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

The Global NEW LIGHT of MYANMAR

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Government to announce increased cash assistance for State service personnel

The government emphasizes the welfare of State service personnel from the production force, raising cash assistance, welfare measures and allowances.

GOVERNMENT considers releasing an announcement soon to raise more cash assistance for State service personnel, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

At the meeting 5/2023 of the Union government held at the SAC Chairman's Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, the Senior General highlighted the government has been placing an emphasis on the welfare of State service personnel from the production force, raising cash assistance, and allowances for them while striving for a decline in commodity prices on one hand, raising the workability of the State.

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Adventurous travellers conquer the snow-capped mountain ranges in Kachin State.

50 travel enthusiasts embark on conquering snowy peaks of Kachin State

The mountaineering season is drawing near in Kachin State and about 50 enlisted to scale the snow-capped mountains of Mount Phonkanrazi and Khakaborazi, according to U Naing Oo, Director of Kachin State Directorate of Hotels and Tourism.

The mountaineering season is between early November and May and about 50 local climbers have made at the travel agencies for this year.

"The scaling of snow-capped mountains in Kachin State started between September and December. The travellers climb the Mount Phonkanrazi and Khakaborazi of Kachin State. These are such adventure trips and so the people have to contact the local travel companies like Trekking in Myanmar and Northern Myanmar Trekking and Rafting. Although there were 40 on the booking list in August, there are now 50 for scaling the show-capped mountains in September," said U Naing Oo.

Mount Phonkanrazi is not very crowded the whole year round except for travellers and locals who search for herbs. Moreover, there is no wild animal on the mountain pathway and it is the best situation for the climbers.

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NATIONAL

Media cooperation under MLC

THE Shared River, Shared Future and the Role of Journalists under the Mekong-Lancang media development programme for MLC (Mekong-Lancang Cooperation) journalists was held in Cambodia yesterday.

The Cambodian government initiated the programme: Role of Journalists on the Shared River and Shared Future in 2022 with the help of the Chinese government as the role of journalists plays a key role in ensuring the regional peace, prosperity and sustainable development of MLC.

During the event, Cambodian Information Minister Mr Neth Pheaktra said, "Media is a key and explores the social, economy, culture and accurate regional situation. All the media outlets in addition to the conservative media should cover the news as per the media ethic as the online media becomes widespread. The current programme will support the Mekong-Lancang media development and quality of journalism."

Similarly, Chinese Ambassador to Cambodia Mr Wu Chuanbing and Director-General of INB Mr Phos Sovann and the secretary-general of the Ministry of Information of Cambodia made remarks respectively.

Then, adviser to the Ministry of Information Prof Moeun Chhean and a representative of Sihanouk Province discussed different topics and international journalists, Cambodian media outlets and MLC correspondents raised questions.

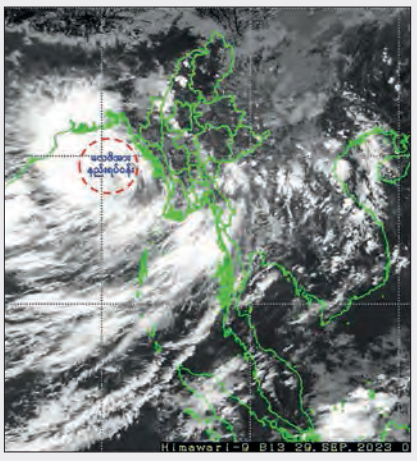
The journalists also visited industrial zones and observed the tire production procedures of General Tyres Technology company.

Thailand put forward an initiative to narrow the development gap and ensure sustainable development of the Mekong sub-regions at the 17th ASEAN-China Summit held in Nay Pyi Taw in November 2014. Following that announcement, China proposed an initiative for Mekong-Lancang Cooperation including Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam.

The MLC focuses on three cooperation pillars, namely public policy and security, economic and sustainable development, and social, cultural and people-to-people exchanges. — Khin Yadana/KTZH

Low Pressure Area Condition

Issued at (19:00) hours MST on 29-9-2023



1. According to the observations at (17:30) hrs MST today, the low pressure area over Northeast Bay and adjoining Eastcentral Bay of Bengal now lies over Northeast Bay and adjoining Northwest Bay of Bengal. It is likely to move Northwestwards and may further intensify into a Well Marked Low Pressure Area during next 48 hours there after it may reach to North Odisha and adjoining West Bengal Coasts, India.

2. **General caution**

Squalls with rough seas are likely at times off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach 35-40 mph. Wave height will be about 8-11 feet off and along Myanmar Coasts from commencing tonight to (3.10.2023).

3. Rain or thundershowers will be fairly widespread to widespread in the coastal areas with regionally and isolated heavy falls in Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi Regions and Rakhine, Kayin and Mon States from commencing tonight to 3.10.2023.

Advisory

Under the influence of Low Pressure Area, people should be aware of strong wind, heavy rain, flash flood and landslide in the hilly areas and near small rivers and also domestic flight, trawlers, vessels and ships off and along Myanmar Coasts. — DMH

COVID-19 report, 29 September 2023

NEW TESTS	NEW CASES	CASUALTIES
5,223	2	0

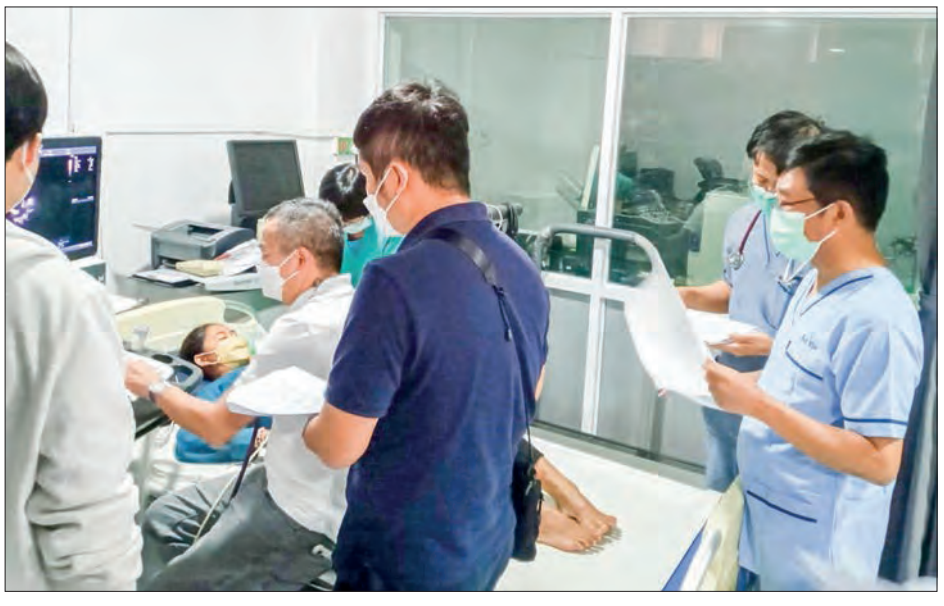
Myanmar, Vietnamese cardiologists perform surgeries for congenital heart disease patients in Mandalay

MYANMAR and Vietnamese specialists conducted operations for patients with congenital heart disease using a device closure that is gently inserted in the groin to seal the hole without open-chest surgery at the Mandalay General Hospital on 23-24 September.

Prof Dr Kyaw Soe Win (Cardiologist) and Cardiologist Dr Nguyen Lan Hieu of Hanoi Medical University led the operations.

The Myanmar and Vietnamese teams organized the workshop on Congenital Heart Disease Device Closure workshop and discussed the Echocardiogram for the treatments of Atrial Septal Defect (ASD), Ventricular Septal Defect (VSD) and Pulmonary Stenosis.

They successfully performed operations for 34 patients with congenital heart disease — two ASD patients, four VSD patients with Pulmonary Stenosis and seven PDA patients using device closure. — MNA/KTZH



Myanmar and Vietnamese specialists perform surgeries for patients with congenital heart disease using a device closure at Mandalay General Hospital on 23-24 September.

NATIONAL

State Administration Council Chair Premier Senior General Min Aung Hlaing addresses the Union government meeting 5/2023 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Government to announce increased cash assistance for State service personnel

FROM PAGE-1

With regard to citizens working abroad, the Senior General disclosed that a plan is underway to give more incentives to Myanmar citizens working abroad for remittance of their incomes contributing to currency circulation of the State and boosting the State economy on the other hand.

He continued to say that the finance of the State must be efficiently spent but wasted on unnecessary projects in order to use surplus funds in regional development and public welfare tasks.

He urged all to effectively serve the interests of the people by working as a shred of evidence for their endeavours.

The Senior General pointed out that if ministries hold discussions with service personnel to clarify the policies of the State, the personnel will comprehensively understand the undertakings of the government and improve their workability.

He noted that only when those from the management sector create employment opportunities and encouragement will workers serve their assignments with full strength in order to develop the State economy.

The Senior General stressed the need to fulfil the requirement of private industries for manufacturing products in full swing, adding running of agricultural and livestock tasks required for private factories, MSME industries and production and factories of ministries at full capacity can much benefit the State.

Union ministers submitted reports on their respective sectors.

The meeting was also attended by SAC Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win and Union-level officials together with region and state chief ministers through videoconferencing. — MNA/TTA

Salient points in Speech of Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at Union Government Meeting 5/2023

- The government is considering releasing an announcement soon to raise more cash assistance for State service personnel.
- The government has been placing an emphasis on the welfare of State service personnel, raising cash assistance, and allowances for them while striving for a decline in commodity prices.
- A plan is underway to give more incentives to Myanmar citizens working abroad for remittance of their incomes contributing to currency circulation of the State.
- Only when those from the management sector create employment opportunities and encouragement will workers serve their assignments with full strength in order to develop the State economy.

Union Minister at Union Government Office 2 receives RMAFC President

U KO KO HLAING, Union Minister at the Union Government Office 2, received Russia-Myanmar Association for Friendship and Cooperation President Mr Anatoly Bulochnikov-led delegation in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

They cordially discussed and exchanged views on the enhancement of friendly relations and cooperation between the two countries in the energy production sectors including the oil and gas exploration sector, the gold and mining sector, the transport and communications sectors and the possibility of holding the Myanmar-Russia Economic Forum in Myanmar. — MNA

Russia-Myanmar Association for Friendship and Cooperation President Mr Anatoly Bulochnikov calls on Union Minister U Ko Ko Hlaing yesterday.

NATIONAL

MoH UM attends 2023 World Heart Day ceremony in Nay Pyi Taw

THE 2023 World Heart Day commemoration ceremony took place at Nay Pyi Taw's Wunna Theikdi Gymnasium B yesterday. During the event, Union Minister for Health Dr Thet Khaing Win addressed the audience, highlighting the global impact of heart and cardiovascular diseases, which claim over 20.5 million lives annually. He emphasized that unhealthy lifestyle choices such as poor diet, lack of physical activity, tobacco use, and excessive alcohol consumption contribute to 85 per cent of these deaths, primarily due to sudden cardiac arrest, cerebral ischemia, cerebral haemorrhages, and strokes.

Union Minister Dr Thet Khaing Win speaks on the occasion of the 2023 World Heart Day yesterday.

This year's World Heart Day theme, "Use Heart, Know Heart," aligns with the State Administration Council's social objective of promoting the health and sports sectors to ensure the nation's life expectancy and well-being.

The Ministry of Health is actively implementing the National Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (2023-2027) to reduce the incidence and mortality of non-communicable diseases, including heart and vascular diseases.

Nationwide, 7,476 non-communicable disease screening and treatment clinics, operating from rural health branches levels, provide free screening and treatment every Wednesday. Essential medications and supplies are provided to individuals with basic heart, high blood pressure, and diabetes conditions.

Advanced medical care, using state-of-the-art equipment and technology for heart patients, is available in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon, and Mandalay. Collaborations with Southeast Asian and international organizations are underway, with plans to establish Coronary Care Units in regional/state hospitals.

Following the ceremony, the Union minister visited the World Heart Day commemoration gallery and observed heart health screenings on the second day of the event. — MNA/TS

The group documentary photograph of the workshop concluding event yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

Journalist join workshop on media literacy to address disformation

THE workshop on media literacy to address disinformation focused on journalism objectivity and values in content and methods or tools to identify disinformation, Deputy Minister for Information U Ye Tint stressed.

The deputy minister said during the closing ceremony of the Workshop on Media Literacy to address Disinformation jointly organized by MRTV and Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) at Horizon Lake View Hotel, in Nay Pyi Taw on 28 September.

The two-day workshop emphasized the ways to receive trust in presenting the news by the focal media outlets, and it can apply the knowledge in daily programmes and news presenting field effectively, he added. He also called on the attendees to understand the digital media literacy that is a challenge in the world and to hold further workshops.

During the event, Speaker Dr Sara Chinnasamy presented the certificates to the trainees.

The deputy minister then gave gifts to Dr Sara Chinnasamy and Programme Manager Ms Monica Phang. Permanent Secretary U Myo Myint Maung of the Ministry of Information also presented gifts to Chairman Myinmu Maung Naing Moe of the Myanmar Press Council, General Manager of Forever Group U Kyaw Kyaw, and Assistant Director of the Media Development Department Daw Myat Kyay Mone.

MRTV became a full member of AIBD on 29 July 1997 and is actively participating in seminars, workshops and webinars of AIBD. — MNA/KTZH

YESC informs people about temporary outage of electricity

THE Yangon Electricity Supply Corporation (YESC) issued an announcement yesterday, stating that the 230/66/11 kV, 155 MVA transformer and the 100 MVA transformer will be switched off to remove the disabled 230/66/11 kV, 100 MVA transformer from the switchyard of Ahlon main power station from 00.00 hr to 03.00 hr on 30 September.

During the working period, some wards of Mingala Taungnyunt, Dagon, Latha, Pabedan, Kyauktada, Lanmadaw, Bahan, Kamayut, Kyimyindine and Hline townships will face temporary outage of electricity. However, YESC will emphasize reducing the power outage period and power outage area. — GNLM

MoFA Deputy Minister receives UNHCR Representative to Myanmar

The UNHCR Representative calls on Deputy Minister U Kyaw Myo Htut yesterday.

U Kyaw Myo Htut, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs received Ms Noriko Takagi, UNHCR Representative to Myanmar yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw. They discussed the preparation of a pilot repatriation project for verified displaced persons who are in Bangladesh, the readiness of the Myanmar side to accept those verified persons and ways and means pertaining to existing and further cooperation between the Government of Myanmar and the UNHCR. — MNA

NATIONAL

Tourists thrilled on Star Ferry's Pansodan-Thanlyin route along Yangon River

ACCORDING to Star Ferry Service, a significant number of passengers aboard the Star Ferry's Pansodan-Thanlyin cruise on the Yangon River.

That trip is a Star Ferry route that connects Star City Housing in Thanlyin Township to Pansodan jetty in Kyauktada Township.

At present, Water Bus cruises have been suspended, but there are reports of a connection between the jetty near the Thanlyin Star City Housing and the Yangon Innovation Centre Terminal near the Pansodan port.

For this trip, it takes approximately one hour to travel from Pansodan jetty to Thanlyin Star City. The Star Ferry operates daily from 7 am to 7 pm, and the ticket price for each passenger is set at K3,500 per trip.

It has been reported that people interested in taking photos of the harbour, the port, and sightseeing spots within Star City Housing, while enjoying the Yangon River Thanlyin-Pansodan boat trip, have expressed their intention to do so. — ASH/KZW

Yangon River bustles as Star Ferry carries commuters across its waters.

Devotees gather at Shwemyintzu Pagoda amidst the serenity of Indawgyi Lake.

Shwemyintzu mid-stream pagoda to be illuminated with 1,500 oil lights at Shanni ethnic dance ceremony in Kachin State

According to U Chit Than, a member of the board of trustees of the Shwemyintzu Pagoda in the Indawgyi Lake, the ceremony of offering 1,500 oil lights will be held in a lively atmosphere with traditional Shanni ethnic dance.

The offering of 1,500 oil lights will be held on the lake on the night of the Thadingyut full moon, and Shanni ethnic groups will perform traditional Shanni songs and dances on the sides of the lake.

The Buddha Pujaniya festival at Shwemyintzu mid-stream Pagoda is traditionally celebrated every year, starting from the 8th Waxing of Tabaung and continuing until the full moon. The festival features Shanni ethnic cultural galleries and dance troupes, rowing competitions, and other sports events. Additionally, exhibitions from various departments are often included. — ASH/KZW

Scenic Snapshot: Snowy peaks and idyllic landscapes in Kachin State.

50 travel enthusiasts embark on conquering snowy peaks of Kachin State

FROM PAGE-1

Although it can get to the Ziyadang Village from PutaO which is the nearest place to Phonkan Razi by walking, it now paves a one-way road that can be used in all seasons. Therefore, the trip period will be six nights seven days instead of 10 nights 11 days.

The climbers must be in good health and make preparations. They also need to follow the instructions of local travel guides and residents.

Currently, the tourists are not allowed to climb the snow-capped mountains. Arrangements are being made to ease the restrictions as there are tourists who make bookings.

Kachin State hosts over 120,000 travellers from January to August 2023. — ASH/KTZH

NATIONAL

Sugar, jaggery prices hit three-year high in end-Sept

The photo shows sugar and jaggery from the Yesakyo area being organized for sale in the market.

THE prices of jaggery and sugar tripled on 29 September 2023 compared to those of the corresponding period in 2020.

The wholesale prices hit K3,800 per viss of sugar and K4,800-5,800 per viss of jaggery depending on producing areas, which are the all-time record high in history.

The prices stood at K840 per viss of sugar and K1,700-1,900 per viss of jaggery on 29 September 2020.

The jaggery fetched only K3,000-3,450 per viss on 17 July 2023 and the price jumped by K2,400 per viss two months later.

Jaggery from NyaungU which is whiter in appearance is highly traded in the domestic market. The one from Yesakyo is commonly used in the Dawei area, U Thein Tun, a trader told the Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM).

The jaggery from Yesakyo fetched K1,000 higher than those from NyaungU on 28 September. The jaggery combo is K500 cheaper than the organic sugar, U Lwin Oo, a trader who sends jaggery to delta regions told the GNLM.

Jaggery combo does not give good flavour and taste like organic ones in making traditional snacks. The new jaggery flows into the market in February and March. — TWA/KK

Aung Bar Lay lottery tickets worth over K6 billion sold in September

AUNG Bar Lay lottery tickets worth over K6,000 million were sold out in September 2023 as sales have increased by K800 million over the previous month, according to the Aung Bar Lay Lottery Directorate of the Internal Revenue Department.

The Aung Bar Lay lottery tickets were sold in September earning K6,136.400 million. It is announced that K4295.480 million as 70 per cent of the sales, will be awarded as lottery prizes plus K4,295 million of confiscated awards.

The sale of lottery tickets in August brought proceeds of over K5,300 million. Compared to the previous month's sales, lottery sales have decreased.

The opening of the Aung Bar Lay lottery will be held on 1 October and there will be only a special prize of K500 million, a prize of K200 million and a prize of K100 million and the number of other prizes will be increased. — TWA/MKKS

The picture shows a Boeing 737-400 Freighter aircraft operating cargo flights.

MNA expands cargo flights to Kolkata, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore

MYANMAR National Airlines (MNA) stated that they will develop new cargo flights to Kolkata, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, and Singapore.

The schedule of cargo flights is as follows: the Yangon-Kolkata-Yangon flight on 28 September and 4 October; the Yangon-Singapore-Yangon flight on every Friday starting 13 October; the Yangon-Kuala Lumpur-Yangon flight on every Wednesday; and the Yangon-Bangkok-Yangon flight on every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday.

Thus, it would be possible to start shipping goods to Kolkata, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, and Singapore.

The Boeing 737-400 Freighter aircraft, which started flying between Yangon and Bangkok on 19 September, will extend cargo flights.

The new cargo plane can carry up to 18 tonnes of cargo and transported 15.9 tonnes of cargo on its first cargo trip. — TWA/CT

69 construction permits issued last week of September

A total of 69 construction permits were issued in the municipal area of the Yangon City Development Committee last week of September.

According to the Engineering Department (Buildings), 70 construction permits were issued and 16 building completion certificates (BCC) were approved last week of September.

Furthermore, to allow the construction of the building, 13 letters of recommendation were sent to the Department of Fire Services, as well as 43 letters to the Engineering Department (Water and Sanitation), nine letters to the Department of Urban Land Management, two to the Engineering Department (Roads and Bridges), two to the Engineering Department (Water Course Management), and two to the Department of Urban and Housing Development.

Within the municipal area of the Yangon City Development Committee, a total of 207 construction permits have been issued within the three weeks of September. — TWA/MKKS

The picture depicts a building under construction in the area of Yangon City Development Committee.

NATIONAL
BUSINESS

Rubber price dips to approximately K1,600 per pound

THE price of rubber has fallen again to around K1,600 per pound in Mon State's rubber market.

Rubber tapping business halted for a while in the monsoon season and resumed in mid-September at the opening prices of K1,770 per pound of Ribbed Smoked Sheet Local 3 and K1,750 for sun-dried rubber.

The prevailing prices slid to K1,590 per pound for sundried rubber and K1,610 for RSS Local 3. The figures showed a decrease of K160 per pound.

Global demand for rubber, rubber production of the Southeast Asian nations and the market supply are contributing factors to Myanmar's rubber prices.

The National Enlightenment Institute (NEI), a non-profit organization based in Mon State, has been receiving technical assistance from PUM Netherlands Senior Experts to enhance the rubber industry since May 2021. The picture shows a stack of rubber sheets.

The rubber price in Mon State, a major rubber production state in Myanmar, is related to those factors as well, the traders elaborated.

Myanmar's annual rubber production is estimated at 300,000 tonnes. Seventy per cent of rubber produced in Myanmar goes to China. It is also shipped to Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Viet Nam, the Republic of Korea, India, Japan, and other countries.

The association aims to achieve rubber exports of 300,000 tonnes in the current 2023-2024 financial year beginning 1 April.

The rubber production in the last FY 2022-2023 reached over 360,000 tonnes and more than 200,000 tonnes of rubber were shipped to foreign trade partners.

Rubber is commonly produced in Mon and Kayin states and Taninthayi, Bago, and Yangon regions in Myanmar. As per 2018-2019 rubber season data, there are over 1.628 million acres of rubber plantations in Myanmar, with Mon State accounting for 497,153 acres, followed by Taninthayi Region with 348,344 acres and Kayin State with 270,760 acres.

Myanmar bagged more than US$449 million in revenue in rubber exports in the previous financial year 2020-2021. — NN/EM

MLF invites trainees for 2023 livestock product value addition training programme

TRAINING on the value addition of livestock products, organized by the Myanmar Livestock Federation and the Department of Livestock Development of Thailand (DLD), is scheduled to be held on 12-18 November in Chiang Mai and trainees are invited to join the training, the GNLM's report citing MRF.

MLF is making efforts to effectuate the development of the livestock sector and ensure food security for the people and food safety. The federation is joining hands with local and international institutions to enhance the value-added businesses on livestock products.

The training, jointly organized by the MLF and DLD, is yearly conducted at the Livestock Product Research and Development Centre (LPRDC) in Chiang Mai, Thailand and will offer two courses in the aspect of technical know-how of value addition of dairy and meat products.

The professionals from Thailand will provide practical and theoretical training. Additionally, food safety experts from Japan will share food safety traceability practices in Japan for milk and dairy products. Also, the professionals from the Faculty of Mass Communication will offer marketing courses for livestock products.

The Livestock Product Research and Development Centre adds new modules related to popular marketable items every year. The centre also welcomes ideas and suggestions from the trainees to improve the training and implement additional training for the requested products. The trainees can also visit some places in Chiang Mai with the assistance of an instructor.

The trainees must bear Yangon-Chiang Mai-Yangon flight costs, training fees and training materials. The Centre set the affordable course, exclusively for Myanmar citizens. The trainees need to hold a passport with six-month validity at least from 18 November.

Those enthusiastic entrepreneurs and startups in value-added markets can enquire about the training program through contact number 09 752278795 and myanmarlivestock@gmail.com of Myanmar Rice Federation. — NN/EM

Myanmar Coffee Association exhibits booths at World Speciality Coffee Conference & Exhibition 2023 in Tokyo

Visitors throng the World Speciality Coffee Conference and Exhibition 2023 held in Japan on 27-30 September.

THE Myanmar Coffee Association has exhibited booths at the World Speciality Coffee Conference and Exhibition 2023 held in Tokyo, Japan, according to the association.

The World Speciality Coffee Conference and Exhibition 2023 is being held for four days from 27 to 30 September, and a total of nearly 400 companies from 32 countries are opening booths.

The World Speciality Coffee Conference and Exhibition 2023 is being held at the Tokyo International Exhibition Centre, and the exhibition of members of the Myanmar Coffee Association and the coffee exhibition of Aung Coffee, which imports coffee beans from Myanmar and sells speciality coffee shops in Japan, is on display.

The opening ceremony was attended by Myanmar Ambassador to Japan U Soe Han, who participated in the ceremony and cut the ribbon.

Organized by the Speciality Coffee Association of Japan, the World Speciality Coffee Exhibition and Conference is the largest in Asia and has been held since 2003, and this is the 20th ceremony. More than 45,000 visitors visit the exhibition every year. — ASH/KZL

OPINION

Shape a better environment for world maritime society

IN LINE with the theme of this year's World Maritime Day, "MARPOL at 50 — Our commitment goes on," Myanmar is taking significant steps to protect our planet and ensure the sustainability of our oceans. This initiative aligns with the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, highlighting our commitment to safeguarding the marine environment.

The central focus of this year's World Maritime Day theme is the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL). MARPOL plays a pivotal role in preventing pollution of the marine environment caused by ships, whether due to operational activities or accidental incidents. A pollution-free marine environment is not only essential for the preservation of aquatic life but also contributes to the well-being of humanity and the overall sustainability of our natural surroundings.

Understanding the pivotal role of the maritime sector in providing essential services such as transport and food supply, fostering regional cooperation, preventing marine pollution, and promoting global unity among member countries of MARPOL is crucial. By working hand in hand, everybody should shape a better future for the world, where the maritime sector continues to serve as a cornerstone of sustainability and prosperity for all.

The international shipping industry is a cornerstone of the global economy, and its safety, security, and efficiency are vital for achieving sustainable green economic growth. The maritime environment not only provides sustenance to society through fishing but also facilitates global trade and transportation, serving as the backbone of our interconnected world. International shipping handles more than 80 per cent of global trade, reaching people and communities across the globe. It is the most cost-effective and reliable method for transporting goods on a global scale, promoting trade, and fostering prosperity among nations and their citizens.

The significance of MARPOL cannot be overstated, with 161 countries, representing nearly 99 per cent of the world's merchant shipping tonnage, having signed the convention. Over the years, several annexes have been added to MARPOL, including annexes 1 and 2 in 1988, and annexes 3, 4, and 5 in 2016. These protocols collectively serve as a comprehensive framework for addressing water pollution and safeguarding our oceans.

MARPOL convention is not merely a legal treaty but a manifestation of our collective commitment to creating a prosperous maritime environment. All nations have to collaborate in shaping an eco-friendly maritime transport sector in alignment with their obligations under the MARPOL convention and their responsibility to protect our planet.

Understanding the pivotal role of the maritime sector in providing essential services such as transport and food supply, fostering regional cooperation, preventing marine pollution, and promoting global unity among member countries of MARPOL is crucial. By working hand in hand, everybody should shape a better future for the world, where the maritime sector continues to serve as a cornerstone of sustainability and prosperity for all.

■

ARTICLE

Chinese Modernization: Harmony Between Humanity and Nature

IMAGINE a place with a blue sky, white clouds, lush mountains and lucid water... It is everyone's dream to live in a clean and beautiful world, no matter where they are. To make this dream come true, China has the way — modernization of harmony between humanity and nature.

Ecological conservation: an integral part of traditional Chinese philosophy

The concept of harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature has been deeply rooted in China's DNA since antiquity. Looking back on thousands of years of history, the relationship between man and nature was such a major topic of traditional Chinese culture that countless efforts were put into its study, with the unity of man and nature being the core concept of traditional Chinese philosophy.

Take Confucianism and Daoism, the two most influential schools of thought, as an example. As Confucius wisely remarked, "What does Heaven ever say? Yet the four seasons move in order, and a hundred things come to life. What does Heaven say?" It holds that humanity must subject themselves to the law of nature to understand and transform the world, and reverence for nature is the premise and basic rule of people's social activities. Zhuangzi, a leading Daoist philosopher, observed that "Heaven and earth coexist with me, and all things and I are one." He regarded nature as an organic whole with an emphasis on the harmonious relationship between heaven, earth and man. In fact, when the various schools of thought in ancient China conducted their studies, their focus had always been the concept of harmony between men and nature.

Green: a definitive feature of China in the new era

President Xi Jinping, with an eye to the severely insufficient per capita energy and resource endowment in China, made the important observation that when accelerating its development, China faces greater constraints in terms of energy, resources and the environment, which determines that the beaten path of Western modernization simply does not suit China at all. As such, the Chinese people protect nature and preserve the environment the way they protect their eyes. Thanks to their unremitting efforts, a more beautiful China with a bluer sky, greener land and clearer water is a dream turned into reality. On water quality improvement, water sections achieving excellent quality grades now account for 87.9 per cent of the total, according to statistics from Chinese state media. In green development, China has always been a major contributor since 2000. Domestically, its forest area has reached 24.02 per cent of the total land area. Globally, a quarter of the world's new afforestation comes from China every year, a whopping figure of 190,000 square kilometres. Clearly, China's ecological and environmental protection is nearing an inflexion point, with historic changes happening across the board.

Giant pandas, though endemic to China, are the beloved ambassadors of friendship across the world. As "ambassadors", they speak volumes about the continuous improvement of China's environment. From captive breeding to wild population recovery, from fragmented habitats to national parks, giant pandas have been upgraded from "endangered" to "vulnerable". At present, 67 nature reserves have been established for giant pandas in China, effectively protecting 53.8 per cent of their habitat and 66.8 per cent of their wild population. With this success, China is now sharing its experience of biodiversity conservation with the world. The China Conservation and Research Centre for the Giant Panda has engaged in scientific research cooperation with zoos in more than 10 countries, joined the "International Long-term Cooperative Project of Giant Panda Breeding" with zoos across the world, and carried out cooperation and research in breeding and conservation.

Huangshan, literally meaning the Yellow Mountain, is a mountain range in southern Anhui Province in eastern China. Huangshan, China's beloved mountain, celebrated in art and literature, remains a captivating destination with stunning granite peaks, clouds, and attracts pilgrims, poets, painters, and photographers **PHOTO: UNESCO**

The Chinese people have been working hard with a strong determination to pursue green development. With its commitment to dual carbon goals, China has promised to move from carbon peak to carbon neutrality within 30 years, which is 10 to 40 years less than that of the United States and Europe. This means that China, as the largest developing country, will achieve the highest reduction in carbon emission intensity in the world and move from carbon peak to carbon neutrality within the shortest time in global history. Saihanba is a case in point. This largest man-made forest farm in the world was awarded the Champions of the Earth Award, the UN's highest environmental honour, for it took only 60 years to transform from a wasteland into a lush green paradise that could neutralize the annual carbon dioxide emissions of 860,000 family fuel cars.

China topped the world in terms of various indicators of green development. For instance, it led the world in the utilization of renewable energy, the output and sales of new energy vehicles, and the speed of air quality improvement. It is also home to the largest area of afforestation in the world with the biggest increase in forest resources. China's steady progress in green development will surely benefit future generations.

China's commitment to the world: building a beautiful and green planet together

China has taken an active part in global environmental and climate governance. While promoting its own green development, China also shares its experience with the world and provides support for global green development. It has put forward and is now implementing the Global Development Initiative; it has promoted the establishment of the Global Clean Energy Cooperation Partnership; it was among the first to issue the National Plan on Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; it has established the Kunming Biodiversity Fund; it has become the largest contributor to the core budget of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Protocols. The list goes on. In joining hands to tackle environmental challenges and promote global sustainable development, China has always been a firm doer of deeds. Dr Bruno Oberle, Director-General of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, lauded China for sharing the concept of ecological civilization, which is yet another contribution that China has made to the world.

Ecological conservation, a timeless theme of human civilization, points the right way forward. Looking ahead, a China that commits to green modernization will provide more opportunities for the world and make a greater contribution to the progress of all mankind.

Source : Chinese embassy

Brain implants could restore paralyzed patients' arm movements

The technology combines a brain-computer interface and a spinal implant.

A PARALYZED Swiss man has become the first person to test a new technology that reads his thoughts using AI and then transmits signals through his own nervous system to his arms, hands and fingers in order to restore movement.

The treatment, a combination of a brain-computer interface and a spinal implant, had previously allow a paraplegic patient to walk again, a breakthrough that was published in the scientific journal Nature in May.

But this is the first time it's being used for "upper extremity function", Onward, the Dutch company behind it, said Wednesday.

"The mobility of the arm is more complex," surgeon Jocelyne Bloch, who carried out the implantation procedures, told AFP.

The Dutch company Onward developed a device that takes signals from a brain implant and uses them to stimulate a paralyzed patient's spinal cord, thus restoring lost movement. **PHOTO: ONWARD MEDICAL/AFP**

Though walking comes with its own challenges -- notably balance — "the musculature of the hand is quite fine, with many different small muscles activated at the same time for certain movements", she said.

The patient, who wishes to remain anonymous, is a 46-year-old who lost the use of his arms after a fall. Two operations were carried out last month at the Lausanne University Hospital in Switzerland.

The first involved removing a small piece of cranial bone and inserting in its place the brain implant, which was developed by the French group CEA-Clinatec and measures a few centimetres in diameter.

In the second, surgeons placed a stimulator roughly the size of a credit card developed by Onward inside the patient's abdomen, and connected it through electrodes to the top of his spinal column.

The brain-computer interface (BCI) records brain signals and decodes them using artificial intelligence to make sense of the patient's intentions, acting as a "digital bridge" to send these instructions on to the spinal cord stimulator.

"It's going well so far," said Bloch, who co-founded Onward and is a consultant for the company. "We are able to record brain activity, and we know that the stimulation works," she said.

"But it is too early to talk about what progress he has made."

Still in training

The patient is still in the training phase, teaching his brain implant to recognize the different desired movements.

The movements will then have to be practiced many times before they can become natural. The process will take a few months, according to Dr Bloch.

Two more patients are scheduled to participate in this clinical trial, and the full results will be published later.

Spinal cord stimulation has already been used in the past to successfully move paralyzed patients' arms, but without reading their thoughts by pairing it with a brain implant.

And brain implants have already been used so that a patient can control an exoskeleton. The Battelle research organization used a brain implant to restore movement in a patient's arm — through a sleeve of electrodes placed on the forearm, stimulating the muscles required from above.

"Onward is unique in our focus on restoring movement in people who have paralysis by stimulating the spinal cord," the company's CEO Dave Marver told AFP, adding the technology could be commercialized by the end of the decade.

Brain implants were long trapped in the realm of science fiction, but the field is now rapidly growing thanks to firms like Synchron and Elon Musk's Neuralink.

SOURCE: AFP

NATIONAL

Some 30,000 Myanmar workers to join S Korea's labour force

The picture depicts Myanmar workers going to work in South Korea in 2022.

AROUND 30,000 Myanmar workers will be employed from South Korea in October, according to overseas employment agencies.

It is also known that more than 28,000 workers will be recruited in three batches from among those who have passed the 14th EPS-Topik exam.

It is planned to call up 20,919 workers for the manufacturing industry from 19 to 27 October as the first batch, and 5,609 workers will be listed to be recruited between 30 October and 3 November for agriculture and livestock industries as the second batch.

In addition, 1,431 Myanmar workers will also be employed in the construction industry as the third batch from 30 October to 3 November.

South Korea is recruiting more Myanmar workers for the manufacturing, agriculture, livestock, and construction industries within their country, according to overseas employment agencies. — TWA/CT

CRIME

Over K8 bln worth of Ice captured in Yamethin township

THE Myanmar Police Force has reported the seizure of a significant quantity of Ice (methamphetamine) valued at K8.7 billion in Yamethin township.

Based on a tip-off, a joint team comprising Anti-Drug Police Force members conducted a search operation involving a motorbike driven by Ko Phyo, also known as Aung Thu Phyo, and a Toyota Hilux Surf driven by Aung Kyaw Swa, also known as Kyaw Swa. This operation took place on the forest road in Yamethin township at 1:30 am on 24 September.

The outcome of this operation was the confiscation of a total of 435 kilograms of Ice, with an estimated worth of K8.7 billion. The suspects apprehended during the operation admitted that these illicit drugs were intended to be transported from Shan State to Mandalay Region.

Legal actions have been initiated against the individuals involved, and a comprehensive investigation is currently underway to identify the entire network of criminals responsible for this illegal activity. — MNA/MKKS

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

Confiscated illegal goods and vehicles.

THE combined on-duty teams under the supervision of the Bago Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force made inspections on 16, 17 and 26 September and confiscated a Toyota Hilux car (estimated value of K10 million), headed to Yangon from Thaton, carrying three kinds of goods worth K8.998 million including 2,000 litres without official documents, a Nissan diesel tractor head with a trailer (approximately K60 million), headed to Yangon from Myawady, carrying 50,000 Jfresh low boxes worth K20.7 million that were not declared in the Import Declaration (ID), a Charm bus (estimated value of K25 million), travelling from Mawlamyine to Yangon, two kinds of goods worth K14 million including 17,500 bottles of M-150 and 900 litres of Prawn Hornet vegetable oil, a Win Myanmar bus (approximately K25 million), headed to Yangon from Ye, carrying two kinds of goods worth K12.82 million including 480 litres of vegetable oil, 5,000 bottles of M-150 energy drink and 1,400 kilogrammes of Polyester woven fabric without official documents and a Toyota Hilux car (approximately K10 million), headed to Bagon from Thaton, carrying 2,700 litres of Prawn Hornet palm oil worth K7.5 million without official documents. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

On 22 September, the combined teams seized a Nissan Diesel truck (estimated value K15 million) carrying eight (used) refrigerators worth K800,000 without official documents at the Nyaungkhashay X-ray station on 22 September. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

An on-duty team captured a Chindwin Star truck (estimated value of K45 million), travelling from Myawady to Yangon, carrying two kinds of goods worth K13 million including 3,000 pairs of RS star sandal that were not declared in the ID near Ywathagyi tollgate on No 2 highway on 19 September. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

A combined on-duty team impounded an express bus (approximately K30 million), headed to Yangon from Myawady, carrying two kinds of goods worth K8.7 million including 14,400 boxes of Lactasoy milk and 2,500 bottles of Lipovitan-D energy drink without official documents near Naunglon tollgate in Hpa-an township on 26 September. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

On 27 September, the on-duty teams nabbed 9,161 kilogrammes of PE Foam flooring worth K12,504,765 that were different from HS code in the Import Declaration (ID) from two vehicles travelling from Chinshwehaw to Mandalay at the 16th — Mile Kyaukchaw checkpoint and a Mitsubishi canter and an Isuzu truck (approximately K46 million), headed to Mandalay from Taunggyi, carrying 25 kinds of goods worth K117,713,200 including 1,320 bags of Tivoli and 16,800 bottles of Justus black without official documents near Htonebo tollgate on the outskirts of Mandalay. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

As a result, a total of 28 arrests were made on 16, 17, 18, 19, 26 and 27 September, with an estimated value of K482,735,965, as reported by the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS

UK's first drug consumption room approved

The facility, which costs £2.3 million ($2.8 million), will provide a clean and supervised environment where drug users can consume their own drugs. Medical supervision will be available to ensure safety.

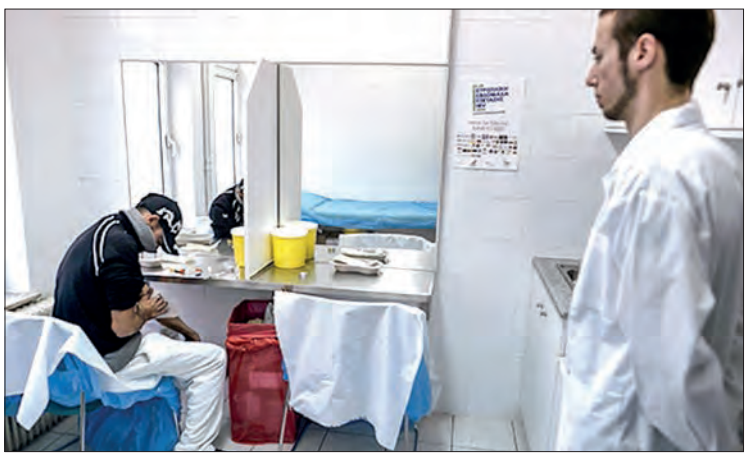
THE UK's first official drug consumption room for illegal drugs will open in Scotland after receiving approval Wednesday, after years of arguments over the controversial harm-reduction policy for addicts.

The £2.3 million ($2.8 million) facility in Glasgow will allow users to take their own drugs in a clean environment under medical supervision. The Glasgow City Integration Joint Board finally approved it on Wednesday, ending years of political legal argument between the parliaments in London and Edinburgh.

The board argued there was "overwhelming international evidence" showing such facilities helped improve the "health, wellbeing and recovery" of addicts.

It would also take the issue off the streets, where it was hurting local communities and businesses, the statement added.

Scotland's most senior law officer, Lord Advocate Dorothy Bain, paved the way for its approval earlier this month after campaigners pressed for legal clarification. — AFP



The idea behind drug consumption rooms is to minimize the negative consequences of drug use while offering a range of services and support to drug users. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ ARIS MESSINIS/ AFP/FILE**

Shortlisted entries for UK's Turner Prize go on display

AN exhibition of the shortlisted Turner Prize nominees opened on England's south coast on Wednesday, with four artists vying for the most prestigious — and often controversial — award in British art.

The show in Eastbourne showcases work by Jesse Darling, Ghislaine Leung, Rory Pilgrim and Barbara Walker, who are in the running for the £25,000 ($30,000) top prize.

The winner will be announced on 5 December.

Previous victors include now-household names such as duo Gilbert & George, Anish Kapoor, Rachel Whiteread, Antony Gormley, Chris Ofili, Steve McQueen and Damien Hirst.

The annual award seeks to encourage debate around new advances in contemporary art and is given to a visual artist based or born in Britain. — AFP

Brus fled Vienna in 1969 after being sentenced to jail over his performance. **PHOTO: AFP**

Austria celebrates last surviving shock 'actionist' artist

Guenter Brus's performances and art have had a significant impact on contemporary art and have been exhibited internationally.

SEVERAL shows are recognizing Guenter Brus, the last surviving key member of Vienna's famed "actionists", who turned 85 this week and whose radical movement broke new ground using the body to make art.

Brus, together with three others, founded the "Vienna Actionism" movement which emerged in the 1960s.

The actionists did not shy away from using blood, urine and excrement as they defied the confines of traditional painting.

Of the group, only Brus is still alive, with retrospectives in Vienna and the city of Graz showing prints from his key performances, his pictorial poems and other important pieces to mark his 85th birthday.

"From an Austrian perspective, Guenter Brus is certainly one of the few who have outstanding international significance. It is impossible to imagine art history without him," said Roman Grabner, who runs a museum dedicated to Brus in Graz, where the artist now lives. — AFP

Talk shows coming back after Hollywood writers' strike ends

LATE-NIGHT talk shows, a mainstay of the US TV schedule, will be back on the air within a week, hosts said Wednesday, after leaders of the Writers Guild of America called off a paralyzing strike.

The densely written shows — fronted by Stephen Colbert, Jimmy Fallon, Jimmy Kimmel, Seth Meyers and John Oliver — have been a glaring absence since writers downed pens in May over demands for better pay and guarantees against the threat from artificial intelligence. — AFP

Stephen Colbert is among late night hosts who will be back on the air next week now the writers' strike is over. **PHOTO: AFP**

ECONOMY
WORLD

German recession will be worse than feared: institutes

The German economy is projected to shrink by 0.6 per cent in 2023. This marks a significant downturn and is worse than earlier predictions.

Employees manufacture the cooling unit for an air-to-water heat pump at the headquarters of the heating technology company Vaillant Group in Remscheid, Germany, on 20 July 2023. **PHOTO: INA FASSBENDER/ AFP**

A recession in Germany this year will be worse than previously feared, leading economic institutes warned Thursday, as high inflation and an industrial slowdown hit Europe's top economy.

The economy will shrink 0.6 per cent in 2023, the institutes said in their latest joint forecast. They had all flagged in recent months that a downturn was expected, although the figure is worse than those previously mentioned.

"The most important reason for this revision is that industry and private consumption are recovering more slowly than we expected," said Oliver Holtemoeller, from the Halle Institute for Economic Research, one of the five groups behind the forecast.

German policymakers face challenges on multiple fronts — from still-high inflation that began surging after Russia invaded Ukraine, to weakness in manufacturing and the impact of record eurozone interest rates.

Problems in the global economy, and in particular a slow recovery from the pandemic in Germany's top trading partner China, are also weighing on the exporting powerhouse.

There were positive signs at the start of the year that Germany may have weathered the energy crisis better than expected, but Thursday's forecasts are just the latest gloomy signal in recent months. — AFP

European firms scrap toxic ships on Bangladesh beaches: HRW

European firms sent 520 ships to a site since 2020, where workers dismantle ships without protection.

Bangladesh's southeastern Sitakunda beaches have emerged as one of the world's largest shipbreaking yards, fuelling the South Asian country's booming construction industry and its need for cheap sources of steel. **PHOTO: ANUKTA/ HRW**

EUROPEAN maritime companies are ditching their old ships for scrap on Bangladeshi beaches in dangerous and polluting conditions that have killed workers pulling them apart, Human Rights Watch said Thursday.

Bangladesh's southeastern Sitakunda beaches have emerged as one of the world's largest shipbreaking yards, fuelling the South Asian country's booming construction industry and its need for cheap sources of steel.

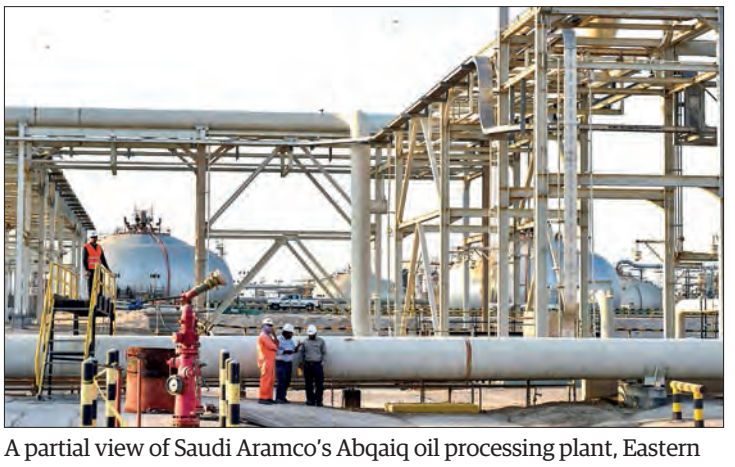
European firms are among the shipping companies to have sent 520 vessels to the site since 2020, where thousands of workers take apart ships without protective gear.

"Companies scrapping ships in Bangladesh's dangerous and polluting yards are making a profit at the expense of Bangladeshi lives and the environment," said HRW researcher Julia Bleckner.

"Shipping companies should stop using loopholes in international regulations and take responsibility for safely and responsibly managing their waste." — AFP

Oil prices finish at highest level in a year

EUROPEAN stocks closed lower Wednesday and Wall Street slipped back from early gains on expectations that inflation will keep US interest rates high, which also drove investors to seek safety in the dollar. Asian markets had managed to rebound from heavy selling on both sides of the Atlantic on Tuesday, but analysts said prospects that central bankers will feel forced to keep monetary policy tight are spurring cautious positions. A report Wednesday showing a larger-than-expected rise in US manufactured goods orders for August added to the cautious tone, since they give the Federal Reserve less reason to lower rates anytime soon. — AFP



A partial view of Saudi Aramco's Abqaiq oil processing plant, Eastern Province, Saudi Arabia, 20 September 2019. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

NEWS IN BRIEF

EU 'nearing' agreement on migration policy reform

EU commissioners expressed optimism the bloc would finally on Thursday agree a reformed migration policy package, after Germany signalled its backing.

"We are now nearing the big agreement that Europe needs after many years of failures," commissioner Margaritis Schinas said as he went into a meeting of EU interior ministers.

"Hopefully today they can agree on the last piece of the pact," which had been holding up its adoption, fellow commissioner Ylva Johansson said.

Paralysis on the issue has caused frustration in the 27-nation bloc as it faces a rise in irregular migration.

The arrival of thousands of asylum-seekers on the Italian island of Lampedusa has spurred urgency to get the revised pact on migration and asylum in place. – AFP

Border FTZs boost China-ASEAN regional development

A vessel loaded with nickel matte docked at the Qinzhou Port in south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region at 10 am, and merely four hours later, the nickel product imported from Indonesia was delivered to a nearby factory's production line for further processing.

Located in the Beibu Gulf, Qinzhou Port is an important hub for trade and economic exchanges between China and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries and a part of the China (Guangxi) Pilot Free Trade Zone (FTZ).

"The remarkable efficiency in the FTZ is an important reason why we located our project here," said Yuan Xun, manager assistant of the Guangxi CNGR New Energy Science and Technology Co Ltd, the importer of the nickel matte.

Yuan said their parent company, CNGR Advanced Material Co Ltd, has invested in multiple projects in Indonesia for nickel mining and nickel matte processing, which not only extended the nickel industry chain, but also provided some 2,000 jobs there.

The nickel matte produced in Indonesia is shipped to Qinzhou to be further processed into materials needed to produce batteries for electric vehicles and other products like mobile phones. — Xinhua

People select goods during the 20th China-ASEAN Expo at Nanning International Convention and Exhibition Centre in Nanning, capital of south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, 19 September 2023. **PHOTO: ZHANG AILIN/ XINHUA**

French billionaire investigated in money laundering probe

FRENCH billionaire Bernard Arnault and Russian oligarch Nikolai Sarkisov are under investigation for alleged money laundering at a luxury Alpine resort, according to Paris prosecutors.

The probe concerns their activities in Courchevel, a ski resort in the French Alps known for being a playground for the ultra-rich, they said late Thursday.

The French economy ministry's financial intelligence unit is leading the investigation, but has yet to determine whether any crime had been committed, a source close to the investigation told AFP. — AFP

US anti-discrimination agency sues Tesla over 'pervasive' racism

A federal anti-discrimination agency filed a lawsuit Thursday accusing Elon Musk's Tesla of allowing "pervasive" racism at its Silicon Valley car plant and retaliating against Black workers who opposed such abuse.

Black workers at Tesla's factory in Fremont, California, have routinely endured stereotyping, racial insults and hostility since at least 2015, according to the suit filed in federal court by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

A lawsuit filed by a US anti-discrimination commission contends that abusive graffiti aimed at Black workers was part of "pervasive" racism at the electric car maker's plant in Fremont, California. **PHOTO: AFP**

Tesla "subjected Black employees at its manufacturing facilities in Fremont, California... to severe or pervasive racial harassment and created and maintained a hostile work environment because of their race," the lawsuit said.

"The racial misconduct was frequent, ongoing, inappropriate, unwelcome and occurred across all shifts, departments and positions," the commission said.

Tesla did not respond to a request for comment.

Racist graffiti at the plant included swastikas, nooses and threats, according to the suit. Some of the graffiti was allegedly on vehicles rolling off the production line. — AFP

Former crypto star Sam Bankman-Fried faces US trial

Former cryptocurrency tycoon Sam Bankman-Fried leaves New York federal court on 26 July 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

CRYPTO magnate Sam Bankman-Fried finds himself in the throes of a legal nightmare, facing federal fraud charges that threaten to dismantle his billion-dollar empire and tarnish the meteoric rise of his once-celebrated FTX platform. Sam Bankman-Fried, once the most respected face of crypto currency, goes on trial Tuesday in federal court facing seven counts of fraud that could see him spend decades in prison.

The curly haired graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in just a few years turned his FTX platform into the world's second biggest crypto exchange, propelling him to become the tech world's latest out-of-the-blue billionaire.

Bankman-Fried's meteoric rise was only matched by his ignominious downfall, which saw him escorted last year by police from his luxury apartment in the Bahamas and extradited to face charges in the United States.

At the height of his celebrity, Bankman-Fried was thought to be worth $26 billion, with FTX becoming a near household name through a frenzied marketing campaign and celebrity endorsements by supermodel Gisele Bundchen, NBA star Stephen Curry and others. — AFP

ROLLING UPDATES
WORLD

US government readies for imminent shutdown

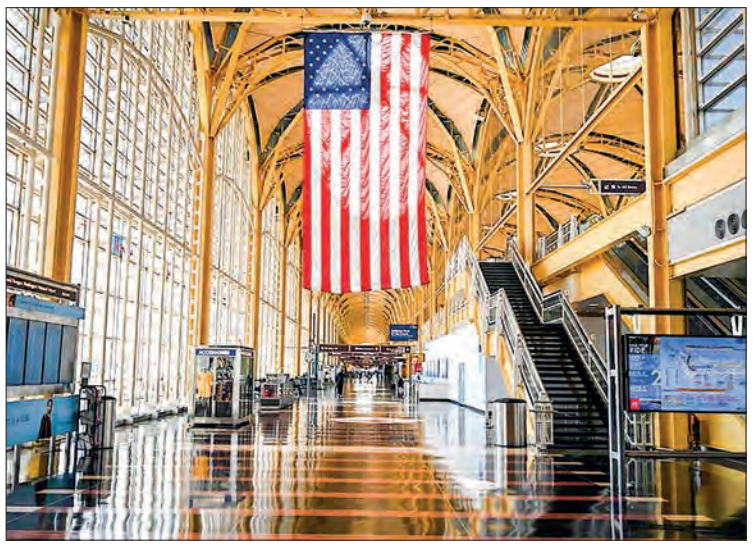
A prolonged shutdown could harm the already fragile US economy.

THE US government began Thursday to inform workers of an impending shutdown that could see millions of federal employees and military personnel temporarily sent home or working without pay, unless Congress reaches a last-ditch deal.

Without an agreement, funding for much of the federal government will expire at midnight on Saturday (0400 GMT Sunday), threatening disruptions to everything from air travel to benefit payments, and – if the shutdown endures – dealing a further blow to the precarious US economy.

The stand-off has been triggered by a small group of hardline Republicans who have pushed back against short-term funding deals while Congress tries to resolve a broader deadlock over calls for deep spending cuts.

Some federal employees have already been informed of preparations for a lapse, according to a notice seen by AFP.



During a government shutdown in 2019, certain airports were forced to temporarily halt their operations. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

A note to staff at the Department of Health and Human Services outlined how it would see "reduced staffing across nearly every division for the duration of the lapse" although many key programmes will continue.

The department also updated its contingency plans, adding that "pre-notified employees would be temporarily furloughed", meaning they are not allowed to work. They would receive retroactive pay after the lapse ends, the note said. — AFP

TOP HEADLINES

Relatives of detained Saudis urge prince to act on cases

RELATIVES of Saudis facing heavy sentences for social media posts are calling on the kingdom's de facto ruler to take action after he voiced shame over their cases.

In a rare interview with Fox News last week, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman was asked about Mohammed al-Ghamdi, a retired school teacher sentenced to death in July for posts on X, formerly Twitter, where he had around 10 followers. Prince Mohammed acknowledged that details of the case described in media reports were "true" and said he disapproved of the judgement. "We are not happy with that. We are ashamed of that," he said, blaming "bad laws" he had so far been unable to change. – AFP

Russia to talk Karabakh mission extension with Baku

THE possibility of extension of the Russian peacekeeping mission in Nagorno-Karabakh will be discussed with Azerbaijan, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov stated on Friday.

"Now we are talking about the mission, which is taking place on the territory of Azerbaijan. This will be a topic of our discussion with Azerbaijan," Peskov told reporters. – SPUTNIK

Iran's satellite launch challenges threats and sanctions

THE Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) launched the third of its Noor ('Light') series satellites into orbit on Wednesday aboard a Qased ('Messenger') carrier rocket. The satellite will engage in intelligence collection, according to the IRGC.

The launch of Iran's latest generation satellite into orbit is a "national success", and an event proving the futility of sanctions against the Islamic Republic, President Ebrahim Raisi has said.

"The production and placing of the Iranian Nour-3 satellite into an orbit of 450 kilometres from Earth, using the Iranian satellite carrier Qased, once again showed that threats and sanctions have no impact on the determination of our young scientists for the progress and excellence of Islamic Iran," Raisi said in a congratulatory message. — SPUTNIK

The file photo taken on 29 February 2012 shows Iran's satellite control site located about 70 kilometres to the west of Tehran, Iran. **PHOTO: AHMAD HALABISAZ/XINHUA**

The departure lobby at Beijing Capital International Airport is crowded with travellers on 29 September 2023, the first day of an eight-day vacation period in China. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Japanese airlines flights from China almost fully booked for holiday

JAPANESE airlines' flights from China to Japan are almost fully booked during an eight-day holiday that began Friday, the airlines said, despite Chinese media reports last month that Japan-bound trips had been cancelled following the release of treated radioactive water from the crippled Fukushima nuclear power plant into the sea.

Japan tops the list of popular overseas destinations for Chinese travellers during the vacation period, which combines the Mid-Autumn Festival and National Day holidays, data analysis made by Chinese internet search giant Baidu Inc and other companies also showed.

An official from a major Japanese airline said, "A high percentage of seats on flights from China to Japan have been reserved and we don't see the impact from the release of the treated water."

Earlier this week, Ichiro Takahashi, chief of the Japan Tourism Agency, told reporters the impact on the number of Chinese travelers to Japan by the release of the treated radioactive water, which commenced on 24 August "has been limited," as the agency inquired at travel agencies in China about travel reservations for the holiday. — Kyodo

SPORTS

Asian Games: World record holder Qin helps grow China swim gold tally

This marked another win for China in swimming, while Japan did not secure a gold medal on this particular day of the competition.

WORLD record holder Qin Haiyang won the men's 200-metre breaststroke in dominant fashion Thursday as China's swimming gold rush continued, and Japan ended the day without a gold medal in the Asian Games pool.

Qin touched the wall in a meet record of two minutes, 7.03 seconds, 1.64 ahead of Chinese compatriot Dong Zhihao. Japan's Ippei Watanabe placed third, 2.88 behind the winner, on the second-to-last day of the swimming programme at Hangzhou Olympic Sports Centre's Aquatic Sports Arena.

The 24-year-old Qin is competing in the Asian version of the Olympics, just two months after he shattered the 200 breaststroke world record with 2:05.48 in Fukuoka, Japan, and became the first swimmer to complete a sweep of the three breaststroke events in a single edition of the world championships.

"I was hoping to go under 2:07, and I wasn't far off," Qin said. "It definitely is different when we are hosts. A lot more is within your control. We are pampered in that sense."

Qin won the 100 metres on Monday and will try to complete a breaststroke treble in Friday's 50.

China collected five gold medals from the day's seven events, including both of the relays, while South Korea claimed two individual golds.

"Qin is really the world's No 1 breaststroker," Watanabe said. "I know he isn't in top form, but he can still turn in a time like 2:07 consistently."

— Kyodo

China's Qin Haiyang (C) poses with the men's 200-metre breaststroke gold medal at the Asian Games in Hangzhou, China, on 28 September 2023, alongside silver medalist Dong Zhihao of China (L) and bronze medallist Ippei Watanabe of Japan. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Qatar Embassy Football Tournament 2023 kicks off in Yangon

ON the occasion of the AFC Asian Cup Qatar 2023™, the Embassy of the State of Qatar in Yangon organized a football tournament with the participation of teams from the Myanmar Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and other Embassies in Yangon to encourage everyone to participate in sporting activities and promote the benefit of healthy lifestyle.

The inauguration day of the said tournament took place yesterday at 5:45 pm at the Yangon United Sports Complex, Indoor futsal stadium.

Dr Rashid Abdulla AL-Kuwari, the Head of the mission and Minister Plenipotentiary of the Embassy of the State of Qatar cut the ribbon, and then the National Anthems of Myanmar and Qatar were played, after that, Dr AL-Kuwari welcomed the attendees, and delivered a short speech stating that "I am proud to inform you that after the success which the State of Qatar achieved in hosting the FIFA World Cup 2022, it will host the Asian Cup 2023 from 12 January to 10 February 2024." He added, "Since the State of Qatar always encourages everyone to take part in sporting activities, I am so pleased to invite you to participate in the Embassies Football Tournament 2023 in Yangon under the theme "Sports Diplomacy."

Dr Rashid Abdulla AL-Kuwari, Head of the mission and Minister Plenipotentiary of the Embassy of the State of Qatar is seen at the opening ceremony. **PHOTO: QATAR EMBASSY**

This diplomatic Football Tournament 2023 is being held in Yangon for the very first time on the days of 29 September and 2, 6, 9, 13, and 16 October 2023 with the participation of Myanmar MoFA, Russia, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, France, Qatar, and Ooredoo Myanmar company. A total of 16 matches will be played, and the first winner will be awarded the trophy and symbolic golden medals, and the second and third winners will be awarded silver and bronze consecutively.

A total of three matches were played yesterday to mark the opening event.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Myanmar) lost to the Qatar team 2- 4 while Kuwait beat the Ooredoo team 3-2.

In the last match, France's team beat Saudi Arabia 3-2.

The France team will face the Russian team on 30 September while Team Ooredoo will take on MOFA and the Saudi Arabian team will meet the Indonesian team on the same day. — KZL

Shan United to take on away match at AFC Cup tournament

Shan United players are seen during an international football game. **PHOTO: THAW GYI**

THE second group match of the 2023-2024 AFC Cup tournament will continue on 5 October, and Myanmar club Shan United will play an away match against Cambodia Club Phnom Penh Crown.

As Shan United lost to Australian club McCarthy at home in the opening game of the group, the remaining games are important for their hopes of advancing to the next round.

Shan United needs a good result, especially in the two away games to be played in the first round. Myanmar defender Soe Moe Kyaw is playing in the Phnom Penh Crown team, which is also a team that is showing good performance this season.

Phnom Penh Crown defeated Singaporean club Tampines Rovers away in the AFC Cup qualifiers and beat Philippine club Cebu by three goals in the first match of the group.

Shan United's main goalkeeper Kyaw Zin Phyo will miss out due to a knee injury, but the rest of the players will be able to participate. After the Shan United team played away against the Phnom Penh Crown team, they will have to play another away match against the Philippine Club Cebu team.

These two matches are important matches for advancing to the next level. — Ko Nyi Lay/ KZL

US government readies for imminent shutdown

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India space chief unfazed by Moon mission's apparent end

The rover, named Pragyan (meaning "Wisdom" in Sanskrit), surveyed the Moon's south pole but was powered down ahead of the lunar night, which lasts approximately two weeks on Earth.

AS hopes dim of further contact with India's Moon rover, the country's space chief has said he was satisfied with the prospect of calling its successful lunar mission to an end.

India began exploring the Moon's surface in August after becoming just the fourth nation to land a craft on the celestial body, sparking celebrations in a country rapidly closing in on milestones set by global space powers.

Rover Pragyan -- "Wisdom" in Sanskrit -- surveyed the vicinity of the Moon's south pole but was powered down before the start of lunar night, which lasts roughly two weeks on Earth.

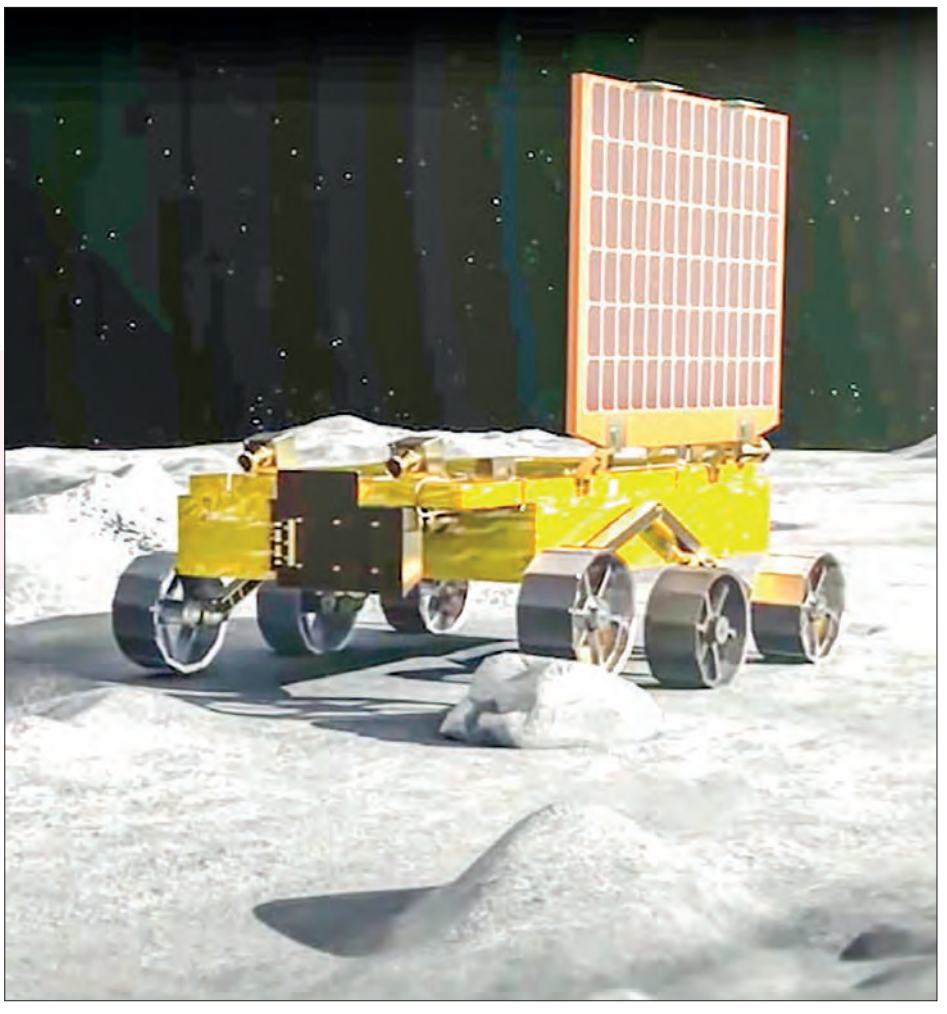
The Indian Space Research Agency had hoped to prolong the mission by reactivating the solar-powered vehicle once daylight returned to the lunar surface, but so far has been greeted by radio silence.

"It is OK if it does not wake up because the rover has done what it was expected to do," ISRO chief S Somanath told reporters late Wednesday, according to the Press Trust of India news agency.

ISRO said last week it had hoped to reestablish contact with the rover and the lander that safely delivered it.

The world's most populous nation has been steadily matching the achievements of established spacefaring powers at a fraction of their cost.

It has a comparatively low-budget space programme, but one that has grown considerably in size and momentum since first sending a probe to orbit the Moon in 2008. — AFP



Rover Pragyan — "Wisdom" in Sanskrit — surveyed the vicinity of the Moon's south pole but was powered down before the start of lunar night, which lasts roughly two weeks on Earth. **PHOTO: ISRO**

US House GOP launches Biden impeachment inquiry hearing

Republicans allege that Biden, while serving as vice-president, used his position to assist his son, Hunter Biden, in securing profitable foreign business deals and personally benefited from what they describe as "corruption".

US House Republicans opened the first impeachment inquiry hearing on Thursday against Democratic President Joe Biden, weeks after Speaker Kevin McCarthy made the call.

Republicans have accused Biden of trading on the power of his office when he was vice-president to help his son Hunter Biden secure lucrative foreign business deals, and of benefiting personally from the "corruption." McCarthy on 12 September requested for opening an impeachment inquiry into the president.

Rep Jim Jordan (R-OH) delivers remarks during a House Oversight Committee hearing titled "The Basis for an Impeachment Inquiry of President Joseph R Biden, Jr" on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC on Thursday. **PHOTO: AFP**

At Thursday's hearing led by the US House of Representatives Oversight Committee, James Comer, the committee chair, said Biden has lied about family members' business dealings. "The American people demand accountability for this culture of corruption," Comer said. Democrats said there was no evidence that Biden had received any of those payments, or had been involved in his son's business ventures.

Democrat Representative Jamie Raskin slammed that his Republican colleagues presented 12,000 pages of bank records which didn't include a "single dime" going to the president. — Xinhua

IEA, ECB urge Europe to move faster on energy transition

EUROPE must invest more quickly and massively in its energy transition if it wants to remain a global industrial power, top policymakers warned on Friday.

The plea was made at a conference on the clean energy transition hosted by the International Energy Agency, the European Central Bank and the European Investment Bank in Paris.

The leaders said private sector investment faces barriers including policy uncertainty, bureaucratic red tape that delays projects, and higher energy costs.

At the same time, the United States, China, India, Japan and South Korea are deploying ambitious industrial programmes, they warned.

Friday's conference focused on the financial and public policy tools that could unleash the investments needed for the clean energy transition. — AFP