

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Myanmar, Russian Federation strengthen diplomatic ties for closer relations

SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing engages in high-level talks with Russian Chief Justice of Supreme Court

CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received a delegation led by Chief Justice Mr Vyacheslav Lebedev of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation at the Credentials Hall of the SAC Chairman Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

At the meeting, they openly exchanged views on the enhancement of diplomatic relations between Myanmar and the Russian Federation, plans of promoting cooperation in legal and judicial affairs, legal experts from Myanmar to study legal subjects in the Russian Federation, plans to further boost bilateral cooperation in the legal affairs sector and judicial affairs sector, and the progress of cooperation in all sectors between the two countries. — MNA/TTA

SAC Chair Premier Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Mr Vyacheslav Lebedev, Chief Justice of Russian's Supreme Court yesterday.



Myanmar's response to report of Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence & its open debate

THE annual report of the United Nations Secretary-General on Conflict-related Sexual Violence for the year 2022, which includes country-specific descriptions of 17 countries including Myanmar, was released and the Security Council held the annual open debate on conflict-related sexual violence on 14 July 2023.

It is disappointing to observe that Myanmar Armed Forces (Tatmadaw) is listed yet again in the annexe of the report. Myanmar views it as

an act of sheer politicization. The United Nations independent experts need to take into account the information provided by the State concerned and all information needs to be cross-checked to the best extent possible. However, the report not only deliberately excluded the information provided by the Government but also failed to verify the accuracy of the alleged cases with the concerned country.

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NATIONAL

Russian Chief Justice-led delegation visits Maravijaya Buddha image, Uppatasanti pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw



THE Russian delegation led by Mr Vyacheslav Lebedev, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, arrived at Nay Pyi Taw on the morning of 23 July to pay a goodwill visit.

Russian chief justice-led delegation visited the Maravijaya Buddha image in Dekkhinathiri Township of Nay Pyi Taw on the same afternoon and also observed religious build-

ings and stone plaque chambers on which circular stupas were built.

The delegation also visited Nay Pyi Taw Uppatasanti pagoda on 24 July and the Chief Justice signed the visitors' book of the pagoda and made cash donations.

They then headed to the white elephant shed in the precinct of the pagoda and fed the white elephants.

Moreover, the delegation paid a visit to Myanmar Gems Museum (Nay Pyi Taw) on 25 July and observed the displayed jade and pearl pieces of jewelry and natural resources. — MNA/KTZH

Chief Justice Mr Vyacheslav Lebedev of Russia's Supreme Court (C) is pictured during his observation tours in Nay Pyi Taw.

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

Tatmadaw's responsibility to defend State security, protecting people's life and property

"Tatmadaw is to discharge duties of State security and defence and protection of life and property of the people."

(The excerpts from the speech delivered by State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting with officers, other ranks and families of Kalaw Station at the station hall on 6 March 2023)

Myanmar's response to report of Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence & its open debate

FROM PAGE-1

Myanmar has been listed in the annexe of the annual report of the United Nations Secretary-General on Conflict-related Sexual Violence since 2018, based on the allegations of sexual violence that reportedly occurred in the Northern Rakhine State in 2017. Nonetheless, there is no concrete evidence to prove the perpetrators of such crimes. Yet the annual report contains unfounded allegations from anti-government sources without meaningful facts such as venue, date and time or any other relevant information to verify the alleged incidents. On the other hand, this year's report informs about cases of sexual violence in the camps in Cox's Bazar and how these cases are referred to male camp leaders who favour harmful dispute-resolution approaches. In fact, such cases have been prevalent unfortunately as rape cases against a total of over forty women by a camp leader were filed by six complainants from an IDP camp in Sittway earlier this year. The cases which were reportedly taken place between 2012 and 2022.

The report itself admits that no complaint was received but made its own conclusion as "underreported" based on speculations. Even though sexual violence cases committed by the terrorist group PDF went viral, failure to include such information makes the report further unbalanced. It is reported that four members of the so-called PDF raped

and murdered a total of seven persons including four girls in August 2022 in Pekatoe village of Chaung Oo Township in Sagaing Region.

The report further misleads the international community by excluding a long list of measures taken by the Government to prevent conflict-related sexual violence. With the aim of delisting Myanmar from the annexe of the said report, the Joint Communique on Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence was signed between Myanmar and the United Nations on 7 December 2018. The National Committee on Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence was also established on 26 March 2019. The State Administration Council reconstituted the National Committee on 31 March 2021. The National Action Plan on Prevention and Response to Conflict-related Sexual Violence was adopted in June 2021 and the inputs provided by the Special Representative were appropriately incorporated in it. Myanmar also shared its National Action Plan with the Special Representative and progress in its implementation was also updated to her properly. The Action Plan has been extended to another year till 10 November 2023.

Myanmar is a society which traditionally and culturally opposes sexual violence in any form. It is well recognized that military personnel are strictly required to abide by the code of conduct as the offenders were punished to maximum sentences in accordance with a zero-tolerance policy.

The Office of the Adjutant General issued a directive with letter No 1/85/727/Yay 3 (ga nge) dated 24 November 2021 to prevent conflict-related sexual violence. The instructions have been made known to all levels of the Tatmadaw which has been strictly monitoring the compliance of the instructions. The Office of the Judge Advocate-General and military academies have conducted a series of education trainings which includes inter alia, awareness raising for prevention of sexual violence. The trainings were participated by a total of over 43,000 military personnel in 2022.

In connection with the allegations against the detention centres, complaints can be filed with the respective Departments or the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission. The Commission has made a total of 41 prison visits from 2021 to May 2023 to inspect whether treatments are in line with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. In addition to the helpline phone established in 2016, Viber messages and Facebook channels were extended to file complaints on different forms of violence against women in January 2022. Moreover, five One Stop Women Support Centres (OSWSCs) have been established since 2017 and expanded to two States and Regions in 2021 and 2022. The OSWSCs provide necessary support including temporary shelter, legal aid and psychosocial support to survivors from

gender-based violence. In the same vein, seven One Stop Crisis Centres (OSCCs) have been established by the Ministry of Health since March 2022 in seven general hospitals in four States and Regions to provide healthcare services.

It is also found out that Kyaw Moe Tun, a dismissed civil servant who has been facing a charge of high treason, participated in the said open debate and made a misleading statement. Myanmar registered its strong objection with relevant UN Offices against his participation and statement which does not represent the country. Myanmar also objects to some irresponsible and one-sided remarks by certain countries at the event.

Continued putting Myanmar on the list of the annexe of the report without any significant cases is a clear act of politicization and selectively targeting Myanmar. The unsoundness and unevenness of elements in the report are literal proof that the report is a mere attempt to discredit Myanmar on political grounds. Myanmar firmly believes that it should be delisted from the annexe of the report since the allegations cannot substantiate, perpetrators were given maximum penalties and domestic mechanisms are put in place to prevent conflict-related sexual violence.

National Committee on Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence
25 July 2023



Union Chief Justice receives delegation led by Chief Justice of Russian Federation

UNION Chief Justice U Htun Htun Oo received a delegation led by Mr Vyacheslav Lebedev, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, at the meeting hall of the Union

Supreme Court in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

The two chief justices exchanged views on bilateral cooperation in judicial affairs in a frank and cordial atmosphere. — MNA/KZW

The Russian delegation calls on Union Chief Justice U Htun Htun Oo yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

NATIONAL

UEC Chairman arrives back from Cambodia

AT the invitation of the Chairman of the Cambodian Election Commission, the delegation led by Union Election Commission Chair U Thein Soe, who attended the 7th National Assembly Elections of Cambodia from 21 to 25 July, returned to Yangon by air at 5:30 pm yesterday.

During the tour, UEC Chair U Thein Soe and member U Soe Oo attended a meeting to brief international election observers on the process on 22 July. They also observed polling station preparations and voting processes at schools in

Cambodia.

After viewing the manner Cambodia's elections are conducted and the conditions for the opening of polling stations and voting and vote counting, they visited the landmarks and cultural sites of Cambodia. — MNA/KZL

(See more news on Cambodian elections on page-15)

UEC Chair U Thein Soe (C) is pictured on his arrival at Yangon International Airport yesterday.



MoFA Union Minister receives Chinese Ambassador



Chinese Ambassador Mr Chen Hai calls on Union Minister U Than Swe in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

UNION Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe received Mr Chen Hai, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Myanmar, yesterday at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, they cordially discussed matters pertaining to further consolidation of the existing Pauk-Phaw relations and cooperation, the continued implementation of

Myanmar-China bilateral projects, the maintenance of peace and stability along the border area between Myanmar and China, China's continuous constructive support towards Myanmar development endeavour as well as further enhancement of mutually beneficial cooperation both at regional and international arenas particularly ASEAN and United Nations. — MNA

MoEP Union Minister attends 5th Ministerial Meeting of International Solar Alliance (ISA) Regional Committee for Asia & Pacific Region

THE Myanmar delegation led by Union Minister for Electric Power U Thaung Han arrived in the UAE on 24 July to attend the 5th Ministerial Meeting of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) Regional Committee for Asia and Pacific Region.

The Union minister and party met ISA Director-General Dr Ajay Mathur at the meeting hall of Sheraton Abu Dhabi Hotel and Resort in Abu Dhabi at 3 pm local standard time on that day.

During the meeting, the Union minister said that Myanmar initiated the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) aiming for 11 per cent renewable

energy output by 2030 to have complied with the decision of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The country also plans to increase up to 17 per cent of renewable energy output if it receives international assistance.

To do so, international countries should support the upgrading of power systems into smart grids, national control centres and smart metering systems.

It also should help the blended finance system for investments in the solar power sector.

Then, the ISA director-general appreciated the ongoing so-

lar power development projects of Myanmar, saying that ISA is working to implement the Global Solar Facility. It will include three sectors like insurance for payment, funds and investment.

Moreover, Myanmar can grab technical assistance in the solar power sector under the Solar Technology and Applications Research Centre (STAR-C) programmes.

The Union minister and party attended the fifth Ministerial Meeting of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) Regional Committee for Asia and Pacific Region at 10 am local standard time yesterday. The meeting focused on ISA's aims for solar energy and the progress in ISA Flagship Initiatives—Solar Facility, SolarX Grand Challenge and Solar Technology and Applications Research Centre (STAR-C).

Then, the Union minister discussed current activities to develop solar energy, and challenges in executing NDC's renewable energy development programmes of NDC. — MNA/KTZH



Union Minister U Thaung Han attends the fifth Ministerial Meeting of ISA Regional Committee for Asia & Pacific yesterday in the UAE.

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We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm with your name and title.

Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

NATIONAL

Advancement of satellite technological services clarified



Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn meets officials from China Rocket Company Limited in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

UNION Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn thanked China Rocket Co Ltd for its clarification on satellite technological services and expressed his wish to cooperate with such a company in running the work process at the clarification on satellite technologies presented by officials of China Rocket Co Ltd at the ministry yesterday morning.

President Mr Zhang Dong of State-owned China Rocket Co Ltd and officials clarified satellite technological services and other services of the company, and its investments in many sectors including the education sector.

The Union minister and attendees discussed plans to cooperate with the Ministry of Information and other necessary measures.

China Rocket Co Ltd, a branch of China Aerospace, plans to operate TV broadcasting measures in the Direct To Home (DTH) system in Myanmar in cooperation with Myanmar citizen-owned Borderless Broadcast Co Ltd together with Laos Asia-Pacific Satellite Co Ltd and implement satellite TV and satellite applied arenas in Myanmar on a wider scale. — MNA/TTA

MoE Union Minister leaves for ASEAN Education Ministers Dialogue in Indonesia



Union Minister Dr Nyunt Pe is seen before leaving for Indonesia yesterday.

THE invitation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Art, Research and Technology of Indonesia, the Myanmar delegation led by Union Education Minister Dr Nyunt Pe left Yangon for Indonesia to attend the ASEAN Education Ministers Dialogue on Early Childhood Care and Education Reform Policy in Southeast Asia to be held in Jakarta yesterday morning. — MNA/KZW

MoH Union Minister receives UNFPA Resident Representative

UNION Health Minister Dr Thet Khaing Win received a delegation led by Mr Ramanathan Balakrishnan, Resident Representative of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities in Myanmar, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

They discussed matters re-

lated to cooperation in the health sector, the provision of drugs and medical supplies for reproductive healthcare activities, arrangements for conducting training courses on healthcare development and measures to be taken for maternal and reproductive health services in areas

affected by Cyclone Mocha.

These topics are to be embodied in the letter of agreement to be signed between Myanmar's Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities. — MNA/KZW



The UNFPA resident representative calls on Union Minister Dr Thet Khaing Win yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Legal Translation Commission
Order No 1/2023
7th Waxing of Second Waso 1385 ME
24 July 2023

- Under Sub-Section (a) of Section 12 of the Legal Translation Commission Law, the Legal Translation Commission hereby announced the approval of the Myanmar version of the Trusts Act prescribed in English under Sub-Section (a) of Section 9 of the Legal Translation Commission Law.
- The law translated in Myanmar shall come into force similar to the original version of the law.

Dr Thida Oo
Chair
Legal Translation Commission

U Tin Yu concurrently accredited as Ambassador of Myanmar to Bahrain

CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Prime Minister of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed U Tin Yu, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, concurrently as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Kingdom of Bahrain. — MNA

NATIONAL

Rare literary heritage kept in libraries, archives of Lancang-Mekong countries to be maintained by Preservation and Conservation Network



Union Minister U Ko Ko joins the Workshop on Building Networks on Preservation and Conservation of Literary Heritage among Lancang-Mekong Area yesterday.

THE rare literary heritages kept in libraries and archives of Lancang-Mekong countries will be preserved and conserved, according to the workshop on Building Networks on Preservation and Conservation of Literary Heritage among Lancang-Mekong Area held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The network was established with Lancang-Mekong-Cooperation Special Fund. It can share the techniques and experiences of experts who operate the preservation and conservation of literary materials and will develop the management on better preservation and conservation.

At the event, the six Lancang-Mekong countries respectively read papers related to rare materials in libraries and archives, management of literary heritages, conservation with the use of modern methods and preparedness for natural disasters for rare materials in libraries.

The Lancang-Mekong-Cooperation aims at bolstering the economic and social development of the Sub-regional countries, enhancing the well-being of their people, narrowing the development gap among regional countries, and advancing cooperation among the developing countries. — MNA/KTZH

Confiscation of illegal items: Teak, foodstuffs, industrial materials, consumer goods and vehicles

A combined team supervised by the Mon State Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force nabbed 10 kinds of goods worth K11.318 million including 100 jerricans of Ruby Prawn without official documents from an Isuzu Elf van (approximate value of K10 million) at the Thanlwin Bridge (Mawlamyine) checkpoint on 23 July. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

Similarly, a combined team led by the respective district forest departments seized a total of 17.653 tonnes of illegal teak in Bago and Pyay districts. The action was taken under the Forest Law.

A combined on-duty team conducted inspections at the 4th-Milepost combined checkpoint on 24 July and captured six kinds of goods worth K7.578 million including eight cabinets of sterilizers and 1,974 Very Good nails without official documents from a Mitsubishi mini bus (estimated value of K12 million) heading to Taunggyi from Kengtung and 12 kinds of goods worth K25,622,750 including 1900 LCD phones and 150 boxes of Gongxiqiye hair straightening serum without official documents from a Jin Bei minibus (approximate value of K17 million) travelling from

Muse to Taunggyi near the toll-gate in Hopate village in Lashio township on 24 July. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

Additionally, the on-duty teams impounded nine kinds of goods worth K8.545 million including 45 SK/NFGS batteries without official documents from a Nissan AD van (estimated value of K25 million) that was parked near Nanong village at the Yepu permanent checkpoint, four kinds of goods worth K4,991,261 including a Siemens semiotics SD low voltage motor and three Sidel blower machinery parts that exceeded the 61 days of VPA and 12.5 kilogrammes of CEO-brand coffee (worth K1.323 million) without Import Licence and FDA approval at the Yan-

gon International Airport (Import Desk), four kinds of goods (worth K29,983,800) including 400 Toki metal halide lamps that exceeded the quantity mentioned in the Import Declaration (ID) at the Asia World Port Terminal container checkpoint and four kinds of goods worth K22,821,120 including micro server with battery charger and automatic microprocessor without official documents that were sent from Hong Kong to Yangon through EMS international delivery company on 24 July.

The action was taken under Customs procedures. A total of 17 arrests were made on 23 and 24 July, with an estimated value of K183,268,803, as reported by the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS



Confiscated illegal items at Asia World Port Terminal.

MoST, business owners & experts collaborate in building well-designed gasifiers



Homemade gasifier and its use for electricity generation (above and left photos.)

MINISTRY of Science and Technology plans to cooperate with business owners and experts to build well-designed gasifiers that consume paddy husk as fuel, according to the ministry.

The gasifier brings an enormous contribution to tackling energy demands and reducing adverse effects of climate change and that prompted the ministry to build well-designed gasifiers throughout the country in cooperation with the MSME business owners and well-experienced experts.

Gasifiers are currently used in large-capacity rice mills and

other industries located in regions where the national grid is not yet installed or electricity demand in the region is not yet sufficiently supplied.

Official data reveals 412 privately owned gasifiers, of which 13 in the Yangon Region, 78 in the Sagaing Region, 16 in the Bago Region, two in the Mandalay Region and 303 in the Ayeyawady Region are registered with the government.

Among the registered businesses, 319 gasifiers are used in rice mills and 21 machines are utilized in electricity generation. — ASH/TH

LOCAL BUSINESS

Fuel prices spiral to above K2,000 per litre

FUEL prices continue rising to K2,205 per litre for Octane 92, K2,320 for Octane 95, K2,250 for diesel and K2,275 for premium diesel on 25 July indicating an increase of K200-300 per litre over three weeks.

The prices stood at K1,985 per litre for Octane 92, K2,085 per litre for Octane 95, K1,950 for diesel and K2,030 for premium diesel on 1 July.

The domestic fuel prices are set depending on the price index set by Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS), the pricing basis for many refined products in Southeast Asia, according to the Supervisory Committee on Oil Import, Storage and Distribution of Fuel Oil.

In August 2022, the oil prices hit record highs of K2,605 per litre for Octane 92, K2,670 for Octane 95, K3,330 for premium diesel and K3,245 for diesel.

The committee is therefore steering the fuel oil storage and distribution sector effectively not to have a shortage of oil in the domestic market and to ensure price stability for energy consumers.

The Petroleum Products Regulatory Department, under the guidance of the committee, is issuing the daily reference rate for oil to offer a reasonable price to energy consumers. The reference rate in Yangon Region is set on the MOPS's price assessment, shipping cost, premium insurance, tax, other general cost and health profit per cent.

The rates for regions and states other than Yangon are evaluated after adding the transportation cost and the retail reference rates daily covered on the state-run newspapers and are posted on the media and official website and Facebook page of the department daily starting from 4 May.

The committee is inspecting the fuel stations whether they are overcharging or not. The authorities are taking action against those retailers of fuel stations under the Petroleum and Petroleum Products Law 2017 if they are found overcharging rather than the set reference rate.

As per the statement, 90 per cent of fuel oil in Myanmar is imported, while the remaining 10 per cent is produced locally. The domestic fuel price is highly correlated with international prices. The State is steering the market to mitigate the loss between importers, sellers and energy consumers. Consequently, the government is trying to distribute the oil at a reasonable price compared to those of regional countries.

Some countries levied higher tax rates and hiked oil prices compared to that of Myanmar. However, Malaysia's oil sector receives government subsidies and the prices are about 60 per cent cheaper than that of Myanmar. Every country lays down different patterns of policy to fix the oil prices. Myanmar also levies only a lower tax rate on fuel oil and strives for energy consumers to buy the oil at a cheaper rate. — NN/EM



A vehicle is seen filling fuel at the petrol station in Yangon.

High-grade Shwebo Pawsan rice surges to K115,000 per bag

THE price of high-grade Pawsan rice from the Shwebo area peaked at K115,000 per bag, according to Myanmar Rice Wholesale Centre (Wahdan).

In addition to the rise in paddy prices, the panic buying of some consumers arising from the Central Bank of Myanmar's issuance of the new K20,000 note on 23 July pushed up the rice price.

The price of Shwebo Pawsan rice increased to K115,000 per bag on 24 July from K112,000 per bag on 21 July, showing an increase of K3,000

within a few days.

Similarly, the prices of other rice varieties were up by K1,000-3,500 per bag. The prices of old Pawsan rice touched a high of K93,000-97,000 per bag depending on producing areas (Myaungmya, Patheingyi, Pyawbwe and other regions), while rice prices stood at K84,000 per bag of Kunni, K63,000 for Ngasein, K65,000 for Aemahta, K85,000 for Pawkywe, K63,000 for rice grown under intercropping system and K92,000 for new Pawsan rice variety, as per the price data released by Myanmar Rice

Wholesale Centre (Wahdan).

Myanmar Rice Federation will endeavour to stabilize the rice price and steer the market for the right price and the right product. The MRF will join hands with the rice millers, rice traders and companies. The federation called on them to balance the short-term and long-term benefits in trading, as per the MRF's notification dated 24 April.

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

Myanmar Rice Federation notified on 24 April that tips-off about those manipulators who spread malicious rumours on digital platforms to spark concerns of the consumers and raise the rice prices can be done for the sake of the long-term benefit of the rice industry. The federation will forward the reports of those manipulators to the relevant authorities if they refused to be persuaded. Those stakeholders in the supply chain need to exert concerted efforts in this as well. — NN/EM



Vendors are organizing various kinds of rice for sale in the Yangon market.

Pigeon pea price rebounds to above K3 mln per tonne

THE price of pigeon pea bounced back to above K3.05 million per tonne on 25 July after dropping to below K3 million per tonne on 21 July, showing a sharp increase of K100,000 per tonne within two days, according to the Yangon Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Bayintnaung).

Similarly, the price of black gram also rose to K2.257 million per tonne on 25 July as well. The price fluctuation of black grams and pigeon peas is highly correlated with the demand of the main buyer, India.

Prices hit record highs of K2.461 million per tonne of black gram on 14 June and K3.33 million per tonne of pigeon pea on 5 June on the back of strong demand by India.

Myanmar shipped over

490,000 tonnes of pulses worth US\$380 million to foreign markets in the Q1 of the current financial year 2023-2024, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Myanmar bagged over US\$1.4 billion from over 1.9 million tonnes of various pulses exports in the past financial year 2022-2023, the Ministry of Commerce's statistics indicated.

Myanmar primarily exports black gram, green gram and pigeon peas to foreign markets. Of them, black gram and pigeon peas are mostly conveyed to India while green grams are shipped to China and Europe.

India has growing demand and consumption requirements for black gram and pigeon peas. According to a Memorandum of Understanding between Myanmar and India signed on 18 June

2021, India will import 250,000 tonnes of black grams and 100,000 tonnes of pigeon peas (tur) from Myanmar for five consecutive years from 2021-2022 financial year to 2025-2026 FY. This G-to-G pact will not affect the pulses' annual quota set by India. Myanmar's exporters are also entitled to deliver the pulses to India under that annual quota.

Myanmar yearly produces approximately 400,000 tonnes of black grams and about 50,000 tonnes of pigeon peas. Black grams that India primarily purchases are commonly found only in Myanmar, whereas pigeon peas, green grams and chickpeas are grown in African countries and Australia, as reported by Myanmar Pulses, Beans, Maize and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association. — NN/EM

OPINION

Uplift the role of mangrove ecosystems in defying disasters

MANGROVE forests have proven to be invaluable shields against natural disasters, offering vital protection from storms, landslides, flooding, and tsunamis. The absence of these coastal forests along the shorelines, as well as riverbanks and creeks, has led to devastating losses and damages in numerous natural disasters.

In the modern era, the significance of the mangrove ecosystem goes beyond its protective capabilities. Its outcomes can extend to tourism services, making it not just a natural defence but also a potential economic asset. To celebrate and raise awareness about the importance of these ecosystems, the International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem is observed on 26 July each year.

As such, the mangrove ecosystem plays a pivotal role in safeguarding human communities from natural disasters while also providing valuable ecological and economic benefits. As everybody needs to observe the International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem, it is necessary to reinforce the commitment to preserving and nurturing these essential coastal forests for the well-being of the planet Earth and future generations.

sustainable growth of these vital forests.

Beyond their protective role, mangrove forests hold significant ecological value. The labyrinth of roots acts as a nurturing nursery for a diverse range of organisms, safeguarding them from predators, extreme heat, and powerful tides. Additionally, coastal forests have been found to remove five times more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere compared to terrestrial forests, underscoring their importance in combating climate change.

The primary cause of mangrove habitat disruption is their location in estuaries, which exposes them to various threats. However, recognizing their ability to support diverse biodiversity and serve as essential nursery habitats for fish and crustaceans, the significance of preserving these ecosystems cannot be overstated. Moreover, their capacity as natural coastal defences against storm surges, tsunamis, rising sea levels, and erosion further highlights the urgency of their conservation efforts.

As such, the mangrove ecosystem plays a pivotal role in safeguarding human communities from natural disasters while also providing valuable ecological and economic benefits. As everybody needs to observe the International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem, it is necessary to reinforce the commitment to preserving and nurturing these essential coastal forests for the well-being of the planet Earth and future generations.

Asia's Accelerating Shift to Cashless Payments: Embracing a Digital Future

BY AUGUSTIN

Asia's Progress Towards a Cashless Society

In recent years, the concept of a cashless society has captured the attention of the world, with remarkable progress witnessed in several countries across Asia. Among these nations, China has emerged as a trailblazer in the transition towards a cash-free economy, paving the way for other countries in the region.

Kent Matthews, a professor of banking and finance at Cardiff University, recently revealed in an exclusive interview with Xinhua that China is making significant progress towards becoming the leading country for cash-free transactions.

According to Matthews, the proportion of cash in circulation in China has reduced to 3.7 per cent and continues to decrease. He noted that people in China are

in circulation within the next five years, citing the country's rapid adoption of technology.

He shared an anecdote from his recent trip to China, where he used his phone to purchase a mango from a street vendor at a very low price. Matthews was impressed by the advanced technology in China, which surpasses other parts of the world, attributing it to the digitization of the Chinese economy.

During his visit, Matthews was astonished to witness various groups, including the elderly, small shop owners, and street vendors, opting to use their phones for transactions instead of cash. He stated that China is setting a global example for digital payments and challenging the notion that age is a barrier to adopting such technology.

Despite the progress towards

WeChat Pay widely accepted and transforming payment habits.

India has also made significant progress in digital payments, driven by government demonetization efforts and the introduction of the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) for instant peer-to-peer transactions.

South Korea, Singapore, and Japan are among the other Asian countries embracing digital payments, leveraging high smartphone penetration rates and advanced banking systems.

Contactless payment technologies such as NFC and QR codes have become prevalent in various sectors, including retail, public transportation, and small businesses.

The benefits of a cashless society include convenience, speed, security, and enhanced financial

ecosystem.

Alternative Payment Options in Myanmar

In recent years, Myanmar has witnessed some progress in digital payment adoption, particularly in urban areas and among younger generations. Mobile banking and electronic payment systems have been introduced by some financial institutions and mobile network operators. These initiatives aim to provide alternative payment options and improve financial inclusion.

The Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) is ensuring that digital payment services provided by Payment Service Providers are strong and secure. The aim is to reduce the use of cash and promote digital payments among the public.

The CBM allows banks to

cial transactions increased, and the total value of online banking, mobile banking, mobile payment, and mobile financial services was 31,666 billion kyats, a 47 per cent increase from the previous year.

The Central Bank is also working with banks to develop guidelines for mobile financial services to promote Nay Pyi Taw as a digital city. Since May 2023, the CBM has been implementing the ability to support staff salaries of ministries in Nay Pyi Taw digitally.

As digital financial transactions have increased, the currency in circulation in the country's economic system has decreased. The growth rate of currency in circulation decreased from 48 per cent in 2021 to 29 per cent in 2022, and as of May 2023, it further decreased to 11 per cent.

Myanmar's banking system is in the process of moderniza-

for individuals, businesses, and governments.

The shift involves embracing digital payment methods like mobile wallets and online banking, promoting financial inclusion and efficiency. Building a cashless society necessitates advanced payment infrastructure, collaboration between public and private sectors, and strong regulatory frameworks.

The advantages of this shift are multifaceted, including enhanced data insights for decision-making, improved economic planning, and reduced risks of counterfeiting and money laundering.

The momentum towards a cashless society continues to grow, as countries recognize the potential benefits of digital advancements in empowering individuals and stimulating economic growth.

Driving Inclusion in the Cashless Era

While the digital revolution offers immense opportunities, it also poses challenges that need to be addressed. Issues such as cybersecurity threats, privacy concerns, and ensuring equal access to digital payment infrastructure must be carefully navigated to build a secure and inclusive cashless society. Additionally, educating and empowering individuals, particularly those from underserved communities, about the benefits and usage of digital payment systems is crucial for ensuring widespread adoption and avoiding exclusion.

In conclusion, the embrace of the digital revolution for building a cashless society represents a transformative shift in how financial transactions are conducted globally. Through the adoption of innovative technologies, the development of robust payment infrastructure, and the collaboration of various stakeholders, nations are reshaping their economies to reap the benefits of convenience, financial inclusion, and economic growth. While challenges exist, the momentum towards a cashless society continues to grow as countries recognize the potential of digital advancements to revolutionize the way money flows and empower individuals and businesses in the modern era.

The Rise of Cashless Transactions

In the era of digital technology, financial transactions have experienced a significant transformation, with cashless transactions gaining prominence over physical currency usage.

Nations worldwide are rapidly adopting innovative technologies to build cashless societies, reshaping financial transactions



Alipay, along with its main competitor WeChat Pay (operated by Tencent), has transformed China into a predominantly cashless society. People in China commonly use their smartphones to pay for various goods and services, from small street vendors to large retailers. (L); This file photo shows customers leaving a shopping mall in downtown Yangon. (R). PHOTO: XINHUA/AFP

using cash much less compared to a decade or two ago, and the trend towards a cashless society is unstoppable.

Matthews compared this with the situation in Britain, where cash represents approximately 2.9 per cent of the total money in circulation. Matthews emphasized that China has rapidly caught up with Britain in terms of transitioning to a cashless society in less than two decades. This rapid progress showcases the quick advancement of technology for cash-free transactions in China and society's swift acceptance of it.

The professor expressed his expectation that cash usage in China could decline to less than two per cent of the total money

a cashless society, Matthews firmly believes that no country can completely eliminate the need for cash. He added that it would be impossible for any government to legislate cash out of existence.

Embracing the Benefits of Going Cashless

Asia is experiencing a notable transition towards becoming a cashless society.

Several countries in the region have seen a significant shift away from cash transactions, with digital payment methods gaining popularity among consumers and businesses.

China is at the forefront of the cashless revolution, with mobile payment platforms like Alipay and

inclusion for previously unbanked populations.

Digital transactions leave a digital trail, which aids in combating corruption, tax evasion, and money laundering.

Challenges to the cashless transition include infrastructure limitations in rural areas, cybersecurity concerns, and the need to bridge the digital divide for equal access to digital financial services.

Cash is expected to coexist with digital payments for the foreseeable future, particularly in regions or sectors where cash usage remains prevalent.

Overall, Asia's cashless revolution is reshaping transaction habits and establishing a more connected and efficient financial

Japanese artists explore using generative AI for creating new manga



Members of the TEZUKA2023 project, under which a new episode of the well-known Osamu Tezuka manga "Black Jack" will be created with the help of artificial intelligence, attend a press conference in Tokyo on 12 June 2023. PHOTO: KYODO

JAPANESE manga artists and creators are exploring the use of generative artificial intelligence, pinning their hopes on using the technology to offer suggestions for illustration drafts and story plots, as well as for making the creative process substantially more efficient.

Nonetheless, manga artists remain cautious about how much AI can be relied upon for generating works captivating enough to sell to the public, and they are also concerned about AI's potential for copyright infringement, given such technologies are typically trained using massive amounts of data from the internet.

Recently, a project was launched in Tokyo to create a new episode of "Black Jack", a famous Osamu Tezuka manga, using generative AI for release in a weekly magazine this fall. Dubbed the "God of manga", Tezuka died in 1989 at age 60 after writing some 150,000 pages of manuscripts for around 700 titles.

"We think that however we use AI, it won't produce an end-product that excels the original Osamu Tezuka work but...it would be considerable if a work scoring 50 (out of 100) is achieved," said Makoto Tezuka, a project member who is also son of Osamu Tezuka and direc-

tor at Tezuka Productions Co.

A New Black Jack Manga Project

The project will aim to use generative AI that could be trained on the structure of past plots and the relationships between Black Jack and the manga's other characters. The series is a medical drama comprising over 200 episodes about Black Jack, the story's namesake – an unlicensed, yet genius, surgeon.

The new manga will be released in the weekly comic magazine "Shukan Shonen Champion", which ran the Black Jack series from 1973 to 1983.

Tezuka and other project members stress that they expect the technology to play a supportive role in the creative process, such as offering storyline suggestions, as well as creating character designs and dialogue from prompts created by instructions from the creators, including general themes and depictions of the fictional world.

"We creators will definitely make the finishing touches and tunings, as in the end, we want to produce something that will be enjoyed by our readers. We feel a sense of responsibility about that," Tezuka explained at a press conference about the project.

SOURCE: Kyodo

CURRENT
AFFAIRS

Myanmar ships US\$2.74
mln worth of goods to
Bangladesh as of 7 July

MYANMAR exported goods worth US\$2.749 million to Bangladesh through Sittway and Maungtaw borders between 1 April and 7 July of the current financial year 2023-2024, the Ministry of Commerce's statistics indicated.

Myanmar shipped goods worth \$0.95 million to Bangladesh through the Sittway border post and goods valued at \$1.84 million via Maungtaw border post as of 7 July this FY.

The value of border trade with Bangladesh over the past three months was \$3.678 million,

which plunged from \$36.113 million in the corresponding period last FY.

Next, Myanmar's exports to Bangladesh via Sittway and Maungtaw amounted to over \$1 million in the second week of July.

Tamarind, plum and fresh ginger were mainly exported via the Sittway border, while the main export items through Maungtaw were agricultural products, fisheries and manufacturing goods. The PVC pipe and PVC tanks were imported via Maungtaw.

Yangon-Sittway Road has



Export cargoes are seen being loaded onto a vessel at Maungtaw Port.

a capacity of only 12-wheel and 6-wheel trucks. Despite the distance of 70 nautical miles between the two countries, climate conditions in the rainy season

sometimes hinder water transport.

Myanmar conducts cross-border trade with Bangladesh via Sittway-Buthi-

daung-Maungtaw and Sittway-Angumaw-Maungtaw trade channels, mostly from Kanyinchaung Economic Zone in Maungtaw. — TWA/KK



Visitors are seen enjoying the Chaungtha Resort Beach.

Over 900,000 people visit Ayeyawady
Region within six months

ACCORDING to the Department of Hotels and Tourism, there were nearly 950,000 visitors in the six months of this financial year to Ayeyawady Region, where the beaches are located.

During the six months from the beginning of January to the end of June this year, there were 124 hotels and guesthouses licensed by the Department of Hotels and Tourism and the number of visitors who came

and stayed there was more than 600,000. More than 300,000 visitors stayed at the inns licensed by the Ayeyawady Region Development Committee, bringing the total number of visitors to more than 940,000. — TWA/KZL

Lweje border trade value
surpasses US\$24 mln as of 14 July

MYANMAR conducted border trade worth US\$24.46 million with the neighbouring country China through the Lweje border post as of 14 July of the current financial year 2023-2024 beginning 1 April, comprising exports worth \$11.36 million and imports worth \$13.1 million, the statistics released by the Ministry of Commerce indicated.

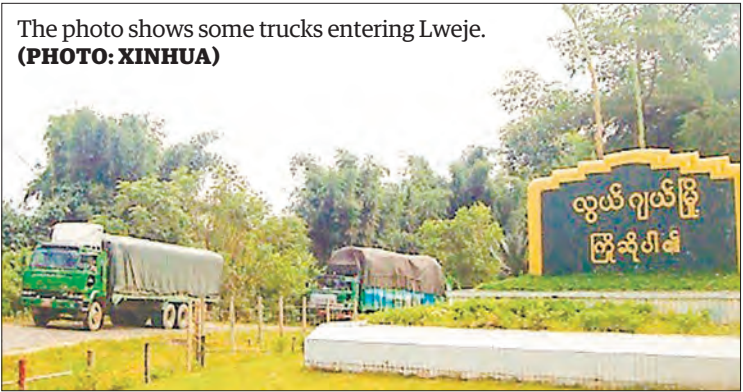
The figure was down by \$34.8 million this FY compared to the corresponding period last FY.

Both exports and imports fell in the past three and a half months.

The number of trucks carrying the goods to China via the Lweje border was around 400-500 per day in April and May and increased to over 700 per day from the second week of July.

Myanmar primarily exported rice, corn, pulses, chilli pepper, onion and seasonal vegetables, while machines, clothes and consumer goods were imported into the country. — TWA/EM

The photo shows some trucks entering Lweje.
(PHOTO: XINHUA)



MoC reports arrival of 40 more electric vehicles at Yangon Port

THE Ministry of Commerce stated that 40 more Electric Vehicles (EVs) arrived at the Yangon Port on 20 July 2023.

Under the approval of the steering committee on devel-

opment of electric vehicles and related industries, 10 EVs (MG, MG4 Mulan) were imported by NPK Motors Co Ltd while 30 (BYD Dolphin), by Earth Renewable Energy Co Ltd. They

have been picked up from the port as per the rules and regulations. The imports of EVs have been relaxed from Customs tariffs as well.

On 10 July, 47 EVs (MG 4

Mulan), three (MG Marvel R) and five (MG5) imported by NPK Motors Co Ltd arrived at the Port, according to the Ministry of Commerce's notification.

There are over 3,200 regis-

tered EVs as of the last week of June 2023, according to vehicle registration statistics in each district released by the Road Transportation Administration Department. — TWA/EM

China Cultural Centre in Malta celebrates 20th anniversary

THE China Cultural Centre in Malta celebrated its 20th anniversary on the weekend, with a series of events organized jointly with the Xi'an Municipal Administration of Culture and Tourism.

A pair of terracotta warrior replicas from Xi'an, the capital of China's Shaanxi Province, were donated to the Chinese Garden of Serenity on Saturday. The donation ceremony was followed by an outdoor concert of traditional Chinese music and dance performed by artists from Xi'an.

At the opening of the concert, Chinese Ambassador to Malta Yu Dunhai said that since the establishment of diplomatic relations more than 50 years ago, China and Malta have established a profound friendship.

Meanwhile, the China Cul-



People view the Chinese tea ceremony during an event in Valletta, Malta, on 23 July 2023. The China Cultural Centre in Malta celebrated its 20th anniversary on the weekend, with a series of events organized jointly with the Xi'an Municipal Administration of Culture and Tourism. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

tural Centre in Malta has taken part in cultural exchanges,

projects including Chinese New Year celebrations, a Chinese Kite Festival, and the "Imagine China" children's art competition.

"It has become an important window for Maltese people to understand China, and will continue playing an important role in enhancing the friendship and people-to-people exchanges between China and Malta," he said.

Culture has played an important part in the development of the bilateral friendship between the people of Malta and China, said Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, chair of the Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society.

"We are marking another significant milestone as we commemorate the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the China

Cultural Centre in Malta," she said. "This is not just a milestone for Malta but also a watershed moment on a European level, as this China Cultural Centre was the first of its kind in Europe."

Charmaine St John, mayor of Santa Lucija, said that the friendship between China and Malta has always been based on equality and mutual benefit, and she hopes to see more cultural interaction between the two countries in the Garden of Serenity in the future.

On Sunday night, a lantern festival was held in the Maltese capital Valletta. During the festival, visitors tasted Chinese tea, enjoyed traditional Chinese music performed by artists from Xi'an, and tried on Tang Dynasty (618-907) costumes. — Xinhua

TikTok chef whips up real-life Los Angeles restaurant after virtual success



Chef Tue Nguyen presents a bowl of her Didi fried rice at her soon-to-open first restaurant, called Di Di (Let's Go! in Vietnamese), in West Hollywood, California, on 10 July 2023, as preparations continue for the 20 July opening. **PHOTO: AFP**

TUE Nguyen became a TikTok star by posting videos of herself cooking Vietnamese dishes during the pandemic.

With lockdowns over, the young chef has leapt from the virtual to the real world to open

her first restaurant near Los Angeles. "I think that's always kind of been like a dream," Nguyen, 25, told AFP recently at Di Di, her restaurant in the vibrant suburb of West Hollywood.

"But... I honestly didn't know

that it would come this fast."

Nguyen attended culinary school to learn the basics of the craft, but says she truly mastered gastronomy when she tapped into her heritage.

"I genuinely didn't learn how to cook until... I really looked back at what I grew up with. And that's the taste of my mom's cooking."

Nguyen, who immigrated to the United States from Viet Nam with her family as a child, credits her mother and stepfather as her main influences in the kitchen.

"They remind me every time that I'm in the kitchen to cook, to make good food and to trust your taste," Nguyen said.

Known on social media as @TwayDaBae, Nguyen first started posting mukbangs, or videos in which people livestream themselves eating. — AFP

Music festival energizes small town at foot of Mount Qomolangma

APPLAUSE resounded through an open space in Zhaxizom Township, southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region, on Sunday night. The air was filled with excitement as performers presented enchanting songs and dances to the

delighted crowd.

The performance marked the beginning of a month-long music and food festival in the township. Zhaxizom is situated approximately 4,200 metres above sea level at the foot of Mount Qomolangma,

the world's highest peak. It is under the jurisdiction of Tingri County and is located about 49 kilometres from Mount Qomolangma's Base Camp, making it a frequent stop for people travelling to the mountain. — Xinhua

LVMH named as premium sponsor of 2024 Paris Olympics

FRENCH luxury brand LVMH announced on Monday it will be a "premium sponsor" of the 2024 Paris Olympics, allowing the organizers to practically reach their sponsorship target of 1.24 billion euros (\$1.37 billion). LVMH becomes the sixth top-tier domestic sponsor, alongside communications company Orange, electricity provider EDF, banking group BPCE, pharmaceuticals company Sanofi and retail giant Carrefour.

"I have the honour of officially announcing that we are now committed to being a premium partner for the 2024 Paris

Olympics," Antoine Arnault, one of the five children and heirs of LVMH Chairman and CEO Bernard Arnault, said.

He made the announcement at a news conference in Paris attended by International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach, Paris 2024 chief organizer Tony Estanguet, Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo and France's sports minister Amelie Oudea-Castera. With Wednesday marking one year to go until the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics, the late completion of the deal with the world's biggest luxury group created great interest in France. — AFP



(FromL) CEO of LVMH Holding Company Antoine Arnault, French Sports Minister Amelie Oudea-Castera, World's top luxury group LVMH head Bernard Arnault, International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Thomas Bach, Mayor of Paris Anne Hidalgo and President of the Paris 2024 Organizing Committee Tony Estanguet pose for a group picture during a meeting after LVMH was named as final premium sponsor of 2024 Paris Olympics, in Paris on 24 July 2023, with the Eiffel Tower in the background. **PHOTO: AFP**

ECONOMY

WORLD

Stock markets mostly gain on China stimulus hopes

STOCK markets mostly rose Tuesday, with the biggest gains in Asia after China's leaders pledged fresh measures to boost the nation's stuttering economy.

The yuan firmed against the dollar, while oil prices built on Monday's strong advance, with optimism also on the prospect of central banks nearing the end of their rate-hiking cycle.

"Hopes that the Chinese government's stimulus measures will help drive domestic demand may be lending some support," noted Joshua Mahony, chief market analyst at Scope Markets.

He added that stocks were boosted by the likelihood of the Federal Reserve soon ending a policy of raising interest rates after, as expected, it hikes again on Wednesday.

In China, with recent data showing growth stuttering and business activity slowing in the



A man (L) walks through exchange square outside the Hong Kong Stock Exchange in Hong Kong on 23 February 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

world's second biggest economy, Beijing has come under pressure to provide support, particularly for the vast property sector.

to interest rates, investors have been largely disappointed by the policy response from authorities, with very few concrete measures being unveiled.

However, top leaders have signalled a fresh push to get the post-Covid recovery back on track, particularly the troubled property sector, which accounts for a major part of China's economy.

The announcement "keeps a supportive tone, which can help provide some support for the recovery and it may provide some boost to market sentiment", said Erin Xin at HSBC.

While it was nowhere near the blockbuster spending plans seen in the past, the news gave investors a boost, with Hong Kong's stock market closing up more than four per cent thanks to a rally in real estate companies and tech giants.

— AFP

Unilever profit jumps on asset sale, higher prices

BRITISH consumer goods giant Unilever on Tuesday said its net profit jumped more than a fifth in the first half thanks to an asset sale and as it lifted prices.

Profit after tax rose 22 per cent to 3.54 billion euros (\$3.9 billion) in the six months to the



A Unilever logo is pictured on a bottle of the company's Persil washing detergent product in a shop in London on 20 January 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

end of June from a year earlier, the maker of products ranging from Magnum ice cream and Cif surface cleaner to Dove soap said in a statement.

Unilever said it gained 497 million euros from the sale of personal-care business Suave in North America, adding it had passed on higher costs to customers in the form of sharp price increases for goods.

Businesses and consumers worldwide continue to battle higher costs as inflation remains stubbornly high, especially in the UK.

Unilever on Tuesday added that its turnover increased 2.7 per cent to 30.4 billion euros in the first six months of the year.

— AFP

Eurozone loan demand lowest since 2003 as rates rise

DEMAND for loans among eurozone companies fell to the lowest level since 2003, a key bank survey showed Tuesday, following sharp hikes in interest rates by the European Central Bank.

The decline in the second quarter of 2023 was "substantially stronger than expected by banks," the ECB's quarterly bank lending survey found, with the indicator reaching its lowest measure since the series began two decades ago.

Rising interest rates and reduced investment needs were the main factors behind the latest drop, the ECB said.

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

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 — the marker's highest level since 2001. The ECB is set to raise rates again at its

next meeting on Thursday, with observers expecting another quarter-point hike.

With the property market looking weak, eurozone banks also reported a decline in demand for housing loans, the ECB said, although the drop was smaller than in previous quarters.

Growing pessimism among households in the euro area likewise contributed to slipping consumer credit demand, the survey found.

Banks further tightened their lending conditions, "reflecting the ongoing pass-through of higher market rates to lending rates for firms and households", the ECB said.

The tightening in loan terms has been "substantial" since the beginning of 2022, when inflation started to take off, it said. Banks also reported that their access to funding deteriorated in most areas, with increased competition for deposits as interest rates rise a potential factor, according to the ECB. — AFP

Malaysia's latest leading index shows encouraging economic outlook amid cautious sentiment

MALAYSIA'S leading index in May recorded a better negative growth of 1.1 per cent with 110.3 points as compared to a negative 2.7 per cent in April, official data showed Tuesday.

The Department of Statis-

tics Malaysia (DOSM) said in a statement that the negative performance was pulled down by real imports of semiconductors and real imports of other basic precious and other non-ferrous metals.

Nevertheless, leading index's monthly performance grew by 1.8 per cent, as a result of growth in five leading index components except for expected sales value in manufacturing and real money supply M1. — Xinhua

‘Era of mass closures’: the Japan businesses without successors



This photo taken on 20 June 2023 shows Kiyoshi Hashimoto, president of the machinery factory J&A Sakura, looking at equipment at his factory in Yachimata, Chiba prefecture. **PHOTO: AFP**

KIYOSHI Hashimoto’s machinery factory outside Tokyo should be buzzing with industry. Instead, it’s so quiet you can hear him practising the recorder. The 82-year-old entrepreneur founded his company nearly 40 years ago, but well past retirement age he has neither a successor nor a buyer for a business that retains loyal clients. It is a problem that Japan’s government warns could affect up to a third of all small businesses in

the country by 2025, as the country’s population shrinks and ages. “All of this would go to waste if I were to close now,” said Hashimoto, whose factory in Yachimata, east of Tokyo, is filled with workbenches, drill

tables and parts cabinets. He once employed dozens of people, but now gets by with just two part-time workers after scaling back operations. The problem is so vast that Japan faces an “era of mass closures”, said Shigenobu Abe of bankruptcy research firm Teikoku Databank. A 2019 government report estimated that about 1.27 million small business owners would be 70 or older by 2025 and have no successors. The trend could kill up to 6.5 million jobs and reduce the size of the Japanese economy by 22 trillion yen (\$166 billion), the study warned. By 2029, the situation will worsen still, as baby boomers hit 81, the average life expectancy for Japanese men, who account for most of the presidents of these firms, according to Teikoku Databank. — AFP

De Beers’ new S Africa mine delivers first diamonds

A \$2.2-billion mining tunnel in South Africa has started to produce its first diamonds, mining giant De Beers said on Tuesday. In 2012, the global firm started digging beneath the country’s largest diamond mine, Venetia, seeking to reach gems at a depth of more than 1,000 metres (3,250 feet). Venetia is an open mine in northeastern South Africa, close to the border with Zimbabwe and Botswana, that closed in December 2022 after 30 years of production. The firm described the first diamonds as “a key milestone” but did not give further details. The underground operation, employing about 4,300 people, is now 70 per cent complete, it said. — AFP



A model holds a De Beers cushion brilliant-cut fancy vivid blue 5.53 carats diamond that could fetch 15 million US dollars during a press preview by Sotheby’s auction house ahead of sale in Geneva on 3 November 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

Indian minister urges banks to handle loan recovery with sensitivity

INDIA’S federal Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday said the government has instructed all banks to deal with loan repayment issues with sensitivity and humanity. “I have heard complaints about how mercilessly loan repayments have been followed up by some banks,” Sitharaman said in the lower house of the Indian parliament. “The government has instructed all banks, both public and private, that harsh steps should not be taken when it comes to the process of loan repayments,” added the minister. — Xinhua

German business morale falls further in July

GERMAN business sentiment fell for the third month in a row in July, a key survey showed Tuesday, as pessimism about the state of Europe’s largest economy deepened. The Ifo institute’s closely watched confidence barometer, based on a survey of 9,000 companies, fell to 87.3 points from 88.6 points in June. Analysts surveyed by financial data company FactSet had expected a reading of 88.0 points. The weak score underlined mounting concerns over the outlook for the German economy, which slipped into recession around the turn of the year. “Sentiment among German companies has worsened further,” said Ifo president Clemens Fuest, noting that companies’ dissatisfaction with their current business was a key drag on general sentiment. — AFP

Notice for Change of Distributor

Notice is hereby given that official distributor have been changed for the following herbicides distributed by **Agro Green Land Chemical Co. Ltd.** and **Taw Win Dar Co. Ltd.** to **ARVIS CROPSCIENCE Co. Ltd.**

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1	Foison Bigboss	Flumioxazin 50% WP	Provisional	P2022-4726	Agro Green Land Chemical Co. Ltd.	ARVIS CROPSCIENCE Co. Ltd.
2	Foison Safa	Atrazine 80% WP	Provisional	P2019-4729		
3	Foison Trump	Fluroxypyr 8.5% + MCPA 33.5% EC	Provisional	P2022-4725		
4	Foison Paniclear	Quinclorac 50% WP	Provisional	P2020-4825		
5	Foison Speed	Cyhalofop-butyl 10%EC	Provisional	P2020-4822		
6	Foison Longstar	Pretilachlor 50% EC	Provisional	P2020-4824		
7	Foison Axe	Triclopyr 480 g/L EC	Provisional	P2020-4943		
8	Foison Weedoff	Bensulfuron-methyl 5% + Quinclorac 25% WP	Provisional	P2020-4859	Taw Win Dar Co. Ltd.,	

Agro Green Land Chemical Co. Ltd., and Taw Win Dar Co. Ltd invites objections to Co-secretary, Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon from all parties within a period of fourteen (14) days form the publication of this notice. If no objection is received within the period prescribed, parties mentioned above shall proceed within the completion of formalities recorded with the Pesticide Registration Board.

Address: **Agro Green Land Chemical Co. Ltd.** No.61, Gayunar Road, Near (Ka Nya Na) office, Dagon Myo Thit (South) Township, Yangon. Tel: **09-777758847**
Taw Win Dar Co.Ltd., Room(3), No(153), Hlut Sit Ward, Tit Taw Street, Ah Lon Township, Yangon. Tel:**09-448027852**

Notice for change of distributor

We, **Eastchem Co.,Ltd**, would like to change the Distributor of the following product, which registered under Pesticide Registration Board, Myanmar, from **EVOGRO COMPANY LIMITED** to **LIONCHEM (MYANMAR) PTE. LTD.** If any objection or enquiry, please contact to Co-Secretary, Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Department of Agriculture, West Gyogone, Insein township, Yangon from here to next two weeks.

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Lionchem (Myanmar) Pte., Ltd
Address: HANDARWADDI STREET, NO.569, ROOM NO.B-1, 123-QUARTER, DAGON MYOTHIT (EAST) TOWNSHIP, YANGON REGION, MYANMAR.

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ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD



World leaders' guest book entries to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum are on display at the "G-7 Hiroshima Summit Reminiscences" exhibition at the International Conference Centre Hiroshima on 25 July 2023. **PHOTO: KYODO**

G-7 leaders' Hiroshima museum messages go on public display

MESSAGES from world leaders written in the guest book of Hiroshima's peace museum during the Group of Seven nations' summit held in the western Japan city in May were put on display Tuesday, in an exhibition of objects related to the meeting.

The "G7 Hiroshima Summit Reminiscences" exhibition at the International Conference Centre Hiroshima aims to offer visitors a chance to reflect on the recent summit, as well as leaders' thoughts on achieving a "world without nuclear weapons".

Amid rising nuclear tensions

worldwide, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida pitched the vision as a central theme of the summit. Kishida represents a constituency in the city, which suffered the world's first atomic bombing by the United States on 6 August 1945.

As part of the theme, the G-7 leaders, which among them include the nuclear powers of the United States, France and Britain, as well as the heads of invited nations such as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and met a

survivor of the bombing during the summit.

The free exhibition will run until 31 August, with its main exhibits including two origami paper cranes symbolizing peace brought by US President Joe Biden to the museum, the round table used in summit talks and 18 guest book entries written by figures including the leaders of G-7 countries and invited nations.

For preservation purposes, the genuine guest book entries will be replaced by replicas after 7 August.

Kairi Sato, a 16-year-old high

school student visiting with family from Matsumoto in central Japan's Nagano Prefecture, said that "seeing the leaders' thoughts written directly, I've been able to think deeply about peace. I want to take what I've seen today with me as an experience". Among the messages, Biden's reads, "May the stories of this Museum remind us all of our obligations to build a future of peace. Together let us continue to make progress towards the day when we can finally and forever rid the world of nuclear weapons. Keep the faith!" — Kyodo

Philippines orders evacuations ahead of Super Typhoon Doksuri

A super typhoon swept towards the northern Philippines on Tuesday, the country's weather agency said, triggering evacuation orders for coastal communities expected to bear the brunt of the powerful storm.

Super Typhoon Doksuri was packing maximum sustained winds of 185 kilometres per hour (115 miles per hour) as it headed towards the northern tip of the main island of Luzon. The storm, which is called "Egay" in

the Philippines, was expected to make landfall or pass very close to the lightly populated Babuyan islands or northeastern Cagayan province by Wednesday, the agency said in its latest bulletin at 0300 GMT. It would then move towards Taiwan and southeastern China.

Coastal communities in northwestern and northeastern Cagayan province had been ordered to evacuate their homes in anticipation of storm surges reaching, or even exceeding, three metres (10 feet).

Three of the five Babuyan islands are inhabited, with a population of around 20,000 people.

Local disaster official Charles Castillejos said people living near the shores of those islands had been ordered to go inland, while fishermen had been told to get their boats out of the water. — AFP



Farmers lead their cows to a safer place in Ilagan town, Isabela province, north of Manila on 25 July 2023 as Typhoon Doksuri heads towards the northern Philippines. **PHOTO: AFP**

Europe, US heatwaves 'virtually impossible' without climate change

BLISTERING heat that has baked swathes of North America and Europe this month would have been "virtually impossible" without human-caused climate change, researchers said Tuesday, as intense temperatures spark health alerts and stoke ferocious wildfires.

With tens of million people affected in the northern hemisphere and July on track to be the hottest month globally since records began, experts warn that worse is to come unless we reduce planet-heating emissions.

Severe heatwaves have gripped southern Europe, parts of the United States, Mexico and China this month, with temperatures above 45 degrees Celsius.

In the new rapid analysis

of the scorching temperatures, scientists from the World Weather Attribution group found that the heatwaves in parts of Europe and North America would have been almost impossible without climate change. Temperatures in China were made 50 times more likely by global warming, they found. "The role of climate change is absolutely overwhelming," said climate scientist Friederike Otto, of the Grantham Institute for Climate Change and the Environment, Imperial College London. Intense temperatures have swept much of the southwest and southern United States — including in Phoenix, Arizona, which suffered a record-breaking three straight weeks of highs above 43C. — AFP

Firefighting plane crashes in Greece: fire brigade

A firefighting plane crashed on Tuesday while battling a forest fire on the Greek island of Evia, a fire service spokesperson told AFP.

It crashed into a ravine on the heights of Karystos, where a fire started on Sunday, according to Greek officials.

"A Greek Canadair plane, with at least two people on board,

crashed near Platanisto," a village in Evia, spokesman Yannis Artopios said.

The plane was among at least three other aircraft and around a hundred firefighters in the fight against the flames on Evia.

The two pilots missing were members of the Greek Air Force, according to information from

the Greek Ministry of Defence, quoted by state TV ERT, which published a video of the aircraft as it crashed and disappeared behind a cloud of flames and black smoke. Wildfires have been raging in Greece amid scorching temperatures, forcing mass evacuations in several tourist spots including on the islands of Rhodes and Corfu. — AFP



A fire fighting aircraft drops water over a wildfire close to village of Vati in the southern part of the Greek island of Rhodes, about 70 km southwest of the capital city on 25 July 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

Thai PM vote postponed, prolonging post-election deadlock

THAILAND’S parliament on Tuesday postponed a vote to choose a new prime minister, prolonging the kingdom’s political deadlock more than two months after an election won by opposition parties.

Reformist candidate Pita Limjaroenrat, whose party won the election, failed to get enough votes in a first parliamentary sitting to select a prime minister on 13 July — blocked by military and pro-royalist senators.

He was refused a second ballot on 19 July, but this decision is now being challenged at the Constitutional Court.

House speaker Wan Muhamad Noor Matha said the new vote for premier, scheduled for Thursday, had to wait for the court’s decision.

“We have to cancel because

the Ombudsman is about to send a case to the Constitutional Court,” Wan told reporters.

“If we go ahead with the sitting on 27 July, before the court has ruled, it could cause problems.”

Pita’s Move Forward Party (MFP) rode a wave of young and urban support eager for change to win a shock victory in May’s election.

But their campaign promises of reform to the kingdom’s strict royal defamation laws and monopolies provoked intense opposition from the conservative establishment. “I am aware of the postponing of the parliament meeting,” Pita told reporters. “There is not much I can do but to be back on the ground and spend most of my time there.” — AFP



Members of Thai Parliament begin debate to decide proceedings before the second round of the parliamentary vote to decide the country’s next prime minister in Bangkok on 19 July 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

Russia to raise max age for compulsory military service

RUSSIAN lawmakers on Tuesday backed legislation increasing the maximum age limit to 30 for compulsory military service, over a year into the Kremlin’s Ukraine offensive.

The bill comes as Moscow seeks to replenish its forces on the front line in Ukraine without resorting to another mobilization — a step that the Kremlin took last September which proved unpopular.

“From 1 January 2024,

citizens aged 18 to 30 will be called up for military service,” the lower house of parliament said after the bill was passed in a second and third reading.

It still has to be approved by the upper chamber and signed into law by President Vladimir Putin, steps that are considered a formality. Previously, one year of military service was mandatory in Russia for men aged 18 to 27, with conscription carried out twice a year. — AFP

Cambodian PM’s party wins overwhelming majority in parliamentary polls

THE ruling Cambodian People’s Party (CPP) won 120 parliamentary seats as the royalist Funcinpec Party gained the remaining five seats in Sunday’s general election of the Southeast Asian country, party spokespersons said on Tuesday.

A total of 18 political parties contested the election, which was held once every five years to elect the members of parliament for the 125-seat National Assembly.

CPP spokesman Sok Eysan said on Tuesday that according to the CPP’s calculation based on the National Election Committee (NEC)’s preliminary results, the CPP won 120 seats and the Funcinpec Party of Prince Norodom Chakravuth gained the remaining five seats.

“The CPP received 80 per cent of the ballots from 8.21 million voters, winning 120 seats, or 96 per cent of the 125 seats in the National Assembly,” he told Xinhua.

“This is another great success for the CPP, and it truly reflected people’s confidence in the party’s leadership,” Eysan said. “We will do our best to continue to serve the people.”

Hun Manet, the future Prime Minister candidate for



Hun Manet, commander of the Royal Cambodian Army and eldest son of Prime Minister Hun Sen, shows his finger after he casts his vote at a polling station in Phnom Penh on 23 July 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

the CPP, said people had clearly expressed their will through votes with a very high turnout rate of more than 84 per cent.

“An overwhelming number has expressed support for the Cambodian People’s Party,” he said in a message released on his official Telegram channel.

Manet, 45, who is also a member of the CPP’s Standing Committee, thanked voters for supporting the CPP, vowing to better serve them in the future.

Funcinpec Party spokesman Nhoeun Raden told Xinhua on Tuesday that the NEC’s preliminary results showed that the Funcinpec Party

gained five seats, or four per cent in the National Assembly.

He said the party won one seat each in the capital Phnom Penh and the provinces of Kandal, Prey Veng, Kampong Thom and Kampong Cham.

According to the NEC, about 8.21 million people, or 84.58 per cent of the 9.71 million eligible voters, cast their ballots in the general election.

Sunday’s parliamentary polls was the seventh of its kind in the Southeast Asian country since 1993. In the previous one held in 2018, the CPP won all 125 seats in the National Assembly. — Xinhua

North Korea fires missiles ahead of key anniversary

PYONGYANG conducted twin missile launches late Monday, ahead of Korean War anniversary celebrations that will be

attended by Chinese dignitaries in the first foreign delegation visit to the country since its 2020 pandemic border closure.

South Korea’s defence ministry described the two projectiles as ballistic missiles that flew about 400 kilometres (248 miles) before falling into the sea, according to reports by news agency Yonhap of South Korea and Japan’s Kyodo. “Our military detected two ballistic missiles North Korea fired from areas near Pyongyang into the East Sea at 11:55 pm on the 24th and at midnight of the 25th,” Yonhap quoted South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff as saying. — AFP



People sit in front of a television screen showing a news broadcast with file footage of a North Korean missile test at a railway station in Seoul on 25 July 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

Cambodian PM's party wins overwhelming majority in parliamentary polls

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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.



Philippines' forward (7) Sarina Bolden (L) celebrates scoring her team's first goal during the Australia and New Zealand 2023 Women's World Cup Group A football match between New Zealand and the Philippines at Wellington Stadium, also known as Sky Stadium, in Wellington on 25 July 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

'Dream come true': Philippine fans celebrate historic World Cup win

HUNDREDS of Philippine football fans celebrated wildly and some cried after the country's historic first World Cup win on Tuesday.

The unfancied Filipinas stunned co-hosts New Zealand 1-0 in Wellington, triggering celebrations more than 8,000 kilometres (5,000 miles) away.

Elated supporters watching the match live on a big screen in the UP Town Centre shopping mall in the capital Manila erupted in screams and song. Some cried tears of joy.

"Oh my God, I am so emotional about our first-ever World Cup win," said Bethany Talbot, 21, as she stood in front of large poster of goalscorer Sarina Bolden.

"I know all the other girls out there, all the girls, all feel the same. I feel like I'm speechless right now, but I'm so over the moon."

Fans, many wearing the national team's blue, white and red, shouted, hugged and jumped up and down with excitement when Bolden headed the ball into the net in the first half.

That left supporters in the air-conditioned mall jittery with nerves as they watched New Zealand come excruciatingly close in the second half to levelling the score.

Football is not nearly as popular as basketball or boxing in the Philippines, and most of the players on the women's national team have been recruited from the country's large diaspora.

But for Filipino fans at UP Town Centre, this victory was special. — AFP

Postecoglou lauds Son's influence at Tottenham

NEW Tottenham Hotspur manager Ange Postecoglou on Tuesday spoke in glowing terms of winger Son Heung-min and the huge influence the South Korean has on his team-mates at the Premier League club.

Speaking a day ahead of his team's pre-season match

against local side Lion City Sailors at Singapore's National Stadium, the Australian lauded Son's talents as a player and leader.

"I've known Sonny really well for a really long time and I think he's an outstanding player," said the former Australia national manager. — AFP

Yadanabon crush GFA 2-0 in MNL Week 13

YADANABON gripped a victorious record after beating GFA 2-0 in the Week 13 of the Myanmar National League at YUSC Stadium in Yangon yesterday.

As soon as the game started, Yadanabon focused on the striking part, corrupting the rival's defence.

Swan Htet Aung broke the deadlock with a beautiful score at 19 minutes.

Yadanabon managed to lead by one goal in the first half.

In the second half, GFA, who were more active in attack, had some more opportunities to create goals, but there were hesitations, and they did not score.

Yadanabon's Naung Naung Soe took advantage of GFA's backline error to send the ball into the net with a quick move at the 51-minute mark.

In the remaining minutes, the Yadanabon team reduced

the game tempo and could play neatly.

At the final whistle, Yadanabon celebrated the 2-0 victory over GFA.

After the match, the Man of the Game Award went to Naung

Naung Soe, a star player of Yadanabon FC. — KZL



Yadanabon player Htun Htun Thein (blue) carries the ball with great speed during the MNL Week-13 match against GFA at YUSC Stadium in Yangon on 25 July 2023. **PHOTO: MNL**