THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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

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

We never illegalize official currencies: SAC Information Team Leader

Inflow of large amounts of twenty-thousand currency notes to monetary market absolutely impossible

MAJ-GEN Zaw Min Tun replies to queries raised by a reporter on the distribution of twenty-thousand-kyat new Myanmar currency note as follows: —

Q: Mingalaba! I would like to raise a question related to the printing and distribution of Myanmar currency notes of twenty thousand kyats on 23 July 2023. People are worried about hiking prices of foreign exchange rates and gold prices because of the printing and distribution of twenty thousand currency notes. So, how do you clarify current situations to the government and the people?

A: We enquired about the root causes of such an event. First, we found it as rumours. I would like to firstly explain the spreading of rumours. The Central Bank of Myanmar announced 8 am

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Power sector leads FDI surge

MIC greenlights 10 new investment projects creating 7,640 employments

Thabyaywa solar power plant project in Thazi Township – one of the renewable energy sources in Myanmar.

IN a significant boost to Myanmar's economy, the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) has greenlit to ten new investment projects, with a major focus on the power sector, during its meeting on 24 July 2023. The approved projects, which also span industries like electricity, hospitality, tourism, livestock and fishery, are set to attract a total investment of US$446.58 million and K254,951.442 million.

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NATIONAL

Research on costumes, genetics of Pyu people to be carried out

Pyu Ancient Cities – one of the World Heritage Lists.

U Aung Aung Kyaw, Director of the Department of Archaeology and National Museum, said that research on the Pyu period costumes, the genetics and life-span calculation of the Pyu people will be carried out.

To do such research, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture has currently established the Pyu generation research supervision team and the Pyu generation field research team.

"Regarding Pyu, our department is verifying literary evidence, field research reports, excavation findings, and stone inscriptions with a team of research officers led by the Deputy Director-General.

And the evidence is being extracted. Later, in addition to the expert staff, the Myanmar Historical Commission is planning to gather Pyu-related experts and hold workshops. We will proceed after coordination and verification," U Aung Aung Kyaw said.

Throughout the history of Myanmar, the genetics of the Pyu people who have passed through the history from the Stone Age, the Iron Age, and the Bronze Age to the Pyu period will be compared with the genetics of today's people.

Pyu generation research will also be conducted in the field at Pyu ancient cities and Iron and Bronze Age sites.

As the research work is done at the national level, it will be documented in the whole process. — ASH/KZL

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

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

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

National Disaster Management Committee

NATIONAL

MIC greenlights 10 new investment projects creating ...

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These groundbreaking initiatives are projected to create an impressive 7,640 job opportunities, offering much-needed employment prospects for the country's growing workforce. Furthermore, the MIC has also granted permission to increase the capital for ten ongoing investment projects.

SAC Member Myanmar Investment Commission Chair Lt-Gen Moe Myint Tun chairs the MIC meeting 2/2023 yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

Operating under the framework of the Myanmar Investment Law, the commission plays a vital role in evaluating investment proposals from both local and foreign investors while providing valuable services to existing investors.

As of June 2023, Myanmar has drawn investments from 52 countries, with Singapore, China, and Thailand leading the pack as the top three investing nations. Notably, the power sector has emerged as the most attractive investment destination, accounting for 28.25 per cent of the total investment inflow, closely followed by oil and gas at 24.59 per cent, and the industrial sector at 14.39 per cent. These statistics underscore the immense potential and promise that Myanmar holds for international investors across various business sectors.

The latest approvals reflect the country's commitment to fostering a conducive investment climate and accelerating economic growth. As Myanmar continues to open up to foreign investors and businesses, the future seems promising, with the power sector poised to remain at the forefront of the nation's development journey. — ASH/KTZH

We never illegalize official currencies: SAC Information Team Leader

FROM PAGE-1

yesterday concerning the circulation of a new currency twenty-thousand note. In mid-day, two rumours came out. The first rumour was the circulation of twenty-thousand-kyat notes; more currency notes may come out; higher valued currency notes may emerge; Myanmar currency value will decline; and it may cause a high inflation rate. One more item of rumour came out a few hours later. Such a rumour was intentionally spread that existing currency notes may be revoked. As that day was Sunday, the forex rate of the US dollar gradually increased and the gold price rose as well. As it was an office holiday, the US dollar exchange rate was slightly high due to the lack of exchanging currencies practically. The gold price was also sharply high. This morning, the Central Bank of Myanmar issued a press release on the Q&A session for public observation. Such a Q&A session showed comprehensive facts and data. After the CBM issued it at about 9 am, one more rumour came out between 10:30 am and 11 am. Such a rumour was based on some parts of the Q&A session of the CBM. It showed that everybody can take three twenty thousand currency notes each. Moreover, it mentioned that a large number of such currency notes based on the Myanmar population have been printed and published. At the same time, some exile media mentioned the fabricated stories presented by a Myanmar economic observer. The rumour carried that it was not good in the economic situation as the government published new currency notes. Consequently, the US dollar exchange rate and prices of gold were high. Later, prices of other commodities were also raised. As a main reason to cause such an event, the CBM issued an announcement on 23 July 2023, regarding the export and import measures. Once, an announcement was mentioned that 65 per cent of earnings from export must be exchanged with Myanmar currency. The Chairman of the State Administration Council always talked about 65 per cent of exchanging the currency whenever he met with MSME businesspersons or other businesspersons. He told businesspersons or industrial entrepreneurs that the exchange rate with Myanmar currency must be amended and reduced at an appropriate time. On 13 July, the CBM issued a press release that 50 per cent of earnings from export must be exchanged with Myanmar currency instead of 65 per cent. After that, everybody may notice that the trade process of the nation speeded up. Moreover, incomes from foreign exchange were higher in the market. The US dollar forex rate was more stable. At present, as twenty thousand currency notes were published, we accept that rumours were spread to cause instability in situations. Importantly, I would like to inform such an issue and guarantee them the stability of the situation. The Q&A session of the CBM issued at about 9 am today was comprehensive.

However, it includes the technical terms and the public may understand it. What I want to say regarding this case is that… No 1, the K20,000-note is not issued in a large sum but it is just a commemorative note. Other countries had issued currency notes as a gesture of commemorative events. But, we have never made that before. We minted gold coins marking the 75th Diamond Jubilee Independence Day. At that time, although people can buy at fixed prices, they cannot purchase a lot. The current case is like that. Another fact is that it includes in the statement of the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM). The new K 20,000 note is just a commemorative note and it will be granted if the people pay the equal value of note at the bank. There is also a limitation. If the people exchange their damaged notes with new K 20,000 notes worth K10 million at the bank, they will not be granted K10 million. One person can get only three K20,000 notes. These three notes will not be issued for free. As the saying goes, if one gives rice, he can get oil. The banknotes are aimed at exchanging damaged banknotes. The CBM will destroy all the damaged notes. Therefore, I am sure that it is completely impossible for new K20,000 notes to enter the financial market massively. I also guarantee that it will not happen. So, there will be no inflation. It spreads rumours to occur instability. The next fact is that the government also guarantees businesses in Section 36 of the Constitution. The government abides by the 2008 Constitution. It also assures with Section 36 (d) shall not nationalize economic enterprises and Section 36(f) shall not demonetize the currency legally in circulation. Therefore, we will not illegalize the officially issued currency as an illegal denomination. I also reaffirm that. The last one is that some are preparing to spread rumours in time regarding the current situation. The government can control these circumstances in business sectors. Therefore, what I want to inform the people is that they can operate for their socioeconomic development, and I guarantee it. Thank you. — MNA/TTA, KTZH

NATIONAL

27 mln fingerlings to be added into lakes in Yangon Region

THE Department of Fisheries estimates to add 27 million fingerlings into the lakes of Yangon Region this monsoon and it has already freed 7.903 million fingerlings, according to the regional department.

The department released 26.1 million fingerlings last year. It conducted the 22nd fish-adding ceremony at 20 lakes in districts and townships in the third week of July accounting for to 29.27 per cent of this year's target.

"The Head of State instructed all those concerned all to add fingerlings on priority as the people can catch them as food in the natural lakes directly. Therefore, we release two-inch-sized fingerlings into the main natural waters or lakes in the regions. If we free 100 fish, 80 may be alive. We add the fish species with the objectives such as ensuring the sustainable development of fishery together with fish resources conservation, to prevent extinction of fish species, ensuring the sustainable development of fish species in natural lakes, developing the fish production and socioeconomic status of locals with food security," said U Myint Shwe, Director of the region department.

The fish-adding ceremony in progress yesterday in Kyauktan Township. **PHOTO: KANU**

The Yangon Region Department of Fisheries added a total of 7.903 million fingerlings — three million in April and 4.75 million during the third week in July. If the fish recourses are decreasing in the river, creeks and lakes due to natural causes or human beings, the fish-adding programme can make the situation normal. Therefore, the fingerlings are freed into the natural freshwater lakes in states and regions yearly to increase fish resources.

The Yangon Region has 100,000 acres of fish firms and produces freshwater fish. It has adequate food and exports to regions and states including Nay Pyi Taw. The freshwater fish and prawns from Ayeyawady and Bago regions are packed at 79 cold storage facilities to export and the country directly exports Rohu to Bangladesh via Sittway. Increasing the production of marine products that have large export volumes and providing techniques and agrochemicals to promote production rates per acre can ensure foreign incomes for the farmers.

The department launched the diploma course in fisheries and aquaculture at Fisheries Institute (Twantay) last year. It is estimated to add over 100 million fingerlings across the nation in 2023-2024FY and 27 million fish in Yangon Region. — Nyein Thu (MNA)/KTZH

Kayin State CM meets Precision Auto Engineering Co officials

KAYIN State Chief Minister U Saw Myint Oo, members of the state government, along with departmental officials, received Precision Auto Engineering Co Ltd project general manager and party yesterday at the state government office, engaging in the assembly, production and distribution of BAJAJ brand vehicles (two-wheel, three-wheel and four-wheel) in Kayin State.

The meeting focused on the status of vehicle assembly, production, distribution and sales in the Hpa-an Industrial Zone, giving more than 120 local employees access to employment opportunities, investment status of about US$3.949 million, the assembly and production capacity status, availability of raw materials and operating conditions in the manufacturing plant, the progress of manufacturing electric vehicles (EVs) project, creating employment opportunities for locals, and efforts for sustainability of the company's goal. The chief minister coordinated with relevant departments and gave the necessary instructions. — Saw Myo Min Thein (IPRD)/TS

The people are urged to receive vaccination of Covid-19 without fail as full-time vaccination of Covid-19 and receiving booster shots can effectively mitigate infection of the virus, severe suffering from the disease and increase of death rate due to the disease.

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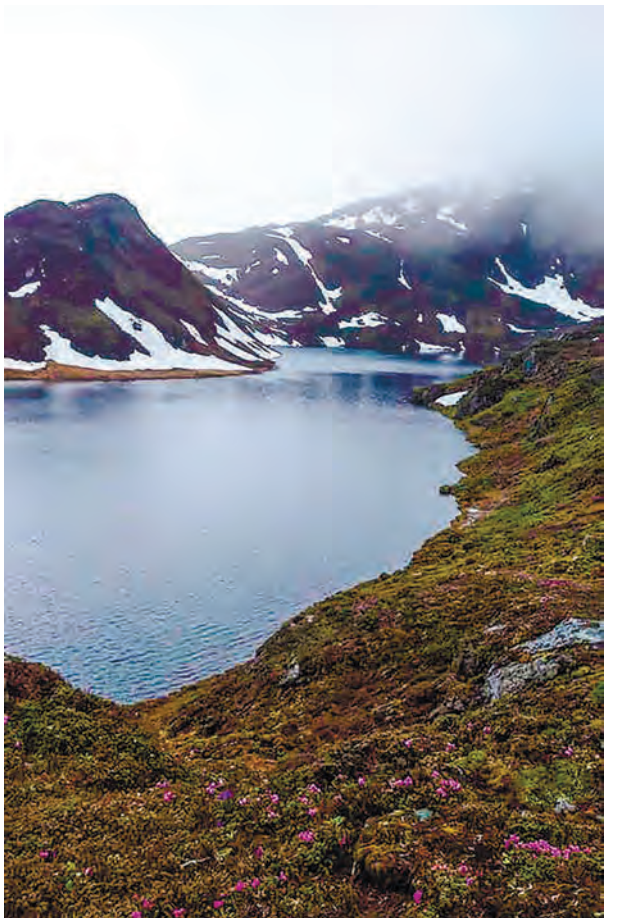
NATIONAL

Kachin State receives 885 foreign tourists in H1 of 2023

DIRECTOR U Khine Win of the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism (Kachin State) said that a total of 885 foreign tourists visited destinations in Kachin State from January to June 2023. The number of tourists has increased by 429 compared to the same period last year.

The number of homegrown and foreign tourists is increasing year by year as 71,771 tourists visited Kachin State in 2021, 184,111 in 2022, and 70,788 from January to April 2023. The incomes for those years were K1,353.9 million and US$16,635, K3,249.1 million and $47,535, and K1,333 million and $10,785, respectively, he added.

The Kachin State Government is making efforts to develop new destinations in the region and implementing the upgrade of the Myitsone region (the confluence of the Maykha and Malikha rivers) as a tourism icon of Kachin State. They are also coordinating with residents and PutaO District tourism management organizations to make the PutaO region a capital of domestic and foreign tourism since it has many natural beauties, including snow-capped mountains.



Above & Right : Photos depict the serene beauty of the well-known lake in PutaO.

For the development of tourism activities in Kachin State, new licences were granted to 167 tourist guides, 61 tourism businesses, and 69 hotels and guesthouses in the financial years 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. — ASH/CT

Myanmar eases COVID-19 restrictions for international travellers

Some foreign travellers are seen undergoing Covid test at the Yangon International Airport.

THE Ministry of Health has relaxed the COVID-19 restrictions for international travellers entering Myanmar by air and by sea, Dr Htay Lwin, head of Yangon Region's Public Health and Medical Services Departments.

Health Declaration Form is mandatory to fill in for all international travellers who arrive in Myanmar by air and by sea. The form needs to be submitted to health officials, according to the ministry's notification for public health guidelines released in early July. Legal action will be taken against those who fail to do so under the existing laws.

"Earlier, foreign travellers need to show proof of COVID-19 vaccination certificate. If they cannot provide them, RT-PCR testing within 48 hours was mandatory for all travellers.

If not, they must be quarantined for a week. Now, the neighbouring countries eased all the COVID-19 rules including vaccination certificates and health declaration forms.

For Myanmar, a health declaration form is mandatory for entry into Myanmar. If a passenger is found to have a symptom of the disease, they will be examined. If the person tests positive, they will be transferred to Yangon General Hospital and Webagi Specialty Hospital for quarantine," Dr Htay Lwin elaborated.

Additionally, they need to show Coronavirus travel medical insurance at the checkpoints. If foreign travellers can provide international health insurance and relevant health insurance from the respective government, they do not need to buy health insurance from Myanma Insurance. If they do not have one, they need to buy coronavirus health insurance from Myanma Insurance.

Travellers need to inform the related health department if they find any symptoms of COVID-19 during their stay in Myanmar. They can also take Covid tests at the laboratories recognized by the Ministry of Health if it is required for their next destination.

Travellers must receive treatment at the relevant treatment centres or hospitals or hotels for quarantine if they test positive. They must incur healthcare costs. — ASH/EM

NATIONAL

Myanmar-China bilateral economic cooperation meeting held in Yangon

The Sino-Myanmar bilateral economic cooperation meeting in progress yesterday in Yangon.

A meeting on Myanmar-China bilateral economic cooperation took place at the conference hall of the China-Myanmar Economic Cooperation and Development Promotion Association in Yankin Township, Yangon, yesterday evening. Mr Li Fu Quan, Chairman of CMECDPA, delivered a welcoming speech, and Mr Hu Bin, Mayor of China's Jilin City People's Government, discussed matters concerning economic development and investment in Jilin City. Following this, U Nyein Chan Maung, Chairman of the National Development Association of Kyaukpyu, Myanmar, also addressed the audience.

During the meeting, Mr Lyu Ji Quan, Head of the Department of Foreign Relations of Jilin City, and U Nyein Chan Maung had a prior discussion to establish Jilin City and Kyaukpyu as sister cities. They exchanged gifts and took photos together. The attendees had friendly discussions on various topics, including bilateral economic cooperation, tourism, investments, and fostering friendship and development between the two nations. — MNA/KZW

Eight new cases of COVID-19 reported on 24 July, total figure registers 640,985

MYANMAR'S COVID-19-positive cases rose to **640,985** after **eight** new cases were reported on 24 July 2023 according to the Ministry of Health. Therefore, a total of **10,994,246** laboratory samples were examined to date and the confirmed COVID-19 cases reached **640,985**. The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **619,773** including **one** new recovery. The death toll from COVID-19 in the country registered **19,494** on 24-7-2023 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

YCDC decides to produce quality humus from waste for crop plantations in Yangon Region

THE Yangon City Development Committee recently stated that it will distribute quality humus produced from waste from landfills in the Yangon Region to crop plantations.

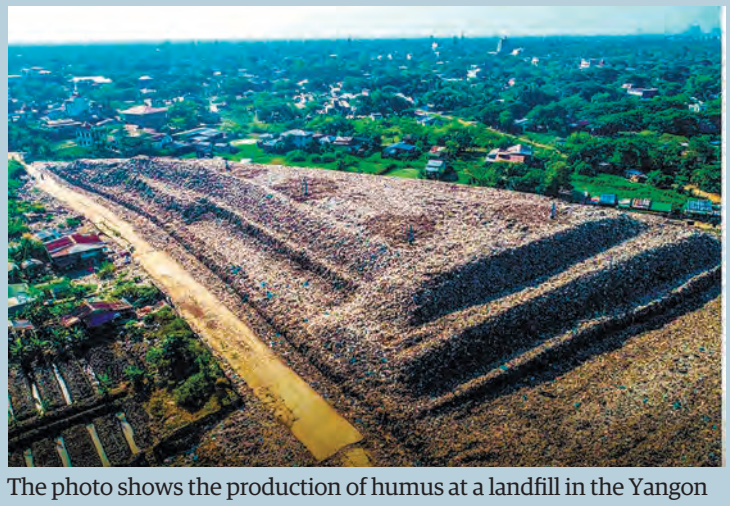
EM Bokashi is being produced from the waste at Thiri Mingala Market in Hline Township and humus is being produced at landfills in Yangon Region to use it in greening tasks of the Yangon City.

Spoiled and damaged vegetables discarded at Thiri Mingala market in Hline Township are used in producing five tonnes of humus per day. Businesspersons from Nyaunghnapin agricultural and livestock special zone in Hlegu Township purchase humus, according to the markets department of YCDC.

Humus is also used at monsoon paddy plantations and vegetable patches of YCDC. The committee decided to produce quality humus from waste to sell to farmers for vegetable plantations in the regions.

A total of 33 townships in the municipal area of YCDC dispose of some 2,500 tonnes of waste daily. These are piled at landfills in Hteinbin of Hlinethaya Township, Daweigyoung of Dagon Myothit (North) Township, Kyuchaung of Dala Township, Hlawga and Seikkyi-Khanaungto for the production of humus.

The wastes are piled in relevant districts of the Yangon Region. Waste from the west and north districts of the Yangon Region is disposed of at the Hteinbin landfill in Hlinethaya Township, that of east and south districts at Daweigyoung landfill in Dagon Myothit (North) Township, that of Dala Township to Dala landfill and that of Seikkyi-Khanaungto to the landfill of the township daily. — ASH/TTA



The photo shows the production of humus at a landfill in the Yangon Region.

Illegal trade eradication teams make significant seizures worth millions

A combined team managed by the Bago Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force conducted inspections near Shwethanlwin Tollgate on 21 July. They intercepted a Man tractor head and a trailer (estimated value of K70 million) travelling from Myawady to Yangon, carrying five kinds of goods worth K31,614,152, including 300 sets of Owl offline UPS that were not declared in the Import Declaration (ID). The action was carried out following Customs procedures.

Likewise, a combined team supervised by the Mandalay Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force intercepted a Nissan Diesel tractor head, a Tongya semitrailer, a Dongfeng tractor head, and a Yuchang semitrailer (approximate value of K114 million) heading to Mandalay from Muse, at the 23/6 Milepost on Mandalay-Lashio Road on 22 July. The vehicles were carrying 21 kinds of smuggled goods worth K114,309,720, including 2,700 kilogrammes of Lion Head food colour and 1,330 kilogrammes of castor oil, which exceeded the quantity mentioned in the Import Declaration (ID). The action was taken under Customs procedures.

Seized illegal goods in Mandalay Region.

The combined on-duty team conducted inspections at the Yepu permanent checkpoint and seized illegal goods worth K29.85 million, including 180 jade beads in various sizes, from a Toyota Mark II (estimated value of K25 million) on 23 July. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

As a result, a total of 10 arrests were made over three consecutive days from 21 to 23 July, with an estimated value of K384,773,872, according to the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee's report. — MNA/MKKS

LOCAL BUSINESS

Palm oil wholesale reference price for Yangon Region set K130 higher this week ending 30 July

THE wholesale reference rate of palm oil for the Yangon market has increased by K130 per viss this week ending 30 July, according to the Supervisory Committee on edible oil import and distribution.

The reference price was set at K4,100 per viss from 17 to 23 July. For the week ending 30 July, the price was set higher at K4,230 per viss. The figures showed an increase of K130 per viss compared to that of the previous week.

The Supervisory Committee on edible oil import and distribution under the Ministry of Commerce has been closely observing the FOB prices in Malaysia and Indonesia including transportation cost, tariff and banking service, and issuing the wholesale market reference rate for edible oil every week.

Yet, the palm oil market price is exorbitantly high Compared to the reference price.

If those edible oil retailers and wholesalers are found overcharging, storing inventory intentionally and attempting unscrupulous action to manipulate the market, they will face legal action under the Essential Supplies and Service Act, MoC released a statement.

The Ministry of Commerce is striving for consumers not to worry over the supply of edible oil. The ministry is also trying to secure edible oil sufficiency, supervise the market to offer reasonable prices to consumers and maintain price stability.

At present, mobile market trucks operated by oil importing companies, in coordination with Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association, were back to business in some townships on 17 July 2022 to offer palm oil at a subsidized rate. They offer palm oil at a fairer price to the consumers directly depending on the reference price. However, there are limited sources of supply although they directly sell the palm oil at reference rate depending on the volume quota.

The domestic consumption of edible oil is estimated at 1 million tonnes per year. The local cooking oil production is just about 400,000 tonnes. To meet the oil sufficiency in the domestic market, about 700,000 tonnes of cooking oil are yearly imported through Malaysia and Indonesia. — NN/EM

Consumers are seen lining up for buying palm oil at the wholesale reference price in Yangon.

MGEA temporarily suspends gold trading to curb market manipulation amid new currency issuance

IN response to concerns about potential market manipulation arising from the issuance of the new K20,000 notes by the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM), the Mandalay Gold Entrepreneurs Association (MGEA) has taken the proactive step of temporarily halting gold trading, according to a statement from an association official.

The CBM's announcement on 23 July regarding the issuance of the new currency notes, commencing from 31 July 2023, has led to a limited exchange of torn, dirty, and damaged notes for the new ones, while the currency already in circulation remains valid as official tender.

However, the news of the new currency has had an impact on the prices of gold and the dollar exchange rate, both of which have been on the rise. As of 24 July, pure gold was priced at K3.58 million per tical, and the exchange rate for a US dollar stood at K3,420.

MGEA's decision to suspend gold trading aims to prevent any potential price manipulation during this period. CBM, in its notification about the new K20,000 notes featuring an albino elephant, has made it clear that it will collaborate with law enforcement authorities to investigate and take necessary actions against any unscrupulous individuals attempting to artificially hike commodity prices and foreign exchange rates to the detriment of the public interest.

Additionally, the Yangon Gold Entrepreneurs Association called on traders on 24 July to avoid spreading malicious rumours that could cause commodity price volatility, urging cooperation among members and gold shop owners to ensure price stability.

Earlier, to stabilize the gold price, MGEA had sold over seven visses of pure gold at a special price within two weeks starting from 19 June.

Myanmar's gold price is closely tied to the spot gold price and the US dollar exchange rate. The recent surge in the dollar, exchanging at over K4,500, had pushed the gold price to a record-high of K3.7 million per tical in late August 2022.

In a bid to alleviate the gold price surge, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation had sold gold ingots through a competitive bidding system in Yangon, Mandalay, and Nay Pyi Taw. Furthermore, both the YGEA and Mandalay Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association had sold gold bullion supplied by their executive members as part of their strategy to reduce the gold price. In light of these developments, stakeholders in Myanmar's gold market are closely monitoring the situation, and with the temporary suspension of gold trading by MGEA, efforts to maintain market stability remain a top priority. — NN/EM

Issue of new currency note cannot impact on forex market, says CBM

THE Central Bank of Myanmar emphasized on 23 July in its press release that the issue of the new K20,000 note will not negatively affect the daily forex market trading.

Responding to the public concerns over the issue of the new banknote, CBM focuses on monetary policies and framework to calculate and hold the specified Reserve Requirement Ratio in the financial system to reduce and curb inflation and contribute to the country's Gross Domestic Product growth target.

The authorized banks raise and reduce the reserve requirement ratio in the financial system rather than interest rate hikes to stimulate businesses. CBM is taking a close look at the money supply to increase and decrease the ratio.

This new note can be considered a celebration and it will be distributed in a limited number. So, the inflation fear is unlikely. CBM is closely observing the foreign currency flow daily to handle inflation and stabilize the forex market.

CBM is also enhancing liquidity swap operations. Those banks with foreign currency reserves are injecting money into the businesses in need.

The foreign exchange rate is quite stable, according to the exchange rate transacted on the official online trading platform for interbank transactions among authorized dealers. As the banks are selling and exchanging the US dollars, there does not impede importing businesses.

Thus, there will be no impact on the daily forex trading with the issue of the new K20,000 note. — TWA/EM

OPINION

Optimize thinking: The key to unlocking the best ideas

THERE are moments in life when individuals find themselves trapped, unable to express their thoughts or ideas. Cut off from external influences, they struggle to generate new ideas or find solutions in their current state.

This predicament often arises when one's thoughts or ideas tend to lean towards pessimism rather than optimism. Critical thinking requires an optimistic mindset to shape a more beautiful world. However, it is essential to strike a balance and approach every situation with a correct and righteous perspective.

When faced with a mental block, taking a break from thinking becomes necessary. Engaging in activities that are different from one's previous thought process can provide a much-needed release. Whether it be singing, talking, or physical movement, freeing the mind from its constraints allows for the emergence of new ways of thinking. By shedding the pressure associated with the problem at hand, one can approach the search for a solution with renewed clarity.

Optimizing one's thinking is crucial for unlocking the best ideas. By fostering an optimistic mindset, taking breaks to refresh the mind, seeking assistance from others, and embracing solutions from individuals of diverse backgrounds, everybody can overcome mental obstacles and arrive at the correct and righteous solutions. Remember, the best thoughts and ideas can emerge from anyone, regardless of their position or age.

If this internal shift fails to yield results, seeking assistance from others becomes crucial. Oftentimes, the ideas that elude us find refuge in the minds of those around us. Some individuals possess a natural ability to solve problems effortlessly. It is imperative to resist selfish inclinations and foster a culture of collaboration. When one person is unable to find a solution, passing the baton to another individual who may possess the capacity to solve it becomes paramount. The ability to solve the problem should take precedence over personal ego or position.

Choosing the perfect time or date to address and resolve problems is a luxury one cannot afford. Time and tide wait for no one. In the limited timeframe of life, everyone must actively seek the best ideas and thoughts, even if it means seeking help from others. The best solutions can emerge from individuals of any age or position, as long as their thinking is correct. Ultimately, the positioning of those striving to generate the best thoughts or ideas holds greater importance than their hierarchical standing.

Optimizing one's thinking is crucial for unlocking the best ideas. By fostering an optimistic mindset, taking breaks to refresh the mind, seeking assistance from others, and embracing solutions from individuals of diverse backgrounds, everybody can overcome mental obstacles and arrive at the correct and righteous solutions. Remember, the best thoughts and ideas can emerge from anyone, regardless of their position or age.

■

ARTICLE

The Burma Circle of the Geological Survey of India and their Contributions to the Geology of Myanmar

By THAN HTUN
(GEOSCIENCE MYANMAR)

EPISODE:16

V P Sondhi came from a respectable family of Jallundhur and was born on 10 March 1903. He had his early education in Jallundhur but joined the Prince of Whales College, Jammu for higher education. In 1925, he obtained his MSc degree from that College, then affiliated with Punjab University, and one of the earliest to start teaching geology in the country.

V P Sondhi (1903-1989), Source: GSI

He joined the Geological Survey of India on November 3, 1926, as Assistant Superintendent, being the first Indian to be selected in the country as Class I, Officer. He had earlier spent a field season with AM Heron in Rajasthan and had given an excellent account of his knowledge and abilities, both theoretical and practical, and demonstrated a keen interest in fieldwork, so essential for a geologist. His recruitment in the Geological Survey of India was a consequence of this excellent report by Heron, so difficult to obtain from an Englishman who was then resentful of Indians entering in Class I, service.

In the Geological Survey of India, he started his career as a member of the Burma Party and carried out geological investigations in the Chindwin and Shwebo districts of Upper Burma. Work in this area, with immense mineral potential, is required also in sillimanite, barytes, stibnite, coal, lignite, salt and even building stones, besides groundwater investigations. In order to work out the regional geology of this vast but important area, Coggin Brown and Sondhi carried out joint traverses from Loilem to Maukmai, a distance of over 250 miles (400 kilometres), and from Taunggyi to Salween. Later on, Sondhi resurveyed a portion of the area and successfully identified two geological formations on lithological and palaeontological bases. Also, Sondhi traced the lead-silver ore belt northward and reported many other mineral deposits, whereas along with Clegg he reported on the Gyophyu and Nyaunglebin Lakes scheme for gravity water supply to Rangoon. Most of this work, however, remained in manuscript reports.

Sondhi discovered many coal outcrops between the Loian Coalfield and the Minapalaung District and a good lignite deposit in the Tertiary lacustrine deposits in the Kengtung Valley.

During 1936-37 Sondhi accompanied the Sino-Burma Boundary Commission on the northeast frontier of Burma. Basically, his job was to carry out reconnaissance work to ensure that as far as possible no worthwhile mineral deposit was lost to China in the process of demarcating the boundary. However, he was in charge of topographic surveys, transport, etc. In addition, in recognition of the excellent job he did, he was honoured by MBE (Member of the British Empire), a relatively well-respected title for civilians, by the Government of the time. Sondhi was transferred back to Calcutta in 1937, but went abroad on study leave in 1937-38.

Geological Reconnaissance in the Southern Shan States

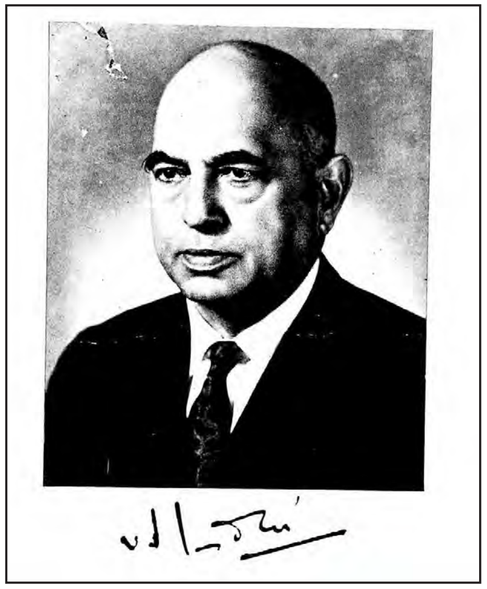
J Coggin Brown and V P Sondhi conducted Geological Reconnaissance in the Southern Shan States and reported in 1933. Due to limited space, only the significant points could be extracted as follows:-

Taunggyi to Hopong

The area covers map sheet 93/H1. For ten miles east of Taunggyi, as measured along the main road, Plateau Limestones continue. They build the precipitous crags and the ridge that faces a Lower Palaeozoic inlier on the west and overshadows Taunggyi on the east, in consequence of which the road has to make a detour of some miles to the south before continuing in its normal direction. These crags have a general easterly dip with a few minor undulations down to the Hopong plain at Pa-leng, ten miles from Taunggyi.

The rocks seen are all typical representatives of the lower division of the Plateau Limestone, sometimes grey brecciated dolomites friable enough to kicked to powder; often, harder, greyish white, recemented material with a deceptive sandy appearance and occasionally handed with pink. Travertine and secondary limestones are of common occurrence over the flat ground between the first and second steep descents, i.e., between miles 5 and 8.

Along their junction with the older rocks the Plateau Limestones are fossiliferous, showing sections of crinoidal stems, brachiopods, and corals. A cap of similar limestone rests unconformably upon the older rocks about four miles N N W of Hopong. The latter rocks that build up the greater portion of the ridge here, dip steeply to the east, and the Plateau Limestone, shows gentle dips to the northeast, forming the crest of the ridge with peaks of over 5,000 feet in height.



V P Sondhi (1903-1989), Source: GSI

Traverse South of Hopong

The area covers map sheets 93 H1 and H2. Hopong lies at an elevation of 3,600 feet at the head of the narrow plain of the Nam Tamhpak, a stream that flows to the south through the small Shan States of Namhkok, Nawngwawn, Wa yin and Hsahtung, for 86 miles before it turns east to enter the Nam Pawn.

A traverse was made down this valley from Hopong to Namhkok, a distance of 13 miles. Around Hopong the character of the country, although it is underlain by Lower Palaeozoic rocks, recalls the downs of Thamakan, between Kalaw and Taunggyi, in its rounded grassy outlines, bamboo groves, lines of giant aloes and occasional banyan trees, but the valley is hemmed into the north-east and west by limestone hills. For the greater part of the distance traversed, the road lies on the alluvium of the plain or on the lower flanks of the eastern foot-hills. Although exposures are few and far between, there is little doubt that for five- or six-miles Plateau Limestone forms both walls of the valley; thus, at the sixth mile tabular, westerly dipping bands can be seen as steep scarps. The isolated hill of Loi Tang, which rises from the plain to the west of the eighth mile has a thick capping of Plateau Limestone, probably of the younger division, and may be entirely built of this rock.

Hopong to Htamsang

The higher ground east of Hopong, where the road crosses it, has no well-marked direction nor individuality for it consists, at any rate in this latitude, of a series of valleys of enclosed drainage, the winding rims of which give rise to a confused topography. Further south the development of a single ridge with peaks of over 8,000 feet in altitude, forming the boundary between the Hopong and Namhkok States on the west and Mong Pawn on the east, seems to betoken a change in lithological composition. Near mile 22-3 there is a cauldron valley with limestone peaks around it and craggy outcrops continue at intervals to the crest at 22-7. Here there is a change and limestones are replaced by brown-grey and white, sandy shales.

Fossiliferous Upper Plateau Limestone

Beyond these shaly outcrops at mile 23-2 occurs the first of the fossiliferous localities of the upper division of the Plateau Limestone, the organic remains from which enabled Diener to prove its Permo-Carboniferous age. Middlemiss was the first to obtain fossils in this neighbourhood and though it is not possible exactly to determine the different localities he mentions, his descriptions of the rocks themselves cannot be improved upon and for this reason are summarized below. The conversion of the rough cart track which he traversed in 1898 into a modern motor road has destroyed the utility of his distance points as a means of identification.

As measured along the road, the places in which the best exposures of the bryozoan limestones occur at miles 23-7 and 24-1 on the roadside. From representative collections made at these localities, Dr F R C Reed has identified the fossils listed in his paper on the Anthracoliyhic fauna of Southern Shan States. Htamsang Rest House is situated at miles 25-4 and around it and the village further west there are abundant rocky outcrops of the Lower Plateau protruding through the soil cap in all directions.

Htamsang to Mong Pawn

The area covers map sheet no. 93 H/5. After leaving the crest of the ridge with its richly fossiliferous, tabular Permo-Carboniferous limestones at miles 28-3, the road commences its winding descent to the Mong Pawn plain at mile 73-2, and about mile 36-5 again encounters fossiliferous Permo-Carboniferous strata which here border the plain. Between these two exposures, there is a series of rocks consisting in the main of greenish-grey shales, sandy shales, and purple mudstones with less frequent sandstones and a solitary band of limestone. From these rocks, C S Middlemiss in 1898 obtained an impression of part of a trilobite, a gastropod, and an ill-preserved cast of a portion of a Nautilus and some indistinct vermicular markings, but they failed to yield any fossils as a result of Dr Coggin Brown's earlier examination. He pointed out then that the evidence, scanty as it is, points to the series being older than the Plateau Limestones, while lithologically, especially in the presence of fine-grained sandstones, it appeared to have affinities with the Namhsim (Silurian) beds of the Northern States. Short notes of the remaining trips are: -

Mong Pawn to Loi-Samhpu Pass

The area covers map sheet no. 93 H/5 and H/9.

An unfossiliferous sandy series builds the western flanks of the Loi-Samhpu.

Loi-Samhpu Pass to Loilem

The area covers map sheet no. 93 H/9. Unfossiliferous limestones form the higher eastern flank of the Loi-Samhpu. The Panghkawkao graptolite bed was found to the west of Loilem. Silurian limestone exposures near Loilem itself.

Loilem to Wan Pong

The area covers map sheet no. 93/H9. New fossil localities in Silurian rocks near Loilem. Types of Silurian limestone. The Panghkawkwo graptolite bed. Upper Naungkangyi purple beds. Details of the more important exposures. A remarkable morphological change takes place at mile 65. A predominantly sandy series between mile 67 and Wan Pong. Possible Silurian correlation of the sandy series.

Mr Sandhi's Traverse from Loilem

The area covers map sheet no. 93 H/9. A series of interbedded limestones and mudstones. Loi Lang is built of Nyaungkangyi mudstones capped by limestone bands.

Traverse to the north of Loilem

The area covers map sheet no. 93 H/9 and G/12. Remains of Pleistocene lacustrine deposits. Mudstone at the 11th mile. Slags of former Iron smelting operations. Silurian horizons probably occur about miles 12 and 13.

Wan Pong to Hsaimong

The area covers map sheet no. 93 H/9 and H/13; 93 G/16;93 K/4 and K/7. The limestone plateau between Wan Pong and Nam Teng. Upper Plateau Limestone on the left bank of the Nam Teng. A Red Bed series overlies the Plateau Limestones. The Plateau Limestones appear again and continue to Hsaimong. Sandy sediments of a slight extent and unknown age near miles 118-5. Character of the limestone topography.

Hsaimong to Kunhing

The area covers map sheet no. 93 K/7 and 129.6 miles from Taunggyi. A steep descent down the Hwe Leng to the Nam Pang. Brecciated Plateau Limestone at Hsaimong. A fossiliferous series between the Plateau Limestone and Red Beds. The shaly sequence. Occurrence of bands of limestone conglomerate. Limestones overlie the shales. A coarse basal conglomerate is followed by a Red Bed formation. Outcrops of the Red Beds between Wan Laikam and Kunhing. Correlation of Mesozoic rocks.

Kunhing to the Salween

The area covers map sheet no. 93 K/7, K/11 and K/12. Red Bed sandstone between 150-6 and 151-7. Chaung Magyi series forms the western bank of the Salween. Nyaungkangyis faulted into the Chaung Magyis.

Wan Pong to Mongnai

The area covers map sheet no. 93 H/9, H/13 and H/14. The southern extension of the Plateau Limestone. Outcrops of the brecciated limestone. Fossiliferous limestone. Alterations of both varieties of limestone. Mesozoic rocks of the south of Hai-pak. A limestone ridge borders the Nam Tawng Valley on the east. Differences between the eastern and western walls of the Nam Tawng Valley in Mong Nai. The Mong Nai Plain.

Mong Nai to Melun (Me-Lawn)

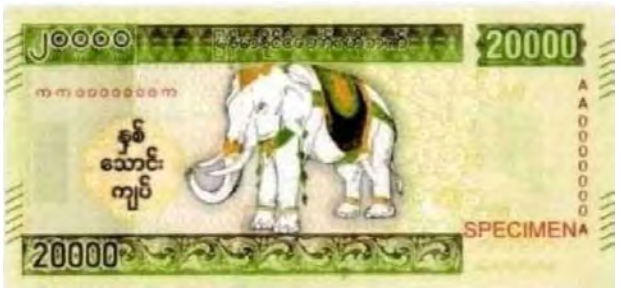
The area covers map sheet no. 93 H/14 and H/15. Older Plateau Limestones around Mong Nai. Thin remnants of Red Beds overlie it to the south. Lower Jurassic preserved by subsidence. The other Plateau Limestone recurs. Acidic igneous rocks not in situ near Melun.

The Old Silver Mines of Mawmai

The area covers map sheet no. 93 H/15. Upper Plateau Limestone between Melun and the old mines. Description of the old lead pits.

References: Coggin Brown, J, and Sondhi, V P, 1933: Geological Reconnaissance in the Southern Shan States, Records of Geological Survey of India, Vol. LXVII.

CURRENT AFFAIRS



The photo shows obverse side of the K20,000 banknote.

CBM to take action against market manipulation

THE Central Bank of Myanmar mentioned in its press release on 23 July that it will investigate and take action against those attempting market manipulation conduct for personal gains for reasons of the issue of the new K20,000 notes.

The newly issued note will not affect the currency in circulation. It will be issued and distributed in returns for defaced and damaged notes. For instance, if a person comes to exchange defective and mutilated notes worth K10 million, only three K20,000 notes are planned to be added to the exchanged amount along with other valid and existing currency notes.

As a result of this, the issue of the new currency note will not affect the value of the currency, the CBM highlighted.

The CBM will join hands with the authorities for law enforcement activities to investigate and take action against those with manipulative behaviour to raise commodity prices and dollar exchange rates as it harms the public interest. — TWA/EM

New passport applications allowed 6 months after lost advertisements

THE passport office announced that the number of people losing or damaging their passports both within the country and abroad is increasing each month.

It is mentioned in the announcement that to apply for a new passport, individuals need to place an advertisement in any state-owned newspaper, along with confirmation letters from the ward or village administrator and the police station. The advertisement should contain their name, father's name, citizenship scrutiny card number, and the lost passport's number.

After six months after the newspaper advertisement, they can apply for a new passport at the passport issuing offices by presenting the original newspaper copy. The applicant must sign a self-declaration stating that the passport was lost in the country and pay a book fee of K35,000, along with the K56,000 lost or damaged fines. — TWA/CT

The picture shows some passport books.

A press briefing for the "Pwekhin" programme organized by SkyNet Channel 9 and MC Entertainment.

"Pwekhin" events to be held at Shwe Htut Tin compound weekly

THE event "Pwekhin", which will include Myanmar plays and fun fairs, will take place at the Shwe Htut Tin compound every Friday and Saturday.

The "Pwekhin" programme will start on 4 and 5 August, and last until the end of August. The programme is organized by SkyNet Channel 9 and MC Entertainment for the public to relive the taste of walking at the fair and watching the drama plays, according to a press conference held on 22 July.

The entrance fee per head is K5,000, and the seats are set at K10,000 and K15,000 per head. The special package is set at K50,000 per mat, as stated by the organizer of the event, Daw Padamyar Kay Khaing.

In the programme, a variety of fun games that all ages can choose to participate in, stalls, a drama play, a circus, a magic show, and other events will be added. The fair will start at 5 pm and the drama play will run from 7 pm to 10 pm. The tickets will be available at the Shwe Htut Tin compound. — TWA/CT

U San Myint, a film actor known as Maung Min Lukalay, passes away

THAKINGYI (aka) U San Myint, who acted as a British soldier in Myanmar video films and was known as Maung Min Lukalay by movie fans, passed away at 12:20 pm on 24 July.

Thakingyi (aka) San Myint was born in Pyay on 16 March 1931. His father was a British soldier who came to Myanmar during British rule, and his mother was Daw Pan Thee. He had six siblings and his father died when he was six years old. At the age of 12, he studied at an English-Myanmar private school free of charge. He passed Standard 7 after studying there only for four years and could speak not only English but also Hindi.

He joined the Burma Army at the age of 18 after passing Standard 7. He served in an artillery battalion and was sent to Yugoslavia in 1952 for a six-month training in how to operate the 76-mm artillery. In 1954, he had to study veterinary medicine in Sakoda, Pakistan.

After that, he participated in military operations named Yangyiaung, Bayintnaung, Loitoon Camp, and Aungmayga. In 1960, he was entitled to attend the officer training course, but he was not selected due to mixed blood, so he left the army in 1962.

After leaving the army, he lived in Kandawlay ward in Yangon and worked as a veterinary staff member at the Yangon Zoo. He assisted in capturing three wild elephants in the Bago mountain range for timber extraction at the request of the Ministry of Forestry.

While in the artillery battalion in Aungban, he got acquainted with the film industry by renting army horses to be used in movies. Thus, he was recruited by film actor U Tin Nyunt and started to enter the film industry with the movie "Yanthu Ko Bamahte".

Later, he got more opportunities to participate in movies. "Maung Min Lukalay" was a phrase used by a British officer to address a Myanmar man. Director Wah Wah Win Shwe taught him to use that phrase in the movie "Sanayma". Thus, the phrase became popular among the Myanmar movie audience.

Thakingyi (aka) U San Myint, who played the role of the British military officer in Myanmar video revolution episodes and the "Sapalin Hnin Maung" series, died at his daughter's home in Bago. He was 94 years old at the time of his death. — TWA/CT

Some video clips of actor Thakingyi (aka) U San Myint.

LIFESTYLE
WORLD

Türkiye's Cat Town, sanctuary for stray cats

CAT Town, a sanctuary for stray cats in central Türkiye, provides a comfortable living space for the furry animals.

Renowned for its stray cats that appear almost everywhere on the streets, Türkiye traditionally has a lot of cat lovers looking after them by providing shelter and food.

Wandering the streets of a Turkish city, it is common to see small containers by the sides of buildings made as shelters for the stray cats, and pet food doled out by the city's inhabitants for them.

The Kocasinan Municipality in the central province of Kayseri has gone further and established five months ago a 600-square-meter Cat Town to provide a sanctuary for these animals.

The felines have all they need in the sanctuary: playgrounds, bungalow huts, bridges, tunnels, climbing tracks, and scratching trees.

Stray cats that are brought to the facility are neutered and placed in a separate place to adapt before joining the other inhabitants of the facility.

Mehmet Cingil, a veterinarian, told Xinhua that the sanctuary provides a soothing place for cat lovers who are unable to keep pets at home and cultivates people's affection for cats.

According to the veterinarian, there are some 25 felines of different breeds in the sanctuary where kindergarten or primary school students visit on a daily basis.

"We want to instill to the youngsters the love for animals, how to show empathy, and how to care for them," said Mehmet Dogan, a municipal official.

"We try to explain to the youngsters that stray or not, cats and animals, in general, are not a nuisance," added Dogan. — Xinhua

Children are seen on 21 July 2023 to play with a cat at the Cat Town", a sanctuary for stray cats in Türkiye's central province of Kayseri. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Greatest rock'n'roll showman Mick Jagger turns 80

MICK Jagger once sang "what a drag it is getting old" but the most senior swinger in town shows little sign of slowing down as he turns 80 on Wednesday.

British rock band The Rolling Stones' singer Mick Jagger (L) and guitarist Keith Richards (R) perform during a concert as part of their 'Stones Sixty European Tour' at the Veltins Arena in Gelsenkirchen, western Germany on 27 July 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

The Rolling Stones frontman is still strutting and gyrating in front of packed-out arenas, most recently touring Europe to mark the band's 60th anniversary.

The icon of 60s counterculture underwent a heart valve replacement in 2019, but his regime of running, kick-boxing, cycling and yoga has maintained his svelte figure and longevity as an energetic showman.

The band completed its 14-date "Sixty" tour last year, although had to cancel one date when Jagger caught Covid.

It was the first time the band had performed without drummer Charlie Watts, who died in 2021. — AFP

Alphorn fest brings sound of music to Swiss mountains

HIGH up in the Swiss Alps, a hundred alphorn players assembled on a windswept pasture Sunday to make the mountains ring in gentle harmonies at the 22nd International Alphorn Festival.

The players formed a wide semi-circle at Tracouet above the ski resort of Haute Nendaz in southern Switzerland for the country's annual alphorn competition, which celebrates the musical instrument in its native landscape.

Several hundred spectators made the cable car trip or trekked up the mountainside to sit amongst the wildflowers at 2,200 metres above sea level and hear the country's top players en masse.

The alphorn is a straight wooden instrument around 3.4 metres long with a cup-shaped mouthpiece. It was first documented in the 16th century and was reputedly used for communication in the mountains, with the clear sound echoing through the valleys.

"It's easy to play it but it's difficult to play it well," explained participant Marcel Henchoz, 85. A team of giant cowbell ringers paraded onto the pasture to start Sunday's festivities. Many of the alphorn players dressed in traditional costume, wearing hats adorned with badges, while flag twirlers performed to the music. — AFP

Library restores Palestinian history one manuscript at a time

A library in Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem offers a rare glimpse into Palestinian history with its treasure trove of manuscripts dating back hundreds of years before the creation of Israel.

At the Khalidi Library in the walled Old City, Rami Salameh expertly inspects a damaged manuscript as part of the effort to restore and digitize historical Palestinian documents.

"The manuscripts range from jurisprudence to astronomy, the Prophet's (Mohammed) biography and the Koran," says the Italian-trained restorer as he carefully manoeuvres a dry brush over a fragile text on Arabic grammar.

From his small workshop, he lets out a sigh of relief, concluding that it won't be necessary to treat the 200-year-old document for discolouration as a result of oxidation.

Working alone, Salameh has already restored 1,200 pages from over a dozen manuscripts belonging to private Palestinian libraries over the past two and a half years.

The items date back as far as 300 years, to the Ottoman period.

The majority of the manuscripts come from the Khalidi Library itself, the largest private collection of Arabic and Islamic manuscripts in the Palestinian territories.

Also on its shelves are Persian, German and French books, including an impressive collection of titles by French writer Victor Hugo. — AFP

Palestinian Rami Salameh, a trained restorer at the Khalidi library, speaks during an interview at the premises in the old city of Jerusalem on 17 June 2023 Located in the walled Old City near an entrance to the Al Aqsa mosque complex, the library was founded by Palestinian notable Raghib Al-Khalidi in 1900 at the request of his late mother Khadija. It also holds Persian, German and French books, including an impressive collection of 60 titles by Victor Hugo. Its founder studied at the Sorbonne in Paris. **PHOTO: AFP**

ECONOMY
WORLD

More Japan tourist hot-spots imposing hotel taxes to fund promotions

THE practice of imposing municipal accommodation taxes on hotel guests has been spreading across Japan as popular tourist areas look to generate funds to use in promoting themselves to travellers in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tokyo is considering increasing its tax for the first time since it became the first area in the country in 2002 to implement the system.

Currently, hotels in the capital charge 100 yen ($0.70) per person per night for stays costing between 10,000 yen and 15,000 yen and 200 yen per night for rooms over 15,000 yen. The collected tax goes toward tourism-related costs, including for maintaining free public Wi-Fi and operating tourism information centres.

Revenue collected has been increasing since 2011, hitting a record high of around 2.7 billion yen in fiscal 2019, but it fell in 2020 and 2021 due to pandemic travel restrictions and a suspension of the system during the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics, according to the Tokyo government. With the recent return of international tourists, the total is expected to recover in fiscal 2023 to about 1.7 billion yen, it said. But that figure falls well short of covering the capital's outlay on tourism promotion in the same year, which is forecast to total around 26.4 billion yen.

With cities and prefectures free to independently set the rate they charge, some municipalities have adopted flat fees higher than Tokyo's. The cities of Kanazawa and Kyoto require guests to pay flat fees of 500 yen and 1,000 yen per night, respectively.

"The situation around the accommodation tax has changed over the last 20 years, so we need to consider a review from a fairness perspective as well," a Tokyo metropolitan government representative said. — Kyodo

File photo shows tourists visiting the Kaminarimon "Thunder Gate" in Tokyo's Asakusa area on 19 July 2023. **PHOTO: KYODO**

ECB set to hike again with inflation stubbornly high

ANOTHER interest rate hike appears a near certainty when ECB policymakers meet Thursday as inflation remains high, but the central bank faces increasing discontent among countries scared high interest rates will hurt growth.

The Frankfurt-based institution has lifted borrowing costs at the fastest rate ever to combat red-hot inflation after Russia's war in Ukraine sent food and energy prices soaring.

The European Central Bank, ECB is pictured prior to the press conference following the meeting of the governing council of the ECB in Frankfurt/Main, Germany, on 15 June 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

Key rates have risen by four percentage points since July last year, with the ECB's deposit rate now sitting at 3.50 per cent — its highest level since 2001.

The sequence of rate hikes does not look like it will stop this week, despite moves by other central banks to slow the tempo of increases.

At its last meeting in June, ECB President Christine Lagarde said it was "very likely" that the bank would raise rates again at its next meeting.

"Virtually everyone is anticipating a 0.25 percentage point increase," the head of the influential German central bank, Joachim Nagel, told the RND media group last week. — AFP

Philips sales jump, bounces back from respirator recall

DUTCH medical tech firm Philips posted a nine per cent jump in second-quarter sales and a return to profit on Monday as it bounces back from a global recall of sleep respirators.

The Amsterdam-based company said sales rose to 4.5 billion euros ($4.9 billion).

It reported a net profit of 74 million euros following a loss of 20 million euros over the same period last year.

"I am pleased with our improved operational performance across all segments and geographies in the quarter," Philips chief executive Roy Jakobs said.

The medical device maker in 2021 announced a major recall of its DreamStation machines for sleep apnoea, a disorder in which breathing stops and starts during sleep.

Users were said to be at risk of inhaling or swallowing pieces of toxic soundproofing foam that could cause irritation or headaches.

Philips also mentioned a "potential" cancer risk in the long term.

But it announced in May that independent tests showed the sleep respirators at the centre of the massive recall were "unlikely" to harm patients. — AFP

OpenAI CEO's Worldcoin crypto project launches

OPENAI chief executive Sam Altman, along with two co-founders, launched Monday the Worldcoin crypto project, saying they aim to grant users a verified digital identity and access to a financial network.

"The Worldcoin Foundation today announced that Worldcoin, a project co-founded by Sam Altman, Alex Blania and Max Novendstern, is now live," read a statement on Worldcoin's website.

Worldcoin provides users with a private digital identity — a "World ID" — after they register in person, where an "Orb" imaging device scans their eye's unique iris pattern to verify they are "a real and unique person", Worldcoin said. The founders said verified private digital identities will be crucial to distinguish humans from AI online.

The company also launched Monday its Worldcoin token, a cryptocurrency now transactable on the blockchain in certain locations, to millions "who participated in the beta", the statement said. — AFP

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman addresses Keio University in Tokyo on 12 June 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

Made-in-China Tesla vehicles exported to ROK for first time

THE Tesla Shanghai Gigafactory began to export its car model, Model Y (Rear-Wheel Drive), to the Republic of Korea (ROK) recently, marking the first time for the Tesla vehicles made in China to enter the ROK market, said the company.

Previously, Tesla vehicles exported to the ROK were produced in its Fremont factory in the United States.

The Shanghai plant recorded a global delivery volume of 476,500 vehicles in the first half (H1) of this year, which is equivalent to about two-thirds of its total delivery volume last year. Currently, a vehicle can be rolled off the production line in less than 40 seconds in the plant, and over 95 per cent of the auto parts can be supplied locally. Besides, the Shanghai factory exported vehicles to Thailand for the first time earlier this year. Car models, including Model 3 and Model Y, made in the factory, have been delivered to Thailand since the beginning of this year, according to the company. Data from the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers (CAAM) shows that in the first six months of this year, China exported 534,000 units of new energy vehicles, surging 160 per cent year on year. — Xinhua

Stellantis, Samsung to build second battery plant in US

US-EUROPEAN automaker Stellantis, whose brands include Fiat, Jeep and Peugeot, and a Samsung subsidiary plan to build a second electric car battery factory in the United States, the companies said Monday.

The location of the facility has yet to be announced but Stellantis and South Korea's Samsung SDI said it would start production in 2027, with an initial annual output capacity of 34 gigawatt hours (GWh).

It would be able to produce hundreds of thousands of vehicles made by Stellantis.

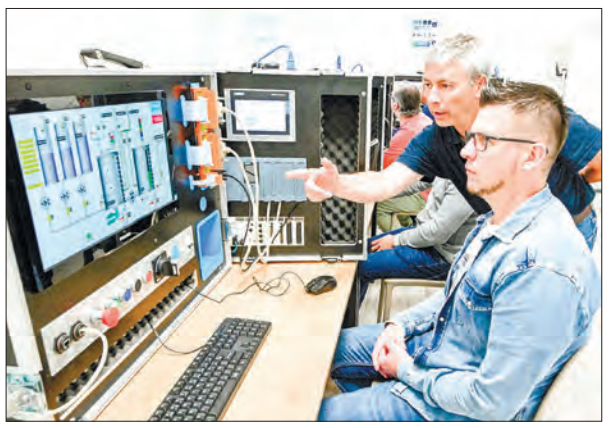
Stellantis, whose US brands include Chrysler, Dodge, Ram and Jeep, plans to have electric vehicles account for 50 per cent of its sales in the United States by 2030.

"This new facility will contribute to reaching our aggressive target to offer at least 25 new battery electric vehicles for the North American market by the end of the decade," Stellantis chief executive Carlos Tavares said in a statement.

The company is seeking to secure around 400 GWh of battery capacity to achieve its sales target.

Stellantis and Samsung SDI are already building a gigafactory in Kokomo, Indiana — an investment of between $2.5 billion and $3.1 billion — with production slated to begin in 2025 and a 33-GWh capacity.

Samsung SDI, which specializes in the production of electric car batteries, announced in April a joint venture with General Motors to build a $3 billion factory in the United States. — AFP



This photograph taken on 10 May 2023 shows Stellantis employees train at the Stellantis battery production site in Douvrin, northern France, ahead of their integration at the future site of the Billy-Berclau gigafactory. **PHOTO: AFP**

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY.NO. (102N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY.NO. (102N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **25-7-2023** 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 LINE

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V ISEACO WISDOM VOY.NO. (095N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ISEACO WISDOM VOY.NO. (095N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **25-7-2023** 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

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V FILOTIMO VOY.NO. (329W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V FILOTIMO VOY.NO. (329W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **25-7-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **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 SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V NANTA BHUM VOY.NO. (539W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V NANTA BHUM VOY.NO. (539W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **25-7-2023** 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 EURO SKY VOY.NO. (74)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V EURO SKY VOY.NO. (74)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **26-7-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT** 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: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S BEN LINE AGENCIES (S'PORE) PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V NOBLE STEED VOY.NO. (104047)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V NOBLE STEED VOY.NO. (104047)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **26-7-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT** 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: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:
M/S CHUN AN INTERNATIONAL LOGISTICS CO LTD

ROLLING UPDATES
WORLD

Sydney's former HIV epicentre close to ending transmission

Red ribbons, a symbol of solidarity for people living with HIV/AIDS, are displayed on a window at Hosier Lane in conjunction with the AIDS Conference 2014 in Melbourne on 22 July 2014. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE inner-city area of Sydney, once the epicentre of Australia's HIV epidemic, is very close to becoming the first place in the world to reach the UN's target for ending transmission of the virus, researchers said on Monday.

UNAIDS has set a goal of ending AIDS as a global health threat by 2030, which includes reducing the number of new HIV cases by 90 per cent compared to 2010.

In inner Sydney, new infections among gay men dropped by 88 per cent from 2010 to 2022, researchers announced at the International AIDS Society's HIV science conference being held in the Australian city of Brisbane.

Andrew Grulich, an epidemiologist at the University of New South Wales who presented the research, told AFP that "we're very nearly there" some eight years ahead of the 2030 target.

Just 11 new HIV cases were recorded in inner Sydney last year, "an extraordinarily small number of infections for what was the heart of the Australian HIV epidemic," Grulich said.

Gay men make up an estimated 20 per cent of the male population in inner Sydney, and they represent the large majority of the city's HIV cases.

Grulich said that several areas in the UK and Western Europe have also seen rapid drops in new HIV cases.

But "I don't think anywhere has gotten close to 90 per cent," he added.

However Grulich emphasised that this does not mean that HIV is close to being eliminated in the city of more than 5.2 million people."HIV can only be eliminated if we have a vaccine and a cure," he said. — AFP

UN Command says in 'conversation' with N Korea over US soldier

THE UN Command has started a conversation with Pyongyang over American soldier Travis King, who ran across the border into North Korea last week, its deputy commander said Monday.

"A conversation has commenced with the Korean People's Army through the mechanism of the armistice agreement," Lieutenant General Andrew Harrison said at a press briefing, referring to the deal that ended Korean War hostilities in 1953.

The UN Command is a US-led multinational force that oversees the Korean War truce. The two Koreas remain technically at war because the 1950-53 conflict ended in an armistice and not a peace treaty.

"The primary concern for us is for Private King's welfare," Harrison said, adding that the incident was "still subject to investigation".

Harrison said that, under the armistice agreement, there was a mechanism allowing the UN Command to communicate with the North's military but declined to give further details due to the "very delicate nature of these negotiations".

He said it was a "difficult and complex situation" and that "someone's welfare is at stake".

The United States does not have any formal diplomatic ties with the North and, since North Korea closed its borders at the start of the pandemic, most embassies with a presence in Pyongyang have withdrawn their foreign diplomats. — AFP

15 dead, all missing passengers found after Indonesia boat sinks

AT least 15 people were killed on Monday after a wooden boat sank off the coast of Indonesia's Sulawesi island, search and rescue officials said, adding that all missing passengers had been accounted for.

The boat sank with 48 people onboard just after midnight (1700 GMT on Sunday), the local office of Indonesia's search and rescue agency said in a statement.

Six people were rescued and taken to hospital for treatment, it added, and the cause of the sinking was being investigated.

Muhamad Arafah, head of the local search and rescue agency in Kendari city in Southeast Sulawesi, said in the statement that the 27 other passengers had been accounted for and all the victims had been identified.

This handout photo from Indonesia's National Rescue Agency (Basarnas) taken and released on 24 July 2023 shows members of a rescue team setting out to conduct search and rescue operations in Buton Tengah, southeast Sulawesi after a ferry sank. **PHOTO: HANDOUT / BASARNAS / AFP**

The agency had said earlier that 19 were missing, but Arafah said the search operation had now been "declared finished and closed". — AFP

Thousands more evacuated as Greece battles wildfires

AUTHORITIES evacuated nearly 2,500 people from the Greek island of Corfu on Monday as crews fight several wildfires in heat-battered Greece.

Tens of thousands of people have already fled blazes on the island of Rhodes, with many frightened tourists scrambling to get home.

About 2,400 visitors and locals were evacuated from Corfu from Sunday into Monday, a fire service spokesman said, adding that the departures were a precaution.

Firefighters use a fire hose on a fuming structure, during a fire between the villages of Kiotari and Gennadi, on the Greek island of Rhodes on 24 July 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

Greece has been sweltering under a lengthy spell of extreme heat that has exacerbated wildfire risk and left visitors stranded in peak tourist season.

Kelly Squirrel, a transport administrator from the UK, said police had ordered people from her hotel on Rhodes to evacuate.

"We had to keep walking," she told AFP at the international airport. "So we walked for about six hours in the heat."

Rhodes, which counted 2.5 million visitor arrivals in 2022, is one of Greece's leading holiday destinations.

Greek television broadcast images of long lines of people, some in beachwear, lugging suitcases along the island's roads on Saturday, when the evacuations were ordered. — AFP

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Putin says Russia will replace Ukrainian grain shipments to Africa

RUSSIA will replace exports of Ukrainian grain to Africa, President Vladimir Putin said on Monday, after Moscow exited a deal allowing their safe shipment.

"Russia will continue its energetic efforts to provide supplies of grain, food products, fertilizers and other goods to Africa," Putin said in a statement published on the Kremlin's website.

"I want to give assurances that our country is capable of replacing the Ukrainian grain both on a commercial and free-of-charge basis."

Moscow's military operation blocked Ukraine's Black Sea ports with warships until a deal brokered by the UN and Türkiye and signed in July 2022 allowed for the passage of critical grain shipments.

Earlier this month Russia exited the deal after complaining that a related agreement on allowing the export of Russian food and fertilizers had not been honoured.

Moscow later said it would consider cargo ships travelling to Ukraine through the Black Sea potential military targets.

The African Union has expressed "regret" over Moscow's decision to end the grain export deal.

Later this week Russia will host the second Russia-Africa Summit and Russia-Africa Economic and Humanitarian Forum, according to the Kremlin.

Humanitarian groups say Africa is heavily reliant on grain from Russia and Ukraine. — AFP

(FILES) This handout photograph taken and released by RIA Novosti on 17 June 2023, shows Russian President Vladimir Putin (L) shaking hands with South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa (R) ahead of a meeting with delegation of African leaders at the Constantine (Konstantinovsky) Palace in Strelna, outside Saint Petersburg. **PHOTO: AFP**

Russia thwarts Ukraine's drone attack on Moscow: defence ministry

A drone attack launched by Ukraine on Moscow was thwarted on Monday, said Russia's defence ministry.

An attempt by Kiev to carry out "a terrorist attack" using two unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) on Moscow was thwarted, the ministry said in a statement.

"Two Ukrainian UAVs were suppressed by means of electronic warfare and crashed," it said, adding that there were no victims.

Moscow Mayor Sergey Sobyanin said on Telegram earlier that at about 4:00 am local time (0100 GMT), drone strikes on two non-residential buildings in the Russian capital were recorded.

According to the mayor, there was no serious damage or casualties. — Xinhua

A police officer secures an area in front of a damaged business centre on Likhacheva Street after a reported drone attack in Moscow on 24 July 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

Paris airports under intense pressure for Olympics

PARIS' airports face a double challenge during the Olympics next year — already under huge pressure, they will also be the first impression that many foreign visitors get of the Games.

France's main international airport, Charles de Gaulle (CDG), and the smaller Orly will be two crucial gateways to the Olympics, which open in around a year on 26 July 2024.

The Parisian airports' authority ADP believes it can cope with the increased traffic in July and August next year in what is already one of the world's most visited cities.

What is keeping managers awake at night is the exceptional nature of tens of thousands of the arrivals — and their outsized baggage.

Some 85,000 competitors, coaches and officials will be accredited for the Olympics and the Paralympics, excluding spectators, said Renaud Duplay, the deputy director of CDG.

"In terms of numbers, it's a drop in the ocean" compared to the approximately 340,000 people who pass through CDG and Orly on peak summer days, he said.

On the other hand, the Olympic arrivals have expectations that are "different from those for which our infrastructure is designed".

The canoeists, for example, will bring kayaks, there will be crates and crates of bicycles and unwieldy poles for pole vaulters.

"There will be a volume of oversized luggage that is just not the one we usually have," Jerome Harnois, the top state official in charge of Paris' airports, said.

Lost or misplaced equipment could mean competitors missing out on Olympic glory, and trigger a storm of negative publicity for the organizers and France as a whole. — AFP

Nine killed in civilian plane crash in Sudan, as war-hit capital left hungry

NINE people, including four soldiers, were killed Sunday evening when a civilian plane crashed in Sudan due to "technical" reasons, the army said, as the war in the east African country entered its 100th day.

The fighting has left millions trapped in their homes and some without water, particularly in the suburbs of the capital Khartoum where residents were calling for food donations to help them survive.

In a war-devastated district of the city, Abbas Mohammed Babiker says he and his family have only been able to eat once a day. Now even that is in doubt, but on Sunday a citizens' support group issued an urgent appeal for donations to help people like him.

"We only have enough for two more days," Babiker said from Khartoum North, where residents said at least one person, a local musician, has already died from hunger.

In Port Sudan, on the east coast largely spared by the war, the army said a child had survived the crash of an Antonov plane which killed nine others. Port Sudan airport is the only one still working in the country due to the conflict.

Since 15 April, battles between the army led by Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), headed by Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, have killed more than 3,900 people, according to the latest toll from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED).

More than 2.6 million people have been internally displaced, mostly from Khartoum, the International Organization for Migration said. — AFP

A picture taken from Omdurman shows smoke billowing north of Khartoum on 22 July 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

Putin says Russia will replace Ukrainian grain shipments to Africa

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25 JULY 2023
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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.

Myanmar claim 2 golds, 2 silvers in Arsec-Asia Inline Speed Skating Challenge 2023

THE Myanmar team grabbed two gold and two silver medals in the Arsec-Asia Inline Speed Skating Challenge 2023, held in Bangkok, Thailand from 22 to 24 July.

With the supervision of the Asian Speed Skating Technical Organization, six countries, including Myanmar, were invited to compete in the tournament.

The Myanmar skating team is seen with medals during the Arsec-Asia Inline Speed Skating Challenge 2023. **PHOTO: BALA SOE**

Myanmar's skater Aung Kyaw Zin (Team Phoenix) won one gold medal in the 500-metre skating event and one silver in the 1,000-metre skating event. Besides, Khin Hlaing (Twantay Skate Club) garnered one gold medal in the 1,000-metre speed skating event and one silver in the 500-metre skating event.

Host Thailand, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Cambodia competed in the tourney together with team Myanmar. — Bala Soe/KZL

No more small teams? Women's World Cup minnows closing the gap

WITH the opening round of group games completed, fears that a first 32-team Women's World Cup would see a flurry of embarrassing mismatches appear largely misplaced.

Admittedly, Morocco experienced a painful introduction to the tournament on Monday as their debut ended in a 6-0 hammering in Melbourne at the hands of Germany, one of the favourites.

Zambia too suffered a heavy 5-0 loss to former winners Japan, but there has been nothing on the scale of the USA's 13-0 annihilation of Thailand with which they began their triumphant campaign in 2019.

England, another of the favourites, struggled to break down a Haiti side ranked 53rd in the world and making their World Cup debut.

The European champions only secured a 1-0 win thanks to Georgia Stanway's penalty.

The United States were expected to rattle in the goals against 32nd-ranked Viet Nam but settled for a 3-0 victory in Auckland, although they missed a penalty and the shot count was 26-0.

Similarly, Spain beat Costa Rica 3-0 but it could easily have been more: they had 46 shots to one for their opponents.

"Going into this World Cup the game has just grown and a lot of federations have grown as well, so I think it is great to see so many countries coming in and making a great impression on the world stage," said United States defender Naomi Girma. — AFP

Vietnamese goalkeeper (14) Thi Kim Thanh Tran celebrates stopping a penalty by USA's forward (13) Alex Morgan (R) during the Australia and New Zealand 2023 Women's World Cup Group E football match between the United States and Viet Nam at Eden Park in Auckland on 22 July 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**