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

The Global NEW LIGHT of MYANMAR

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Political unrest stalls State's economic progress

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing emphasizes lawful management of trade with foreign countries and swift action against violators

THE government needs to create the chance for the people to work at home peacefully, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aug Hlaing at the meeting with region and state chief ministers and chairmen of self-administered zones and division at the SAC Chairman Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

In his address, the Senior General stressed the government in its term legally solved political conflicts triggered by different political attitudes but

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> "The growing overseas workforce has resulted in labour shortages in specific areas of Myanmar. We emphasize the significance of creating tranquil domestic employment opportunities, underscoring the government's pivotal role in their cultivation."

Restoring ancient Bagan buildings nearing completion

DIRECTOR U Aung Aung Kyaw of the Department of Archeology and National Museums said that 90 per cent of the ancient and religious buildings in the Bagan Archaeological Zone, including the Bagan City Wall, have been maintained according to UNESCO guidelines.

Repairs and maintenance of ancient buildings and temples in the Bagan Archaeological Zone affected by Cyclone Mocha are undertaken with funds approved according to the financial year.

Maintenance of ancient buildings and pagodas including the Bagan city wall was completed in July of this financial year.

"Officials are doing repairs to the religious buildings affected by Cyclone Mocha and are also carrying out maintenance to areas affected by floods. The restoration status of 10 religious buildings and ancient buildings, including the Bagan city wall, has been completed 90 per cent this month," U Aung Aung Kyaw added. Ancient building numbers: 676, 495, 505, 1,256, 1,286, 1,196, 1,239, 1,483, 1,473, 2,186, 2,176, 1,459, 1,977 and the Bagan city wall have been repaired and maintained. — ASH/KZL

Restoration efforts for Cyclone-damaged ancient buildings and pagodas in Bagan Archaeological Zone in progress.

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Flood victims in Kayin State receive cash assistance and relief aids

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Industrial end-product exports exceed US$3 bln in 4 months this FY

LOCAL BUSINESS PAGE-7

Surge in prices detected in domestic rice market

NATIONAL

Leadership, obedience and the creation of humans are crucial in all aspects

A man participates in all measures such as political, social and economic matters. Leadership, obedience and the creation of humans are crucial in all aspects.

(The excerpts from New Year Message of greetings delivered by Chairman of State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing on New Year occasion in 1385 Myanmar Era Myanmar New Year Day on 17 April 2023)

Myanmar Gazette

Appointment of Head of Service Organization

THE State Administration Council has appointed U Sein Minn, Deputy Director-General of the Survey Department under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, as the Director-General of the same department on probation from the date he assumes charge of his duties.

Myanmar businesspersons invited to join 2nd Khilona-India Toys & Games Fair 2023

MYANMAR businesspersons have been invited to participate in the 2nd Khilona-India Toys & Games Fair 2023, according to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI).

That B2B show including all the stakeholders in the toys and game industry in India, organized by the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Ministry of MSME and the Toy Association of India, will be held at India Expo Center & Mart, Greater Noida, Delhi NCR, from 18 to 20 August, to boost manufacturing of toys, promoting market potential and expanding share, creating exclusive networks for global buyers by linking the traditional and modern toy manufacturers with games manufacturers.

Games and puzzles, board games, hobby sets, educational toys, accessories for children's rooms, cycles & paddle wheels, cultural heritage toys and many more products will be exhibited.

The government of India will reimburse economy class airfare (round trips) and a complimentary hotel stay in New Delhi for three nights during the show for interested buyers, as per the terms and conditions.

For further detail, please visit the website: www.indiatoyfair.in, https://www.indiatoyfair.in/assets/Khilona_2023_Brochure.pdf. Interested participants can register through the website: https://www.indiatoyfair.in/visitor/new-reg.

Those who will participate in that Fair need to inform the UMFCCI's expo division through Ph: 01 2314344~49 (Ext: 301) and Email: itpc.umfcci@gmail.com, with the attachment of the official letter of the company mentioning name, position, and organization/company information of the participants. — NN/EM

Rice husk charcoal to be distributed to farmers in Yangon

THE Yangon Region government and the Department of Research and Innovation under the Ministry of Science and Technology jointly initiate a distribution project of rice husk charcoal to farmers in the region, said Dr Kay Thwel Khine, deputy director of the department.

The RHC is mixed with urea to produce fertilizers. The carbonized rice husk is produced as per the FAO guidelines for the farmers.

"The RHC will be produced with the collaboration of the Yangon Region government and the Research and Innovation Department. The department mainly focuses on the production sector. We conduct practical sessions for production stages and produce systematically in line with the FAO guidelines. The amount of fertilizer depends on the fruit plants between one and three tonnes per acre. We get the sample rice husk from Thilawa industrial zone and mix them with urea. According to our lab tests, this fertilizer will help increase the yield by more than 8.4 buskets per acre," she elaborated.

The RHC testing shows that the amount of fertilizer to be used is three tonnes per acre of paddy, one tonne per acre of cowpea, and two tonnes per acre of sunflower and it can be applied four times.

Fertilizers will be mainly distributed to Thanlyin, Kyauktan, Thongwa, Twantay, Kungyangon, Kawhmu, Hlegu, Taikkyi and Hmawby townships where the paddy, beans and pulses and vegetables are mainly planted. — ASH/KTZH

Rice husk charcoal is produced systematically in line with FAO guidelines (left photo) and a farm is seen using rice husk charcoal (right photo).

Copyright Law set to take effect in October

THE Copyright Law, enacted 24 May 2019, will come into force in October, and those who have registered their works will have substantial evidence to support their claims if any disputes relating to copyright arise, Dr Hnin Nwe Aye, Deputy Director-General of the Intellectual Property Department, under the Ministry of Commerce told The Global New Light of Myanmar on 9 August.

The literature and arts sector is among of the most important landscapes of a country and the government is drafting two bylaws, targeted to be ready soon, to implement the Copyright Law, she said.

The primary goal of the law is to create a better system of intellectual property rights for the ecosystem development of the nation's economy. The effort includes the enactment of four copyright laws — the Industrial Design Copyright Law, the Invention Copyright Law and the Literary and Artistic Copyright Law — and the formation of the Central Committee on Rights of Intellectual Property and related agencies, ensuring a good infrastructure for the implementation of the law that will come into effect in October, according to the deputy director-general. She also said her department would collaborate with the relevant ministries and the bodies of intellectual property in enforcing the law. — ASH/TH

NATIONAL

Five-Point Roadmap for State Administration Council

1. An emphasis will be placed on ensuring peace and stability of the whole Union to enjoy the full rule of law so that a free and fair multiparty democratic general election will be held successfully.
2. Continuous efforts will be poured out for the promotion of the State economy and enhancement of the socioeconomic life of the entire people by expediting manufacturing businesses rooted in agriculture and livestock farming inclusive of the entire ethnic people.
3. Priority will be given to stabilize the restoration of internal peace which is the primary essence of the State and the results of the internal peace process aligned with the agreements involved in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) as much as possible.
4. Work momentum will be raised continuously to strengthen the genuine disciplined multiparty democratic system and processes of building the Union based on democratic and federal principles.
5. Further stages of the roadmap will be undertaken to hand over the State duty to the elected government which will emerge from the free and fair multiparty democratic general elections upon completion of holding the general elections fairly and justly without losing the rights of all eligible voters and all the processes in full compliance with the provisions of the State of Emergency.

Political unrest stalls State's economic progress

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets the region and state chief ministers and chairpersons of the self-administered division and zones yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

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the situations based on political conflicts delayed the economic development of the State.

The Senior General urged students, parents, teachers and administrative officials to create an environment for students to pursue education at monastic education schools and basic education high schools as well as advanced schools in a safe and secure situation.

With regard to the role of teachers, the Senior General requested the teachers to teach students to have comprehensive knowledge of school education in addition to other necessary correct attitudes.

The Senior General pointed out that the students who have completed the agriculture, livestock and mechanical subjects at BEHSs in 50 districts will have the capacity to improve their lives whereas the country will have the human resources which will contribute to the manufacturing sector.

In the production sector, the Senior General called for operating the firm manufacturing businesses based on agriculture and livestock farms in regions and states, adding that authorities have to encourage the production industries for serving the interests of the majority of the people rather than the minority.

With regard to land utilization, the Senior General stressed the need to prevent the loss and reduction of cultivable lands, urging all to strictly supervise the farmers not to use cultivable lands in other ways.

The tourism industry defined as a smokeless industry must be encouraged for serving the interests of relevant regions through the arrivals of local and foreign travellers. Moreover, it is necessary to support garment industries which can create a large number of job opportunities as well as increase the incomes of individuals.

In the labour sector, the Senior General underscored that as the number of people go abroad to work, some parts of Myanmar face a shortage of labour. Hence, he continued to say that the government needs to create a chance for the people to work at home peacefully.

The Senior General instructed officials to restrict tax evasion of some taxpayers and to restrict the manipulation of land plots under the farmland laws.

Region and state chief ministers and chairmen of self-administered zones and division reported on the progress of relevant regions in agriculture, livestock and manufacturing with endeavours of peace and stability.

SAC member Lt-Gen Moe Myint Tun and Union ministers presented clarifications on the import of fertilizers, assistance for the development of agriculture, livestock and manufacturing sectors, formation of cooperative societies and creation of jobs.

In conclusion, the Senior General stressed the need to correctly manage trade with foreign countries under the law and take action against the offenders. Increased incomes of individuals can reduce poverty. He urged all to help students to correctly learn education this academic year to continue their learning to one more grade and increase the enrolment rate. Encouragement must be given to the students who learn agriculture, livestock and industrial subjects, the Senior General noted. — MNA/TTA

NATIONAL

Deputy Prime Minister MoTC Union Minister inspects locomotive factory in Nay Pyi Taw

GENERAL Mya Tun Oo, Member of the State Administration Council (SAC) and Deputy Prime Minister, who also serves as the Union Minister for Transport and Communications, conducted a comprehensive inspection of the newly established locomotive assembly and manufacturing factory in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the visit, the managing director of Myanma Railways and officials provided a detailed overview of the factory's history, its current operations, and the production processes of new diesel electric locomotives. The Union minister underscored the significance of addressing the country's locomotive requirements, strategic planning for future locomotive production, and capitalizing on the expertise of the factory's staff.

In his remarks, the Union minister highlighted the objective of achieving self-sufficiency in locomotive production, which not only conserves foreign currency expenditure but also bolsters the domestic rail industry. He emphasized the collaboration with relevant ministries and institutions, advocating for localized production to meet the country's locomotive demands. The Union minister also emphasized meticulous adherence to procurement protocols, factory security, employee safety, and addressing the factory's operational needs.

Subsequently, the Union minister and party examined the manufacturing process of train carriages, the production of wheels essential for new locomotives, and specifically reviewed the newly assembled diesel electric locomotive DF-1273. Additionally, they observed the ongoing assembly of two more locomotives within the premises of the Locomotive Assembly and Manufacturing Factory.

Member of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Transport and Communications General Mya Tun Oo conducts the comprehensive inspection of the newly established locomotive assembly and manufacturing factory in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The Union minister concluded the inspection by giving necessary directives to ensure the effective and efficient continuation of locomotive production in Nay Pyi Taw's factory. — MNA/TS

Flood victims in Kayin State receive cash assistance and relief aids

Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Soe Win encourages flood victims in Hpa-an Township of Kayin State yesterday.

PEOPLE in Kayin State are receiving flood relief items provided by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement as they are suffering from flooding due to heavy rains this week.

Union Minister Dr Soe Win and officials handed over foodstuffs to flood-affected people living temporarily in the flood relief camps in Hpa-an yesterday morning.

They also observed the evacuation of flood victims in Kyondoe, Kawkareik Township and provided cash and relief items on the same day.

The Union minister presented rice bags worth over K31 million and instant foods worth over K2 million to 3,470 people of 704 households who are staying temporarily at nine flood relief camps in Hpa-an.

Similarly, he provided rice bags worth over K6 million and instant foods worth over K840,000 to 752 people of 172 households who are staying temporarily at three flood relief camps in Kyondoe. — MNA/KZL

Seven new cases of COVID-19 reported on 9 August, total figure registers 641,107

MYANMAR'S COVID-19-positive cases rose to **641,107** after **seven** new cases were reported on 9 August 2023 according to the Ministry of Health. Therefore, a total of **11,066,943** laboratory samples were examined to date and the confirmed COVID-19 cases reached **641,107**. The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **619,912** including **four** new recoveries. The death toll from COVID-19 in the country registered **19,494** on 9-8-2023 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

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NATIONAL

Nine Objectives of State Administration Council

Political Affairs

1. To strengthen a disciplined and authentic multiparty democratic system and to foster a Union founded upon democratic and federal systems.
2. To prioritize the attainment of enduring peace for the entire nation in alignment with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).
3. To emphasize the complete restoration of peace and stability and the rule of law throughout the whole Union for the people to enjoy the safety of the socioeconomic life of the people.

Economic Affairs

4. To enhance development rooted in agriculture and livestock-inclusive of all ethnic people to ensure national prosperity and food security of the nation utilizing contemporary production methodologies and to promote all-round growth in other sectors of the economy.
5. To invigorate Micro-, Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) for the fortification of the export sector, leveraging the momentum of the thriving economic landscape.
6. To spur the cultivation of oil crops to meet targeted production levels, thereby achieving self-sufficiency in local oil supply and striving towards both local adequacy and overseas export of surplus oil crops.

Social Affairs

7. To implement a multi-education system that addresses all segments of society, nurturing intellectual and intelligent capacities among the entire population and producing a significant pool of skilled technicians crucial for the manufacturing sector.
8. To elevate the health and sports sectors inclusive of all the people, improving the longevity and health of the nation.
9. To nurture the youth sector, bringing out versatile, physically strong, knowledgeable, morally upright, socially adept and economically empowered young individuals, poised to lead the nation's development efforts.

Devotees reverently pay homage to Maravijaya Buddha Image

THE Maravijaya, the world's tallest sitting marble Buddha image in the precinct of Buddha Park in Dekkhinathiri Township of Nay Pyi Taw, is crowded with pilgrims.

It is open to the public free of charge from 8 and 16 August between 6 am and 8 pm. The monks, nuns and visitors flocked to the pagoda and made donations.

The donors donate vegetable biryani to the pilgrims at the pagoda.

There will be inspections under security measures for the safety of pilgrimage people and apart from the escalator, the officials arrange vehicles for monks, the elderly and the disabled.

Moreover, there are spacious places for the pilgrims and religious organizations to recite Gathas and the people can view the pagodas in 24 special chambers around the platform of the Maravijaya Buddha Image.

Pilgrims from various region of the country are seen at the Maravijaya, the world's highest sitting marble Buddha image in the precinct of Buddha Park in Dekkhinathiri Township of Nay Pyi Taw yesterday (left photo), and pilgrims receive vegetable biryani meal boxes in the precinct of Buddha Park (above photo).

Similarly, the people can pay homage to the 720 stone plaque chamber pagodas on which Tri Pitaka treatises were curved in Pali and Romanized languages with the use of modern machinery.

The Thudhamma public houses constructed with traditional architecture were also packed with the pilgrims and the water fountain square and other religious and recreational sites in Buddha Park were also crowded with throngs of visitors. — MNA/KTZH

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Captured in Action: Dedicated factory workers at a garment manufacturing unit in Yangon, 12 May 2023.

Industrial end-product exports exceed US$3 bln in 4 months this FY

DATA provided by the Ministry of Commerce reveals that over US$3 billion was generated through the export of industrial finished products to foreign markets between April and July in the 2023–2024 financial year.

Within the category of exported finished industrial goods, state-owned exports contributed more than $1.1 billion, while private exports contributed over $1.9 billion, resulting in a total exceeding $3 billion.

Comparing this financial year's export figures with the previous year, there has been a decrease of more than $600 million in the export of finished industrial goods, as last year's total stood at over $3,700 million.

Among the various industrial end-products originating from Myanmar, the highest exports are attributed to CMP sewing and garment exports, followed by sugar, jewellery, and natural gas. Additionally, significant imports include investment goods, industrial raw materials, consumer goods, and construction materials. — TWA/CT

UHDD plans YBS bus lines for Thukha Dagon public rental housing

TO provide convenience for residents of Thukha Dagon public rental housing in Dagon Myothit (South) Township, the Urban and Housing Development Department (UHDD) is preparing to introduce YBS bus lines. The strategic location of the housing complex near the junction of No 2 Highway and No 7 Ring Road, although a bit distant from downtown Yangon, has prompted officials to consider running YBS buses to connect the area more efficiently.

Currently, residents face a 30–45-minute journey to reach the Sanpya market. Buses such as Yangon-Bago, No 97, No. 1 (Hlegu-Yangon), and No 71 (Thayetpinchaung-Yangon) operate on No 2 Highway, but there is no direct bus route between the housing complex and downtown Yangon. Ko Min Min Lwin, a resident of Tamway Township, emphasized the need for a direct bus line to boost the prosperity of the housing compound.

Plans also include the construction of a temporary market within the housing compound, with supermarkets expected to open shortly. The housing project's first phase, featuring 1,168 apartments, will begin offering rental permits in late August, while the second phase aims to complete over 800 apartments by December. The Urban and Housing Development Department anticipates the entire rental housing project to be finalized by April 2024. — TWA/MKKS

The picture shows the entrance of an apartment at Thukha Dagon public rental housing.

MAI's 30th Anniversary: Thrilling lucky draws, prizes for passengers

MYANMAR Airways International (MAI) has announced plans for lucky draw events in celebration of its 30th anniversary. Prizes will encompass 30 travel tickets along with tour packages valued at over K40 million, generously offered by partner companies. In addition to these offerings, a variety of splendid prizes, including complimentary stays at renowned hotels and vouchers for dining at popular restaurants, will be up for grabs.

Participation in the lucky draw is open to all passengers who purchase an MAI ticket during the promotional period from 1 to 31 August. The list of winners will be unveiled on 2 September 2023, through MAI's social media channels. — TWA/CT

Myanmar exports over 180 containers of black gram in July

YANGON'S bean and pulses industry said that 185 containers of black gram (4,440 tonnes) were released in July and 60 more containers (1,440 tonnes) were traded in five days of August.

The prices stood at K3,665-3,750 per viss of green gram and K2.368 million per tonne of black gram on 5 August 2023. About 40 containers (96 tonnes) of black gram were transacted on that day.

Myanmar bagged over US$160 million from over 190,600 tonnes of black gram and $130 million from over 194,700 tonnes of green gram as of 28 July in the current financial year 2023-2024 beginning 1 April, the Ministry of Commerce's statistics indicated.

India notified that the free import policy of black gram (urad) and pigeon pea (tur) extended up to March 2024, bringing more benefits to the stockholders in the supply chain including growers and exporters.

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 gram 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.

The price of green gram from the Pakokku area remained unchanged at K2,500-2,670 per viss between 19 June and 3 August. Similarly, the green gram from the Kayan area (Shwe Wah variety) was stable at K3,665 per viss from 13 July to 5 August.

The price of new green gram from the Pakokku area was K206,000-210,000 per 56.25 viss in the Yangon market.

The green gram is cultivated in the post-monsoon period in that township and they are started to be supplied to the market in the early months of the year.

A bountiful green gram harvest is captured in NyaungU Township's lush green fields.

This year, the green gram price plummeted to K2,250 per viss on 4 April and peaked at K3,915-4,035 per viss on 13 February. Black grams and pigeon peas are mainly shipped to India, while green gram is exported to European countries and China beyond India. There is higher consumption of green gram in domestic markets rather than pigeon pea and black gram. — TWA/KK

LOCAL BUSINESS

Surge in prices detected in domestic rice market

THE price of high-grade Pawsan rice from the Shwebo area surged to K135,000 per sack, according to Myanmar Rice Wholesale Centre (Wahdan).

The panic buying of some consumers sparked by the Central Bank of Myanmar's issuance of the new K20,000 note on 31 July drove up the rice prices.

The price of Shwebo Pawsan rice stood at K115,000 per sack on 24 July and then jumped to K135,000 per sack on 9 August. The figures showed a sharp rise of K20,000 per sack over the past two weeks.

Similarly, the Yangon market sees a persistent rise in the prices of other rice varieties. The prices of old Pawsan rice touched a high of K98,000-100,000 per bag depending on producing areas (Myaungmya, Pyapon and Dedaye), while rice prices stood at K87,000 per bag of Kunni, K67,000 for Ngasein, K88,000 for Pawkywe, K67,000 for rice grown under intercropping system and K105,000 for Kyapyan rice variety, as per the price data released by Myanmar Rice Wholesale Centre (Wahdan).

To stabilize the rice price, Myanmar Rice Federation started to sell off the rice reserved under the cooperation of the exporting companies and other schemes from 7 August at the Wahdan and Bayintnaung rice wholesale depots.

Workers carry packages of rice at a warehouse in Yangon.

The rice prices are set at K110,000-120,000 per sack of Pawsan from the Shwebo area, K94,000-97,000 for Pawsan from Ayeyawady, K65,000 for Aemahta (10 per cent broken) and K60,000 for Aemahta (25 per cent broken) respectively.

The consumers are entitled to buy a rice sack of Pawsan rice and a rice sack of Aemahta rice per month, presenting the citizenship scrutiny card.

Moreover, the staff from government departments, factories and companies can buy the rice with official letter by sending a purchase letter to admin@mrf.com.mm.

For further detail, consumers can contact the MRF through Ph: 09 400062760, 09 400067270 and Wahdan Depot via Ph: 01 8221448, 01 8220131, 01 8210287 and Bayintnaung depot via Ph: 09 769029428.

Initially, 50,000 rice bags (25 per cent broken – single polished and stored) are to be sold. The federation will increase the sales quota if necessary.

Under the guidance of the Ministry of Commerce, MRF has been making efforts and participating in the development of the rice market, systematic registration for rice storage, fair market and price stability as the role of the private sector.

Myanmar has achieved self-sufficiency in rice and only the excess rice is exported systematically. At present, rice crops are being harvested in the northern Bago region and central Myanmar region. With the electricity supply improving, rice mills could run operations fully. Therefore, the production meets the consumption for sure. Nevertheless, those unscrupulous are spreading malicious rumours and fake news to trigger consumers' concerns and spark panic buying. The federation hereby requested the consumers to stop panic buying and buy rice when they need it.

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 product. 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 refuse to be persuaded. Those stakeholders in the supply chain need to exert concerted efforts in this as well. — NN/EM

Relocation of Myawady border checkpoint facilitates licensed goods export and import

FOLLOWING the landslides caused by torrential rain on the Myawady road section on 7 August, the border checkpoint for the export and import of licensed goods will be shifted to the Myawady trade zone, according to the notification released by the Trade Department (Myawady Trade Zone) on 8 August.

The successive rain inundated road sections in Myawady which is the major point for Myanmar and Thailand border trade and repairs to the damaged road sections are underway.

To ensure smooth trade, the exporters can move to some Myanmar-Thailand border posts after receiving the export licence for the goods. If they want to change the mode of transport to maritime transport, the authority will give the green light to it as well.

This move will also cover the importers engaged in Myanmar-Thailand border trade for the licensed goods.

The torrential rain caused landslides on the Myawady-Kawkareik Asian Highway in Kayin State and road transport came to a halt on that section. There is no road safety to use the old Dawna mountain road as well.

That road was constructed under the rule of the British and the scenic view on that road attracts tourists. Upon the opening of the new Asia highway in late 2016, the Dawna mountain road was left abandoned and after eight years, the commuters turned to that old road.

There are six border points between Myanmar and Thailand; Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthoung, Myeik, Hteekhee and Mawtaung. Of them, Hteekhee performs the largest trading value and Myawady is the second border post with bustling trading activity.

Cargo-loaded lorries are seen entering the Myawady trade zone.

Myanmar conducts border trade with neighbouring Thailand, China, Bangladesh and India.

Agricultural products, livestock products, fisheries, minerals, forest products, finished industrial goods and other goods are exported to the neighbouring countries while it imports capital goods, intermediate goods, consumer goods and raw materials by the enterprises working on a Cutting-Making and Packaging basis. — NN/EM

OPINION

Comprehensive preparedness: Defying the impacts of El Ñino

THE tropical Pacific Ocean and the Equator's atmospheric temperatures are currently experiencing a situation of partial moderation. International meteorological observatory centres predict that Myanmar will face a moderate El Ñino event in August 2023, an extreme natural disaster known for causing severe warming and dryness. El Ñino, originally noticed by South American fishermen in the 1600s, refers to periods of unusually warm water in the Pacific Ocean, typically peaking around December. Historically, it occurred once every five to seven years, but recently, it has been happening more frequently, with intervals of two to three years.

> In light of the impending El Ñino events and the current challenges posed by it, the government and regional authorities must adopt systematic measures for preparedness and disaster risk reduction. Early preparedness and mitigation strategies can help minimize losses and casualties in the face of these natural disasters. Public awareness campaigns are crucial in raising awareness about the impacts of El Ñino and the best ways to respond effectively and efficiently to minimize the damage and human suffering.

While El Ñino originates in the Pacific Ocean, its impact is global, leading to irregular rains, high temperatures, storms, wildfires, and economic and ecological disruptions worldwide. Myanmar is currently grappling with the effects of El Ñino, experiencing torrential rains, sudden changes in precipitation, high-temperature fluctuations, droughts, and strong winds.

Though Myanmar is suffering from El Ñino's impacts, the entire world faces a formidable El Ñino event. European countries and Japan are grappling with scorching temperatures, posing a threat to their citizens. In June, a record 15,969 people in Europe suffered from heatwave-related impacts. Meanwhile, the Philippines and other nations are being hit by floods and severe storms, causing numerous casualties.

In Myanmar, 18 major cities experienced record-setting high temperatures during the 1997-1998 El Ñino period. Additionally, 15 more cities recorded their lowest rainfall during the same time frame. The severe El Ñino of 2015-2016 brought extreme heat and dryness nationwide, leading to a surge in outbreaks of fires, water shortages, and diseases. Presently, the country is facing heavy rains and stormy weather.

In light of the impending El Ñino events and the current challenges posed by it, the government and regional authorities must adopt systematic measures for preparedness and disaster risk reduction. Early preparedness and mitigation strategies can help minimize losses and casualties in the face of these natural disasters. Public awareness campaigns are crucial in raising awareness about the impacts of El Ñino and the best ways to respond effectively and efficiently to minimize the damage and human suffering.

In conclusion, El Ñino remains a significant threat with far-reaching consequences for the world. Myanmar's current experience with the event serves as a reminder of its devastating effects. However, with comprehensive preparedness and a proactive approach, countries can defy the impacts of El Ñino and protect their societies and environments from its destructive forces. By working together and prioritizing disaster resilience, everybody can build a safer and more sustainable future for all. ■

ARTICLE

Sayagyi Paragu — the First and Foremost Recipient of the 'National Lifetime Award for Literary Achievement

By Maung Hlaing

Sayagyi Paragu (1921-2011)

Introduction

A LOOK into history will reveal that during the time of Myanmar kings, the nation had the tradition of honouring outstanding literati, princes and court officials with titles. Such ceremonies made Myanmar literature flourish in accord with the conditions of those past ages and systems that then prevailed. Myanmar kings did so in order to honour the mass of writers who wrote literature for people's sake. Generally, literati are honoured on the Sarsodaw Nay, or Literati Day as they have performed the task of developing and handing over literature to new generations by inheriting and preserving it.

The successive governments including the present government hold grand ceremonies to present literary awards to the outstanding winners on the 1st Waxing of Nadaw, the ninth month in the Myanmar calendar every year.

In modern times, we have seen the lofty aims of holding the ceremony since the time when the Burma Translation Society (BTS) was established on 26 August 1947. Among the 14-point aims and objectives, one of the objectives is "To institute or encourage research in Myanmar literature and the fine arts to bring about an improvement in mass education." To implement the objective of the BTS, the literary award presentation ceremonies have been held since 1948.

The Early Days of Literary Awards

When the literary prizes were introduced, the then late Prime Minister U Nu once described the awards as an attempt to stimulate the production of 'New Life Literature' which should go hand in hand with the 'New Life Culture' that is building up Burma as an independent and sovereign country. [An excerpt from A report of the Burma Translation Society's experience to date (February 1956), presented by the staff of the society.]

At the outset of the history of literary awards, 'Sarpay Beikman Award (စာပေဗိမာန်ဆု) emerged between 1948 and 1961. Generally, it was known as the 'Sarpay Beikman Contemporary Novel Award' (စာပေဗိမာန်ကာလပေါ်ဝတ္ထုဆု) and Sarpay Beikman, formerly known as BTS, organized the ceremonies on behalf of the State. Each year from 1948 to 1957, a prize was awarded for the best Myanmar novel, the best translation of a great, or classic book, the best work of the belles lettres class, and the best work on any subject of general knowledge.

The first and foremost literary award went to the novel 'Moe–out Myay–byin' (မိုးအောက်မြေပြင်), or the Land under the Sky' written by novelist Min Aung. The first prize-presenting ceremony was held in June 1949. The winner earned 1,000 kyats for his best work.

"Four important literary awards are made every year. One is for the best work of fiction (published during the calendar year) which must be an original work: neither translated nor adapted (prize: 1,000 Kyats)…

"Another is for a translation which must be of a novel and from English into Burmese. The original work must be a classic (prize: 750 kyats)…

"A third award is given for a work selected from historical biographies, autobiographies, travels, literary criticisms which are neither fiction, poetry nor drama (Pya-zat) (prize:1,000 Kyats)…

"The fourth award goes to any instructive, educative or informative work not included in the last category (prize:1,000 Kyats)."

Regarding the national literary awards, it was depicted vividly in the booklet entitled 'SARPAY BEIKMAN, Palace of Literature, published in September 1958. From 1958 onwards, literary awards for other genres were added to the original four.

In 1962, the name of 'Sarpay Beikman Award', was changed to 'Fine Art Literary Award' (အနုပညာစာပေဆိုင်ရာဆု). Up to 1962, all the prizes were presented for only the best work. However, the literary prize-giving system changed in 1963. From 1963 to 1969, four prizes—first, second, third and fourth—were set apart for each genre.

It was in the year 1965 that the name 'Fine Art Literary Award' was changed again to 'National Literary Award' (အမျိုးသားစာပေဆု). Which has been used up to date. Likewise, the system of giving first, second, third and fourth prizes for the literary award terminated in 1968. And presenting one prize for the best one for each genre resumed in 1969.

In the same year, the system of competition of both the works published and the manuscripts was completely abolished and all the literary works of the first edition in a calendar year were scrutinized by the 'Selection Committee of the National Literary Awards' (အမျိုးသားစာပေဆုစိစစ်ရွေးချယ်ရေးကော်မတီ). As a result, 'Sarpay Beikman Manuscript Award' (စာပေဗိမာန်စာမူဆု) emerged and all the manuscripts for competition were scrutinized by the separate 'Selection Committee of Sarpay Beikman Manuscript Award' (စာပေဗိမာန်စာမူဆု စိစစ် ရွေးချယ်ရေးအဖွဲ့). The writers who took part in the competition could pin their hopes on winning first, second and third prizes for each genre except the translation subject for which only the first prize was set apart. From that time onwards, the Sarpay Beikman Manuscript Award has been beneficial to old and new writers who cannot publish their manuscripts in book form for various reasons.

> "The 'National Lifetime Award for Literary Achievement' (အမျိုးသားစာပေ တစ်သက်တာဆု) was successfully introduced to the literary world with effect from 2022. The first and foremost recipient of the award was Sayagyi Paragu (Sithu U Hla Kyaing) who was selected (for 2001) in 2002.

Sayagyi Paragu and National Lifetime Award for Literary Achievement

The 'National Lifetime Award for Literary Achievement' (အမျိုးသားစာပေ တစ်သက်တာဆု) was successfully introduced to the literary world with effect from 2022. The first and foremost recipient of the award was Sayagyi Paragu (Sithu U Hla Kyaing) who was selected (for 2001) in 2002. Since then the award has been presented to one writer or literary scholar whose literary works have contributed much to the nation and the people. Later, the number of recipients came to change in accordance with the decision of the selection committee.

The 'National Lifetime Award for Literary Achievement' is the highest literary award in Myanmar. To be objective, the emergence of the highest literary award was attributable to Sayagyi Paragu who was selected to be the recipient of the South East Asian Writers Award, officially known as S.E.A. WRITE AWARD offered by Thailand. Although he was selected, he failed to leave for Bangkok due to the immediate change of the government's policy in those days. In brief, the literary award that would be the equal of the S.E.A. WRITE AWARD was given birth to the literary arena of Myanmar.

Saya Paragu was born of U Ba Saw and Daw May Toke in the village of Thanon Thanaut in Hinthada Township, Ayeyawady Region on 10 November in 1921. His name was Maung Hla Kyaing. He pursued his primary education in the primary school in Thanon Thanaut village. At the age of 11, his parents made him become a Buddhist novice. At 15, 16 and 17, Ko Hla Kyaing passed Pahtama-ngae, Pahtama-latt and Pahtama-gyi consecutively. When he was 19, he completed the Honours Course of Instructor-monk of Buddhist scriptures.

At 20 in 1941, he was ordained as a Buddhist monk at the Hinthada Myit-Kway Monastery. Then he continued to pursue education at the Hindi University in Varanasi, India between 1947 and 1952. Using the pen-name 'Myo Nyunt Nwe' U Hla Kyaing began to write in the 'Toe Tet Yay Magazine of February 1939 issue. He took another pen name 'Tha-ma-nay shin Paragu' and wrote in the 'Dagon Magazine'. The first literary work was a short story entitled 'ရင်သွေး' (The Progeny) that appeared in the 'Toe Tet Yay' magazine of August 1940 issue. He wrote that short story under the pen name 'Phonegyi Kyaunthar'. In the same year, he passed the Dhamma Ceria Examination with distinction in three treatises.

During the Japanese occupation in 1942, he learned Japanese literature at the Japanese Language School in Thanlyin for two years and wrote an article in Japanese that appeared in a Japanese newspaper published at that time. He used his pen name 'Shin Paragu' for that article.

In 1947, he won a scholarship of Ariya Dhamma offered by an Indian rich man called Virala and as a result, he could join the Oriental Collage of Varanasi University in India to learn Hindi and Sanskrit. While he was studying at the university, he contributed several articles to the 'Dhamma Duta Magazine' published in Hindi by Migadawon Maha Bhodi Association. At the same time, he wrote articles for the 'Journal Kyaw' paper which was published in Yangon, Myanmar.

In 1952, he came back to Myanmar and translated 'From Volga to Ganges' (second part) by 'Rahul Sanskrityayan' under the pen name of 'Weikza'. The first part of the book was translated by Sayagyi U Hsan Htun. In 1954, he took the nom de plume 'Paragu' and wrote the book "Words of Buddha" (ဗုဒ္ဓစကား) Then he left monkhood in 1954. As he possessed an established pen name, Saya Paragu attended the Asian Writers Conference held in New Delhi, India in 1956.

U Hla Kyaing worked as a translator at the Information Department of the Embassy of India in Myanmar. Similarly, he served as a member of the Committee of Oriental Studies for Universities and Colleges in Myanmar; a member of the Myanmar Language Committee, an executive member of the Centre of Myanmar Theravada Missionary; Patron of Theosophy Association, Vice-Chairman of the Myanmar Literature Propagation Association; Chairman of Tagore Association of Myanmar, Chairman of the Association of Hindi Literature; and took various duties in writers organization.

From 1939 onwards, U Hla Kyaing wrote over 150 books including translated works of his life, under the pen-names of 'Myo Nyunt Nwe' 'Thanma-nay shin Paragu' 'Phongyi Kyaungthar'. Among them, 'ဗုဒ္ဓစကား' (Words of Buddha), 'ဓမ္မစကား' (Words of Dhamma), 'ဗုဒ္ဓဒိုင်ယာရီ' (Diary of Buddha), 'နိဗ္ဗာန်' (Nirvana), 'သုန္ဒရနန္ဒ (ခေါ်) ညီတော်မင်းနန်' (Thondra Nanda, or Younger Brother Min Nan) (That book won him Fine Art Literary Award on Translation genre for 1963), 'သားတော်ရာဟုလာ' (Son Rahula), 'သိဒ္ဓတ္ထ' (Siddhartha), 'စိတ္တရလေခါ' (Citra Lekha), 'အမ္ဗပါလီ' (Ambapali), 'ပီယဒဿီ' (Piya Datthi), 'ရဂကထာ' (Pra Kahtar), 'ဘဝခရီးသည်' (Lifelong traveller), 'ပုဂ်ခရီးသည်' (Travellar of Bagan), 'ဂေါရီ' (the winning work of National Literary Award on translation genre for 1985) attracted the mass of readers. (Some titles are transliterated.)

Previously, he lived in Bahan Township. However, he moved to No.988-991, U Ponnya Street in Shwe Paukkan, North Okkalapa where he made his home to be a library and named 'Paragu Shantiniketan Library'. It was opened to all with effect from 24 December 2005.

As he made efforts in the interest of the literary world of Myanmar, he won the National Lifetime Award for Literary Achievement in 2001, Lifetime Literary Award (of Pakokku U Ohn Pe's literary funds) in 2002, Decoration of Outstanding in Arts (First Class) in 2003, Lifetime Literary Award offered by Thuta Swzone in 2005.

Sayagyi Paragu was the one who devoted all his life to the dissemination of literary knowledge among the younger generation. He really wanted young writers to be active and dynamic in carrying out literary activities.

About four decades ago when I began to join the Sarpay Beikman, I met him at the table of late Saya U Myo Thant (Maung Hsu Shin). The words he said to Maung Hsu Shin have still stuck in my mind.

"Ko Myo Thant…we need to give birth to young translators of a new generation. We're now getting old. If you're no longer here in Sarpay Beikman, there may be a shortage of promising translators."

What he said was true.

Literature enriches the cultural life of the nation and influences social life in various ways. Sayagyi Paragu who did a lot for promoting national literary interest left all of his friends, books and the literary world he loved most, on 9 April 2011.

Reference :

- အမျိုးသားစာပေတစ်သက်တာဆုရစာပေပညာရှင်များ၏ စာပေနှင့် ဘဝအကြောင်း တစ္ဆေတစောင်း (၂၀၀၁-၂၀၁၃)၊ စာပေဗိမာန်၊ ၂၀၂၁
- **Through the Window of Sarpay Beikman by Maung Swe Ngae, 2021**

(Note:- The author of this article joined the Sarpay Beikman in 1980 and worked as Assistant Editor, Editor and Chief Editor. Although he retired in 2007, he is still working for Sarpay Beikman by participating in literary teams organized by the State.) ■

NATIONAL

Severe rainfall, flooding disrupt railway operations on Bago-Mawlamyine railway section in Mon State

Engineers from Myanma Railways conduct assessments to evaluate potential structural damage to the bridge on the Bago-Mawlamyine railways line.

SINCE yesterday morning, Mon State has experienced heavy rainfall, leading to a rapid influx of water from the mountains. Consequently, in Bilin Township, the railway section spanning 1,500 feet between Don Wun station and Shwe Pale station has become inundated, with water levels rising two inches above the tracks. This flooding has necessitated the temporary suspension of four trains on the Yangon-Mawlamyine route to ensure the safety of other passenger trains passing through the area.

Due to this situation, passenger train No 81 travelling up and RBE express No 89 departing from Yangon have had to halt at Hnin Pale station. Likewise, passenger express train No 82 down from Mawlamyine is temporarily stationed at Taungsoon station, and No 90 down RBE Express from Mawlamyine is awaiting conditions to improve at Don Wun station.

Although water levels receded yesterday evening, the flow remains strong, impacting four bridges within the vicinity. Officials from Myanmar Railways are presently conducting assessments to evaluate potential structural damage to the bridges and to gauge the extent of water erosion along the railway tracks. If any damage is identified, necessary measures will be promptly undertaken. Depending on the outcomes of safety evaluations, appropriate plans will be devised to proceed with the journey as per the original schedule. — MNA/KZW

CRIME NEWS

Illegal industrial materials, foodstuffs, consumer goods and vehicles confiscated

A combined on-duty team under the management of the Taninthayi Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force conducted a surprise check on a warehouse in Inlaymyaing Industrial Zone in Myeik coastal township on 7 August and nabbed four kinds of goods (worth K14,460,500) including 1,019 kilogrammes of Polypropylene rope and 12,000 packs of Yum Yum instant noodles without official Import Licence. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

In addition, Myawady District Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force made unexpected inspections on a warehouse in Pharchaung Ward, Myawady township, on 7 August and captured two kinds of goods (worth K8 million) including 20,000 kilogrammes of cement ceiling board. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

Similarly, Bhamo District Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force impounded a Mitsubishi canter (approximate value of K15 million), headed to Mandalay from Bhamo, carrying 133 bags of dried tea (made in China) without official documents at the 5th-Mile Sihae combined checkpoint in Bhamo township. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

An on-duty team seized 4,000 Vapes (worth K60 million) in card boxes that were piled on the side of road near the tollgate on the bypass in Lashio township and action was taken under Customs procedures.

The combined teams under Customs Department confiscated a Yutong express bus (approximate value of K30 million), headed to Yangon from Myawady, carrying 5,400 boxes of Lactasoy soy milk (worth K1.8 million) without official documents at the Mayanchaung permanent checkpoint, a Mitsubishi Fuso vehicle (estimated value of K35 million), travelling from Muse to Mandalay, carrying 1,700 kilogrammes of toilet spray nozzle head (worth K4,462,500) that were not declared in the Import Declaration (ID) at the Yepu permanent checkpoint and three kinds of goods (worth K8.95 million) including 99 sets of Icom remote control microphone without official documents and six kinds of goods (worth K1,117,029) including four sets of SIDEL brand new spare part for blower that exceeded the 61 days of VPA from luggage at the Yangon International Airport (Import Desk). The action was taken under Customs procedures.

As a result, a total of 12 arrests were made on 7 August, with an estimated value of K184,110,029, as reported by the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS

Drugs seized in Waw, Kunhing Townships

Arrestees are seen along with seized stimulant tablets and vehicle.

A joint team comprising members of the Anti-Drug Police Force conducted a search of a Toyota Crown vehicle driven by Shauk Kwar and accompanied by Shauk Wain at the combined checkpoint in Tarkaw village, Kunhing township, around 3 pm on 7 August. The search resulted in the seizure of 17 blocks of heroin and 5.95 kilogrammes of the same substance.

Furthermore, law enforcement officials halted and inspected an express passenger bus operated by Kaung Myat Thaw and accompanied by Kyaw Zaw Hein (aka) Kyaw Gyi and Nyein Chan at the Nyaungkhashay x-ray checkpoint at approximately 9:30 pm on 6 August. This operation led to the confiscation of 292,500 stimulant tablets.

Following thorough questioning, the police apprehended Aung Aung (aka) U Aung, who was involved in the drug trafficking activity at the bus station in Taunggyi township around 11 pm.

Individuals involved in these incidents have been charged under the provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. — MNA/MKKS

LIFESTYLE
WORLD

Scout jamboree SOS issued to BTS megastars

WITH national embarrassment building over the World Scout Jamboree evacuations, a South Korean lawmaker has issued an SOS to supergroup BTS.

The K-pop megastars are currently on a hiatus with two members — Jin and J-Hope — performing their mandatory military service, and another member, SUGA, set to enlist shortly.

South Korea's military should give them a leave pass so they can briefly reunite and perform for the thousands of mostly teenagers from around the world left stranded by the jamboree fiasco, according to lawmaker Sung Il-jong.

"For these precious guests, it is necessary to fill the lack of schedule... with the power of Korean culture," Sung wrote on his Facebook page.

He asked Seoul's defence ministry to "take all necessary measures" to allow BTS to perform at a K-pop concert in Seoul on Friday for the scouts.

Doing so "would help elevate South Korea's national prestige."

Sung, also a member of the parliament's national defence committee, said the jamboree had "tarnished our country's reputation due to inadequate preparation and poor management".

The defence ministry told AFP that it had "nothing to comment" on Sung's request.

About 43,000 people had gathered on South Korea's coast last week for the World Scouts Jamboree. — AFP

With national embarrassment building over the World Scouts Jamboree evacuations, a South Korean lawmaker has issued an SOS to supergroup BTS. **PHOTO: AFP**

DR Congo's 'voodoo wrestling' provides spellbinding fun

THERE has been a power cut, and under moonlight in a poor quarter of DR Congo's capital, wrestler Maitresse Libondans explains how she invokes her ancestors to cast spells that rout her opponents.

"I research the fetish," says the 28-year-old, a figure wearing a dramatic red wig ahead of her fight and holding a cane that she says is imbued with mystical powers. Maitresse Libondans is a practitioner of "catch-fetiche", also called voodoo wrestling — a wildly over-the-top Congolese sport where fighters grapple with each other and use magic to try to gain supremacy.

She will only step into the ring if her ancestors, reached through spiritual rites, assure her of conquest. And once in combat, she uses her signature fighting technique: baring her chest to hypnotize her opponent.

"I made him suck my breasts," Maitresse Libondans told AFP matter-of-factly about her most recent victory.

A huge draw in impoverished neighbourhoods of the Democratic Republic of Congo's sprawling capital Kinshasa, voodoo wrestling features men and women of all sizes, who use various degrees of magic in the ring. — AFP

Voodoo wrestler Maitresse Libondans says she invokes the spirits of her ancestors when she steps into the ring. **PHOTO: ALEXIS HUGUET/AFP**

From East to West to southern trap, 50 years of hip hop

FROM the disco samples of old school hip hop to the deadpan delivery of today's drill, American hip hop has morphed in every direction over its 50-year history, defying categorization. Still, patterns have emerged: what follows is a run-down of some of hip hop's prominent phases.

Lauryn Hill performing in May 2017; Jay-Z in 13 October 2021; Ice Spice at the 2023 BET awards, Kendrick Lamar performing in 2023 at Governors Ball in Queens. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Old school

What's now broadly referred to as old school hip hop is the genre's earliest commercially recorded music, and typically refers to songs put out from approximately 1979 to 1983.

The Sugarhill Gang's "Rapper's Delight" became the first commercially successful hip hop song after it was released on 16 September 1979. It's preserved in the Library of Congress' National Recording Registry. — AFP

Los Angeles suffers as Hollywood strike hits 100 days

FILM and TV production ground to a halt 100 days ago when writers downed their pens, only to be joined on the picket lines in mid-July by actors.

The double strike emptied offices and sets in and around Burbank, in the suburbs of Los Angeles. "If nobody's in the office, no clothes are coming in, it's as simple as that," says 56-year-old Malian, who gets around 70 per cent of his business from studio employees.

In an effort to cope with the downturn, Malian has shortened his opening hours, cutting staffing costs. But it's not enough to cushion the blow. "My bills are all the same, expenses are all the same, that makes me sweat," he says. — AFP

ECONOMY
WORLD

Major results at BRICS ministers of trade and economy meeting

CHINA'S Ministry of Commerce (MOC) said Tuesday that BRICS ministers of trade and economy reached a consensus and achieved significant results at a recent ministerial meeting.

At the video conference on Monday, the ministers agreed to expand cooperation in the digital economy and green development and make joint efforts to promote a stable supply chain and support micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises, an MOC official said.

In a common voice, the ministers agreed to strengthen the multilateral trade system with the World Trade Organization (WTO) at its core and participate in the WTO reform with a constructive attitude.

The ministers condemned some developed countries for adopting unilateral and discriminatory measures, including the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism and tax incentives. They stressed that the policy-making related to climate change be consistent with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and the WTO rules. — Xinhua

Aerial photo, taken on 17 June 2022, shows the headquarters building of the New Development Bank (NDB), also known as the BRICS bank, in East China's Shanghai. **PHOTO: FANG ZHE/XINHUA**

NEWS IN BRIEF

China reports biggest drop in exports since 2020

CHINA last month suffered its biggest drop in exports for more than two years, according to official figures Tuesday, as the world's second-largest economy struggles with sluggish global demand and a domestic slowdown.

The data will likely ramp up calls for leaders to do more to revive growth, having laid out a series of stimulus measures in recent weeks.

Sales of Chinese products to foreign markets plunged 14.5 per cent on-year last month, a third consecutive drop, according to the customs authority.

The decline was bigger than expected and the heaviest since a 17.2 per cent drop in January-February 2020, when the economy came to a standstill in the early weeks of the Covid-19 pandemic. — AFP

Over 11,000 city workers in Los Angeles go on 24-hour strike

MORE than 11,000 city workers in Los Angeles, the second largest city in the United States, are walking off their job on Tuesday for a 24-hour strike.

Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 721, the largest public sector union in Southern California, said in a Facebook post that it staged a one-day walkout over "unfair labour practice". "We refuse to accept LA City's bad faith bargaining efforts and repeated labour law violations. We strike today to demand respect and fight for our dignity," the union noted.

SEIU Local 721, which represents more than 95,000 workers in Southern California, said on its website that its members include people working in hospitals, foster care, mental health, courts, law enforcement, libraries, street services, beach maintenance, sanitation, water treatment, parks services and watershed management. — Xinhua

City workers go on strike in front the Los Angeles City Hall in Los Angeles, the United States, on 8 August 2023. More than 11,000 city workers in Los Angeles, the second largest city in the United States, are walking off their job on Tuesday for a 24-hour strike. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Moody's downgrades 10 US banks, citing profitability pressures

RATINGS agency Moody's downgraded the credit ratings of 10 US banks on Monday and warned of possible cuts to more lenders.

Moody's cut the ratings of those banks by one notch, and also placed some other banks on review for potential downgrades.

The downgraded banks include M&T Bank, Pinnacle Financial Partners, Prosperity Bank and BOK Financial Corp.

In addition, Moody's placed six major lenders, including Bank of New York Mellon, US Bancorp, State Street and Truist Financial on review for potential downgrades.

"US banks continue to contend with interest rate and asset-liability management risks with implications for liquidity and capital, as the wind-down of unconventional monetary policy drains systemwide deposits and higher interest rates depress the value of fixed-rate assets," the ratings agency wrote in a note.

The Capital One Arena is closed amid the COVID-19 pandemic in Washington DC, the United States, on 16 April 2020. **PHOTO: TING SHEN/XINHUA**

"Meanwhile, many banks' Q2 results showed growing profitability pressures that will reduce their ability to generate internal capital," it added.

Moody's also changed its outlook to negative for 11 US major lenders, including Capital One, Citizens Financial and Fifth Third Bancorp. Moody's announcement came after the ratings firm Fitch downgraded US government debt rating last week. Regional banks are at a greater risk since they have comparatively low regulatory capital, Moody's warned, adding that institutions with a higher share of fixed-rate assets on the balance sheet are more constrained in terms of profitability and ability to grow capital and continue lending. — AFP

Australia's Commonwealth Bank posts record profit as rates rise

AUSTRALIA'S biggest lender Commonwealth Bank reported a record annual profit Wednesday as it raked in money from customers forced to pay higher interest rates.

After-tax cash profit climbed six per cent from a year earlier to Aus$10.2 billion (US$6.6 billion) in the 12 months to 30 June, the bank said.

Commonwealth Bank said the interest it received from borrowers exceeded the returns it paid to savers.

Net interest income rose 18 per cent, said the bank, which is also Australia's biggest mortgage provider. Australia's central bank has been pushing up official interest rates for 15 months to curb inflation. Commonwealth Bank nevertheless sees the "tailwinds of a recovery" in the economy with a rising population, high commodity prices and low unemployment, said chief executive Matt Comyn.

"However, there are signs of downside risks building as rising interest rates have a lagged impact on mortgage customers and other cost of living pressures become a financial strain for more Australians," he said. The bank was keeping a close eye on the impact on businesses of people tightening non-essential spending, Comyn said. — AFP

China slips into deflation as post-Covid recovery falters

Deflation refers to falling prices of goods and services and is caused by a number of factors, including waning consumption. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

CHINA slipped into deflation for the first time in more than two years in July, official data showed Wednesday, as slowing domestic spending weighs on the post-Covid economic recovery.

The reading comes a day after news that the country suffered its biggest fall in exports since the early days of the pandemic, while imports tanked again as domestic and global demand fall away. The Consumer Price Index, the main gauge of inflation, fell 0.3 in July, the National Bureau of Statistics said, having flatlined in June. While it was marginally better than the 0.4 per cent decline forecast in a survey by Bloomberg, it marked the first drop since the beginning of 2021 and will add to pressure on authorities to provide much-needed support to the economy.

Deflation refers to falling prices of goods and services and is caused by a number of factors, including waning consumption.

And while cheaper goods may appear beneficial for purchasing power, falling prices pose a threat to the broader economy as consumers tend to postpone purchases in the hopes of further reductions. — AFP

Honda posts record operating profit of 394.45 bln yen for April-June

HONDA Motor Co said Wednesday its operating profit for the April-June business period jumped 77.5 per cent to a record 394.45 billion yen ($2.8 billion), helped by strong improvement in automobile sales primarily in the North American market.

The Japanese automaker's net profit soared more than twofold to 363.07 billion yen, while sales increased 20.8 per cent to 4.62 trillion yen.

"The auto industry (in North America) is recovering, with demand still outpacing supply," Masaharu Hirose, head of the Finance Division, said during an online press conference. — Kyodo

Photo taken in Tsukuba, northeast of Tokyo, on 13 February 2019, shows the logo of Honda Motor Co. **PHOTO: KYODO**

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V SITC CHANGMING VOY.NO. (2312S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SITC CHANGMING VOY.NO. (2312S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **10-8-2023** 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 SITC CONTAINER LINE CO., LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V MSC FORTUNE F VOY.NO. (SB331A)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MSC FORTUNE F VOY.NO. (SB331A)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **10-8-2023** 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:

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ROLLING UPDATES
WORLD

World's largest cruise ship to set sail as industry rebounds

Royal Caribbean's luxurious new vessel Icon of the Seas will be the world's largest cruise ship. **PHOTO: AFP**

WITH cruise bookings seeing a resurgence after the Covid pandemic caused luxury liners to mothball, a Finnish shipyard is putting the final touches on what will be the world's largest cruise ship.

Royal Caribbean's luxurious new vessel Icon of the Seas is nearing completion in the Turku shipyard on Finland's southwestern coast, its maiden voyage scheduled for January 2024.

"This ship is as of today, as far as we are aware of, the biggest cruise ship in the world," said Tim Meyer, CEO of shipbuilder Meyer Turku tasked with the construction. While some have labelled the colossal structure a "monstrosity", citing its vast climate footprint, others are in awe of the sophisticated engineering integrated into this floating holiday destination and flocking to buy tickets. Resembling a village more than a ship, the mammoth vessel boasts colourful waterparks, more than 20 decks and can carry nearly 10,000 people.

A distinct feature of the new ship, which went into construction in 2021 and entered sea trials in June, is a gigantic glass dome that covers part of its front section. The pandemic dealt a heavy blow to the industry, raising questions about whether it would ever recover. Cruise companies are now seeing customers return.

The Cruise Lines International Association has predicted that passenger volume will surpass pre-pandemic levels with 31.5 million passengers in 2023. — AFP

"Take me out of here...": Imran Khan on staying in jail

Former prime minister Imran Khan addresses supporters during an anti-government march towards Islamabad, demanding early elections, in Gujranwala, Pakistan on 1 November 2022. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

PAKISTAN'S former Prime Minsiter Imran Khan, who was arrested last week in the Toshakahana case, has expressed his sadness about staying in jail and said that he doesn't stay there, Geo News reported on Wednesday.

While talking with his lawyers in the Attock jail, Imran Khan said, "Take me out of here; I don't want to remain in jail," according to the officials.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman also stated that he remains holed up inside his prison cell in "distressing" conditions, as per the sources.

Khan's counsel Naeem Haider Panjotha was granted access by the jail authorities Monday to meet him, who after seeing the PTI chairman said that the former premier was being kept in "distressing" conditions provided "C-Class jail facilities".

Panjotha added that the PTI chief was in high morale despite all such difficulties and vowed to spend his lifetime in jail but wouldn't bow to slavery, reported Geo News. — ANI

Russia shoot down two combat drones trying to reach Moscow

RUSSIAN air defence systems have shot down two combat drones that were trying to reach Moscow, Mayor Sergey Sobyanin said early on Wednesday.

"There was an attempt to fly two combat drones into the city," Sobyanin said on Telegram, Sputnik reported.

"Both were shot down by air defences. One near Domodedovo [town in the south of Moscow], and the other one near the [Moscow-] Minsk highway."

The mayor said there was no immediate information about casualties from falling debris, adding that emergency services were working at the site.

The incident comes days after the Russian armed forces thwarted Ukrainian mechanized brigades' attempts to carry out strikes in the direction of Krasny Liman, having shot down four drones and targeted two enemy strongpoints in Torsky and Serebryansky. — SPUTNIK

A "No Drone Zone" sign sits just off the Kremlin in central Moscow as it prohibits unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) flying over the area, on 3 May 2023. **PHOTO: NATALIA KOLESNIKOVA / AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Biden says will visit Viet Nam 'shortly'

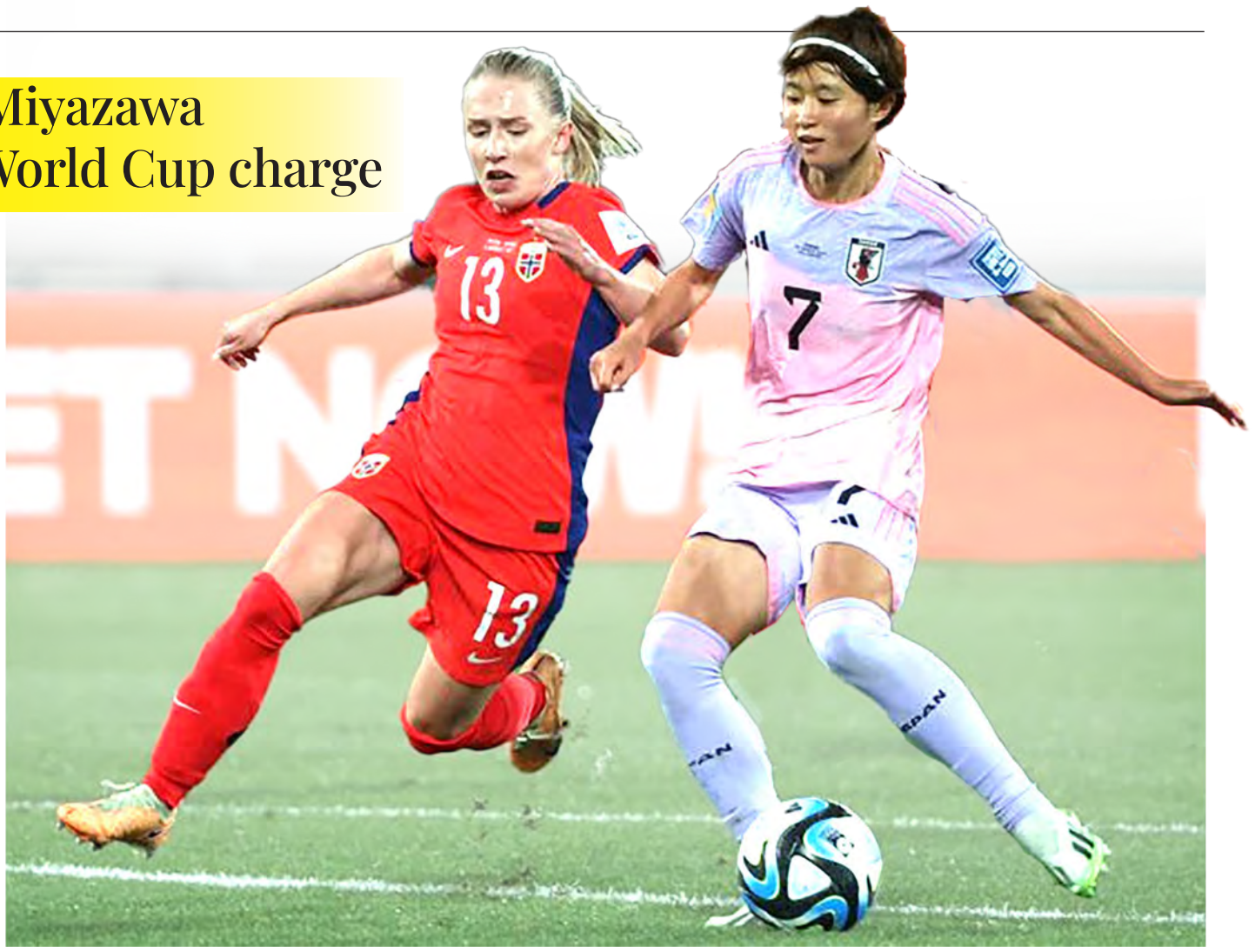
US President Joe Biden said Tuesday he would travel to Viet Nam "shortly" as part of an effort to improve ties with Hanoi, as Washington seeks to counter China's influence in the region.

"I'm going to be going to Viet Nam shortly because Viet Nam wants to change our relationship and become a partner," Biden said during remarks in New Mexico.

"We find ourselves in a situation where all these changes around the world are taking place at a time we have an opportunity ... to change the dynamic," he added. — AFP

SPORTS

Fast, cool, deadly: Miyazawa spearheads Japan World Cup charge



Japan's midfielder Hinata Miyazawa (rigt) battles past Norway's midfielder Thea Bjelde during the Women's World Cup round of 16 match at Wellington Regional Stadium on 5 August. **PHOTO: AFP**

HINATA Miyazawa had never been prolific for club or country before the Women's World Cup — now she is the tournament's leading scorer and spearheading Japan's surprise title charge.

The 23-year-old already has five goals in four matches and has Sweden in her sights in Friday's quarter-final in Auckland.

"I honestly didn't think I could score this much," Miyazawa told reporters after her ice-cold finish in the 81st minute polished off Norway in the last 16.

It was typical of how Miyazawa, who plays in Japan's domestic women's league, has been at the World Cup: cool, calculating and deadly.

It is also noticeable that she has scored with both feet and rather than trying to smack the ball into the net, it is all about precision and placement. Expectations were low at home ahead of the tournament that Japan could repeat their World Cup title success of 2011. Miyazawa had only scored four times in more than 20 appearances for her country.

But Japan are playing some of the best football at the World Cup and Miyazawa's five goals equal the number that Homare Sawa achieved in the 2011 title success.

Deadly composure

Miyazawa's goal haul is all the more surprising because she has scored only four times in 39 appearances for her club MyNavi Sendai over the past two seasons. — AFP

Myanmar to square off against Nepal in FIFA Friendlies

MYANMAR national football team will play two FIFA International friendly matches against the Nepal team at Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon on 8 and 11 September, as stated by the Myanmar Football Federation.

PHOTO: MFF

According to FIFA, Myanmar has ranked 158th and team Nepal is ranked 176th. Myanmar beat Nepal 3-0 in an international match in 2019.

Team Myanmar will play a home and away match against Macao in the 2026 World Cup Qualifiers (Asia Zone-First Stage) and the 2027 Asian Cup Qualifiers in October.

If they succeed in the first round of qualifying, Myanmar will play again in the second round in a group consisting of Japan, Syria and North Korea. Officials will continue to organize FIFA friendlies for the 2023 and 2024 qualifiers.

The Myanmar national team went to Dalian, China last June to compete in the FIFA international friendlies. They suffered a defeat to China 4-0 and beat the Macau team 2-0. — KZL

Colombia 'dreaming big' as they plot England downfall at World Cup

COLOMBIA captain Catalina Usme is "dreaming big" and coach Nelson Abadia wants to "make history" as the last team standing from the Americas plots the downfall of England in the Women's World Cup quarter-finals.

The 25th-ranked South Americans have never made the last eight before but they are brimming with confidence after grinding down Jamaica 1-0 on Tuesday thanks to a goal from their skipper. They will now play England in Sydney on Saturday and are fearless, having beaten world number two Germany in the group stage. "Because of their football and their history we need to be careful, we need to be cautious," Abadia said of Sarina Wiegman's strongly fancied England.

"But in football we have already seen that the gaps between teams have been closing down and Colombia have proven to be a solid team.

"Of course, England are one of the favourites, that goes without saying -- they are the European champions.

"But we also faced Germany, who were second favourites. We were wise enough and had the composure."

Colombia's intense, attacking mindset has served them well so far, with their teenage striker Linda Caicedo one of the stars of the tournament. But Usme is the glue that keeps them together and she said they were in no mood to stop now. — AFP

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WORLD

European Union cannot offer Ukraine security guarantees – Brussels

THE European Union is not a security organization and thus cannot provide security guaranties to Ukraine, European Commission spokesperson Peter Stano said Tuesday. "The EU is supporting Ukraine in several areas, but the issue of security guarantees is not one for the European Union," Stano said at a briefing.

"We are not a security organization, that is why discussions of security guarantees are discussions for NATO and for individual countries, but not for the EU as an organization."

On 12 July, G7 member states presented the Joint Declaration of Support for Ukraine, which provides for the allocation of additional military equipment, expanded intelligence sharing and new training programmes for the Ukrainian military, as well as the development of industrial capacities. — SPUTNIK

Russian serviceman in a special military operation in Ukraine. **PHOTO: SPUTNIK/FILE**

China 9 August 2023. The satellite has entered the planned orbit. The launch was the 482nd mission by the Long March rocket series. **PHOTO: LU XING/XINHUA**

China launches new disaster reduction satellite

CHINA launched a new satellite for disaster reduction from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Centre in Shanxi Province on Wednesday.

The satellite was launched by a Long March-2C carrier rocket at 6:53 am (Beijing Time) and entered the planned orbit.

Its primary users will be the Ministry of Emergency Management and the Ministry of Ecology and Environment. The satellite will form an in-orbit network with a similar one launched into space last October, making up a preliminary satellite constellation for emergency management and environment monitoring.

The S-band synthetic aperture radar system aboard the satellite can work on cloudy and rainy days, which effectively overcomes the shortfalls of optical satellites.

Also, the emergency data processing system on the satellite can realize on-board real-time imaging, as well as information extraction and pre-processing for hot-spot areas.

The satellite will provide basic data for disaster relief and also contribute to land resources surveys, water conservancy, agriculture and forestry. The launch was the 482nd mission to use the Long March rocket series. — Xinhua

The French defence firm won the 1.2 billion euros ($1.3 billion) contract in 2019 to build four Gowind corvettes and renovate two more in partnership with Romanian company Constanta Shipyard. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ NAVAL GROUP VIA TWITTER**

Romania cancels 1.2 bln euro warships deal with France's Naval Group

ROMANIA on Tuesday said it cancelled a tender won by France's Naval Group for building four warships after the two sides failed to sign any contract.

The French defence firm won the 1.2 billion euros ($1.3 billion) contract in 2019 to build four Gowind corvettes and renovate two more in partnership with Romanian company Constanta Shipyard.

But the contract was never signed, despite both NATO countries wanting to boost security on the Black Sea, a strategic point of increasing importance after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine last year. "The decision to cancel the specific procedure was taken... since the successful tenderer did not sign the framework agreement within the time limits requested by the contracting authority," Romania's Defence Ministry said in a press release.

The Dutch group Damen was also fighting for the contract and came second, but Romania says there are no funds available to match their offer. "The funds required to declare the next-placed economic operator the winner were not identified," the press release added. — AFP