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.

Arid region eyes livestock breeding zones

The Thaphanchan Livestock Breeding Applied Research and Regeneration Farm is seen in Kyaukse Township, Mandalay Region.

RURAL communities play a crucial role in the agricultural and livestock farming sectors, working diligently to produce food for public consumption. By integrating small-scale agriculture and livestock farms, their production volume can be significantly enhanced.

Specifically, in the arid region of central Myanmar, livestock farm zones have been established, providing land plots for residents to engage in small-scale livestock farming. This enables them to earn income for their families while fulfilling domestic consumption needs.

Preparations are currently underway to establish a livestock farm zone near Kanhla Village in Kyaukse Township, Mandalay Region. The primary objective of this zone is to facilitate the cultivation of crops for animal feed and implement efficient cage farming practices with a sustainable water supply. Furthermore, zone officials plan to collaborate with relevant departments to systematically transform small-scale livestock breeding operations into commercial ventures.

Furthermore, in Kyaukse Township, the Thaphanchan Livestock Breeding Applied Research and Regeneration Farm is located. This farm focuses on the production and distribution of new goat species, as well as the management of pedigree animal species and regeneration measures. Despite its location in a dry region, the farm has successfully secured a water supply not only for its own regeneration purposes but also for the Bowa goat farm, Hteinsan goat farm, and sheep farm. Local authorities are currently exploring options for constructing water tanks to fulfill the water needs of these animal farms.

In Nyaungbintha Village of Meiktila Township, the Kaung Htet San dairy cow farm showcases its capacity to produce milk and dairy products while raising dairy cows. Presently, the farm strives to meet the demand for milk and dairy products in central Myanmar to the best of its ability.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation, along with relevant authorities, are making concerted efforts to establish livestock breeding zones in various regions and states. These initiatives aim to promote increased meat consumption, ensure the well-being and nutritional needs of the people, and accelerate the growth of the manufacturing sector based on livestock breeding farms.—GNLM/TTA

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World's biggest marble Buddha statue nearing completion in Myanmar

By S Venkat Narayan, Our Special Correspondent

THE world's biggest marble Buddha statue is coming up in Myanmar's capital Nay Pyi Taw. The majestic monument is being given final touches and will be thrown open to the public soon.

The white marble for the 5,300-tonne statue shows the Buddha seated and contemplating. Its total height is 81 feet. While the Buddha statue is 63 feet tall, its base is 18 feet high.

Some 20,000 tonnes of marble have been acquired in all to create the Buddha's image and the sprawling complex around it. A team of 150 labourers have been working at the site for the past five years.

The marble has been procured from Sagyin, a village near Mandalay in Myanmar. Nearly 88 per cent of the country's 55 million people are Buddhist.

A supervisor at the complex told this correspondent: "We hope to complete the work in the next few months and open it for the public."

Carving of world's largest marble Buddha image is in progress.

50 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 18 June, total figure registers 640,049

MYANMAR'S COVID-19-positive cases rose to 640,049 after 50 new cases were reported on 18 June 2023 according to the Ministry of Health. Therefore, a total of 10,781,657 laboratory samples were examined and the confirmed COVID-19 cases reached 640,049. The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached 618,913 including 10 new recoveries. The death toll from COVID-19 in the country registered 19,494 on 18-6-2023 with no new death reported from the pandemic. COVID-19 information can be browsed on the internet page moh.gov.mm of the Ministry of Health. — GNLM

Announcement for local and foreign well-wishers to donate cash to cyclonic storm Mocha victims

1. AN announcement has been issued that well-wishers wishing to make donations for people who fell victim to the extremely severe cyclonic storm Mocha which hit Myanmar on 14-5-2023 can donate cash to Myanmar account OA-011834 and foreign account 1DA-0300086.
2. In this announcement, it is duly mentioned that our commitment to receiving donations extends to additional electronic payment systems and mobile payment systems. Further updates and notifications will be made in due course.
3. It has been announced that donations can be made to the previously announced phone number and to the account that was opened, and since it can be confusing to donate with a phone number, we have already made it possible to donate with a QR code instead of the phone number.
4. Donations can be made through KBZ Pay or Wave Money. If you wish to donate, please scan the QR codes provided by both KBZ Pay and Wave Money. To contribute, enter the code included within the respective QR codes.
5. People make donations through CB Pay, AYA Pay, OK $, UAB pay and Citizens Pay which are widely used to enhance convenience for donors. To donate, please scan the QR code and enter the code provided within it.
6. The well-wishers can contact the following persons for further information: -

Nay Pyi Taw	Yangon	Mandalay
Daw Lei Lei Aye Director-General Department of Disaster Management 067-3404050 09-2021491	U Than Soe Director Department of Disaster Management Office of Yangon Region Department 09-250123885	U Aye Min Thu Director Department of Disaster Management Office of Mandalay Region Department 09-420708827
U Win Shwe Deputy Director-General Department of Disaster Management 067-3404048 09-254170011	Daw Than Than Win Deputy Director Department of Disaster Management Office of Yangon Region Department 09-420740160	
Daw Phyu Phyu Win Director Department of Disaster Management 067-3404316 09-43054844		

National Disaster Management Committee

Collective efforts needed to achieve advanced socioeconomic goal

Every nation and individual strives to advance their socioeconomic status. Our collective efforts are necessary to achieve this overarching goal. Dedicated work and determination enable us to achieve any goal we set.

(Excerpts from the speech delivered by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing at 75th Anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) Independence Day ceremony on 4 January 2023)

DPM, union ministers look into rehabilitation process in Sittway

MEMBER of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Transport and Communications Admiral Tin Aung San accompanied by Union Ministers Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung, U Myo Thant and Dr Thet Thet Khine, Chief Minister of Rakhine State U Htein Lin and officials inspected unloading of relief and rehabilitation materials at Sittway's multi-purpose port and Technological University (Sittway).

At Sittway multi-purpose port, the Admiral inspected arrival of MV Wirupakkha and MV Royal Venus.

At Technological University (Sittway), the rector and officials reported to the Admiral and party on renovation of lecture halls and future plans.

Then, the Admiral paid homage to the Alodawpyae Sayadaw and donated alms and meals. At the afternoon, they attended the rehabilitation coordination meeting at the Rakhine State Government Office. Officials reported on arrivals of more relief aid, distribution process, progress of rehabilitation tasks and future plans.

Finally, the Admiral stressed the need to manage distribution of foodstuffs to the affected people in areas through a priority plan. It is crucial to ensure that there are no delays in the loading and unloading of relief aid, and timely distribution of supplies. — MNA/KZW

Member of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Transport and Communications Admiral Tin Aung San and officials inspect unloading of relief and rehabilitation materials at Sittway's multi-purpose port on 18 June 2023.

Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn warmly greets the trainees of Batch 7 New Talents Training at CMB Films Myanmar Co Ltd's studio yesterday.

Fine arts a way to capture the hearts of people

UNION Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn visited Myanmar Media Development Centre, a branch of Forever Group Holding Ltd, located at the corner of Thanthuma Street and Parami Street, South Okkalapa Township, Yangon Region, and CMB Films Myanmar Co Ltd, located at Ward 37, Dagon Myothit (North) Township yesterday morning.

At the Myanmar Media Development Centre, the Union minister viewed round preparation for screening TV series and the renovation of the studio facilities. He observed preparation of equipment used in filming at CMB Films Myanmar Co Ltd.

On arrival at Batch 7 New Talents Training graduation ceremony at the CMB Films Myanmar Co Ltd's studio, the Union Minister said that fine arts is a way to capture the hearts of people and now he is happy to know that the graduates will walk the path of fine arts.

He urged them to work for the people with honest efforts in the arts, and that the trainees would have to embrace the truth of their dreams in the future. A total of 34 trainees were graduated in the 7th batch of new talents training course. — MNA/KZL

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.gnlm.com.mm/e-paper.

News and Periodicals Enterprise

Kachin State CM inspects cultivation of quality monsoon paddy, oil crops in Myitkyina

Chief Minister U Khet Htein Nan makes an inspection on the conditions of excavating the 2,000-foot-long drain around the model plot on 17 June 2023.

THE Kachin State Government has been making efforts to improve the agricultural sector in the state, increase the production of produce, and improve the socio-economic lives of the farmers. Kachin State Chief Minister U Khet Htein Nan examined the model paddy farm of 100 acres and 100 baskets per acre at the Mankhein Ward in Myitkyina at 2 pm on 17 June.

The Chief Minister, along with state-level departmental officials, oversaw the status of monsoon paddy cultivation in the 100-acre model plot. A discussion was held between responsible personnel regarding the conditions of planting green manure (Crotalaria Juncea) for the farmers to ensure the saturation of the soil and the situation of distributing and planting seedlings of the high-quality Hsin Ekari rice variety to produce 100 baskets of rice from 1 acres of plantations.

In addition, the Chief Minister and party made an inspection on the conditions of excavating the 2,000-foot-long drain around the model plot, which the Department of Irrigation and Water Utilization Management is responsible for, and progress of plowing by tractor. The Chief Minister urged farmers to prepare in advance for the plantation of oil crops such as soybean, canola, and sunflower after the harvest of the monsoon paddy is completed. He also coordinated with departmental officials to fence before planting to keep cattle away. — State IPRD/CT

Tatmadaw relief teams exert rehabilitation efforts

TO facilitate relief and rehabilitation activities in areas affected by natural disasters, Tatmadaw deploys relief teams consisting of local security forces. In cooperation with social relief organizations, they are actively assisting in the affected areas.

The relief troops in Sittway join hands with the mobile medical teams which provide healthcare services to locals in Kyauktanchay village.

Similarly, relief teams in Kyauktaw distributed purified drinking water to locals.

Relief teams in Buthidaung cooperated with departmental staff to clean trees and bushes in the roads side of South Myothit Ward. — MNA/KZL

The relief teams distribute purified drinking water to locals in Kyauktaw yesterday.

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 increase of death rate due to the disease.

Tatmadaw senior officers, officials oversee rehabilitation tasks in Rakhine State

SENIOR military officers have been assigned under Section 11 of the Natural Disaster Management Law to oversee progress of rehabilitation in the storm-affected areas.

Brig-Gen Kyaw Kyaw Soe from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) currently in Myebon in Rakhine State along with officials inspected healthcare services given by the mobile medical teams to locals at the town hall of Myebon Township and encouraged the locals receiving the medical treatment. — MNA/KZW

Brig-Gen Kyaw Kyaw Soe inspects healthcare services given by the mobile medical teams to locals at the town hall of Myebon Township in Rakhine State yesterday.

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LOCAL BUSINESS

Myanmar earns $240 mln in export of pulses within two months

ACCORDING to the Ministry of Commerce, Myanmar has successfully shipped more than 310,000 tonnes of pulses, valued at over $240 million, to foreign countries during the first two months of the 2023-2024 financial year.

Seaborne trade accounted for $212.505 million (280,816.864 tonnes) of the pulses exports, while an additional 29,756.277 tonnes of pulses, worth $212.505 million, were sent to neighbouring countries via land borders between 1 April and 2 June 2023.

In the previous financial year of 2022-2023, Myanmar's pulses exports surpassed $1.4 billion, with a total volume of over 1.9 million tonnes, as indicated by the Ministry of Commerce's statistics.

The primary pulses exported by Myanmar include black grams, green grams, and pigeon peas. Black grams and pigeon peas are mainly shipped to India, while green grams are sent to China and Europe.

India has a growing demand for black grams and pigeon peas, leading to increased consumption. A Memorandum of Understanding signed between Myanmar and India on 18 June 2021, states that India will import 250,000 tonnes of black grams and 100,000 tonnes of pigeon peas (tur) from Myanmar annually for five consecutive years, from the 2021-2022 financial year to the 2025-2026 FY. This government-to-government agreement will not affect India's set annual quota for pulses. Myanmar's exporters are also permitted to deliver pulses to India within that quota.

The current prices for pulses stand at K2.425 million per tonne of black gram (urad) and K3.235 million per tonne of pigeon peas (tur). On 14 June, the price of pigeon peas reached a record high of K3.33 million per tonne, while black grams peaked at K2.461 million per tical on the same day.

Beans and pulses displayed in the market.

Myanmar Pulses, Beans, Maize, and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association states that black gram, which is primarily purchased by India, is predominantly found only in Myanmar. Pigeon peas, green grams, and chickpeas are grown in African countries and Australia. — NN/EM

Garlic prices skyrocketing in Yangon market

Kyukok garlic entering Yangon market.

BOTH locally produced garlic from Shan State and imported Kyukok garlic experienced price increases in mid-June. Compared to the previous year, prices have doubled at the beginning of the new crop season, according to a garlic depot seller on Yetama Street (Bayintnaung).

In the wholesale market, Kyukok garlic reached a high price of K6,800 per viss, while Shan garlic was priced between K5,500 and K7,000 per viss, depending on quality and size.

Local garlic was priced at K4,200 per viss, while Kyukok garlic was K3,750 per viss on 11 March 2023. However, in early June, prices surged to K6,000 per viss for Shan garlic and K6,800 per viss for Kyukok garlic.

Kyukok garlic is commonly used in restaurants due to its ease of peeling, while local garlic, which is smaller in size, is favoured by housewives for its stronger and better taste.

Although hundreds of thousands of onions are exported annually to foreign markets, there is an influx of garlic and potatoes from China. Garlic prices have been consistently rising since the post-Thingyan period, as reported by a trader to the Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM).

The accompanying photos showcase locally produced garlic from the Aungban and Taunggyi areas, which are popular choices among housewives. — TWA/EM

Sino-Myanmar border trade surpasses $600 mln in two months

THE Ministry of Commerce's statistics revealed that the border trade value between Myanmar and China has exceeded US$600 million during the first two months of the current financial year 2023-2024.

Comparing the figures to the same period last year, there has been a significant increase of $241.303 million. In the previous period, the recorded value stood at $392.697 million.

Myanmar engages in cross-border trade with China through various points, namely Muse, Lweje, Chinshwehaw, Kampaiti, and Kengtung. Among these, the majority of trade, totalling $417.646 million, occurred at the Muse border.

Additionally, the trade value amounted to $153.363 million via Chinshwehaw, $43.825 million via Kampaiti, $17.329 million via Lweje, and $1.837 million via Kengtung, respectively.

Myanmar conducts border trade with four neighbouring countries: China, Thailand, Bangladesh, and India, utilizing the corresponding land borders.

Export items include agricultural products, livestock products, fisheries products, minerals, forest products, manufacturing goods, and other commodities. On the other hand, capital goods, intermediate goods, manufacturing goods, and raw materials are imported by CMP enterprises.

The Sino-Myanmar trade is experiencing steady growth during the post-Thingyan period. At the Muse border post alone, approximately 200 trucks are flowing in and out. Traders anticipate further expansion in Sino-Myanmar trade.

Every day, Myanmar exports rice, broken rice, pulses, rubber, watermelon, fishery products, chilli pepper, and other food commodities to China. In return, the country imports building materials, electrical appliances, pharmaceuticals, fertilizer, household goods, and industrial raw materials. — NN/EM

Vietnamese well-wishers donate rice to 1,000 monks

A ceremony to donate rice to 1,000 members of the Sangha by Vietnamese well-wishers took place at the ancient Buddha images prayer hall of the Shwedagon Pagoda yesterday morning.

Joint-Secretary of State Sanga Maha Nayaka Committee Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Bhaddanta Pannadhaja administered the Five Precepts. Vietnamese well-wishers offered alms to members of the Sangha.

The rice donation ceremony to SSMNC member Sayadaws, Tipitakadhara Sayadaws, Vietnamese Sayadaws and invited members of the Sangha, totalling 1,000, was held at the central pavilion on the southern part of terrace of Shwedagon Pagoda.

After the ceremony, venerable Sayadaws including Vietnamese Sayadaws were offered day meals by Vietnamese well-wishers. In the evening, Vietnamese well-wishers led by Tipitakadhara Dhammabhandagarika Bhaddanta Indapala (Rammawady) lit 10,000 oil lamps on the platform of Shwedagon Pagoda.—Ko Ko Zaw (MNA)/KZW

Vietnamese well-wishers donate rice to 1,000 members of the Sangha at Shwedagon Pagoda on 18 June. **PHOTO : KO KO ZAW (MNA)**

2/2023 Cord meeting of CMP Export and Import Supervision Subcommittee held

THE coordination meeting 2/2023 of the CMP (Cutting, Making, and Packaging) Export and Import Supervision Subcommittee took place at the office of the UMFCCI in Yangon yesterday morning.

Deputy Minister for Commerce U Nyunt Aung, departmental officials who are members of the subcommittee, the Secretary of the Working Committee on Ensuring the Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods, the UMFCCI General Secretary, chairs of associations related to CMP, representatives, and members of the CMP Business Inspection Subcommittee participated in the meeting.

In the meeting, they discussed issues related to the decisions of the subcommittee on the 1/2023 coordination meeting, the import and export operations of CMP companies by industrial zone, changes in the number of export and import companies for CMP, the condition of increasing export according to the lists of import and export, programmes that will be carried out to better understand the relevant processes according to the conditions of CMP operations on the ground, and issues to be done in the pharmaceutical manufacturing and export business with the CMP system. — MNA/CT

CMP Export and Import Supervision Subcommittee in progress at UMFCCI office in Yangon on 18 June.

Confiscation of illegal goods: Timbers, wild animals, electronics, industrial materials and vehicles

AT the 16th-Milepost Kyaukchaw checkpoint on 15 June, an on-duty team successfully seized an Isuzu bus worth K20 million travelling from Nay Pyi Taw to Muse was found carrying four Pangolins worth K320,000 without official documents from two paper cartons. The action was taken in accordance with the Conservation of Biodiversity and Protected Area Law.

An inspection team from Monywa Police Force under management of Sagaing Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force intercepted two Jialing Super Cub motorbikes worth K600,000 in Monywa township on 15 and 16 June. The operation was conducted in adherence to the Export and Import Law.

In separate incidents, on 16 June, Customs on-duty teams impounded 320 Hanabishi electric frying pans worth K5.76 million, which were not declared in the Import Declaration (ID), from a Dongfeng 375 tractor head and CIMC Semi trailer (estimated value of K45 million) heading to Yangon from Myawady at Mayanchaung permanent checkpoint in Mon state and three kinds of goods worth K10.34 million including 128 RTH PE tubes that were not declared in the ID at the Myanmar International Terminals Thilawa (MITT). The action was taken under Customs procedures.

Additionally, a total of 0.590 tonne of illegal timbers worth K41,314 was seized near 25/0 Milepost on Koepin-Thagara road in Yedashe township on 15 June, an unregistered Honda fit (estimated value of K4 million) was captured on Yangon-Mandalay Highway in Toungoo township on 16 June and an unregistered Nissan Murano (approximately K7.5 million) was confiscated near Tollgate at 52/0 Milepost on Yangon-Mandalay Highway in Bago township on 17 June. The action was taken under the Forest Law and Export and Import Law.

As a result, a total of 10 arrests were made on three consecutive days from 15 to 17 June, with an estimated value of K93,561,314, as reported by the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS

Nepali Ambassador reiterates impact of direct flight in tourism development

By - KK

The Nepalese ambassador explains running of direct flight between Myanmar and Nepal at Nepalese embassy in Yangon recently.

AMBASSADOR Harishchandra Ghimire highlighted the need for direct air connectivity between Myanmar and Buddha's Birthplace and requested airlines to make chartered flights to Bhairahawa, Nepal, at Nepal's Tourism Promotion event held recently.

The Embassy of Nepal in Yangon organized Nepal's Tourism Promotion: Experience Sharing Event on 10 June 2023 on the Embassy premises, following the Myanmar delegation's participation in Buddhist International Travel Mart (BITM) 2023 held in Lumbini in May 2023.

The Ambassador encouraged the tour operators to explore tourism packages to Nepal and establish business agreements with counterpart Nepali travel and tour companies.

Also, Myanmar National Airlines was positive about the direct flight between Myanmar and Bhairahawa during the discussion organized by Nepal Tourism Board on 18 April 2023.

Ms Ganga Sundas, Second Secretary, mentioned in her welcome remarks that the event aimed to provide a platform for visitors to share their experiences and also foster close relations with the business community, and travel and tour companies in Myanmar.

U Maung Maung Myint, chair of the Bodh Gaya Pilgrimage Working Committee, who led the delegation shed light on the Maya Devi Temple (the UNESCO World Heritage Site in Lumbini, Nepal) and the surrounding sacred places (Kudan, Gothihawa, Niglihawa, Ramagrama).

Myanmar is ranked eighth in the top ten most tourist-arriving countries in Nepal. It would be better if airlines can run chartered flights to Nepal in addition to commercial flights, he highlighted.

Daw Kyi Kyi Myint, MD of Myanmar Shwe Maha Tourism Company, shared her experiences stating that it is worth riding the Mt Everest mountain flight. Nepal is a promising tour destination for Myanmar people with enchanting places for natural scenic views and adventure tourism and cultural heritage sites.

Beyond the spiritual and ritual tour to the sustainable Lumbini, the birthplace of the Buddha, adventure tour such as mountaineering expeditions in the popular peak climbing regions, mountain flight, cable riding to enjoy the panoramic view, river rafting, boating, paragliding, ziplining, bungee jumping, sightseeing tour to the prominent mountain views including the famous breathtaking sunrise view atop the Sarangkot Hill, Devil's falls, the second largest and the most visited Phewa Lake in Nepal, and the Kathmandu cultural tour will enchant Myanmar pilgrims and visitors for sure.

The tour operators showed their interest in mountaineering sports, spiritual, cultural and adventure tourism. They were optimistic about commencing business in the upcoming season.

The director of the Aung Chan Thar Bodh Gaya Pilgrimage tour appreciated the efforts of the Ambassador in promoting tourism and hospitality of Nepali during the tour. She requested the Ambassador to promote bilateral tourism for the economic benefit of the airlines.

Moreover, some also requested to ease visa conditions to facilitate transport as eVisa does not permit land crossing, while Myanmar tour operators draw itineraries for India-Nepal pilgrimage packages. Some also called out to bargain the camera fees for tourists and to waive the visa fee. They shared innovative and creative tourism marketing ideas and trends for promotion as well.

The representatives from different travel and tours companies, Myanmar mountaineers and Mr Sagar Ghimire, President of All Myanmar Gorkha Hindu Religious Association, Mr Devendra Naulakha, President of Non-Resident Nepal Association and members of the Nepali Community in Myanmar also shared their views and intensified efforts in boosting the Nepal-Myanmar tourism.

Myanmar businessmen allowed to exhibit at 6th China International Import Expo

This photo taken on 5 November 2022 shows a night view of the National Exhibition and Convention Center (Shanghai), where the fifth China International Import Expo (CIIE) is taking place, in east China's Shanghai. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

BUSINESSPERSONS from Myanmar are allowed to exhibit at the 6th China International Import Expo (CIIE), to be held in Shanghai, the People's Republic of China from 1 to 10 November 2023.

Four booths will be provided free of charge at the expo for businessmen from Myanmar in order to export more of Myanmar's high-quality products to China and increase income.

Booths will be allocated for companies related with Myanmar Tea Association, Myanmar Aquatic Products Producers and Exporters Association, Myanmar Coffee Association, Myanmar Food Manufacturers and Exporters Association, participating in the Korea TASK Project.

Members of the UMFCCI and its associates, and businessmen who are interested in participating in the exhibition can directly contact Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization at 067-3408622 or Email: event.td.myantrade@gmail.com for detailed information about the exhibition.

Those who are interested in exhibiting should fill out the registration form: https://rb.gy/5vvol and register as soon as possible.—Myo Min Thura/KZL

OPINION

Focus on operating agricultural and livestock farming zones

Although Yangon Region is the smallest among all regions and states with the highest population density and the largest population, its demand for food supplies is top among others. According to the census enumerated in 2019, Yangon Region is home to more than eight million population out of more than 55 million population in the whole country.

It is not easy to supply food to the people of the Yangon Region. But the government is striving for meeting the demand for food supplies for the Yangon Region by ensuring food security and selling goods at fair prices thereby operating agricultural and livestock farming zones. These zones focus on the supply of meat, fish, eggs and vegetables to Yangonites on a daily basis as much as possible.

> Basic foodstuffs such as rice, cooking oil, meat, fish and kitchen crops are essential for residents of Yangon as a daily routine. Practically, high prices of goods become a burden on residents. Manipulation of commodities and greedy storage of goods become nightmares for the low-income population. As such, authorities should take action against those market manipulators while arranging the selling of consumer goods at appropriate prices as a consideration over those facing plights in the daily kitchen problems.

Moreover, agricultural and livestock farms in regions and states, especially in Ayeyawady and Bago regions as well as Shan State, send their products to Yangon Region. In this regard, the products sent from other regions and states will be more expensive than that of nearby regions and states as the original production of goods from other regions and states will be added with transport charges. To avoid high prices of goods in the Yangon Region, agricultural and livestock farms are being operated to have success.

In fact, Yangon Region allocates many land plots for industrial zones, agricultural and livestock farming zones and other business areas as it is a commercial hub of the nation. As such, employees from all regions and states flow into Yangon Region so as to work in business industries for their earnings. In consequence, the growing population demands a larger volume of food supply on a daily basis.

Basic foodstuffs such as rice, cooking oil, meat, fish and kitchen crops are essential for residents of Yangon as a daily routine. Practically, high prices of goods become a burden on residents. Manipulation of commodities and greedy storage of goods become nightmares for the low-income population. As such, authorities should take action against those market manipulators while arranging the selling of consumer goods at appropriate prices as a consideration over those facing plights in the daily kitchen problems.

To be able to overcome these challenges of the city dwellers, local authorities manage the establishment of agricultural and livestock farms to produce staple food paddy and vegetables as well as meat from cattle, goats, pigs and sheep in addition to poultry farms for meeting the demand of residents. It can be defined as building a prosperous society. ■

ARTICLE

Governance of Ai

By U AC

A vehicle and person recognition system for use by law enforcement is demonstrated at last year's GPU Technology Conference in Washington, D.C., which highlights new uses for artificial intelligence and deep learning. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/SAUL LOEB/AFP/FILE**

ChatGPT was released in Nov 22. It gathered a million users within a week. And 100 million within 2 months. This generative Ai has been so good and powerful that the potential of a doomsday scenario has been voiced out by many including Elon Mask and Steve Wozniak.

Prior to the launch, in August 2022, Ai Impacts, a US research group, surveyed 700 machine learning researchers about their predictions on Ai risks. The result yielded a 5% probability of Ai causing an 'extremely bad' outcome, such as human extinction.

Li Fei Fei, Ai luminary at Stanford, talks of a 'civilizational moment' for Ai. Geoff Hinton, another Ai bigwig from the University of Toronto, said, the judgement day is not inconceivable. Robert Trager of the Centre for Governance on Ai said one risk of such large language models (llms) is "making it easier to do lots of things - and thus allowing more people to do them (harm)".

In a recent survey of super forecasters and Ai experts, the median Ai expert gave a 3.9 per cent chance of an existential catastrophe (<5,000 humans survived) owing to Ai by 2100. The median super forecaster gave only 0.38 per cent. The difference may probably be due to field selection bias by Ai researchers.

So, how do we control Ai?

Before Chatgpt4 (C4), OpenAI used several approaches to reduce the risk of accidents and misuse. One is called 'reinforcement learning from human feedback' (rlhf). Rlhf asked humans to provide feedback on whether the model response to a prompt was appropriate. Then the model is updated based on feedback. The goal is to reduce the likelihood of producing harmful content when given similar prompts in the future. The drawback is that humans often disagree about what counts as 'appropriate'. Rlhf also made C4 far more capable in conversation, thus propelling the Ai race.

Another approach, borrowed from war gaming, is 'red-teaming'. OpenAI worked with Alignment Research Centre (ARC) to put its model through a battery of tests. The red-teamer job was to attack the model by getting it to do something it should not, in the hope of anticipating mischief in the real world.

Another idea is to use Ai to police Ai. Sam Bowman of New York University and of Anthropic Ai firm, has written on topics like "Constitutional Ai", in which a secondary Ai model is asked to assess whether the output from the main model adheres to certain 'constitutional principles'.

In general, governments can approach control Ai using one of the following three strategies:

I. Light touch - with no new rules or regulatory bodies. The approach is to apply existing regulations to Ai systems. e.g., UK, US.

II. Tougher line - The government would create law categories for different uses of Ai classified according to risk, with stringent monitoring and disclosure. Some Ai to be banned such as subliminal advertisements and those with remote biometrics. The government would impose fines for non-compliance. E.g., EU.

III. Toughest - Under this strategy, the government would treat Ai like medicines, with a dedicated regulator, strict testing and pre-approval requirements. E.g., in China, where all new Ai has to undergo a security review before release.

Even if efforts to produce safe models work, future Ai models could work around them. E.g., Ai models have already made new discoveries in biology. Hence it is not inconceivable that one day ai may design dangerous biochemicals themselves.

The general attitude of the world seems to be better safe than sorry. Dr Li of Stanford thinks we 'should dedicate more, much more resources to research on Ai alignment and governance. Dr Trager of the Centre for Governance on Ai, on the other hand, supports the creation of bureaucracies to govern Ai standards and do safety research.

In the meantime, Ai researchers supporting much more funding for safety research has grown from 14 per cent in 2016 to 35 per cent in 2023. ARC is also considering developing a safety standard for Ai.

Immediate impacts before the judgement day

The probability of the end of the world may be low enough to cast aside, yet everyone seems to agree that the immediate impact of ai would be on jobs. The big tech already retrenched tens of thousands of staff in the last twelve months alone. These jobs are not coming back. Tyna Eloundou of Openai and colleagues estimated that 'around 80 per cent of the US workforce could have at least 10 per cent of their tasks affected by the intro of llms. Based on Ms Eloundou's estimates, Ai would result in a net loss of around 15 per cent of US jobs. Some could move to industries experiencing worker shortages, such as hospitality. A big rise in unemployment would follow, maybe up to 15 per cent reached during Covid.

Edward Felten of Princeton University and colleagues, conducted a similar exercise, legal services, accountancy, and travel agencies come out at or near the top of professions most likely to lose out. According to him, 14 of the top 20 occupations most exposed to Ai are teachers.

Goldman Sachs's prediction is somewhat more positive, stating the widespread adoption of Ai could drive a seven per cent or almost 7T increase in annual global GDP over a 10-year period. Academic studies predict a three per cent rise in annual labour productivity in firms that adopt Ai.

Another concern from this has been who would eventually benefit most from Ai. Ai profits could end up in just one org - Openai. Generative ai has some real monopolistic characteristics. C4 reportedly cost more than $100m to train. There is also a lot of proprietary knowledge about data for training the models plus the users' feedback.

Should you be worried about that job loss?

In areas of the economy with heavy state involvement such as healthcare and education, technological change tends to be super slow. Governments may have policy goals such as maximization of employment levels, that are inconsistent with improved efficiency. These industries are likely to be unionized and unions are good at preventing job losses, according to Mark Andreessen of Andreessen Horowitz. Only the bravest of all governments would replace teachers with Ai.

A paper by David Autor of MIT and colleagues said about 60 per cent of the jobs in today's America did not exist in 1940. The 'fingerprint technician' was added in 2000. 'Solar photovoltaic technician' in 2018. The ai economy is likely to create new occupations which today cannot even be imagined. The personal computer was invented in the 1970s. In 1987, Robert Solow, an economist, famously declared that the computer age was 'everywhere except for productivity stats'.

Jobs beyond the reach of Ai are blue-collar works, such as construction and farming, accounting for 20 per cent of the rich world GDP and in industries where human-to-human contact is an inherent part of the service, such as hospitality and healthcare.

In summary, we can be less concerned about job losses and individual impacts of Ai. We should be more concerned about the balance of power, changing of the society and nations and the destruction of them, simply based on the extrapolation of how damaging social media is. Just imagine, C4 is a godsend for nimby fighting against a government plan or a development program. In five minutes, he can produce a well-written 1,000-page objection. Someone then has to read and respond. Spam emails would be harder to detect. Fraud cases would soar. Banks will need to spend more on preventing attacks and compensating people who lose out. Combining that with the auto-creating of comments in social media would bring fake news and mal-information to a whole new level. That's exactly the future without the strict governance of Ai! ■

Air travel demand seen soaring 28% to near pre-pandemic level in 2023

Global air passenger traffic is expected to soar 28.3 percent to 4.35 billion people in 2023, returning to near the pre-pandemic level of 2019 with Asia-Pacific airlines benefiting from a sharp recovery in demand, according to estimates by an industry body.

The projected passenger number is higher than 3.39 billion fliers in 2022 and represents about 96 per cent of the 4.54 billion fliers four years ago, owing to the removal of COVID-19 border control measures, the International Air Transport Association said in a recent report.

Air travel demand, measured in revenue passenger kilometers or RPKs, is expected to rise across the world. Airlines based in the Asia-Pacific region are expected to enjoy the highest growth of 63 per cent in demand as every country in the region has ended their pandemic travel restrictions, the association said.

"China lifted COVID-19 restrictions earlier in the year than anticipated," putting the industry on track to improve profitability more quickly, Willie Walsh, IATA's director general said in a release.

Carriers based in Africa and the Middle East are forecast to see rises of 30.1 per cent and 20.8 per cent, respectively, in air passenger traffic. Those from Europe will have 19.6 per cent growth in air travelers, while North America will see a 16.5 per cent jump.

The upbeat air travel demand helps the industry beat IATA's earlier profit estimate for 2023, said the group that represents some 300 airlines comprising 83 percent of global air traffic.

Combined industry net profits are expected to reach $9.8 billion in 2023, more than double the December forecast of $4.7 billion, the association said. The industry suffered a total net loss of $3.6 billion in 2022.

North American carriers are expected to lead the way with $11.5 billion in net profit, up 26.4 per cent from 2022, and net profit at European carriers is projected to soar 24.4 per cent to $5.1 billion.

Total revenues are forecast to grow 9.7 per cent to $803 billion, or almost 96 per cent of the 2019 level, the association said.

SOURCE: Kyodo

Haneda Airport handles both international and domestic flights. It serves as a hub for several major airlines and offers a wide range of domestic and international destinations. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VIAUAL PURPOSE/ANA**

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Silicon statue of Bhamo Sayadaw to have newly advanced artificial teeth

Sculptor U Aung Kyaw Tun seen with the silicone portrait of Bhamo Sayadaw, which is still being sculpted.

THE image of Bhamo Sayadaw will be the first in the history of Myanmar's silicon sculpture to be installed with artificial teeth.

"Sayadaw often smiles with his teeth, so the teeth had to be made with artificial teeth technology. I also made the artificial eyes myself, as well as planting hair on the statue and shaving the hair back is not an easy matter. Sayadaw's image will be the first statue to be made using artificial teeth technology in the history of Myanmar's silicon statues," U Aung Kyaw Tun, a silicon artist who is making Saydaw's statue himself.

The clay statue of Chairman of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Bhamo Sayadaw has 75 per cent completed to make a silicon statue.

Silicon sculptor U Aung Kyaw Tun is known for his silicon portrait of General Aung San reading on a chair, which was displayed at the Bogyoke Museum in Natmauk in commemoration of the 100th birthday of the General. — Htun Htun/KZL

YGN Chief Minister stresses cleanliness inside and outside Bogyoke Aung San Museum for Martyrs' Day Ceremony

The Yangon Region Chief Minister and party inspect courtyard of Bogyoke Aung San Museum.

DURING the inspection at the Bogyoke Aung San Museum in Natmauk Street, Bahan Township on the morning of 14 June, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein directed responsible personnel to pay close attention to cleanliness around the entrance and inside and outside the Bogyoke Aung San Museum for the celebration of 76th Martyrs' Day.

The Chief Minister also instructed responsible personnel to paint the areas needed, clean the garbage in the lake, and perform necessary operations for the cleanliness of the Ministers' Office in Yangon.

Then, the Chief Minister gave the necessary instructions after the inspection of landmarks on display at the house of General Aung San (Bogyoke Aung San Museum) and the Ministers' Office in Yangon. — TWA/CT

Covid-19 infects over 350 locals within one week

Officials exmines laboratory samples of Covid-19.

ACCORDING to the Ministry of Health, there were 354 new patients infected with Covid-19 nationwide, and the rate of infection was around 1 per cent in the week from 10 to 16 June.

According to the list of new patients infected with Covid-19 on 10 June, there were 53 new patients on 10 June, 58 on 11 June, 40 on 12 June, 38 on 13 June, 52 on 14 June, 71 on 15 June, and 42 on 16 June. The Ministry released the information that there has been no death due to Covid-19 in the current period.

The percentage of infection detected by day was 0.67 per cent on 10 June, 0.86 per cent on 11 June, 0.58 per cent on 12 June, 0.5 per cent on 13 June, 0.79 per cent on 14 June, 1.06 per cent on 15 June, and 0.62 per cent on 16 June, respectively.

The statistics of the MoH indicated that there are 639,905 laboratory-confirmed Covid-19 patients, 19,494 deaths, and 618,877 people who have recovered in Myanmar as of 16 June.

The report of the World Health Organization on Covid-19 released on 7 June stated that there were nearly two million new cases of Covid-19 and more than 12,000 deaths worldwide, including Myanmar, during a month from 1 to 31 May 2023. — TWA/CT

PHOTO NEWS

A fire broke out at 87th Street, West Kandawgyi Ward, Mingala Taungnyunt Township, Yangon Region, at 6:07 pm yesterday.

Outbreak of fire was at Level-1, and due to the joint efforts of fire brigades from Mingala Taungnyunt Township fire station and other township fire stations, the fire was brought under control at 6:26 pm, and it was extinguished at 6:37 pm, according to the Fire Services Department.—TWA/KZL (Photo : MFSD)

HEALTH/WELLNESS: WORLD

NEWS IN BRIEF

Brimful clinics, cemeteries as dengue ravages Peru

TWO months after cyclonic downpours flooded the town of Catacaos in northern Peru, dozens of inhabitants lie sick and dying of dengue, a disease carried by mosquitos attracted by stagnant water.

Near the border with Ecuador, Peru's Piura region is battling a new health crisis even as the South American country is still recovering from the world's highest reported Covid-19 death rate.

This time it is an epidemic of dengue, a viral disease with symptoms ranging from fever, headache and joint pain to bleeding, organ failure and sometimes, death. — AFP

Children in war-scarred Yemen line up for water, not school

EVERY day at dawn, 14-year-old Salim Mohammad leaves home to fetch water, trekking through his city in southwestern Yemen to join the queues at the nearest public dispenser.

He and his three siblings walk at least a mile (1.6 kilometres) and wait, sometimes for hours, hoping to fill their jerry cans and make it back in time for school.

"My arms and my back hurt from the load I carry every day," Mohammad told AFP from the family's makeshift apartment, a former grocery store, in the city of Taez. "We wake up in the early morning and leave home with our father, sometimes even at night, to collect water," he said. — AFP

Eight people die in Mexico heatwave

EIGHT people have died in the third heatwave to hit Mexico since mid-April, the country's health ministry said on Friday.

Temperatures reached a record high of 35 degrees Celsius (95 Fahrenheit) in the capital Mexico City this week.

Seven of the victims died of heatstroke and one of dehydration between 14 April and 12 June, the ministry said in a statement.

In the northeastern city of Monterrey, temperatures exceeded 40C, while water pressure was reduced in homes and an increased demand for electricity including air conditioning led to power cuts.

Wendy Tijerina, a Monterrey resident, said the heat is more intense because the city lies in an industrial zone.

"There is a lack of water, you can't bathe the children or even use a fan because they cut the power," she told AFP.

She said her family tries to drink a lot of water to protect themselves from heatstroke.

The government of Nuevo Leon state, where Monterrey is located, has limited the time children attend school to two hours a day to avoid sun. — AFP

Pedestrians shield themselves from the sun in the city of Guadalajara in Mexico's Jalisco state. **PHOTO: AFP**

Teams withdraw from Tour of Switzerland after Maeder tragedy

Maeder, who rode for Team Bahrain Victorious, fell into a ravine in the downhill finale of Thursday's fifth stage. **PHOTO: TEAM BAHRAIN-VICTORIOUS**

TWO entire teams as well as several individual cyclists withdrew from the Tour of Switzerland on Saturday following the death of Swiss rider Gino Maeder.

Maeder, who rode for Team Bahrain Victorious, fell into a ravine in the downhill finale of Thursday's fifth stage.

He died from his injuries on Friday. He was 26.

Maeder's team immediately pulled out and they were joined on Saturday by Swiss outfit Tudor and Belgian rivals Intermarche prior to the seventh stage.

In all 36 riders did not take part in the stage — an 184-kilometre ride from Tubach to Weinfelden — and those who did observed a minute's silence.

A dove was released as a further moving tribute.

The withdrawals came despite organisers saying they had decided to proceed with the remainder of the race after consulting both the teams and the rider's family.

Tudor, though, tweeted it could not carry on.

"After careful consideration and talking to both riders and staff, the team decided not to continue racing this year's Tour de Suisse," Tudor tweeted.

"Under these difficult circumstances we feel it is the human way to respect the feelings of our riders and pay respect to Gino," it added.

Intermarche followed suit.

"After consultations with our riders and staff, we have decided to withdraw from the Tour of Switzerland," Intermarche posted on social media.

"Our priority is to respect the mental health of our riders." — AFP

Seven injured in Swiss hot-air balloon accident

SEVEN people were injured, three of them seriously, when a hot-air balloon caught fire after take-off in northern Switzerland Saturday, police said.

The balloon had just taken off in the early morning from at around 06:00 local time (04:00 GMT) from Mattenboden when it caught fire and fell suddenly back to the ground from a low altitude, the police statement said.

Four women and three men aged between 28 and 62 were injured.

Of them, two women and a man received serious injuries.

The town's fire brigade was able to extinguish the fire quickly and secure the area.

A hot-air balloon passes over the Swiss Alps at the Chateau-d'Oex ski resort. Seven people were injured on Saturday when a hot-air balloon caught fire. **PHOTO: FABRICE COFFRINI / AFP**

The Swiss Security Investigation Service (SESE) has launched an investigation into the incident. — AFP

ECONOMY
WORLD

Japan not on US currency watch list for 1st time since 2016

THE US Treasury Department said Friday it has removed Japan from a list of major trading partners that it monitors for potentially unfair foreign exchange practices for the first time since 2016, when the current format of designation began.

In its biannual report to Congress, the department placed seven economies on its "monitoring list" — China, Germany, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Switzerland and China (Taipei).

While Japan carried out foreign exchange interventions in September and October last year in an attempt to stem the yen's rapid depreciation against the US dollar, a Treasury official said in a press briefing there was no need to continue listing the country as one of the criteria employed is "the persistence of an intervention."

The official warned, however, that interventions should only be conducted in "very exceptional circumstances" after consultations with other countries.

The department did not designate any trading partner as a currency manipulator, which could result in the imposition of US sanctions. But it said China must be monitored closely, noting in the report that Beijing's lack of transparency regarding key features of its foreign exchange system makes it "an outlier among major economies."

For the list, the department uses three criteria to assess whether a country has manipulated its foreign exchange rates to gain an unfair trade advantage. — Kyodo

Photo taken 16 June 2023, shows the US Treasury Department in Washington. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Mitsotakis: the PM who steered Greece from brink to growth

Greece is enjoying a rare respite from economic instability under Kyriakos Mitsotaki. **PHOTO: ARIS MESSINIS /AFP/FILE**

GREEK ex-prime minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, who hopes to clinch an absolute majority in next week's general election, is credited with returning his debt-ridden country to a path of growth.

He is on course to win the vote despite a wiretapping scandal and a devastating train crash in February, which have blighted his record and contributed to low turnout among voters disillusioned with politics.

Mitsotakis, a scion of a conservative dynasty that has dominated Greek politics for decades, is seeking a second straight four-year term as prime minister.

His Conservative New Democracy party came first in last month's general election but with insufficient votes for a workable parliamentary majority.

He called a new snap vote for 25 June in a bid to obtain an even broader victory and govern alone.

The 55-year-old Harvard graduate, who worked at US financial consultancy McKinsey, has offered his country a rare respite from economic instability in the face of global upheavals including Covid and the war in Ukraine.

Greece's remarkable economic recovery from the pandemic is one of Mitsotakis' top talking points, in addition to heavy spending on defence. — AFP

Plane leaves Yemen capital for Saudi, first since 2016

THE first commercial flight from Yemen's rebel-held capital to Saudi Arabia since 2016 took off carrying hajj pilgrims on Saturday, in the latest sign of easing tensions after years of war.

A Yemenia Airways plane carrying 277 travellers departed at around 8 pm (1700 GMT), an official told AFP, seven years after Sanaa's international airport was blockaded by the Saudi-led coalition fighting the Iran-backed Huthi rebels.

"Hopefully, the blockade will end and the airport will remain open. We are very happy and relieved, and I cannot describe the feeling," said Mohammad Askar, one of the travellers.

The Jeddah-bound flight is the first to Saudi Arabia since Sanaa's airport was closed by the coalition blockade in August 2016, more than a year into the Saudi-led military campaign to dislodge the Huthis.

Air traffic was largely halted by the blockade, but there have been exemptions for aid flights that are a lifeline for the population. — AFP

Officials gather outside a Yemenia Airways Airbus A320 aircraft carrying returned Huthi prisoners, exchanged in a deal Yemen's internationally recognised-government, upon arrival at Sanaa International Airport on 14 April 2023. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Crunch time at UPS as workers vote to authorize potential strike

THE Teamsters, which represents hundreds of thousands of UPS employees, announced Friday that workers authorized a potential strike against the delivery service, handing union leadership additional bargaining powers during negotiations.

An "overwhelming" 97 percent of Teamsters voted to grant Teamsters leadership the ability "to call a strike should UPS fail to come to terms on a strong new contract by 31 July" when the current pact expires, the Teamsters said.

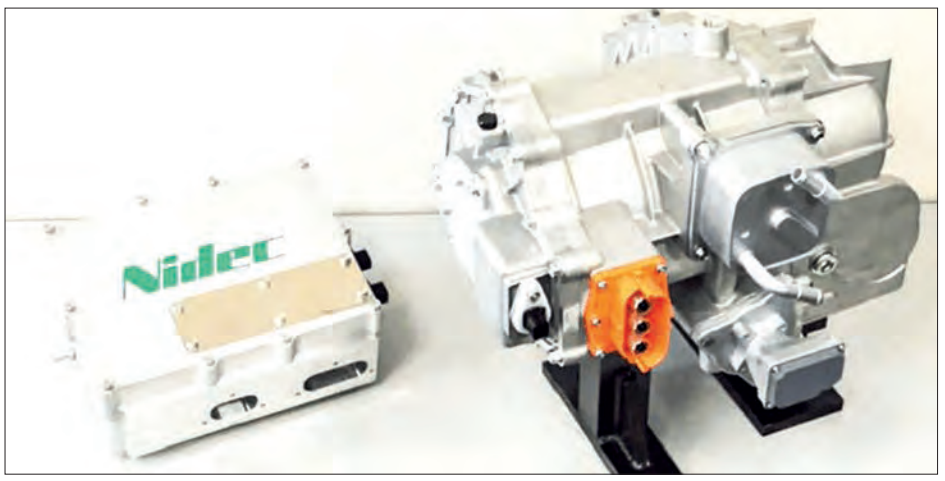
UPS called the authorization vote and approval "normal steps in the labour union negotiations," the company said on its website.

"The results do not mean a strike is imminent and do not impact our current business operations in any way," UPS said.

"We continue to make progress on key issues and remain confident that we will reach an agreement that provides wins for our employees, the Teamsters, our company and our customers."

The authorization vote adds to the stakes of the labor talks, which come on the heels of other difficult negotiations in the logistics sector.

Industry experts consider a work stoppage as unlikely, but one with major implications for the US economy. — AFP



Nidec produces a diverse range of products, including brushless DC motors, brushed motors, hybrid and stepping motors, compressors, fans, and other precision machinery. **PHOTO: NIDEC**

Japan's Nidec to enter flying vehicle motor business via JV

JAPANESE electric motor maker Nidec Corp. said Sunday it will set up a joint venture with Brazilian regional jet manufacturer Embraer in the United States to tap the growing demand for electric flying vehicle components.

Nidec will take a 51 percent stake in Nidec Aerospace LLC and will develop electric propulsion systems for the aerospace sector, with the remainder to be owned by the Brazilian partner.

The companies did not disclose the amount of capital required, but did say the new entity will establish a base in St Louis, Missouri as early as September.

Nidec Aerospace will initially manufacture propulsion systems for electric vertical take-off landing, or eVTOL, vehicles and aim to provide the systems to other aircraft in future, Nidec said in a release.

eVTOL vehicles operate like a drone, using battery power to take off and land vertically, usually with multiple motors and rotors.

Demand for electric flying vehicles is set to surge as the aircraft industry is stepping up efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions. The global flying car market is expected to reach 60.8 billion yen ($429 million) in 2025 and soar to about 185 trillion yen by 2050, according to Yano Research Institute. — Kyodo

Basel defies forecast of art market slowdown

"Fox with Bird" 2016-2023 by US artist Jeff Koons , was sold within hours of Art Basel opening this week. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

THE Basel contemporary art fair this week defied forecasts of a market slowdown, with wealthy collectors buying works with seven or eight-figure price tags.

At its VIP day on Tuesday, Zurich's Hauser and Wirth gallery sold a spider by Franco-American sculptor Louise Bourgeois for $22.5 million. While jittery stock markets and soaring interest rates had triggered predictions that the art market was cooling, the gallery sealed a dozen sales of more than one million dollars during the first two days of Art Basel.

An oil on canvass by US painter Philippe Guston went for a total of $9.5 million. Some 284 galleries representing more than 4,000 artists are represented at the fair in the Swiss city, which for one week every year becomes the centre of the global contemporary art market.

During that week, Art Basel serves as "a barometer of the industry", new CEO Noah Horowitz said at the opening event.

Every year, the first two and a half days are reserved for wealthy collectors, before the doors open to the public from Thursday to Sunday. — AFP

Binance to repatriate US customer funds as legal woes mount

BINANCE has agreed to repatriate its US customers' assets pending a massive lawsuit against the world's largest crypto exchange, the US Securities and Exchange Commission said Saturday, adding that it will secure the funds.

Binance and its boss Changpeng Zhao have "agreed to repatriate to the United States assets held for the benefit of customers of the Binance.US crypto trading platform," the SEC said in its statement.

The regulator did not specify how many of Binance's US customers are affected, nor the value represented by these funds. — AFP

US regulators have accused crypto giant Binance of "an extensive web of deception" and "calculated evasion of the law". **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Paris Fashion Week looks to future with Pharrell Williams debut

THE debut of multi-talented star Pharrell Williams at Louis Vuitton is the hottest ticket at Paris Fashion Week as it kicks off on Tuesday, seen as a significant moment in the evolution of the multi-billion-dollar industry.

The renowned musician, DJ and producer takes over as artistic director for the fabled French brand, hoping to build on the shift towards US streetwear that helped it achieve more than 20 billion euros ($22 billion) in revenue for the first time last year. Williams offered a teaser on social media, sharing a photo of himself in front of the Orsay Museum featuring a giant billboard of singer Rihanna, heavily pregnant and sporting some colourful LV bags. — AFP

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Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

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GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Putin: Kyiv threw possible Russia-Ukraine settlement deal 'into dustbin of history'

Meeting with heads of delegations of African states. **PHOTO: PAVEL BEDNYAKOV, RIA NOVOSTI**

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin presented the African delegation with the draft of the Istanbul agreement on the Ukraine settlement, which, as the Russian president said, specifies everything from the number of armed forces to units of military equipment and personnel.

"Here it is! It exists!" Putin said, showing the document signed by a Ukrainian representative, Sputnik reported.

"And it is called accordingly — the treaty on permanent neutrality and security guarantees for Ukraine. Exactly about guarantees. Eighteen articles," the Russian leader noted.

"Moreover, there is also an annex to it. They [clauses] also concern the armed forces, other things. Everything is specified -down to the units of combat equipment and personnel of the armed forces. The document is here!" Putin said, adding that the document had been initialed and signed by the Ukrainian delegation.

"But after we withdrew the troops from Kyiv, as we promised, the Kyiv authorities, as their masters usually do, threw it all into the dustbin of history. Let's put it clearly. I'll try to put it intelligently. They gave it up," he added.

The president also addressed the root of the crisis, reminding his audience that the violence engulfed Ukraine after the bloody 2014 coup, which was backed by the US and the EU.

"All the problems in Ukraine began after the state, unconstitutional, armed and bloody coup in 2014. And this coup was supported by Western sponsors. They, as a matter of fact, do not hesitate to talk about it," he stressed.

Earlier on Saturday, Putin personally received and greeted the African delegates at the Konstantinovsky Palace to discuss the joint African peace initiative on Ukraine. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa revealed a ten-point plan for peaceful settlement. — SPUTNIK

Israelis hold Fresh Anti-Regime Rallies for 24th Week

TENS of thousands of Israelis held fresh anti-regime rallies across the occupied territories, denouncing the Israeli prime minister's determination to push through with a set of highly divisive "judicial reforms".

The rallies were held in Tel Aviv and other cities throughout the territories on Saturday for a 24th straight week, presstv reported.

Protesters were seen lighting up flares and shouting anti-regime slogans.

Some held up a huge banner emblazoned with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's picture and the words "persona non grata". The demonstrations have been a weekly occurrence since late December when Netanyahu announced his plan to have Knesset (the Israeli parliament) rubberstamp the so-called overhaul.

Tens of thousands of Israelis have held fresh anti-regime rallies across the occupied territories, denouncing the Zionist regime's prime minister's determination to push through with a set of highly divisive judicial reforms. **PHOTO: AFP**

The changes seek to rob the Israeli supreme court of much of its ability to rule out politicians' decisions. They will also give the political elite a bigger say in the process of selection of the court's judges. — AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Chinese FM meets with US secretary of state

CHINESE State Councilor and Foreign Minister Qin Gang met with visiting US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Beijing on Sunday.

As agreed between China and the United States, Blinken is visiting China from 18 to 19 June. — Xinhua

Saudi Arabia says to reopen embassy in Iran soon

THE visiting Saudi Arabian foreign minister said on Saturday that the Saudi embassy will soon reopen in Iran's capital Tehran, the Iranian Students' News Agency reported.

Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud made the remarks at a joint press conference with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, following their meeting in Tehran earlier in the day.

Saudi Arabia and Iran are currently making efforts to continue diplomatic measures in the two countries, he said. Iran earlier reopened its embassy in Riyadh as well as consulate general and representative office to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Jeddah. — Xinhua

Japan to set out guidelines for future defence technology equipment

A Japanese ground self-defence force type 10 tank is displayed at a defence equipment fair called 'DSEI Japan' in Chiba, east of Tokyo, on 10 November 2019. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/KYODO**

JAPAN'S Defence Ministry plans to set out guidelines for defense technologies that the country will prioritize for development, citing a dozen areas including innovations in miniaturized robotic technology, a source familiar with the matter said Saturday.

The guidelines are intended to encourage increased cooperation between government agencies, companies and research institutions to develop key defence technologies over the next decade, in an effort to counter Chinese and Russian state-of-the-art weaponry.

The envisioned defence technology guidelines will vow to "think outside the box, push the boundaries and pursue new capabilities," the source said.

The 12 areas the ministry will focus on will include technologies such as insect-sized robots, electromagnetic barriers, and capabilities for utilizing large datasets to make better strategic predictions.

The guidelines will also recommend the development of technology that utilizes unconventional methods of energy production and special materials capable of regenerating after being damaged. — Kyodo

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

US plan keeps migrants waiting farther from border

THE opening of US migrant processing centers in Colombia, Costa Rica and Guatemala ensures that more than ever these countries will become waiting rooms for asylum seekers wanting American visas.

The "Safe Mobility" initiative rolled out by Washington in Central America — the main corridor for tens of thousands hoping to reach the United States without visas — attempts to expand legal pathways for asylum seekers while keeping them in countries farther from the US border.

The new program started May 11 with the end of Title 42, which had allowed US authorities to return migrants across the border and deny them the right to seek asylum under rules put in place due to the Covid pandemic.

Migrants must now seek a virtual appointment on the movilidadsegura.org website, which is supported by the UN Refugee Agency and the International Organization for Migration.

New regional processing centers in Colombia and Guatemala will interview migrants for legal pathways to the United States, Canada and Spain.

In Costa Rica, Safe Mobility offices will facilitate ways for Nicaraguans and Venezuelans to migrate legally as long as they were in the country prior to 12 June.

US officials consider the new program a success. — AFP

The opening of US migrant processing centres in Colombia, Costa Rica and Guatemala ensures that more than ever these countries will become waiting rooms for asylum seekers wanting American visas. **PHOTO: AFP**

Philippine ferry with 120 people aboard catches fire, all safe

A ferry with around 120 people on board caught fire on Sunday morning off Bohol province in the central Philippines, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) said.

The coast guard station in Cebu City told Xinhua that all the passengers and crew were rescued safely. The PCG in Manila later confirmed the information.

The PCG spokesperson Armando Balilo said fire engulfed the M/V Esperanza Star around 4:30 am local time off Panglao island as it approached the Tagbilaran City port. Initially, Balilo said 55 to 65 passengers and crew were on the boat. The PCG station in Bohol said in a social media post that the boat was carrying at least 120 passengers and crew when the fire broke out.

Fire engulfed the M/V Esperanza Star around 4:30 am local time off Panglao island as it approached the Tagbilaran City port. **PHOTO: PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD (PCG)**

It took the PCG over five hours to extinguish the fire. The PCG is looking into the cause of the fire. — Xinhua

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mali junta holds vote on new constitution

MALIANS go to the polls on Sunday to pass judgment on the governing junta's constitution, which has fuelled speculation that the country's strongman ruler will seek election.

The west African nation has been under military rule since an August 2020 coup, which came after a decade of instability marked by jihadist insurgencies and political and economic crisis. Some 8.4 million citizens are eligible to vote "yes" or "no" on the draft constitution in the first electoral test for leader Colonel Assimi Goita, 40, who has vowed to lead the country back to civilian rule in 2024 elections.

Voting begins at 0800 GMT and results are expected within 72 hours.

But election turnout is typically low in the country of 21 million, where many have grown weary of chronic instability, while others face the direct danger of jihadist attacks in central and northern regions. – AFP

Austria foils pride parade attack: interior ministry

AUSTRIAN police have arrested three youngsters, including a 14-year-old, for allegedly planning an attack at Vienna's pride parade, which drew hundreds of thousands of people, officials said Sunday.

The young men, aged 14, 17 and 20 and suspected of being Islamic State (IS) sympathisers, were held ahead of the parade, according to domestic intelligence agency (DSN) chief Omar Haijawi-Pirchner. He told reporters that there was "never any threat" to those who participated in the Pride Parade in central Vienna on Saturday.

"They sympathised with the Islamic State online and shared extremist content. In this context, the suspects focused on the Pride Parade as a potential target for an attack," the interior ministry said in a press release.

During raids on two premises on Saturday, authorities discovered weapons and other evidence against the three Austrians with Bosnian and Chechen roots.

One of them was already previously known to police. They had planned to use "knives or vehicles" in the attack, police told reporters. — AFP

Some 300,000 took part in the parade for LGBTQ rights. **PHOTO: AFP**

US plan keeps migrants waiting farther from border

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SPORT

Portugal win in Euro 2024 qualifying as Scotland stun Haaland's Norway

BRUNO Fernandes scored twice as Portugal won in Euro 2024 qualifying on Saturday after Scotland produced a stunning late comeback to beat Erling Haaland's Norway in Oslo.

Portugal defeated Bosnia and Herzegovina 3-0 in Lisbon to make it three wins out of three in Group J, with Manchester City star Bernardo Silva opening the scoring a minute before half-time.

Fernandes headed in the second from a Ruben Neves cross in the 77th minute and scored his second, and Portugal's third, in added time. Cristiano Ronaldo wore the captain's armband and played all 90 minutes as the 38-year-old men's international appearance record-holder won his 199th cap. However, the forward now playing for Al Nassr in Saudi Arabia did not manage to add to his record 122 international goals — he found the net with a header midway through the first half only to be denied by an offside flag. — AFP

Bruno Fernandes celebrates with Ruben Dias after scoring one of his two goals as Portugal beat Bosnia and Herzegovina 3-0 in Euro 2024 qualifying. **PHOTO: AFP**

Canada aim to end trophy wait in Nations League final with USA

FOR over three decades, Canada went into clashes with the United States as the clear underdog against their bigger and better resourced neighbor.

Not any longer.

On Sunday, the pair meet in the final of the CONCACAF Nations League at Allegiant Stadium with the Canadians looking to follow-up their top spot in the region's World Cup qualifying with their first trophy in 23 years.

The US lineup turned in one of its most impressive displays in recent years with a 3-0 dismantling of Mexico in Thursday's semi-final, which saw two red cards for each side, while Canada had little trouble in getting past Panama 2-0. — 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.

Myanmar's Vero Nika beat Vietnamese Fighter Trieu Thi via 3rd round TKO

MYANMAR'S star fighter Vero Nika smashed Vietnamese star fighter Trieu Thi via technical knockout-TKO in the third round of Thai Fight: King of Muay Thai Event yesterday.

Vietnam's Trieu Thi, a SEA Games medalist, showcased her great technical skills. She carefully studied Vero Nika's style of play, and responded tough in the fight.

In the early two rounds, both of them fought equally, which caught the attention of the fans.

The Vietnamese star mainly focused on touches for collecting points while Vero Nika is seeking for the knockout victory.

Vero Nika produced her powerful kicks plus series of punches. In the third round, Vero Nika hit the opponent with a body shot.

While the opponent was in pain, the referee gave a short break to her, but Vero Nika cleverly ended the fight with series of punches just after the break.

"This bout was the most intense of all Vero Nika fights in 2023. Vero Nika defeated a good opponent with her brilliant skills. No one has been able to take away Vero Nika's title as the Queen of Thai Fight. Hits and punches are really scary. Now she has won 13 matches in a row in Thai Fights," Thai Fights fans stated. — KZL

The referee (black) announces Myanmar's Vero Nika (right) as the winner of the Thai Fight after her third round TKO win over Vietnamese star fighter Trieu Thi on 18 June 2023. **PHOTO: TIGER MUAY THAI**

Prograis defeats Zorrilla to keep world light-welterweight title

HOMETOWN hero Regis Prograis retained his World Boxing Council light-welterweight crown on Saturday with a split-decision victory over Puerto Rico's Danielito Zorrilla at New Orleans.

Prograis won by judges' scores of 118-109 and 117-110 while the third judge saw Zorrilla winning 114-113.

"I was confident I would get the decision," Prograis said. "It was a tough win but I felt like I deserved the win."

Prograis, who managed the only official knockdown in the third round of a fight filled with pushdowns and slips, improved to 29-1 while elusive Zorrilla fell to 17-2. — AFP