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

SUNDAY EDITION

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Maintenance of inlet and outlet drainage channels in the Bagan World Heritage Site in progress to solve the flooding in the region and future preventive measures.

Advanced machinery employed to safeguard Bagan Heritage Site from flooding

Preserving above and underground heritage a priority in enhancing drainage facilities

As drainage facilities are being improved with the use of machinery to prevent flooding in Bagan World Heritage Site, an emphasis is being placed on not harming above and underground cultural heritage, according to the Bagan branch under the Department of Archaeology and National Museum.

The department sought advice from expert Dr Massimo Sarti from the University of Marche of Italy in improving the drains in the cultural region in pursuit of UNESCO guidelines.

Moreover, U Kyaw Myo Win, Director of the Bagan Branch of the department disclosed that they emphasize not harming above and underground cultural heritage to ease the concern of the people over improving the drainage system in Bagan ancient cultural region.

"Being a World Heritage Site, the Bagan region catches public attention more than other ancient regions of the country. Short-term and long-term plans have been adopted to urgently respond to flooding in the Bagan region through collaborative efforts of the officials who have experience in studying emergency response to floods abroad. Moreover, the department invited an Italian expert concerning water management in ancient regions to go on the process under international guidelines. In this regard, we know that people worry about the use of machinery in improving the drainage

SEE PAGE-2

Myanmar-Laos border welcomes commissioning of Kenglat Trading Post

Due to the opening of the Kenglat border trade station between Myanmar and Laos with special funds from the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation, the economy between the two countries will further increase, and the friendship between the people will also improve, Union Minister for Commerce U Aung Naing Oo said during the opening ceremony of the trade station held on 26 August.

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MGMA's dedicated commitment to further enhance Myanmar's garment sector

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Myanmar nationals in Thailand allowed to easily renew residence permits via one-stop service

NATIONAL

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Order No 78/2023

10th Waxing of Wagaung 1385 ME
26 August 2023

Appointment of members of Board of Directors of Central Bank of Myanmar

THE State Administration Council has appointed the following persons as members of the Board of Directors of the Central Bank of Myanmar under Section 419 of the Constitution.

1. Dr Yi Aye
2. U Tin Myint
3. Dr Hla Nyunt

By order,

Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary
State Administration Council

The meeting between UMFCCI and the charge d' Affaires ai of the Egyptian Embassy to Myanmar held in Yangon on 24 August. **PHOTO : MYO MIN THURA**

Myanmar, Egypt discuss economic cooperation, bilateral trade

PRESIDENT of UMFCCI U Aye Win received Charge d' Affaires ai Dr Ahmed Eltahlawy of Egyptian Embassy to Myanmar in Yangon on 24 August.

During the meeting, they discussed the promotion of bilateral trade, investment, and two-way trade between the two countries including the Middle East region, proper cooperation with UMFCCI, sending of representatives to economic forums and dialogues and information exchanges. — Myo Min Thura/ KTZH

Maintenance of inlet and outlet drainage channels in the Bagan World Heritage Site in progress.

Advanced machinery employed to safeguard Bagan Heritage Site from flooding

FROM PAGE-1

system. World Heritage Sites are allowed to use small and medium-scale machinery in necessary measures for the sake of people from the society when the heritage impact assessment (HIA) has been conducted. Such kind of measures are not totally prohibited. So, we have to conduct several assessments over the heritages, and machinery can be used in some parts of the work process in which manpower cannot be deployed. Such work process must be mentioned in the State of Conversation-SOC report which is submitted once every two years," U Kyaw Myo Win explained.

Experts from the department in cooperation with the Italian expert have conducted field surveys for three years, including the micro-topographic survey, measuring ten-centimetre contour line survey for the total station, measuring of the sea level at the datum of Bagan, and conducting heritage impact assessment not to harm heritage in Bagan World Heritage Site to produce necessary maps.

The Italian expert inspected inlet and outlet drainage channels in the Bagan era in the Bagan World Heritage Site and gave suggestions on the ways to solve the flooding in the region and future preventive measures. Currently, the Myanmar-Italy combined team is conducting research works on Wetkyee-in Creek, Ale Lake, Alan Bagan and the viewing mound and the drainage system of the emerald lake (Mya Lake) near Culamani Temple to take preventive measures against flooding in Bagan Heritage Site. — ASH/TTA

Rehabilitation items transported to people in Mocha-hit Rakhine State

FOR the Mocha victims in Rakhine State, the MV Mercury Force carrying a total of 1,942.46 tonnes – 1,517 concrete lampposts (10 metres long), 1,355 concrete lampposts (9 metres long) donated by the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Electric Power and the MV Wirupakkha carrying a total of 217.59 tonnes – 35,000 rice bags, 400 tonnes of iron rods, 20 tonnes of flange plate and two tonnes of foodstuffs donated by the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement — left the Myanmar Terminal (TMT) for Sittway yesterday morning.

A total of 30 vessels, including Tatmadaw vessels, transported 40,392.03 tonnes of rehabilitation items including construction materials, electronic devices, medications and health equipment, consumer goods and foodstuffs and a total of 249,762 gallons of diesel and 199,886 gallons of Octance 92 to Sittway township in Rakhine State starting from 16 May. — MNA/MKKS

The MV Wirupakkha carrying a total of 35,000 rice bags and other rehabilitation materials leaves for Sittway from the Myanmar Terminal (TMT) yesterday.

NATIONAL

Myanmar commits to regional health, economic recovery

Union Health Minister Dr Thet Khaing Win participates in the second-day ASEAN Health Ministers' Meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia, on 25 August.

Union Health Minister Dr Thet Khaing Win participated in the ASEAN Health Ministers' Meeting's second day on 25 August, hosted at Jakarta's St Regis Hotel. Dignitaries like Indonesia's Health Minister, the Director-General of the World Health Organization, and the ASEAN Health Ministers' Alternate Chairman delivered speeches, preceded by opening remarks from Laos' Health Minister.

During the session, Dr Thet Khaing Win underscored the shift in the COVID-19 pandemic from an emergency response to the pressing need for prevention, control, and treatment. Acknowledging Myanmar's pandemic challenges, he highlighted successful collaborative efforts within the Ministry of Health, led by the Central Prevention, Control and Treatment Committee, in combatting and overcoming COVID-19. Myanmar's economic and social landscape also suffered due to the pandemic, prompting the initiation of the Myanmar Economic Recovery Plan and the Myanmar COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan. These initiatives aim to bolster recovery and establish favourable economic conditions for sustainable national development.

The focus on enhancing the Genomic Surveillance System for pathogenic variations has been ongoing since 2021. The construction of Myanmar's Disease Control Centre is almost complete, signalling the imminent establishment of an international and regional centre for infectious disease prevention and control. The Union minister stressed the significance of upgrading the Genomic Surveillance System and enabling Genomic Sequencing-capable laboratories to promptly identify and manage emerging viruses.

He also emphasized equitable aid distribution among ASEAN member countries, aligned with the principles of ASEAN Equality and ASEAN Centrality. Myanmar commits to improving regional health by collaborating with fellow ASEAN nations to establish a responsive, sustainable, and inclusive health system.

The meeting concluded with the approval of the Call for Action, slated for ratification at the forthcoming ASEAN Summit. The Myanmar delegation returned to Yangon via air yesterday. — MNA/KZW

A coordination meeting of the reception team of the International Art Centre (Mandalay) in progress on 25 August.

MoI Deputy Minister inspects International Art Centre (Mandalay)

THE reception team of the International Art Centre (Mandalay) held a coordination meeting at the three-storey conference hall of the Mandalay Region Government Office on 25 August afternoon.

Deputy Minister for Information U Ye Tint, who serves as the Chairman of the International Art Centre (Mandalay) Building Reception Committee, first mentioned in his speech that two international art centres have been established in Yangon and Mandalay. The architectural plans for both centres have already been finalized. The construction of the Yangon Centre, which is currently underway, received approval from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture. Regarding the Mandalay Centre, the Ministry of Information has taken over the project and will oversee its completion. The design of the building is being evaluated for quality assurance by a team designated by the Ministry of Information. It is essential to verify whether the dimensions and construction materials align accurately with the original design and budget stipulated in the contract. This ensures that the established quality standards have been met. It is necessary to assess whether the construction aligns with the specified standards.

The discussion then continued with Permanent Secretary U Myo Myint Maung of the Ministry of Information and committee secretary U Aye Kywe. The participants engaged in further deliberations before the concluding speech by the deputy minister. The deputy minister and his team, accompanied by officials from the building reception team, also inspected the International Art Centre (Mandalay) building on 73rd Street, Chanmyathazi Township of Mandalay. — MNA/KZW

Myanmar-Laos border welcomes commissioning of Kenglat Trading Post

FROM PAGE-1

Before the opening ceremony, members of the ethnic perform traditional dances.

The trading post was implemented and built with the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Special Fund 2021. The trade station, which was previously opened temporarily, has been upgraded to become a new one with the full characteristics of a big trading station.

The Union minister expressed his gratitude to the People's Republic of China for providing support from the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Special Fund for the construction of the camp buildings.

Due to the seperation of the Mekong River between the two countries, bilateral trade has not developed, but the Myanmar-Laos friendship bridge was built, and the natural barrier was overcome.

The Kenglat Trade Station was temporarily opened on 15 March 2015. The trade agreements between Myanmar and Laos were signed on 8 May 1995, and the bilateral border region management and cooperation agreement was signed in Myanmar-Lao-English languages on 27 March 1997 in Yangon by the foreign ministers of the two countries.

The construction of the Myanmar-Laos Friendship Bridge over the Mekong River began in February 2013, was completed on 25 April 2015, and opened on 9 May 2015.

After the opening ceremony of the trading post, the Union minister and the party visited the Myanmar-Laos Friendship Bridge over the Mekong River, visited the trading post in Meyan Ward of Tachilek, met employees, and discussed issues related to promoting exports and preventing illegal trade. — MNA/TWA/KZL

NATIONAL

MoHA Deputy Minister pays observation tours in Thailand

The Myanmar delegation from the Ministry of Home Affairs and Thai delegation from Royal Thai Police Force pose for a documentary photo during the former's tours in Thailand.

A delegation led by the 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 made a study tour to Doitung, Chiang Rai Province, Thailand at the invitation of Mr Wichai Chaimongkhon, the Secretary General of the Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB) on 21 August.

The delegation studied the sustainable alternative development projects being carried out by the Mae Fah Luang Foundation since 1998 and aimed to finish in 2051 with the support of the mother of King Rama 9 and ONCB in the area. The projects include perennial plantations, agricultural training, value-added products manufacturing and commercial forests and environment conservation services.

The delegation also visited the International Narcotics Control College-INCC and Safe Mekong Cooperation Centre-SMCC in Chiang Saen, Chiang Rai Province to observe the information-sharing processes of representative officials from six Mekong countries.

On 23 August, the delegation visited the area where the Roi Jai Rak project is being implemented by the Mae Fah Luang Foundation with the support of ONCB within the time frame of 2018-2029 in Mae Ai, Chiang Rai Province. The focus of the project is establishing fishery business, soil preparation, establishing forests, livestock breeding, handicraft business development, value-added products development and development of tourism in the region. The delegation also studied the listing of arms and analysis at No (5) Police Criminal Academy in Lampung Province.

On 24 August, the delegation visited the Doi Inthanon Royal Project area in Chiang Mai where fishery business is being carried out under the alternative development project, before discussing matters relating to Myanmar-Thai collaboration opportunities for establishing alternative development operations in poppy growing areas of Myanmar. Then the delegation headed to No (5) Provincial Police Force to study efforts of anti-narcotic drug operations, information sharing about drug criminal matters between the forces, the development in application of technology in identification of criminals starting from 2011 and investigation of money laundering.

The delegation visited No (333) Doi Saket shooting range in Chiang Mai Province to observe hostage rescue operations using automobiles and helicopters, drug crackdown operations and other demonstrations in the shooting range.

The delegation then discussed with the counterparts matters pertaining to opportunities of sending trainees from the Myanmar police force to Thailand, operations to be carried out between two forces, the current situations of seizing drugs, controlling the precursor chemicals, destruction of seized drugs and upgrading capacity of police members, the fruits of collaboration of two nations in cracking down drugs and more efforts to crack down narcotic drugs. The delegation arrived back in Yangon on 25 August. — MNA/TH

Advanced income tax collection planned for doctors, healthcare providers at private hospitals

THE Ministry of Planning and Finance has issued a directive that income tax will be collected in advance from doctors and healthcare providers who provide medical treatment in private hospitals.

From 1 September, doctors and healthcare providers who provide fee-for-service treatment at private hospitals have been instructed to deduct two per cent income tax from their payments.

The notification is dated 2023. It is stated that it will be effective from 1 September.

Section 7 of the Law on Private Health Services provides for the withholding of tax at the time of disbursement of income from the profession of healthcare providers in Section 2 Sub-section (R) of that law.

As per this specification, the individual responsible for distributing funds to healthcare providers in private health enterprises is required to withhold two per cent of income tax from the payment during disbursement. This deduction must take place at the time of payment, and within 15 days of deduction, the name of the recipient or the healthcare provider should be forwarded to the relevant township Internal Revenue office or deposited into the bank account of the Tax Office for Medium Taxpayers or the Tax Office for Large Taxpayers.

In the case of salary income paid monthly to healthcare providers appointed as permanent employees in private health enterprises, the person responsible for disbursing the money shall proceed according to the method of income tax under the title of salary without the need to withhold and submit the income tax withheld from the source under clause (a).

Similarly, healthcare providers, excluding those who solely receive income from salaries, are required to submit an annual income declaration form based on Section 17 of the Income Tax Law. This form outlines their earnings and is used to determine income tax assessment. Following the directive, the head of the Township Internal Revenue Department is mandated to subtract the income tax already deducted from the original income tax, from the income tax that is due for assessment after the income year. — TWA/KZW

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NATIONAL

MRF distributes 250,000 rice sacks to four regions, states to steer volatile market

MYANMAR Rice Federation has sent 250,000 sacks of rice to four regions and states beyond the Yangon Region to sell them at fairer prices to the consumers to control the high volatility in the domestic market, including 200,000 sacks to Rakhine State, 2,000 to Mon State, 1,000 to Magway Region and 2,000 to Kayin State.

Aemahta rice of export quality (well-milled, polished and sorted) started to sell off at K2,500 per pyi at 42 shops in 17 townships across Yangon Region on 25 August.

The mobile market scheme for Aemahta rice variety will cover 17 townships with 42 shops starting from 25 August, with seven shops in Hlinethaya Township, four each in Shwepyitha and South Dagon, five in North Okkalapa, three in Thingangyun, Dala and Mingaladon, two each in North Dagon and East Dagon, Dawbon, and one each in Dagon Seikkan, Pazundaung, Thakayta, Kyimyindine, Ahlon, Seikkyi Khanaungto and Insein.

The MRF launched a subsidy scheme for Pawsan and Aemahta rice varieties on 7 August at Wahdan and Bayintnaung Commodity Wholesale Centres. Each consumer is entitled to buy a sack of Pawsan rice and a sack of Aemahta rice per month, presenting the citizenship scrutiny card.

In addition to the rice depots, the MRF is selling off rice to the staff from government departments, factories and companies according to the relevant reports. The federation is also running a mobile market at the quarters in the townships, with the fairer price of K2,500 per pyi of Aemahta rice.

Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF) notified on 7 August that it would sell off 170,000 rice sacks in August, comprising 50,000 rice sacks of Aemahta variety, 20,000 sacks of Pawsan rice and 100,000 sacks of short matured rice Aemahta variety (90 days). The federation will increase the sales quota when necessary.

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.

Workers are seen organizing rice bags with meticulous care in a warehouse in Yangon.

MRF, affiliated associations, rice exporting companies, rice mills and traders will exert concerted efforts to stabilize the prices in August and September and offer the fairer prices to the consumers of low income, MRF stated.

Despite MRF's subsidy scheme of selling off reserved rice to control the price increases, the prices of rice are on an upward trend in the domestic market.

The price of high-grade Pawsan rice from the Shwebo area rocketed to K145,000 per sack.

The prices of old Pawsan rice hit K110,000-122,000 per bag depending on producing areas (Myaungmya, Pathein, Pyapon and other regions), while rice prices stood at K98,000 per bag of Kunni, K70,000 for Ngasein, K68,000-69,000 for Aemahta, K100,000 for Pawkywe, K70,000 for rice grown under intercropping system and K110,000 for new Pawsan rice variety, as per the price data released by Myanmar Rice Wholesale Centre (Wahdan).

— NN/EM

Illegal foodstuffs, consumer goods, industrial materials, auto parts and vehicles confiscated

A combined team under the management of the Yangon Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force examined a vehicle driving on Thudhamma road near the No 2 market bus stop in North Okkalapa township on 22 August and captured two kinds of goods worth K2.2 million including 32 bottles of palm oil (Two Shrimps) made in Thailand and 112 bottles of soybean oil made in Thailand. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

Similarly, the Customs on-duty teams impounded three kinds of goods worth K1.5 million including two sets of Portable Air-conditioners that were not declared in the Import Declaration (ID) at the Asia World Port Terminal container checkpoint on 23 August and 30 sets of Alternator dynamo worth K3.6 million that were not declared in the ID at the Thilawa Port and 10 kinds of goods worth K555,035,300 including 2,835 boxes of Fexofenadine hydrochloride tablet that were not declared in the ID, 1,080 boxes of Metpure XL tablet and 10 sets of Growatt solar inverter that exceeded the ID from three containers at the Myanmar Industrial Port on 24 August. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

Confiscated foodstuffs are seen in Bago Region on 24 August.

The on-duty team nabbed 14 kinds of goods worth K13,795,000 including 280 Lady blouse short sleeves that were smuggled and piled up by the side of Union highway in Muse on 24 August. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

The combined on-duty teams made inspections on 24 August and seized 660 bottles of palm oil (Two Shrimps), 840 bottles of Red Bull energy drink, 840 bottles of Singha beer, 720 bottles of SPY wine cooler and 1,440 bottles of Milo Nestle worth K6.65 million at the warehouses and convenience stores in No 9 Ward in Hpa-an and a vehicle travelling from Myawady to Yangon carrying two kinds of goods worth K4.3 million including 400 Duro cycle tyres without official documents. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

A combined team made inspections on 24 August and captured a Yutong bus (approximately K15 million), headed to Yangon from Kawkareik, carrying five kinds of goods worth K4,798,855 including 165 bags of Wai Wai instant rice vermicelli and 100 boxes of Lactasoy Soymilk without official documents. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

An on-duty team at the Latpanhla-Singu temporary checkpoint confiscated a Nissan diesel truck (estimated value of K30 million), headed to Mandalay from Bhamo, carrying 1,000 kilogrammes of Blade wire without official documents on 24 August. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

A total of 19 arrests were made on three consecutive days from 22 to 24 August, with an estimated value of K640,879,155, as reported by the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee.

— MNA/ MKKS

LOCAL BUSINESS

File photo shows the panoramic view of workers at the CMP garment workplace.

MGMA's dedicated commitment to further enhance Myanmar's garment sector

FOLLOWING H&M Group phasing out outsourcing from Myanmar, the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association (MGMA) will accelerate its effort to keep improving Myanmar's garment sector, as per the MGMA's statement on its commitment released on 25 August.

Reuters reported on 17 August that H&M Group decided to cut ties with Myanmar suppliers.

The MGMA was disheartened to see this unexpected news as it will bring negative impacts on the livelihood of the employees and pose a higher risk of layoffs amid the challenging economic climate. Since its establishment in 2002, the MGMA has been joining hands with all the stakeholders in the industry, development agencies, international partners and valuable brands to enhance the working environment of Myanmar garment factories.

The MGMA has implemented the Voluntary Labour Compliance Assessment (VLCA) from February 2020 to evaluate the compliance of the factories in line with the national labour laws and international labour standards. To beef up the assessments and expand enrolment, the online version was launched in November 2022. More than 220 factories have accomplished the assessment so far and over 100 are still under scrutiny.

Furthermore, the MGMA is discussing constructive engagements and cooperation with the stakeholders concerned in the industry to address the livelihood and labour issues of the workers.

Additionally, the MGMA is encouraging to deepen the ties between the international garment brands and local factories and foreign-owned factories established in the country. The MGMA has experienced negative impacts from the similar withdrawals of the multinational companies in early 2000. The MGMA clearly said in the statement that it strongly believed the responsible presence of international brands in the country is the best way to improve the labour market conditions and safeguard the dignified livelihood of a hundred thousand young women employees. The responsible partnership will contribute to the improvement of the working conditions in progress, as per the statement.

Thus, MGMA is willing to work together with international brands and partners to carry out responsible businesses in Myanmar and commit to keep improving the situation of Myanmar's garment sector. — NN/EM

Onion prices decrease with opening of Myawady Road

THE onion price in the countryside and Yangon falls again as the trucks can travel the Myawady road again, according to the traders.

On 15 August 2023, the large-sized onions were priced at K2,500 per viss and reached K3,500 per viss on 22 August.

However, it was below K3,300 per viss on 24, 25 and 26 August, according to the source.

At Seikphyu wholesale centre, 9,000 visses entered the market and the price was K3,150 per viss on 26 August.

Meanwhile, the Pakokku market received 55,000 visses which were K3,250 per viss, and 58,440 visses flew into the Myingyan market and the price was K2,600-K3,200 per viss.

On 22 August, the Myingyan market hosted 113,520 visses and it was K2,800-K3,300 per viss.

The onion price on 26 August 2022 was K2,800 per viss and so the onion price of this year is K500 higher compared to the same period of last year.

The onion sales are slack in Yangon in August and the prices change depending on the demand from border areas.

The trucks can pass through the Myawady road section soon and the onion demand from border areas can change the prices.

The Bayintnaung market does not have demand from borders like in 2000 and makes sales just for local consumption. Therefore, the onion price changes depending on foreign demand, onion purchaser U Win Latt told The Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM).

The prices could potentially be high just like 2022 according to the current local and foreign onion markets.

The prices seem to reach the highest prices of 2015 and 2019. — TWA/KTZH

Pakokku onion market is seen on 26 August.

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CURRENT AFFAIRS

Myanmar extradites 24 suspected online scammers to China in four days

MYANMAR police force handed over five Chinese people suspected of involvement in online scams to the Beijing authorities at Yangon International Airport on 26 August.

A total of 24 suspects including these five people were handed over to China within four days.

Police from the four countries — China, Thailand, Myanmar and Laos — have launched a special joint operation to crack down on gambling, fraud, human trafficking and other crimes.

The Chinese embassy to Myanmar said the capture demonstrates the firm determination of the country to fight the crimes, especially those involved in gambling and fraud.

The embassy stated China will continue strengthening cooperation to combat regional gambling and fraud. Myanmar police also transferred six suspects who had been captured during an anti-telecom fraud campaign to Chinese police in June. — TWA/KTZH

The photo shows five online fraud suspects (C).

Union Supreme Court receives 1,853 legal cases within six months

THE Union Chief Justice U Thar Htay said that the Supreme Court of the Union has received 1,853 legal cases and 1,406 cases have been examined within six months in 2023.

Regarding the trial of crimes, 747 criminal cases were received, 586 cases of which were examined, and 1,106 civil cases were received, and 820 of which were examined at the Supreme Court of the Union from 1 January to 30 June.

He highlighted that at the 25th coordination meeting of the Supreme Court of the Union and the regional and state high courts held on 24 August.

A total of 2,693 criminal cases have been received and 2,529 of which have been examined in the regional and state high courts. Likewise, 2,575 civil cases have been received and 2,628 cases have been examined (including 53 remaining cases from last year).

Meanwhile, 11,915 criminal cases were received in the self-administered zone courts, self-administered division courts, and district courts, and 13,005 cases were examined and resolved (including 1,090 remaining cases from last year).

Similarly, 7,830 civil cases were received and 7,824 cases of which were examined.

Photo shows the Office of Supreme Court of the Union.

106,360 criminal cases were received in the township courts (including the remaining 3,639 cases from the previous two years) and 109,999 cases were examined.

Union Chief Justice U Thar Htay said that 9,261 civil cases have been received and 10,092 cases have been examined (including 831 remaining cases from last year).

In turn, 217 cases filed under the Children's Law have been received and 199 cases have been completed in other courts established by law, such as the Children's Court (Yangon and Mandalay). City Development Courts (Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay) have received 1,749 cases filed under the City Development Law and 1,733 cases have been examined. A total of 43,320 cases were prosecuted under the Motor Vehicle Law for violating traffic regulations and traffic rules in the Motor Vehicle Court (Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay).

He commented that they are working hard to ensure that the cases are properly investigated and completed without any delay.

He stressed that the courts should conduct regular and speedy adjudication of cases under the law, and cases that are being tried by private courts without delay, should be properly examined and resolved quickly.

The Chief Justice of the Union also added information related to the judicial sector, to strictly follow the instructions issued concerning the management of evidence including the need for employees serving at court levels to fulfil their duties and make efforts to achieve the first-year work plan 2023 of the Five-Year Judicial Strategic Plan 2023-2027. — TWA/KZL

Myanmar nationals in Thailand allowed to easily renew residence permits via one-stop service

THE Myanmar Embassy to Thailand announced that Myanmar nationals who have arrived in Thailand will have the opportunity to re-enter Myawady and Kawthoung and extend their residence permits through the One-Stop Service.

Reportedly, individuals who arrived in Thailand under the MoU programme before the COVID-19 period have renewed their passports at the Myanmar embassy (Bangkok) and Consulate-General (Chiang Mai) after the pandemic's conclusion, and they are continuing to reside and work in Thailand.

Those whose residence permits have expired in Thailand, but still possess passports with a validity of two years or more, will no longer be required to Yangon for re-entry and employment in Thailand through the MoU/U-Turn System.

They can now utilize the One-Stop Service system by returning to Myawady and Kawthoung. The streamlined process for re-entering various workplaces in Thailand within a short period is set to be implemented. As a result, HR managers and officials within these workplaces have been advised to stay informed and notify relevant parties accordingly.

The opening date and process details will be announced in a statement from the Myanmar embassy to Thailand. — TWA/KZW

OPINION

Address the struggles of people amidst unstable commodity prices

THE instability of prices for essential food items and personal goods continues to pose significant challenges in the daily lives of people. While this problem stems from various factors, the primary culprits are the skewed trading practices driven by soaring fuel prices and foreign exchange rate inflation.

It is imperative to assess whether subjecting consumers to the adverse effects of these high prices is equitable. The escalation in commodity prices hinges on the surge in fuel costs and the depreciation of the Myanmar currency against stronger foreign currencies. Amidst these circumstances, it falls upon wholesalers and retailers to introspect and evaluate whether their actions align with public interests.

The government strategically intervenes by procuring foreign exchange in the official market. This measure aids in regulating commodity prices and curbing their upward trajectory. The government implements interest rates and monetary policies that pivot on the microeconomic state of the nation. In parallel, the Central Bank of Myanmar takes a proactive stance by supplying US dollars to owners in the fuel, cooking oil, and import sectors through private banks. This strategic provision of foreign currency aims to meet both currency requirements and the stability of foreign exchange rates.

Addressing the challenges posed by fluctuating commodity prices requires a holistic approach that balances economic considerations with public welfare. Myanmar's government can foster an environment where businesses thrive without resorting to unethical practices. Through such concerted efforts, the nation can pave the way for a more equitable future.

Illicit entities employ nefarious tactics to artificially inflate commodity prices and engage in illegal currency exchange through online and social media platforms. These actions disrupt the market equilibrium and defy market demand dynamics and established protocols. Adhering to the Foreign Exchange Management Law and its accompanying regulations, citizens have to keep a prescribed quantity of foreign currency within a designated timeframe.

The presence of smuggling and unlawful exports exacerbates domestic commodity price instability. Consequently, law enforcement task forces diligently monitor and clamp down on illegal traders to prevent the influx of contraband goods into the country. To counteract this, the government routinely establishes foreign exchange reference rates grounded in accurate data.

Additionally, authorities streamline the foreign currency expenditure process for importers, facilitating the acquisition of foreign currency for meeting both domestic fuel demands and industrial raw material imports. Consequently, traders are incentivized to conduct business ethically, benefiting from the government's streamlined procedures while transcending personal interests.

Addressing the challenges posed by fluctuating commodity prices requires a holistic approach that balances economic considerations with public welfare. Myanmar's government can foster an environment where businesses thrive without resorting to unethical practices. Through such concerted efforts, the nation can pave the way for a more equitable and prosperous future.

ARTICLE
BOOKRACK

Household production of fruits, vegetables makes population food secure: Study

The study suggests that recognizing and supporting household-level food production should be integrated into government policies, aligning with the broader goal of ensuring a resilient food system that can withstand challenges posed by urbanization, climate change, and socioeconomic shifts.

ACCORDING to a recent study from the University of Sheffield, household production of fruits and vegetables in gardens and allotments may be essential for a population that is healthy and food secure.

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the production, acquisition, donation, and waste of fruit and vegetables among home food producers over the course of a year.

It found those who grow their own can produce more than half of the vegetables (51 per cent) and 20 per cent of the fruit they consume annually.

Home Food Production Boosts Health

As well as providing sustainable access to fresh fruit and vegetables, the study also found household food growers ate 6.3 portions of their recommended 5-a-day, which is 70 per cent higher than the UK national average at only 3.7 portions. This finding suggests household food production could promote the adoption of a healthier diet.

Author of the study, Dr Zilla Gulyas, from the University of Sheffield's School of Biosciences, said: "Eating at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day is associated with significantly decreased risks of developing health issues like obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and certain types of cancer, and could help prevent associated deaths and cut healthcare costs worldwide.

"Our new study highlights the role that growing fruit and vegetables at a household scale could play in increasing their consumption."

The findings of the study suggest that household food production could both promote fruit and vegetable consumption and play an important role in increasing household and national food self-sufficiency, as well as reducing waste.

In addition to ensuring sustainable access to fresh produce, the study indicates that individuals who grow their own fruits and vegetables tend to consume more healthily. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ PIXABAY**

Minimized Food Waste

Households that had the ability to grow their own fruits and vegetables also wasted little, with only 0.12 portions a day being thrown out on average. This is 95 per cent lower than the fruit and vegetable waste of the average UK household.

This suggests that household food production was associated with more waste-reducing behaviours which could also increase household food security on a national scale, as participants commonly engaged in behaviours like donating unneeded food items and persevering and freezing excess food for later use.

According to the National Food Strategy published in 2021, developing the ability of the national food system to provide sufficient amounts of healthy food for all, whilst withstanding socioeconomic and environmental shocks, and pressures from continued rapid urbanization and climate change, is a key priority in the UK. Although, the role of own-growing in this was overlooked and going forward should be recognized in government policy.

Dr Gulyas states household-level food production could play an important role in promoting both healthy diets and food system resilience. For this, however, people need better access to space and other resources needed to grow their own.

Nurturing Inclusivity and Space

She said: "We need to find ways to overcome socioeconomic challenges to upscaling household food production, especially among those most affected by low fruit and vegetable intakes, like low-income families. Increasing the amount of space available to UK households to produce their own food is essential to this, especially given the steady decline in allotment land nationally."

SOURCE: ANI

Book Title	-	Ahnaukko Shaukparloe Ahshaygode Hmyawlaityin
Writer	-	Thein Pe Myint
Publishing House	-	Seikkku Cho Cho
Publication Date	-	August 2023 (3rd Edition)
Price	-	K6,000

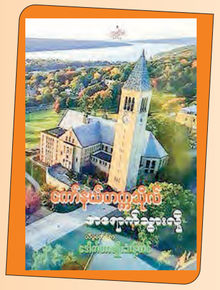
Ahnaukko Shaukparloe Ahshaygode Hmyawlaityin

THERE are two famous epitaphs of Myanmar writers namely Bhamo Tin Aung and Thein Pe Myint. The epitaph of Bhamo Tin Aung says, "The value of a person ought to be assessed by how much he has accomplished the duties assigned to him by the country during his lifetime" whereas the epitaph of Thein Pe Myint says, "Satisfied with my life, I am not afraid of death. To die or to live makes no difference for me. I have already lived for 50 years happily. I won't ask the God of Death to spare my life. But if I still can continue to live, I am confident I can lead a happy life as before." Saya U Thein Pe Myint died at 64, nevertheless.

The writer of this book is nobody but Thein Pe Myint, who has been the Chief Editor of the Botahtaung Daily. He was invited by the US government to visit America. He wrote the articles of this book under review in his newspaper in a series. This book is, in fact, a collection of travelogues. Before he visited the US, people gossiped about the writer, asking why he should visit America when he was a very strong communist. The gossip was viral among writers and politicians alike. He did not make any remarks about his visit to the country he harboured dramatic hate for. He just ignored all the gossip. But when he started to write articles about his visit to the US, people witnessed his loyalty to communism. In his articles, he mentioned the evil things about US policies and programmes.

During his trip to the USA, he visited India, Pakistan, Egypt, Italy and England. Upon return from America, he visited Hawaii, the Philippines, Hong Kong and Thailand. He wrote about the City of Karachi in the political, economic and social contexts in one article whereas he touched upon Beirut, the City of Lebanon, in another article in which he wrote about the US invasion of Lebanon. Although the Americans were saying that Russia might intrude the Middle East, it was the US Navy that had invaded the Middle East. He quoted a taxi driver in Beirut as saying, "The Americans are thinking that if they can lavish the US dollars, all the people they approach will be on their side. If they use a show of force, they think people would kneel before them. So thinking, they make blunders. That's why they are failing around the world."

When he was in Rome, he got the feeling that the Myanmar people were given high regard by the diplomats in Italy just because of Myanmar's foreign policy – i.e., independent and active foreign policy. In fact, Myanmar was keeping good relations with all nations in those days. In London, the writer posed for a painting. The artist was an English and the model was a Myanmar. While posing for the portrait, a thought struck his mind that both the artist and the model would not like a war between the two countries. But there had been three Anglo-Burmese wars in history. If the readers read his articles between the lines, they will see that the writer was highly critical of the United States of America.



Book Title	-	Cornell Tekkatho Ahyauk Thwar Lo
Writer	-	Theikpa Kyaw Swa Dr Myo Thant Tin
Publishing House	-	Khattiya
Publication Date	-	July 2023 (1st Edition)
Price	-	K6,000

Cornell Tekkatho Ahyauk Thwar Lo

THIS book was written by Dr Myo Thant Tin, who got a Bachelor's Degree in Engineering, majoring in Chemical Engineering in the Academic Year 1965-1966. He then attained a Doctorate Degree in Chemical Engineering from Loughborough University in England in 1971. Additionally, he did one year of research on Enzyme Technology at Cornell University in the US in 1988. Concerning the medals conferred by the State, Dr Myo Thant Tin received the Medal for Outstanding Performance in Industrial Economy (Third Grade) in 1983, the Sarpay Beikman Manuscript Award Second Prize in the Genre of Science and Applied Science with the book titled 'Sethmu Theenan Pilaw Penan,' in 1981, the National Literary Award in 1984 with the book titled 'Konbaung Khit Myanma Theikpan Pyinnyar Shin Myar', another National Literary Award in 1987 with the book titled 'Shay Khit Myanma Theikpan Kyan Myar', the Pakokku U Ohn Pe's Life Time Literary Award in 2022 and the Life Time National Literary Award in 2021.

The book under review is a collection of articles first published by the Kahlya Magazine. The articles were written based on his experience gained from conducting research on Enzyme Technology at the University of Cornell in the United States of America. Now, this book was published by Khattiya Sarpay. The foreword for this book by Dr Myo Thant Tin, the National Literary Award for Lifetime Achievement Winner, was written by Sayagyi Thura Zaw, another National Literary Award for Lifetime Achievement Winner for 2020. Sayagyi Thura Zaw is a great poet.

This book includes 18 articles, which deal with science and technology mostly. However, some of them are also travellogues, which were written entertainingly. Reading this book will make a different impression of Dr Myo Thant Tin, who is noted for his writings on science and technology. He is, in truth, a good writer of literature. He can write both facts and fiction. His literature skills can be seen in the article titled Ahshay Zon Nya, The Longest Night. He was able to depict his worries over his wife Daw Mya Yee, who was deeply concerned over the health of her ailing mother amidst her own poor health. At such a time of disaster, he should not have left her behind. He wrote that he could not understand why he had decided to go abroad, leaving his better half at a very difficult time, that he should be beside her, consoling her, uttering words of encouragement and that he should not have accepted the scholarship bid at all. This book is worth reading because it is not only knowledge-giving but also entertaining. The readers will at least know something about the difficult life of international students in addition to gaining knowledge about Cornell University as well as the work of research. Last but not least, the readers can be proud of the success achieved by a Myanmar scholar and researcher.

Entertainment

Celebrity Brief

U Khin Maung Htwe (Htwe Oo-Myanmar)

HTWE OO Myanmar Puppet Theatre has been established nearly for 17 years. As the public interest is decreasing, there are certain hardships in this industry. "I love the marionette and I make my living with that. Today, it does not make any guarantee for life and so no one wants to do it. Although the foreigners like the puppets, Myanmar people do not like it," said U Khin Maung Htwe, founder and manager of the theatre.

Yan Aung

ACTOR YAN AUNG, who faced criticism for his eyelid surgery, says Anoni Mus becomes successful for his good fortune and luck. He should know the procedures step by step when he arrives at a certain level. If he didn't know the steps, he could not maintain his success. He should think about the ways to control his success, make good relations with whom and how to keep doing his work. Yan Aung said the above during an interview for Anoni Mus.

Htet Htet Htun

ACTRESS HTET HTET HTUN who was featured in the "Marriage" movie streamed a Giveaway Live on her Facebook page for answer and question session with her audience. Those who give the right answer can get a promo code for a one-week unlimited video assessment to watch the new series "Laung" that will be broadcast on Mahar Application on 27 August.

She acted in the role of "Nyein" in the "Laung" series and asked a question, "Is there someone who encounters a mother-in-law like Nyein's mother-in-law". The fans also want to know whether Nyein's character in the "Laung" will be more successful than the "Dr Khin Thida" character in the "Marriage" movie.

Daw Khin Lay Swe

ACTRESS DAW KHIN LAY SWE celebrated her 92-year-old birthday on 17 August. She offered alms and cash at the monastery.

Her granddaughter, Smile made a birthday wish for the veteran actress on her Facebook page.

Sai Sai Kham Leng

THE "Padauk Ka Tae Gita" film was screened again at JCGV, Mega Ace and other cinemas between 4 and 10 August. Sai Sai Kham Leng who won the Academy Award with the "Padauk Ka Tae Gita" film also met with his fans at San Yeik Nyein Gamone Pwint cinema on 2 August.

Aung Htet

SINGER AUNG HTET'S birthday was on 17 August. The 33-year-old singer also expressed thanks to those who made birthday wishes to him on his Facebook. — Htun Htun/KTZH

32 contestants vying for Miss Universe Myanmar 2023 Crown

MISS UNIVERSE MYANMAR 2023 will take place at Novotel Yangon Max Hotel in Sangyoung, Yangon on 14 September, featuring a total of 32 contestants from 32 cities across the country, said Ma Soe Yu Wai, national director of the Miss Universe Myanmar 2023.

There will be a Swimsuit Presentation at this year's beauty pageant on 2 September and the National Costume Competition will be held on 5 September.

"We are planning to include performance in the 10th competition to have fun audience participation. We are endeavouring to finish the show with success and glory. We assign city directors in each township to make a shortlist for the final competition. Earlier, contestants from 36 townships were about to join the Miss Universe Myanmar 2023. At present, those from 32 townships will compete for the crown. Some of them have already won the hearts of many fans from previous competitions. So, the competition is heating up for sure. We will provide training and coaching to the beauties for 10 days, along with photo shooting," Ma Soe Yu Wai elaborated.

Miss Universe Myanmar 2023 delegates are Khay Mar representing Bhamo, Ei Linn from southern Yangon, Phyu Sin Thant from northern Yangon, Bo Ma from eastern Yangon, Ei Kha Kha Mon from Toungoo, Hsu Myat Thu from Taunggyi, Nang Nandar Linn from Tachilek, Saw Myat Ei Khine from Sittway, Kyi Phyu Khin from Pyinmana, Thin Sandar Pyae Thiha Aung from PyinOoLwin, May Thin Zar from Pyay, No No May from Pathein, Sasha Viola from Nay Pyi Taw, Rose Seng Htoi from Myitkyina, Seng Pan Htoi from Muse, Yu Wady Aung from Monywa, Saung Hay Hman from Mogok, Su Myat Noe from Meiktila, Dee from Mawlamyine, Wutt Hmone Han from Mandalay, Rosa from Lashio, Ei Shwe Eain from Kyaukse, Mai Zin Latt from Kutkai, Amara Bo from Kengtung, Lily from Kawkareik, Pyae Kaung Su Thant from Phakant, Amelia from Hpa-an, Yoon May Aung from Haka, Khun Sett Cho from Falam, Wint Shwe Sin from Bago, Zin Ei Nwe from Aungban and Pearl Pwint Phyu from Amarapura respectively.

The Swimsuit Presentation and National Costume Competition will go live on Miss Universe Myanmar's Facebook page, Miss Universe Myanmar's official YouTube channel and Channel 9 Myanmar's page. The Miss Universe Myanmar Final will be broadcast live via SkyNet Teen Channel, Channel 9, Miss Universe Myanmar's Facebook page and YouTube. — ASH/EM

ROLLING UPDATES
WORLD

In preparation for upcoming events like Independence Day and the G20 summit, the National Security Guard (NSG) conducted aerial insertion drills across the national capital, while Delhi Police conducted an anti-terror mock drill in New Delhi. **PHOTO: ANI/FILE**

Biden's agenda for G20 summit differs from India's, analyst says

INDIA has said that addressing the concerns of the Global South, including food and fertilizer shortages, is one of the primary objectives during its G20 presidency.

The agenda of US President Joe Biden and the Western allies for the G20 Summit differs from India, which could make it challenging to arrive at a consensus on the outcome document at the G20 Summit scheduled to take place in New Delhi on 9-10 September, an Indian expert has told Sputnik.

"It is quite well-known that India's position on the Ukraine issue has been different from the Western stance. India has continued to maintain strong ties with Russia and continuously insisted on the need to resolve the issue through dialogue and diplomacy", stated Niranjan Marjani, a foreign affairs analyst and researcher.

He stressed that India's stance during its G20 presidency has been to voice support for causes of the developing world, be it multilateral governance reforms, addressing problems of debt distress, and the ongoing food shortages across the world. Marjani recalled that none of the G20 meetings held under the Indian presidency so far have come out with a mutually agreed upon outcome document due to the West's insistence on including the "Bali geopolitical paragraphs". Both Russia and China have objected to these references.

"The G20 came into being to forge economic coordination among the top global economies in the wake of the Global Financial Crisis (GFC). It is not a platform to discuss geopolitical differences at the expense of economic issues affected the Global South in particular," Marjani highlighted.

The G20 comprises the world's top 20 economies, including the G7 club of rich democracies, as well as Russia and China. — SPUTNIK

Drought-hit Panama Canal to restrict access for one year

THE drought-hit Panama Canal will maintain restrictions on the passage of ships for one year, a measure that has already led to a marine traffic jam as boats line up to enter the waterway linking two oceans.

The canal is facing a shortage of rainwater needed to transfer ships through locks that function like water elevators, an engineering marvel that moves six percent of the world's maritime commerce up and over the isthmus between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

The canal's sub-administrator Ilya Espino, told AFP that unless heavy rains fall in the next three months, "we are looking at a period of one year" of restricted access.

That period will give clients "a year to plan" how to adapt, she said late Thursday.

Each ship moving through the canal requires 200 million liters of freshwater to move it through the locks, provided by two artificial lakes fed by rainfall in a surrounding watershed. The lakes also supply drinking water to half the country of about 4.2 million people.

However, Panama is facing a biting drought, made worse by the El Nino warming phenomenon, which has forced canal administrators to restrict the waterway to ships with a maximum draft (water depth) of 13.11 metres (43 feet).

In 2022, an average of 40 ships crossed through the canal a day, a number which has now dropped to 32 to save water. — AFP

This week Panama President Laurentino Cortizo was forced to deny an assertion by his Colombian counterpart Gustavo Petro that the canal was closed due to drought. **PHOTO: AFP**

British Museum director resigns after spate of thefts

BRITISH Museum director Hartwig Fischer resigned on Friday, admitting the museum did not act "as it should have" on warnings that items had gone missing.

The museum in central London is best known for housing collections that include the Rosetta Stone and the Parthenon Marbles.

It said last week it had dismissed a staff member and alerted the police after artefacts from its collection were found to be "missing, stolen or damaged". — AFP

The Parthenon Marbles, also known as the Elgin Marbles, are on display at the British Museum in London. **PHOTO: YASUYOSHI CHIBA/FILE**

QUICK NEWS HIGHLIGHT

UK probes sale of suicide substances from Canadian website

BRITAIN'S National Crime Agency (NCA) said Friday it had launched an investigation into the deaths of 88 people in the country who bought substances to assist with suicide from Canadian websites.

"The NCA has taken the decision to conduct an investigation into potential criminal offences committed in the UK. This operation is under way," said NCA deputy director Craig Turner.

The law enforcement agency, sometimes called the UK's FBI, added that "at this early stage there are no confirmed links between the items purchased from the websites and cause of death in any of these cases".

The announcement came after Canadian Kenneth Law, 57, was arrested in Ontario in early May and charged with two counts of counselling and aiding suicide. He is accused of selling a lethal substance to people across the world, with Canadian police alleging that he sent at least 1,200 packages to over 40 countries. — AFP

ECONOMY
WORLD

Vibrant BRICS to play bigger role in global development, governance

The recently concluded 15th BRICS Summit in South Africa underscores the significance and appeal of the BRICS mechanism in fostering development, upholding multilateralism, and enhancing global governance.

This aerial photo taken on 4 May 2023 shows a cargo ship carrying corn imported from South Africa at a port in Guangdong province, China. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

THE 15th BRICS Summit that concluded in South Africa on Thursday demonstrates the vibrancy and appeal of the BRICS mechanism and the bigger role it will play in promoting development, safeguarding multilateralism and improving global governance.

In a historic expansion, six countries — namely Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — were invited to become new BRICS members, with their membership starting on 1 January, 2024. This will inject fresh vitality into the BRICS cooperation mechanism, and further strengthen the forces for world peace and development.

Against the backdrop of the world's sluggish economy and other grave challenges, the first in-person BRICS summit since the COVID-19 pandemic enhanced the solidarity and cooperation of the BRICS countries and the Global South.

BRICS has been an important positive and stable force in shaping the international landscape and building a just and equitable world order.

BRICS, which currently comprises Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, accounts for 42 per cent of the world's population and a quarter of global GDP.

The Shanghai-based New Development Bank and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement exemplify fruitful and pragmatic cooperation under the mechanism.

Upholding the spirit of openness, inclusiveness and win-win cooperation, the BRICS mechanism represents an important cooperation platform for emerging markets and developing countries (EMDCs).

The "BRICS Plus" cooperation approach, proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Xiamen Summit in 2017, has set a prime example of South-South cooperation and sought strength through unity among the EMDCs.

The collective rise of EMDCs represented by the BRICS is fundamentally changing the global landscape. EMDCs have contributed as high as 80 per cent of global growth in the past 20 years, and their share in the global GDP has increased from 24 per cent 40 years ago to more than 40 per cent.

The world has entered a new period of turbulence and transformation, undergoing major shifts, division and regrouping. Impacted by the unprecedented pandemic and new uncertainties, developing countries are facing even more formidable challenges in realizing the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

In addition, certain countries, entrenched in a Cold War mentality, have been sparing no effort to create division and confrontation in recent years to maintain its hegemony. — Xinhua

UK energy bills to fall again

THE price cap on energy bills for most British households is to fall again, regulator Ofgem announced on Friday, offering mild relief amid the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

Bills will decline from October thanks to a further fall in wholesale energy prices, which had soared in the wake of the post-Covid recovery and the war in Ukraine. The cap will fall to £1,923 ($2,419, 2,240 euros) per year from £2,074 for an average household consuming electricity and gas, Ofgem said.

Pedestrians shelter from the rain beneath umbrellas while walking past the London landmark, the London Eye, from Embankment by the River Thames, in central London, on 18 August 2023 on a gloomy summer's day. **PHOTO: HENRY NICHOLLS / AFP**

At the height of last winter, it had reached £4,279.

"The change will bring the average dual-fuel energy bill below £2,000 a year for the first time since April 2022, saving households an average of £151 on the previous quarter," Ofgem said in a statement. Energy Minister Grant Shapps said it was "encouraging" that energy bills were coming down, calling it "another milestone as we deliver on our promise to halve inflation".

Inflation in the UK eased sharply in July to 6.8 per cent year-on-year from 7.9 per cent in June, mainly thanks to lower energy prices, but it remains the highest in the G7. — AFP

Apple unexpectedly supports Right to Repair Act

APPLE on Thursday confirmed it is endorsing passage of a California law requiring major gadget makers to enable people to fix their devices without taking them back to companies.

A Right to Repair Act that mandates manufacturers provide customers and outside repair shops with tools, parts, and information needed to fix broken electronics is making its way through the state legislature.

"Apple supports California's Right to Repair Act so all Californians have even greater access to repairs while also protecting their safety, security, and privacy," the iPhone maker said in response to an AFP inquiry. Advocacy organization Public Interest Research Group (PIRG) called Apple's move "an unexpected about-face," describing the tech giant as having been a high-profile opponent of such laws. A Right-to-Repair movement, of which PIRG is a part, has led to laws in a handful of other US states, the advocacy organization noted.

"It's not just about providing parts and tools for repairs; it's about empowering consumers to make environmentally responsible choices," said Liz Chamberlain of repair tips website iFixit.

"Right to Repair has been building momentum in Big Tech's backyard, it's about time Apple opens the front door." — AFP

Microsoft's Bing, LinkedIn vows more ads transparency

MICROSOFT will provide more information on targeted adverts and protect users against any new risks from artificial intelligence, the company vowed Friday, as stringent EU rules on tech platforms enter into force.

Internet giants must now enforce the milestone EU's Digital Services Act (DSA), which demands they protect users online from harmful content and be more transparent about their algorithms.

The European Union has named 19 platforms, the majority of whom are based in the United States, including Microsoft's Bing and LinkedIn as well as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok.

The rules apply from Friday to these "very large" social media networks and websites.

One of the most significant demands under the DSA is the requirement to give users the option to have a non-personalised feed that is not based on profiling.

Microsoft-owned LinkedIn on Friday said in a blog post they had implemented this change for the desktop and mobile version of the network. — AFP

A sign outside a building with offices belonging to Microsoft is seen in Chevy Chase, Maryland, 18 January 2023 **PHOTO: SAUL LOEB/AFP**

Beijing seafood dealers shocked by total Japan import ban

Photo taken in Beijing on 25 August 2023, shows Chinese newspaper reports on Japan beginning its discharge of treated radioactive water from the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant into the sea. **PHOTO: KYODO**

FISH dealers at a Beijing market appear shocked after China banned all seafood imports from Japan in response to its release of treated radioactive water from the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant into the Pacific Ocean.

With Chinese state media reports and social media posts filled with information emphasizing negative effects of the Fukushima water release on the marine environment and human body, the local food industry also expressed wariness about the outlook for businesses related to "washoku" traditional Japanese cuisine.

A fish dealer at the Beijing market said Friday the company had mainly procured cultured tuna from southwestern Japan's Nagasaki Prefecture due partly to the neighbouring country's advanced farming technology and stable supply, but now has to explore different sources such as Australia, New Zealand and Spain.

However, the taste and texture of tuna from other countries are "totally different" from those of Japanese imports and it is "impossible to replace them", the dealer said. — Kyodo

Hawaii county sues power company over deadly wildfires

MAUI County is suing Hawaii's electricity company over the deadly fire that leveled Lahaina, alleging the destruction could have been avoided if power lines had been shut off.

The lawsuit is the latest step in a growing critical focus on the power provider in the wake of the blaze, which killed at least 115 people, with videos apparently showing downed cables setting light to vegetation in the hours before tragedy struck. The lawsuit says there was plenty of warning of strong winds from a nearby hurricane, but Hawaiian Electric and its subsidiaries negligently kept power lines live.

"These power lines foreseeably ignited the fast-moving, deadly, and destructive Lahaina Fire, which completely destroyed residences, businesses, churches, schools, and historic cultural sites," the lawsuit, filed Thursday, says.

"Defendants knew that the high winds the (National Weather Service) predicted would topple power poles, knock down power lines, and ignite vegetation.

"Defendants also knew that if their overhead electrical equipment ignited a fire, it would spread at a critically rapid rate." — Xinhua

The photo taken with a mobile phone on 14 August 2023 shows a vehicle destroyed in a wildfire in Lahaina town, Maui Island, Hawaii, the United States. **PHOTO: YANG PINGJUN /XINHUA**

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V GSS YANGON VOY.NO. (175N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V GSS YANGON VOY.NO. (175N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **27-8-2023** 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 NEW GOLDEN SEA SHIPPING PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V TORRES STRAIT VOY.NO. (331W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V TORRES STRAIT VOY.NO. (331W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **27-8-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD

WORLD

Pope Francis calls disinformation 'first sin' of journalism

Pope Francis criticizes the spread of "disinformation" and fake news as a significant issue in journalism, deeming it the principal offence.

Pope Francis meets with Hungary President Katalin Novák at the Vatican on 25 August 2023. **PHOTO : VATICAN MEDIA/AFP**

POPE Francis on Saturday denounced "disinformation" and fake news spread in an effort to influence public opinion as journalism's principal offence.

"Disinformation is the first of the sins, the mistakes — let's say — of journalism," Francis told Italian journalists at a Vatican gathering to bestow a journalism prize.

Widely considered a savvy communicator himself, the pontiff returned to the term "sins" to list what he called the four misdeeds of the media, according to the Vatican's translated statement of his comments.

"Disinformation, when journalism does not inform or informs badly; slander (sometimes this is used); defamation, which is different from slander but destroys; and the fourth is... the love of scandal."

"I am concerned, for example, about the manipulations of those who interestingly propagate fake news to steer public opinion," he said, urging a "reawakening of responsibility" in particular as Europe grapples with the ongoing war in Ukraine.

"My hope is that space will be given to the voices of peace, to those who are committed to putting an end to this as to so many other conflicts," he said.

Francis, 86, has interacted extensively with the media since becoming head of the world's 1.3 billion Catholics in 2013, appearing at ease and expansive in interviews — a far cry from his predecessor Benedict XVI. — AFP

PM Modi says his Athens visit will add momentum to India-Greece friendship

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Friday met his Greek counterpart Kyriakos Mitsotakis and held a bilateral meeting during his long-day visit to the country. **PHOTO: ANI**

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said his Greece visit will add momentum to India-Greece friendship, particularly people-to-people linkages.

"This Greece visit is a very special one. It will add great momentum to India-Greece friendship, particularly people-to-people linkages. I also had a very memorable interaction with the dynamic Indian community here. Gratitude to PM @PrimeministerGR @kmitsotakis, the Government and people of Greece," PM Modi wrote on 'X' formerly Twitter on Friday.

PM Modi on Friday left for India from Greece's Athens after wrapping up his visit to the country.

PM Modi had started his four-day formal tour on August 21 for South Africa and Greece. In South Africa, PM Modi attended the 15th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg on 22-24 August at the invitation of the country's president Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa.

During the Greece Visit, PM held meetings with Greek PM Kyriakos Mitsotakis and President Katerina N Sakellaropoulou.

In the meeting with the Greek President, the PM added another feather to his cap, as he was conferred with the Grand Cross of the Order of Honour in Athens, Greece.

President of Greece Katerina N Sakellaropoulou feted PM Modi with the Grand Cross after the latter called on the former during his day-long official visit to Greece. — ANI

Osaka frets over World Expo failure amid slow pavilion construction

CONCERNS are growing among the organizers of the 2025 World Exposition in Osaka that the event may flop due to the slower-than-anticipated construction of pavilions by overseas participants. The event, to be held from 13 April to 13 October in 2025 on the man-made Yumeshima island in Osaka Bay, western Japan, is set to showcase technological and cultural exhibitions from around 150 countries and is expected to attract 28.2 million visitors. Its economic impact is estimated to reach about two trillion yen ($14 billion).

But with less than two years to go, only South Korea and the Czech Republic have so far drawn up specific plans for their pavilions, a core attraction of the event, stoking fear among the organizers that many of the exhibitions will not complete before the start of the event.

The construction of the South Korean pavilion, which will be the earliest among the overseas participants, is expected to finish around November 2024, four months later than initially expected. The delays come as a shortage of construction workers in Japan intensifies and material costs keep rising. — Kyodo

Osaka Gov Hirofumi Yoshimura attends a ceremony marking the first minting of a commemorative 1,000 yen silver coin for the 2025 World Exposition at the Japan Mint in Osaka on 7 August 2023. Myaku-Myaku, the mascot for the expo can be seen behind him. **PHOTO: KYODO**

SPORTS

Jackson retains women's 200m world title with stunning run

SHERICKA Jackson produced the second fastest women's 200-metre time in history to destroy a top-class field and retain her world title in Budapest on Friday.

The 29-year-old Jamaican's victory was never in doubt as she ran a superb bend to enter the straight with a clear lead and finished in a stunning 21.41-second.

USA's Olympic bronze medallist Gabby Thomas took silver in 21.81 second while her compatriot Sha'Carri Richardson ran a personal best of 21.92 second to add a bronze medal to the gold she impressively won in the 100-metre.

It was sweet revenge for Jackson after she had to settle for silver behind Richardson in the 100-metre.

Her time was just seven hundredths of a second slower than the world record set by the late Florence Griffith-Joyner in 1988, suggesting she could break the mark one day. — AFP

Shericka Jackson retained her world 200m title. **PHOTO: AFP**

Yangon United women's footballers are seen cheering up after the match against SPEI FC played in Yangon on 26 August 2023. **PHOTO: YUFC**

Yangon United women's team closes 2023 season with series of win

Yangon United women's team beat Sports & Physical Education Institute FC 3-1 in the final match of the 2023 Myanmar Women's League yesterday and closed the season with three points.

Yangon bagged the full point thanks to the goals of Yoon Wati Hlaing, Pann Ei Nwe and Zin Moe Pyae.

With a 4-2-3-1 set formation, Yangon frequently attacked opponents. Yangon United team's attacks hit the goal bar thrice in the early minutes. But Yoon Wati Hlaing scored the leading goal at 23 minutes of the game.

However, Sanda Lin from the SPEI team scored the equalizer at the 34-minute mark.

In the second half, team Yangon penetrated the rivals' defence line with a quick pass. Yangon found the second goal at 71 minutes which was netted by Pann Ei Nwe at 71 minutes and the third goal at 83 minutes by Zin Moe Pyae.

With the 3-1 victory, Yangon secured their sweet victory with full points. After the 2023 season of the women's league, Yangon is standing fourth with three wins, one draw and six losses. — KZL

Bellingham scores again as Madrid edge Celta Vigo

JUDE Bellingham continued his superb start to life in La Liga with a late header to earn Real Madrid a 1-0 win at Celta Vigo on Friday.

The England international netted his fourth goal in three matches in the Spanish top flight to end Celta Vigo's stubborn resistance and disappoint the hosts in their centenary week.

Rodrygo had missed a penalty for Real Madrid, while Vinicius Junior went off in the first half after appearing to suffer a thigh problem, although early Spanish reports suggest it will not keep him out for too long. Kepa Arrizabalaga made his debut in goal for Real Madrid on loan from Chelsea as a replacement for the injured Thibaut Courtois, while Carlo Ancelotti continued with Bellingham in the No 10 position, where he has proven lethal.

"Bellingham (was) good, he's still scoring and adding to the team," said Ancelotti.

"(Vinicius) wanted to continue, so I don't think it was that serious, he tried, then it hurt a bit."

England international Bellingham continued his fine goalscoring form against Celta, eventually finding a gap in their defensive armour as former Madrid manager Rafa Benitez lined up with a sturdy five-man defensive line.

Celta thought they had gone ahead early on but Jorgen Strand Larsen's goal was ruled out for a soft foul by the forward on Arrizabalaga.

Vinicius departed for Spanish international Joselu after 17 minutes with his thigh bandanged, a worry for Madrid given their squad is relatively light this season in attack, with Ballon d'Or holder Karim Benzema and other forwards departing. — AFP

Real Madrid's English midfielder Jude Bellingham (C) celebrates scoring the goal that earned his team victory in Vigo. **PHOTO: AFP**

Berlin's BRLO brewery produces around 160 hectolitres of alcohol-free beer every month. Co-founder of Berlin's BRLO brewery Michael Lembke checks a sample of the company's non-alcoholic 'Naked' beer. **PHOTO: AFP**

Germany's booze-free beer boom

Health-conscious consumers are replacing traditional beer with high-quality non-alcoholic options, exemplified by the popularity of brews containing less than 0.5 per cent alcohol in Germany's renowned beer gardens.

All the fun of the Oktoberfest, without the hangover: Germans are swapping traditional beer for non-alcoholic brews, driven by health concerns and the increasing quality of booze-free options.Beers containing less than 0.5 per cent alcohol — the legal limit to be classed as non-alcoholic — are no longer an uncommon sight in the country's famous beer gardens. "I like the taste of beer, but I don't find it reasonable to always drink it with alcohol," Kathrin Achatz, 40, told AFP at the BRLO beer garden in Berlin. According to federal statistics office Destatis, the volume of non-alcoholic beer produced in Germany has almost doubled over the past 10 years, reaching 670 million litres in 2022. In a 2022 survey by the Allensbach Institute, non-alcoholic beer represented around seven per cent of total beer purchases. — AFP

Tattoo artists make their mark at Hong Kong fair

Sousyu Hayashi peers at the intricate pattern of sakura blossoms before him, born from 30 hours of deft prodding by his traditional Japanese tattoo needle — and he is not even halfway done.

Surrounded by admiring onlookers, the 47-year-old is among the 130 tattoo artists who have set up stalls at a Hong Kong convention running until Sunday, where attendees can pick out designs from an eclectic lineup and get inked on the spot.

Hayashi is a master of tebori, Japanese for "handcrafted", where the skin is pierced by a steel-tipped bamboo rod with no mechanical help. Only a handful of practitioners are left, he told AFP.

"I'm never satisfied," he said. "I've done this for 24 years, and at home, I'm always practising."

Heavyweights like Hayashi brought a much-needed jolt to Hong Kong's tattoo community, which has grown rapidly over the years, according to Gabe Shum, organizer of the Hong Kong China International Tattoo Exhibition. Tattoos in the Chinese city used to be associated with organized crime, but Shum, 60, said over time he has witnessed a "growing acceptance" among the public.

The Malaysian-born tattoo artist started decorating skin at 19 and went on to enjoy a storied career that has included inking sports legends David Beckham and LeBron James.

"When I returned to Hong Kong to start my business, there were only four tattoo parlours," Shum told AFP. "Today, there are 300 to 400 tattoo artists." The convention, which began a decade ago, also draws fans from mainland China, where tattoos have spiked in popularity even though the ruling communist party has discouraged them.

'Bumpy path'

Tattoo artists from Hong Kong make up around one-third of this year's lineup, which organizer Shum said shows the "rapid development" of the industry locally.

But they were dealt a heavy blow during the pandemic, as the government forced beauty salons — a category that includes tattoo parlours — to close for months at a time to reduce virus transmission.

Mini Lau began her tattoo business in 2018, bringing techniques she learned in South Korea back to her home city, where her designs featuring fine lines and pastel colours have become a hit with younger women.

She recalled how, in school, her friends would ask her to draw on their arms for fun.—AFP

A woman shows her tattoos at the 7th Hong Kong China International Tattoo Convention in Hong Kong. **PHOTO: AFP**

S'pore company launches luxury cat cruises

Cat owners in Singapore can now take their pets on luxury sunset cruises, perfect for pampered kitties who enjoy the finer things in life.

Onboard the tall ship Royal Albatross, the animals can lounge in custom-built "cat-bana" cages as their owners enjoy a four- or seven-course dinner beside them on deck. The ship's operator introduced the cat-friendly sailings this month after dog cruises launched in 2021 proved popular.

For two-and-a-half hours, up to 15 feline and 130 human passengers sail along the resort island of Sentosa, enjoying views of Singapore's skyline and a short fireworks display.

"I think they're doing very well... they're enjoying the view and I guess the perceived freedom that they get," said Marissa Ng, a 28-year-old human resources professional whose five-year-old ragdolls Coco and Bobo sat looking out at the sea from a cage beside her table.

The ship has hosted over 2,000 dogs since 2021, and the cat cruises may soon catch up, with more than 200 tickets for human passengers — priced at Sg$225 ($166) each — having already been sold. The cat and dog cruises have different sailing days. — AFP

The ship's operator introduced the cat-friendly sailings this month after dog cruises launched in 2021 proved popular. **PHOTO: AFP**