonaro, 68, is set to start a new job next week as honorary president of his Liberal Party (PL), earning 41,600 reais (around \$8,000) a month.

The ex-president (2019-2022), who recently rented a house in a gated community in Brasilia, has said he plans to criss-cross Brazil “doing politics” and “upholding the banner of conservatism.” —AFP

New city honouring Turkmenistan’s leader to cost \$5 billion

TURKMENISTAN will spend nearly five billion dollars to build a city named in honour of strongman Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov, officials said Wednesday.

The reclusive Central Asian country bordering the Caspian Sea has been ruled by the Berdymukhamedov family for more than 16 years.

Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov, a former dentist turned autocrat, officially stepped down as president of the ex-Soviet nation last year and was replaced by his son, Serdar Berdymukhamedov.

But the 65-year-old, known for his personality cult, bears the title of “Arkadag” (Hero Protector) and continues to

dominate the country. The new city 30 kilometres (18 miles) outside the capital Ashgabat will carry his title.

And Berdymukhamedov has ordered officials to get it into the “Guinness Book of Records” in some way.

“The first phase of construction of the city of Arkadag costs \$3.3 billion,” said Deryageldi Orazov, an official heading a state committee in charge of its construction.

“The second phase will cost about \$1.5 billion, according to our estimates.” Orazov said the exact cost will be clear after a call for tenders. But it already greatly exceeds the figure of \$1.5 billion announced in February 2020.—AFP



Strongman Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov riding an Akhal-Teke stallion, one of the symbols of the Central Asian nation. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Roadside bomb attack by Pakistan Taliban kills four police

FOUR policemen were killed by a roadside bomb as they scrambled to protect a police station under siege by Taliban militants in northwest Pakistan, officials said Thursday.

Pakistan has witnessed rising attacks by Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) since the Afghan

Taliban retook Kabul in 2021, and police are increasingly on the frontline of Islamabad’s bid to quell the movement.

TTP fighters launched a heavy-weapons assault early Thursday on a police station in Lakki Marwat district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, which

abuts the border with Afghanistan.

Four officers, including a deputy superintendent, were killed by a bomb as they rushed towards the fight in a “planned act of terrorism”, senior local police official Muhammad Ashfaq told AFP.—AFP

Putin says sanctions could have 'negative' impact on Russia



SPORT

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

1. Political affairs

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

2. Economic affairs

- To enhance development based on agriculture and livestock using modern production techniques and to strengthen all-round development in other sectors of the economy.
- To develop a stable market economy and promote international investment in order to enhance the economic development of the entire National people.
- 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.
- To advance the socioeconomic life of the people, in order to ensure the country's prosperity and food security.

3. Social affairs

- To ensure a strong and dynamic Union spirit, the genuine spirit of patriotism.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Myanmar wins 5 golds, 4 silvers, 18 bronzes in 6th SEAVF Southeast Asian Vovinam Championship 2023



The Myanmar team (middle) holds the national flag and waits to receive the medal during the award ceremony of the 6th SEAVF Southeast Vovinam Championship 2023 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. **PHOTO: BALA SOE**

IN the 6th SEAVF Southeast Asian Vovinam Championship 2023 (pre-SEA Games), held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia from 25 to 30 March, Myanmar Vovinam athletes won five gold, four silver, and 18 bronze medals, placing third nationally.

Aik Soe Lin from Men's Individual, Manarr Kwee+Tin Htoo Zaw from Men's Double, Khaing Wah Phoo+Ma Honey Aung Lwin from Women's Double, Aung Khaing Lin+Hein Htet Aung+Kyaw Thu Soe Aung+Yar Zar Tun+Nay Lin Htet, and manarr Kwee+Aik

Soe Lin+Yar Zar Tun+Tin Htoo Zaw+Min Min Htike from a team of five (men's) competitions won a gold medal each.

Yar Zar Tun in men's individual competition, Kyaw Thu Soe Aung+Nay Lin Htet+Hein Htet Aung+Khaing Zar Tun+Phyo Ei Kyaw+Thida Min in Men's and Women's mixed competition and Aung Thet Naing in the 65-kilo competition and Hnin Thet Wai in the 55-kilo competition won a silver medal each.

Next, 18 bronze medals were won by the team Myan-

mar in different categories and competitions.

Athletes from Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam, Laos, Indonesia, and the Philippines competed in the tourney.

Myanmar Vovinam Sport team including 10 male and 10 female athletes led by team leader U Myo Naung, vice president of the Myanmar Martial Arts Federation, team administrator U Lwan Aung, coaches U Kyaw Min Tun and Daw Mya Thein Su will return to Yangon, Myanmar on 31 March. — Bala Soe/KZL

Fury, sadness in Indonesia after FIFA pulls Under-20 World Cup

INDONESIAN football players, fans and pundits reacted with anger and sadness Thursday after FIFA pulled the Under-20 World Cup from the host nation weeks before it was due to kick off, following protests against Israel's participation.

The humiliating loss came after two influential governors advocated banning Israel from the competition.

Indonesia and Israel do not have formal diplomatic relations, and support for the Palestinian cause in the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation runs high, fuelling local opposition to hosting the Israeli team.

FIFA's decision to find a new host — thereby nixing Indonesia's automatic qualifying spot —



A woman walks past banners for the Indonesia 2023 FIFA Under-20 World Cup football tournament in Jakarta on 30 March 2023. **PHOTO: ADEK BERRY / AFP**

puts the country's most popular sport back in the doldrums and facing another bout of isolation as it recovers from a stadium stampede that killed 135 people last year. Some of the archipelago

nation's football prodigies took to social media with fury and heartbreak after losing the chance to play in what FIFA bills as the "tournament of tomorrow's superstars". — AFP

Cirstea upsets Sabalenka in WTA Miami Open quarter-finals

WORLD number two Aryna Sabalenka suffered a shock straight sets Miami Open quarter-final loss to resurgent Romanian Sorana Cirstea, who reached her first WTA 1000 semi-final in a decade.

Cirstea, ranked 74th in the world, triumphed 6-4, 6-4 against the Australian Open champion to secure her first WTA 1000 semi-final since Toronto in 2013.

The 32-year-old is enjoying an upturn in form since taking on Swede Thomas Johansson as her coach, reaching the quarter-finals at Indian Wells and beating world

number four Caroline Garcia of France in both legs of the "Sunshine Swing".

In her first meeting with the big-serving Belarusian, Cirstea looked comfortable and composed as she broke Sabalenka's first service game.

The 24-year-old from Minsk, who is now based in Miami, broke back to make it 4-4 but Cirstea swiftly got back in front and held to win take the opening set with her opponent looking visibly irritated and frustrated as she laboured in the early afternoon heat and humidity. — AFP