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Friday, 5 May 2023

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

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

SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing holds talks with delegation led by Russian Orthodox Archbishop His Eminence Sergiy of Metropolitan of Singapore and South-East Asia



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Russian Orthodox Archbishop His Eminence Sergiy of Metropolitan of Singapore and South-East Asia on 4 May 2023 in Nay Pyi Taw.

CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received a delegation led by Russian Orthodox Archbishop His Eminence Sergiy of Metropolitan of Singapore and South-East Asia at the parlour of the SAC Chairman Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

At the talks, they cordially discussed the development of diplomatic relations between the two countries for a long time and situations to undertake further improvement, exchange of culture and religious affairs, further cementing friendly relations between the two governments and people via religious ties, a plan underway to build a Russian Orthodox Church in Myanmar, construction of a Buddhist Centre and a Shwezigon replica temple in Russia, and building Maravijaya Buddha Image made of marble which would be the largest in the world and the Archbishop blessed Myanmar for development, peace and stability.

After the meeting, the Senior General and His Eminence Sergiy exchanged commemorative gifts and had documentary photos taken together with attendees. — MNA/TTA

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Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Union Election Commission
Announcement No 15/2023
1st Waning of Kason 1385 ME
4 May 2023
Allowing Pa-O National Organization
(PNO) Party to register as political party
AS of 4 May 2023, Pa-O National Organization (PNO) Party with its headquarters located at No 18, West Circular Road, Zaypaing Ward, Taunggyi, Shan State, has been allowed to register under Section 9 of the Political Parties Registration Law. The registration number of the Pa-O National Organization (PNO) Party is 10.
Sd/Thein Soe
Chairman
Union Election Commission

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Union Election Commission
Announcement No 16/2023
1st Waning of Kason 1385 ME
4 May 2023
Allowing Mro Ethnic Party to register as
political party
AS of 4 May 2023, Mro Ethnic Party with its headquarters located at No 245, Ward 4, Thabyaygon, Buthidaung, Rakhine State, has been allowed to register under Section 9 of the Political Parties Registration Law. The registration number of the Mro Ethnic Party is 11.
Sd/Thein Soe
Chairman
Union Election Commission

40 electric vehicles arrive at Yangon Port

A total of 40 MG electric vehicles (14 MG4 models and 25 MGZS models) imported by NPK Motors Co Ltd arrived at Yangon Port and they were allowed to be claimed under Customs procedures. The import of battery electric vehicles (BEVs) is exempted from Customs duties. — MNA/MKKS



Officials check the newly-arrived electric vehicles (EVs) in Yangon Port.

Daily newspapers available online

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

195 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 4 May, total figure registers 635,452

MYANMAR'S COVID-19-positive cases rose to **635,452** after **195** new cases were reported on 4 May 2023 according to the Ministry of Health.

Therefore, a total of **10,407,809** laboratory samples were examined and the confirmed COVID-19 cases reached **635,452**. The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **614,998** including **44** new recoveries. The death toll from COVID-19 in the country registered **19,492** on 4-5-2023 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

2023 basic, advanced maritime and aviation youths under training in respective townships

FOR new generation youth to develop knowledge, make the most of holidays, and follow their hobbies during the summer vacation, and to turn out the future generation of maritime and aviation skillful youths for the state, basic and advanced maritime youth courses (senior level), and basic aviation youth courses (junior level) were opened at training camps in the respective townships at the same time by Tatmadaw (Navy) and Tatmadaw (Air) on 24 April.

The coaches from Tatmadaw (Navy) are training 43 trainees at the Myeik training camp in Taninthayi Region, 115 trainees at the Kyunsu training camp, 50 trainees at the Patheingyi training camp, and 85 trainees at the Mawlamyine training camp in Mon State. A total of 712 trainees are also being trained at 11 maritime youth training camps in respective townships.

Similarly, basic aviation youth courses (senior level and junior level) are being provided by the coaches of Tatmadaw (Air) to 40 trainees at the Meiktila training camp in Mandalay Region, 40 trainees at the Namsam training camp in Shan State (South), 40 trainees at the Toungoo training camp in Bago Region, 40 trainees at the Patheingyi training camp in Ayeyawady Region, 40 trainees at the Mawlamyine training camp in Mon State, and 40 trainees at the Lashio training camp in Shan State (North).

A total of 680 trainees are being trained at 17 aviation youth training camps in respective townships.

The chief ministers of the respective regions and states and commanders from the respective military commands visited the training sites to encourage the youth and also fulfilled the requirements in coordination with responsible personnel. — MNA/CT

Tatmadaw’s responsibility to safeguard Constitution, Our Three Main National Causes and genuine disciplined democratic system

ACCORDING to the 2008 Constitution, Tatmadaw is mainly responsible for safeguarding the Constitution, Our Three Main National Causes, and the genuine and disciplined multiparty democratic system. Therefore, Tatmadaw’s preventive measures in law against all misconducts leading to failing the constitution being referred to as the soul of the country and multiparty democratic system are the shouldering or obligatory responsibility.

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

SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing holds talks with delegation led by Russian Orthodox Archbishop His Eminence Sergiy of Metropolitan of Singapore and South-East Asia

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The Senior General poses for the documentary group photo (top) and presents the gift to the Archbishop (above) at the event yesterday.

World Press Freedom Day commemorated

THE Myanmar Press Council organized the ceremony to commemorate World Press Freedom Day which falls on 3 May at 10 am yesterday at the office of the Myanmar Press Council on Merchant Street, Yangon.

Union Information Minister U Maung Maung Ohn gave an opening speech through video conferencing and Myanmar Press Council Chair U Ohn Maung (Myinmu Maung Naing Moe) gave a commemorative speech on World Press Freedom Day.

Next, Director-General Dr Thida Tin of the Media Development Department explained the media development activities.

Afterwards, a round of discussions was conducted under the topics: “National Development and the Role of the News

Media” by Myanmar Press Council Chair U Ohn Maung (Myinmu Maung Naing Moe); “Responsibilities of those who produce and distribute news” by MPC Vice-Chair 1 U Myo Tun (Maung Sein Naung – Lew), and “Democracy and Freedom of Press” by MPC Secretary U Aung Pyae Sone. The Myanmar Press Council chairman gave words of thanks before the event came to a close. — Aung Myint (IPRD)/TS



The commemorative event of World Press Freedom Day in progress yesterday in Yangon.

DPM MoTC Union Minister meets ministry’s new staff



Deputy Prime Minister MoTC Union Minister Admiral Tin Aung San addresses the meeting with 23 new staff in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

STATE Administration Council Member Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Transport and Communications Admiral Tin Aung San met 23 new staff who completed the AGTI diploma course of the Nationalities Youth Resource Development Degree Colleges (Yangon and Sagaing) for the 2022-2023 academic year in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Speaking at the event, he said the recruits should apply the subjects that they have studied in the workplace practically. Transport and communications are crucial for the development of the country and the ministry is working hard to meet the international standards in transport and communication services in line with its motto “Transport and Communicate for the benefit of the people”. Therefore, the new staff should know the visions of the ministry and follow the instructions of senior officials.

He then clarified the fields of work of 19 departments under the ministry.

Of 146 students who completed the AGTI diploma course of Nationalities Youth Resource Development Degree Colleges (Yangon and Sagaing) for the 2022-2023 academic year, a total of 23 — 15 males and eight females — will work at the ministry and they will be assigned at six departments under the ministry. — MNA/KTZH

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission Statement No 6/2023

1. THE Chairman of the State Administration Council issued Order No 31/2023 on 3 May 2023, under which a total of 2,153 male and female prisoners serving sentences in respective prisons, jails and camps under Section 505-A of the Penal Code, were pardoned under Section 401 (1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, in commemoration of the full moon of Kason (Buddha Day), 1385 ME, and in the interest of public peace of mind and on compassionate grounds.

2. Furthermore, the death sentences of 38 prisoners from respective prisons and jails have been commuted to life imprisonment by Order No 32/2023 on 3 May 2023 under Sub-Section (a) of Section 204 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

3. This action is a positive step from a human rights perspective and, as a result, the parolees have the opportunity to be reunited with their families. Furthermore, those whose death sentences have been commuted may have the opportunity to enjoy their lives. Therefore, the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission is deeply delighted together with relevant family members.

4. The Commission hopes that similar positive steps will be continued in future.

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission
Date: 4 May 2023

MoRAC Union Minister holds talks with Russian Orthodox Archbishop



Union Minister U Ko Ko receives Russian Orthodox Archbishop Sergiy yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

UNION Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Ko Ko met a delegation led by His Eminence Sergiy, Russian Orthodox Archbishop for Metropolitan of Singapore and South-East Asia, yesterday afternoon in Nay Pyi Taw.

They frankly and cordially discussed matters related to the construction of a Russian Orthodox Church in Yangon and further strengthening of friendly relations between the two countries through religious and cultural cooperation.

The meeting was also attended by the deputy minister, the permanent secretary, the directors-general and responsible officials with the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture. — MNA/TS

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.

MoI Union Minister inspects rehearsals for Myanmar Film Academy Award ceremony



Rehearsals for the Myanmar Film Academy Award Event in progress, watched by Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

UNION Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn inspected the rehearsals of the Myanmar Film Academy Award ceremony yesterday evening.

The Union minister arrived at the open-air theatre near City Hall where the ceremony is to

be held and viewed the completion of stage construction of the Myanmar Film Academy Award ceremony for 2019, 2020 and 2022, installations of audio, visual and lighting systems, rehearsals for the opening ceremony, practising of recep-

tionists and masters of ceremonies, fixing the place for laying the red carpet, trial setting off fireworks, accommodation arrangement and installation of colourful lights.

Deputy Minister U Ye Tint and responsible officials ex-

plained matters concerning the agenda, selection of songs to be performed and successful holding of the ceremony.

Some film stars and receptionists are arriving to attend the Myanmar Film Academy Awards ceremony to be held

on 6 May and are making the preparations for the ceremony.

Out of the film stars who are going to attend the ceremony, two actors and two actresses will be chosen and presented with Fashion Awards. — MNA/MKKS

MoIP Union Minister meets Belarusian First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, visits National Centre for Electronic Services



Union Minister U Myint Kyaing holds talks with Belarusian First Deputy Minister Maj-Gen Nazarenko Yuriy Genadievich of Internal Affairs in Minsk on 3 May.

AT the invitation of the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, Lt-Gen Ivan Kubrakob, Union Minister for Immigration and Population U Myint Kyaing made a tour to Minsk of Belarus.

The delegation left for Belarus at 5:30 pm on 1 May and arrived in Minsk at 11:20 pm Minsk Standard Time on 2 May.

On 3 May, Union Minister U Myint Kyaing met First Deputy Minister Maj-Gen Nazarenko Yuriy Gennadievich of Internal

Affairs of Belarus at the meeting hall of the ministry in Minsk.

During the meeting, the two parties exchanged views on immigration processes and biometric ID cards of Belarus.

After the meeting, the two sides exchanged gifts and the officials from the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Belarus hosted a lunch to the Myanmar delegation.

The Union minister and party also visited the National Centre for Electronic Services

in Minsk on the same afternoon. Director Gradusof Roman Anatovich of the centre explained the e-ID system of Belarus, digital services, the emergence of the information system, resources of digital services, activities for the development of the national digital service system and ongoing processes.

Then, the Union minister discussed the immigration processes and implementation of an e-ID system in Myanmar. — MNA/KTZH

Illegal teak, consumer goods, foodstuffs, auto parts and vehicles seized

THE Unregistered Vehicles Seizure Team of No 2 Traffic Police Force captured an unregistered Toyota Harrier car (approximately K3.5 million) near Myitta Street in North Okkalapa township on 1 May. The action was taken under the Export and Import Law.

A Customs on-duty team seized 95 vacuum cups worth K3.5 million that were not declared in the Import Declaration (ID) from a Mitsubishi Fuso truck (approximately K25 million) heading from Myawady to Yangon at the Mayanchaung permanent checkpoint on 3 May. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

In addition, the combined teams made inspections at the Thanlwin Bridge combined checkpoint and confiscated 50 used tyres worth K3.5 million without official documents from a Mitsubishi Fuso lorry (estimated value of K35 million) heading from Hpa-an to Thaton. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

Similarly, a combined on-duty team nabbed four kinds of palm oil, including 960 litres of high-quality palm oil (Thai-made Two-Shrimp brand),



Confiscated illegal commodities.

worth K11.265 million. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

The combined teams led by the Bago Region Forest Department captured a total of 28.465 tonnes of illegal teak and 4.0820 tonnes of illegal hardwood worth K12,193,178 in Toungoo district on 3 May and a total of 14.813 tonnes of illegal teak and 3.7604 tonnes of illegal hardwood worth K9,179,932 in Bago and Toungoo districts on 4 May. The action was taken under the Forest Law.

Therefore, eight arrests (estimated value of K103,138,110) were made on 1, 3 and 4 May, according to the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS

CURRENT
AFFAIRS



The Lweje border trade post.

Lweje border trade value tops
US\$0.2 mln on 30 April

EXPORTS worth US\$0.232 million were shipped in 19 trucks to China through the Lweje border on 30 April, the statistics of the Ministry of Commerce indicated. Fifteen truckloads of tissue-cultured bananas and one truckloads of watermelons with a total value of \$0.085 mil-

lion were exported.

Artificial turf, synthetic fibre bags, PVC pipes, tractors, auto spare parts, motorbike spare parts, and plastic balls worth \$0.147 million were imported from China. The trade between China and Myanmar is running as usual.

From 15 to 21 April 2023, Lweje and Kampaiti borders in Kachin State handled exports worth over \$8.23 million and imports valued at over \$0.64 million between China and Myanmar. The exchange rate is one yuan per 303.95 Myanmar kyats.— TWA/CT

RTAD to confiscate wheel
tax on non-installation of
new number plates

THE Road Transport Administration Department has announced that wheel tax cards of vehicles that have not been installed with new embossed number plates will be confiscated.

If the vehicles without new number plates are found out in

the second week of May, the owners will be fined K5,000 and if they are found out in the third week, wheel tax cards will be confiscated. Will new wheel tax cards be issued only when the vehicles have been installed with new number plates. — TWA/MKKS



Traffic police members check the vehicles in Yangon.

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Weekly market update of dry groceries at Bayintnaung
Wholesale Centre

FOR a week from 27 April and 2 May 2023, the prices of onion and sugar went up at Bayintnaung Wholesale Centre. However the palm oil price dipped. The sugar prices climbed up to K3,200-K3,250 per viss.

Onion

Bayintnaung Wholesale market saw the entry of 150,000 vissses of onions on 2 May. The prices moved between the range of K1,400 and K1,700 per viss depending on the quality, size and producing areas (Seikphyu and Myittha) that day.

The centre was opened only on 2 May during its market holidays for three days. Despite the low demand, the prices increased. On 3 May, only 5,000 vissses of onions were supplied to the Pakokku market and the lot price was K1,700 per viss.

On 2 May, 75,000 vissses of



The photo shows a retail shop of dry groceries.

onions were supplied to the Myingyan market and the price touched a high of K1,800 per viss, according to the market data.

Garlic

On 2 May, the prices stayed at K3,600-K4,600 per viss, depending on varieties and quality,

whereas Kyukok garlic fetched K5,300 per viss.

Potato

The prices of potatoes moved in the range between K1,300 and K1,600 per viss in the Yangon market depending on quality and strains on 2 May.

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 K13,500-17,000 per viss.

Palm oil

For a week from 2 to 7 May, the wholesale reference price of the Yangon Region was set at K4,570 per viss, which is a decrease of K110 per viss compared to that of the previous week. The delivery order price was K6,250 per viss on 23 April and it hovered around K6,100 on 2 May.

Rice

On 2 May, the prices of rice were up by K3,000 per bag at Yangon Port's rice wholesale

centre. Yet, the demand is pretty weak.

The prices hit K60,000 per bag of low-grade Hnanka and K67,000 for summer short-mature rice (90 days) and K75,000 for Pawkywe variety. The new Pawsan rice prices were K85,000 from the Bogale area, K88,000 from Pyapon, K90,000 from Myaungmya and K105,000 from the Shwebo area on 26 April.

Pulses

The prices of various pulses stood at K2,180,000 per tonne of black gram (Fair Average Quality/RC), K2,425,000 per tonne of black gram (Special Quality/RC), K2,445,000 per tonne of pigeon pea (red gram) RC, K3,750 per viss of green gram and K4,900-K5,150 per viss of chickpea in Yangon markets. — TWA/EM

LOCAL BUSINESS

Soaring rice prices persist in domestic market

THE prices of rice that are mainly consumed locally are on an upward trend, according to the Wadan Rice Wholesale Centre.

On 28 April, Pawsan rice prices moved in the range between K72,000 and K105,000 per bag depending on the producing areas in Shwebo, Myaungmya, Dedaye, Pyapon and Pathein. New Pawsan rice fetched K80,000 per bag. Meanwhile, the prices stood at K87,000-K88,000 per bag for Kyapyan, K70,000 for Kunni, 55,000 for Ngasein, K65,000 for short-mature rice (90 days), K56,000 for Emahta, K70,000 for Pawkywe and K56,000 for rice grown under intercropping season.

In early May, the prices of Pawsan rice were still high at K85,000-105,000 per bag. The prices of various rice varieties were up by K1,000-13,000 per bag within a few days.

Rocketing paddy prices pushed up the rice prices.

Starting from 3 August 2022, Myanmar Rice Federation, Myanmar Rice Producers and Plant-



In early May, the prices of Pawsan rice were still high at K85,000-105,000 per bag. The prices of various rice varieties were up by K1,000-13,000 per bag within a few days. Shoppers are pictured buying rice from the rice retail outlet in Yangon.

ers Association, Myanmar Rice Millers Association, and traders and brokers engaged in Wahdan Rice Wholesale Centre and Bayintnaung Rice Wholesale Centre have been working together to offer fair prices for Shwebo Pawsan from K75,000-77,000 per bag and other rice varieties to the consumers at the Wahdan

Wholesale Centre.

Myanmar Rice Federation will join hands with the rice millers, rice traders and companies to stabilize the rice price and steer the market for the right price and the right product and encourage the mill owners to achieve performance balance between the short-term and long-term, as per

the MRF's notification dated 24 April.

Individuals and family entities can contact the rice wholesale centres for a fair price and the right product. For any difficulties, please contact the office of the MRF, as per the statement.

On 25 April, the prices of rice stood at K82,000-K1,060,000 per

bag of Pawsan rice depending on producing areas (Shwebo, Myaungmya and Pyapon and Bogale), K72,000 for Pawkywe, K65,000 for short-mature summer rice (90 days) and K60,000 for monsoon Hnanka variety.

As the growers have sold the paddy out, the traders who keep the stocks in their hands are making great profits. Consequently, the price has risen. The price hike occurred three times in 2023.

Additionally, it will inspect those manipulators who spread malicious rumours on digital platforms to spark the concerns of the consumers and raise the rice prices for the sake of the long-term benefit of the rice industry. The federation will forward the reports to the relevant authorities. Those stakeholders in the supply chain need to exert concerted efforts in this purpose.

At present, rice is steadily supplied to the domestic markets. The rice sellers are also doing a roaring trade, the Wadan Rice Wholesale Centre stated. — NN/EM

Gold price hovers around K3 mln per tical on spot gold price rally

PURE gold price surged to K2.997 million per tical (0.578 ounce or 0.016 kilogramme) in the unofficial domestic market on 3 May as the spot gold price rebounded to \$2,015 per ounce.

On 2 May, YGEA hiked the reference rate to over K2,355,000 per tical.

Consequently, there is a large price difference of about 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 K2,860 in the unauthorized forex market.

The US dollar exchange rate influences domestic gold prices. The YGEA requested sellers to make gold transactions below K2.9 million per tical on 27 April when the gap between the reference price and the market price is wide.

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 only with 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 inspect those manipulators to interfere with market stability through digital platforms, according to the notification dated 20 March.

The soaring dollar exchanging at over K4,500 drove the pure gold price up to a record-high of K3.7 million per tical in late August 2022.

For the gold price to decline, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation has been selling gold ingots under the competitive bidding system in Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw.

With an aim at reducing gold prices, the YGEA and Mandalay Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association sold gold bullion supplied by the executive members and the members as well. — NN/EM

Prices of fuel oil, gold and dollar on 4 May 2023

Fuel Oil Price (Yangon)

Octane 92	K1,915
Octane 95	K1,990
Diesel	K1,795
Premium Diesel	K1,875

All of the prices are based on per litre.

Gold Price

The reference price of high-purity gold set by YGEA	K2,397,500 per tical
High-purity gold in the gold market	K2,998,000 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	K2,845 to K2,860

The above prices may change from time to time.

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OPINION

Honour firefighters for bravely serving duties with reluctant efforts

FIRE is one of the natural dangers which can harm society. Such a kind of natural disaster can sweep all lives and property in a few seconds. Hence, humans have been carefully controlling fire since time immemorial. But, fire cannot be fully controlled till today.

The outbreak of fire is based on various reasons. Although humans can control outbreaks of negligent fire, ember, short circuits and so on to some extent they cannot comprehensively control forest fire till today. It is because forest fire sweeps millions of hectares of forest areas all over the world yearly.

In Myanmar, firefighters were grouped in the reigns of Myanmar kings to extinguish outbreaks of fire in royal residences as well as public areas. In the reign of King Anawrah-ta (1044-1077 AD), a total of 663 firefighters were formed to take preventive measures against fire in Bagan royal palace. It can be said that those firefighters were forefathers of today's firefighters due to the historical records.

The All Burma Fire Brigade Conference was convened in Kandawgale of Yan-gon on 5 May 1946 with 197 representatives from 19 districts of the nation. National Leader General Aung San on the occasion gave work guidelines for firefighting. From then on, the day of 5 May has been marked as the Fire Brigade Day across Myanmar. Fire brigades are formed in three categories as government fire brigade members, local auxiliary fire brigade members and separate fire brigade members, especially for factories, industries and businesses.

Currently, the Department of Fire Services formed with 753 officers and 23,864 service personnel, totalling 24,599 in the organizational setup is under the Ministry of Home Affairs in discharging the assigned duties of taking fire prevention, making preparedness for natural disasters, performing rescue and relief works for victims of natural disasters, and serving the public welfare tasks.

The missions of the Department of Fire Services are aimed to protect the life and property of the people and production capital of the State against the outbreak of fire and to take responsibility for emergency rescue and relief works whenever natural disasters fall.

As firefighters serve their duties at risk of sacrifice for life and limbs, it is necessary to honour those fighters with physical and mental facilities so as to keenly discharge their assignments with reluctant efforts for protecting the people against the danger of fire and unexpected natural disasters in all seasons. If so, those personnel will take pride in bravely serving their duties by bringing honour to the department as well as prestige to society.

ANNUAL sessions of NPC (National People's Congress) and CPPCC (Chinese People Political Consultative Conference) have been completed recently in March. The two plenaries mustered consensus and bolstered further strengthening of China's modernization and status in this new world.

Xi's principles & continuity

President Xi has been reaffirmed for the third 5-year term as the leader - the President of China, General Secretary of the CPC and Chairman of the Central Military Commission. That could only mean one thing - Xi's principles of building socialism with Chinese characteristics can be further cemented by piling resources into the successful modernization of 1.4 billion people and common prosperity for everyone. Obviously, the other three unique features of the Chinese path to modernization, balancing of material and cultural-ethical progress, harmonious co-existence between humanity and nature, and peaceful development would supplement the first two principles.

With the continuation of good principles and righteous leadership, China is no doubt, well positioned to scale new heights

The Rise of New China

By U AC



From financial resources to talent to manufacturing capabilities, China already has all the hard powers. A semiconductor factory in China's Mutankiang, Heilongjiang Province. PHOTO: FOR REPRESENTATIONAL PURPOSE ONLY/ XINHUA

towards the top in various barometers of measuring success. As Xi mentioned in his last book, the first recommendation of the CPC going towards a model socialist

society was to promote high-quality development.

For that high-quality development, China would focus on original and pioneering research,

increase capacity in science and technology, advance reforms in these two areas to support innovation, build an innovation ecosystem and become a global

leader in talent resources. The digital economy is also part of this high-quality development and with China's government stability and strength in cyber governance, the digital economy can play a critical role in the new development dynamic giving China an edge in international competition.

New wolf warrior

The original wolf warrior Wang Yi has been promoted to the Central Committee, the CPC's highest decision-making authority. In his place came Qin Gang, the new Foreign Minister. He held a press conference on China's foreign policy and foreign relations on the sidelines of the first session of the 14th National People's Congress and impressed the international crowd of reporters with his fiery statements, highlighting that "Chinese diplomats would have no choice but to confront head on to protect the motherland when jackals and wolves are blocking the way, and hungry wolves are attacking China". A fine example

of talent development perhaps, is when one wolf warrior hands over the reins to another equally ferocious one.

Opening up of China

In expectation of elevation of its status globally, the buzzword for the new China included high-standard opening up to the world from China, at a time when the global openness index keeps declining. Some of the most important aspects of China's high-standard opening up include sharing opportunities, developing together and improving people's livelihoods, all with the ultimate aim to build a community with a shared future for mankind. Under this policy, China has issued a series of measures to level the playing field, so that foreign companies can enjoy a better business environment in the country. As proof of that, in March 2023, Chinese regulators added more than 1,000 mainland listed companies to a list that foreign investors can access, leaving 90 per cent

of mainland stocks open to foreign investors.

Empirical evidence

The new China is making itself known on the global stage. From financial resources to talent to manufacturing capabilities, China already has all the hard powers. It is now in full display of its soft powers: The Sunni and Shia majors of Iran and Saudi are at peace now because of China. China is playing a significantly larger role in the Middle East. It's also laying down plans to start the process of peace talks between Russia and Ukraine. China is part of the BRICS initiative to put forward a global currency to counter the USD. It strengthened SCO for political, security and economic relations among countries of East Europe and Asia. It signed many bilateral deals with significant trading partners, to use counter-party currencies instead of the USD in their respective trades.

Even foreign leaders are taking note. French President Macron changing attitude which differs from the US and many other EU countries, reflected the positive impact that China is having from its reforms and soft power displays on the global stage.

How Myanmar can tag along

First, we must learn a lot from our big brother. From peaceful development to cyber governance to rules for writers and artists, China is already getting it right. We can simply emulate some of that. Now China is in the second stage of its development. Myanmar, being its closest neighbour, must take full advantage of China opening up to the world while lifting its own standards of exported goods and services along the way. "Green hills bathe in the same cloud and rain. The same moon lights up towns however far away", said Wang Changling, a renowned poet of the Tang Dynasty, highlighting shared prosperity among neighbours and people.

We can also be united with China by having our very own wolf warriors as the West continuously come up with deceptive rhetoric against Myanmar. "To improve conduct, one should dare to offend others", said Huang Kecheng, former Chief of the Chinese Army. We cannot have a foreign policy that focuses purely on defence. Without such warriors, Myanmar could end up being another Ukraine, in the contest for superiority between the two economic superpowers of the world.

WHO sets out future Covid policy

THE World Health Organization on Wednesday published its new strategy for fighting Covid-19, seeking to help countries move from emergency mode to a long-term prevention and control strategy.

The publication comes ahead of a meeting of the WHO's Covid-19 emergency committee to decide whether the pandemic is still serious enough to merit the maximum alert level, which was introduced in January 2020 at the start of the pandemic.

The final decision, which rests with WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, may not be published until several days after that meeting.

In the meantime, the WHO has unveiled its strategic plan for responding to Covid-19 for 2023-2025, the fourth such plan since the first cases were reported in

late 2019 in the Wuhan region of China.

Tha aim is "to support countries as they transition from an emergency response to longer-term sustained COVID-19 disease prevention, control and management", the WHO head said in the report.

Last week the WHO said that Covid-19 deaths had dropped by 95 per cent since the start of the year — but warned the virus was still on the move.

The World Health Organization said Covid-19 was here to stay and that countries would have to learn how to manage its ongoing non-emergency effects, including the post-Covid-19 condition known as Long Covid.

The new strategy will maintain the two goals of the previous plan, released in 2022; to reduce the circulation of Covid and to

treat the virus to reduce mortality, morbidity and long-term consequences.

But the new plan adds a third goal; "to support countries as they transition from an emergency response to longer-term sustained COVID-19 disease prevention, control and management".

The WHO release places strong emphasis on addressing Long Covid, which appears to arise in six per cent of symptomatic cases, according to Tedros.

"This is why we urge countries to maintain sufficient capacity, operational readiness and flexibility to scale up during surges of COVID-19, while maintaining other essential health services and preparing for the emergence of new variants with increased severity or capacity," said the agency. Continuing research into the virus and its effects was essential,

the WHO said.

"The response to COVID-19 has been costly, but the cost will

be greater if we fail to build on those investments by making a sustained commitment to science and public health," Tedros warned.

SOURCE: AFP



People in traditional Korean hanbok wear face masks as they jump for a souvenir picture at Gyeongbokgung Palace in Seoul on 3 February 2020. PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ JUNG YEON-JE/AFP /FILE

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SCI/TECH/ENVIRON WORLD

What will the Artemis Moon base look like?

THE next time NASA goes to the Moon, it intends to stay. Under the Artemis programme, the US space agency plans to maintain a human presence, for the very first time, on a celestial body other than Earth.

But building a lunar base is no small feat. It will need power generators, vehicles and habitats, and the space industry is racing to meet the technological challenges. "It's the Super Bowl of engineering," Neal Davis, lead

systems engineer for the Lunar Terrain Vehicle at space company Dynetics, told AFP.

Dynetics revealed its prototype design for a Moon rover last month at the Space Symposium in Colorado Springs.

But it probably won't be until later Artemis missions — 7 onwards — "where we're starting to look at adding permanent habitations on the surface," said NASA associate administrator Jim Free.

Artemis 3, the first planned landing, won't happen until later this decade, so habitat building wouldn't start before the 2030s.

The base would likely comprise multiple sites, he added, to diversify the targets of scientific exploration and to offer more flexibility for the landings.

Power and communications

Despite this distant timeline, companies are already chomping at the bit. — AFP



A prototype of a Moon rover developed by Leidos and Nascar is revealed at the Space Symposium in Colorado Springs. **PHOTO: AFP**

Microsoft expands AI access to public



Microsoft corporate vice-president Yusuf Mehdi says the firm has done away with a waitlist and made generative AI features available to anyone using a Microsoft account. **PHOTO: AFP**

MICROSOFT on Thursday expanded public access to its generative artificial intelligence programmes, despite fears that tech firms are rushing ahead too quickly with potentially dangerous technology.

The AI-enhanced features of the company's Bing search

engine and Edge internet browser are now open for anyone to use, Yusuf Mehdi, corporate vice president, said in a blog post.

"This means that it will now be easier than ever for everyone to try the new Bing and Edge by simply signing into Bing with

your Microsoft Account," Mehdi said.

The services have been enhanced with the ability to work with images as well as text, and Microsoft intends to add video to the mix, according to the executive.

A Bing "Image Creator" was recently integrated into its AI chatbot's repertoire, allowing it to generate visual, as well as written, content, Mehdi said.

"We are expanding Image Creator to all languages in Bing," he added.

"So now you can create images in your native language."

Risks from AI include its potential uses for fraud, with voice clones, deep-fake videos and convincing written messages. A range of experts in March urged a pause in the development of powerful AI systems to allow time to make sure they are safe. — AFP

New York becomes first US state to ban gas in new buildings

NEW York has become the first US state to pass a law banning gas stoves and other fossil fuels in most new buildings, in a victory for environmental activists.

The legislation adopted by lawmakers in the Democratic-run state legislature late Tuesday will require newly built homes to be all-electric in three years' time.

The move aims to tackle climate change by reducing New York's dependence on natural gas. "Changing the ways we make and use energy to decrease our reliance on fossil fuels will help ensure a healthier environment for us and our children," said state assembly speaker Carl Heastie.

The law, which could face legal challenges from the gas industry, will require solely electric heating and cooking in new buildings under seven stories from 2026.

For taller skyscrapers, the deadline is 2029.

Hospitals, critical infrastructure such as transportation, and commercial food establishments will be exempt.

The law will also not apply to buildings where the local grid is not capable of handling the load.

Existing buildings are also not affected by the legislation, meaning residents can keep gas stoves they already have.

The appliances became an unlikely flashpoint in America's bitterly partisan politics earlier this year when a federal official suggested the government might ban new gas stoves over concerns they cause harmful air pollution indoors.

Representatives from the fossil fuel industry and Republican allies slammed the comments by Richard Trumka Jr, a member of the US Consumer Product Safety Commission, and the White House was forced to clarify that stoves would not be banned. — AFP

Charles the 'green king' harnesses love of nature for UK coronation

KING Charles III, once mocked as a crank for admitting he talked to plants and championing organic farming, has steeped his coronation in symbols of nature and the environment.

As an environment radical long before Greta Thunberg castigated world leaders for "30 years of blah, blah, blah", green issues from climate change to biodiversity have been at the heart of Charles's work.

Now, for his coronation, his environmental interests will be reflected in wildflower seeds for schoolchildren, recycled royal garments, even the possible replacement of tiaras with floral headdresses. With the UK having lost 98 per cent of its wildflower habitats over the past 80 years, primary schools nationwide are to receive 200,000 packets of seeds for children to scatter in their green spaces. The initiative aims

to foster a connection to nature and help children understand how it can support their mental health. Biodiversity enthusiast Charles has a four-acre (1.6-hectare) wildflower meadow at his Highgrove home in Gloucestershire, western England.

Carefully tended over the past 30 years, it is now home to 120 different plant species and is said to literally hum to the sound of insects and birds. — AFP



The move is to help New York meet its goal of reducing emissions by 85 per cent by 2050. **PHOTO: STAN HONDA/AFP**

HEALTH/WELLNESS:
WORLD

US to end COVID-19 public emergency next week

US coronavirus alert will officially end next week, and the Joe Biden administration will no longer require vaccination for travellers arriving from abroad or for federal officials.

“We are announcing that the administration will end the COVID-19 vaccine requirements for federal employees, federal contractors, and international air travellers at the end of the day on 11 May, the same day that the COVID-19 public health emergency ends,” the White House

said in a statement on Monday.

The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Department of Homeland Security will start their own processes to end vaccination requirements for Head Start educators, workers at healthcare facilities that take Medicare and Medicaid, and some non-citizens at the land border, according to the White House statement.

“The short, four-paragraph statement closes one of the most contentious chapters in recent

American history, in which vaccine mandates became a centrepiece for a vitriolic battle between Republicans and Democrats across the country,” said The New York Times.

The vaccine requirements were ordered by the Biden administration in 2021.

Since January 2021, COVID-19 deaths in the country have declined by 95 per cent, and hospitalizations are down nearly 91 per cent, according to the White House. — Xinhua



People line up for COVID-19 testing in Washington, DC, the United States, 5 January 2022. PHOTO: XINHUA /FILE

Conflict deepens Russia’s demographic crisis



The Russia-Ukraine conflict highlights weaknesses in the world’s global health network. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

RUSSIA’S offensive in Ukraine has aggravated a long-simmering demographic crisis that President Vladimir Putin has struggled to tackle, which could further damage its sanctions-hit economy.

For a country already suffering from a shrinking labour

force because of persistently low birth rates, the conflict means even more difficulties that could persist for years.

The mobilization of hundreds of thousands of men took them off the job market, while prompting many of the most educated parts of the population to

flee the country.

“Russia lacks workers,” Alexei Raksha, a demographer who previously worked at the Rosstat statistics agency, told AFP.

“It’s an old problem, but it has gotten worse due to mobilization and mass departures,” he said.

Russia inherited low birth rates with the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, when birth rates had halved due to economic hardship and uncertainties over the country’s future. Putin has since tried to push families to have children, heralding “traditional values” as a way to solve what he believes to be an existential crisis.

As part of his efforts to boost population growth, he introduced a financial bonus for a second and every following child. — AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Newly-developed censor can detect early signs of cancer, type of tumours

MIT engineers have designed a new nanoparticle sensor that could detect early diagnosis of cancer with a simple urine test.

The sensors, which can diagnose many different cancerous proteins, could also be used to distinguish the type of a tumour or how it is responding to treatment.

The nanoparticles are designed so that when they encounter a tumour, they shed short sequences of DNA that are excreted in the urine. Analyzing these DNA “barcodes” can reveal distinguishing features of a particular patient’s tumour.

The researchers designed their test so that it can be performed using a strip of paper, similar to an at-home Covid test, which they hope could make it affordable and accessible to as many patients as possible. — ANI

‘Arthroscopy helps young adults with borderline hip dysplasia’

A study found that for young individuals with borderline hip dysplasia (BHD), primary arthroscopy improves symptoms and function while eliminating the need for hip replacement surgery in the majority of instances.

The findings of the study were published in the Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery. The journal is part of the Lippincott portfolio and is published in collaboration with Wolters Kluwer. — ANI

No alternative: Afghan farmers lament Taliban poppy ban

IN a secluded compound in south Afghanistan, Bibi Hazrato cries in dismay as a group of men hack down her poppy crop, enforcing a Taliban government order to wean the nation off the narcotic plant.

“If you were working for God, you would not have crushed this little field,” the frail sexagenarian hectors the turbaned men flaying her plants. “God says crush this,”

one of them bluntly answers.

The lucrative trade of poppy tar — the psychoactive substance in heroin — has been one of the few constants over decades of war and chaos in Afghanistan. But, last April, Taliban Supreme Leader Hibatullah Akhundzada declared poppy cultivation “strictly prohibited”.

On a trip to the opium-producing areas of Afghanistan, AFP

saw fields of wheat where poppy flowers once bloomed, as the first harvest season under the ban got underway.

In Hazrato’s spartan home with tarpaulin sheet windows in Sher Surkh village of Kandahar province, Afghanistan’s dilemma plays out in brief as an illicit-yet-vital source of revenue is extinguished in the midst of a humanitarian crisis. — AFP



A Taliban security force member slashes at a field of poppies, used in the production of heroin, which have been banned by the government. PHOTO: AFP

Japan, Kenya leaders agree to boost economic, energy cooperation



A container ship berths at the port of Mombasa. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ AFP**

JAPANESE Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Kenyan President William Ruto agreed Wednesday to strengthen their countries' cooperation in areas related to decarbonization, infrastructure development and bolstering economic ties.

Meeting in Kenya's capital Nairobi, the two leaders con-

demned Russia for its invasion of Ukraine while affirming the importance of the rule of law. They also agreed on promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific, Japan's Foreign Ministry said.

Japan will continue to cooperate with Kenya by providing infrastructure development assistance for the East Afri-

can nation's port of Mombasa, Kishida told a press conference after the meeting.

The two leaders shared the view that enabling fair and transparent financial development is important for alleviating Kenya's debt problems, according to the Japanese ministry.

The move comes amid concerns about China having created "debt traps" for several African countries by providing them with large loans that have become difficult to repay, consequently allowing Beijing greater leverage over their political affairs.

Wednesday's visit to Kenya was the first by a Japanese prime minister since August 2016. Kishida's trip to Kenya is part of his four-leg African tour. — Kyodo

TotalEnergies says to explore for gas in Lebanon waters

FRENCH firm TotalEnergies has signed a contract to begin drilling and exploring for gas this year in waters off crisis-hit Lebanon, the company said in a statement Tuesday.

"TotalEnergies in agreement with its partners Eni and QatarEnergy has signed a firm contract with Transocean to hire the drilling rig that will drill an exploration well on Block 9 offshore Lebanon, as soon as possible in

2023," the group said.

"This is a new key step in the preparation of the operations," TotalEnergies added.

The announcement follows the signing in October of a landmark border agreement between Lebanon and Israel that opens up lucrative offshore gas fields for the eastern Mediterranean neighbours.

Beirut divided its exclusive economic zone at sea into 10

blocks, and Block 9 was part of the area disputed with Israel.

Block 9 contains the so-called Qana field or Sidon reservoir.

There are still no proven gas reserves in the field that straddles the maritime border, but a 2012 seismic study by the British firm Spectrum estimated recoverable gas reserves in Lebanon at 25.4 trillion cubic feet.

Lebanese officials have announced higher estimates.

Many politicians in Lebanon have pinned hopes of a way out of crisis on gas exploration, but analysts have said Beirut, which is in deep financial crisis, cannot count on gas alone to bail it out.

In January, the Lebanese government had said that Qatar entered a consortium with Italy's Eni and TotalEnergies to explore for offshore gas in waters near Israel. The deal saw the gas-rich Gulf country's state-run QatarEnergy receive a minority 30 per cent stake in two blocks of Lebanon's exclusive economic zone, Lebanese caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati had said at the time. — AFP



French firm TotalEnergies has signed a contract to begin drilling and exploring for gas this year in waters off crisis-hit Lebanon. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ TOTALENERGIES**

Google clashes with Brazil over disinformation bill

THE Brazilian government accused Google Tuesday of "deceitful and abusive propaganda" against a bill to tackle disinformation online, ordering the US tech giant to stay out of the debate or label its positions as advertising.

The row came as lawmakers in Brazil's lower house prepared to vote on the so-called "fake news bill" — dubbed the "censorship bill" by critics — which aims to make tech companies regulate disinformation, hate speech and violent content on their platforms.

Brazil's National Consumer Protection Bureau ordered Google, which has criticized the bill, to label as "advertising" messages on its site warning the legislation could "make your internet worse" and "increase confusion about what is

true or false in Brazil."

The bureau gave the company two hours to balance that with "counter-propaganda" or face a fine of one million reais (\$200,000) an hour.

Justice Minister Flavio Dino accused Google of "manipulating" search results to display content opposed to the bill more prominently — a charge the company denied.

"No one should be manipulating Brazilians' freedom of expression," Dino told a news conference, accusing Google of abusing its platform to promote its own position.

Addressing the same conference, consumer protection secretary Wadih Damous announced a series of measures against what he called Google's "deceitful and abusive propaganda". — AFP



Protesters outside Brazil's Congress in January after rioters vandalized government offices. Many of the attackers had repeated falsehoods spread in far-right chat groups. **PHOTO: MARCELO CAMARGO/ XINHUA**

White House calls in tech firms to talk AI risks

THE White House plans to meet with top executives from Google, Microsoft, OpenAI and Anthropic on Thursday to discuss the promise and risks of artificial intelligence.

Vice-President Kamala Harris and other US administration officials will discuss ways to ensure consumers benefit from AI while being protected from its harms, according to a copy of an invitation seen by AFP.

US President Joe Biden expects tech companies to make sure products are safe before being released to the public, the invitation said.

US regulators last month

took a step towards drawing up rules on AI that could see the White House put the brakes on new technologies such as ChatGPT. The US Department of Commerce put out a call for input from industry actors that would serve to inform the Biden administration in drafting regulation on AI.

"Just as food and cars are not released into the market without proper assurance of safety, so too AI systems should provide assurance to the public, government, and businesses that they are fit for purpose," the Commerce Department said in a statement at the time. — AFP

US private hiring up unexpectedly in April but pay gains slow: ADP

US private sector employment heated up unexpectedly in April, according to data released by payroll firm ADP on Wednesday, although pay gains slowed rapidly as well.

The jump comes despite policymakers' efforts to rein in stubborn inflation by raising interest rates, and the Federal Reserve is expected to unveil another quarter-point hike at the end of its key policy meeting on Wednesday.

Job gains hit 296,000 last month, around twice the figure that analysts expected and a surge from the revised 142,000 number in March, ADP said.

But "the slowdown in pay growth gives the clearest signal of what's going on in the labour market right now," said ADP chief economist Nela Richardson in a statement.

"Employers are hiring aggressively while holding pay gains in check as workers come off the sidelines," she added.

Pay growth has continued a "nearly year-long slowdown" with those who changed jobs having their pay gains ease to 13.2 per cent, ADP said.

For those who stayed in their roles, wage growth stood at 6.7 per cent.

Richardson said ADP data also indicated that fewer people are switching jobs.

The majority of job gains came from service-providing industries, with leisure and hospitality being a standout, while sectors such as financial activities and professional or business services saw declines, ADP said.

Meanwhile, small and medium establishments added more jobs than large ones. — AFP



US private hiring picked up unexpectedly in April, according to payroll firm ADP. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Airbus net profit plunges as deliveries drop

EUROPEAN aircraft manufacturer Airbus said Wednesday its revenues and net profit fell during the first quarter of the year as deliveries dropped amid continuing supply chain difficulties.

The company delivered 127 aircraft in the first three months of this year, down from 142 during the same period last year.

While this had only a modest impact on revenue, down two per cent to 11.76 billion (\$13.0 billion), net profit fell 62 per cent to 466 million euros.

"On the one hand, our customers continue to express a strong appetite for our products as highlighted by some of our recent commercial announcements such as Air India,"



Employees working on the fuselage of Airbus A220 aircraft at a factory in Shenyang, China. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

said chief executive Guillaume Faury, referring to the Indian airline's order for 470 aircraft.

"On the other hand, we continue to see a com-

plex and adverse global environment with persistent tensions in the supply chain, including engines which also impact the availability of aircraft in service."

Airbus posted a record profit of 4.2 billion euros in 2022 despite supply chain problems limiting its ability to raise production.

The company slashed production and jobs during the pandemic when airlines halted most operations, and it has had trouble scaling production back up, as have some of its suppliers. — AFP

BMW profits plummet, sales slip in first quarter

GERMAN automaker BMW reported Thursday a sharp drop in first-quarter profits due to an accounting effect, while sales also slipped in Europe and China.

Net profits fell 64 per cent to 3.7 billion euros (\$4.1 billion) compared to the period last year, when the figure had been boosted by the full integration of its Chinese business BMW Brilliance.

The Munich-based group's operating profit

nevertheless jumped 58.5 per cent to 5.4 billion euros, lifted by continued high prices for the luxury carmaker's vehicles.

But overall vehicle sales declined by 1.5 per cent year-on-year, with a 6.6 per cent slide in China and a 1.9 per cent decrease in Europe.

In Europe, "the environment was characterised by persistent inflation and high interest rates," BMW said. In Asia meanwhile, the "after-effects of



German automaker BMW reported Thursday a sharp drop in first-quarter profits due to an accounting effect, while sales also slipped in Europe and China. PHOTO: AFP

the coronavirus pandemic in China dampened the BMW Group's business development". — AFP

Stellantis says easing chip crunch boosts sales

STELLANTIS, the world's fourth-largest automaker, said Wednesday that an easing shortage of semiconductor supplies helped drive sales in the first quarter, as

more vehicles could be delivered to buyers. Some 1.47 million vehicles were sold across its 14 brands including Fiat, Chrysler, Peugeot and Citroen, lifting quarter-

ly revenue 14 per cent to 47.2 billion euros (\$52 billion). Chips, which have become crucial components for modern vehicles, became scarce as the Covid-19 pan-

demic shut down factories in China and elsewhere in Asia, causing shortages that are only recently being absorbed by supply chains. — AFP

PESTICIDES DISTRIBUTOR CHANGING

We, **Shandong United Pesticide Industry Co.,Ltd**, would like to change the Distributor of the following products, from **Huynh Zaw Co.,Ltd** to **Myanmar Golden Sun Crop Science Co.,Ltd**. If any object or enquiry, please contact to Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Department of Agriculture, Yangon, from here to next (2) weeks.

No	Trade Name	Active Ingredient Name	Registration Type	Registration Number
1	Abin	Azoxystrobin 250g/L SC	Provisional	P2018-4356

Myanmar Golden Sun Crop Science Co.,Ltd
Tel: 09-784772103

PESTICIDES DISTRIBUTOR CHANGING

We, **Shanghai Yuelian Biotech Co.,Ltd**, would like to change the Distributor of the following products, from **Myanmar Byter Agro Tech Co.,Ltd** to **Myanmar Gold Medal Crop Science Co.,Ltd**. If any object or enquiry, please contact to Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Department of Agriculture, Yangon, from here to next (2) weeks.

No	Trade Name	Active Ingredient Name	Registration Type	Registration Number
1	Byter Win Win	Acetamiprid 22.5% + Alpha-Cypermethrin 2.5% WDG	Experimental	E2022-5946

Myanmar Gold Medal Crop Science Co.,Ltd
Tel: 09-784772103

Japan PM heads to Seoul as ties warm over North Korea threat



South Korea's President Yoon Suk Yeol (L) visited Tokyo in March and met Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida (R). **PHOTO: JAPAN'S CABINET PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE VIA JIJI PRESS/AFP**

JAPANESE Prime Minister Fumio Kishida will visit Seoul this weekend as the two countries seek to bury historical animosities and reboot their relationship in the face of a growing threat from North Korea.

The two-day trip starting Sunday will be the first official bilateral visit to Seoul by a Japanese leader for over a decade.

Kishida will meet with President Yoon Suk Yeol — who has made resetting ties with Japan a top priority — just weeks after the South Korean leader visited Tokyo in March.

Yoon has also just returned from a state visit to Washington, where he met President Joe Biden and signed an accord aimed at boosting the nuclear protection afforded to South Korea by the United States.

Relations between Seoul and Tokyo — both key regional US security allies — have long been strained over Japan's brutal 1910-45 colonial occupation of the Korean peninsula, including the imposition of forced labour and sexual slavery.

But Yoon, who took office last year, has sought to bury the historical hatchet, earlier announcing a plan to compensate Korean victims of Japanese forced labour despite the absence of any direct involvement from Tokyo.

His endgame is improving regional security to counter perceived threats from North Korea, experts say. — AFP

Drone attack sparks Russia oil refinery fire: state media

A drone attack in southern Russia caused a fire at an oil refinery, the state-run TASS news agency reported on Thursday.

The alleged incident joins a string of recent drone attacks announced by Russia, including what it said was an attempt to assassinate President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday.

The fire at the oil refinery's reservoir, in the southern Krasnodar region's Ilsky settlement, started after an attack by "an unidentified drone", an emergency services official told TASS.

Krasnodar Governor Veniamin Kondratyev said the refinery fire had been localized to a 400-square-metre (4,300-square-foot) area and was quickly extinguished by emergency services.



The fire at the oil refinery's reservoir, in the southern Krasnodar region's Ilsky settlement, started after an attack by "an unidentified drone", an emergency services official told TASS. **PHOTO: KRASNODAR REGION GOVERNOR TELEGRAM CHANNEL/AFP**

In the nearby village Volna, a similar blaze at an oil reservoir engulfed 1,200 square metres, with officials blaming a drone crash.

That same day, Moscow said it shot down two drones aimed at Putin's residence and accused Ukraine of attempting a "terrorist act". —AFP

WORLD: TOP HEADLINES

UK's Sunak faces first date with voters

PRIME Minister Rishi Sunak's Conservatives are braced for heavy losses in their first major electoral test since he became the UK's third leader in the space of a few chaotic weeks last year.

In the depths of the worst cost-of-living crisis in decades, the local council elections across England on Thursday will shed light on the main parties' standing ahead of a UK-wide general election expected next year.

At the last parliamentary clash before the vote, opposition Labour leader Keir Starmer Wednesday pressed on Tory wounds after the party ditched Boris Johnson and then Liz Truss in quick succession last year.

Nearly two million Britons will end up paying more on their home loans "because his party used their money as a casino chip", Starmer told Sunak, referring to Truss's disastrous tenure, when financial markets tanked.

In national polls, Labour has built a double-digit lead over the Conservatives, and is treating the municipal elections as a referendum on Tory rule.

The prime minister tried to recast the elections — for more than 8,000 council seats across 230 English districts — back on to local issues. — AFP



Police have arrested a man suspected of shooting five people — one of whom died — at an Atlanta hospital, US authorities say. **PHOTO: AFP**

Suspect arrested in deadly Atlanta hospital shooting

POLICE have arrested a man suspected of shooting five people — one of whom died — at an Atlanta hospital on Wednesday, authorities in the southern US city said.

One person was killed and four were injured when Deion Patterson allegedly opened fire in a hospital waiting room just after midday (1700 GMT). Patterson then allegedly stole a truck that had been left running at a nearby gas station and fled.

A manhunt went into the night before Patterson was apprehended outside the city in neighbouring Cobb County.

"Law enforcement have taken the suspect into custody," Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens said at a news conference Wednesday evening.

"He will be charged and stand trial for his crimes."

Patterson was detained "without incident," said Cobb County police chief Stuart VanHoozer. —AFP

Indigenous leaders demand King Charles apologize for colonialism



Police officers stand on duty close to Buckingham Palace in central London on 3 May 2023 as preparations continue ahead of the 6 May Coronation of King Charles III. **PHOTO: AFP**

INDIGENOUS leaders from a string of former British colonies on Thursday urged King Charles to swiftly apologise for “centuries of racism” and the “legacy of genocide” perpetrated by the crown.

In a staunchly worded letter that could sour the build-up to this weekend’s coronation,

Indigenous representatives from 12 Commonwealth nations also called for financial reparations and the return of stolen cultural treasures.

The letter was signed by leaders from Australia — where Indigenous people were massacred by British colonisers and forced off their lands — as well

as several Caribbean nations once plundered for slaves.

The group said they had banded together to help their people “recover from centuries of racism, oppression, colonialism and slavery”.

Charles has in recent years stepped up efforts to engage with Indigenous leaders, as the monarchy faces a reckoning over its links to the slave trade and the British Empire’s legacy of violence.

Although he has conceded the crown must “acknowledge the wrongs which have shaped our past”, the letter implores him to go further by offering a formal, royal apology.

Former Olympian Nova Peris, the first Aboriginal woman elected to Australia’s federal parliament, was one of the leaders to sign the letter. —AFP

Striking Hollywood writers decry the Uber-ization of their trade

TELEVISION and film writers, on strike over the “existential crisis” of a Hollywood dream factory that mistreats the source of its stories, are fed up with seeing their profession become more



Writers walk the picket line on the second day of the television and movie writers’ strike outside of Paramount Studios in Los Angeles, California on 3 May 2023. **PHOTO: FREDERIC J. BROWN / AFP**

precarious in the age of streaming. “What the studios are trying to do is basically turn our work into gig work, and make it impossible for writers to have a career,” said Sarah Fischer, on the picket line Wednesday outside major studio Warner Bros.

After 10 years working as an assistant on major series such as Marvel’s “Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.,” the 30-year-old scribe was only recently admitted into the Writers Guild of America (WGA).

The powerful union represents 11,500 screenwriters and ordered a strike this week after talks with Hollywood studios and streaming services over better pay and conditions collapsed. —AFP

Investigation of top Mexican resort town wins reporting prize

AN investigation about the hidden side of the Caribbean resort town of Cancun on Wednesday won a prize honoring two journalists murdered in Mexico, one of the world’s deadliest countries for the press.

Ricardo Hernandez won the Breach-Valdez award for human rights journalism for his report in

the magazine Gatopardo about the underbelly of the Mexican beachside city, which is visited by millions of tourists every year. —AFP

Spain’s far-right MPs snub visiting Colombian leader

COLOMBIAN President Gustavo Petro was snubbed by far-right lawmakers as he began a state visit to Spain on Wednesday calling for deeper ties with Latin America to fight climate change.

Addressing parliament, Petro said his visit was not just about “remembering the past and the historical scars” left as a result of Colombia’s past as a Spanish colony, but about “modern-day demands”.

His speech was overshadowed by a protest by the far-right Vox, Spain’s third largest party, whose lawmakers staged a walkout as Colombia’s first leftist president approached the podium.

The protest was in response to Petro’s remarks on 1 May about his nation’s 19th-century struggle for inde-

pendence “from the Spanish yoke”.

“He’s an unrepentant terrorist, a man who insulted Spain before flying over here,” Vox leader Santiago Abascal told reporters outside parliament, referring to Petro’s involvement with a guerrilla group when he was a teenager.

Abascal was joined by several dozen demonstrators for a protest called by the Madrid Forum, an alliance of right and far-right Spanish and Latin American lawmakers.

“There was never any yoke, but a beautiful brotherhood, with a shared culture, faith and worldview,” Abascal wrote on Facebook on May 2, describing it as “outrageous” that the Colombian leader would be allowed to address Spain’s parliament. —AFP



Demonstrators protest against the state visit of Colombian President Gustavo Petro to Spain. **PHOTO: AFP**

Kenyan pastor faces court over cult massacre

A prominent Kenyan pastor faces a court hearing on Thursday in connection with the horrific discovery last month of dozens of bodies in mass graves.

Ezekiel Odero, a wealthy televangelist who boasts a huge following, is being investigated on a raft of charges including murder, aiding suicide, abduction, radicalization, crimes against humanity, child cruelty, fraud and money laundering.

Prosecutors accuse Odero of links to cult leader Paul Nthenge Mackenzie, who is

in custody facing terrorism charges over the deaths of more than 100 people, many of them children.

Mackenzie, the head of the Good News International Church, is alleged to have incited his followers to starve to death in order to “meet Jesus” in a case that has deeply shocked Kenyans. Odero arrived in court in the Indian Ocean port city of Mombasa ahead of the hearing, as about 50 supporters gathered outside, some dressed in all white, some in red, and praying with bibles in hand. — AFP



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

1. Political affairs

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

2. Economic affairs

- (a) To enhance development based on agriculture and livestock using modern production techniques and to strengthen all-round development in other sectors of the economy.
- (b) To develop a stable market economy and promote international investment in order to enhance the economic development of the entire National people.

- (c) To assure support for the sustainability of Micro-, Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) that prioritize import substitution, export production, and the use of domestically produced raw materials, in order to increase domestic production and generate employment opportunities.
- (d) To advance the socioeconomic life of the people, in order to ensure the country's prosperity and food security.

3. Social affairs

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



CAMBODIA 2023 32nd SEA GAMES 12th ASEAN PARA GAMES

Kun Bokator to Teqball - unusual SEA Games sports

SOUTHEAST Asian athletes will vie for dominance in more than 30 sports in Phnom Penh from May 5 to 17, in everything from athletics and football to jet ski and obstacle race.

The SEA Games has a flexible programme which includes sports in the hosts' favour and also allows for regional and newer disciplines.

AFP Sport looks at four unusual sports at these Games:

Kun Bokator -

Believed to date back more than 1,000 years to the armies of the Khmer empire, which spread across much of South-East Asia, Kun Bokator is perhaps the most quintessentially Cambodian martial art.

The graceful style, incorporating elbow blows, shin strikes, locks and grapples, makes its SEA Games debut just a year after being inscribed on UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, and so finds itself in rude health only decades after nearly being erased.

Teqball -

In contrast to the ancient, locally rooted Kun Bokator, Teqball was invented as re-

cently as 2012, in Hungary.

Played on a specially curved table, it is a mash-up of football and table tennis, requiring agility, stamina and acrobatic overhead kicks.

Arnis -

The stick-wielding martial art of the Philippines is back again in 2023, having only made appearances in 2005 and 2019, when the country hosted the Games.

In arnis, two players in body armour and helmets try to hit each other with a baton made of ratan.

In the anyo discipline, individual performers don traditional dress for choreographed routines with weapons.

Chinlone -

Myanmar's chinlone is essentially a footballer's game of "keepy-uppy", but played with a woven cane ball by teams with deft touch, balletic grace and physical invention.

Hugely popular in the villages of Myanmar, it is a game of team cooperation. Six players keep the ball off the ground using any part of their body except their hands, with players performing flips as they kick the ball high into the air. — AFP

SEA Games Men's Football: Myanmar suffers 0-5 defeat to Indonesia



Myanmar's Hein Htet Aung (No 10) vies for the ball against rivals during the Group A match of the SEA Games Men's Football Tourney, played at Olympic Stadium, Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 4 May 2023. PHOTO: MFF

MYANMAR U-22 men's football team faced a 0-5 loss against Indonesia U-22 team in the Group A match of SEA Games Men's Football Tournament, played at Olympic Stadium, Phnom Penh, Cambodia yesterday.

In terms of individual skills,

strategy and team play, the Indonesian team is stronger than the Myanmar team in yesterday's match. Although the Myanmar players tried their best, they couldn't stop Indonesia's fast attack.

At the 20-minute mark, team

Indonesia broke the deadlock with a goal scored by Marcelino.

After the first goal, Indonesia did not stop their tempo and the second goal was scored by Ramadhan via penalty at 30 minutes.

Team Indonesia still dominated in the later minutes to end the first half with double goals.

In the second half, Team Myanmar used some new strategies to get equalizers but they did not work. With more football possessions than the Myanmar team, the opponents made the third goal at the 59-minute mark, scored by Ramadhan.

Next, Fajar scored the fourth and Titan Agung made the fifth for Indonesia at 73, and 88 minutes respectively. Despite the big loss, the Myanmar team played the best blocking game till the final whistle.

Next, Myanmar will face host Cambodia on 7 May. Since Team Myanmar have lost one match, they will have a chance to advance to the semifinals only if it wins against the host team.

— KZL

Cambodia poised for SEA Games with Chinese flavour

CAMBODIA will welcome thousands of athletes from across the region when the Southeast Asian Games begin on Friday with an opening ceremony at a new stadium built and paid for by China. The capital Phnom Penh will stage the 32nd edition of the biennial SEA Games, the first time Cambodia plays host. More than 11,000 athletes, coaches and delegates from 10 other countries will descend on the country for the Games, which run until 17 May. Regional glory is up for grabs but competitors will also have one eye on the Asian Games in China in September-October and next year's Paris Olympics.—AFP