Embrace the Future: Unfolding a New Chapter with a Fresh Vision

The Global NEW LIGHT of MYANMAR

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State of Emergency extended further six months

National Defence and Security Council holds its 2/2023 meeting

THE National Defence and Security Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar held the 2/2023 meeting at the office of the State Administration Council Chairman in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

Speaking at the meeting, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing explained the endeavours of the State Administration Council during the six months further extended to take State responsibilities in accord with the Five-Point Road Map and 12 Objectives.

He continued to say that, during the period from 1 February to 31 July 2023, four members of the Sangha and nuns, 772 innocent people and 28 State service personnel lost their lives in attacks by NUG, PDF and some EAOs. Moreover, those terrorists destroyed one building related to the health sector, 11 religious buildings, 76 public buildings, 94 roads, bridges and tollgate facilities and 26 telecom towers.

While the government is striving for the education promotion of the people, terrorists committed terror attacks against the education sector.

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Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing cordially greets NDSC member Vice-President U Henry Van Thio, who is attending the National Defence and Security Council meeting 2/2023 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

National Defence & Security Council of Republic of Union of Myanmar issues announcement

The National Defence and Security Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar issued announcement No 2/2023 signed by Pro Tem President U Myint Swe and dated 31 July 2023, and the full text of the announcement is as follows: -

1. The 2/2023 meeting of the National Defence and Security Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar was held at 9:30 am on 31 July 2023. During the meeting, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing reported on accelerating development of the State and the amendment and addition made to Five-Point Road Map and 12 Objectives to be able to step up the implementation of two political tasks and two national tasks within the previous six-month extension period, achievements in political and socioeconomic endeavours through the deep undertaking of the road map and objectives, destructive attacks launched by NUG, CRPH and their subordinate PDF terrorists, concerted efforts to promote the education sector, destructive acts of terrorists aiming at deterioration of the education sector, arrests and seizures following the reports of the public, supports to develop the agriculture and livestock-based MSMEs, GDP growth in respective financial years,

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ongoing plans ensuring the increase in GDP in 2023-2024FY, enactment of the Political Parties Registration Law, situation to keep carrying out for security concerns, peace talks with NCA-signatory EAOs and NCA non-signatory EAOs for nationwide enduring peace, plans to continue the peace talks, voting fraud of the 2020 general elections, ongoing processes to collect the exact household lists that is vital for accurate voter lists, delays occurred in these processes due to the destructive actions of the terrorists, preparations before Cyclone Mocha, recuse works and rehabilitation tasks executed after the storm, electoral issues and security affairs regarding the holding of the election.

2. The National Defence and Security Council members including the Pro Tem President discussed the presentation of the Senior General. They discussed the situations of killing innocent people, blowing up public places, intentions to deteriorate the education system and mine attacks on public transport facilities like roads, bridges and railways and coercion on the people committed by CRPH, NUG and their subordinate PDF terrorist groups aiming to cause utter devastation to the State although the State Administration Council is striving for ensuring peace and stability of the State and development in all sectors, the unusual circumstances of the country and the terrorists' attempt to seize the State power. It needs to extend the State of the Emergency period as the political parties encounter threats during their preparations and campaigning processes for the election, the collecting of household lists to ensure voter lists is proceeding and it needs to carry out the security measures in holding the election to be able to cast votes freely and fairly without fear. For the Senior General to be able to accomplish the duties, the period for the State of Emergency across the nation is extended further six months starting 1 August under Section 425 of the Constitution and in accordance with the response of the Constitutional Tribunal made on 1 February 2023.

3. The meeting was attended by Pro Tem President U Myint Swe, Vice-President U Henry Van Thio, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Union Minister for Defence General Mya Tun Oo, Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Soe Htut, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe, Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung, special invitees SAC Secretary Lt-Gen Aung Lin Dwe, Joint-Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo, and Union Minister for Legal Affairs and Attorney-General of the Union Dr Thida Oo.

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Announcement of Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

14th Waxing of Second Waso 1385 ME
31 July 2023

AS it is necessary to continuously control infection of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), it is hereby announced that public requests, orders, notifications and directives (except for easing the restrictions) released by the Union-level organizations and Union ministries up to 31 July 2023 have been extended until 31 August 2023 for prevention, control and treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Two new cases of COVID-19 reported on 31 July, total figure registers 641,058

MYANMAR'S COVID-19-positive cases rose to **641,058** after **two** new cases were reported on 31 July 2023 according to the Ministry of Health. Therefore, a total of **11,028,311** laboratory samples were examined to date and the confirmed COVID-19 cases reached **641,058**. The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **619,829** including eight new recovery. The death toll from COVID-19 in the country registered **19,494** on 30-7-2023 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

MIFER, UNFPA plan to cooperate in public healthcare development

THE United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations (MIFER) will sign a letter of agreement on cooperation in public health care development projects.

Regarding this, Union Health Minister Dr Thet Khaing Win and the delegation led by Mr Ramanathan Balakrishnan, UNFPA Resident Representative to Myanmar, discussed on 24 July.

The letter of agreement will include matters such as collaborating in the health sector, providing medicine and medical equipment for reproductive healthcare activities, organizing courses for the development of healthcare, and the situation of collaborating on maternal and reproductive health activities in areas affected by Cyclone Mocha. The UNFPA is currently working together with relevant ministries on activities in Myanmar such as reproductive health, population and development, achieving gender equality, and taking censuses. — TWA/CT



The service for public health is being carried out by the UNFPA and the collaborative team.

NATIONAL

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing pays homage to foreign venerable monks bound for gala religious ceremonies

THE ceremonies to consecrate the Maravijaya Buddha Image which will be the world's tallest sitting marble Buddha image, hoist umbrellas atop small pagodas on stone plaque chambers and share merits gained will be held on a grand scale in Dekkhinathiri Township of Nay Pyi Taw on the full moon of Second Waso 1385 ME (Dhammacakka Day), 1 August 2023.

Over 70 venerable monks from Cambodia, Thailand, Nepal, Viet Nam, Bangladesh, Russian Federation, Laos, India and Sri Lanka will attend the ceremonies.

Chairman of State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and party paid homage to the monks at Jasmine Hotel yesterday.



State Administration Council Chair Premier Senior General Min Aung Hlaing offers the miniature Maravijaya Buddha image to Thai members of the Sangha yesterday.

First, State Ovadacariya Shwegyin Nikaya Sangharaja Sitagu Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Nyanissara and Rector of IBTMU Bhaddanta Chekinda introduced the respective monks to the Senior General, the Vice-Senior General and party.

Then, the Senior General said the attendance of the venerable monks to the ceremonies will strengthen the cooperation in religious affairs and support the propagation of the Buddhism.

Then, the foreign Sayadaws made certain words of advice describing Myanmar as the focal point of the Theravada Buddhism. Next, the Sayadaws and laypersons presented cash donations, robes and gifts of Dhamma and the Senior General accepted them. The venerable monks visited the Maravijaya Buddha image, religious buildings, Mucalinda Nagayon Pagoda and small pagodas on stone plaque chambers in the precinct of the Maravijaya Buddha Park yesterday afternoon. — MNA/KTZH

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Moreover, terrorists committed to blowing up the roads and bridges 94 times. According to the information, a total of 18,792 assorted guns, 1,423,224 rounds of ammunition and 45,865 units of ammunition were seized from terrorists from 1 February 2021 to 30 July 2023.

The government set military operation areas and military administration areas under the law for ensuring peace and stability of the entire people and security of the socioeconomic life of the people.

The government managed help the State escape from the economic downtrend in the 2020-2021 financial year due to its concerted efforts under the missions and visions. As the country secured 3.4 per cent of GDP in 2022-23 FY, now it sees 4 per cent of GDP in 2023-24 FY with concerted efforts.

Concerning the election process, 30 old political parties and five new parties, totalling 35 have been allowed to stand as registered political parties till 27 July 2023.

The National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee held peace talks with seven NCA signatories and three non-NCA signatories 22 times from 1 February to 27 July 2023. Three NCA signatory armed organizations did not attend the peace talks for various reasons. Currently, these three organizations commit terror attacks. But, the government always opens the door of peace to all ethnic armed organizations which wish to ensure peace and development in Myanmar.

As the current government took the State's responsibilities due to occurrences of voting fraud, the correct voter list is of importance for the forthcoming election for which the current government will take responsibility.

The Senior General noted that some terrorist groups and some ethnic armed organizations are committing armed attacks, murdering, mine planting, setting fire and various terror acts in some townships of Sagaing, Magway, Bago and Taninthayi regions, Kayin, Kayah, Chin and Mon states. They use civilian people as human shields in attacking the buildings of locals, religious buildings and departmental offices. So, security forces control their counterattacks on those terrorists.

The election must be held in the entire nation creating a peaceful and stable situation with full law and order for the voter people to cast votes without dependence and fear. Hence, everybody needs to strive for emphasizing the holding of the general election which will be a political decision. Moreover, political parties, EAOs, stakeholders, people, local and foreign organizations and international communities have to cooperate with the government to realize a genuine, disciplined multiparty democratic system the entire people aspire to. As it is necessary to accelerate peace and stability, and rule of law processes must be done in some areas of regions and states where terror attacks occur, the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services sought the approval to extend six further months period of the State of Emergency.

Vice-President U Henry Van Thio and Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U T Khun Myat agreed to the submission of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services to extend six months of the State of Emergency from 1 August 2023 under Section 425 of the Constitution.

Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Vice-Senior General Soe Win discussed the need to take a certain length of time to launch military and security operations for minimizing terror acts, strenuous efforts of the Tatmadaw to restore perpetual peace across the nation, preparations for the accuracy of voter lists, and support for an extended further six-month period of the State of Emergency across the nation.

Union Minister for Defence General Mya Tun Oo, Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Soe Htut, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe and Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung expressed their support for an extension of the further six-month period of the State of Emergency.

In his address, Pro Tem President U Myint Swe said that with regard to the forthcoming election, except some areas of Sagaing, Magway, Bago and Taninthayi regions, Kayah, Kayin and Chin states due to occurrences of terror acts and unlawful movements, such general election must be held in the entire nation.

Before concluding the meeting, the Pro Tem President declared the extension of a further six-month State of Emergency in the entire nation from 1 August 2023 and informed the National Defence and Security Council about further handing over the State responsibilities to the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services under Section 419 of the Constitution, adding that the National Defence and Security Council will announce it. — MNA/TTA

Facts File:

Salient points about the State Administration Council

At the first meeting of the National Defence and Security Council on 1 February 2021, the Pro Tem President of the State handed over legislative, executive and judicial powers of the State to the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services under Section 418 (a) of the State Constitution.

- a one-year term from 1 February 2021 to 31 January 2022
- a six-month term from 1 February 2022 to 31 July 2022
- an additional six-month term from 1 August 2022 to 31 January 2023 for the first time
- an additional six-month term from 1 February 2023 to 31 July 2023 for the second time

NATIONAL

MRTV Farmers' Channel, MRTV Sports Channel to be upgraded from 1 August





SAC Member Deputy Prime Minister Union Transport & Communications Minister Admiral Tin Aung San and Union Information Minister U Maung Maung Ohn press the electric button for the inaugural of the upgraded Farmers' Channel yesterday.

MRTV Farmers' Channel and MRTV Sports Channel will be upgraded from 1 August, according to the Ministry of Information.

Rebranding of these channels was done by the Ministry of Information, MRTV and Hey Play Company Limited.

The channel rebranding of MRTV Farmers' Channel and MRTV Sports Channel will be launched in commemoration of two years and six months of State service of the State Administration Council on 1 August and for the dedication ceremony of the Maravijaya Buddha image in Nay Pyi Taw, which will be the highest among the seated Buddha statues in the world.

MRTV Farmers' Channel and MRTV Sports Channel broadcast for four hours daily and four rotations for a total of 16 hours each.

After the rebranding, these two channels will be broadcast in cooperation with Hey Play Company Limited from 6:00 am to 12:00 pm starting from 1 August.

In such broadcasting, the department will continue to broadcast as originally with four hours each. For the remaining 14 hours, Myanmar TV series and movies produced by Hey Play Company Limited, Farmers' business experience and prospects, seasonal agriculture and rural lifestyle programmes, training methods in collaboration with sports federations, football clubs participating in the Myanmar National League – (MNL) and international football matches will be broadcast. A total of 18 hours will be broadcast by dividing the broadcast time.

MRTV Farmers' Channel broadcasted information on modern farming systems and agricultural information related to the agricultural sector, technology and experience in environmental protection and rural development starting from 15 October 2013.

MRTV Sports Channel started broadcasting on 15 February 2018 to watch sports techniques and national and international sports events.

MRTV broadcasts television and radio FM programmes daily, with a total of 18 channels including private channels including 6 in-house channels using the DVB-T2 system.

In addition, the DTH system has been broadcasted through In-House Channels since 1 February 2023, and efforts are being made to add new channels for the development of television media. — ASH/KZL

Myanmar delegation joins 2023 ASEAN-China Greater Bay Area (Qianhai) Economic Cooperation Forum

AT the invitation of the ASEAN-China Centre (ACC), a Myanmar delegation led by Commerce Deputy Minister U Nyunt Aung attended the 2023 ASEAN-China Greater Bay Area (Qianhai) Economic Cooperation Forum in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province of China.

The opening ceremony of the forum was held on the morning of 29 July and the deputy minister delivered a speech, along with leaders and representatives from China and ASEAN countries, focusing on the science and technological cooperation programme in the industry.

The deputy minister highlighted the active cooperation of ASEAN member countries in the upgrading of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area and the construction of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

The Myanmar delegation, led by Deputy Minister U Nyunt Aung, returned to Yangon yesterday morning. — MNA/KZW



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NATIONAL

MoHA DM MPF Chief attends Eagle 19 training closing in Thailand

THE Myanmar delegation led by Secretary of the Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control (CCDAC) Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Chief of Myanmar Police Force Lt-Gen Ni Lin Aung attended the closing ceremony of the 5th special task force Eagle 19 training yesterday, at the invitation of Secretary-General Mr Wichai Chaimongkhon of the Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB) of Thailand.

The training was conducted at the Counter-Terrorism Operations Centre of the Royal Thai Police from 2 to 31 July. A total of 49 trainees — 22 from Myanmar and 27 from Thailand — joined the training course. The training is aimed at boosting physical and mental resistance and skills for special tasks.

Moreover, Chief of Myanmar Police Force Lt-Gen Ni Lin Aung met the ONCB secretary-general and discussed matters related to regional drug cases, cooperation in combatting illegal precursor chemicals in the Golden Triangle, systematic destruction of seized drugs and chemicals, capacity-building training courses and enhancement of cooperation between the two countries.

The Myanmar delegation arrived back in Yangon on the same night. — MNA/KTZH



The concluding event of the Eagle 19 training in progress yesterday in Thailand.

CRIME NEWS

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



Seized illegal items in Kayin State.

THE combined on-duty teams under Kayin State Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force made inspections on 29 July and confiscated a Toyota HiAce vehicle and a Canter vehicle (approximate value of K30 million) carrying five kinds of goods worth K18.054 million including 240 packages of Dumex and 150 bags of fertilizer without official documents near Myaynigon junction in Myawady, a Scania tractor head and a trailer (estimated value of K90 million), headed to Yangon from Myawady, carrying two kinds of goods worth K24.96 million including 7,400 kilogrammes of Chewy candy choco that exceeded the quantity mentioned in the Import Declaration (ID) and a Dongfeng tractor head and a trailer (approximately K70 million), headed to Yangon from Myawady, carrying two kinds of goods worth K10.4 million including 80 Kargo brand new car batteries that exceeded the quantity mentioned in the ID at the Kawkareik (Tadakyoe) combined checkpoint. The action was conducted under Customs procedures.

In addition, an on-duty team under Bago Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force conducted inspections on 31 July and impounded 840 kilogrammes of Wai Wai instant rice vermicelli and 2,500 kilogrammes of Lactasoy soymilk that were not declared in the ID from a Nissan Diesel vehicle and a Hino truck (approximately K95 million) heading to Yangon from Myawady near Famous filling station in Phayagyi. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

A total of 14 arrests were made on 29 and 31 July, with an estimated value of K365,834,230, as reported by the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS

Drugs seized in Chanmyathazi, PyinOoLwin townships

A combined team comprising members of the Anti-Drug Police Force conducted an inspection of a motorbike driven by Nay Myo Sat Aung (aka) Ko Nay, accompanied by Myo Thet Oo, and a Toyota Crown driven by Po Po Hein, accompanied by Ma Thida Aye, in Chanmyathazi township at 5:30 pm on 30 July. The team successfully apprehended 29,250 stimulant tablets during the operation.

Similarly, at 8 am on 28 July the police force examined a 12-wheel Mitsubishi Fuso driven by Aik Sam on Mandalay-Lashio Road in PyinOoLwin. They seized 7,200 litres of a restricted chemical, namely hydrochloric acid. All the offenders involved in these incidents are currently facing prosecution under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. — MNA/MKKS



Offenders were seen along with seized drugs, a saloon and a motorbike.

Trafficker sentenced to ten years in prison with labour

THE Insein District Court delivered a ten-year prison sentence with labour to Daw Aye Aye Thwe, also known as Daw Watoke, who lived in Hlinethaya Township in Yangon Region, for trafficking a 17-year-old girl who lived in the same township.

Under the guise of offering a job at a beauty salon or restaurant for 20 days, Daw Aye Aye Thwe convinced the victim with promises of earning between K200,000 or K300,000. However, instead of fulfilling these promises, she coerced the girl into working in the sex trade, exploiting her earnings.

The trafficker faced prosecution at Hlinethaya (North) Myoma police station under Section 24 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law. — MNA/MKKS

CURRENT AFFAIRS


The photo shows the packaging of fertilizer at No 5 Fertilizer Factory (Kangyidaunt).

Increased fertilizer production helps reduce demand for foreign currency: Union Energy Minister

THE Union Energy Minister called for increased production of fertilizer to reduce the demand for foreign currency, during his visit to No 5 Fertilizer Factory (Kangyidaunt) on 29 July which is running with locally produced natural gas under the supervision of Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise.

He also called on the staff to increase fertilizer production, ensure equipment maintenance, be fully operational throughout the year and undertake environmental impact assessment.

Additionally, he observed automated control and operation of the factory under the distributed control system and fertilizer packaging line for distribution.

Fertilizer produced from that plant is being distributed to the farmers at a fairer price through an evaluation committee on fertilizer quota.

In June, Myanmar imported 144,900 tonnes of fertilizer worth US$58.041 million via sea-borne and border trade channels, the Ministry of Commerce's statistics showed. — TWA/EM

26 trafficked Indonesian citizens in Myawady rescued

THE Indonesian Embassy in Yangon reported the successful rescue of 26 Indonesian citizens who were victims of trafficking in Myawady Township, Kayin State. Among the rescued were 21 men and five women, who were brought back to the Indonesian Embassy in Yangon under the care of the respective authorities.

Additionally, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia informed that nine Indonesian citizens, who had been trafficked to a company in Myawady Township, Kayin State, were safely repatriated to Indonesia through Bangkok, Thailand, on 26 June. Furthermore, in May, 25 other Indonesians who were victims of trafficking in Myawady were also successfully sent back home via Bangkok, as reported by The Reporter, a news agency based in Thailand. — TWA/MKKS


The picture of 26 Indonesian citizens who were trafficked in Myawady.


A teacher is teaching the children from the Mary Chapman School for the Deaf.

Acceptance of applications for teacher training in deaf education commences

THE Mary Chapman School for the Deaf is currently accepting applications for a one-and-a-half-year teacher training course designed for working with children who have hearing disabilities.

To be eligible for the course, applicants must be graduates from any university and fall between the ages of 25 and 40.

The training will cover essential subjects such as disability concepts, sign language, and child psychology, taught through both theoretical and practical approaches. The course is scheduled to commence on 15 September this year and conclude on 31 March 2025.

Interested candidates are required to submit their applications to the Mary Chapman School for the Deaf, located at No 2, Thantaman Street, Dagon Township, Yangon Region, no later than 1 September. — TWA/CT

Yangon wholesale market unset Shan potato prices on poor supply

THE low supply of potatoes from Shan State pushed Yangon's wholesale centre not to set the price in July and the prices of only Chinese potatoes were shown between 11 and 29 July, U Zaw Wai, a trader from Laputta, told the Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM).

The price of Chinese potato touched a high of K3,000 per viss on 11-13 July and declined to K2,700 on 29 July.

Despite the lack of an official set price, potato from Shan State (Aungban) was priced at K2,150-2,600 per viss depending on sizes at some depots.

The consumers' demand for potatoes from Shan State falters due to low quality presently.


The photo shows some potatoes harvested in the field in Shan State.

Potatoes imported by China via the border directly flowed into the Yangon market in the previous years. This year, it was sent via Mandalay market, according to depots on Yetama Street (Bayintnaung).

Potatoes from the Sinphyukyun area entered the Yangon market before the Thingyan period. They are grown in October and November and harvested in January and February.

There is no supply of potatoes from the Tatkon and Loikaw areas to Yangon this year. Some potato chip businesses make direct purchase orders from regions outside Yangon rather than buying from Bayintnaung Wholesale Centre, said a trader engaged in the Yangon market.

Of kitchen dry groceries, onions are grown in the country twice a year. Export volume has achieved 100,000 tonnes of onions per year. With the price of locally produced onions rocketing, cheaper onions from China market enter the domestic market.

The harvest time of potatoes varies depending on the growing areas. Yet, the supply is extremely low in July 2023, prompting the wholesale centre not to reveal the price.

Thus, high-quality potato is suggested to boost the yield and cut potato imports from foreign markets. — TWA/EM

LOCAL BUSINESS

Fuel prices increase by K250-360 per litre in one month

FUEL prices were up by K250-360 per litre within one month in the domestic market.

Fuel prices surged to K2,235 per litre of Octane 92, K2,345 for Octane 95, K2,310 for diesel and K2,390 for premium diesel on 31 July, while 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 price index set by Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS), the pricing basis for many refined products in southeast Asia, influences the domestic fuel prices, according to the Supervisory Committee on Oil Import, Storage and Distribution of Fuel Oil.

In August 2022, the oil prices peaked at K2,605 per litre for Octane 92, K2,670 for Octane 95, K3,330 for premium diesel and K3,245 for diesel.



The photo taken on 26 July 2023 shows the sign displaying fuel prices at the petrol station in Yangon.

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 Inspection and Supervision 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 the 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

Palm oil wholesale reference price for Yangon Region heads for another weekly rise

THE wholesale reference rate of palm oil for the Yangon market continued rising for the week ending 6 August, according to the Supervisory Committee on edible oil import and distribution.

The reference price was set at K4,230 per viss from 24 to 30 July. For the week ending 6 August, the price was set higher at K4,295 per viss. The figures showed a small increase of K65 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.


The edible oil sales counter of a shopping centre.

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

Preserve invaluable cultural heritage for future generations

PRESERVATION and conservation measures are crucial to prevent the disappearance of both tangible and intangible cultural treasures. These kinds of cultural heritage not only narrate the history of humanity but also represent the culmination of societies that have weathered various eras, encompassing moments of joy and sorrow throughout the world's history.

The evolution of cultural progress, driven by the ever-changing movements of humanity, is ceaseless. While the global community continues to expose ancient cultural heritage, some of these precious artefacts gradually fade away and vanish due to the negligence of relevant human societies. Conversely, newer cultural properties emerge and become integrated into society.

> Safeguarding tangible and intangible cultural heritage is paramount to preserving humanity's rich history and societal achievements for future generations. By acknowledging and protecting these invaluable cultural treasures, we can pass on a legacy that speaks of our shared heritage and fosters a deeper understanding of our collective past.

It is natural for older cultural elements to gradually diminish, only to resurface in new forms over time, much like the cycles seen in religious orders. For instance, we currently witness unprecedented occurrences concerning cultural heritages, but these objects will eventually become older themselves. As a result, some may be forgotten and replaced by newer cultural elements, while others that genuinely resonate with society will endure and become future heritage. Time serves as the ultimate judge of the societal value of these cultural properties.

The world is adorned with cultural heritage scattered across various regions. Some hold great significance for global society due to their immeasurable cultural value. While certain cultural elements may have only emerged a few years ago, their profound cultural significance can classify them as heritage entities for society.

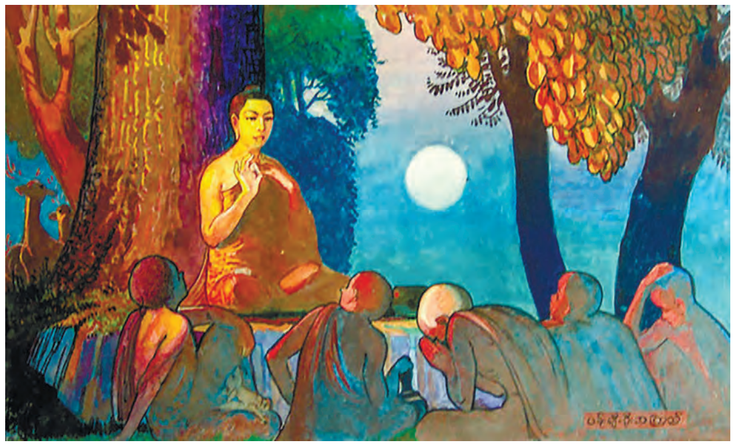
However, not all objects and elements displaying artistic masterpieces can be considered cultural heritages. Only the finest and most remarkable arts and crafts can be found in these treasured cultural assets. Moreover, for an object to be recognized as a cultural heritage, it must withstand the test of time and endure successive eras.

Myanmar, in particular, boasts abundant cultural heritage throughout the nation, influenced by the customs and nature of diverse ethnic groups, geographical conditions, and historical backgrounds. The country continues to create new cultural heritage, further enriching its national identity. While not all objects and elements may attain cultural heritage status, every citizen of Myanmar takes pride in their existence, recognizing their significance for future generations.

Safeguarding tangible and intangible cultural heritage is paramount to preserving humanity's rich history and societal achievements for future generations. By acknowledging and protecting these invaluable cultural treasures, we can pass on a legacy that speaks of our shared heritage and fosters a deeper understanding of our collective past. ■

Significance of Full Moon of Waso in Buddhism

By April Son



The picture illustrated by veteran artist U Ba Kyi portrays the Lord Buddha preaching Dhammacakka Pavattana Sutta to five disciples.

THE full moon of Waso is a ring rung by a bell for all Buddhists in Myanmar to notice a time to take a Sabbath as part of performing meritorious deeds. In fact, taking a Sabbath can be defined as an act of shaping a peaceful, tranquil and calm environment in society regardless of nationality and country.

Treatises and literature in Buddhism emphasize the paramount importance of the full moon of Waso, which typically falls in June or July, depending on the calendar. This auspicious day holds great significance in Buddhism, as it marks several important events in the life of the Lord Buddha. These events include the conception of the Buddha, Prince Siddhartha, in the womb of his mother Maya, Queen of King Suddhodana, his renunciation of worldly attachments, the preaching of the Dhammacakka Pavattana Sutta to his first five disciples after attaining enlightenment, and the demonstration of unprecedentedly extraordinary supernatural powers. These events have consistently occurred on the full moon of Waso throughout history.

The Buddhist Lent and its Purpose

Over 2,500 years ago, the Gautama Buddha established a set of rules and disciplines for members of the Sangha known as Vinaya, one of three primary pillars: Sutta, Vinaya and Abhidhamma. One of these rules requires monks to observe a Buddhist Lent, which lasts for three months, from the full moon of Waso in the Myanmar calendar to the full moon of Thadingyut. Significantly, Lent bans the travels of Buddhist monks from one place to another. The purpose of this Lent is to prevent monks from inadvertently or intentionally causing harm to plants or animals during their travels. It serves as a period of introspection and restraint for Buddhist practitioners.

> "Through diligent practice, he attained enlightenment by following the Noble Eightfold Path, which consists of the correct view, proper thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration."

The Buddha's Quest for Enlightenment

The Buddha-to-be, Prince Siddhartha, embarked on a spiritual journey to seek the ultimate truth and escape the cycle of worldly existence. He renounced his privileged life and embraced the life of an ascetic in order to understand the nature of suffering beyond material wealth. Through diligent practice, he attained enlightenment by following the Noble Eightfold Path, which consists of the correct view, proper thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. These noble paths are of great importance for everybody to attain enlightenment for escaping from the vicious circle. This transformative experience led the Buddha-to-be to become the Lord Buddha. As such, these eight noble paths are sure for everyone to embrace the unprecedented taste of Dhamma.

The Sermon and Disciples

All events in commemoration of Buddhism can be seen vividly in India. These evidences show the deniable Buddhological facts and figure which flourished in India in the past. In truth, Buddhology is inseparable from the histories of India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. Of them, the full moon of Waso is of great importance in Buddhology. Upon attaining enlightenment, the Lord Buddha delivered his first sermon, known as the Dhammacakka Pavattana Sutta, or "Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion," to his five initial disciples at the Deer Park in Sarnath, India. This sermon encompasses the essence of all the teachings that the Lord Buddha imparted during his lifetime. According to ancient treatises, the sermon was attended by 18 crore celestial beings in addition to the five disciples. From then on, the Lord Buddha preached His noble Dhamma to an uncountable number of living beings and heavenly beings till His demise with a relentless effort for the sake of the living beings from the 31 abodes of the secular world.

Historical Observance in Myanmar

In Myanmar's history, each month was associated with specific festivals. The month of Waso in the traditional Burmese calendar was designated for ordination ceremonies, where eligible men were ordained as monks. The Myanmar kings recognized these ceremonies' significance and actively supported them.

The full moon of Waso holds a special place in the Buddhist tradition. It marks the day when the Lord Buddha proclaimed his enlightenment, the emergence of the Sangha (the monastic community), and an opportunity for laypersons to aspire to a noble life. In adherence to the Vinaya, members of the Sangha commit to not undertaking overnight travel during the entire three-month Buddhist Lent starting from the full moon of Waso. Laypersons support the monks during this period by offering necessities, including Waso robes. Moreover, people in urban and rural areas donate flowers, water, and other offerings to the Buddha images and monasteries dedicated to the Lord Buddha.

Types of Buddhists Lent

Generally, Buddhist Lent can be categorized into two types: Purimassavasa, the first category, which starts from the 1st waning moon of Waso and ends with the full moon of Thadingyut, and Pacchimassavasa, the second category, which accommodates those monks who missed the opportunity to enter the first category due to various reasons. The second category begins with the 1st waning moon of Wagaung and concludes with the full moon of Tazaungmone.

In Myanmar, before the start of the Buddhist Lent, donors offer alms and Waso robes to the Sangha to support their needs during this period. Buddhists consider these acts as meritorious deeds dedicated to the Lord Buddha and as a means to attain liberation from the cycle of worldly existence by understanding and following the Dhamma.

During the three-month Buddhist Lent, while monks engage in meditation and practice, laypersons follow certain restrictions outlined in the Vinaya. They observe the Sabbath on the eighth day and the full moon and waning moon days of each month to propagate the noble Dhamma, perform meritorious deeds, offer alms to Buddhist monks and occasionally donate meals to people from four corners of the region.

The Four Universal Truths

The Lord Buddha taught his disciples the four Universal Truths:

- The truth of suffering
- The truth of the cause of suffering
- The truth of the end of suffering
- The truth of the path leading to the end of suffering

Through the Buddha's teachings and efforts, countless individuals, both humans and celestial beings, have attained enlightenment and liberated themselves from the vicious cycle of suffering.

Guidance given by members of the Sangha

Since the time of the Lord Buddha, members of the Sangha have diligently fulfilled their duties of guiding disciples and laypersons towards understanding and realizing the Universal Truths as well as delivering sermons for those disciples to take meditation for escaping from the secular world and attaining the Nibbana. For over 2,500 years, the teachings of the Buddha have provided a peaceful path within the material world, benefiting both religious and non-religious communities.

Promoting Peaceful Coexistence

On the significant day of the full moon of Waso, Buddhists are reminded to reflect on the attributes of the Lord Buddha and his teachings, which guide individuals on cutting attachments and living harmoniously in society. All individuals and nations need to embrace the principles of peaceful coexistence, as preached by the Lord Buddha, in order to shape a peaceful and prosperous society. Doing so can collectively overcome secular challenges such as hunger, conflict, wars, bullying, and natural disasters.

Preserving Buddhist Heritage

As a symbol of Buddhism, the full moon of Waso carries deep significance and serves as a reminder of the rich cultural heritage derived from the religion. It is the responsibility of current Buddhist generations to pass down this heritage and the associated intangible cultural practices to future generations, thus honouring the heritage's relevance to Myanmar's society. Although Buddhism's teachings are inseparable from Myanmar's traditions, they can benefit both Buddhist individuals and people of various faiths. The cardinal virtues preached by the Lord Buddha should guide the people of Myanmar towards a peaceful nation.

In Myanmar, members of the Sangha taught children of Myanmar families, including those from various ethnicities. Those Sangha guided Myanmar people on the lifestyle of good behaviours and talks, how to live throughout their lives, and how to choose livelihoods. Up to now, members of the Sangha have been managing philanthropic measures to accommodate and teach ethnics from ethnic regions and needy families from urban areas to seek shelter in their lives. Thanks to the teachings of those members of the Sangha, children could uplift their lives themselves to meet their ambitions. It is believable that those members of the Sangha will surely give guidance to further generations of Myanmar people. In this regard, the root cause of the flourishing of Buddhism is thanks to the Lord Buddha, who adopted the Vinaya for setting the Buddhist Lent, which contribute a great deal to the propagation and purification of Buddhism and the increasing number of Buddhist monks.

The full moon of Waso holds immense importance in Buddhism, serving as a reminder of key events in the life of the Lord Buddha and the establishment of the Buddhist Lent. It is a time for reflection, meritorious deeds, and observing the teachings of the Buddha. By adhering to the principles of peaceful coexistence and promoting the Universal Truths, individuals and nations can pave the way for a harmonious and prosperous society. The preservation of Buddhist heritage and its integration with Myanmar's cultural identity is crucial for future generations to appreciate and follow the path of the Buddha.



The platform of Shwedagon Pagoda is packed with pilgrims and visitors on the fullmoon of Waso on 12 July 2022.

SCI/ENVIRON WORLD

UN weighs Great Barrier Reef reprieve for Australia



This picture taken on 7 March 2022 shows the current condition of the coral on the Great Barrier Reef, off the coast of the Australian state of Queensland. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE UN's cultural agency UNESCO said Monday its experts recommended giving Australia more time to boost protection of the Great Barrier Reef which the organization's World Heritage Committee has threatened to declare "in danger".

On the basis of progress made by Australia, the experts said the natural wonder's current state should not be discussed at this year's World Heritage Committee meeting in September in Riyadh, but instead be revisited in 2024.

However the experts, whose advice still needs to be approved by the Committee, said surveillance of the Reef would be strengthened and Australia needed to submit a progress report on the implementation of UNESCO's recommendations by February.

Climate change is threatening the Great Barrier Reef's ecosystem, causing severe bleaching and damaging its corals.

Since 2016, the Great Barrier Reef has been hit by three mass bleaching events, during which heat-stressed corals expel algae living in their tissues, draining them of their vibrant colours.

UNESCO said last month it welcomed Australia's commitments to protect the Reef, with the government pledging 4.4 billion Australian dollars ($2.9 billion). The fate of the reef has been a recurrent source of tension between UNESCO and Australian authorities, with the World Heritage Committee threatening to put the world's largest coral system on a list of "in danger" global heritage sites.

Behind-the-scenes diplomacy and lobbying from Australia have avoided such a move and commitments from the Labour government of Anthony Albanese have drawn praise from the Paris-based organization. — AFP

Coal versus forest: Turkish locals mobilized to save trees

PROTECTING their faces with scarves, local women are taking the frontlines against water cannons and tear gas fired by security forces in the southwest Türkiye, resisting cutting of trees for the expansion of a coal mine.

Akbelen forest, located in the Milas district in the Aegean province of Mugla, has been occupied by local villagers as well as environmental activists for over two years to defend the trees from an energy company that runs the coal mine.

While Türkiye has been battling wildfires since early this month, tensions erupted last Monday between local villagers and gendarmerie forces in Ikizkoy village when logging crews turned up in the forest area, prompting hundreds of ecologists to rush to the rescue.

The gendarmerie set up barricades to prevent villagers from entering the forest, leading to violent scuffles when the security forces fired tear gas and water cannon to push back the crowds.

"They cut down our trees, uproot our olive groves, scrape and throw away our lands and burn it all in thermal power plants for gold and coal," Ikizkoy resident Ayse Coban, 54, told AFP. —AFP

UAE oil giant pledges to 'accelerate' zero-carbon plan

THE national oil giant of the United Arab Emirates, host of this year's UN climate talks, said Monday it had accelerated its emission reduction goal to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045.

The Abu Dhabi National Oil Company "is accelerating its decarbonization plan to advance its net-zero ambition to 2045, compared to its previous target of 2050," ADNOC said in a statement.

It said is intends to "increase its investments and redouble efforts in decarbonization," relying on an initial financing of $15 billion for "low-carbon solutions" and achieving "zero methane emissions by 2030".

A picture shows the headquarters of UAE's state oil company ADNOC in Dubai on 27 July 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

Environmental groups charge that net-zero pledges from the world's energy giants are misleading when the companies in fact plan to increase their oil and gas sales, as ADNOC does. — AFP

Non-native English speakers struggle more in science research

RESEARCHERS who are non-native English speakers spend more time and money than native speakers in contributing to the global scientific community where the language is prevalent, a group of international scientists said, calling for more inclusivity.

Their survey of 908 environmental scientists of eight nationalities revealed greater costs for non-native speakers in reading and writing English papers and that they even forwent attending international conferences held in English, according to an online journal published 18 July in PLOS Biology. The study conducted online in 2021 sought to compare and quantify the effort made by researchers from Bangladesh, Bolivia, Britain, Japan, Nepal, Nigeria, Spain and Ukraine, with varied English proficiency and income levels.



People walk through Harvard Yard on the Harvard University campus on 29 June 2023, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. **PHOTO: KYODO**

"The results unveiled profound disadvantages for non-native English speakers in conducting all scientific activities surveyed," the group said, noting the significant impact it had, especially on researchers early in their careers.

Those with low English proficiency who published only one English language paper devoted a median of 90.8 per cent more time reading scientific papers compared to native speakers, their study showed. Besides needing more time to write a paper in English, low and moderate-speaking respondents were 2.5 or 2.6 times more likely to see their papers rejected by journals due to poor English than the 14.4 per cent of native speakers. Almost 43 per cent of researchers from non-English speaking countries said they were asked to improve their English writing during their paper revision, or 12.5 times higher than native English speakers. — Kyodo

LIFESTYLE
WORLD

UNESCO recommends putting Venice on heritage danger list

THE UN's cultural agency UNESCO on Monday recommended that Venice be added to its list of world heritage in danger, saying the Italian authorities needed to step up efforts to secure the historic city and its surrounding lagoon.

UNESCO said in its recommendation that Venice risked "irreversible" damage due to a string of issues ranging from climate change to mass tourism. The recommendation will now go to a meeting of UNESCO's World Heritage Committee in Riyadh in September for adoption.

"The effects of the continuing deterioration due to human intervention, including continuing development, the impacts of climate change and mass tourism threaten to cause irreversible changes to the outstanding universal value of the property," said UNESCO.

"Some of these long-standing issues have already led to the deterioration of the inherent characteristics of the property and its attributes," UNESCO said, warning that developments including high rise buildings risk "having significant negative visual impact".



A view taken on 31 July 2023 shows St Mark's square in Venice. UNESCO is recommending that Venice be placed on the list of World Heritage in Danger, as "insufficient" measures have been taken to fight the deterioration of the site due in particular to mass tourism and climate change, according to a decision made public on 31 July 2023. UNESCO, the UN's cultural wing, put Venice on its heritage list in 1987 as an "extraordinary architectural masterpiece", but the body has warned of the need for a "more sustainable tourism management". **PHOTO: AFP**

"Moreover, the combined effects of human induced and natural changes are causing deterioration and damage to build structures and urban areas," it added.

It said that overall, there was a "lack of significant progress" by Italy in addressing these issues and this was further "hindered by a lack of overall joint strategic vision".

'Still insufficient'

A draft resolution prepared for adoption by the World Heritage Committee said there had not been "a significant level of progress in addressing the persistent and complex issues" and added measures proposed by Italy were "still insufficient and need to be further developed".

UNESCO said it hoped inscription on the danger list "will result in greater dedication and mobilization of local, national and international stakeholders".

The World Heritage Committee, which oversees the awarding of the coveted World Heritage label to sites around the world, is due to meet in Riyadh from 10-25 September.

It is due to consider 53 new candidate sites for addition to the World Heritage List.

Intense lobbying is often employed by delegations to ensure their national cites are given — and retain — the status.

The "in danger" label aims to encourage the better preservation of the site for the future. In exceptional circumstances a site can be stripped of its World Heritage label if the steps are deemed unsatisfactory.

Venice was included on the World Heritage List in 1987 but its state has concerned UNESCO for some years. — AFP

Growing appetite for art performance among Chinese youths

AFTER hectic weekdays, more and more Chinese youths are apt to spend a leisurely weekend by enjoying operas, dramas, and concerts in theatres. The new craze drives the robust recovery of China's theatre consumption.

According to the data released by the China Association of Performing Arts (CAPA), a total of 31,050 commercial performances were staged in China during the five-day Labour Day holiday of 2023, up 49.1 per cent from the same period of 2019 before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Operas, concerts, children's plays, and dance performances received a warm welcome from the younger generation in the post-pandemic era.



Italian opera singer Chiara Di Bari (L, on the stage) performs in the Shaanxi Opera House in Xi'an, northwest China's Shaanxi Province, 21 July 2023. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

On 21 July, famous artists from China, Italy, and France performed arias from classical musical repertories, such as "The Phantom of the Opera" and "Romeo and Juliet", in the Shaanxi Opera House in the northwest Chinese historic city of Xi'an, setting off jubilation among more than 1,000 audiences. Yang Tian, a 28-year-old girl from southwest China's Chongqing Municipality, enjoyed many exhilarating moments with her friend at the musical concert.

"The show boasts an all-star cast. It combines solo, duet, chorus, and symphony. The human voice in the musicals goes straight to the hearts of the audience and fully expresses the sentiments of characters," said Yang. — Xinhua

Record-breaking mountaineer Kristin Harila ready for a normal life

NEWLY minted world record-breaker Kristin Harila is done with 8,000-metre mountains and ready for a "normal life" after achieving her goal of giving women a rare role model in extreme climbing.

The 37-year-old Norwegian and her Nepali guide Tenjin "Lama" Sherpa became the fastest people to summit the world's 14 highest mountains after reaching the top of mighty K2 in Pakistan's Himalayas on Thursday.

Together they completed the feat in three months and one day, surpassing Nepal-born British adventurer Nirmal Purja's record, set in 2019, of six months and six days.

"I haven't been thinking too much about the record... for me, I wanted to change something," Harila said about the male-dominated climbing sphere.

"If you go and look at history, it's been all about men. And I think that if it's going to change, we need to have some profiles and we need to take some place."

More than 40 people have summited the world's 14 "super peaks" that rise above 8,000 metres (26,250 feet), only a few of them women.

Harila, who had a custom-made down suit because none in the market fitted her slender female frame, hopes her success will help more women to secure attention and financial backing for mountain challenges. — AFP

ECONOMY
WORLD



This picture taken on 2 December 2022 shows employees working inside a packaging factory of Nam Thai Son Group in Ho Chi Minh City. **PHOTO: AFP**

Foreign investment in Viet Nam shows signs of recovery

FOREIGN investment in Viet Nam showed signs of recovery with 16.24 billion US dollars poured into the country in the first seven months of this year, up 4.5 per cent year-on-year, according to the Ministry of Planning and Investment.

For the first time in 2023, total registered investment capital soared after witnessing consecutive decreases over six months, local newspaper Vietnam News reported on Monday, citing the ministry.

During the period, Viet Nam licensed 1,627 new foreign direct investment (FDI) projects with total registered capital of 7.94 billion dollars, up 75.5 per cent in quantity and 38.6 per cent in capital year-on-year, according to the ministry.

The country also saw 736 operational FDI projects raise capital by 4.16 billion dollars in total over the seven months, down 42.5 per cent year-on-year.

From January to July, the disbursed FDI capital totalled 11.58 billion dollars, up 0.8 per cent year-on-year, according to the ministry.

Whether foreign investment in Viet Nam got a strong recovery depended greatly on the country's policy response, the newspaper said, citing local experts. — Xinhua

Cambodia's banking, financial industry stays healthy in H1: report

CAMBODIA'S banking and financial industry continued to enjoy healthy growth in both loans and deposits in the first half of 2023, said the biannual report of the National Bank of Cambodia (NBC) released on Monday.

Outstanding loans rose by 13.8 per cent year on year to 58.6 billion US dollars by June this year, while customers' deposits increased by 6.4 per cent to 44.4 billion dollars, the report said.

The loans had been given to main sectors such as trade, housing, construction and real estate, agriculture, hotels and restaurants, and manufacturing, among others, it said.

Non-Performing Loans at the banks and the microfinance institutions were at controllable rates of four per cent and 3.3 per cent, respectively, it added.

The report said the current assets in the country's banking and financial system rose to 82.2 billion dollars by June 2023, up 9.9 per cent from June 2022. NBC's Governor Chea Chanto said the growth in both loans and deposits explicitly reflected public confidence in the banks and financial institutions. "The NBC will continue to conduct stress tests on the resilience of the banking and financial institutions on a regular basis to ensure the resilience of the banking system against any potential risks," he said in the biannual report. — Xinhua

EU, Philippines agree to relaunch free trade talks

THE European Union and the Philippines will restart negotiations on a free-trade agreement as they seek to accelerate "a new era of cooperation", European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said Monday.

Talks began in 2015 under then-Philippine president Benigno Aquino but stalled two years later under his successor Rodrigo Duterte, whose deadly drug war strained diplomatic relations with the West and sparked an international probe.

"I'm very glad that we have decided to relaunch negotiations for (a) free-trade agreement (FTA)," von der Leyen told reporters at a joint news conference with President Ferdinand Marcos in Manila.

"Our teams will get to work right now on setting the right conditions so that we can get back to the negotiations," she said, noting an FTA has "huge potential for both of us" in terms of jobs and growth.



Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr (R) talks to President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen (L) during her arrival at the Malacanang presidential palace in Manila on 31 July 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

The European Union is the Philippines' fourth-largest trading partner and an FTA would be Manila's second bilateral deal after Japan. — AFP

Crisis-hit Sri Lanka records sharp inflation drop

CRISIS-HIT Sri Lanka's inflation moderated to 6.3 per cent in July, official figures showed Monday, its lowest rate in nearly two years.

The island's worst-ever economic turmoil saw widespread shortages and the ouster of its president, with inflation peaking at 69.8 per cent last September.

But it has fallen since then, reaching 12.0 per cent in June before dropping further in July, when data from the department of Census and Statistics showed a decline in food prices.

Sri Lanka defaulted on its $46 billion foreign debt in April 2022 and many of its 22 million people endured months of food, fuel and medicine shortages.



Vendors sell vegetables at a market in Colombo on 4 July 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

The foreign exchange shortage has somewhat eased since, with the government securing a $2.9 billion bailout from the International Monetary Fund in March.

Last month, the government unveiled a debt restructuring plan which offered a 30-per-cent haircut for international sovereign bondholders, who account for more than a quarter of Sri Lanka's outstanding foreign obligations.

The IMF said last month that Sri Lanka's economy showed "tentative signs of improvement" but warned Colombo still needed to pursue painful reforms.

Last year's economic crisis sparked months of civil unrest which eventually toppled then-president Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

His successor Ranil Wickremesinghe has doubled taxes, removed generous subsidies on energy and sharply raised prices to shore up state revenue. — AFP

China unveils policy incentives to boost consumption

CHINA'S top economic planner on Monday rolled out a slew of measures to boost consumption amid efforts to sustain economic recovery and promote high-quality development.

The country vowed to spur consumption of a wide range of items and services, including new energy vehicles (NEVs), home appliances, electronics, catering, cultural and tourism sectors, as well as that in rural areas. It also pledged to support rigid demand for housing and improved living, according to a notice released by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC).

Based on the principles of adhering to better combinations of an effective market and a competent government, optimizing supply and expanding demand, and quality upgrading and innovative development, the NDRC has introduced a set of 20 measures, said Li Chunlin, deputy head of the commission, at a press conference. The measures aim to stabilize consumption of big-ticket items, expand service consumption, promote rural consumption, explore new types of consumption, improve consumption facilities, and optimize the consumption environment, said Li.



A consumer shops at a supermarket in Anshun, southwest China's Guizhou Province, 11 April 2023. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Local authorities should not unveil new measures to restrict auto purchasing, while regions that have already had restrictive measures on auto purchasing should improve these measures to adapt to local conditions, the NDRC said in the notice.

Efforts should be made to build high-quality charging infrastructure, promote the use of NEVs in rural areas, and maintain and improve the favourable tax incentives for NEV purchasing, according to the notice.

Li said that the output and sales of automobiles in China grew notably in the first half of the year, increasing 9.3 per cent and 9.8 per cent, respectively. During the same period, the NEV output expanded 42.4 per cent year on year to nearly 3.79 million units, while the NEV sales surged 44.1 per cent to almost 3.75 million units.

China introduced several measures to unleash the domestic consumption potential in the NEV sector earlier this year.

The country extended its preferential purchase tax policy for NEVs to the end of 2027 and released a guideline to support people living in rural areas to purchase and use NEVs, focusing on boosting the construction of charging infrastructures. — Xinhua

UK to issue 'hundreds' of new oil, gas licences in North Sea

THE UK government said Monday it would issue "hundreds" of new oil and gas licences in the North Sea to secure energy reserves while still aiming for net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The announcement angered environmental groups and comes amid an internal debate within the ruling Conservative party on green policies.

The main opposition Labour party has said it will not issue any new North Sea drilling licences if it regains power in a general election due next year.

"Investment in the North Sea will continue to unlock new projects, protect jobs, reduce emissions and boost UK energy independence," Downing Street said in a statement. — AFP

Japan's June industrial output rises 2.0% on month

JAPAN'S industrial output in June expanded 2.0 per cent from the previous month, led by shipments of motor vehicles on the back of solid demand in both domestic and overseas markets, government data showed Monday.

The seasonally adjusted index of production at factories and mines stood at 105.3 against the 2020 base of 100, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry said in a preliminary report. The increase followed a revised 2.2 per cent contraction in May.

The ministry maintained its basic assessment for the reporting month, saying industrial production was "showing signs of moderately picking up", while forecasting a dip in July and recovery in August. Of the 15 industrial sectors the survey covers, output in 10 increased whereas production in five dropped.

Among the 10 sectors reporting rising output, motor vehicles surged 6.1 per cent, propped up by transmission, steering and other parts as well as trucks. — Kyodo

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ENERGY
MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE
(INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER)
(16/2023-2024)

1. Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective service in Myanmar Kyats.

Sr: No.	Tender No.	Description	Remarks
(a)	MOGE-C002/2023	Shot Hole Drilling and Cable/Geophone Layout/ Pick-up Service of 2D Seismic Acquisition for onshore Block PSC-Q, Payagon Area.	Kyats

2. The open tender form including description of materials/Qtty with details specifications and Tender Terms and Conditions can be available during office hours commencing from 1 August, 2023 at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No.(44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

3. The interested Bidders should submit the Technical Specifications with Original Bid Bond and Commercial Quotation in each separate sealed envelopes on which to be addressed to the Managing Director, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No.(44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar and should reach in tender box of the Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise not later than 01:00 pm, 31-8-2023.

4. Tender closing date and time 31-8-2023, 01:00 pm.

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ph; 067-3411214

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V SITC ZHAOMING VOY.NO. (2310S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SITC ZHAOMING VOY.NO. (2310S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **1-8-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **HPT** 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 STIC CONTAINER LINE CO., LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V KOTA HAPAS VOY.NO. (KHPS0391N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V KOTA HAPAS VOY.NO. (KHPS0391N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **1-8-2023** 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 PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL LINES

ROLLING UPDATES
WORLD



Group of Seven summit chair Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida holds a press conference following the conclusion of the three-day event in Hiroshima, western Japan, on 21 May 2023. **PHOTO: KYODO**

70% of A-bomb survivors say G-7 was meaningful for nuclear-free goal

NEARLY 70 per cent of atomic bomb survivors across Japan felt the Group of Seven summit held in Hiroshima earlier this year made a meaningful contribution towards realizing a nuclear-free world, a recent Kyodo News survey showed.

The 354 respondents of the survey, however, were divided in their views on the Hiroshima Vision on Nuclear Disarmament statement compiled for the first time by G-7 leaders, with many disappointed that their view that nuclear weapons are "absolute evil" was not reflected in the document.

The statement, which was released after the leaders visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum during the summit in May, did not mention the survivors or the UN treaty banning nuclear weapons, which entered into force in 2021, but supported the possession of nuclear weapons for deterrence.

The most common cited reason by the 246 respondents who attributed significance to the summit, at 59.3 per cent, was the opportunity the gathering provided world leaders in understanding the reality of the atomic bombings.

The G-7 groups Britain, Canada, Germany, France, Italy, Japan and the United States, plus the European Union.

Regarding the Hiroshima Vision statement, 51.7 per cent expressed a negative view, with reasons including "no mention of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons" at 59 per cent and "endorsement of nuclear deterrence policies of G-7 countries" at 21.3 per cent. — Kyodo

Dutch authorities tow fire-struck cargo ship to new location

A cargo ship packed with electric cars ablaze off the Dutch coast has been towed to a new temporary position, authorities said Monday, racing to prevent an ecological disaster.

The 66-kilometre (41-mile) operation to move the Fremantle Highway vessel began on Sunday and was carried out "without any problem", the Rijkswaterstaat national water management agency said.

The cause of the fire that broke out last Tuesday remains unclear, though the vessel's owner has said one of the electric vehicles on board may have been the source.

One sailor died after he and 22 others were rescued from the burning ship that had forced some crew members to jump overboard. Most have since been released from hospital.



This handout photograph taken on 30 July 2023 and released on 31 July 2023 by the Dutch coastguards, shows the Panamanian-registered car carrier ship Fremantle Highway, after a fire broke out late on 25 July 2023, killing one crew member, and prompting a massive effort to extinguish the flames. **PHOTO: HANDOUT / NETHERLANDS COASTGUARDS / AFP**

The cargo ship is now 16 kilometres north of the islands of Schiermonnikoog and Ameland, but concerns remain about the impact of pollutants on the waters and a nearby archipelago of ecologically sensitive islands in the Wadden Sea. — AFP

Air filters bushfire life saver for millions of Australians: study

PORTABLE air purifiers could protect millions of Australians from smoke inhalation during major bushfire events, according to new research.

In a study published on Monday, a team from the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) found that purifiers fitted with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters can improve indoor air quality by up to 74 per cent during bushfire events.

Much of Australia was blanketed by smoke during the devastating 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires, causing a 44-per-cent increase in the number of people reporting asthma symptoms and presenting to emergency departments.

A landmark inquiry into the fires later heard evidence that the smoke was linked to an estimated 445 deaths.

The new study estimates that its findings could protect 2.7 million Australians with asthma and an additional seven million at elevated risk of health problems during extreme smoke events.— Xinhua

Beijing on alert with two killed as heavy rain batters north China

HEAVY rains battered northern China on Monday, killing at least two people in Beijing while washing away cars and forcing the capital to issue its highest alerts for flooding and landslides.

Storm Doksuri, a former super typhoon, has swept northwards over China since Friday, when it hit southern Fujian province after scything through the Philippines.

Emergency personnel recovered two bodies from waterways in Beijing's Mentougou district on Monday, the state-run People's Daily said.AFP reporters saw tree branches and dented cars, left by receding floodwaters, strewn on riverbanks in Mentougou on Monday afternoon.

"This morning it was crazy, the water overflowed the Mentougou river and the whole avenue was flooded," Guo Zhenyu, a 49-year-old resident, told AFP.

Yellow bulldozers, workers in orange mackintoshes and residents cleared away the mud and debris during a period of lighter rain on Monday afternoon."I'm old but I've never seen flooding like this before in my life," Mentougou resident Qin Quan said.

She showed AFP a video on her phone, shared among residents of the area, of workers attempting to resuscitate an unconscious man, as well as footage of a man desperately clinging to a pole with one hand as water washes over him.—AFP



This picture shows a view of the overflooded Yongding river, after heavy rains in Mentougou district in Beijing on 31 July 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

SPORT

Yangon earns full points with impressive win over Rakhine

YANGON United collected full points in the Week-14 of the Myanmar National League after trouncing Rakhine United 4-1 at Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon yesterday.

Goals from Sylla and Valencia sealed victory for team Yangon.

U Tin Maung Tun managed the team as an interim head coach and brought out the squad with a 4-4-2 format. Sylla made an opener for Yangon just 4 minutes into the first half.

Yangon's leading was doubled after Valencia touched the ball into the net at the 10-minute mark. Rakhine United pulled back a goal by Traore at 24 minutes. Yangon United team got the third lead at the 32-minute mark as Valencia scored a header through Zaw Win Thein's corner kick.

Then, Yangon United produced their winning or fourth goal, which was scored by Sylla at 35 minutes. At the end of the first half, Yangon United led Rakhine United by 4-1.

In the second half of the match, the Yangon United team made continuous attacks, but the back row of the other side was too strong to block. At the end of the game, the Yangon United team won the Rakhine United team with a goal of 4-1.

Yangon United interim Head Coach U Tin Maung Tun expressed his feeling after the match. "My players shaped the victory on the pitch, and they deserved to win," U Tin Maung Tun said.

Yangon United took second place after 14 plays, with 11 wins, one draw, and two losses earning 34 points.

The team will face Kachin United on 7 August at Yangon United Sports Complex. —KZL



Yangon's player David Htan (bluish green) concentrates on passing the ball to his teammates during the Myanmar National League match against Rakhine United at Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon on 31 July 2023. **PHOTO: MNL**

Raso stars as Australia surge into last 16 and dump Canada out



CO-HOSTS Australia rescued their Women's World Cup hopes with a 4-0 thumping of Canada to sweep into the last 16 at the expense of the Olympic champions on Monday.

The Matildas came into the clash needing victory to ensure they made the knockout round after a stunning 3-2 defeat to Nigeria left them on a knife-edge.

They thrived on the pressure in front of more than 27,000 in Melbourne to consign Canada to an early flight home, with Hayley Raso scoring twice.

Australia top Group B ahead of Nigeria, who drew 0-0 with Ireland, and set them up for a clash against the second-placed team in Group D — likely Denmark or China — in the next round.

"I'm so, so proud of this team," said coach Tony Gustavsson. "The players, there's something special about this group.

"In the press conference yesterday someone asked if this was legacy-defining, a crossroads moment for this team, and yes it was. But we didn't shy away from it," he added.

"The way the players performed tonight, all the talk about Sam (Kerr), they just went out and played their game, stayed true to who they are."

Talismanic striker Kerr remained on the bench as a precaution despite declaring herself available after a calf injury that had ruled her out of Australia's first two games.

Real Madrid's Raso put them ahead in the ninth minute, firing low into the corner after captain Steph Catley fed a teasing low cross. — AFP

Australia's defender (7) Stephanie Catley (R) celebrates with teammates after scoring her team's fourth goal from the penalty kick during the Australia and New Zealand 2023 Women's World Cup Group B football match between Canada and Australia at Melbourne Rectangular Stadium, also known as AAMI Park, in Melbourne on 31 July 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

Premier League to clamp down on players harassing referees

PREMIER League players have been warned they face harsher punishments for harassing referees as part of a raft of measures aimed at stamping out bad behaviour on the pitch.

English football's authorities aim to "reset" the attitude from players and managers towards officials in the coming season.

A series of measures intended to tackle the issue were revealed on Monday ahead of the Premier League campaign kicking off on 11 August.

The new 'Participant Charter' empowers referees to take tougher action against unacceptable behaviour, backed up by stronger disciplinary action from the Football Association.

Serious and repeat offenders can expect to face increased financial penalties, while referees will be encouraged to issue at least a yellow card if they are surrounded by two or more players.

Managers can also expect to be punished if they leave the technical area on the touchline to "enter the pitch to confront any match official at half-time or full-time".

"We want players, managers and fans to continue showing their passion, but these new measures have been introduced to ensure that the line is not crossed when it comes to on-field and technical area behaviour," said Premier League chief executive Richard Masters.

FA chief executive Mark Bullingham added: "Football has the power to unite and inspire all those that play and watch the game. However, sometimes, this can be negatively impacted by a small minority of players, coaches and fans.

"Our collective approach is to reset this behaviour on the pitch and from the sidelines, whilst giving our referees the respect and protection that they deserve." — AFP

70% of A-bomb survivors say G-7 was meaningful for nuclear-free goal

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WORLD

NEWS IN BRIEF

ASEAN-China 12.1 billion yuan economic cooperation deals inked

SEVEN economic cooperation projects worth 12.1 billion yuan (about 1.7 billion US dollars) between the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and ASEAN countries were signed Sunday in the southern Chinese metropolis of Shenzhen. The signing was completed during the 2023 ASEAN-China Greater Bay Economic Cooperation (Qianhai) Forum that ran from 29 to 30 July, which covered industrial park construction, digital economy and agricultural cooperation.

The Greater Bay Area-ASEAN International Chamber of Commerce Alliance and the China-ASEAN Think Tank Partnership were established at the forum. The forum also resulted in an initiative concerning a closer Greater Bay Area-ASEAN economic partnership.— Xinhua

See more national news on page 4.

Indonesia braces for forest fires as El Nino strengthens

INDONESIA is bracing for forest fires due to the El Nino weather phenomenon, which caused long drought, and the peak is expected from August to September, according to the National Disaster Mitigation Agency on Monday.

The agency's head Suharyanto said that the government has deployed ground forces, trained locals, and readied tools like weather modification technology, monitoring applications, water bombers, and helicopters. "A total of 31 helicopters have deployed to reach remote locations," Suharyanto added.

Six vulnerable provinces are monitoring priorities, including South Sumatra, Riau, Jambi, West Kalimantan, South Kalimantan and Central Kalimantan.— Xinhua



A Russian Yars intercontinental ballistic missile launcher rolls through Red Square during the Victory Day military parade in central Moscow on 9 May 2023. **PHOTO: GAVRIIL GRIGOROV / SPUTNIK / AFP**

Russian nukes to stay in Belarus unless US, NATO quit hostile policy

A hypothetical withdrawal of Russian tactical nuclear weapons from Belarus could only happen if the US and NATO abandon the policy of undermining the security of Russia and Belarus, which implies a complete withdrawal of all US nuclear weapons to the territory of the United States, a senior Russian diplomat told Sputnik.

"I would like to immediately note that the deployment of Russian tactical nuclear weapons on the territory of Belarus was a response to the many years of destabilizing nuclear policy of NATO and Washington, as well as to the fundamental changes that have recently taken place in key areas of European security," Aleksey Polishchuk, the head of the Russian foreign ministry's second department for the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, said.

Polishchuk emphasized that the deployment of Russian tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus is a forced containment measure, designed to ensure the security of Belarus, which has a common defense space with Russia.

"In this regard, the hypothetical withdrawal of Russian tactical nuclear weapons from the territory of Belarus will be possible only if the United States and NATO abandon their destructive course of purposefully undermining the security of Russia and Belarus. This stipulates the complete withdrawal of all American nuclear weapons to the territory of the United States with the elimination of the corresponding infrastructure in Europe," Polishchuk told Sputnik.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said in mid-June that Mos cow had transferred the first part of the nuclear warheads to Belarus and would complete the task of moving tactical nuclear weapons by the end of the year. Putin said the deployment was an element of deterrence and a signal to those thinking of inflicting a strategic defeat on Russia. — SPUTNIK



Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif (R) speaking with Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng during their meeting at the prime minister house in Islamabad.
PHOTO: HANDOUT / PAKISTAN'S PRESS INFORMATION DEPARTMENT (PID) / AFP

China, Pakistan to mark mega infrastructure anniversary

CHINESE Vice Premier He Lifeng arrived in the Pakistan capital Sunday to mark the 10th anniversary of an enormous economic plan that is the cornerstone of Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative.

Since its initiation in 2013, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has seen tens of billions of dollars funnelled into massive transport, energy and infrastructure projects.

But the undertaking has also been hit by Pakistan struggling to keep up its financial obligations, as well as attacks on Chinese targets by militants.

"After a decade since its inception, CPEC has shown mixed results," said Azeem Khalid, assistant professor of international relations at COMSATS University Islamabad.

"The primary goal of connecting China with the Arabian Sea is still relatively low in achievement for China. On the other hand, Pakistan has made notable progress in achieving short-term objectives."

In recent years Beijing has been one of Islamabad's most reliable foreign partners, readily providing financial assistance to bail out its often struggling neighbour.

Earlier this week, Beijing granted Pakistan a two-year rollover on a $2.4 billion loan, giving the debt-saddled nation much-needed breathing space as it tackles a balance-of-payments crisis. — AFP