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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.

Systematic techniques key to advancing breeding sector, says Senior General

Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the State Administration Council, delivered an address at the national manufacturing promotion meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. He emphasized the importance of adopting systematic techniques in the breeding sector, highlighting their superiority over traditional methods.

The Senior General outlined three key sectors that should be addressed to promote the manufacturing sector effectively. These include ensuring sufficient local consumption, increasing export volumes through surplus production, and developing substitute import products. Priority should be given to achieving self-sufficiency in agricultural and breeding products consumed daily by the people, while also exploring the export potential of less commonly used products.

SEE PAGE-3



Myanmar ships 50,000 tonnes of rubber to foreign markets in Q1 FY2023-2024



Rubber is weighed on a digital scale in the rubber factory. PHOTO: AYE THAN

MYANMAR Rubber Planters and Producers Association (MRPPA) reported that approximately 50,000 tonnes of Myanmar's rubber were exported to foreign countries in the first quarter (April-June) of the current financial year 2023-2024.

Myanmar has set a target to export 300,000 tonnes of rubber to external mar-

kets for this financial year.

During the monsoon season, rubber tapping operations are temporarily suspended, resulting in a halt in the rubber business. Currently, prices in Mon State are set at K1,630 per pound of Ribbed Smoked Sheet (RSS-1), K1,530 for RSS-3, and K1,550 for sundried rubber.

The rubber price in Mon State, a

significant rubber production state in Myanmar, is influenced by global demand for rubber, rubber production in Southeast Asian nations, and market supply, according to traders.

Myanmar produces an estimated 300,000 tonnes of rubber annually, with 70 per cent of it being exported to China. The remaining portion is shipped to Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Viet Nam, the Republic of Korea, India, Japan, and other countries.

In the previous financial year 2022-2023, Myanmar's rubber production reached over 360,000 tonnes, with more than 200,000 tonnes exported to foreign trade partners.

Rubber is mainly produced in Mon and Kayin states, as well as Taninthayi, Bago, and Yangon regions in Myanmar. As of the 2018-2019 rubber season, Myanmar has over 1.628 million acres of rubber plantations, with Mon State accounting for 497,153 acres, followed by Taninthayi Region with 348,344 acres and Kayin State with 270,760 acres.

In the previous financial year 2020-2021, Myanmar generated revenue of over US\$449 million from rubber exports.

— NN/EM

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Illegal timbers, jade, electronics, industrial raw materials and vehicles confiscated

AN on-duty team under the supervision of Mandalay Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force at the 16th-Mile Kyauk-chaw checkpoint nabbed an Isuzu truck (approximately K25 million) carrying a total of 1.134 tonnes of timbers worth K1,247,400 that were hidden from consumer goods without official documents on 12 July. It was handed over to Township Forest Department under Customs procedures.

A combined team and the group leader of the Ayeyawady River Jetty Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force made patrol inspections and impounded 17,820 kilogrammes of coal bags worth K1.26 million that were piled up between Yadana-bon shipyard and Gawain jetty without official documents. It was handed over to Maha Aungmyay Township Forest Department under Customs procedures.

Action on a tip-off, Mandalay Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force confiscated 30 kinds of goods worth K11,949,441 including 240 kilogrammes of circuit breaker from a Mitsubishi Fuso tractor head and a trailer (estimated value of K55 million) heading to Mandalay from Muse at the 23rd Milepost on Mandalay-Lashio Road. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

Similarly, a combined team led by a police officer from Muse Myoma Police Station seized three kinds of goods worth K17.39 million including 98 kilogrammes of suspected jade stone pieces without official documents from a vehicle travelling from Swamsaw ward to Pankhan village along with Pyidaungsu highway road near Myayni bus station compound in Muse township. The action was taken under Customs Procedures.

An on-duty team captured eight kinds of goods worth K2.898 million including 210 sets of current transformers model-TW1 without Import Licence at the Asia World Port Terminal container checkpoint on 13 July. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

A special team under the Customs Department seized 200 Secure multi-function digital panel meter elites 440-445 that were declared in the Import Declaration (ID) and 10,000 kilogrammes of Manganese oxide worth K20.8 million that exceeded the ID from a Hino Profia truck (estimated value of K33 million) at the Ywathagyi Dry Port. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

Similarly, a total of 4.106 tonnes of illegal teak and other timbers worth K1,4800.026 was captured in DaikU and Paukhaung townships and an unregistered Daihatsu Hijet car (approximately K7 million) driving from Nyaungkhashay to DaikU was seized between the 21/3 Milepost and 21/4 Milepost on DaikU-Sittoung Road. The action was taken under the Forest Law and Export and Import Law.

Therefore, 13 arrests (estimated value of K183,024,867) were made on 12 and 13 July, according to the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS



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		

Building of a Union system is the most reliable system for our country

THROUGH historical experience, it is not enough to foster a multiparty democratic system alone in our nation-building, and it can be seen that the building of a Union system in the oneness of opportunity through a peaceful co-existence of multi-ethnicity is the most reliable system for our country.

(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)

Systematic techniques key to advancing breeding sector, says Senior General

FROM PAGE-1

In 2021, the government made significant efforts to boost the State economy through product exports and the development of both on-ground and underground resources in the trading sector. The exploration of these resources is being carefully managed to ensure the long-term interests of the country.

Turning to the farming sector, the Senior General emphasized two main objectives: meeting targeted crop production rates and maximizing production capacity. Achieving these goals requires four crucial elements: seedlings, land, water, and modern techniques. By focusing on these factors, production costs can be reduced, crop production rates can be improved, job opportunities can be created, and both self-sufficiency and export volumes can be enhanced.

In the livestock breeding sector, with a population of approximately 55 million, the Senior General underlined the importance of ensuring food security throughout the entire country, rather than merely satisfying sufficiency in specific states and regions. Balancing the consumption and production rates of meat and fish is essential to stabilize prices. Moreover, the Senior General advocated for the adoption of systematic



Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing delivers an address at the national manufacturing promotion meeting in Nay Pyi Taw on 15 July 2023.

techniques in breeding instead of relying solely on traditional methods.

Since 2016, the cultivation of cotton plants has reduced the clothing sector’s reliance on basic needs. Currently, the country’s cotton requirement is 363.22 million visses, but production stands at only 201 million visses. To meet the targeted cotton production rate of 700 visses per acre, the country can fulfil local demand and export the surplus.

The Senior General emphasized the need to increase production rates in the agricultural

sector by applying the four key elements of seedlings, land, water, and techniques. He stressed that crops should meet local and foreign demands while maintaining quality. In livestock breeding, modern techniques should be developed to meet the needs of meat, fish, and eggs. Officials must also enforce regulations to ensure farmland is used exclusively for recognized crops and not repurposed unlawfully. Additionally, manageable-scale river water pumping projects and land repairs through the growth of green manure or Sun-

nhemp present potential opportunities. The relevant ministries should research the benefits of cultivating Sunnhemp.

In conclusion, the Senior General urged the relevant ministries to study international investment in the agriculture and livestock breeding sectors, as well as methods to promote such investments. He emphasized the importance of building an industry based on the farming sector and working in cooperative groups within the agriculture and livestock breeding sectors. The agriculture sector

plays a vital role among the three sectors of agriculture, industry, and services in national development. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) rely on agricultural and livestock products. By utilizing farmland effectively, industrialized farming can reduce production costs and increase production rates. Thus, research should be conducted to identify specific vegetables with export potential. Efforts should be made to develop MSMEs within the manufacturing sector based on agriculture and livestock industries. — MNA/KTZH

MoFA Union Minister-led delegation leaves for 12th Mekong-Ganga Cooperation FMs’ Meeting & BIMSTEC FMs’ Retreat

AT the official invitation of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic Mr Saleumxay Kommasith and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand Mr Don Pramudwinai, a Myanmar delegation led by U Than Swe, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs left for Thailand yesterday to attend the 12th Mekong-Ganga Cooperation For-

eign Ministers’ Meeting and BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers’ Retreat. The delegation was seen off at the Yangon International Airport by officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. — MNA

Myanmar delegation led by Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe is seen off at the Yangon International Airport by officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday.



Education should be prioritized to foster human resources development, emphasizes DPM Union Home Affairs Minister



Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Soe Htut presents awards to an outstanding student who excelled in the matriculation exam yesterday.

DURING an award ceremony held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday to recognize outstanding students who passed the matriculation exam in the 2022-2023 academic year, Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Soe Htut highlighted the importance of education in developing human resources. The event, organized by the Ministry of Home Affairs, specifically hon-

oured students who are family members of officials from the Union Minister's Office. The ceremony was attended by government officials, including Lt-Gen Soe Htut, member of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Home Affairs, as well as students and parents.

In his address, the Union minister emphasized that students will play crucial roles in shaping the future of the nation. Recognizing education as the foundation for nation-building, he stressed the need for experts to build a country for sustainable development. Highlighting the significance of human resources in this process, he underscored the necessity of prioritizing education to foster their development.

Following the remarks, the Union minister and officials presented cash awards to the outstanding students who excelled in the matriculation exams.

Expressing gratitude on behalf of the honoured students, Ma Theint Hnin San from the Myanmar Police Force family conveyed her appreciation. During the 2022-2023 academic year, a total of 383 students from Ministry of Home Affairs families achieved outstanding marks in the matriculation exams, while 687 students attained ordinary marks.

The ministry is also providing stipends to students pursuing university degrees. — MNA/KZL

Rakhine State CM provides funds, supplies for policemen engaged in rehabilitation, medical teams delivering healthcare services



U Htein Lin, Chairman of the Rakhine State Natural Disaster Management Committee and Rakhine State Chief Minister, along with deputy ministers, state ministers, and departmental officials, held a meeting with the Myanmar Policemen who have been actively involved in relief and rehabilitation efforts in Rakhine State following the devastation caused by Cyclone Mocha. During the meeting, the Myanmar Policemen were commended for their efforts and were presented with financial support and essential supplies. Additionally, they met with a medical team consisting of specialists who are overseeing healthcare services at the 500-bed general hospital in Sittway.

To bolster healthcare activities in the cyclone-affected region of Rakhine State, the Ministry of Health has despatched specialists and healthcare workers from state hospitals, including general practitioners, surgical specialists, orthopaedic specialists, and paediatricians. These specialized medical teams have been deployed to provide essential healthcare services to the local population in Rakhine State.

As part of the Ministry of Health's programme, a team of general surgery specialists, general practitioners from Yangon, and specialist doctors, including retired local specialists, are delivering healthcare services at the 500-bed general hospital in Sittway for two days. — MNA/KZW

Myanmar Media Development Group holds first coord meeting

MYANMAR Media Development Group (MMDG) organized its first coordination meeting at the meeting hall of the Printing and Publishing Department in Botahtaung Township, Yangon Region yesterday.

Speaking at the event, Deputy Minister for Information U Ye Tint, in his capacity as Chairman of MMDG said the media censorship was abolished in 2012 for media development. The Printing and Publishing Law was enacted in 2014 and it abolished the 1962 Printers and Publishers Registration Law. It also allowed the reentry of Myanmar media outlets and permitted to operate the media related operations under the law. Therefore, the News Media Law was amended and enacted in 2014 and Myanmar Press Council was organized. Similarly, the censorship policies in Motion Picture Law were also eased focusing on State stability, unity among ethnic people, conservation of national culture and elimination of brutal and inappropriate scenes.

He added that it also held talks and discussions with local and foreign organizations for media development and the media sector grabbed proper achievement to a certain extent. Currently, the government establishes a Media Development Department under the Ministry of Information as well as the Myanmar Media Development Group recently.

Then, U Myo Myint Maung, Secretary of MMDG and Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Information and the participants coordinated the discussion.

The deputy minister offered the instructions and concluded the meeting. — MNA/KTZH



MIFER Union Minister attends First High-Level Conference of Forum on Global Action for Shared Development & 2023 Seminar on High-Quality Development of Marine Economy

AT the invitation of the China International Development Co-operation Agency (CIDCA), Dr Kan Zaw, Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations and party attended the First High-Level Conference of the Forum on Global Action for Shared Development from 9 to 10 July in Beijing and the 2023 Seminar on High-Quality Development of the Marine Economy on 12 July in Xiamen.

In Beijing, China, on 11 July, Union Minister Dr Kan Zaw and high-level participants of the First High-Level Conference of the Forum paid a courtesy call to Chinese Vice-President Mr Han Zheng. During the courtesy call, they exchanged views on the activities of the development agenda including the Global Development Initiative (GDI) and sustainable development being led by China. The delegation led by the Union minister left for Xiamen by flight in the evening.

On the morning of 12 July, the Union minister explored the Exhibition Hall of BRICS Partnership on the New Industrial Revolution Innovation Centre in

Xiamen which is one of the four Special Economic Zones initially established in China in 1980.

Afterwards, Union Minister Dr Kan Zaw attended the opening ceremony of the 2023 Seminar on High-Quality Development of Marine Economy held at the Xiamen International Conference Centre and delivered the opening speech on the occasion. The seminar was opened by Union Minister Dr Kan Zaw together with Mayor Mr Huang Wenhui of the Xiamen municipal people's government, and Vice-Chairman Mr Zhong Haidong of the China International Development Co-operation Agency.

In the evening, the Union minister toured King Long United Automotive Industry Co Ltd in Xiamen and discussed the production of vehicles, exportation to Myanmar and the prospects for investment in Myanmar.

On the morning of 13 July, the Union minister visited Kulangsu Island, which is a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site, and went round the Cultural Heritage Conservation Area and museums.

In the evening, the Union



Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations Dr Kan Zaw is welcomed back by officials from the Ministry and Chinese Embassy in Yangon at the Yangon International Airport on 15 July 2023.

minister visited Kelong Co Ltd, a micro-module data centre supplier in China, that produces electric UPS and electric vehicle (EV) chargers, and encouraged the company to cooperate and to make investments in Myanmar. And then the Union minister also explored the Chinese Buddhist College.

On the morning of 14 July, Union Minister Dr Kan Zaw vis-

ited the Biomedical Research and the Xiamen Cardiovascular Hospital of Xiamen University and he discussed investment and collaboration in the medical and healthcare sector as well as academic exchanges.

Union Minister Dr Kan Zaw and Deputy Director-General Dr Aung Moe Chai of the Foreign Economic Relations Department arrived back in Yangon by Xia-

men Airline in the evening. Director-General U That Sin Lwin of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, Minister-Counsellor of the Chinese Embassy to Myanmar Ms Cao Jing and officials from the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations welcomed back the Union minister and party at the Yangon International Airport. – MNA

Industry UM-led delegation arrives back in Yangon

MYANMAR delegation led by Union Minister for Industry Dr Charlie Than arrived back at Yangon International Airport after attending the 13th Industrial Trade Fair in Yekaterinburg of the Russian Federation yesterday evening.

During the tour in Russia, the Myanmar delegation attended the opening ceremony of the 13th Industrial Trade Fair and observed the displayed industrial products, participated in Penal Discussion under the topic of Sustainable Manufacturing Strategies of Renewal and discussed the matters related to Building Economic Relations and Protecting your Own Manufacturer.

Moreover, the delegation enjoyed the dinner hosted by the Sverdlovsk Region Governor together with Deputy Prime Minister of Russian Federation Industry and Trade Minister Mr Denis Manturov separately and visited the geological museum of Ural State Mining University, the museum complex of military and civil



Union Minister for Industry Dr Charlie Than is welcomed back by officials from the Ministry of Industry and Rostec at the Yangon International Airport yesterday.

met the delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister of Russian Federation Industry and Trade Minister Mr Denis Manturov separately and visited the geological museum of Ural State Mining University, the museum complex of military and civil

equipment of the Ural Mining and Metallurgical Company and Stone-Crafting House by Alexey Antonov.

The Union minister discussed development programmes of the industrial sector of Myanmar, technical assistance and training

courses for the steel and iron sector, exploration of metal ores and MSMEs development programmes with Mr Byechis Laffarin, Minister of International Economic Relations of the Sverdlovsk Region. — MNA/KTZH

8 new cases
of COVID-19
reported on 15
July, total figure
registers 640,873

MYANMAR'S COVID-19-positive cases rose to **640,873** after **eight** new cases were reported on 15 July 2023 according to the Ministry of Health. Therefore, a total of **10,947,877** laboratory samples were examined to date and the confirmed COVID-19 cases reached **640,873**. The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **619,681** including **12** new recoveries. The death toll from COVID-19 in the country registered **19,494** on 15-7-2023 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

CURRENT
AFFAIRS

Lancang-Mekong Cooperation holds talks on Non-Traditional Security Cooperation



Chinese Ambassador Mr Chen Hai speaks on the occasion on 14 July.

THE Lancang-Mekong Cooperation’s dialogue on non-traditional security cooperation took place in Yangon on 14 July. During the event, Mr Chen Hai, Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar, delivered a speech emphasizing the ongoing threats posed by non-conventional security matters to human survival and development. He highlighted that in response to the complex and evolving international security landscape, President Xi Jinping proposed a global security initiative to

address security challenges and fulfil international security needs. China’s commitment to promoting security for all has received widespread acclaim and active responses from the international community. Ambassador Mr Chen Hai mentioned that the six Lancang-Mekong countries have established a test zone for a global security proposal, which focuses on combatting terrorism, online gambling, and communication fraud, and addressing non-traditional

security concerns like human trafficking. Effective cooperation has been fostered in these areas. The meeting was organized by the Myanmar Strategic and International Studies (MISIS) and attended by U Kyaw Myo Htut, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, U Thant Kyaw, Chair of MISIS, diplomatic representatives from Lancang-Mekong countries based in Myanmar, and a panel of experts. — TWA/KZW

ASEAN-JAPAN Cybersecurity Awareness Video Competition 2023 to be held online

THE Cybersecurity Awareness Video Competition 2023 will be held online and the first winning video will be sent representing the country to the ASEAN-JAPAN Cybersecurity Awareness Video Competition 2023 which will be held in Brunei, according to the Ministry of Transport and Communications. It was organized by the Ministry of Transport and Communications to improve cybersecurity knowledge, help

the development of critical thinking about digital technology, show the qualities and capacities of the students, raise the interest of youths about cybersecurity, have opportunities to compete with regional countries and promote cooperation with universities and educational institutions. The competitors have to send their videos to the competition organizing committee by email or CD, DVD and USB before 4 pm on 11 August 2023.

The K1.5 million, K1 million, K700,000 and two prizes of K300,000 cash awards to the winners as well as certificates of honour and the video of the first winner will be sent representing the country to the ASEAN-JAPAN Cybersecurity Awareness Video Competition 2023. Contestants can contact 067 3422272 for more details about the competition application and details. — TWA/MKKS



The documentary group photo after the 2nd ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Working Group meeting in 2023.

News in Brief

Good air quality prevails across most cities in Myanmar

DESPITE the prevalence of air pollution in many Asian cities, the Environmental Protection Department announced on 13 July that the analysis of air quality throughout Myanmar indicates that most cities have good air quality.

MV Pioneer Harmony to arrive in Yangon on 16 July
THE bulk carrier MV Pioneer Harmony, which departed from Malaysia on 12 June, is en route to Yangon, Myanmar, carrying 16,088 tonnes of cargo. Its scheduled arrival in Yangon is on 16 July.

Lottery sale permits required in 6 townships of Mandalay

THE Mandalay Municipal Development Committee has announced that individuals wishing to sell lottery tickets in Aungmyethazan, Chanayethazan, Mahaaungmye, Kyaukse, Chanmyathazi, and Amarapura townships within the municipal boundaries of Mandalay City must apply for a lottery sale permit.

Above half of City Taxis yet to display new stickers
OUT of over 60,000 City Taxis operating in the Yangon Region, only approximately 30,000 have been affixed with the new side stickers. According to the Yangon Region Transport Committee (YRTC), more than half of the taxis have not yet been installed with the new side number stickers.

Bailey bridge to replace damaged Kyone Ate Bridge

THE Kyone Ate bridge, located between Bilin and Thaton along the Yangon-Mawlamyine highway in Mon State, suffered damage from mining activities. In response, a temporary iron frame bailey bridge, measuring 95 feet in length and 41 feet in width, is being constructed as a replacement.

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LOCAL BUSINESS

CBM eyes digital payment growth

THE Central Bank of Myanmar will accelerate the digital payment system in the State, according to its notification released on 15 July.

The CBM is endeavouring to improve payment service providers' platforms providing digital transaction services across the country, secure the digital payment system and reduce the use of cash among people.

The CBM has permitted digital banking services for bank institutions, i-banking, mobile banking, mobile pay and mobile financial services.

The CBM launched MMMQR Specification Version 1.0 for QR code payment in January 2019, achieving interoperability between payment systems of financial institutions through MMQR Specification Version 1.0 and stepping up to use crop-border QR code

payment interoperability, the notification mentioned.

The CBM issues merchant acquiring service licences so that acquiring banks can process payments from customers on behalf of merchants.

To meet the goals and objectives of the National Payment Strategy (2020-2025), National Payment System Governing Committee comprising the CBM and other ministries concerned has been formed and coordination matters are being undertaken.

Thanks to the continuous efforts to promote digital payment (i-banking, m-banking, mobile pay and mobile wallet services), the digital payment sector boomed to K31.666 billion in 2022, which was a 47 per cent increase compared to that of 2021, the CBM mentioned in the notification.

The CBM has been in-



The office front view of the Central Bank of Myanmar.

structing necessary guidelines to the banks and mobile financial services to turn Nay Pyi Taw into a digital city. Starting from May 2023, the CBM has been implementing digital salary payments to the officials and staff under the ministries

to strengthen digital payments in the capital city.

With the digital payment platform growing, Currency in Circulation-CIC has declined in the State's economy. The CIC growth has fallen to 29 per cent in 2022 and 11 per cent as of

May 2023 from 48 per cent in 2021.

The CBM will proceed to reduce cash use, raise awareness of digital payment systems among the public and drive economic growth through digital payment platforms. — NN/EM

Palm oil market price dips in third week of July



The photo shows some consumers buying palm oil from a mobile market truck.

PALM oil wholesale market price rocketed at K7,500 per viss in the second week of July 2023 and declined to K6,500 per viss in the third week of July.

The price jumped to K7,800-8,000 per viss on 11 July and decreased to K6,800 per viss on 15 July.

The price moved up on 8 July. There was a slew of difficulties in buying them in the domestic market. A week later, the price returned to a

normal rate, U Maung Tun, a trader who sends palm oil to regions outside Yangon, told the Global New Light of Myanmar.

Nonetheless, there is a gap of K2,000 per viss between the reference price and the market price. The traders are observing the market not to yield a loss.

International prices stood at US\$870 per tonne on 10 July, \$875 on 11 July, \$870 in the

afternoon and \$890 in the evening of 14 July respectively.

The price is not that different in the international market. Furthermore, there is a steady inflow of edible oil from foreign countries, with 10,200 tonnes imported into the country on 13 and 14 July.

The wholesale reference price for Yangon Region for a week from 10 to 16 July was set at K4,140 per viss, while the mobile market scheme offers palm oil at a retail price of K4,300 per viss. The mobile market trucks offer a fair price at K5,000 per viss to the consumers in Bayintnaung, Lanmadaw and Nyaungpinlay areas. There is a long queue of consumers to buy palm oil at a fairer price through the mobile market trucks.

The palm oil wholesale market is moving at a slow pace due to the price fluctuation, Ma Win Aye, a trader from Myaungmya Township who comes to buy palm oil in Yangon, told the GNLm. — TWA/EM

CBM replacing torn, dirty cash in three big cities

IN a view to eliminating torn, damaged dirty cash, the Central Bank of Myanmar has been replacing them with new ones of the same value in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay, according to its notification dated 14 July.

THE project of exchanging damaged or defective cash with new notes of the same value commenced in 2009, intending to

diminish dirty and torn notes in circulation. The CBM has eased the rules year over year starting from 2017. It has instructed with directives and notifications to ensure there is no torn and damaged cash during the withdrawal from the private and state-owned banks and to replace those defective notes in line with rules and regulations. — NN/EM

သတင်းစာ မှာယူလိုပါက ဆက်သွယ်နိုင်ပါတယ်

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Build a motherland with food sufficiency of rice

RICE and paddy play a significant role in Myanmar, not only for food production but also for cultural purposes. Paddy, the crucial crop of the agricultural sector, occupies 34 per cent of the total sown acreage for all crops.

Myanmar holds the fifth position among the top 10 countries in paddy production. The leading rice-exporting countries are India, Thailand, Viet Nam, Pakistan, Myanmar, the US, China, Cambodia, Brazil, and Uruguay, according to RepotLinker, a global consultancy for countries and companies.

Paddy cultivation stands at the forefront among various crops in Myanmar. The paddy yield is sufficient to feed the entire population, with a surplus being exported abroad. Myanmar earns approximately US\$80 million per month from rice exports. Currently, Myanmar exports rice and broken rice to about 30 countries. According to RepotLinker, the number of rice consumers worldwide is increasing, and the value of the global rice market is projected to reach US\$271.04 billion by 2028.

The instability of the rice market is more severe in Myanmar compared to neighbouring countries. The fluctuation of the US dollar has a direct impact on the high prices of agricultural inputs, fuel, and other commodities. Additionally, the lack of peace and stability in some paddy-growing regions affects the overall paddy production process.

However, rice prices in the domestic market are soaring due to certain businessmen hoarding rice and selling it at inflated prices. The spike in rice prices poses a significant challenge for lower-income groups and those at the lower strata of society, despite widespread criticism of the situation.

The instability of the rice market is more severe in Myanmar compared to neighbouring countries. The fluctuation of the US dollar has a direct impact on the high prices of agricultural inputs, fuel, and other commodities. Additionally, the lack of peace and stability in some paddy-growing regions affects the overall paddy production process.

To ensure local food sufficiency and maintain export capabilities, farmers in Myanmar must take advantage of favourable weather conditions, minimize losses and waste, adapt to market conditions, and utilize fertile soil. By increasing the volume of rice and broken rice exports to earn foreign exchange, the country can allocate its budget to relevant sectors and focus on modernization. As such, now is the time for farmers to expedite efforts in growing paddy and other crops with the assistance of local authorities for local consumption as well as earning incomes in the export of rice to customer countries.

‘End of AIDS’ still possible by 2030: UN

“THE end of AIDS” is still possible by 2030, the United Nations insisted Thursday, but cautioned that the world’s deadliest pandemic could only be halted if leaders grasped the opportunity.

“AIDS can be ended” as a public health threat, the UNAIDS agency said, as it outlined a roadmap of investment, evidence-based prevention and treatment, empowering civil society and tackling the inequalities holding back progress.

UNAIDS said ending the pandemic was, above all, a political and financial choice.

“We are not yet on the path that ends AIDS,” the agency’s executive director Winnie Byanyima said, but “we can choose to get on that path”.

The UN first set out in 2015 the target of ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.

Byanyima said the greatest progress on HIV — the virus that causes AIDS — was being made in the countries and regions that have invested strongly.

She cited eastern and southern Africa, where new HIV infections have dropped by 57 percent since 2010.

Botswana, Eswatini, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe have already achieved what are called the 95-95-95 targets.

This means that 95 per cent of those living with HIV know their status; 95 per cent of those

who know they have HIV are on life-saving anti-retroviral treatment; and 95 per cent of people on treatment to achieve viral suppression — and therefore highly unlikely to infect others.

At least 16 other countries are close to achieving the target.

They include eight in sub-Saharan Africa — the region where 65 per cent of HIV-positive people live — and Denmark, Kuwait and Thailand.

39 million living with HIV

In a report, UNAIDS said that two decades ago the AIDS pandemic seemed unstoppable, with more than 2.5 million people acquiring HIV each year and AIDS claiming two million lives

annually.

But the picture is now dramatically different.

UNAIDS said that in 2022, 39 million people globally were living with HIV, of whom 29.8 million were accessing anti-retroviral therapy. Those missing out include 660,000 children.

The numbers on anti-retroviral treatment have near-quadrupled from 7.7 million in 2010.

Furthermore, 82 per cent of pregnant and breastfeeding women living with HIV had access to anti-retroviral treatment in 2022, compared to 46 per cent in 2010 — which has led to a 58 per cent drop in new infections in children.

Around 1.3 million people be-

came newly infected with HIV last year — down 59 per cent from the peak in 1995.

Meanwhile 630,000 died from AIDS-related illnesses, and it is still the “number one killer” in countries including Mozambique, said Byanyima.

“Overall, numbers of AIDS-related deaths have been reduced by 69 per cent since the peak in 2004,” the report said.

‘Dependent on action’

“The end of AIDS is an opportunity” for today’s leaders to be remembered as “those who put a stop to the world’s deadliest pandemic”, said Byanyima.

“We are hopeful, but it is not the relaxed optimism that



AIDS activists have used protests to demand access to treatment. PHOTO: JIM WATSON/AFP

might come if all was heading as it should be. It is, instead, a hope rooted in seeing the opportunity.”

Funding for HIV fell back in 2022 to \$20.8 billion — around the same level as in 2013, and well

short of the \$29.3 billion needed by 2025.

SOURCE: AFP



Book Title	-	Godfather
Translator	-	Tekkatho Ne Win
Publishing House	-	Dagaung
Publication Date	-	March 2017 (3rd Edition)
Price	-	K5,000

Godfather

By Mario Puzo

BEFORE writing about this book under review, I would, first of all, like to mention a remark of Bogyoke Aung San as the Martyrs’ Day is approaching. He was quoted as saying, “After attainment of independence, I will quit the field of politics to write. I prefer to lead a peaceful life of a writer.” Nevertheless, He could have a chance to be a writer as he was assassinated. Fortunately however, his bodyguard has led the life of a writer to fulfill his boss’ dream. The name of the bodyguard is Bo Tun Hla aka Tun Hla Aung aka Tekkatho Ne Win. In fact, Tekkatho Ne Win has been writing while performing the duty of a bodyguard. Before becoming the bodyguard of General Aung

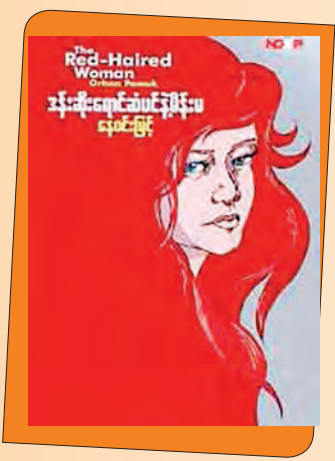
San, he has participated in 1936 Students’ Boycott and 1300 Uprising. And he has been involved in the independence struggle in various capacities.

He entered the field of literature in 1936 when he contributed a short story to the Dagon Magazine. His first story was titled Ahmwa Nyi Naung. During the pre-war period, he won the first prize with the short story genre in the short story competition held by the Myanmarsa Association of the University of Yangon. He also became the editor of Oway Magazine published by the Students’ Union of the University of Yangon. He became the chief editor of that magazine in 1945. Additionally, he was a columnist

with Myanma Ahlin Daily Newspaper. He has also been the editor of the Nation, the English version newspaper, and of Naing Ngan Thit Newspaper. He has also contributed short stories, novelettes and articles to Myawaddy, Thway Thauk and other magazines and journals. Lastly, he is a translator. And this book under review is one of his great translation works. Godfather was originally written by Mario Puzo. This is a crime novel. Mario Francis Puzo was an American author and screenwriter. He wrote crime novels about the Italian-America Mafia and Sicilian Mafia, most notably The Godfather, which he later co-adapted into a film trilogy directed by Francis Ford Coppola.

The word godfather is defined as a man who presents a child at baptism and promises to take responsibility for their religious education. He is also defined as a man who is influential or pioneering in a movement or organization. In both religious and civil views, a godparent tends to be an individual chosen by the parents to take an interest in the child’s upbringing and personal development, to offer mentorship or claim legal guardianship of the child if anything should happen to the parents.

In this book, the godfather is the leader of a mafia gang. The godfather is an Italian, who came from the Sicilian Island. His father was killed by the gangsters of mafia. And when the assassins attempted to kill him, his mother sent him to New York in the United States. So, the main character was brought up in America. He has become a millionaire who is highly influential over the Italian mafia gangsters. He can solve all problems, throwing his weight around, giving away money. But he is ruthless, and kills mercilessly those who are disloyal to him. Readers of this book will have an insight into the mafia world and the weakness of the judicial system of the US. The readers will learn a lot from this novel.



Book Title	-	The Red-Haired Woman
Translator	-	Ne Win Myint
Publishing House	-	Ngar Doe Sarpay
Publication Date	-	June 2022 (1st Edition)
Price	-	K8,500

The Red-Haired Woman

By Orhan Pamuk

THE Red-Haired Woman was written by Orhan Pamuk, a Turkish writer, in 2016. The novel tells the story of Cep, an Istanbul boy whose life is turned upside-down when his father, a pharmacist, abandons the boy and his mother and disappears, offering no clue about where he’s headed.

The Red-Haired Woman compared the two ancient myths that are milestones in the literary growth of the two different civilizations – Sophocles’ Oedipus Rex, a story of patricide, and Ferdowsi’s story of Rostam and Sohrab, a story of filicide.

Typical of Pamuk’s work, the novel, divided into three parts, is set in Istanbul. As the

novel opens, it is the mid-1980s. Cem Celik, the teenage narrator and protagonist of the book, lives with his parents and is working towards his goal of becoming a writer. His father disappears, leading Cem to believe that he has been arrested by government officials because of his controversial political beliefs.

After his father’s disappearance, he takes a job as an apprentice with a well-digger for the summer to raise money for his education. Cem goes along with the well-digger, Master Mahmut, to the nearby town of Ongoren where they have been hired to dig a well for a wealthy businessman who lives there.

Cem starts to look at Mahmut as a father figure. While they work, Cem and Mahmut like to exchange stories. Cem tells Mahmut the story of Oedipus. References to this story recur throughout the novel.

One day, while Cem happens to be in the town centre of Ongoren, he notices a woman with a vibrant head of red hair. Finding her beauty astounding, he soon becomes fixated on the idea of learning more about her. Learning that she is an actor who performs with a local theatre troupe, he decides to go see her perform. During the show, the troupe reenacts many stories, one of which is the story of

Rostam and Sohrab. After the show, the red-haired woman finds Cem, introducing herself as Gulcihan. Cem invites her to take a walk with him, and they spend some time talking and getting to know each other. They end up having sex that night.

The next day, Cem goes back to work on the well, still distracted by the events of the previous evening. While daydreaming about her, Cem drops a bucket into the well while Mahmut is inside. He fears that the bucket has hit Mahmut on the head and killed him. He decides to flee the scene and never speak of the incident again, knowing this also means that he cannot return to Ongoren, leaving his dreams of the red-haired woman behind.

Cem goes to the university where he studies engineering. He becomes involved with another woman called Ayse, and they eventually decide to get married. They cannot get children, unfortunately.

The novel concludes with an epilogue by Gulcihan, who insists that her son did not intend to kill his benefactor, and the latter does not die, only injured.

China unveils preliminary plan on manned lunar landing



Visitors view back-scatter electron micrographs of lunar soil particles at an exhibition themed on lunar soil research achievements in University of Science and Technology of China, in Hefei, east China's Anhui Province, 19 April 2023. **PHOTO: XINHUA/HUANG BOHAN**

CHINA plans to land its taikonauts on the moon before 2030 to carry out scientific exploration, according to a preliminary plan released by the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA) on Wednesday.

The plan is to launch two carrier rockets to send a lunar lander and a manned spacecraft to a lunar orbit, respectively. The craft and lunar lander will rendezvous and dock with each other, and then taikonauts will enter the lander.

As the lunar lander descends and arrives at the preset area on the lunar surface, taikonauts will carry out scientific tasks and collect samples.

After completing the planned tasks, taikonauts will return to the lander, which will lift them back to the lunar orbit to dock with their spacecraft.

In the final step, the spacecraft will fly taikonauts back to Earth with lunar samples.

Chinese researchers are working on the development of the Long March-10 carrier rocket, a new generation of manned spacecraft, lunar lander, lunar landing spacesuit, manned lunar rover, and other equipment, said Zhang Hailian, deputy chief designer with the CMSA at a space industry forum in Wuhan, capital of central China's Hubei Province.

The new carrier rocket will have three and a half stages with a carrying capacity of about 27 tonnes to the lunar transfer orbit, and the rocket body is five meters in diameter.

— Xinhua

US govt agencies may be slapped with deadline to declassify 'UFO' files

THE US Senate wants to set a 300-day deadline for government agencies to turn over records related to Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP) to a specially established UAP Records Review Board.

The nine-member panel, appointed by President Joe Biden and subject to Senate approval, in turn, would have 72 hours to decide whether to release the records or shelve them.

POTUS could then subsequently opt to agree or overturn the panel's decision.

The legislation, the Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP) Disclosure Act, states that, "All federal government records concerning Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (government-derived word for UFO) should carry a presumption of immediate disclosure." It further says that legislative action was required "to restore proper oversight over UAP records" that have "otherwise been lacking".

The bipartisan legislation which passed the Senate on Friday was introduced as an amendment to the National Defence Authorization Act (NDAA) — the annual defence policy bill. It was authored jointly by Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-NY, and Sen Mike Rounds, R-SD, with support from Sen Marco Rubio, R-Fla. — SPUTNIK



A photograph of a purported UFO in Passaic, New Jersey, taken on 31 July 1952. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE, WIKI/FILE**

AI-supercharged neurotech threatens mental privacy: UNESCO

THE combination of "warp speed" advances in neurotechnology, such as brain implants or scans that can increasingly peek inside minds, and artificial intelligence poses a threat to mental privacy, UNESCO warned on Thursday.

The UN's agency for science and culture has started developing a global "ethical framework" to address human rights concerns posed by neurotechnology, it said at a conference in Paris. Neurotechnology is a growing field seeking to connect electronic devices to the nervous system, mostly so far to treat neurological disorders and restore movement, communication, vision or hearing.

Recently neurotechnology has been supercharged by artificial intelligence algorithms which can process and learn from data in ways never before possible, said Mariagrazia Squicciarini, a UNESCO economist specialising in AI.

"It's like putting neurotech on steroids," she told AFP.

Gabriela Ramos, UNESCO's assistant director-general for social and human sciences, said that this convergence of neurotechnology and AI was "far-reaching and potentially harmful". — AFP



A researcher uses a brain-computer interface helmet at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Grenoble. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/JEAN-PIERRE CLATOT/AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

ExxonMobil to buy Denbury for \$4.9 bln to expand low-carbon business

EXXONMOBIL will acquire Denbury Inc, a specialist in enhanced oil recovery and carbon sequestration, for \$4.9 billion as it builds out its low-carbon business, the oil giant announced Thursday.

The all-stock acquisition provides ExxonMobil with Denbury's carbon dioxide pipeline network in industrial-rich regions of the southern states of Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi, where oil companies plan major carbon sequestration projects in response to climate change. The deal is expected to close in the fourth quarter. "Acquiring Denbury reflects our determination to profitably grow our Low Carbon Solutions business by serving a range of hard-to-decarbonize industries with a comprehensive carbon capture and sequestration offering," said ExxonMobil Chief Executive Darren Woods. — AFP

LIFESTYLE

In Sao Paulo, boom of apartments the size of hotel rooms

LARA Maia types on her laptop perched on a small desk occupying a gap between the fridge and wardrobe in her micro-apartment in Sao Paulo, Latin America's most populated city.

Behind her, the bed also serves as the couch.

"I don't need any more: I'm close to everything and I feel free to leave whenever I want with a few bags," the 34-year-old computer scientist told AFP of the 16-square-metre (172-square-foot) apartment near downtown Sao Paulo.

Maia's space on the 16th floor that serves as her home and occasional office is an example of a growing trend of apartments the size of hotel rooms.

Long a way of life in other large cities of the world, in Sao Paulo, Brazil's economic capital, the boom has been a recent one.

From 2016 to 2022, available units up to 30 square metres soared from 461 units to 16,261, according to the state housing



From 2016 to 2022, available micro-apartments up to 30 square metres soared from 461 units to 16,261. PHOTO: NELSON ALMEIDA /AFP

association Secovi-SP.

The number represents a fifth of all apartments in the city of 11.5 million residents.

Some, with furniture squeezed in as in a game of Tetris, or with the kitchen just inches from the bathroom, have become the subject of jokes on social media. But this has done nothing to dampen demand,

mainly among adults aged 20 to 39, according to a survey by real estate firm Quinto Andar.

"They are young professionals; middle and upper-middle class, at the start of their careers, mostly single, attracted by modern and well-located properties close to jobs or public transport," said Secovi-SP CEO Ely Wertheim. — AFP

Japan's macho cheerleaders fight to save a tradition

THEY are drenched in sweat, their hands bloodied from clapping, and their voices hoarse from shouting — meet Japan's predominantly male and unashamedly macho "leadership section" cheerleaders.

The cheerleaders are part of a century-old tradition that some fear faces an existential crisis, with fewer students showing an

interest in the hardcore art form.

And now there is a push for the squads and their counterparts in Japan's traditional "oendan" cheering groups to be registered as part of the country's "intangible" cultural heritage.

The "leadership section" cheerleaders are a formidable sight. Dressed in old-fashioned

school-style uniforms, they are a mass of black at college baseball games as they belch out chants, bang taiko drums and thrust their fists in rigid, martial moves.

"We give it our all to the point of ridiculousness, and that's what makes us so cool," said Taisuke Ono, 21, a member of a squad at Tokyo's Waseda University. — AFP



They're drenched in sweat, their hands bloodied from clapping, and their voices hoarse from shouting -- meet Japan's predominantly male and unashamedly macho "leadership section" cheerleaders. PHOTO: AFP

Afghan village potters keep centuries-old tradition alive

TWICE a month, Noor Agha Faqiri lights up the kiln at his small workshop around 50 kilometres (30 miles) northwest of the Afghan capital to fire a fresh batch of pottery.

Faqiri is one of dozens of potters in Qarya-e-Kulalan (potter's village) in the picturesque Istalif district, but many have ceased production since the Taliban's return to power in 2021 as the distressed economy has led to sales plummeting.

Faqiri, however, is determined to carry on.

"A business that your parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents have worked on should not be let go because it is particularly blessed," the 53-year-old told

AFP during a visit.

"My children are also looking at the family business and want to maintain it in any circumstances and prevent it from going under."

Afghanistan has a centuries-old tradition of pottery across the country, but Istalif's reputation for craftsmanship and quality stands out.

But those still open display a dazzling array of jugs, pots, bowls and plates glazed with an eye-catching turquoise, aquamarine and earth-brown finish.

Most customers are day trippers from Kabul, who make the 90-minute drive to picnic in the hills or alongside the rivers surrounding the scenic village. — AFP



An Afghan potter takes sun-dried bowls from the roof of his kiln to stack for firing in Istalif village, Afghanistan. PHOTO: AFP

Struggling Dutch 'Tesla of e-bikes' gets creditor reprieve

DUTCH electric bicycle maker VanMoof, a once rising star that earned the monicker "Tesla of e-bikes", has secured protection from creditors and decided to temporarily close brand stores as it struggles financially.

The company had raised \$128 million in September 2021 in efforts to expand as it rode a boom in the e-bike sector after the Covid pandemic prompted people to seek alternatives means of transportation.

But it has struggled since then, with Dutch media saying it was plagued by long delivery times for its bikes and a raft of technical issues.

The Amsterdam firm lost almost 80 million euros (\$89 million) in 2021 and the same figure last year, according to financial daily Het Financieele Dagblad. VanMoof filed for protection from creditors and an Amsterdam court granted a stay of payment on Wednesday.

The company said Wednesday that its management and administrators "are looking for a possible solution so that VanMoof can continue its activities".

"Due to recent developments, we have decided to temporarily close the brand stores for the safety of our colleagues in the stores," it said. — AFP

ECONOMY
WORLD

Surprise growth helps Singapore avoid recession

SINGAPORE'S economy grew more than expected in the second quarter, data showed Friday, helping it avoid a recession, but analysts warned the trade-dependent city faced headwinds owing to weak overseas demand.

The Southeast Asian nation's performance is often seen as a barometer of the global environment because of its reliance on international trade.

Official data showed the economy expanded 0.3 per cent quarter-on-quarter in April-June, having shrunk 0.4 per cent in the previous three months. It had been tipped to contract 0.2 per cent in a Bloomberg survey.

That meant it dodged falling into a technical recession, defined as two successive quarters of contraction.

On a year-on-year basis the



Customers queue to enter a Robinsons department store at the Heeren along Orchard Road on 30 October 2020. PHOTO: ROSLAN RAHMAN/AFP/FILE

economy grew 0.7 per cent, according to trade ministry estimates, after 0.4 per cent expan-

sion in January-March.

The surprise reading came even as manufacturing, a pillar

of the economy that covers key semiconductor exports, dropped 7.5 per cent on-year, worsening

from the 5.3 per cent decline in the first quarter.

"The economy avoided a technical recession in the second quarter but we continue to expect growth to come in well below consensus this year as elevated interest rates and weaker external demand weigh heavily on economic output," research house Capital Economics said in an analysis. It noted, however, that the advance estimate is based on the data from the first two months of the quarter "and is often subject to large revisions". Selena Ling, chief economist at Singapore's OCBC Bank, said "the anticipated recovery in the global electronics industry, especially for semiconductors, appears to be delayed towards the fourth quarter... or even early 2024". — AFP

China's trade in goods with Belt and Road countries up 9.8% in H1



An exhibitor cooks chicken imported from Thailand at the Thailand pavilion of the Belt and Road International Cooperation Pavilion during the 19th Western China International Fair (WCIF) in Chengdu, southwest China's Sichuan Province, 29 June 2023. PHOTO: SHEN BOHAN/XINHUA

CHINA'S trade in goods with countries along the Belt and Road jumped 9.8 per cent year-

on-year in the first half of 2023, 7.7 percentage points higher than the country's overall trade

growth during the same period, government data showed Thursday.

The total value of trade in goods with countries along the Belt and Road accounted for 34.3 per cent of the country's total import and export value of 20.1 trillion yuan (about 2.8 trillion US dollars) registered in the first half of the year, according to data released by the General Administration of Customs at a press conference of the State Council Information Office.

The data also revealed that the value of China's trade in goods with other members of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership rose 1.5 percent year on year in the same period. — Xinhua

Panama seizes six tonnes of illegally traded shark fins

POLICE in Panama seized more than six tonnes of shark fins bound for Asia on Thursday, arresting five people in connection to the illegal trade, authorities said.

The black-market shark fin trade is estimated to be worth \$500 million annually, and Panama last year spearheaded international efforts to protect many endangered shark species.

Attorney-General Javier Caraballo told a press conference that most of the seized fins "were already dehydrated and ready to be exported".

The shark fins were allegedly destined for Asia, police said, where a kilogramme of fins can cost up to \$1,000.

Shark fin soup is viewed

as a delicacy in East Asia, often eaten at weddings and expensive banquets. It is also believed in some countries, including China and Japan, to slow aging, improve appetite, aid memory and stimulate sexual desire.

Authorities suspect that the shark fins were being sent from Panama to a Chinese citizen who financed the activity.

Police also seized a pistol with an expired permit and bank transfer documentation during the operation, and discovered a storage and packaging centre used in the fin trade.

The five people who were arrested during the operation will be charged with crimes against collective security and the environment. — AFP



Panama seized six tonnes of shark fins and arrested five people in connection to the illegal trade. PHOTO: PANAMA NATIONAL POLICE/AFP

US budget deficit nearly triples through June 2023

THE US budget deficit in the first nine months of the fiscal year nearly tripled from a year ago, the Treasury Department said Thursday, citing lower receipts and higher spending.

The deficit for the period

between October 2022 and June this year came in at \$1.39 trillion — up from \$515 billion the same period a year ago.

Receipts slipped 11 per cent compared with last year, while outlays rose by

10 per cent.

Part of this reflects strong receipts last year and slower receipts this year in capital gains and other categories, a Treasury official told reporters. — AFP

US banks caution on economy as Fed rate hikes boost earnings



Higher Federal Reserve interest rates boosted bank earnings as executives offered a cautious outlook on the US economy. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

RESULTS of large US banks released Friday underscored the boon from higher interest rates, as executives described the world's biggest economy as "resilient" but facing risks.

JPMorgan Chase, Citi and Wells Fargo all enjoyed the benefits of being able to charge higher rates on credit cards and other loans, while not yet suffering as much of a hit from elevated interest payments to depositors.

JPMorgan and Wells Fargo both reported huge increases in second-quarter profits while Citi experienced a drop, citing an anemic investment banking market as a drag on revenues. Executives for the banks — which have extensive retail operations throughout

the United States — described American households as still fairly healthy. But there are more signs of strain after a lengthy period of elevated inflation and the erosion of savings from pandemic fiscal programs.

"We have seen payment rates start to come down a bit," Citi chief financial officer Mark Mason said of credit card payments, adding that the hit is greatest among consumers with low credit scores.

Citi's base case is still for a "mild recession" in the US economy, Mason added. At JPMorgan, profits for the quarter ending 30 June were \$14.5 billion, up 67 per cent from the year-ago period, while revenues were up 34 per cent to \$41.3 billion.—AFP

China to refine city-specific real-estate market policies

CHINA'S financial departments will work to improve city-specific policies in the real estate market.

The supply and demand relationship in the real estate market has undergone profound changes, so there is room to improve the policies introduced during the overheated stage of the market, said Zou Lan, head of the monetary policy department of the People's Bank of China (PBOC), at a press conference Friday.

The overall property market has been running steadily since the beginning of the year, but it still takes time for persistent risks in certain property firms to fade away, he said.

Credit data from the central bank mirrored improvement in the property

market. The banks lent 3.5 trillion yuan (490.96 billion US dollars) of mortgages from January to June, an increase of 510 billion yuan year on year, while the cumulative new loans for property development hit 420 billion yuan, an increase of 200 billion yuan year on year.

On Monday, China announced to extend two financial policies supporting the stable and healthy development of the real estate market to the end of 2024, involving a 16-step guideline rolled out last November. — Xinhua



A citizen checks out housing models at a real estate sales department in Taiyuan, Shanxi province, on 6 September. PHOTO: CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Heavy rain, flood give another jolt to Himachal tourism business

THE heavy rainfall and floods have given another jolt to the tourism business in Himachal Pradesh which was recovering from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

A hotelier spoke to ANI on how the rainfall adversely affect the tourism business.

"There is 100 per cent loss to the tourism business. I run hotels in Shimla, Kasauli, and Manali. In most places, there is no road connectivity due to floods and rain. Those tourists are in a state of fear. This is another jolt to

our tourism business after Covid", said hotelier Rajinder Singh Thakur.

Thakur added, "We were just trying to revive the tourism business and this rain and flood has hit us. The tourists have canceled the advance bookings which they had done

for the next three months in the state. We don't have even a single hotel room occupied these days."

Notably, owing to torrential rainfall in the state, 91 people have lost their lives from 24 June to 13 July, according to an official statement. — ANI

German wholesale prices register sharpest drop in 3 years: Destatis

IN June, the German wholesale price index, a measure of inflation based on the prices of goods, fell by 2.9 per cent, the sharpest year-on-year decline in three years, the Federal Statistical Office (Destatis) said on Friday. "The steep drop in prices in the wholesale of mineral oil products had the biggest impact on the overall development," Destatis said.

After mineral oil

products were the main inflation driver in Europe's largest economy last year, wholesale prices for these products dropped 22.7 per cent in June.

Wholesale prices for fruits and vegetables, on the other hand, soared by almost 30 per cent year-on-year, while prices for live animals also rose particularly sharply by around 20 per cent, according to Destatis. — Xinhua



People visit a shopping mall in Berlin, Germany, on 1 February 2023. PHOTO: STEFAN ZEITZ/XINHUA

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BANDA VOY.NO. (290N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SINAR BANDA VOY.NO. (290N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **16-7-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINES

ROLLING UPDATES

ASIA

Modi feted in France during tense Bastille Day celebrations

INDIAN Prime Minister Narendra Modi was honoured during France's Bastille Day celebrations on Friday, which are taking place under tight security two weeks after riots swept the country. Around 45,000 police are set to be deployed nationwide in the evening while firework sales have been banned as the government aims to prevent a repeat of the urban violence seen at the end of June following the police killing of a teenager.

The annual Bastille Day festivities, which mark the storming of the Bastille prison at the start of the French Revolution in 1789, kicked off with a traditional military parade in the morning that saw tanks, planes and soldiers



In a proud moment for India, the Indian Army's Punjab Regiment marched in Paris on Bastille Day. **PHOTO: AFP**

sweep down the Champs Elysees. Several hundred Indian soldiers took part, while three of the 36 French-made Rafale fighter jets acquired by New Delhi as part of a sweeping military overhaul also flew over Paris.

"We were able to all see a marvellous image of our cooperation on sea, land and in the skies," Modi told Macron during a joint statement by the leaders following talks at the presidential palace. The Indian defence ministry on Thursday announced its intention to procure another 26 Rafales for use on its new aircraft carrier, as well as three more Scorpene-class submarines in a deal expected to be worth billions of euros. — AFP

Singapore minister arrested in anti-corruption probe



The Transport Minister of Singapore, S Iswaran, was arrested by the anti-corruption agency. He was released on bail after being arrested on Tuesday. **PHOTO: AFP**

SINGAPORE'S Transport Minister S Iswaran has been arrested, the country's anti-corruption agency said Saturday without elaborating on the case.

Iswaran was arrested on

Tuesday but was later released on bail, the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau told Kyodo News. Corruption cases involving ministers are rare in Singapore, with the last publicly known one

dating back to 1987.

Ong Beng Seng, a prominent tycoon based in Singapore who played a key role in attracting Formula One's Grand Prix to the city-state, was arrested the same day and was also released on bail, his company Hotel Properties said in a statement on Friday.

Ong was requested by the agency to provide information about his interactions with Iswaran, the company said.

The bureau said in a statement Wednesday that Iswaran was assisting its investigation, with Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong confirming the development. Lee said in his Facebook post that he had instructed the minister to take a leave of absence until the investigation is completed. — Kyodo

NEWS IN BRIEF

Thai PM frontrunner says only one more shot at forming govt

THE liberal frontrunner to become Thailand's next prime minister said Saturday he would withdraw his candidacy if parliament did not endorse him next week, after military-appointed lawmakers foiled his first attempt. Pita Limjaroenrat's Move Forward Party (MFP) won the most seats in May elections, buoyed by young Thais eager for progressive reforms after nine years of army-backed rule in the kingdom. But the Harvard-educated millionaire's campaign to lead the next government was knocked back Thursday by senators in parliament who consider his pledge to reform strict royal defamation laws a red line. — AFP

30 years in prison for US man who exploited Filipino girls

A Chicago man has been sentenced to 30 years in prison for soliciting sexually explicit photos and videos from young girls in the Philippines. Karl Quilter, 58, pleaded guilty last year to sexual exploitation of children, the US Attorney's Office for the North District of Illinois said. — AFP

Heavy rains, flooding leave 22 dead in South Korea

AT least 22 people have died and 14 more are missing after heavy rain caused flooding and landslides in South Korea, officials said Saturday, with thousands more ordered to evacuate their homes. South Korea is at the peak of its summer monsoon season and there has been heavy rainfall for the last three days, triggering widespread flooding and land-

slides, and causing a major dam to overflow. The interior ministry reported that 22 people had been killed and another 14 were missing in the heavy downpours, mostly buried by landslides or after falling into a flooded reservoir.

The majority of the casualties — including 16 dead and nine missing — come from North Gyeongsang province, largely

due to massive landslides in the mountainous area that engulfed houses with people inside.

South Korea's Yonhap News Agency had earlier reported 24 deaths, citing local disaster relief officials. In the most severely affected areas, "entire houses were swept away whole", one emergency responder told Yonhap. — AFP



This handout photo taken and released on 15 July 2023 by the Gyeongbuk Fire Service Headquarters shows South Korean emergency workers searching for survivors at a house destroyed by flood waters after heavy rains in Yecheon. **PHOTO: HANDOUT / GYEONGBUK FIRE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS / AFP**

Russia could give legal status to private military groups: Kremlin



A view shows howitzers, which were handed over by the Wagner mercenary group to Russia's regular armed forces, according to Russian Defence Ministry, at an undisclosed location, in this still image taken from video released 12 July 2023. **PHOTO: RUSSIAN DEFENCE MINISTRY/AFP**

THE Kremlin said Friday that Russia could grant legal status to private military groups, in what would be a U-turn prompted by the fallout of the Wagner group's short-lived insurrection last month.

"This issue will be considered," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters, describing a move that would give Russian authorities greater direct control over ostensibly private fighters.

Peskov said that Vladimir

Putin had made the point in an interview published a day earlier with the Kommersant business newspaper.

Questions around the official status of private mercenary groups "required further consideration", Peskov paraphrased the Russian leader as saying.

The ambiguity of the relationship between groups like Wagner and the Russian state has given the Kremlin plausible deniability when dispatching private fighters to serve state

interests abroad.

But the Wagner group's failed uprising has seen Moscow bring the group closer under its control, including by removing all heavy military hardware from the organization's inventories and striking a deal to exile its leader.

Putin told Kommersant that during a meeting in the Kremlin, Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin had refused to let his fighters serve under someone else's command. — AFP

'Stunning' cache of gold coins found in Kentucky cornfield



A collection of gold coins dating back to the US Civil War found in a Kentucky cornfield. **PHOTO: GOVMINT.COM/AFP**

A trove of more than 700 gold coins dating back to the US Civil War found buried in a cornfield in the state of Kentucky is being put up for sale and is expected to reap millions.

The "Great Kentucky Hoard" was discovered on a farm in the Bluegrass State earlier this year, according to the firm which graded the coins and the company selling them.

The exact location of the find and the identity of the man who found the coins have not been revealed. In a video posted on GovMint.com, which is selling the hoard, the man is seen digging up the coins in the dirt and heard saying "this is the most insane thing ever".

GovMint.com said the coins were dated between 1840 and 1863 and include \$1 Gold Indians, \$10 Gold Libertys and \$20 Gold Libertys.

Among them are 18 extremely rare \$20 Gold Libertys minted in 1863 in Philadelphia which GovMint.com said fetch six-figure sums from collectors. — AFP

Stars hit Hollywood sidewalks as anger at studios simmers

HONKING horns, simmering heat, a smattering of stars, and a lot of anger at Disney boss Bob Iger.

The Hollywood actors' strike kicked off on a sweltering Friday morning in Los Angeles, just over 24 hours after contract talks collapsed with studios.

Several hundred actors swelled the ranks of picketing television and movie writers, who have been pounding the palm tree-lined sidewalks outside Netflix, Warner, Paramount and more for well over two months already.

"No contracts? No actors!

No wages? No pages!" went the chants, as organizers from both unions begged strikers to keep hydrated and stay off the roads, where passing cars and trucks blared their horns in support.

"It's a wonderful celebration of workers. This is more than an entertainment industry labour strike — it's all of labor, all over the country and the world," said "Titanic" star Frances Fisher, 71.

"Everybody's standing up," she told AFP, yards away from the historic arched entryway to Paramount Picture studio. — AFP



SAG-AFTRA President Fran Drescher was swarmed by fellow actors outside Netflix as the Hollywood actors' strike began. **PHOTO: AFP**

South Korea's president in Ukraine to see Zelensky

SOUTH Korea's President Yoon Suk Yeol was in Ukraine Saturday on an unannounced visit, his office said, where he visited the town of Bucha ahead of a summit with Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky.

"The president first toured the Bucha city massacre site near the capital Kyiv and the city of Irpin, where missile attacks were concentrated on civilian residential areas," his office said. "President Yoon will visit a memorial for the war dead to lay a wreath, and hold a summit meeting with President Zelensky," it added in a statement. South Korea, the world's ninth-largest arms exporter, has sent humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and has also sold tanks and howitzers to

Poland — a key ally for Kyiv as it battles invading Russian forces. However, it has a long-standing policy of not providing weapons to active conflict zones, which it has stuck to despite repeated requests from the United States, European allies and Ukraine itself for more help.

Yoon's meeting with Zelensky — who has previously urged Seoul to consider supplying weapons to Kyiv directly — is expected to focus on South Korea's supply of aid to the country. Seoul, which remains technically at war with nuclear-armed North Korea, produces significant volumes of NATO-compatible weaponry, including its tanks, howitzers and deeply sought-after shell ammunition. — AFP

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PAGE-15



SPORT

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.



The Myanmar U-19 women's football team is seen receiving the third prize after a 4-2 triumph over Indonesia yesterday. PHOTO: MFF

Myanmar crown bronze with 4-2 victory over Indonesia

MYANMAR U-19 women's football team grabbed third place in the AFF U-19 Women's Championship 2023 after beating Indonesia 4-2 in a penalty decision yesterday.

Both sides played vigorously to earn the medal, but they struggled due to fatigue. Indonesia played strongly with the support of the home team's fans, and Myanmar's backline and goalkeeper had to defend.

The Myanmar team's attack was able

to create several opportunities, but the Myanmar fans were not satisfied as they missed all. The leading goal for Myanmar was scored at 30 minutes by Yin Loon Eain. But Indonesia found an equalizer through a penalty at 49 minutes in the second half.

In the rest of the game, both teams fought hard, but they couldn't score any more goals, so they had to decide on a penalty shootout. Every player from the

Myanmar side was able to score a goal during the penalty shoot-out, while the Indonesian side scored only two goals, and the team Myanmar won (4-2).

"First of all, I want to congratulate the Indonesian team. They improved a lot and tried their best to play. If we want to win within the 90 minutes of play, we still need to work harder," said Myanmar team head coach Daw Thet Thet Win after the game. — KZL

Rice rises from Chelsea reject to England's most expensive player



Declan Rice's £105 million move from West Ham to Arsenal has made him the most expensive English player ever. PHOTO: AFP

DECLAN Rice capped a remarkable rise from the crushing disappointment of being released by boyhood heroes Chelsea

as a teenager as he joined Arsenal from West Ham on Saturday for a fee that could rise to £105 million.

Rice admits to being reduced to tears when the Blues let him go as a promising 14-year-old.

But a decade on, the brave decision to up sticks and move across London to join West Ham has been the making of the England international.

Fresh from leading the Hammers to their first trophy in 43 years by lifting the Europa Conference League in his final game for the club, the £100 million initial fee for Rice matches international colleague Jack Grealish's move from Aston Villa to Manchester City two years ago as the most ever for an English player and the highest between two British clubs. — AFP

Djokovic, Alcaraz ready to clash for Wimbledon title

NOVAK Djokovic says the "world of sport" will be watching when he faces Carlos Alcaraz in a Wimbledon final where history and a generational shift are at stake.

Djokovic is attempting to equal Roger Federer's record of eight titles at the All England Club and match Margaret Court's all-time mark of 24 Grand Slam crowns. — AFP

New Club World Cup could overlap with Gold Cup says Montagliani



CONCACAF president Victor Montagliani says he is in talks with FIFA about how to deal with an overlap between the Gold Cup and the new FIFA Club World Cup in 2025. PHOTO: AFP

FIFA'S new Club World Cup, which will be held in the United States in 2025, could "overlap" with CONCACAF Gold Cup being held in the same country, CONCACAF president Victor Montagliani said on Friday. Montagliani, who is also a FIFA vice-president, told AFP in an interview that talks were already underway between the two bodies to avoid clashes of kick-off times and other potential headaches. FIFA announced last month that their new-look, expanded 32-team Club World Cup would debut in the United States in 2025. — AFP