

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. X, No. 91, 15th Waning of First Waso 1385 ME

www.gnlm.com.mm

Monday, 17 July 2023

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

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

Maravijaya Buddha Image to be world's highest sitting marble Buddha image upon its completion



Pro Tem President U Myint Swe, Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and President (Retired) U Thein Sein visit Maravijaya Buddha image in Nay Pyi Taw on 16 July 2023.

THOSE from Myanmar Engineering Council and the Military Engineering Corps joined hands in lifting up the parts 1, 2 and 3 of the Maravijaya Buddha image with the use of modern machinery, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at his clarification on progress of the Buddha image yesterday morning, with attendance of Pro Tem President U Myint

Swe and wife Daw Khin Thet Htay, the Senior General's wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, President (Retired) U Thein Sein, retired senior military officers and their wives, Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Maung Maung Aye and wife and officials.

In his clarification, the Senior General who is a leading donor for building the Buddha image as well as the Buddha park said that building of Maravi-

jaya sitting Buddha image aims to show flourishing of Theravada Buddhism in Myanmar, to be Myanmar as a focal point of Theravada Buddhism, ensure prosperity of the State and contribute to peace and stability of the world.

With regard to stone-carving process, the Senior General explained that in line with the advice of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee member Sayadaws and Ovadacariya Sayadaws,

treatises of Tri Pitakat in accord with the copies approved by the sixth Buddhist Synod are being impressed on marble plaques in Pali and Romanized languages. Additionally, Tri Pitakat treatises are being printed in Pali and Romanized languages to donate them to Buddhist monasteries across the nation and to insert them into the tablets.

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Orthopedic speciality hospitals successfully perform spinal surgery on patients with congenital scoliosis

THE medic team consisting of spine surgery specialists Dr Thein Aung Kyaw and Dr Shein Myint Han, specialists Dr Naing Lin Oo and Dr Kyaw Lin Lin and Professor Dr Kan Min from the Swiss Spine Foundation in Switzerland performed the operation on pedicle screws and sods posterior fixation

(PSRF) on 12 patients with scoliosis at the Orthopedic Speciality Hospital in Yangon from 12 to 16 June.

Since 2005, about 12 scoliosis patients a year on average have undergone surgery. To date, more than 200 scoliosis patients have successfully been operated at the hospital.

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Myanmar-Indian experts cooperate in restoring precious golden sketches in Ananda Temple's tunnel

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India-Myanmar traditional food festival kicks off in Yangon



THE India-Myanmar Traditional Food Festival jointly organized by the Myanmar Women Entrepreneurs' Network (MYANWEN) and the Indian Women's Association of Yangon took place at the India Centre, at the corner of Shwethontha Street and Merchant Street, Yangon on 15 July 2023. The purpose of the festival was to raise awareness of In-

dian and Myanmar traditional foods, to strengthen friendship between India and Myanmar through cultural exchange and to foster development of local micro-, small-, medium-sized enterprises. Indian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Shri Vinay Kumar, and Indian Women's Association Yangon's Chairperson Mrs Iona Sinha, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry U Aye Win and Vice Chair of MYANWEN Dr Su Hla Han opened the event by lighting the oil lamps. Then, Indian and Myanmar traditional dance troupes entertained the guests. — Myo Min Thura/KZL

Bogyoke Aung San Museum (Yangon), Secretariat Building (former Ministers' Office) to open free of charge

WITH a special exhibition on the 76th Anniversary of Martyrs' Day 2023, the Bogyoke Aung San Museum (Yangon) on Bogyoke Museum Road, Bo Cho Ward 2 in Bahan Township will be open to the public for observing without admission fee between 7:00 am and 5:00 pm from 19 to 21 July 2023. Similarly, the Secretariat Building (former Ministers' Office) will also be open free of charge for the public observation from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm on 19 July 2023. — MNA/KZL

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.

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 dona-
- tions 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

People need to participate in anti-corruption efforts as a national duty

- Everyone is urged to participate in making anti-corruption efforts as a national duty.
- The government is emphasizing the emergence of a clean government and good governance, improvement of capacity to take prestige and responsibility in administration, and not to harm the society, citizen rights and interests.

(Excerpts from the speech delivered by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the ceremony to mark International Anti-Corruption Day on 9 December 2022)

Maravijaya Buddha Image to be world's highest sitting marble Buddha image upon its completion

FROM PAGE-1

Moreover, Musalinda Nagayon Pagoda is being built according to the advice of Ovadacariya Sayadaws and under the treatises, he added. The Senior General also briefed all on construction of parts of Maravijaya Buddha Image in sytematic calculation, water fountains, Maravijaya Buddha Park, Maravijaya Chamber, Musalinda Lake, and stone plaque chamber.

With respect to construction processes of the Buddha image, the Senior General clarified that those from Myanmar Engineering Council and the Military Engineering Corps joined hands in lifting up the parts 1, 2 and 3 of the Buddha image with the use of modern



Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing explains the progress of construction of Maravijaya Buddha Image yesterday.



The dignitaries visit Musalinda Lake in the Buddha park.



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and party view the scale model of Maravijaya Buddha Park.

machinery. Moreover, religious objects and jewellery items donated by well-wishers across the nation were enshrined in the central parts of the bejewelled throne.

He continued to say that Sasana Beikman Agga Dipati Withongama ordination hall, 296 feet long, 213 feet wide and

94 feet high, was built to accommodate 900 members of the Sangha and 1,200 laypersons at the religious ceremonies.

At further clarification, the Senior General underscored installation of Uññalun holy hair on the face of the Buddha image, construction of the platform and Gandakuti chambers, escalator

facilities for older persons, and preparations for organizing the gala consecration ceremony of the image.

Those present at the ceremony generously donated cash to the fund for building the Buddha Image and the park to the Senior General who spoke words of thanks for all

donations.

They all viewed scale models of the Buddha image and the park, printed Pitakat treatises in Pali and Romanize languages and insertion of them into tablets.

The Senior General, wife and party planted sal trees.

All attendees to the cere-

mony then viewed round the Maravijaya Buddha Image and the Maravijaya Buddha Park.

Maravijaya Buddha Image which would be the world's highest sitting marble Buddha Image upon its completion is being carved in Dekkhinathiri Township of Union Territory Nay Pyi Taw. — MNA/TTA

Myanmar further enhances friendly relations with India, Thailand



Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe meets Indian External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar and Mr Don Pramudwinai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand on the sidelines of the 12th Mekong-Ganga Cooperation Foreign Ministers' Meeting and BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers' Retreat in Bangkok, Thailand, yesterday.

U Than Swe, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar separately met Dr S Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of the Republic of India, at 10 am Thai standard time and

Mr Don Pramudwinai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, at 11 am Thai standard time on 16 July 2023 on the sidelines of the 12th Mekong-Ganga Cooperation Foreign Ministers' Meeting and

BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers' Retreat in Bangkok, Thailand.

During the meeting with the Indian External Affairs Minister, the Union Minister appraised the Myanmar Government's efforts to ensure peace, prosperity and democracy in line with the Five-Point Roadmap and latest developments of Myanmar. They also cordially exchanged views on matters pertaining to the pro-

motion of long-standing friendly bilateral relations between the two countries and expansion of mutually beneficial cooperation in the areas, among others, border area development and security, connectivity as well as closer collaboration in the regional and international fora including the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation and the BIMSTEC.

At the meeting with Thai Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, they candidly exchanged views on strengthening of the existing cordial relations, expanding mutually beneficial cooperation especially in the areas of trade and investment as well as collaborating closely in ASEAN and the UN. — MNA

Progress of India-Myanmar-Thailand (IMT) Trilateral Highway discussed at 12th MGC FMM

AT the official invitation of Mr Saleumxay Kommasith, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the current Co-Chair of the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC), Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe participated in the 12th Mekong-Ganga Cooperation Foreign Ministers' Meeting (12th MGC FMM) on 16 July in Bangkok, Thailand.

At the meeting, the Ministers reviewed the progress of India-Myanmar-Thailand (IMT) Trilateral Highway. They also exchanged views on cooperation and future direction of Mekong-Ganga Cooperation.

The meeting approved the implementation of the Lead Country Mechanism for the co-

operation areas under MGC and the establishment of MGC Business Council. The Joint Ministerial Statement of the 12th MGC Foreign Ministers' Meeting was adopted by consensus as an outcome document of the Ministerial Meeting.

Then, the Lao PDR handed over the Co-Chairmanship of Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) to Myanmar. Myanmar and India will serve as Co-Chairs of the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC).

The Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) is the regional cooperation mechanism established in the year 2000 to further enhance socio-economic development of the region. India and five Mekong countries: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam are Members of the MGC.—MNA



Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe and ministers attending the 12th MGC FMM pose for documentary group photo on 16 July 2023.

13 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 16 July, total figure registers 640,886

MYANMAR'S COVID-19-positive cases rose to **640,886** after **13** new cases were reported on 16 July 2023 according to the Ministry of Health. Therefore, a total of **10,952,121** laboratory samples were examined to date and the confirmed COVID-19 cases reached **640,886**. The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **619,682** including **1** new recovery. The death toll from COVID-19 in the country registered **19,494** on 16-7-2023 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

Orthopedic speciality hospitals
successfully perform spinal surgery ...

FROM PAGE -1

Cooperation between Myanmar spine surgeons and the Swiss Spine Foundation, and the exchange of technology will pave the way for international-level treatment for complex spine diseases, continuous development of spine surgery techniques and advancement of knowledge.

Spinal surgery treatments are also performed by professors and specialists at Mandalay General Hospital and Orthopedic Speciality Hospital-Mandalay.—MNA/KZW



The photos show that before and after surgery of the number 5 patient.

Flood Warning

(Issued at 15:00 hrs M.S.T on 16-7-2023)

ACCORDING to the (14:30) hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Hkamti at Chindwin River is observed as about two feet below its danger level. It may reach its danger level during the next two days.

According to the (14:30) hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Homalin at Chindwin River is observed as about three inches below its danger level. It may continue to rise from the present water level by about ½ foot during the next one day and may remain above its danger level.

It is especially advised to the people who settle near the river banks and low lying areas at Hkamti and Homalin townships, to take precaution measure. — DMH

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

Illegal teaks, foodstuffs, consumer goods, industrial raw materials, vehicles seized

AN inspection team from Magway Police station, under the management of Magway Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force, made inspections at the corner of Mehtee street and circular street in Magway on 12 and 13 July. They found a Toyota Mark II worth K3 million without licence and the action was taken under the Export and Import Law.

A combined team led by Sedoktara Township Forest Department made inspection near Kyaukmwe village and found 2.011 tonnes of illegal sawn teak and sal (estimated at K1,005,700) and a FAW truck worth K3 million which carried these timbers and the action was taken under the Forest Law.

Similarly, an inspection team led by Customs Department under the management of Kayin State Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force made inspection on 13 July. They found nine kinds of goods (estimated value of K3.481 million), including 200 children's clothes for which legal import documents could not be presented, were taken from a vehicle driving from Thamanya to Yangon.

According to reports that illegal goods are being transported by Hpa-an detour, a casual inspection was conducted on Kyagale-Zathapyin-Mawlamyine road. They inspected two vehicles

driving from Myawady to Mawlamyine and a vehicle driving from Kyondoe to Mawlamyine were unable to show valid import permit documents and they found 700 cartons of Sponsor energy drink, 200 cartons of Lipovitan-D energy drink, 1,600 litres of cooking oil, 50 cartons of Yum Yum instant noodle, 50 cartons of various biscuits, 8,750 kilogrammes of Flying Horse fertilizer estimated at K40.482 million and a Nissan Condor Truck, a Mitsubishi Fuso Truck, a Mitsubishi Canter Truck worth K57 million. Actions were taken in accordance with Customs procedures.

Furthermore, a combined team made inspection at the Kawkareik (Tadakyoe) checkpoint and found 1,350 child wear cotton worth K2.025 million which were not declared in Import Declaration and a total of 5,000 kilogrammes of GS Caltex high density polyethylene, with an estimated value of K9 million imported under different import declarations and brands. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

Moreover, an on-duty team under the management of Mandalay Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force made inspection at Mandalay 16th-mile Kyaukchaw checkpoint and found 0.329 tonne of teak parquet esti-



Cartons of Sponsor energy drink seized in Hpa-an on 13 July.



Pieces of teak parquet seized at Kyaukchaw checkpoint in Mandalay on 13 July.

mated at K361,680 and a Nissan Condor Truck worth K3 million which carried the goods. A total estimated value of K30,361,680 was seized and, in accordance with customs procedures, has

been transferred to the Forest Department in Patheingyi Township. Action was taken according to Customs procedures.

Additionally, a combined team led by Forest Department

of Bago Region made inspection on 14 July. They seized 122.8420 tonnes of illegal teak estimated at K48,415,888 from DaikU Township and the action was taken under the Forest Law.

Moreover, an inspection team led by No 2 Traffic Police Force Branch, under the supervision of Yangon Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force, inspected and seized a Honda Airwave worth K3.5 million without licence at the Aungmyay Thazi street in Kamayut Township.

Therefore, a total of 18 cases of arrests were made from 12 to 14 July, with an estimated value of K201,271,268, according to the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/KZW

CURRENT
AFFAIRS



Ananda Temple in Bagan.

Myanmar-Indian experts
cooperate in restoring
precious golden sketches
in Ananda Temple’s
tunnel

ACCORDING to the Department of Archaeology and National Museum, experts from Myanmar and India are jointly working on the cleaning of golden sketches in the Ananda temple’s tunnel.

The work started in the first week of June, and currently, work process has completed by 50 per cent.

The Ananda Temple, locat-

ed in Bagan’s ancient cultural area, is being restored in collaboration with Indian experts. Those Indian experts are also maintaining ancient building No 1600 Nathlaungkyaung, ancient building No 235 Thag-yapone temple, and ancient building No 225 Myataung brick monastery without losing original works. — TWA/KZW

Negotiations on increasing
export of industrial products,
industrial raw materials and
fishery products held

THE Deputy Minister for Commerce recently said that they are working together with the respective departments to facilitate import and export and provide sufficient fuel to the industrial zones at the coordination meeting related to increasing exports of agricultural produce, cotton, CMP and industrial products, industrial raw materials, and fishery products that was held at the UMFCCL.

At the meeting, UMFCCL President U Aye Win also said that three business coordination meetings on export promotion were held at the federation, and there were 41 findings. An Awareness Workshop was also held at the federation to ensure a clear understanding of the Central Bank of Myanmar’s directives related to AD banks, export, and import.

Officials from the Myanmar Rice Federation, Myanmar Rice and Paddy Traders Association, Myanmar Pulses, Beans, Maize, and Sesame Merchants Association, Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association, Cotton Product Merchants and Manufacturers Association, Myanmar Fisheries Processors and Exporters Association, Myanmar Fisheries Federation, Myanmar Livestock Federation, and Myanmar Industries Association presented the challenges and



The late-monsoon long-staple cotton plantation thriving in the farm in Meiktila.

difficulties encountered on the ground in their respective sectors for discussion at the meeting. — TWA/CT

Lancang-Mekong Cooperation: A pragmatic
mechanism for regional collaboration, affirms
MoFA Deputy Minister

U Kyaw Myo Htut, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, hailed the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) as the most practical and effective mechanism for regional collaboration in the area. His remarks came during the Lancang-Mekong Unconventional Security Cooperation Conference held on 14 July in Yangon.

Deputy Minister U Kyaw Myo Htut highlighted the significant impact of the LMC on Myanmar, with numerous LMC Special Fund projects being successfully implemented in the country. These projects have contributed to Myanmar’s progress towards achieving the United Nations’ 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and have directly benefited the people. He further emphasized the LMC’s focus on non-traditional security cooperation.

The conference provided a platform for regional countries to engage in exchanges and cooperation on non-traditional



The Lancang-Mekong Non-Conventional Security Cooperation Forum in progress in Yangon on 14 July.

security matters, aligning with current international and regional conditions. Myanmar, as the co-chair of the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation, expressed its active participation in the initiative, aiming to uphold peace and promote sustainable development in the region, added the Deputy Minister.

The conference comprised two sub-forums: “Combatting Online Crimes such as Online

Gambling and Telecommunications Fraud” and “Food Security and Poverty Reduction in the Lancang-Mekong Region.”

The Lancang-Mekong Non-Conventional Security Cooperation Forum was organized by the Myanmar Institute for Strategic and International Studies (MISIS) with the support of the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Special Fund. — TWA/KZL

Japan to offer jobs to another 1,065 workers from Myanmar

THE Myanmar Embassy in Tokyo issued an announcement on 14 July that a total of 1,065 workers from Myanmar would be recruited to work for companies in Japan.

Between 1 and 14 July, 319 out of 1,065

job offer letters were verified.

According to a statement from the Myanmar embassy to Japan, the findings about the official establishment of companies that would recruit Myanmar

workers and documents were sent to the Ministry of Labour through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On 30 June, a total of 293 job offer letters to recruit over 400 Myanmar workers

was sent from Japan. On 15 June, 350 job offer letters from Japan were also sent to recruit more than a thousand of Myanmar workers, according to the Myanmar embassy to Japan. — TWA/KZW

LOCAL BUSINESS

Yangon market sees decrease in prices of green gram, gram

ON 15 July 2023, in the Yangon market, the price of special green gram (Kayan Shwewah variety) stood at K3,665 per viss, as well as gram at K5,400–K5,500 per viss.

Green gram (Kayan Shwewah variety) price was stable at K3,830 per viss from 4 May to 2 July 2023, in the Yangon beans and pulses market. The price per viss was K3,750 on 2 May and 3 July and decreased to K3,665 in mid-July.

Domestic demand increased for gram at K4,900/K5,000 per viss on 2 May 2023, and the price of bean soared up to K6,000–K6,200 on 12 July. However, the price fell back to K5,400–K5,700 per viss in mid-July. The beans and puls-

es market broke the previous record of high prices this year, and the one with the most domestic demand and the highest price is gram.

Local merchants still emphasize trading of pulses and beans in varieties such as black bean, red pigeon pea, green gram (Kayan Shwewah), gram, Hinthada black bean, chickpea, Ukraine and Canada.

Sixty-five per cent of export earnings were allowed to be used at the reference price of K2,100 and the remaining 35 per cent at market exchange rates. Authorities have changed the percentage of changing export earnings from 65:35 to 50:50 this month, benefiting exporters.

Thus, the export bean price



The Mandalay beans and pulses market seen in April 2020.

that skyrocketed in previous months has dropped back this month. But, there are speculations in the market that the price may shoot up again. — TWA/CT

Online businesses identified as important services



The illustration for the online marketing graphically.

ACCORDING to the online vendors, there is particular concern among online businesses over the upcoming taxation and directive orders after the designation of the businesses as essential services.

In accord with Section 4 and Subsection (c) of the Essential Goods and Services Act, online sales activities have been declared as essential services starting from 4 July.

The Ministry of Commerce has been empowered to issue prohibition orders, regulatory orders, supervision orders, protection orders, and necessary actions related to this service.

“Since the Ministry of Commerce has been given the authority to issue orders, tax

issues may continue to arise. Some sell online, but I see that commercial sellers and self-owned sellers may suffer more. There is no problem with charging those who sell diamonds and gold jewellery items, but if the tax rate is the same for online sellers who sell just one a day, a minority may suffer,” said U Myint Swe, a resident of Mingala Taungnyunt Township.

Most online sellers are worried about the regulatory issues related to business licences and taxes.

“Domestic online sales have been strong again during the period of Covid-19, so I think that the officials have responsibility for handling the tax issues and controlling

over the products. Taxes are paid wherever transactions are conducted. This kind of online sales is a form of tax avoidance. This may be done because of the loss of taxes for the country,” said U Aung Gyi, a retired employee.

Some of the traders have been selling local and foreign products including food, clothing and cosmetics online, but now some are selling housing and building materials, mobile phones, cars, lands, apartments and gemstones online.

According to the Essential Supplies And Services Law enacted in 2012, if goods are identified as important goods, the ministry authorized by the Union government may regulate or prohibit import, sale, possession, storage, transportation, distribution, etc.

This is done in order to restrict and prevent goods and services that may harm the interests of citizens, and to prevent the domestic transportation of goods and animals that may cause dangers, epidemics and unacceptable problems.

Violation of the law is punishable by a minimum of six months to a maximum of three years in prison and a fine of not more than K500,000, according to the law. — TWA/KZL

Myanmar product: Owl beans dominate Mandalay market

ACCORDING to beans and pulses dealers in Mandalay, there is a strong demand for owl beans in the Mandalay bean market. This is driven by both domestic market and high demand from China.

Owl beans are being transported from different regions to the Mandalay market. Last year, three baskets of owl beans were sold at an opening price of over K120,000. U Soe Win Myint, owner of the Soe Win Myint Commodity Depot in Mandalay, said, “Due to the increasing demand from China and domestic consumption, the price of a bag of three baskets of owl beans has now risen to K150,000. The owl beans have established a solid market, especially after five years of exporting them to China. These beans, which resemble an owl in shape, are a type of blue Phaseolus bean.

They are easy to cultivate and thrive in alluvial lands. Farmers from Yesago call it “mascot beans” because of their owl-like appearance and they have been selling well. With the strong demand from the Chinese market, owl beans have become a promising new export item.” This year, farmers and traders will secure benefits from the current market price of this bean, he added.

It is a main cold season crop in the basin areas of the Ayeyawady, Dokhtawady and Chindwin rivers, such as Pakokku, Yesagyo, Monywa, Myingyan, NyaungU, Kyaukse, Patheingyi, Madaya, Singu, and Sinbyukyun townships. These beans started to be produced in early March, and it yields 35 baskets per acre. — Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)/CT



PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG

Protect the rights of housemaids at home and abroad

The global movement of migrant workers from one country to another is steadily increasing due to varying levels of economic development, unemployment rates, and the desire to secure better job opportunities. Within the realm of domestic and international employment, both men and women often find work as housemaids.

Practically, these housemaids continue to face a lack of recognition for their contributions, a lack of mutual respect, the loss of entitlements, and inadequate protection of their rights in all countries. Despite their hard work, housemaids frequently encounter labour and salary exploitation by brokers and homeowners in their daily routines.

According to statistics from the International Labour Organization (ILO), there are approximately 75 million housemaids working in households worldwide, with over 76 per cent of them being female workers and around one-fourth being male. While housemaid positions can vary depending on the nature of the households and the specific tasks involved, such jobs predominantly provide employment opportunities for female workers. Unfortunately, discrimination is prevalent in these types of employment, leading to worsening conditions for housemaids both abroad and within their home countries.

Typically, housemaids are assigned various responsibilities such as house cleaning, cooking, child care, elderly care, and other household chores. However, Myanmar society does not perceive the role of a housemaid as prestigious employment. Some homeowners consider housemaids as their personal slaves or servants, responsible for all household tasks.

As a result, many housemaids suffer from torture, sexual abuse, neglect of their labour rights, and mental oppression. Since their work takes place within the confines of private homes, the majority of people remain unaware of their daily lives and the hardships they endure. It is only when these housemaids escape from their abusive environments, unable to bear their suffering any longer, that their stories are brought to light through the media. This underscores the urgent need for legislation in Myanmar to protect the rights and entitlements of housemaids. Such a law should be fair to both homeowners and housemaids, promoting the resolution of any work-related issues without disputes or controversies.

All employment should be conducted under relevant labour laws and international conventions. Those who have suffered losses should have the right to reclaim their rights and entitlements fairly, without infringing upon the rights of others. Housemaids should dutifully fulfil their assigned tasks, while homeowners must exhibit humane treatment towards their labour force such as housemaids to create harmonious work environments to be free from discrimination and exploitation.

homeowners consider housemaids as their personal slaves or servants, responsible for all household tasks.

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A captivating news story
Recently, I came across a captivating news story that shed light on the intersection of urban development and the fading out of traditional mat-weaving art.

It struck me as a poignant reminder of how modern progress can sometimes erode centuries-old cultural practices and endanger the livelihoods of communities deeply rooted in their heritage.

The story highlighted the Mangrove fan palm, locally known as Ph'av, which thrives beneath the tropical sun in Southeast Asia.

This remarkable palm has been cherished by Cambodian families for generations due to its nutritional value and its important role in traditional Khmer medicine.

Not only does it provide sustenance with its nutritious heart and terminal bud, but it also possesses medicinal properties, soothing fevers, supporting prenatal health, and even serving as a remedy for tuberculosis.

In Siem Reap's historic Angkor Thom district, nestled among the remnants of ancient temples, the art of weaving Ph'av mats has been upheld by around 400 families in the three villages of Leang Dai commune.

This age-old tradition passed down from ancestors has stood the test of time, preserving the cultural identity of these communities amidst the ever-changing modern world.

However, as I delved deeper into the story, I discovered a troubling undercurrent. The once abundant mangrove fan palms that were once plentiful in Siem Reap are now increasingly scarce in the province.

The encroachment of urban

development has gradually diminished the availability of the palm, as forests are cleared to make way for buildings and infrastructure. This poses a significant threat to the art of Ph'av mat weaving, as the survival of the palms is inextricably linked to the existence of forests.

The fading away of an invaluable tradition with time

The mat weavers, like Nam Vern, a 68-year-old resident of Ta Prok village, expressed their concerns about the future of their craft. They lamented the lack of interest and patience among the younger generation, fearing that their invaluable tradition may fade away with time. Learning intricate techniques and dedicating the required time to create these exquisite mats demand unwavering patience, skill, and dedication.

Despite the challenges they face, the mat weavers persevere, and some have even embraced modern platforms like Facebook to sell their Ph'av mats. Yet, the fluctuating prices of the mats reflect the dwindling availability of the palm, amplifying the urgency to address the pressing issue of preserving this cultural heritage.

Local leaders, such as Leang Dai commune chief Koeun Kerb, acknowledge the crucial role that Ph'av mat weaving plays in improving the villagers' living conditions.

However, they also emphasize that the diminishing number of mangrove fan palms poses an imminent threat to the sustainability of this age-old craft.

Experts, including Tea Kim Soth, the director of the Siem Reap provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries, echo these concerns. They point out that the gradual

Collaborative Efforts Ensure the Sustainability of Traditional Mat Weaving



In the southern region of Myanmar, there are several townships known for their traditional mat-weaving businesses. (L); Women from Siem Reap province's Angkor Thom district carry mats made from mangrove fan palms. (R) **PHOTO: UK SEIN, MYANMAR LOCAL CRAFTS ON FACEBOOK / ANN/THE PHNOM PENH POST**

disappearance of Ph'av-rich areas due to urban development exacerbates the decline in the availability of the palm.

While some substitute palm varieties can be used in areas where Ph'av is scarce, they fail to match the quality and unique characteristics of Ph'av mats.

This captivating news story serves as a reminder of the delicate balance between progress and preservation.

It raises questions about the responsibility we bear in safeguarding cultural traditions that hold immense value for communities and contribute to the rich tapestry of our global heritage.

It is a call to action to find sustainable solutions that protect the mangrove fan palm and support the continuation of the art of Ph'av mat weaving, ensuring that future generations can still marvel at the

beauty of these intricately crafted mats and the stories they carry.

The art of traditional mat weaving

Mat weaving is a craft enjoyed by many people worldwide. It has a long history and is passed down through generations. Different regions have their own special ways of making mats using different materials.

In Asia, countries like India, Bangladesh, Thailand, and Indonesia are famous for their intricate mats made from reeds, bamboo, jute, and seagrass. Skilled artisans use traditional methods to create beautiful designs.

In Africa, countries such as Ghana, Senegal, and Kenya have vibrant traditions of mat weaving. They use materials like sisal, raffia, and palm leaves to make mats for sitting and sleeping. These

mats reflect the cultural heritage of the communities.

In the Pacific Islands, like Fiji, Tonga, and Samoa, mat weaving is important for cultural ceremonies and gatherings. People weave mats from pandanus leaves in complex patterns to show hospitality and respect.

In the Americas, indigenous tribes like the Navajo, Hopi, and Cherokee weave mats and rugs using wool and natural dyes. These mats have symbolic patterns that represent their cultural heritage.

Myanmar's traditional mat market

In Myanmar, there is a town called Pantanaw that holds significant importance in the realm of traditional mat weaving. Pantanaw Township is a place in Ayeyawady Region. It used to

be called Pan Kya Naw because a pagoda was built there when Princess Ohmar Danti accidentally dropped her flower from her head while running away from the princes.

Traditional mats are widely cherished and sought after as one of the most beloved consumer goods in the country. These mats are skillfully crafted by local artisans who have inherited the traditional weaving techniques passed down through generations.

The mats produced in Pantanaw are not only renowned within the town but are also distributed and sold throughout the country, gaining popularity and admiration from both locals and visitors alike.

The intricate designs, vibrant colours, and durable nature of these traditional mats make them highly desirable for various purposes, including home decor,

By Augustin

seating mats, and ceremonial uses. The mat weaving industry in Pantanaw not only provides a means of livelihood for the artisans but also contributes to the preservation and promotion of Myanmar's cultural traditions.

In the southern region of Myanmar, there are several townships known for their traditional mat-weaving businesses. These townships include Pantanaw, Danubyu, Laymyethna, and Hinthada. Even now, Maubin Township continues to produce traditional mats. Additionally, in Taninthayi Region, within Taninthayi Township, located in the Myeik District, the traditional mat business is a significant occupation for the local community.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional mat-weaving businesses in our country have faced challenges. Business owners have noticed a decline in sales and slower business activity.

The pandemic has caused difficulties for traditional businesses worldwide. They have struggled to acquire the necessary materials for making their products, and customers have found it challenging to make purchases.

The attempt by businesses to sell their products online

Many businesses that rely on in-person shopping have experienced a decrease in sales because people are unable to go out as often. Some businesses

have attempted to sell their products online, but they have faced obstacles in adapting to this new method of selling.

Additionally, businesses that depend on tourism have suffered due to reduced travel. Governments and organizations are offering financial assistance and support to these businesses, encouraging them to explore alternative avenues such as online sales. Despite the ongoing challenges, traditional businesses are persevering and seeking innovative solutions to sustain their operations.

The pandemic disrupted supply chains and reduced customer demand, impacting traditional businesses heavily reliant on in-person transactions. Artisans and weavers faced financial hardships and had to adapt to online platforms. To ensure sustainability, support from governments, organizations, and communities is crucial. Financial aid, grants, and initiatives promoting online presence have helped preserve and promote traditional mat weaving.

Raising awareness about the cultural value of traditional mats is essential. Collaborations between artisans and designers can infuse modern elements while preserving traditions. Sustainable practices require consumer participation. By appreciating and purchasing traditional mats, individuals contribute to preserving cultural heritage.

The sustainability of traditional mat weaving relies on the collective efforts of artisans, communities, governments, organizations, and consumers. By recognizing and supporting these crafts, we can ensure their longevity, celebrate their beauty, and honour the stories woven into our societies. ■

Health benefits of adding coconut water to your breakfast

Coconut water is a refreshing and nutritious beverage that can be a great addition to your breakfast routine. It contains essential nutrients and can help replenish electrolytes in the body. It can help keep you hydrated, provide essential nutrients, improve digestion, boost your immune system, and reduce

stress levels.

Here are some health benefits of adding coconut water to your morning meal:

Hydration

Coconut water is a natural isotonic drink that helps replenish electrolytes and keep you hydrated. It contains high levels

of potassium, which is essential for maintaining fluid balance and supporting proper muscle function.

Digestive Health

Coconut water contains dietary fibre, which can promote a healthy digestive system by preventing constipation and support-

ing regular bowel movements. It may also have a mild laxative effect, helping to prevent or alleviate digestive issues.

Antioxidant properties

Coconut water contains antioxidants, such as vitamin C and various phytochemicals, which help protect the body against

oxidative stress caused by free radicals. Antioxidants play a role in reducing inflammation and lowering the risk of chronic diseases.

Losing Weight

Coconut water is low in calories and fat, making it suitable for those watching their weight. It is a healthier alternative to sugary

drinks, providing natural sweetness without the added sugars and artificial additives in many beverages.

Full of Nutrients

Coconut water is a good source of several essential nutrients, including vitamin C, magnesium, calcium, and phosphorus. These nutrients contribute to overall health and well-being and support various bodily functions.

SOURCE: ANI



Coconut sap is a refreshing and nutritious beverage. It can be a great addition to your breakfast routine. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE, FREEPIK**

TECH/SCI WORLD

COP28 host UAE and India vow 'successful' climate summit

THE United Arab Emirates and India vowed on Saturday to make this year's COP28 conference in Dubai a success, as Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid a visit to the Gulf state.

The oil-rich UAE will host the COP28 United Nations climate talks in November and December, as world nations remain far apart on means to reduce fossil fuels and reduce global warming.

"The UAE and India are united in their determination to ensure the successful outcome of COP28 as an inclusive and action-oriented conference," read a statement following talks in Abu Dhabi between Emirati President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Modi.

The two leaders said they



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi discussed the upcoming COP28 climate conference during with the president of the United Arab Emirate, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, during a visit to the Gulf nation hosting the event. **PHOTO: MOHAMED AL-HAMMADI / UAE'S MINISTRY OF PRESIDENTIAL AFFAIRS/AFP**

were "committed to enhance cooperation on climate ambition, decarbonisation and clean energy, and work together to

have tangible and meaningful outcomes" at the conference, it added.

With global temperatures

hitting record highs last week and countries buffeted by floods, storms and crop-withering heatwaves, the world remains far off

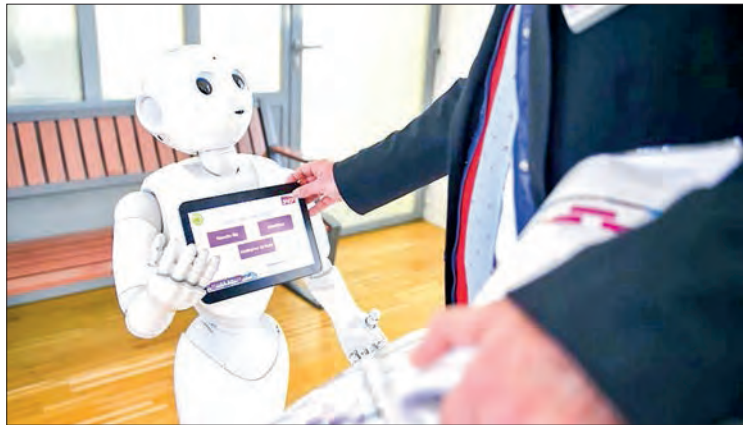
track to meet its climate goals.

Emirati oil executive Sultan Al Jaber, who will head up the COP28 talks, has said he expects fossil fuels to continue to play a role, albeit reduced and with the use of often controversial technologies to "abate", or neutralise, the emissions.

Last year's climate summit in Egypt saw the creation of a new financial facility for poor countries already ravaged by impacts, but rebuffed attempts to spell out the need to ditch fossil fuels.

That same fault line will run through COP28, pitting the European Union and scores of developing countries against China, India and other emerging giants, along with the United States, the world's largest oil and gas producer. — AFP

UN rights council calls for AI transparency



It's important for AI to be transparent and understandable so that people can trust it. We also need to think about how AI can affect things like human rights, equality, and democracy. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/AFP**

THE UN Human Rights Council on Friday called for transparency on the risks of artificial intelligence and for the data harvested by AI to be used re-

sponsibly.

An explosion in generative AI content since ChatGPT launched late last year has left authorities scrambling to figure

out how to regulate such chatbots and ensure the technology does not endanger humanity.

In its first look at the development of AI, the UN's top rights body adopted a resolution that called for the "adequate explainability" of AI-supported decisions, taking into account "human rights risks arising from these technologies".

It also calls for the use of data in AI systems to be in line with international human rights law.

The resolution — co-sponsored by Austria, Brazil, Denmark, Morocco, Singapore and South Korea — was adopted by consensus in the 47-country council. — AFP

London's new 'super sewer' to end Thames pollution blight

THE door of the steel box lift clanks shut and a crane slowly lowers construction workers building London's "super sewer" 40 metres (130 feet) to the bottom of an enormous vertical shaft.

Here, a world away from the city's busy streets, thousands of engineers and construction staff have spent the past seven years creating the biggest-ever upgrade to the city's 19th-century sewers.

London's existing sewerage network dates back to the second half of the 1800s when it was designed by civil engineer Joseph Bazalgette

in response to the infamous "Great Stink".

In July and August 1858, a combination of soaring temperatures and a sewerage system that emptied straight into the Thames resulted in the city being engulfed in a cloud of putrid air.

The unbearable stench led to the construction of the sewerage system that is still in use today.

But in recent decades, lack of capacity due to the British capital's population growth has meant that raw sewage has once again flowed into the river. — AFP



A workman wearing PPE works at the Thames Tideway tunnel building site, in west London, on 14 June 2023. **PHOTO: DANIEL LEAL / AFP**

Italian TikTokers fake being ill to hitch lift in ambulance

TWO Italians who faked being ill to hitch a ride to the nearby town in an ambulance before posting footage of the episode on social media will be prosecuted, police said Friday.

Their video on TikTok — captioned "When you're out in the countryside and there's no public transport" — racked up over 50,000 views in just one day.

The footage, shot Sunday

by the 19 and 20-year-old men, starts with one of them saying "we're lost in the middle of the countryside, and now we're solving the problem".

One contacts the emergency services and says his friend has fainted, while the other can be seen lying on a bench stifling laughter.

The pair then filmed the arrival of the ambulance, which took them to the seaside town

of Riccione in northeast Italy, where they spent a brief amount of time in the accident and emergency department, according to ANSA news agency.

Police identified them from the video, and said they would be prosecuted after the regional health agency filed a complaint.

"I'm an idiot, I shouldn't have done that", one of the men was quoted as telling the local Il Resto del Carlino daily. — AFP

Japanese director Miyazaki’s new anime film released, 1st in decade

RENOWNED Japanese director Hayao Miyazaki’s animation film “Kimitachi wa Do Ikiru ka” (How Do You Live?) was released Friday in Japan after a lack of promotion that had left fans guessing about his first feature film in 10 years.

The limited information available before the release of the latest Studio Ghibli Inc. film included a poster, revealed in December 2022, of a bird-like creature with white and blue feathers.

The 124-minute film by 82-year-old Miyazaki, who came out of retirement for it, features a boy who lost his mother in a fire



A long queue forms at a cinema in Tokyo on the morning of 14 July 2023, as renowned Japanese director Hayao Miyazaki’s animation film “Kimitachi wa Do Ikiru ka” (How Do You Live?) is released in Japan. PHOTO: KYODO

in Japan during wartime.

He wanders into a mysterious world guided by a gray her-

on while looking for his father’s expected new partner who has gone missing. — Kyodo

Italy returns 1,800-year-old smuggled stele to Türkiye

TÜRKISH culture minister said Thursday that Italy has returned a 1,800-year-old smuggled tomb stele.

The relic smuggled from the ancient city of Zeugma in Türkiye and found in Italy last year, was handed over to the Zeugma Museum in Türkiye’s southern Gaziantep province, Turkish Culture and Tourism Minister Mehmet Nuri Ersoy told reporters.

The stele features a female figure and words saying “Farewell, Satornila, the wife

who loved her husband,” the semi-official Anadolu Agency reported, citing Ersoy.

Speaking to a press conference in the Zeugma Museum, the minister revealed that the Italian authorities reached out to Turkish side after seizing the tomb stele.

Later, examination by Turkish experts showed that the stele had been stolen and smuggled from Zeugma, he said, thanking Italy for facilitating the return of the relic.— Xinhua

‘Like Ons Jabeur’: Young Tunisian girls dream of tennis glory



Nine-year-old Lina Chedi competes at a local tournament at the Tennis Club of Tunis in the Tunisian capital on 15 July 2023. PHOTO: AFP

AT a sporting club in Tunis, young girls enthusiastically hit yellow tennis balls across the court in the hope of one day making it to Wimbledon, like their idol Ons Jabeur.

As the tennis star tried but failed for a third time to become the first African or Arab woman to win a Grand Slam singles title on Saturday, a tournament took place at the Tennis Club of Tunis in the Alain Savary neighbourhood, near the centre of the Tunisian capital.

On the dozen sunny courts, surrounded by large trees, Tunisian boys and girls vigorously compete in several matches surrounded by their families.

Ibtissem Treimech, the mother of one player says, “when they see Ons Jabeur ... succeeding as a finalist, the children and parents are inspired, and the

parents encourage their children to play tennis”.

In a country where football reigns supreme, Jabeur has become a national icon and sparked a newfound enthusiasm for tennis over the past three years, especially among young girls. Like Jabeur, many of them come from working-class backgrounds.

Disappointed fans

Yasmine Ben Mabrouk, also nine, has no doubts over her own talent.

“I think I will become a great tennis player like Ons Jabeur, and I will participate in very big matches,” she said.

Not far away, 10-year-old Emna Bartagisse says she will “become better than Ons Jabeur.”

Jabeur defines herself as a “100 per cent product of Tunisia”,

and her fans praise her for her dynamic game, which includes drop shots and approaches to the net, and her sense of camaraderie.

The star continues to push the limits, despite a sometimes difficult period following a series of recent injuries to her wrist and calf.

Before Saturday’s final at the All England Club Jabeur said she had “learned to be very patient and to accept everything that has happened to her regarding injuries.”

But her straight-sets defeat at Wimbledon, where Marketa Vondrousova won 6-4, 6-4, broke the hearts of her fans back home.

“I am disappointed because Ons has lost. Such a shame,” said Ben Chedly, a boy who watched the game at the Gammarth tennis club in Tunis.

Chedly’s brother Mehdi is also upset, insisting that victory for Ons was close but “she does not know how to control herself”.

Jabeur hails from the seaside resort town of Sousse and is adored by fans and spends time after each match signing autographs and posing for selfies.

Since she came into the spotlight in January 2020 at the Australian Open, becoming the first Arab woman to reach a Grand Slam quarter-final, the soon-to-be 29-year-old has become a source of national pride for Tunisia. — AFP

Lisa Marie Presley death linked to weight loss surgery

THE death of Lisa Marie Presley, the singer-songwriter and only child of rock and roll legend Elvis, was caused by a bowel obstruction related to a prior weight loss surgery, medical examiners said.

Presley, who led a tumultuous life in the sprawling shadow of her world-famous father, died in January at age 54 after being discovered unresponsive in her home and rushed to the hospital.

Her cause of death was determined to be “a small bowel obstruction caused by scar tissue that developed after a previous bariatric surgery years ago. The manner of death is natural,” the County of Los Angeles Department of Medical Examiner said in a statement Thursday.

Bariatric surgery is a

stomach-shrinking bypass procedure carried out on those wanting to lose excessive weight.

Presley was found by her ex-husband on 12 January, and pronounced dead later that afternoon, the medical examiner said.

The ex-husband, Danny Keough, lived at her property in the celebrity-studded Los Angeles suburb of Calabasas. He performed CPR until paramedics arrived and transported her to hospital, where she was put in an induced coma on life support before dying, TMZ reported at the time.

In addition to Keough, whom she divorced in 1994, Presley had also been married to Nicolas Cage, Michael Jackson and actor-composer Michael Lockwood. — AFP



Lisa Marie Presley performs in September 2013 in Nashville, Tennessee. PHOTO: RICK DIAMOND /AFP

ECONOMY WORLD

Price rises, tax hikes make Turks feel worse-off

TURKISH consumers are facing a new wave of stinging price increases and tax hikes as the value of the national currency continues dipping against the background of a cost-of-living crisis.

“Life is expensive here, and it is impossible to make ends meet in Türkiye anymore, even though three members of my family are working hard to pay the household expenses,” said Jale Tasiyan, a 46-year-old hotel employee.

Tasiyan told Xinhua that because of a significant decline in the family’s purchasing power, even a cup of coffee that she used to have in a cafe could be a luxury for her now, adding that



People walk into a mobile phone shop in Ankara, Türkiye on 14 July 2023. **PHOTO: MUSTAFA KAYA/XINHUA**

she has to take a second job in a restaurant to help support the family.

She lamented that the rising hotel prices spoiled her family’s beach holiday plans, and they have to stay home this summer instead. — Xinhua

Crypto gets much needed boost after SEC court loss

BITCOIN and other cryptocurrencies rose in value on Friday after the US Securities and Exchange Commission was handed a setback in its legal campaign against the hard-hit sector.

The increases came after a federal judge in Manhattan partially dismissed the SEC’s case against the creators of the XRP cryptocurrency, Ripple Labs, who were accused of marketing their currency without first registering it with the Wall Street regulator. The SEC has argued for years that certain digital currencies are financial securities, like stocks or bonds, and are therefore subject to its supervision as an investment product.

The crypto community rejects the argument bitterly and has struggled to withstand the increased scrutiny as well as a string of scandals and arrests of top figures in the sector.

“There are still questions about how this applies to other tokens and whether the ruling will hold up, but for now, it’s a huge win for the industry,” said a note from financial advisor The Motley Fool.

In a second day of gains, Ethereum was up 5.69 percent in the past 24 hours and Elon Musk-supported Dogecoin was up more than 7 percent. Bitcoin, the main asset in the crypto space, was up 2.3 percent over the past 24 hours. — AFP

UK names investment zone in northern England

THE UK government revealed Friday that its first investment zone for advanced manufacturing will be in northern England, under its so-called “levelling up” policy to boost growth outside London.

South Yorkshire, including Sheffield, Rotherham, Doncaster and Barnsley, will be the first of 12 planned investment zones and aims to support 8,000 jobs by 2030, said finance minister Jeremy Hunt.

The scheme, first announced in Hunt’s budget earlier this year, seeks to invest around universities and clusters of high-growth industries such as advanced manufacturing, life sciences or green industries.

The South Yorkshire hub, which will feature the University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam University, will leverage more than £1.2 billion (\$1.6 billion) of private funding.

“Our first investment zone is a shining example of how we will drive growth across the country,” Hunt added.

South Yorkshire has secured £80 million for a portfolio of research and development projects which will examine the future of aerospace and is backed by US giant Boeing.

Hunt hailed the scheme for “bringing opportunity into areas which have traditionally underperformed economically”.

Under the plan, each invest-

ment zone will be backed with £80 million of support for a range of interventions which could include skills, infrastructure and tax relief.

“Levelling up” proposals helped the governing Conservatives win swathes of formerly Labour party seats in northern England at the last general election in 2019.

The Tories maintain it is about spreading investment and industry across the UK, particularly in post-industrial areas, rather than concentrating wealth in southeast England.

But plans for its implementation were sidetracked by the arrival of the coronavirus pandemic. — AFP



The new research facility will be built as an extension to the AMRC’s Factory 2050 - a hugely successful advanced manufacturing research centre that has set the standard for academic and industry R&D. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD**

EU Commission rebuffs Paris demand to ‘reconsider’ American hire



Image for The European Commission insignia and flag. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE European Commission on Friday rejected a demand from France that it “reconsider” its appointment of an American to a key post in the EU executive dealing with the regulation of US tech giants.

“The decision was made. We see no grounds to reconsider,” commission spokeswoman Dana Spinant said. The French government on Thursday asked the commission to rethink the hiring of US economics expert Fiona Scott Morton to such a sensitive position, saying it raised conflict-of-interest risks.

Scott Morton, a Yale University economics professor and former lobbyist, served as deputy assistant attorney general for economics at the US De-

partment of Justice’s antitrust division in 2011 and 2012. There, she was in charge of economists who investigated mergers.

She has also worked as a consultant for Amazon, Apple and Microsoft. The EU executive announced that she had been chosen to serve from September as the new chief economist at the commission’s antitrust unit, which comes under EU antitrust supremo Margrethe Vestager.

The unit is charged with making sure EU markets remain competitive — including ensuring that US tech titans do not abuse their market dominance, which has already seen them served record fines.— AFP

Hitachi driverless passenger railway opens in Honolulu, 1st in US

A fully autonomous elevated railway system operated by a Hitachi Ltd. unit partially opened in Honolulu late last month, raising hopes it will enhance convenience for tourists and ease the area’s notorious traffic congestion.

The initial 17-kilometre portion of the Skyline, the first driverless commuter railway in the United States and first passenger rail service on Hawaii’s Oahu island in 76 years, connects nine stations from East Kapolei to Aloha Stadium.

The railway will eventually be expanded to connect 19 stations, including

Daniel K. Inoue International Airport in Honolulu and Civic Center station near the Hawaii state capital’s city council building, according to Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation.

The opening of the whole line, which will allow passengers to travel around 30 km in roughly 40 minutes, is set for 2031, it said. The island had been without a full-fledged passenger train service since 1947.

“Today’s opening of Skyline begins truly a transformative era for Hawaii,” Honolulu Mayor Rick Blangiardi said at the



Honolulu Mayor Rick Blangiardi (standing) speaks during the opening ceremony for the initial segment of the self-driving Skyline rail system on Oahu island in Hawaii on 30 June 2023. PHOTO: KYODO

opening ceremony held on 30 June, calling the launch a “historic occasion.”

Hitachi said group firm Hitachi Rail Ltd.’s role in the project includes

manufacturing passenger train cars, designing and constructing fire detection,

alarm and other subsystems, as well as operating and maintaining the system.

It has delivered a fleet of 20 four-car trains, each with a capacity of up to 800 passengers, the Tokyo-based conglomerate said. The trains feature ample space for bicycles, surfboards and baby strollers, it said.

“I came to Hawaii looking forward to riding the first train,” said Ryo Nishimura, an engineer from Tokyo.

“I am paying attention to safety as a Japanese company has manufactured it.” — Kyodo

Iraq honey production at the mercy of heat and drought

AN oppressive heat beats down on the central Iraqi province of Babylon, where drought and rising temperatures are hitting bees and honey production hard.

Beekeeper Mohamed Aliawi knows it all too well as he checks on dozens of hive boxes placed at the feet of tall palm trees in the fields of Al-Reghila village.

“There is no water and therefore no (flowering) plants to keep the bees satisfied,” Aliawi, the deputy director of a local apiarist association, told AFP.

The earth is cracked, and growing

melons and watermelons proves difficult due to a lingering drought and intense July temperatures often reaching around 50 degrees Celsius (122 Fahrenheit) — which take their toll on bees too.

A bee needs to constantly forage for the pollen and nectar necessary for honey production. It is in constant movement, usually travelling hundreds of metres (yards) to find its bounty, said Aliawi.

But the drought is forcing bees to travel longer — up to five kilometres (three miles) — to pollinate. — AFP



A lingering drought in Iraq and rising temperatures are impacting the lifespan of bees and hurting honey production. PHOTO: AHMAD AL-RUBAYE / AFP

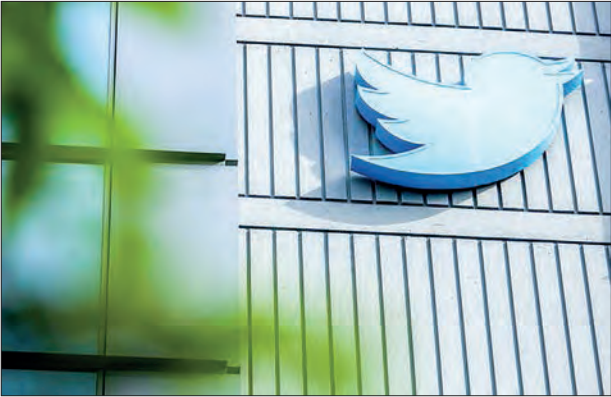
Twitter has lost half its advertising revenue

TWITTER owner Elon Musk said Saturday that the social media platform he bought for \$44 billion last October has lost roughly half of its advertising revenue.

“We’re still negative cash flow, due to ~50% drop in advertising revenue plus heavy debt load,” the billionaire said in a post, responding to a user who was giving suggestions on financing for the platform.

“Need to reach positive cash flow before we have the luxury of anything else,” he added, without further elaboration.

Insider Intelligence



Twitter logo is seen on a sign on the exterior of Twitter headquarters in San Francisco, California, on 28 October 2022. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

has reported that Twitter was set to earn less than \$3 billion in 2023, down one-third from 2022.

Changes instituted by Musk since his takeover of

Twitter have turned off users and advertisers alike.

Earlier this month, Musk announced that Twitter was limiting verified accounts to reading

10,000 tweets a day.

Non-verified users — the free accounts that make up the majority of users — are limited to reading 1,000 tweets per day. New unverified accounts would be limited to 500 tweets.

A few days later Twitter said TweetDeck, a popular program that allows users to monitor several accounts at once, will be available only to “verified” users from next month.

The changes came as Threads, an app launched by Facebook parent Meta as a rival to Twitter, signed up more than 100 million users in its first five days. — AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V YANTRA BHUM VOY.NO. (1116E)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V YANTRA BHUM VOY.NO. (1116E) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 17-7-2023 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/MIP 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 REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V ISEACO GENESIS VOY.NO. (200N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ISEACO GENESIS VOY.NO. (200N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 17-7-2023 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 NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES

ROLLING UPDATES WORLD

Russia becomes India’s 3rd largest trading partner for first time in history



The volume of bilateral trade grew 3.8 times in January-May to a record \$27.1 billion, the ministry’s data showed. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/AFP**

RUSSIA, for the first time in history, became India’s third largest trading partner, with the trade between the countries reaching \$27.1 billion in the first five months of 2023, Sputnik has calculated using the data of the Indian Commerce Ministry.

The volume of bilateral trade grew 3.8 times in January-May to a record \$27.1 billion, the ministry’s data showed.

Over this period, India increased its imports of Russian goods by 3.9 times up to \$26.5 billion, which allowed Russia to stay the country’s second largest importer. At the same time, the export of Indian products to Russia

grew by 2.6 times to \$639 million.

China remained India’s largest trading partner with turnover of \$41.1 billion, which decreased, however, by 9.3 per cent year-on-year. Trade between India and the United States, New Delhi’s second largest trading partner, dropped by 12.5 per cent in annual terms to \$30.4 billion

The United Arab Emirates-India trade decreased by 11 per cent to \$24.2 billion between January and May, and, as a result, the UAE dropped to the fourth position. Saudi Arabia came in fifth with a turnover of \$18.3 billion, down 9.1 per cent year-on-year. — SPUTNIK

US envoy Kerry arrives in China to restart climate talks



US climate envoy John Kerry (L) gestures as he speaks next to China’s special climate envoy Xie Zhenhua (R) during a session at the World Economic Forum annual meeting in Davos on 24 May 2022. **PHOTO: FABRICE COFFRINI / AFP/FILE**

US climate envoy John Kerry arrived in China on Sunday, state media reported, to restart stalled talks between the world’s two biggest emitters of planet-warming gases.

Starting on Monday, “China and the United States will have an in-depth exchange of views” on climate issues, state broadcaster CCTV said on Kerry’s arrival in Beijing.

Kerry’s trip to China, where he will meet with his counterpart Xie Zhenhua, follows weeks of record-setting summer heat that scientists say is being exacerbated by climate change.

Bilateral climate talks stalled last year after Nancy Pelosi, then speaker of the US House of Representatives, visited self-ruled China (Taipei) and infuriated Beijing, which considers the island its territory.

But Kerry, a former secretary of state, has enjoyed comparatively cordial and consistent relations with China despite Washington and Beijing locking horns over Taiwan and a number of other thorny issues, including advanced semiconductors. — AFP

Japan issues heatstroke alerts as temperatures soar

JAPAN issued heatstroke alerts Sunday to tens of millions of people as near-record high temperatures scorched swathes of the country, while torrential rain pummelled other regions.

National broadcaster NHK warned viewers that the heat was at life-threatening levels, as temperatures soared to nearly 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) in some places, including the capital Tokyo.

“Please stay hydrated and use air conditioners appropriately, and refrain from outings that seem difficult,” a news presenter said.

The government issued heatstroke alerts for 20 of the country’s 47 prefectures, main-

ly in the east and southwest, affecting tens of millions of people.

Heat can kill by inducing heatstroke, which damages the brain, kidneys and other organs, but it can also trigger other conditions such as a heart attack or breathing problems.

Kiryu city in Gunma prefecture, north of Tokyo, saw the mercury reach 39.7C while Hachioji in western Tokyo reached 38.9C, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency.

Japan’s highest temperature ever recorded was 41.1C, which was first recorded in Kumagaya city, in Saitama, in 2018 and then matched in Hamamatsu city, Shizuoka, in 2020. — AFP

China-ASEAN forum held to enhance cooperation on sustainable development

THE 2023 China-ASEAN International Forum on Innovation and Cooperation for Sustainable Development concluded Saturday in the tourist city of Guilin, south China’s Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

The three-day forum attracted participants from China and ASEAN member states,

as well as representatives from international organizations, enterprises and research institutions.

Participants exchanged views at the forum on topics such as green technology transfer, tourism cities and experience in building national innovation demonstration

zones of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In 2018, China’s State Council gave approval for the cities of Shenzhen, Taiyuan and Guilin to build innovation demonstration zones to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. — Xinhua



A girl enjoys a spray of mist in Tokyo’s Ginza area recently amid soaring temperatures. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Spain vote may change govt, but not foreign policy

FROM defending Spain's interests within the EU to its tortuous relations with Morocco, there will be no shortage of foreign policy challenges for right-wing leader Alberto Nunez Feijoo if he wins the 23 July election.

But the main challenge will undoubtedly be more personal, according to analysts: to assert himself on the international stage to ensure Spain's voice continues to be clearly heard.

At the helm of the right-wing Popular Party (PP) for the past year, Feijoo, 61, "doesn't have a great track record in international politics," said Ignacio Molina, senior analyst at the Elcano Royal Institute, a Madrid think-tank.

And judging by his campaign, "he is not going to take any decision which will involve any big change in foreign poli-

cy, whether that be within the EU, NATO or in the defence of Spain's interests," he told AFP.

The PP's programme states that a Feijoo government would continue "military, economic and humanitarian support to the Ukrainian people where necessary" as well as "support for sanctions against Russia".

The PP also said it would raise defence spending to 2.0 percent of Spain's GDP, the military spending target set for member states by the North Atlantic Treaty Association (NATO).

EU, Maghreb ties

Since Socialist leader Pedro Sanchez became prime minister in 2018, Spain has been very active on the EU stage after years of taking a back seat, and Feijoo's challenge will be to ensure that continues, Molina said. — AFP



Spain's right-wing leader Alberto Nunez Feijoo will face many foreign policy challenges if he wins the July 23 election. **PHOTO: AFP**

Airlines grapple with rise in turbulent passengers



An unruly passenger who took out a knife forced the diversion of a Bangladeshi airliner in 2008. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

VIRAL videos of vulgar, intoxicated and violent airplane passengers have become common, but it is not just a social media trend: statistics confirm cases are on the rise.

The surge in incidents comes as the aviation industry is bouncing back from the Covid pandemic, with airlines expecting to fly a near-record 4.35 billion passengers this year.

According to the airline industry trade group IATA, one in every 568 flights had an incident linked to an unruly passenger in 2022, compared to one flight in

835 flights in 2021.

"Although non-compliance incidents initially fell after the mask mandates were removed on most flights, the frequency began to rise again throughout 2022 and ended the year some 37 per cent up on 2021," IATA said recently.

The most common incidents involved passengers smoking or vaping in the cabin or toilet, refusing to buckle their seatbelt, failing to respect baggage limits and storage instructions and consumption of their own alcohol on board. — AFP

Sudan army returns to talks in Saudi as war enters fourth month

SUDANESE army representatives have returned to Jeddah in Saudi Arabia for talks with their paramilitary foes, a government source said Saturday as the war between rival generals entered its fourth month.

"A delegation of the armed forces has returned to Jeddah to resume negotiations with

Rapid Support Forces (RSF) rebels," the source told AFP on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to speak to media.

The RSF has made no comment on returning to the talks in Jeddah, which Saudi and US mediators adjourned last month after a series of

repeatedly violated ceasefires.

On 15 April, a power struggle between army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his former deputy, RSF commander Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, burst into all-out war, claiming at least 3,000 lives and displacing more than three million people. — AFP

Fears over Syria's proposed control on aid to rebel-held areas

THE Syrian government recently announced it would allow aid to cross into rebel-held areas after a United Nations mechanism expired, sparking concerns from humanitarian groups.

They worry over the fate of residents in Syria's last remaining rebel strongholds, in the north and northwest, after the Security Council failed on Wednesday to extend the mechanism.

Under a 2014 deal, aid had largely passed through the Bab al-Hawa crossing with Turkey without the authorisation of Damascus.

But expiry of the UN mech-



A convoy carrying humanitarian aid arrives in Syria after crossing the Bab al-Hawa border crossing with Türkiye on 10 July 2023, a day before the UN Security Council failed to reach consensus on extending the route. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

anism, as well as Syria's decision to change course on the delivery of aid to those areas, has sparked fears and questions among the humanitarian community. — AFP

Spain vote may
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policy



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.

Lionel Messi signs contract with Inter Miami through 2025



A woman takes a photo of Argentine artist Maximiliano Bagnasco's giant mural of international soccer star Lionel Messi in Wynwood, Miami's art district, in anticipation of his arrival at MLS club Inter Miami. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

ARGENTINE superstar Lionel Messi has signed a contract through the 2025 season with Inter Miami, the Major League Soccer team announced on Saturday. The 36-year-old striker, who

sparked Argentina to a World Cup title last year in Qatar, is set to be unveiled by the team in a Sunday ceremony and expected to join Inter Miami on the pitch by Friday.

"I'm very excited to start this next step in my career with Inter Miami and in the United States," Messi said in a statement. The seven-time Ballon d'Or winner's arrival in Miami from Paris Saint-Germain has already caused a sensation and is expected to spark greater interest in the game and MLS across the United States.

It's also hoped the long-time Barcelona talisman can revive the fortunes of a Miami squad at the bottom of the MLS Eastern Conference at 5-13 with three drawn. "This is a fantastic opportunity and together we will continue to build this beautiful project," Messi said. "The idea is to work together to achieve the objectives we set and I'm very eager to start helping here in my new home." Messi's debut match is planned for Friday when Inter Miami will host Cruz Azul in the Leagues Cup, a revamped competition between MLS and Mexican league squads. — AFP

Japan's Oda, 17, wins Wimbledon wheelchair title

JAPANESE teenager Tokito Oda made history by winning the Wimbledon wheelchair title with a commanding 6-4, 6-2 victory against Alfie Hewett on Sunday. Aged 17 years and 69 days, Oda is the youngest man to win a Wimbledon singles title in any discipline.

He is also the youngest player to win a Wimbledon singles title since 16-year-old Martina Hingis lifted the



Japan's Tokito Oda with the Wimbledon wheelchair singles trophy. **PHOTO: AFP**

women's trophy in 1997. "This is so amazing. I didn't expect this amazing support on this court. I am feeling like I'm living in a dream. I'm so happy," Oda said. "I want to thank Alfie and his support team. It was not easy playing in this situation against a country's home player. — AFP

Maha United beat Rakhine United 3-1 in MNL Week-12

MAHA United defeated Rakhine United 3-1 in the Week-12 match of the Myanmar National League held at Thuwunna Youth Training Centre in Yangon yesterday. The two teams that have

strengthened

and recruited new players met in the mid-season transfer period and the Maha United team managed to win.

With the victory, Maha United reached the 3rd place in the standing table. The Rakhine United team is still in the middle of the points table due to the defeat. Both teams used main players and launched opening attacks from the start. Thet Naing scored first and second goals for Maha United at 36 and 57 minute and the third and winning goal was scored at 90+4 minute by Kaung Myat Thu. A single or consolation goal for Rakhine United was scored by Kaung Si Thu at 90+3 minute. Regarding the good performance, the best player award went to Thet Naing, star player of Maha United. Hanthawady United will take on Myawady FC at Thuwunna Stadium today and ISPE FC will play against Shan United at YUSC Stadium today. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

Maha United player (yellow) poises to shoot the ball during the MNL Week-12 match against Rakhine United at Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon on 16 July 2023. **PHOTO: MNL**

