ABIDE BY TRAFFIC RULES TO PREVENT UNACCEPTABLE ACCIDENTS

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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.

Xiamen Airlines resumes Xiamen-Yangon service

CHINA'S Xiamen Airlines resumed its direct flights between Xiamen and Yangon on 26 April, according to Yangon Aerodrome Company Limited (YACL).

Xiamen Airlines reopened the route between Xiamen and Yangon on 26 April after it had been suspended for nearly four years since 22 June 2019.

The Yangon International Airport warmly welcomed the arrival of Xiamen Airlines Flight No MF8669/70 from Xiamen, the People's Republic of China, to Yangon on 26 April. Passengers on arrival were gifted a souvenir each by YACL.

There will be three flights every week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) of between Yangon and Xiamen. Travellers are advised to check with https://www.xiamenair.com/en-ww/ for updates on schedules.

The YACL operates flight services as per the guidance of DCA and ICAO transparently and cooperates with partner organizations to operate international flight services. It also watches the travel restrictions on the arrival and departure of travellers. In 2022, the Yangon International Airport served a total of 2,149,202 arriving and departing passengers and 33,750 flights. — Nyein Thu (MNA)/KTZH

An aircraft of the Xiamen Airlines fleet at Yangon International Airport on 26 April. **PHOTOS: KANU**

Mini-key chains are presented to travellers from Xiamen Airlines at Yangon International Airport.

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Chaungwa bridge project completes 83% ensuring tourism development, socioeconomic progress

THE construction of the Chaungwa Bridge, which will connect Ngayokkaung Town and Kywaychaing village of Gawringyi Island in Ngaputaw Township, Pathein District, Ayeyawady Region, is now 83 per cent completed.

The construction of 1,280-foot-long bridge started on 1 March 2020 with a regional capital fund using bored piles for the foundation, RC concrete for the bridge body and PC girder/RC slab for the upper body part of the bridge. The width of the motorway is 24 feet.

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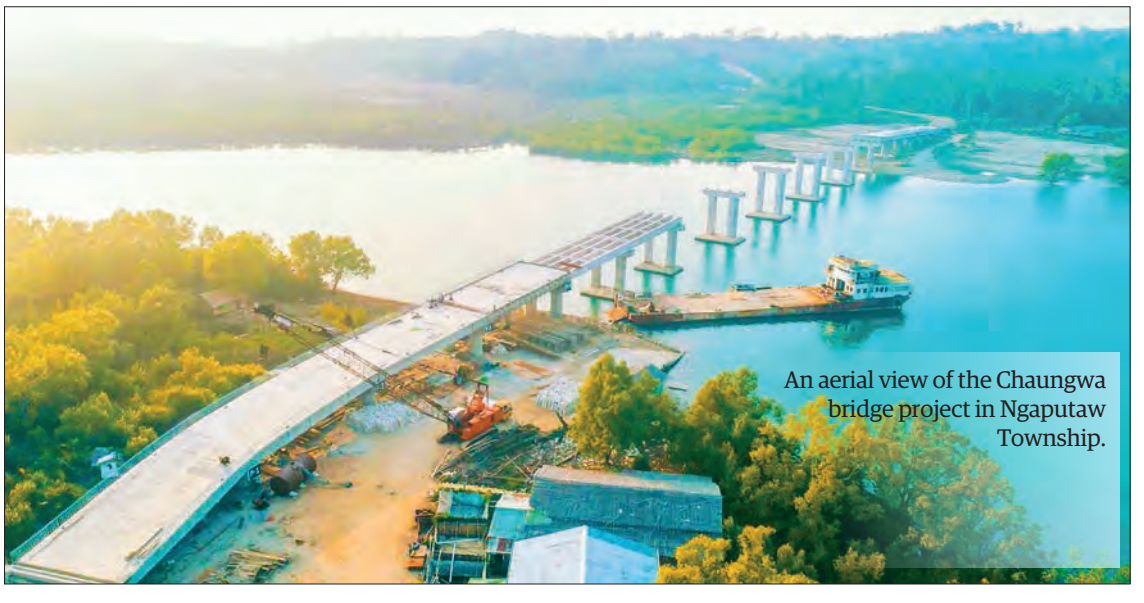

An aerial view of the Chaungwa bridge project in Ngaputaw Township.

Summer paddy yield meets target on adequate irrigation water supply

A bird's-eye view of the Ngamoeyeik Dam. **PHOTOS: KANU**

SUMMER paddy cultivation this year surpassed the target. The number of summer paddy in the Yangon Region expanded to 206,944 acres with an adequate irrigation water supply.

The number of summer paddy acres increased by 20,805 acres in Yangon Region. A total of 61,581 acres of summer paddy out of 206,944 have been harvested as of 21 April. Reaping summer paddy will be undertaken on the remaining acres. The high price of paddy prompted the growers to expand the acres. Dams play a big role in feeding the farms adequate water and summer paddy yield is successful in Yangon Region.

"Thanks to irrigation water and the high price of paddy, the growers can scale up the farming acres," said Daw Hla Kyi, deputy director of Yangon Region's Agriculture Department.

A thriving summer paddy field is seen being sufficiently irrigated by the Ngamoeyeik Dam.

Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department provides irrigation water by Paunglin, Lagunpyin, Mahuya, Ngamoeyeik, Kalihtaw, Taunglonemyaung, Tabuhla, Bantbwaygon and Zarmaniinn dams for the growers to facilitate in the farming process. Furthermore, Ngamoeyeik and Lagunpyin dams supply water to Yangonites daily. "The irrigation system can cover the summer paddy fields up to early May despite the declining storage capacity. Lagunpyin and Ngamoeyeik dams will continue to supply water for Yangon residents. Irrigation water plays a pivotal role in summer paddy cultivation. The maintenance activities for the dam strength are carried out every year," said U Nyan Soe, assistant director of the Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department in the Yangon Region. Myanmar has 235 dams that store water, mostly found in Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway regions. There are nine reservoirs which supply water for the agriculture of the Yangon Region. — Nyein Thu (MNA)/EM

Chaungwa bridge project completes ...

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The waterway clearance of the bridge is 78.744 feet in width and 40 feet in height.

"We construct the bridge crossing the Chaungwa River on the Ngayokkaung-Gawringyi Island Road. Upon completion, it will benefit the residents by creating many job opportunities. As the locals can get the Gawringyi Island easily, it can develop the tourism sector and the socioeconomic status of residents of Kywaychaing, Nathaphu, Natmaw, Yaykyaw, Thephyu, Kanchay-Oo, Kwinbat, Moetahmyin and Sabagyi villages will be also improved. They can also go to the Ngayokkaung Hospital easily for medical services. Currently, it is 83 per cent complete," said an official of Special Bridge Task Force 16 of the Ministry of Construction.

Moreover, the people can easily go to Pathein using the Ngayokkaung-Sinma-Ngwesaung Road and to Rakhine State via the Ngayokkaung-Sinma-Ngwesaung-Chaungtha-Shwethaungyan-Makyeebin-Kyaukchun-Gwa Beach Ring Road. Therefore, it can transport local products across the nation more easily. — Nyein Thu (MNA)/KTZH

60 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 27 April, total figure registers 634,599

MYANMAR'S COVID-19-positive cases rose to 634,599 after 60 new cases were reported on 27 April 2023 according to the Ministry of Health.

Therefore, a total of 10,331,702 laboratory samples were examined and the confirmed COVID-19 cases reached 634,599. The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached 614,752 including 30 new recoveries. The death toll from COVID-19 in the country remained unchanged at 19,490 on 27-4-2023 with no new death reported from the pandemic.

According to the research, it is found that people who have been vaccinated do not suffer severely from the disease, need not be hospitalized and are unlikely to die. If they have received booster shots, the death rates can be reduced more.

As such, people need to follow the new normal way of living with COVID. Hence, all people above five have to fully receive COVID-19 vaccination inoculated by the Ministry of Health free of charge. Six months after the vaccination, they have to take booster jabs at relevant health centres and ward/village administration offices without fail.

Moreover, they have to wear masks while in closed chambers and public places. They need to often wash their hands with soap and water or the hand gel containing alcohol (at least 60 per cent) for 20 seconds. People need to follow the social distancing rule and avoid crowds as much as possible.

While not wearing masks, if they cough and sneeze, they need to cover their mouth and noses with elbows in line with the personal hygienic ways. COVID-19 information can be browsed on the internet page moh.gov.mm of the Ministry of Health. — GNLM

Request to the public

1. THE Ministry of Health is continuously analyzing infection of Covid-19 not only in global countries and neighbouring countries but in Myanmar and is carrying out necessary prevention and control of the pandemic.

2. According to the press release of the World Health Organization on 20 April 2023, infection rate of Covid-19 is rising in Myanmar's neighbouring countries such as India, Thailand, Bangladesh and other regional countries as from January 2023, with infection of variant XBB. 1.16 (Arcturus).

3. It was found that infection of Covid-19 has been slightly increasing in Myanmar from the early April 2023.

4. According to the surveys and monitoring till today, variant XBB. 1.16 of Covid-19 is spreading 1.27 folds quicker than previously found variants but the former does not cause higher violent infection, situation of medical treatment at hospital and dead rate. But, suffering from the variant can be affected by current drugs. The drugs being used in Myanmar are effective over the prevention of the disease. Booster dose of vaccines can reduce infection of the disease, intensification and dead rate.

5. As such, all the people especially the aged and those suffering from chronicle diseases are –

   (a) to specially take care of receiving Covid-19 vaccine and booster dose,
   (b) to follow primary ways for prevention of Covid-19 pandemic with social distancing and wearing masks to go to the public places and closed sites,
   (c) to take necessary treatment by contacting nearby health centres as quickly as possible if suspect symptoms of the pandemic are found,
   (d) to follow the health protocols released by the Ministry of Health not to spread the virus to others and quarantine themselves at home.

Ministry of Health
23-4-2023

Ethnic national brethren to seek solution without external interference

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

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

Position of Myanmar towards Global Security Initiative - GSI proposed by Mr Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China

THE Ministry of Foreign Affairs has well taken note of the recent release of the Global Security Initiative (GSI) Concept Paper by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China following the Global Security Initiative (GSI) proposed by Mr Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China, in 2022. Myanmar commends China for the achievements gained with regard to global security in the implementation of the GSI over the past year.

It has been observed that the GSI is underpinned by "six commitments", namely, staying committed to the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security; staying committed to respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries; staying committed to abiding by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter; staying committed to taking seriously the legitimate security concerns of all countries; staying committed to peacefully resolving differences and disputes between countries through dialogue and consultation; and staying committed to maintaining security in both traditional and non-traditional domains.

Myanmar welcomes the GSI for being a visionary initiative, and its commitments conform to the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, including respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and non-interference that Myanmar consistently adheres to in conducting its foreign policy.

As the world today is facing profound changes, the world countries need to strive together for a just and equitable international order. Myanmar expresses its willingness to work with China and other countries to implement the GSI with a view to building a more peaceful, secure and prosperous world and a community with a shared future for mankind as well as consolidating traditional bonds of friendship between Myanmar and China, expanding mutually beneficial and win-win cooperation and promoting the socioeconomic development of both peoples.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Nay Pyi Taw.
Dated, 28 April 2023

MoNREC Union Minister receives delegation led by RMAFC Senior Vice-President

Union Minister U Khin Maung Yi meets the RMAFC Senior Vice-President and his delegation yesterday.

UNION Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Khin Maung Yi received the delegation headed by Mr Anatoli Bulochnikov, Senior Vice-President of the Russia-Myanmar Association of Friendship and Cooperation of the Russian Federation yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

Both sides cordially discussed and exchanged views on matters related to mineral development between Myanmar and Russia and technical cooperation.

The meeting was attended by the deputy ministers, heads of department, officials with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation and responsible officials from the Russia-Myanmar Association of Friendship and Cooperation. — MNA/TS

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News and Periodicals Enterprise

Myanmar delegation attends 51st Meeting of GMS Tourism Working Group (TWG-51), MTCO Board Meeting, and Mekong Tourism Forum 2023

THE 51st Meeting of the Greater Mekong Subregion Tourism Working Group (TWG-51), the Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office (MTCO) Board Meeting, and the Mekong Tourism Forum 2023 were hosted by Cambodia at the Independence Hotel in Preah Sihanouk State on 25 and 26 April.

Leaders of the Greater Mekong Subregion Tourism Authority, regional tourism professionals, government and private representatives, and the Myanmar Tourism Federation, led by Director-General U Maung Maung Kyaw of the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism under the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, as well as officials from the Myanmar Tourism Entrepreneurs Association (MTEA), participated in the meeting.

Myanmar delegates pose for the documentary group photo at the forum in Cambodia.

The development of the tourism industry in Myanmar, the views and opinions of Myanmar on the restoration of the Mekong tourism website, the operation status of the MTCO for the regional development of tourism through social networks, the signing of the MTCO Establishment Agreement, and issues to be coordinated by member countries for the MTCO to obtain the status of legal standing were discussed at the GMS Tourism Working Group Meeting (TWG-51) and the MTCO Board Meeting on 25 April.

The Mekong Tourism Forum 2023 continued on 26 April under the theme of "Rethinking for Resilience and Digitalization". At the forum, professionals in the international and Mekong region tourism industry, and entrepreneurs from tourism and related businesses conferred about strengthening the tourism industry in the Mekong region, promoting multi-sectoral participation in the tourism industry, the sustainability of food resources by member countries, the creation and promotion of local traditional food of member countries in a clean manner, based on the preferences of tourists, the digitalized promotion of tourism and destinations, enhancing the participation of women in tourism, the need for review by the Mekong Tourism Authority for the proper training and development of tourism human resources, and issues of cooperation.

In connection with the Mekong Tourism Forum 2023, an exhibition programme of regional tourism attractions and related services was held, and two booths from Myanmar participated in it, showing Myanmar's destinations, traditional cultures, and food. About 250 government and private tourism representatives from 19 countries attended the forum and the exhibition.

Myanmar will host the 52nd Meeting of the GMS Tourism Working Group (TWG-52) and the MTCO Board Meeting in November 2023. — MNA/CT

CRIME NEWS

Illegal timbers, industrial materials, consumer goods, auto parts and vehicles confiscated

THE combined teams led by the Region/District/Township Forest Departments under the management of the Ayeyawady Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force seized a total of 25.868 tonnes of illegal teak and other timbers worth K1,946,140 in Hinthada and Pathein districts on 22 April. The action was taken under the Forest Law.

On 25 April, an on-duty team examined two vehicles heading to Yangon from Myawady at the Kawkareik (Tadakyoe) combined checkpoint and captured 130 Camel motorbike tyres worth K3.25 million and 168 pairs of foam slipper sandals worth K2.52 million that were not declared in the Import Declaration (ID). The action was taken under Customs procedures.

In addition, a combined team led by the Tatkon Township Forest Department conducted inspections in Tatkon Township and nabbed a total of 4.332 tonnes of illegal timbers worth K254,740. The action was taken under the Forest Law.

Seized illegal goods at the Yepu permanent checkpoint.

The on-duty teams at the Mayanchaung permanent checkpoint confiscated 3,850 kilogrammes of nylon lace fabric worth K5.005 million from a Mitsubishi Fuso truck (estimated value of K30 million) heading to Yangon from Myawady on 25 April and three kinds of goods (including 3,600 cans of Lactasoy milk) worth K3.515 million without official documents from a Mitsubishi Fuso express (estimated value of K23 million) heading to Yangon from Mawlamyine on 26 April. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

Confiscated illegal commodities at the Mayanchaung permanent checkpoint.

On 26 April, an on-duty team at the Yepu permanent checkpoint conducted inspections and seized two kinds of goods (including 295 Bluetooth mini-speakers) worth K3,900,382 that exceeded the Import Declaration from a Hino Profia car (estimated value of K35 million) heading to Mandalay from Muse. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

On the same day, a total of 2.276 tonnes of illegal teak and 0.7294 tonne of illegal hardwood worth K1,115,780 was captured in Bago and Toungoo districts and a Mitsubishi auto (approximate value of K3.5 million) without official documents was seized in Nyaunglebin township. The action was taken under the Forest Law and the Export and Import Law.

Therefore, 12 arrests (estimated value of K113,007,042) were made on 22, 25 and 26 April, according to the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS

BE HAPPY WITH PEACEFUL TOURS

Shwegugyi Pagoda.

Shwegugyi Pagoda in Bagan Archaeological Zone attracts pilgrims from across Myanmar

THE Department of Archeology and National Museum (Bagan Branch) said that when visiting Shwegugyi Pagoda in Bagan-NyaungU Archaeological Zone, NyaungU Township, Mandalay Region, pilgrimage can study the interior works and mural paintings.

The Shwegugyi Pagoda is located at the front of the palace and is also called Nan U Pagoda.

Excavated to the north and west of Shwegugyi Pagoda is the site of the Bagan era palace (Aung Myay Gone Palace area).

The Shwegugyi Pagoda was built in 1141 AD by King Alaung Sithu.

Shwegugyi Pagoda is a large Temple facing North, and there is a small staircase in the northwest corner climb up the pagoda.

Green-tiles, figures of spirits made of bricks, green glazed tiles, large doors carved with wooden carvings, and wall paintings decorated in the pagoda.

There are two original Pali inscriptions on the north wall of the temple, and the inscriptions contain the dates of the construction of the Shwegugyi Pagoda and the dates of the completion of the pagoda.

According to stone records, the pagoda was built in seven months.

In the southwest corner, a stone pillar inscribed in 1551, which was donated by King Bayintnaung, can also be observed.

On the south side of the Shwegugyi Pagoda, there are Thabbyinnyu Pagoda, Nathlyaungkyaung, Ngakywenataung Pagoda, and Pahtoethamya Pagoda.

On the west of the pagoda is Kandaw Palin Pagoda, while on the north and northwest of the pagoda are Aungmyaygon Palace, and Mahabawdhi Pagoda.

On the east side of the pagoda are Ananda Pagoda, Tabatkya Pagoda, Thandawkya Pagoda, Pitaka Building and Tharapa Gate.

In the Bagan Archaeological Zone, pilgrims can observe 3,822 pagodas with a variety of different construction styles. — Depalin/KZL

Pilgrims flock to pagodas in Pindaya Township

Many a pagoda-goer is seen at landmark pagodas in Pindaya Township (above and below photos).

FAMOUS pagodas and locations in Pindaya Township of Danu Self-Administered Zone in southern Shan State are packed with pilgrims and visitors in the new year period, 1385 ME.

The famous pagodas and temples in Pindaya such as ShweUmin Cave, Konlonsintsan Monastery, Ponetaloke Lake, Zawgyi Creek and so on are crowded with visitors from various regions and states. – Ye Htet Oo (IPRD)/KTZH

Kyonehtaw waterfall receives over 500 visitors daily

THE Kyonehtaw waterfall in Kaluhtaw village of Yinbine village-tract in Shanywathit Town of Hpa-an District in Kayin State hosts over 500 travellers daily in summer.

The clean and cool water is flowing from the layers of rocks at Kyonehtaw waterfall about 20 miles from Shanywathit Town and it is a well-known location in Kayin State. Besides the residents of Hpa-an and Hlaingbwe townships, visitors from across the nation pay a visit to it by car to play water enjoying the picturesque scenes of waterfalls and mountains daily.

Vegetarianism is practised at the Kyonehtaw waterfall and meat, fish, drugs, alcohol and beer are prohibited. The people are not allowed to throw waste into the waterfall in order to conserve the natural environment, according to an official.

The vegetable, souvenir and vegetarian meal vendors make a good income daily this summer due to the increased number of travellers to Kyonehtaw waterfall. — Zin Lay (IPRD)/KTZH

Visitors are pictured having joyous time at the Kyonehtaw waterfall.

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Nearly 100% of KG to Grade-11 students pass exams in 2022–2023 academic year

THE Basic Education Department, Ministry of Education, stated on 27 April that almost 100 per cent of the students who took the exam from KG class to Grade 11 passed the exam for the 2022-2023 academic year.

Students who passed exams will have to study in accordance with the new curriculum from KG to Grade 12 starting from the 2023-2024 academic year.

Under Section 16 in Chapter 5 of the National Education Law, students will have to receive basic education for a total of 12 years after kindergarten. — TWA/MKKS

The photo shows students and parents looking into the exam results in Bilin, Mon State.

Weekly market update of dry groceries at Bayintnaung Wholesale Centre

DURING the week ending 26 April 2023, the prices of rice, onion, chilli pepper and sugar went up at Bayintnaung Wholesale Centre. The prices of palm oil and Kyukok garlic declined.

ONION

Bayintnaung Wholesale market saw the entry of 120,000 visses of onions on 26 April. The prices moved in the range of K1,350 and K1,600 per viss depending on the quality, size and producing areas (Seikphyu and Myittha) that day.

On 26 April, 48,000 visses of onions were supplied to the Pakokku market and the highest price of onion was K1,400 per viss in the wholesale market.

On 25 April, 13,000 visses of onions were supplied to the Seikphyu commodity centre and the highest price was K1,500 per viss. Approximately 75,160 visses of onions flowed into the Myingyan commodity centre on 25 April. The prices stood at K800-K1,500 per viss.

Garlic

On 26 April, the prices stayed at K3,600-K4,900 per viss depending on varieties and qualities, whereas Kyukok garlic fetched K5,100 per viss.

Potato

The prices of potatoes moved in the range between K1,300 and K1,650 per viss in the Yangon market on 26 April.

Chilli pepper

The wholesale prices of chilli peppers were K10,500-K12,500 per viss for long chilli pepper and Moehtaung variety. The prices of bell peppers from the Sinphyukyun area and delta regions were K14,000-K17,000 per viss in the market.

Rice

Rice prices have spiked in the Yangon market since 24 April. The prices hit K58,000 per bag of low-grade Hnakar, K62,000 for short-mature rice price (90-days) and K74,000 for the Pawkywe variety. The new Pawsan rice prices were K82,000 from the Bogale area, K89,000 from Pyapon, K90,000 from Myaungmya and K106,000 from the Shwebo area on 26 April.

Palm oil

For a week from 24 to 30 April, the wholesale reference price of the Yangon Region was set at K4,680 per viss, which is a decrease of K110 per viss compared to that of the previous week.

The wholesale market price of palm oil was K6,100-K6,150 per viss on 26 April. The prices touched a high of K6,200 on Lanmadaw Road at Nyaungpinlay market and K6,300 in the Myingyan market.

Pulses

The prices of various pulses stood at K2,115,000 per tonne of black gram (Fair Average Quality/RC), K2,355,000 per tonne of black gram (Special Quality/RC), K2,430,000 per tonne of pigeon pea (red gram) RC, K3,750 per viss of green gram and K4,900 -5,000 per viss of chickpea in Yangon markets. — TWA/EM

Chinshwehaw border trade value reaches US$3.322 mln in 3rd week of April

THE statistics of the Ministry of Commerce indicated that the Chinshwehaw border post handled exports and imports worth US$3.322 million in the third week of April.

From 15 to 21 April, the Chinshwehaw border post managed exports valued at $0.478 million and imports worth $2.844 million.

Between 8 and 14 April, Myanmar exported broken rice, corn, mung bean, butter bean, rice bean, peanut, dried tea leaves, sorghum, wet ginger, dried konjac, onions, and cotton. — TWA/CT

Truckloads are seen passing through the Chinshwehaw border.

Black gram, pigeon pea prices hit record high on 26 April

THE price of black gram (RC) reached a fresh new peak of K2.115 million per tonne on 26 April 2023.

Last year's record price was K2.1 million per tonne on 31 August 2022.

Similarly, the pigeon pea also surged to K2.43 million per tonne on 26 April. It touched the highest of K2.175 million per tonne on 19 April 2022.

On 26 April 2023, 15 containers (360 tonnes) of black gram RC and 10 containers (240 tonnes) were traded.

The prevailing price hit a four-month high on 26 April, indicating a sharp increase of K500,000 per tonne, Yangon's wholesale market data showed.

Moreover, the prices of pigeon peas also rose by K700,000 per tonne on 26 April 2023 compared to that recorded four months ago.

India's pulses output drastically dropped in 2023. Consequently, the demand for pulses is growing. The authorities concerned are closely monitoring the large warehouses to stop manipulation.

The price of black gram (urad in India) is expected to be around Rs7,500 per quintal whereas pigeon pea (tur) fetched Rs8,200 per quintal in Chennai until August. India's market observers forecast the volatile price is unlikely.

Traders engaged in the Yangon market shared their opinions that the pulses prices remain unchanged at present. — TWA/EM

Black grams and pigeon peas are pictured being displayed for sale.

LOCAL BUSINESS

Automatic licencing and non-automatic licencing systems for importers to kick off on 1 June

SEEKING import licences through automatic licencing and non-automatic licencing systems on Myanmar Tradenet 2.0 platform will commence on 1 June, according to the Trade Department under the Ministry of Commerce.

An import licence is obligatory to bring in goods through seaborne trade and border posts to have a systematic and smooth trade flow.

Having digitized the licensing system, licencing for certain lines (3,075 lines) that do not need to apply for import licence will be automatically passed on the system.

According to Notification 19/2023 of the Ministry of Commerce under the Customs Tariff of Myanmar 2022, 8,774 commodities lines with 10 digits HS Code for export are required to be applied for export/import licences on Myanmar Tradenet 2.0 portal and they will be granted licences through non-automatic import licencing.

The MoC released this directive dated 31 March, in the exercise of the power conferred by Section 4 (C) and Section 13 (B) of the Export and Import Law that more than 10,000 commodities lines are set to seek export and import licences.

As per Notification 84/2022 dated 12 October under the Customs Tariff of Myanmar 2022, 1,556 commodities lines with 10 digits HS Code for export and 8,774 for import are required to be applied for export/import licences on Myanmar Tradenet 2.0 portal.

Trucks are seen transporting export/import cargo containers at Yangon Port.

Only after traders of those items have received licences first in line with the export/import regulations through the non-automatic licencing process, the shipment by air, sea and road will be given the green light.—NN/EM

CAD says complaint can be made in purchasing EVs, chargers

Myanmar has been bringing in electric vehicles (EVs) under the customs tariff relaxation through seaborne and border trade routes. The photo shows several imported EV taxis.

THE Consumer Affairs Department notified on 26 April that complaints can be made for any loss and dissatisfaction in purchasing Electric Vehicles (EVs) and chargers.

The Department is protecting consumer rights and benefits by looking forwards to food safety and consumer product safety and trying to improve the quality of goods and services. Consumers can file a complaint if they are dissatisfied with the service or products or if false or misleading advertising that harms the rights of consumers under the Consumer Protection Law.

There are 48 Consumer Information and Complaint Centers (CICC) in Nay Pyi Taw, regions and states. Consumers can make complaints by dialling 1535 of the Consumer Call Centre.

Myanmar Investment Commission also released a statement on 15 February that electric vehicles and related businesses will be promoted as the priority sector, according to its notification dated 15 February.

In the exercise of the power conferred by sections 43 and 100 (B) of Myanmar Investment Law, the MIC issued this statement with the approval of the Union government.

Enterprises executing installation, manufacturing and restoration services of the EVs, renewable electricity generation, EVs charging service businesses, electric vehicle battery production, EV battery and related service business, electric bus operation services, electric taxi and transportation service businesses and scientific research development business are included in those priority sectors.

During the establishment and ideation phase for incorporation and operations, those businesses can seek permits from the MIC to enjoy tariff relief or zero-customs tariff status and the exemption for other taxes levied in the country under Section 77 (A) of the Myanmar Investment Law and income tax exemption under Section 75 (C) of the Myanmar Investment Law for the importation of machinery, essential equipment and accessories, spare parts and construction raw materials that cannot be found in domestic markets.

Myanmar has been bringing in electric vehicles (EVs) under the customs tariff relaxation through seaborne and border trade routes, according to the Ministry of Commerce. – NN/EM

Prices of fuel oil, gold and dollar on 27 April 2023

Fuel Oil Price (Yangon)

Octane 92	K2,045
Octane 95	K2,110
Diesel	K1,980
Premium Diesel	K2,060

All of the prices are based on per litre.

Gold Price

The reference price of high-purity gold set by YGEA	K2,355,000 per tical
High-purity gold in the gold market	K3,003,000 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	K2,860 to K2,875

The above prices may change from time to time.

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OPINION

Abide by traffic rules to prevent unacceptable accidents

GOVERNMENTS in all global countries are placing an emphasis on the enforcement of traffic rules in various ways and means. Loss of life and limb is an unacceptable plight for people in traffic accidents. Hence, those governments are facing challenges to manage traffic rule enforcement.

Reckless driving, lack of responsibilities and rationality of drivers may cause the loss of many lives and limbs of victims in traffic accidents. Most traffic accidents are based on the weakness of drivers in following the traffic rules, dozing, weak maintenance of machinery and so on. Hence, the United Nations is striving for reducing half of the deaths and injuries in traffic accidents in 2030.

> If so, every citizen comprising drivers and conductors as well as pedestrians needs to follow traffic rules and other related regulations prescribed by the authorities. Meanwhile, responsible persons should strictly enforce traffic rules without bias in taking action against offenders for ensuring the traffic safety of all citizens.

The World Health Organization-WHO released a report in June 2022, saying that some 1.3 million people lost their lives in traffic accidents across the world on a yearly basis. The traffic accidents left the number of people between 20 million and 50 million injured, most of who suffer from disabilities.

Moreover, the report mentioned that traffic accidents mostly caused by vehicles are the root causes of death for youths from five to 29 years old. Ninety-three per cent of deaths in traffic accidents can be seen on the roads of countries which can earn middle incomes. More than half of deaths in traffic accidents are pedestrians, cyclists and bikers.

In the case of a traffic accident, the driver may face legal action to be taken by relevant bodies of the country. Moreover, the vehicle owner will surely face some problems related to the accident case. Regrettably, some persons lose their lives and limbs in the case. Moreover, some families of dead or injured persons in traffic accidents will face the burden of frets for their family members. If so, any traffic accident cases never bring good things to all.

All traffic accidents which may be minor or major can shake the daily life of the families. Both sides in the case will face physical and mental hurts in addition to a lot of costs for medical treatment and other expenses. It can be said that all traffic cases can occur losses in the socioeconomic life of relevant persons and the economy of the State as well.

If so, every citizen comprising drivers and conductors as well as pedestrians needs to follow traffic rules and other related regulations prescribed by the authorities. Meanwhile, responsible persons should strictly enforce traffic rules without bias in taking action against offenders for ensuring the traffic safety of all citizens.

■

ARTICLE

Overview of a Journey of Myanmar Culture Preservation and Promotion: The Emergence of Political Changes and the Cultural Policy

By Dr Nanda Hmun
Permanent Secretary (Retired)

(CONTINUED FROM YESTERDAY'S ARTICLE)

Political Objectives

- Stability of the State, community peace and tranquillity, the prevalence of law and order;
- National Reconciliation;
- The emergence of a new enduring State Constitution;
- Building a new modern developed nation in accordance with the new state constitution

Social Objectives

- Uplift of the morale and morality of the entire nation;
- Uplift of national prestige and integrity and preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national character;
- Uplift of dynamism and patriotic spirit;
- Uplift of health, fitness and education standards of the entire nation

One of the Social Objectives "Uplift of national prestige and integrity and preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national character" has become the leading policy of the Ministry of Culture. It is clearly noted that there has been no special attention nor forming national culture or promulgating of laws for cultural preservation and dissemination of culture before its formation and the years that followed. There can be seen only the general view of culture preservation and safeguarding of ethnic cultures in the early days of its establishment in the 1950s. After the Two Constitutions: 1947 and 1974, historical events in the political sphere can be obviously seen as numerous, complicated, fragile, spilt, and delicate. They were also intertwined with economic, social, international relations and cultural spheres too. The Independence of Myanmar has suffered defections not only on ideological but also on racial grounds.

The ultimate objective of the Government and the people of the Union of Burma, as embodied in the Constitution, is to create a democratic Socialist State. The tyranny and oppression inherent in these two systems must not be allowed in the Socialist State and devise a way of life which will combine full political rights, economic security and a high standard of living with spiritual uplift and morality. It must not only guarantee religious freedom but also provide an opportunity for each individual to exercise his religious rights and beliefs at the highest possible plane. Socialism in Burma must be fully harmonized with the religious beliefs and cultural background and heritage of the people. This new era must not be imposed on the people from above. It must be set up by the people themselves and must harmonize with their culture, religious beliefs and traditions. This new era is none other than the Pyidawtha State to which the people of Burma had pledged themselves.

In accord with Articles 21 and 22 of the Constitution of the Union of Burma 1974, the National Culture Policy reflected in it emphasized the assimilation of the nationalities to be under one community as unity in diversity. The policy emphasizes "Burmese way to Socialism" a Myanmar identity for the state is more prior. It defines as guidelines for 'national culture' too. Since the Constitution allows all citizens to be equal before the law, regardless of race, religion, status or sex and enjoy the opportunities and benefits derived from their labour and develop and promote unity, mutual assistance and respect among the national races, cultures of all national races have been prior and promoted.

The 7-step Road Map is one of the milestones of SPDC (2003) for its commitment to driving building a modern, developed and democratic nation it highlighted only for the convening of the National Convention and it includes:

1. Reconvening of the National Convention that has been adjourned since 1996;
2. After the successful holding of the National Convention, step-by-step implementation of the process necessary for the emergence of a genuine and disciplined democratic state;
3. Drafting of a new constitution in accordance with basic principles and detailed basic principles laid down by the National Convention;
4. Adoption of the constitution through a national referendum;
5. Holding free and fair elections for Pyithu Hluttaws (Legislative bodies) according to the new constitution;
6. Convening of Hluttaws attended by Hluttaw members in accordance with the new constitution;
7. Building a modern, developed and democratic nation by the state leaders elected by the Hluttaw; and the government and other central organs formed by the Hluttaw,

Zatpwe is a Burmese-style musical play. Hsaing waing, the traditional Burmese ensemble, provides musical accompaniment. Various dances are incorporated into the play to tell a story which is usually drawn from Buddhist scriptures. **PHOTO: GNLM/FILE**

It is noted that the way forward for a brighter future for the whole country is based on the objective conditions in the country as well as the aspirations of the entire people. During the Interim Period, the SLORC and SPDC had tried their utmost effort not only for peace and stability and tranquillity but also the establishment of the first and foremost cultural institution – the University of Culture in 1993 which is remarkable.

Cultural Administration and Cultural Development

According to Myanmar's own perception and conception, her socioeconomic system, technological development and especially political ideology which reflect in its national policy are the factors that become to be determined for its cultural policy and methods. Issues related to the impacts of institutional, administrative and financial stress on the need, increasingly stressed for exchanging experiences and information, especially on technical aspects.

Myanmar culture has flourished for almost 2,000 years and Myanmar has currently developed over time and values within the culture which have undergone modification and impact of globalization. Especially for being under the British for more than a century and those civil unrests taking place for more than 70 years, Myanmar culture and tradition have many challenges to be survived and succeeded in blending other elements of our own nationalities into their own way of life with some observable dualism instead of being totally westernized and influenced by other alien cultures.

National Stakeholders and Culture Preservation in 21st Century

(i) Strong Stem of Myanmar Culture Preservation

The role of Monastic Education (Hpone daw gyi thin Pyin nya yay) Education System taught by Myanmar Buddhist Monks, established in the early days of Myanmar monarchy has been significantly spread out in the country even in the 21st century. The Syllabus focused on Myanmar ways and manners mingled with Myanmar history and the Jataka stories. They are the centres to foster better social integration (both in rural and urban areas), obligations of Myanmar societies, unity and peace. This is the place where Buddhist values like generosity, loving-kindness, reciprocal attention and appreciation can be imparted. Buddha's teachings of non-violence, compassion, generosity, tolerance, etc can be taught and generated merit and practice too.

Before Independence and After

During the colonial period, the future of the Burmese nation was seen as closely tied to the future of the Buddhist dispensation. For the ethnic Burmese people, Burmese nationalism was almost inseparable from their Buddhist identity. Indeed, a common slogan of the independence movement was "To be Burmese means to be Buddhist". One of the first and most influential of these nationalist Buddhist organizations was the Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA), founded in 1906. They lead the role of preserving Myanmar Buddhist culture as much as they can since its establishment.

To carry out the series of cultural preservation projects and training schools/centres for cultural awareness and promotion only established after Independence in 1963 as the School of Fine Arts and School of Performing Arts in Yangon and Mandalay led by some leading artists and artistes under the guidance of Ministry of Union Culture. To this purpose, it was commonplace for schools and public institutions to use the arts as an opportunity for inter-ethnic interaction and for symbolic displays of multiculturalism through the showcasing of traditional ethnic dances alongside each other. The distribution of State funds for arts groups was also ad hoc, dispensed as the Project Grant by the then Ministry of Culture, without any long-term view to nurture the relationship between arts practitioners and the state.

Culture Dissemination and Promotion of Myanmar Culture: the Role of the Ministry of Culture

Ministry of Culture (renamed in 1972) with its mission: *"to love and cherish the country and the people by taking pride in own good traditions as well as by preserving, exposing and propagating Myanmar cultural heritage throughout lengthy Myanmar and good traditions and customs"*, is preserving, promoting and disseminating Myanmar culture and tradition with its main respective departments.

The fall of Myanmar Theatrical Performances with its poor technological inventories and unskilled dancers and low budgeting for costumes and performing programmes can be seen since the 1980s. It is only for the sake of the government and its Ministry of Culture to pay more attention and nurture the burgeoning artistes. To handover those cultures and traditions especially performing arts for systematic teaching to a good morale new generation, the University of Culture (established in 1993) under the Ministry of Culture has the following objectives: -

- Preservation and dissemination of Myanmar cultural heritage;
- Research and training the aim of Myanmar's traditional culture and turning out outstanding artistes;
- Teaching traditional cultures and customs of indigenous national races at the university
- Upholding the spirit of nationalism and patriotism; Upbringing good artistes with high morality and nobility.

Under the leadership of BSPP (Burma Socialist Programme Party), the Ministry of Union Culture has the following policies: -

(1) To safeguard the National Culture; (National Culture is the Culture of all nationalities in Burma)
(2) To implement all cultural activities which support the Burmese Way to Socialism;
(3) To develop and upgrade the research on Myanmar Culture to be abreast with international standards;
(4) To study the cultures of other countries

To carry out the Culture Policy, the Union Culture Council of the Ministry of Culture observes the following actions: -

(1) To develop the genuine and envisioned Myanmar culture in its own way by sustaining the Myanmar Fine Arts and Performing Arts;
(2) To be the culture and arts supportive for the state and people;
(3) To be edutainment instead of entertainment and arts not for art's sake but to give prior both to arts and people;
(4) To campaign and educate more on the ideology of people and their desire to be in line with changing way of a developing country;
(5) To keep and support the non-disintegration of the national races and consolidation of national sovereignty ;
(6) To abolish the alien cultures which are not in line with Myanmar's Culture and society;
(7) To nurture civic duties and good behaviours and characters;
(8) To sustain and supportive for the national unity of the state by creating works on fine arts;
(9) To try towards the development and raising the standard of arts and culture

(TO BE CONTINUED)

ENVIRON WORLD

‘Impossible to keep track’: Spain’s gamble on green hydrogen

Madrid wants to ramp up production of emissions-free fuel like green hydrogen. **PHOTO: AFP**

MAJOR green energy projects are sprouting up across Spain as it seeks to position itself as a future green energy leader — but experts have urged caution over costs and demand uncertainty.

Spanish firms are ramping up production of emissions-free fuel and ploughing investment into green energy projects, despite fears over the high price of production.

“Everything is going very fast,” said Miguel Angel Fernandez, technical director at the Spanish National Hydrogen Centre, a public research centre based in central Spain.

“There are so many projects, it is impossible to keep track of them all.”

Most hydrogen is currently produced using polluting fossil fuels but so-called “green hydrogen” is made entirely using renewable energy such as wind, solar and hydropower.

While fossil fuels emit harmful greenhouse gases when they burn, hydrogen only emits water vapour.

Madrid launched a 1.5-billion-euro ($1.7-billion) plan in in 2021 to support green hydrogen projects, using a European Union Covid recovery fund.

Spain is now home to 20 per cent of the world’s green hydrogen projects — second only to the United States.

Last year Spanish energy giant Iberdrola started operating what it says is the largest green hydrogen plant for industrial use in Europe, in the former mining town of Puertollano. The plant uses 100 megawatts of solar panels to produce green hydrogen, which is stored in huge white storage tanks. The initial goal is for it to provide 10 per cent of the energy needed by a neighbouring factory belonging to fertilizer maker Fertiberia. This will prevent the release of 48,000 tonnes of planet-warming carbon dioxide per year according to Iberdrola.—AFP

Deadly invader devastating Venezuelan coral reefs

Unomia stolonifera is a popular aquarium ornament — pretty to look at and hardy — with a single polyp fetching as much as $80 to $120. In the wild it can sow havoc on ecosystems. **PHOTO: AFP**

AN ominous shadow in the turquoise Caribbean waters off Venezuela comes from a deadly intruder — a soft coral that experts say has caused one of the most destructive habitat invasions on record anywhere.

The Unomia stolonifera, native to Indonesia and the Indo-Pacific, is a pinkish type of pulse coral so called for its dance-like movements in the ocean currents. It is a popular aquarium ornament — pretty to look at and hardy — with a single polyp fetching as much as $80 to $120.

But it is also a killer -- settling on native hard corals, rocks and even seagrass which it suffocates and replaces, ultimately destroying entire ecosystems.

Off Venezuela’s north coast, Unomia dominates the ocean floor landscape after being introduced through the illegal aquarium trade around 20 years ago.

“This is an ecological catastrophe,” said marine biologist Juan Pedro Ruiz-Allais, director of Project Unomia, named after the invader he has spent years investigating. Fish stocks are drastically decreasing in the waters off Venezuela as native reefs, which serve as nurseries and feeding grounds, die off, he told AFP. “When the reef dies, when it is covered by the Unomia stolonifera, a disruption of the food chain occurs,” said the biologist.—AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Drought threatens Panama Canal shipping traffic

DROUGHT has forced Panama’s authorities to reduce shipping traffic in the canal that links the Atlantic and Pacific as a water supply crisis threatens the future of this crucial waterway.

Two artificial lakes that feed the canal in the province of Colon have been depleted by lack of rain.

“This Lake Alhajuela has less water every day,” Leidin Guevara, 43, who fishes in the lake, told AFP.

The Panamanian Canal Authority (ACP) has limited the largest ships passing through the canal for the fifth time during this drought season. — AFP

Undeterred by jail, Germany’s climate activists ramp up protests

MORITZ Riedacher sat down at a busy road junction with four other climate activists in southwestern Germany earlier this year, holding up traffic for hours -- an action that landed him a jail sentence. But he remains undeterred.

This week, the 26-year-old journalism student again halted traffic, this time in Berlin where fellow activists in the group Letzte Generation (Last Generation) launched a campaign demanding stronger climate protection policies. — AFP

Global warming made Horn of Africa drought possible:

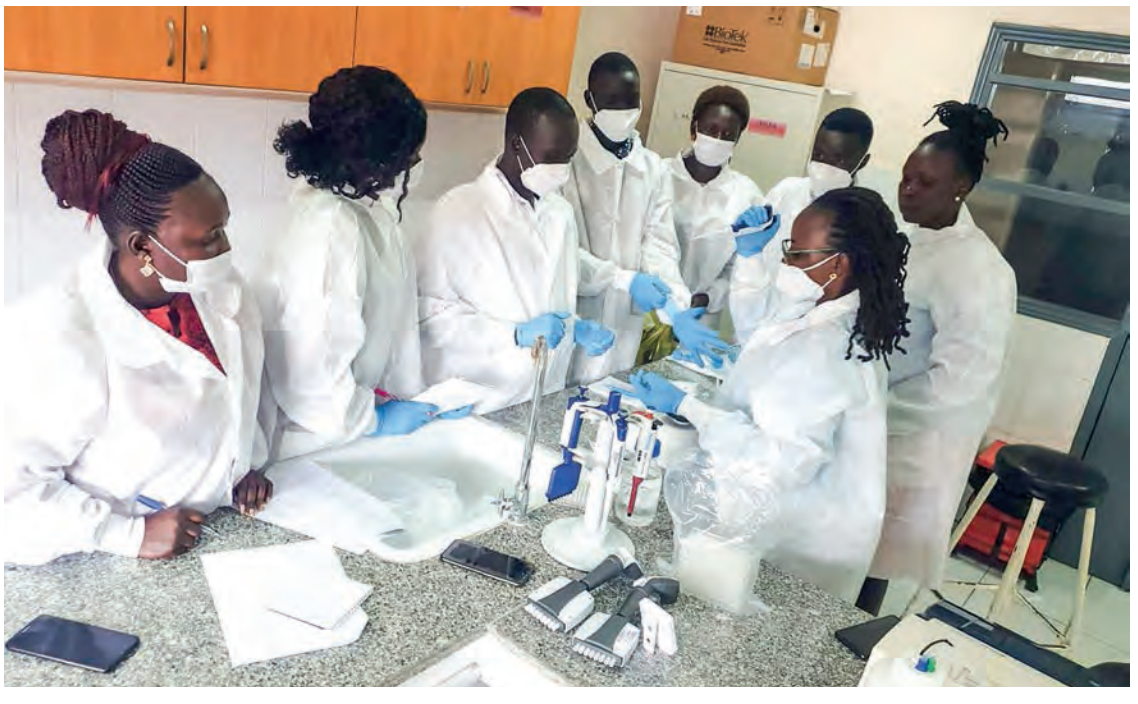
A devastating drought that has struck the Horn of Africa could not have occurred without global warming, according to a new report released Thursday from an international team of climate scientists.

“Human-caused climate change has made agricultural drought in the Horn of Africa about 100 times more likely,” said a summary of the report by the World Weather Attribution (WWA) group.

“The ongoing devastating drought would not have happened at all without the effect of greenhouse gas emissions,” it added. Since late 2020, countries on the Horn of Africa -- Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan — have been suffering the worst drought in 40 years. The extended drought has led to the deaths of millions of heads of cattle and wiped out crops. The WWA study concentrated on the three areas worst hit by the drought: southern Ethiopia, Somalia and eastern Kenya. While climate change had little effect on total annual rainfall in the region, “higher temperatures have significantly increased evaporation from soil and plants, which has made dry soils much more likely”, according to the 19 scientists who contributed to the WWA report.—AFP

Two young men lift a bucket of water from a well in an Ethiopian village. **PHOTO: AFP**

WHO says assessing risk after fighters seize Sudan lab



Fighters in Sudan have taken over a national laboratory holding samples of deadly diseases, the WHO said 26 April 2023. Technical officers in the National Public Health Laboratory trained on yellow fever laboratory testing and confirmation. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/WHO AFRICA**

THE World Health Organization said Wednesday it was assessing the threats to public health after fighters in Sudan occupied a national laboratory holding samples of a range of deadly diseases.

The World Health Organization said Wednesday it was assessing the threat posed to public health after fighters in Sudan occupied a national laboratory holding samples of deadly diseases.

"We are also concerned that those occupying the lab could be accidentally exposed to pathogens stored there," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a press conference in Geneva.

"WHO is seeking more information and conducting a risk assessment."

His comments came a day into a 72-hour ceasefire brokered by the United States that was struggling to hold after the regular army launched renewed air strikes against rival paramilitary forces in the capital Khartoum late on Tuesday.

The nearly two weeks of urban combat has killed hundreds, wounded thousands and sparked a mass exodus of foreigners, while the UN has warned a giant new refugee crisis could be brewing.

But the WHO has warned of an additional threat, after it said fighters had occupied a national public laboratory in Khartoum, holding samples of diseases including polio, measles and cholera.— AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

American Samoa declares measles emergency

THE US Pacific territory of American Samoa has declared a measles emergency, prompting its nearest island neighbour to announce travel restrictions Wednesday.

After one confirmed and 31 probable cases of the viral infection, American Samoa's governor Lemanu Mauga declared a public health emergency, fearing a potentially deadly outbreak.

The Pacific territory is home to about 50,000 people, including a sizable contingent of US military personnel.

The suspected cases include children who have been hospitalized, but are under six months old and ineligible for the vaccine, the government has said.

Scott Anesi, an epidemiologist at the Department of Health, told AFP Wednesday that it's now "a waiting game" to get the results of the suspected cases from a laboratory on nearby Hawaii.

Anesi said the focus is on getting as many people as possible vaccinated.

The government has said the current vaccination rates on American Samoa "are not sufficient" to prevent the disease from spreading.

All schools and daycare facilities have been ordered to close for three weeks.—AFP

EU agency calls for reduction in pesticide use

THE EU environment agency on Wednesday urged member states to reduce pesticide usage over concern that sales of harmful chemicals remain strong despite its effects on human health and biodiversity.

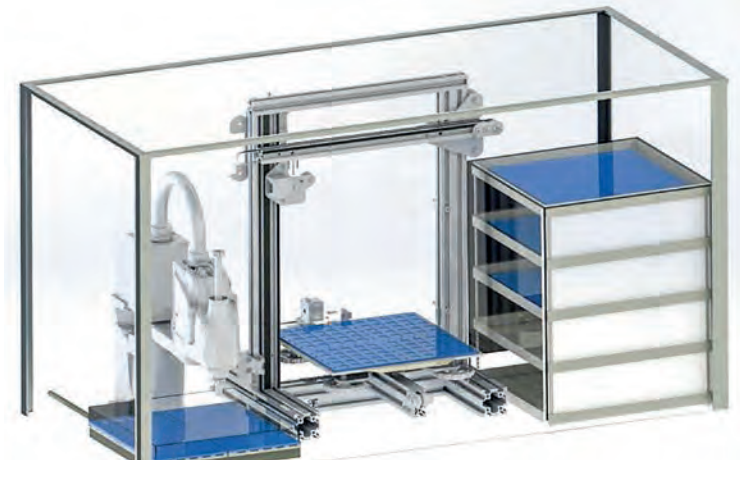
The warning comes amid findings that one or more pesticides were detected above thresholds of concern at 22 per cent of all monitoring sites in rivers and lakes across Europe in 2020, the European Environment Agency (EEA) said.

Activists hold a banner that says "Pesticide-free agriculture is possible" during a demonstration in Paris to reduce pesticides by 60 per cent by 2023 and 90 per cent by 2050, 4 March 2023. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

"From 2011 to 2020, pesticide sales in the EU-27 remained relatively stable at around 350,000 tonnes per year," the EEA said in a new report, citing data from Eurostat.

Pesticides are widely used in the agriculture sector but also in forestry, along roads and railways, and in urban areas such as public parks, playgrounds or gardens.

The insecticide imidacloprid and the herbicide metolachlor showed the highest absolute number of exceedances across Europe, primarily in northern Italy and northeastern Spain.—AFP



The 'vaccine printer' produces small patches which each contain hundreds of tiny needles. **PHOTO: MIT/AFP**

Scientists develop mobile printer for mRNA vaccine patches

SCIENTISTS said Monday they have developed the first mobile printer that can produce thumbnail-sized patches able to deliver mRNA Covid vaccines, hoping the tabletop device will help immunize people in remote regions.

While many hurdles remain and the 3D printer is likely years away from becoming available, experts hailed the "exciting" finding. The device prints two-centimetre-wide patches which each contain hundreds of tiny needles that administer a vaccine when pressed against the skin.

These "microneedle patches" offer a range of advantages over traditional jabs in the arm, including that they can be self-administered, are relatively painless, could be more palatable to the vaccine-hesitant and can be stored at room temperature for long periods of time.—AFP

ECONOMY
WORLD

Dominant US dollar faces challenge from emerging currencies

AS the top global currency, the US dollar has enjoyed decades as the cash of choice for investors -- but it is now facing a growing challenge to that status.

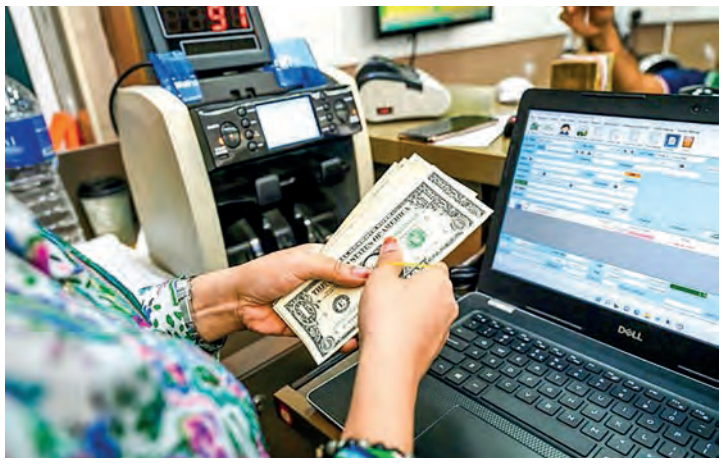
The greenback has been used for almost everything in terms of international trade and global finance, from ordering planes, buying oil, or issuing debt.

But a number of developing economies, particularly China, have been leading a drive against over-reliance on the US currency.

"In many developing countries there is desire to be less dependent on the dollar, particularly on the trade side," said Paola Subacchi, professor of International Economics at the Global Policy Institute at Queen Mary University of London.

On a visit to China in April, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva asked why "all countries are forced to trade based on the dollar", before signing an agreement with Beijing to provide commercial contracts denominated in yuan and reals.

And Bangladesh announced recently it paid Russia for a nuclear power plant in Chinese yuan, as well as using its own currency for a delivery of liquefied natural gas from France's TotalEnergies. —AFP



The greenback has been used for almost everything in terms of international trade and global finance. **PHOTO: AFP**

Kremlin warns it could widen foreign company asset seizures

THE Kremlin warned on Wednesday that Russia could widen the list of foreign companies subject to temporary asset seizures in case of the "expropriation" of Russian assets abroad.

The comments came after Putin signed a presidential decree approving the takeover of operations of two Western energy groups in Russia — Finland's Fortum and Germany's Uniper — and threatened to do the same with others.

"If necessary, the list of companies could be expanded," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters, a day after President Vladimir Putin signed a decree allowing asset seizures.

"The aim of the decree is to create a compensation fund for the possible adoption of retaliatory measures against the illegal expropriation of Russian assets abroad," he said.

The new legislation means that owners will not be deprived of their property but will "no longer have the right to make management decisions", according to Rosimushchestvo, the Russian federal agency named as "temporary manager" of assets seized.—AFP

UK children receiving food aid spikes to over one million: charity

MORE than a million children in the UK received food aid in the past 12 months, an increase of 300,000 from a year earlier, as the country battles a cost of living crisis, latest figures showed Wednesday.

Out of the nearly three million food parcels distributed in the year to the end of March 2023, more than 1.1 million went to children, according to the Trussell Trust charity which supports some 1,200 food banks nationwide.

The number of emergency packages going to children the previous year was over 800,000, it said. In 2017-18 the figure was less than 500,000.

The figures come as the UK — a G7 member and one of the world's richest countries — grapples with the biggest surge in prices in decades with fuel, heating and food and housing costs all soaring.

Food banks have become a feature of life as increasing costs combined with wage stagnation have pushed many to seek help for the first time — even those in work.

Staff for the charity 'His Church' prepare pallets of food and supplies which will be distributed to charities and community support networks across the UK from their warehouse near Market Rasen, northern England on 14 April 2020. **PHOTO: OLI SCARFF / AFP**

"We are experiencing an unprecedented rise in the number of people coming to the food bank, particularly employed people who are no longer able to balance a low income against rising living costs," said Brian Thomas, chief executive of South Tyneside food bank in northeast England.

"We're also seeing a really high number of families needing support as people struggle to afford the essentials."

Under strain

The cost-of-living crisis has seen sectors across the economy from doctors, nurses and teachers to dock workers and lawyers strike in the past year.

Thomas added that the situation had hit donations as more people struggled to meet basic costs for themselves.—AFP

Indigenous Brazilians demand more land reserves

THOUSANDS of indigenous Brazilians are gathered in the capital this week to demand the creation of new reserves on their ancestral lands. They came from all around the country to Brasilia for their 19th annual gathering under the slogan "Terra Livre (free land) — the first since the return to power in January of leftist leader Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

Lula had expressed support for expanding Indigenous reserves, unlike his far-right predecessor Jair Bolsonaro, who had vowed to not yield "one more centimetre." "We travelled a week to get here. What we want is equal rights for all Indigenous peoples throughout Brazil," Joyce Paumari Hiraka, 24, told AFP-TV — her face, like many others there, decorated with tribal motifs.

Many among the assembled sported majestic feather head-dresses and body paint, presented a stark contrast to the futuristic architecture of the capital city hosting the week-long gathering that started Monday.

"The demarcation of our lands is very important for us, to prevent intrusions by those who come to destroy the forest," said 33-year-old Andre Guajajara, who came from the northeastern state of Maranhao. Indigenous reserves are considered by experts as a bulwark against Amazon deforestation caused mainly by mining and agricultural expansion.

"Our territory is an island of forest with destruction all around," said Yakari Kuikuro Mehinaku, who lives on a reserve in the Alto Xingu region of Brazil's central Mato Grosso state.—AFP

Indigenous reserves are considered by experts as a bulwark against Amazon deforestation caused mainly by mining and agricultural expansion. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Japan sets 30% target for women execs at big firms by 2030

JAPAN'S prime minister ordered his government on Thursday to begin work on increasing the number of women executives in major companies to 30 per cent or more by 2030.

Women represented only 11.4 per cent of executives in major listed companies in Japan in 2022, according to a cabinet office survey, although the figure has been rising in recent years.

"We seek to have the ratio of women among executives at 30 per cent or more by 2030 in companies that are listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange's Prime Market," Fumio Kishida told officials at a meeting on gender equality.

The Prime Market is the stock exchange's leading sector.

Kishida said ensuring diversity would boost innovation as well as the economy.—AFP

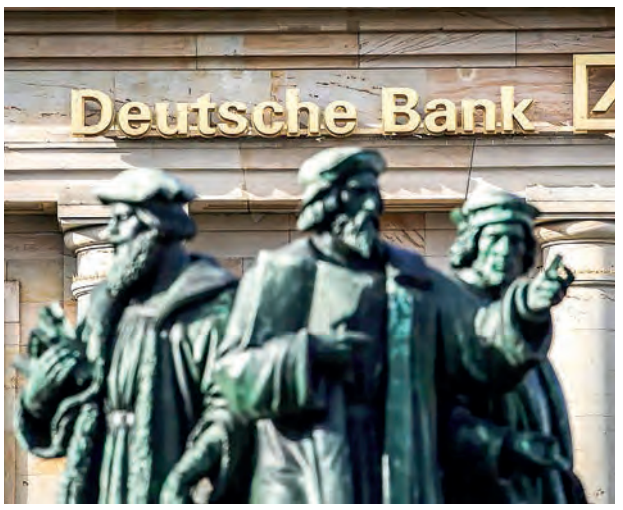
Deutsche Bank to make more cuts as profits rise

GERMAN banking giant Deutsche Bank reported an increase in its first-quarter profits Thursday, as it announced new measures to reduce its costs.

The lender booked a net profit of 1.3 billion euros ($1.4 billion) over the first three months of 2023, it said in a statement, an eight-per-cent increase on the same period last year.

Global revenues at the banking group rose by five per cent to 7.7 billion euros as major central banks hiked interest rates.

Deutsche Bank's non-interest costs rose by one per cent over the same timeframe, while the group has said it aims to keep its expenditure essentially stable this year.



German banking giant Deutsche Bank reported an increase in its first-quarter profits Thursday. **PHOTO: AFP**

In order to increase its profitability further, the bank announced a series of "additional measures" to reduce costs.These include "strict limitations" on hiring in non-client facing areas of the business and targeted reductions in management.

Deutsche Bank also wants to further downsize its technology centre in Russia, caught up in tensions over the invasion of Ukraine. Between January and March this year, the group's investment banking arm saw revenues drop sharply by 19 per cent as compared with the same period in 2022. Asset management revenues similarly fell by 14 per cent amid volatility on markets.—AFP

Unilever revenue up on price hikes of consumer goods

UNILEVER on Thursday reported higher revenue in the first quarter as high inflation pushed the British consumer goods giant to hike prices.

The maker of products ranging from Magnum ice cream and Cif surface cleaner to Dove soap, said revenue increased seven percent to 14.8 billion euros ($16.4 billion) compared with the first three months of 2022.

Unilever, like companies worldwide, is passing on higher costs to customers as inflation stays stubbornly elevated.

Rising revenue at Unilever in the first quarter was "driven by price growth in response to continued high input cost inflation and an improved volume performance", outgoing chief executive Alan Jope said in the earnings statement.

Unilever, like companies worldwide, is passing on higher costs to customers as inflation stays stubbornly elevated. **PHOTO: AFP**

"We remain focused on navigating through continued macroeconomic uncertainty and are confident in our ability to deliver another year of strong growth, which remains our first priority," he added.

Unilever earlier this year announced that Hein Schumacher, head of Dutch dairy and nutrition firm Royal Friesland-Campina, would succeed Jope in July.—AFP

Volvo Cars profit falls despite higher sales

SWEDEN'S Volvo Cars on Thursday reported a drop in its first-quarter profits, even as its revenue grew, with the automaker saying it was looking for areas to cut costs.

Like other automakers, Volvo Cars has faced supply chain problems and higher costs amid soaring inflation.

The Swedish carmaker, majority-owned by China's Geely, reported a 10-percent increase in sold cars to some 162,900 cars, and a 29-per cent increase in revenue to 95.7 billion kronor ($9.3 billion). Despite this, the company's net profit fell to 3.98 billion kronor, compared to 4.5 billion a year earlier. The company said its efforts to reduce costs had started to materialise in certain areas but said it might have to look to further cut expenditure.—AFP

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ENERGY
MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE
(INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER)
(4/2023-2024)

1. Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in Myanmar Kyats.

Sr No.	Tender No.	Description	Remarks
(1)	DMP/L-086(23-24)	Electrical Materials for Yenangyaung Oil Field (3) Groups	Ks
(2)	DMP/L-087(23-24)	Electrical Materials for Mann Oil Field (3) Groups	Ks
(3)	DMP/L-088(23-24)	Industrial Raw Materials (2) Groups	Ks
(4)	DMP/L-089(23-24)	Class 'G' Cement (500) Tons	Ks
(5)	DMP/L-090(23-24)	Assorted Sizes of Hose Pipe (2) Groups	Ks
(6)	DMP/L-091(23-24)	Assorted Kinds of Valves, Pressure Gauge and Union (9) Groups	Ks
(7)	DMP/L-092(23-24)	Spares for Pup Joint, Bit Substitute, X- Over Substitute, Kelly & Swivel Substitute and Inside BOP (5) Groups	Ks
(8)	DMP/L-093(23-24)	Drawwork Rotary Table and Drive Group Replacement Parts (6) Groups	Ks
(9)	DMP/L-094(23-24)	Flexible Steel Wire Rope, Mast Raising Lines and Floor Board Raising Line (2) Groups	Ks
(10)	DMP/L-095(23-24)	Sucker Rod, Sucker Rod Coupling & Change Over Coupling (5) Items	Ks
(11)	DMP/L-096(23-24)	Pipe Fitting and Accessories (43) Items	Ks
(12)	DMP/L-097(23-24)	Printer Catridge, Colour Printer Catridge, Copier Toner, Colour Copier Toner & Fax Catridge (46) Items	Ks
(13)	DMP/L-098(23-24)	Empty Poly Bag (New) (500,000)Bags	Ks
(14)	DMP/L-099(23-24)	Assorted Sizes of Tyre (1) Lot	Ks
(15)	DMP/L-100 (23-24)	Assorted Sizes of Battery (1) Lot	Ks
(16)	DMP/L-101(23-24)	Cement Additives (6) Items	Ks

2. The Open Tender forms including Description of Materials / Qtty with details specifications and Tender Terms & Conditions can be available during office hours commencing from **28 April, 2023** at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No. (44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.
3. The interested Bidders should submit the **Technical Specifications and Commercial Quotation with Original Bid Bond in each separate sealed envelopes** on which to be addressed to the Managing Director, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise and should reach in Tender Box of the Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise not later than **13:00 pm** on **12, May 2023**.
4. Tender Closing Date & Time – **12-5-2023, 13:00 pm**

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ph No. + 95 67 – 411206

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

China to send envoy to Ukraine to settle crisis: Xi

CHINESE President Xi Jinping told his Ukrainian counterpart, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, over the phone Wednesday that Beijing will send a special envoy to the Eastern European country to help facilitate a political settlement of the war being waged against it by Russia, China's Foreign Ministry said.

Beijing, which has close ties with Moscow, has called for a comprehensive cease-fire in Ukraine since Russia invaded the neighbouring country in February last year. Xi held his first phone talks with Zelenskyy since the war started.

Xi also said dialogue and negotiations are "the only viable way forward" in dealing with the crisis, and there is "no winner in nuclear wars," underscoring his opposition to Russia's threat of using nuclear weapons against Ukraine.

Zelenskyy said in a Twitter post on Wednesday that he "had a long and meaningful phone call" with Xi and believes this call will "give a powerful impetus to the development of our bilateral relations". The phone talks between the two leaders lasted about an hour, according to Zelenskyy's spokesman Sergey Nikiforov.

Russia "takes note of" China's readiness to promote the negotiation process with Ukraine, Tass news agency quoted Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova as saying. Tass also reported that former Chinese Ambassador to Russia Li Hui will head China's delegation for settling the Ukraine crisis, quoting a Chinese Foreign Ministry official.— Kyodo

Chinese President Xi Jinping told his Ukrainian counterpart, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, over the phone Wednesday that Beijing will send a special envoy to the Eastern European country to help facilitate a political settlement of the war being waged against it by Russia. **PHOTO: AFP**

Ukrainian refugees struggle in nationalist Hungary

Most Ukrainian refugees pass through Hungary quickly moving further west – but it can be tough for those who stay. **PHOTO: ATTILA KISBENEDEK/AFP**

POPE Francis is set to meet refugees in Hungary this weekend, shedding light on the plight of Ukrainians trying to rebuild their lives in a state that offers a frosty reception.

Under Prime Minister Viktor Orban's anti-migration agenda, they face a system that feels geared against them -- from the struggle to find schooling to being squeezed out of accommodation in the capital.

Most Ukrainian refugees pass through Hungary quickly, moving further west -- but it can be tough for those who stay.

The country scarcely has a support system to accommodate them, activists say.

"We are grateful for the help we receive from Hungarians, but we need to help ourselves," said Dina Biktagirova, a 40-year-old mother-of-four from Kyiv.

She was speaking during a Hungarian lesson in Budapest organized by Unity, one of the many Ukrainian self-help groups active in Hungary.— AFP

Brazil court suspends Telegram app in neo-Nazi probe

A Brazilian court on Wednesday ordered the countrywide suspension of messaging app Telegram after its parent company failed to provide data sought by authorities on neo-Nazis operating on the network, officials said.

The move came after a spate of violent school attacks, at least one of them linked to exchanges on a group with anti-Semitic leanings. Justice Minister Flavio Dino said the court had fined Telegram a million reais (about $198,000) per day for "not complying" with an ongoing probe into neo-Nazi activity on social networks, and ordered the "temporary suspension of (its) activities".

"There are groups called 'Anti-Semitic Front' and 'Anti-Semitic Movement' acting in those networks, and we know that this is at the core of violence against our children," the minister said in a video sent to journalists.— AFP

Justice Minister Flavio Dino said the court had fined Telegram a million reais (about $198,000) per day for "not complying" with an ongoing probe into neo-Nazi activity on social networks, and ordered the "temporary suspension of (its) activities." **PHOTO: AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

EU will support peace negotiations in Colombia: Envoy

THE European Union will support upcoming peace talks between the Colombian government and dissident factions of the disarmed FARC guerrillas, the bloc's diplomacy chief said Wednesday.

"I am impressed by what President (Gustavo) Petro wants to do with his 'total peace' project," said Josep Borrell, who arrived in Colombia Tuesday.

"The European Union will accompany this process in every way we can, politically and economically."

Petro has been pursuing negotiations in recent months with a swath of armed actors in Colombia — many of them linked to drug trafficking — including paramilitary groups, criminal gangs and dissident groups that split off from the Marxist FARC guerrilla movement when it signed a peace accord with the government in 2016.

Negotiations are set to begin with the Central General Staff, one of the main FARC dissident groups, in May.– AFP

Digital book readership in China reaches 530 mln in 2022: report

THE overall scale of China's digital reading market reached 46.35 billion yuan (about 6.73 billion US dollars), according to the China digital readership report 2022 released at the 9th China Digital Reading Conference in the eastern Chinese city of Hangzhou on Monday.

Individuals aged between 19 and 45 constitute the majority of digital book readers in China, accounting for 67.15 per cent of overall readers.

Last year, 618,100 Chinese digital books were released abroad last year, a year-on-year increase of more than 50 per cent.– Xinhua

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

King's Day in the Netherlands

KING'S Day has the reputation of being one big party where everyone is wearing orange, but what's the story behind the festivities?

King's Day is an official national holiday in the Netherlands, Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, and Sint Maarten. It's celebrated every year on 27 April, the birthday of King Willem-Alexander. This year's edition is even more memorable as the King is celebrating ten years on the throne.

History

King's Day, which used to be called Queen's Day and Princess' Day, has its origins in the 1880's. Back then, Dutch government officials were looking for a way to promote Dutch unity. Unfortunately the King at that time was very unpopular. But his four-year-old daughter Princess Wilhelmina wasn't.

Thus, the Netherlands celebrated their very first Princess Day on Wilhelmina's fifth birthday: 31 August 1885.

The princess was paraded through the streets and waving to the crowds. Initially, it was only held in the province of Utrecht but the rest of the country quickly joined the celebrations. When Wilhelmina acceded the throne after coming of age, the name was changed to Queen's Day.

The Netherlands had more Queens celebrating Queen's Day until the abdication of Queen Beatrix in 2014. Since Beatrix' birthday was in January, she decided to keep celebrating on Queen Juliana's birthday which was 30 April. When her son King Willem-Alexander acceded to the throne the name was changed to King's Day and the date of the celebrations was moved to his birthday, 27 April.

Throughout the years it become customary for the extended Royal Family to visit a different Dutch town on King's Day. This year they'll visit Rotterdam and the city is gearing up with major festivities.—AFP

On 27April 2014, the Dutch people celebrated King's Day for the first time in 123 years. The main focus was the fishing town of De Rijp, in the north-west of the Netherlands, where well-wishers turned out to greet the royal family. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Biden, Yoon agree on "new level" of US nuclear shield for S Korea

North Korea has reportedly fired 26 projectiles, including short-range and intercontinental ballistic missiles, over 11 test launches in just the first three months of 2023. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

US President Joe Biden agreed Wednesday with his South Korean counterpart Yoon Suk Yeol on plans for Washington to send nuclear submarines to its major ally for the first time in four decades as part of efforts to bolster extended deterrence measures in response to North Korea's growing nuclear threat.

Biden and Yoon, who is on a state visit marking the 70th anniversary of the bilateral security alliance, released a joint declaration to make unequivocal the US commitments to South Korea's defence, including enhancing military training and forming a group of senior officials to discuss nuclear issues.

At a press conference with Biden after their summit at the White House, Yoon praised the elevation of Washington's extended deterrence to a "new level" and the forthcoming expansion of the mutual security treaty to the realms of cyberspace and outer space.— Kyodo

Spain to vote on key housing law ahead of elections

SPANISH lawmakers vote Thursday on a housing bill aimed at capping soaring rents and addressing dire social housing shortages as the government seeks to bolster the right to affordable housing.

The bill would cap rent hikes, increase help in high-demand areas, offer more protection for those facing eviction and punish serial property investors who keep housing stock empty, ministers say.

Spain's left-wing government is hoping to fast-track the bill into law before regional and local polls on 28 May, seen as a sounding board ahead of a general election expected to be tight.

Flagged by Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez as the "first-ever housing law" since Spain's return to democracy in 1975, the bill is part of a reform promised to Brussels in exchange for EU recovery funds.

The government says the legislation aims to meet the needs of those struggling to afford housing while limiting property speculation.

"Spain has a huge, very serious problem with housing," Sanchez told lawmakers last week, saying average rents had risen 45 per cent between 2014 and 2021, making housing "unobtainable for many people, especially youngsters".—AFP

Demonstrators wave Spanish flags during a nationwide protest called by Spanish far-right Vox party against price hikes, in front of the city hall in Madrid on 19 March 2022. **PHOTO: JAVIER SORIANO / AFP**

Peru deploys military to block undocumented migrants

PERU'S president decreed a state of emergency at the South American country's borders Wednesday and ordered the deployment of troops to reinforce checkpoints and block undocumented migrants making their way north from Chile.

Hundreds of migrants, who the United Nations says are mainly from Haiti and Venezuela but had been living in Chile, have been blocked for weeks at the border between the Peruvian city of Tacna and Arica in northern Chile.

Many say they are seeking a way home or plan to continue further north to the United States.

On Wednesday, President Dina Boluarte said extra soldiers will be deployed to support police at border crossings with Chile, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador and Colombia. "The national police will maintain control of internal order with the support of the armed forces," Boluarte told a press conference.—AFP

King's Day in the Netherlands

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SPORT

Myanmar U-22 footballers perform at the MFF's training session in preparation for the Cambodian SEA Games. **PHOTO: MFF**

MFF select final squad for Cambodian SEA Games Men's Football event

MYANMAR Football Federation (MFF) and Myanmar U-22 Men's Football Team Head Coach Michael Feichtenbeiner announced the final 20-player list ahead of the 32nd SEA Games Men's Football Tournament after training session this week.

Pyae Phyo Thu (Yadanabon FC), and Hein Htet Soe (Ayeyawady United) will play as goalies.

Meanwhile, Chit Aye (Yadanabon FC), Okkar Naing (Yangon United), Swan Htet (Yadanabon FC), Aung Thiha (Ayeyawady United), and Hein Htet Aung (Selangor FC) will play for forward positions.

The Midfield line-up sees Aung Myo Khant (Yadanabon FC), Arkar Kyaw (Mahar United), Yan Kyaw Soe (Yangon United), Zaw Win Thein (Yangon United), Ye Yint Phyo (Ayeyawady United), and Khun Kyaw Zin Hein (Hanthawady United).

Next, Shin Thant Aung (Hanthawady United), Kaung Htet Paing (Yadanabon FC), Htoo Myat Khant (Kachin United), Lat Wai Phone (Shan United), Thet Hein Soe (Yadanabon FC), Nyan Lin Htet (Yangon United), and Naung Naung Soe (Yadanabon FC) will serve as defenders for team Myanmar.

The Myanmar U-22 Team will leave for Cambodia this week to participate in the SEA Games, according to the MFF's statement. — KZL

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.

Arsenal won't surrender in title race: Ramsdale

AARON Ramsdale insists Arsenal will not surrender in the Premier League title race despite their calamitous 4-1 loss at Manchester City.

The Gunners have ceded control of the title race to City after allowing Pep Guardiola's side to move within two points on Wednesday.

With two games in hand, City will lift a fifth title in six seasons if they win six of their last seven games. April has proved a painful month for Arsenal, with three successive draws preceding the chastening defeat at the Etihad Stadium.

But Arsenal keeper Ramsdale is not ready to throw in the towel just yet."We're going to be disappointed now but we haven't played nine months of Premier League football, and played the way we wanted to play, to give up with five games to go," he said. "If anything is going to happen in football, it is this league it is going to happen in. It might not do but stranger things have happened in the Premier League.

"You see how tight it is at the bottom, you see how tight it is at the top, so we are going to be pushing every game — with five games left we need to win five games — and we will see how that ends at the end of the season. We can't feel sorry for ourselves." — AFP

Growing threat or pie in sky? Experts at odds over genetic doping

THERE is a popular saying that dopers are always one step ahead of the testers and while not a single case of genetic doping has yet been detected, authorities are increasingly vigilant.

Opinions are mixed as to whether genetic doping will take hold but it is taken seriously enough to have been included in the Olympic Bill which passed into law in France on 12 April.

The law sets up the possibility that the laboratory of the French anti-doping agency (AFLD) will perform genetic testing at the 2024 Olympics in Paris, with the hope of being able to detect if genetic manipulation has taken place in a competitor's body.

The World Anti-Doping Agency is a foundation initiated by the International Olympic Committee based in Canada to promote, coordinate, and monitor the fight against drugs in sports. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ WADA**

Genetic doping — which has been on the radar of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) since 2002 — is defined by using gene therapy for something other than it was intended for, namely introducing genetic material into the cells "in order to cure an illness".— AFP