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

The Global NEW LIGHT of MYANMAR

Vol. X, No. 168, 3rd Waning of Tawthalin 1385 ME | www.gnlm.com.mm | Monday, 2 October 2023

Myanmar, Thailand, China effectively cooperate with each other in combatting online scams along border

Myanmar conducts Operation 39 in 2023 to prevent import of prohibited precursor chemicals

The Vice-Senior General disclosed that the Myanmar, Thailand and China set an operation period from 1 April to 16 June 2023 to combat the forced labour acts for committing online scam cases along border areas of Myanmar through an effective cooperation based on mutual understanding among them.

Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win delivered an address at the ceremony to mark the 59th Anniversary of Myanmar Police Force Day at the Myanmar International Convention Centre-II in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

SEE PAGE-3

Mr Wu Chunming, the first Business Visa holder Chinese citizen to enter Myanmar through the border, is being warmly welcomed by officials.

Business Visa effective for entry, exit at Nandaw checkpoint on Myanmar-China border

Starting from 1 October, Myanmar-China border crossings in Muse, Shan State (North), will allow entry and exit of travellers holding an official Business Visa.

On the morning of 1 October, U Ye Yint Tun, Deputy Director of the Ministry of Immigration and Population in Muse District of Myanmar, regional and township officials, together with Mr Shang La Sian, the Mayor of Ruili, China and other representatives joined the launching of the official visa entry programme at the Nandaw checkpoint on the Muse-Ruili border.

Furthermore, Mr Wu Chunming, a Chinese citizen, was granted entry and exit privileges with an official Business Visa, and he received a welcome from officials on both sides. To ensure the smooth continuation of his journey to Lashio, Myanmar officials also arranged transport and hotel accommodation for him.

Moreover, Myanmar officials cordially explained detailed explanations on the visa regulations to the Chinese citizen traveller. — Muse IPRD/KZW

NATIONAL PAGE-2

More pilgrims visit Bagan ancient cultural zone on Sunday

NATIONAL PAGE-4

Coronary care units to be established at states and regions hospitals

NATIONAL PAGE-6

Price of exported rice from Myanmar remains high despite decreased export prices of other countries

BUSINESS PAGE-7

Myanmar ships $1.736 mln worth of over 1,000 tonnes of honey in five months

NATIONAL

Photo shows that pilgrims visit pagodas in Bagan Ancient Cultural Zone yesterday.

More pilgrims visit Bagan ancient cultural zone on Sunday

PILGRIMS from all over Myanmar are crowded at Bagan ancient cultural zone in NyaungU Township, Mandalay Region on 1 October, Sunday.

Due to the large number of visitors coming to Bagan, a total of 73 hotels and lodges are full of visitors.

Temples with high levels of ancient architecture and temples that are famous online including Shwegugyi Pagoda (alias) NanU Pagoda also have a large number of pilgrims.

A total of 18 temples, including Shwezigon Pagoda are crowded with pilgrims.

Those who want to study temple architecture and those who want to study mural paintings also rent E-bikes with friends and family and study in Bagan ancient cultural zone.

Photo and video enthusiasts also flocked to Yinmana temple, Kheminga temple, Thitsa Mandaing temple and Shwe Nanyintaw temple.

Due to the large number of pilgrims on that day, local tour guides and those who rent tourist cars, those who rent Mini Oway, those who rent E-bike, and those who rent pony carts are busy.

Restaurant owners, henna artists, and souvenir shops in Bagan are also earning increased incomes. — Dipa Lin/KZL

Objectives of 24th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions 2023

(a) To uplift national prestige and integrity and to preserve the cultural heritage and national characteristics
(b) To explore, preserve and uplift the traditional cultural heritage of performing arts of ethnic nationals and national cultural characteristics
(c) To explore and preserve the traditional cultural heritage for the young generation and further propagate the national spirit
(d) To support measures in the field of national culture ensuring the development, peace and tranquillity of the State

'Three people three days' art exhibiton kicks off

WRITER Ayo, vocalist G Latt and TV presenter Sann Htut are displaying an art exhibitation with the theme of 'Three People Three Days' at the Collector Art Gallery in Kyauktada Township, Yangon Region, according to G Latt.

The exhibition is the second event of the three artistes and started on 30 September and scheduled to finish on 2 October. Their first exhibiton was in September 2022.

"Ko Sann Htut chose the theme of the exhibition to be 'Three people three days'. We didn't know each others paintings before the exhibition. I like Bougainvillea known as paper-flower and my paintings display the nature of that flower and pagodas," G Latt said. The artistes took a period of one year to arrange for the exhibition which displays nearly 40 paintings drawn using water, oil and acrylic mediums. — ASH/TH

A visitor observes the works of artistes at the Collector Art Gallery in Kyauktada Township, Yangon Region.

Indians trafficked in Myanmar sent back to India

THE Indian Embassy to Myanmar has successfully repatriated a total of 381 Indian citizens who were trafficked in Myanmar. On 30 September, two Indian citizens, who were the victims of trafficking in Myanmar, left for Chennai International Airport in India through Yangon International Airport with the assistance of Indian Embassy to Myanmar.

They will return to their respective places from there, according to the Indian Embassy to Myanmar.

The embassy to Myanmar has been rescuing its citizens who were trafficked in Myanmar and brought them back to their country, and there recent efforts have brought a total of 381 its citizens back.

The embassy has also expressed their appreciation to the Myanmar authorities and other supporters for their invaluable assistance to rescue and repatriation Indian citizens who had been trafficked in Myanmar.

Indian citizens trafficked in Myanmar are seen at Yangon International Airport before departure for their country on 26 July.

Furthermore, the Indian External Affairs Ministry had also issued a warning to its citizens to pay a special attention to job offering in IT sector promising high salaries. — ASH/KZL

Daily newspapers available online

FOR those who would like to read the Myanma Alinn, the Kyemon and the Global New Light of Myanmar, published daily by the Ministry of Information, please visit www.moi.gov.mm/mal, www.moi.gov.mm/km, www.moi.gov.mm/nlm and www.gnlm.com.mm/e-paper.

News and Periodicals Enterprise

Advertise
with us / Hot Line : ☎
09974424848

NATIONAL

FROM PAGE-1

During the operation in 2023, action was taken against 76 suspects in 119 online scam cases and 134 suspects in 58 online gambling cases, he added.

The Vice-Senior General noted that as it is difficult for a single country to tackle the transnational crime which is a challenge for political, economic, social development and State security as well as a threat to the human security, many countries have to link with each other in responding to such a measure.

He continued that Myanmar is closely cooperating with international organizations to combat danger of narcotic drugs. During the period from 2013 to 2022, Myanmar conducted special operations against narcotic drugs 38 times, and the Operation 39 is being conducted to prevent import of prohibited precursor chemicals in 2023.

As such, the Vice-Senior General unveiled that the country seized narcotic drugs and related accessories in refining narcotic drugs worth more than K623 billion and arrested 5,974 persons in 4,380 cases from 1 January to 31 August 2023.

In effectively taking action against trafficking in person, Myanmar arrested 6,516 human traffickers in 2,245 cases from 2006 to August 2023, he added.

He highlighted that MPF co-

Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win views the booths displayed at the ceremony to mark the 59th Anniversary of Myanmar Police Force Day at MICC-II in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Myanmar, Thailand, China effectively cooperate with each other in combating online scams along border

operates with INTERPOL and ASEANPOL in regional human trafficking cases and human trafficking combatting projects.

The Vice-Senior General urged all from the constable to minister to command all in unity for serving the assigned duties so as to become the MPF as an prestigious organization.

At the ceremony, the Vice-Senior General and SAC member Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Yar Pyae presented honorary medals to winners.

The ceremony was also attended by SAC members, Union ministers, Union-level officials, senior military officers, diplomats and guests.

SAC member Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Transport and Communications General Mya Tun Oo attended the dinner to mark the 59th MPF Day.

The Myanmar police force was reformed in the post-independence era, and it was identified the People's Police Force on 1 October 1964 and designated as the Police Force Day. On 1 October 1995, it was renamed the Myanmar Police Force. — MNA/TTA

Nay Pyi Taw marks International Day of Older Persons

AN event commemorating the International Day of Older Persons was held at Mingala Thiri Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw Hotel Zone yesterday.

Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Soe Win, who is the chairman of the Myanmar Elderly Committee said that in honour of the Elderly Day, the nation's oldest grandfather, U Aung Tun, aged 121, from Paletwa Township, Chin State, and the oldest grandmother, Daw Chaw Yin, aged 123, from Magway Township, Magway Region, have been handed over K1 million each through the respective regions and states.

Although the interim population census of 2019, the number of elderly people showed about 5.2 million, the estimated

The event commemorating on the International Day of Older Persons in progress at Mingala Thiri Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw Hotel Zone yesterday.

population census of 1 October 2023 stated the number of elderly people has increased to more than 6.3 million in Myanmar.

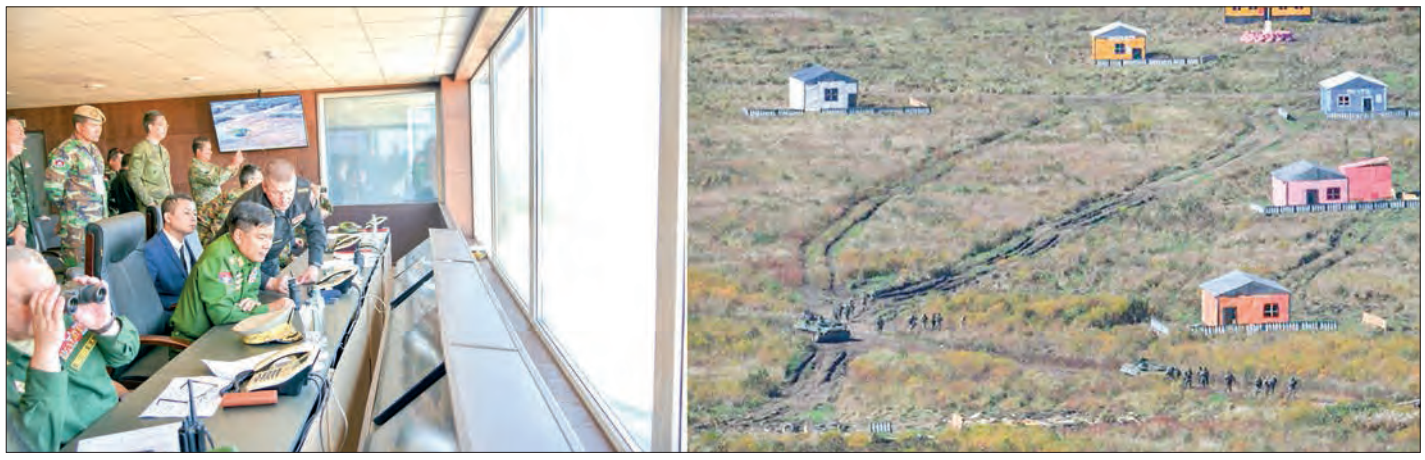
Therefore, the country's economic policies and social policies must be reviewed and prepared for the future.

According to Myanmar's National Strategic Plan for Social Protection (2014), social pension for the elderly has been supported nationwide since the fiscal year 2017-2018. Currently, there are 198,721 social pension beneficiaries.

After that, the Deputy ministers and members of the Committee for the Elderly presented medical supplies and donations to the grandparents, and the Ministry of Health's Medical Centre conducted a medical check-up on the grandparents.

The theme of this year's 25th International Day of Older Persons is "Fulfilling the Promises of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for Older Persons: Across Generations". — MNA/KZL

NATIONAL



Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Maung Maung Aye observes the field training exercise of ASEAN Plus Counter-Terrorism Expert Task Force in Russia.

Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Maung Maung Aye attends Field Training Exercise in Vladivostok of Russia

CHIEF of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Maung Maung Aye arrived in Vladivostok of Russia on 25 September to attend the Field Training Exercise of the ASEAN Plus Counter-Terrorism Expert Task Force.

In the afternoon, he visited the Pacific Naval Fleet at Far Eastern Federal University-FEFU and viewed preparations of Myanmar Tatmadaw and control squads of Russian Armed Forces.

On 26 September, the General attended the field training exercise of ASEAN Plus Counter-Terrorism Expert Task Force at the Sergeevsky training ground in Vladivostok together with officials from Russian Armed Forces, relegates from ASEAN and partner countries. He also visited the training camp of troops from the field training exercise. At Suvorov Military School in Ussuriysk, the General viewed round the training halls, teaching aid lecture halls, gymnasiums, mess hall and hostels.

On 27 September, the General held a meeting with Admiral Viktor Nikolayevich Liina , Chief of Pacific Naval Fleet at House of Naval Officers meeting room of the headquarters. They discussed further promotion of cooperation between two armed forces, and measures on field training exercise. He also attended the dinner hosted by Admiral Viktor Nikolayevich Liina. On 28 September, the General visited Frigate 543 Marshal Shaposhnikov and No 19 Submarine Corps.

On 29 September, the General delivered a speech at the concluding ceremony of the field training exercise. He also attended the dinner hosted by Chief of Pacific Naval Fleet Admiral Viktor Nikolayevich Liina. Yesterday, the General arrived back in Myanmar.

The field training exercise was conducted at Primorsky Krai of Vladivostok from 26 to 29 September. On 29 September, the troops from various countries in the field training exercise successfully performed the practical exercise to combat the area controlled by terrorists with the supporting fire of relevant military corps.

During the training period, delegates from various countries visited the Anna Shchetinina woman hero statue, Glavnaya Ploshchad square, Pacific Navy Fleet museum, the submarine museum, the marine museum and the Russian historical museum. In order to combat terrorists and terrorism, the table top exercise was held in Nay Pyi Taw of Myanmar from 2 to 4 August and the Field Training Exercise in Vladivostok of Russian from 26 to 29 September. — MNA/TTA

Coronary care units to be established at states and regions hospitals

ARRANGEMENTS are being made to enforce large scale hospitals in States and Regions with coronary care units for heart patients, Dr Thet Khaing Win, Union Minister for Health told the World Heart Day event in Nay Pyi Taw on 29 September.

He also said his ministry is establishing networks with organizations in the Southeast Asia to be able to earn and develop the state-of-the-art technologies.

He also said the ministry has 7,476 clinics capable of diagnosing non-communicable diseases across the country including rural areas.

He explained that unhealthy diets, sedentary lifestyle and excessive intake of tobacco products as well as alcohol can lead to the development of heart deisese.

The heart and cadiovascular diseases claim more than 20.5 million lives every year in the world, of which 85 per cent are died of heart attack and stroke resulted from cerebral hemorrhage. — ASH/TH

A coronary care unit is seen at Sanpya hospital under Ministry of Health in Yangon Region.

The Global NEW LIGHT of MYANMAR
www.gnlm.com.mm
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT of MYANMAR

CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION
(+95) (01) 8604532,
Hotline - 09 255597511
ADVERTISING & MARKETING
(+95) (01) 8604530,
Hotline - 09 251022355
marketing@gnlm.com.mm
subscription@gnlm.com.mm

Printed and published at the **Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory** at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the **Global New Light of Myanmar Daily** under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.
gnlmnews@gmail.com,
newsroom@gnlm.com.mm
www.gnlm.com.mm

Write for us

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

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

NATIONAL

Union National Race Village (Yangon) set to offer Yangon River, Bago River cruises in upcoming tourist season

PLANS are underway for visitors to tour the Union National Race Village (Yangon) in Thakayta Township, Yangon Region, by taking a cruise on the Yangon River and Bago River during the next tourist season, said U San Hlaing, deputy director of the village.

A pontoon bridge has been built at the village where boats can moor to visit by cruises on the Yangon River and Bago River. As such, boats from villages along Bago River can be used in transport of visitors to dock at the newly established pontoon bridge of the village and jetties at Pansodan and Botahtaung.

During the upcoming tourism season, the Yangon River and Bago River cruises will offer visitors the chance to explore the Union National Race Village (Yangon) and participate in programmes allowing visitors to cook and enjoy ethnic foods. — ASH/KZW

Union National Race Village (Yangon) has built a pontoon bridge for visitors to visit by cruises on the Yangon River and Bago River.

Exploring stunning condos in Thailand.

Myanmar secures 8th spot in top 10 countries from condo purchases in Thailand

IN the first half of 2023, Myanmar ranked 8th among the countries with the highest number of purchasing condominiums in Thailand, according to the Bangkok Real Estate Information Centre.

In Thailand, the number of condo purchases by Thai citizens is low, but foreigners are on the rise. Among them, Chinese nationals are the most likely to take over the condos.

The value of condo takeovers has risen steadily since the second half of 2021, driven by a surge in purchases due to the overall reopening in the second half of last year. According to Bangkok real estate information, condominium ownership of foreigners is a 20 per cent increase over the previous year, especially in Pattaya and Phuket.

In the first half of this year, 7,338 condo units were transferred to foreigners.

China ranks the first, followed by Russia and the United States. In 2022, Myanmar was ranked 6th in terms of condo purchases, and this year, it ranked 8th among the top 10 countries for condo purchases.

According to the list published by the Real Estate Information Centre, 182 condo units were purchased by Myanmar with an average value of seven million baht per unit.

In Thailand, Myanmar people buy condos as second home in Thailand. In Bangkok, some purchasers prefer Sukhumvit, which is close to railways.

Some choose a location near healthcare services, while other opts for places close to universities for their studies, said a Myanmar resident in Thailand. — TWA/KZW

Myanmar earns more than $7 bln from exports within six months of 2023-2024 FY

Private sectors' exports surpass rather than exports from government sector

THE data from the Ministry of Commerce indicated that exporting abroad brought in over US$7.03 billion for the country within six months of the financial year 2023-2024.

From 1 April to 15 September of 2023–2024 FY, exports from the State-owned sector reached $2.17 billion, and those from the private sector earned more than $4.76 billion.

It can be seen that exports from the State-owned sector are decreasing and private exports are increasing this financial year.

Myanmar mainly exports agricultural produce, animal products, fishery products, mineral products, forest products, and finished industrial products to trade partner countries including China, Thailand, Bangladesh, and India, according to the Ministry of Commerce. — TWA/CT

Containers that will be exported abroad are seen at the port.

NATIONAL

Pilot project for weather index-based crop insurance targets three regions

WEATHER index-based crop insurance, based on rainfall and widely practised in agricultural-producing countries, is going to be introduced as pilot projects in Yangon, Bago and Ayeyawady regions, according to the Myanma Insurance.

The Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation said on 22 September that projects were being developed to help protect farmers from risk triggered by climate change with the weather index insurance.

A public-private partnership task force led by Myanma Insurance under the Ministry of Planning and Finance will launch the pilot project by covering loan to farmers by government with insurance. The weather index insurance, when it operates full swing, will be based on the amount of money invested for cultivation by farmers or the loan to farmers by government.

Farmars planting paddy in Dala Township, Yangon Region were seen on 13 July this year. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

The government will also take steps not to lose the loans to farmers by Myanma Agricultural Development Bank and the State economic promotion fund.

Buying insurance policy may become mandatory for farmers and the authorities expect them to buy policies for one to two per cent of the loan provided by the government.

The Task Force includes Myanma Insurance, experts, UMFCCI, Myanmar Rice Federation, and Myanmar Pulses, Beans, Maize and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association. — TWA/TH

Price of exported rice from Myanmar remains high despite decreased export prices of other countries

ACCORDING to reports from the rice market, the price of rice exported from Myanmar did not drop, while the prices of rice exported from Thailand and Viet Nam were falling this month.

Although a tonne of white rice with 5 per cent of exports was priced at US$646 on 4 September in Thailand, which is the second largest exporter of rice, it decreased to $612 per tonne on 25 September. Other varieties of rice also dropped by $10 to $27 per tonne between 4 and 25 September.

On 4 September, a tonne of exported rice from Myanmar was $585-595 for rice with 5 per cent of exports and $545-555 for rice with 25 per cent of exports, and they fell to $590-600 and $555-560, respectively, on 25 September. According to the statistics, the price of export rice did not fall but rose slightly.

Export rice bags are seen loading onto a vessel at the port.

Due to the El Nino weather conditions that will be experienced in 2023, there are concerns that rice production may decrease. Therefore, rice sales have decreased in most of the world's rice-exporting countries. The demand for rice has also fallen, and the price of rice exports has decreased in most countries.

In the first five months of the 2023-2024 financial year, Myanmar exported 379,384 tonnes of rice and rice products valued at $166 million, which is around 500,000 tonnes less than the same period last year.

However, a total of 200,000 tonnes in October and 250,000 tonnes each in November and December are scheduled to be exported abroad. A total of two million tonnes of rice will be exported abroad in the 2023–2024 financial year, according to rice organizations. — TWA/CT

Trial census to cover 100 polling stations across 20 townships, including Yangon Region

The map shows the satellite layout plans of Dagon Seikkan Township for the trial census.

A trial enumeration of census will be conducted in 100 selected polling stations in 20 townships, including the Yangon Region, according to the meeting of the Yangon Regional Census Supervisory Committee.

From 1 to 15 October this year, the trial census will be conducted by selecting 100 enumeration plots in 20 townships.

The census work is crucial for the overall development of the country, as emphasized by the Chairman of the Yangon Region Census Supervisory Committee Yangon Region Chief Minister.

In the Yangon Region, they will collect data from five urban plots and 10 rural plots from two wards and two village-tracts in Hmawby and Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) townships.

Six immigration personnel who have attended the central-level pilot census enumeration together with those from relevant census committees will collect the census.

In order to obtain high-quality information as in previous censuses, the entire census process will be considered as a national duty. The Chief Minister of the Yangon Region called for public participation in the census enumeration process together with relevant organizations. — TWA/KZW

Myanmar ships $1.736 mln worth of over 1,000 tonnes of honey in five months

A keeper checking beehive.

MYANMAR exported approximately 1,157.31 tonnes of honey worth US$1.736 million in the past five months (April-August) in the 2023-2024 financial year, said U Myo Tint, the deputy director of the Apiculture Division under the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department, Nay Pyi Taw.

Myanmar has delivered honey to the Republic of Korea, Japan, China, the US, Canada and the ASEAN countries at the price of $ 2,500 to $3,000 per tonne and the yearly demand is nearly 3,000 tonnes.

"The major destinations of honey from Myanmar are Thailand, China, Japan, and the ROK where jujube honey is most exported.

The jujube honey is produced between September and October and it is the largest produced kind of honey in Myanmar taking nearly 60 per cent of all kinds of honey produced locally.

Niger honey production is the second largest in Myanmar and takes some 20 per cent," U Myo Tint said.

Myanmar produces sesame honey, jujube honey, niger honey, sunflower honey, rubber honey, lychee honey and flower honey from nearly 200,000 beehives bringing yearly yield to about 5,000 tonnes.

Myanmar saw more than 820 private beekeeping businesses in 2022-2023 financial year and more than 130 businesses are registered in 2023-2024 FY, bringing the total to more than 950. — ASH/TH

SITE Thailand aims to revitalize Myanmar's tourism industry

IN a display of commitment to innovation, SITE Thailand, which is representing Thailand in the tourism sector, connected its global networking in the Let's Go VACS Yangon Travel Fair 2023, held from 22 to 24 September 2023.

The strategic collaboration underscored SITE Thailand's pivotal role in reshaping and revitalizing the tourism industry, marking a significant milestone in Myanmar's tourism industry, as stated by the association.

Ms Punnaporn (Paula) Wongjunpen, President of the SITE Thailand, led the charge in organizing the seminar, "Keys to Success in Incentive Business", which was a core element of this collaboration. Her expertise in Incentive Travel, with a wealth of experience in organizing events in both Myanmar and Thailand, contributed significantly to the seminar's success.

SITE Thailand symbolizes a collective endeavour to elevate Myanmar's tourism sector. **PHOTO: SITE THAILAND**

Furthermore, an enriching panel discussion on "Medical Wellness Tourism" featured Dr Thiti Samuthrat, an esteemed SITE member, Committee member of the Thai Medical and Wellness Tourism Association, and chief partnership officer of ArokaGO. The overarching goal of these initiatives is to impart knowledge and motivation, empowering participants with the essential insights needed for the advancement and expansion of their tourism ventures within Myanmar.

SITE Thailand's involvement in Myanmar's event is a testament to its unwavering commitment to excellence and innovation. This partnership is not merely about revival, it symbolized a collective endeavour to elevate Myanmar's tourism sector to new heights, promoting sustainable growth and prosperity, as stated by the association. — KZL

India offers to purchase Myanmar's corn

INDIA has offered to purchase corn from Myanmar; in spite of that, there are difficulties in shipping due to the decrease in the corn price in the global market, according to corn traders.

Although a massive amount of corn crops were exported in the zero tariff period of 1 February to 31 August, exports in September decreased significantly.

After Thailand froze the purchase order of corn from Myanmar, India has offered to buy them, and they will also be purchased as a substitute for opium by China.

The corn price of K1,180 per viss in the second week of September has been dropping to the lowest from K1,050 per viss in the Yangon market. A total of two million tonnes of corn is exported abroad each year, and it was exported to Thailand with tax exemption from February to August.

In September, 1,250 tonnes of corn were exported to China from the Lweje border and 2,294 tonnes from the Chinshwehaw border. At present, Myanmar corn is shipped to Viet Nam, Malaysia, and the Philippines via the maritime route and exported to Thailand and China via the border trade route. — TWA/CT

A worker is seen sorting husked corn by size.

OPINION

Seek narrow margins in trading to reduce commodity prices

In a nation deeply rooted in agriculture, the majority of its rural populace finds livelihoods in the cultivation of staples like paddy and other seasonal crops, catering to the ever-growing demands of consumers. Paddy, in particular, holds a significant role in shaping the daily consumption habits of the nation.

However, the present scenario finds the populace grappling with the harsh realities of escalating commodity prices in the domestic market, prompting them to explore various avenues to secure their survival. Among these commodities, rice takes the central stage, dictating the very essence of daily life for the people.

In a bid to alleviate the burden on consumers, the Myanmar Rice Federation has recently unveiled reference prices for trading paddy this year. These prices serve as a tool to strike a balance between the pricing of rice and paddy within the agricultural sector. Only when the prices of rice are effectively regulated can the daily expenses of the populace be curtailed, offering them a glimmer of respite.

> All paddy and rice traders need to prioritize compassion over self-interest when engaging in these transactions. Only by narrowing profit margins can consumers begin to breathe easier with regard to their daily food supplies. Thus, it is incumbent upon paddy and rice traders to foster a sense of consideration for the welfare of all, ensuring that the basic needs of the people remain accessible and affordable.

Businesspersons and rice millers were urged to adhere to restrictions that ultimately serve the interests of the consumers. These price dynamics are contingent on the type and variety of paddy, and any fluctuations therein are bound to have a ripple effect on rice prices and, by extension, the daily expenditure of families.

It is imperative for those engaged in the paddy trade to cultivate empathy and consider the repercussions of manipulating paddy and rice prices. Such manipulations can burden consumers tremendously. MRF established a pricing framework for paddy based on quality, variety, and moisture content. This rationale dictates that paddy should be traded within the range of K1.3 million to K2 million per 100 baskets.

Under this framework, Ngasein/Aemahta paddy strains ought to be traded at K1.3 million to K1.5 million per 100 baskets, while paddy varieties from the Ayeyawady Region, such as Pyapon, Myaungmya, and Pathein, should be priced between K1.6 million to K1.8 million. Likewise, Ayeya Min paddy, Ayeya Padetha paddy, and Shwebo Pawsan are assigned pricing bands of K1.6 million to K1.8 million and K1.8 million to K2 million, respectively.

All paddy and rice traders need to prioritize compassion over self-interest when engaging in these transactions. Only by narrowing profit margins can consumers begin to breathe easier with regard to their daily food supplies. Thus, it is incumbent upon paddy and rice traders to foster a sense of consideration for the welfare of all, ensuring that the basic needs of the people remain accessible and affordable.

■

ARTICLE

Pulse on China's Economy: High-quality trade, a main growth driver, helps stabilize the economy despite pressure

The 20th China-ASEAN Expo saw record numbers of events, cooperation projects and investments. Nearly 2,000 businesses, up 18.2 per cent from 2022, showcased their products at the expo. High-tech products such as intelligent equipment became a highlight at the expo. Particularly, Brunei's decision to purchase 30 Chinese-made airplanes, namely C919 and ARJ21, for more than US$2 billion in total became the biggest deal in the expo's 20-year history.

The bustling scene at the expo illuminates an emerging trend in China's trade sector in recent months: Even as Chinese exports face a weakening external demand due to a wide range of factors including profound challenges and rising protectionism in advanced economies such as the US and Europe, China's trade with emerging markets, including ASEAN and countries and regions participating in the joint construction of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), continues to rise steadily. Meanwhile, high-value, high-quality Chinese products such as new-energy vehicles (NEVs) and construction equipment are becoming new growth spots.

While foreign media outlets have been hyping claims of "falling" Chinese exports or allegations of Made-in-China being "replaced" by other countries and regions, China's foreign trade remains resilient in the face of external and internal downward pressure, businesses and economists noted. And as exports remain one of the three growth engines of the Chinese economy, high-value, high-quality trade will continue to help stabilize the world's second-largest economy in the coming months and years, they noted.

People view a model of China's C919 passenger jet at the 6th China International Advanced Materials Industry Expo in Heilongjiang province in August 2023. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Resilience in hardship

At the exhibition halls of the China-ASEAN Expo, vendors from ASEAN showed a palpable sense of confidence and interest in boosting trade with China, as they showcased various products, which were emptied by visitors. While ASEAN exhibitors focused more on agricultural products and small commodities, Chinese exhibitors focused on high-tech products such as NEVs and robots.

"The world is currently facing an economic slowdown… ASEAN member countries are pinning their hopes on China," Tan Sri Dato' Low Kian Chuan, President of The Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia (ACCCIM), told the Global Times on Tuesday on the sidelines of the China-ASEAN Expo. "It can be seen from the trade volume that China-ASEAN trade has surpassed the EU. We need China, and China also needs ASEAN. Bilateral cooperation will definitely deepen."

In the first eight months of 2023, China's total imports and exports dropped by 0.1 per cent year-on-year to 27.08 trillion yuan, with exports growing by 0.8 per cent year-on-year to 15.47 trillion yuan, according to data from the General Administration of Customs (GAC). However, there were also plenty of emerging trends that point to the resilience and upgrade of China's trade sector.

From January to August, China's imports and exports with 152 countries that are participating in the joint construction of the China-proposed BRI grew by 3.6 per cent year-on-year to 12.62 trillion yuan, accounting for 46.6 per cent of China's total foreign trade. China's trade with ASEAN, which remains China's biggest trading partner, grew by 1.6 per cent year-on-year to 4.11 trillion, accounting for 15.2 per cent of China's total trade. The fall in China's overall trade during the period is largely due to declines in exports to the EU, the US and Japan, which all face stubbornly high levels of inflation.

In terms of top export products, demand for Chinese-made mechanical and electrical products remained high, as exports during the first eight months increased 3.6 per cent year-on-year. Exports of cars, including NEVs, skyrocketed by 104.4 per cent year-on-year. China's car exports have made headlines around the globe, with many foreign media outlets predicting that China is set to overtake Japan as the world's biggest car exporter in 2023.

A slew of advanced technology exhibits was unveiled at the China-ASEAN Expo. The exhibits cover a wide range of products, spanning aerospace, advanced manufacturing, sustainable development, and digital advanced applicable technologies, offering the audience a glimpse of life in the future. The advanced tech exhibition area covers an area of 3,400 square metres, with a total of 124 exhibitors and 345 exhibiting projects on display.

Gao Lingyun, an expert at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, said Chinese products still maintain a solid competitive edge even though Chinese exports face challenges such as US' additional tariffs. Gao noted the challenges will be relatively short-term against the backdrop of the trade competition between China and the US.

"The core factor affecting China's trade, namely the competitiveness of Chinese products, has not undergone major changes," Gao told the Global Times, adding that while the role of exports as a major economic engine is decreasing due to the rise of Chinese consumption, China's foreign trade still has a vast potential for development.

High-quality development

New trends in China's foreign trade also underscored high-quality development, in which more markets have been explored and more Chinese-made high-tech products are getting increasingly popular around the world, analysts noted, stressing that an increasingly optimized trade structure that focuses on emerging markets and industries is more sustainable in the long run.

Zhou Mi, a senior research fellow with the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said that one of the biggest highlights of China's foreign trade is that the trade volume with countries participating in the BRI is rising sharply, which in turn lifts local economic developments and thus demand. In terms of product offerings, China's exports sector has responded swiftly to demand for the digital economy, green development and other new consumption trends.

"To gauge the global influence of one country's exports, we still need to see whether it can meet the needs of global economic and industrial upgrading, so the quality of exports needs more attention. China's exports are still recovering, and this recovery is not only reflected in the quantity," Zhou told the Global Times. "We cannot just focus on increasing the scale of exports, we also need to improve the quality."

Amid the rapidly shifting global geo-economic landscape and the domestic industrial upgrade, China has made high-quality development in foreign trade one of its top priorities, and has taken a slew of measures in this regard. In April, the Ministry of Commerce introduced a series of policies to stabilize the scale of foreign trade and improve its structure, including helping automakers establish and improve their international marketing and service systems, and improving foreign trade financing services for medium, small and micro enterprises. These measures have greatly helped boost relevant sectors such as soaring NEV exports.

Another highlight of China's foreign trade sectors this year is surging exports by private enterprises. In the first eight months, total exports value by private enterprises rose by 6 per cent to 14.33 trillion yuan, accounting for 52.9 per cent of the national total, according to the GAC.

The measures, which also include extensively resuming domestic offline exhibitions, will continue to help enterprises explore more markets. China has held a series of trade fairs this year, including the China-ASEAN Expo and the China International Fair for Trade in Services earlier this month. More are under planning, including the China International Import Expo scheduled later this year in Shanghai, which has become a major event for global trade cooperation that focuses on imports.

"I have confidence in China. I believe that China has the conditions and capabilities. Moreover, China is not just the world's largest factory. It can make breakthroughs and cope with the current challenges through its own technological innovation," Low said.

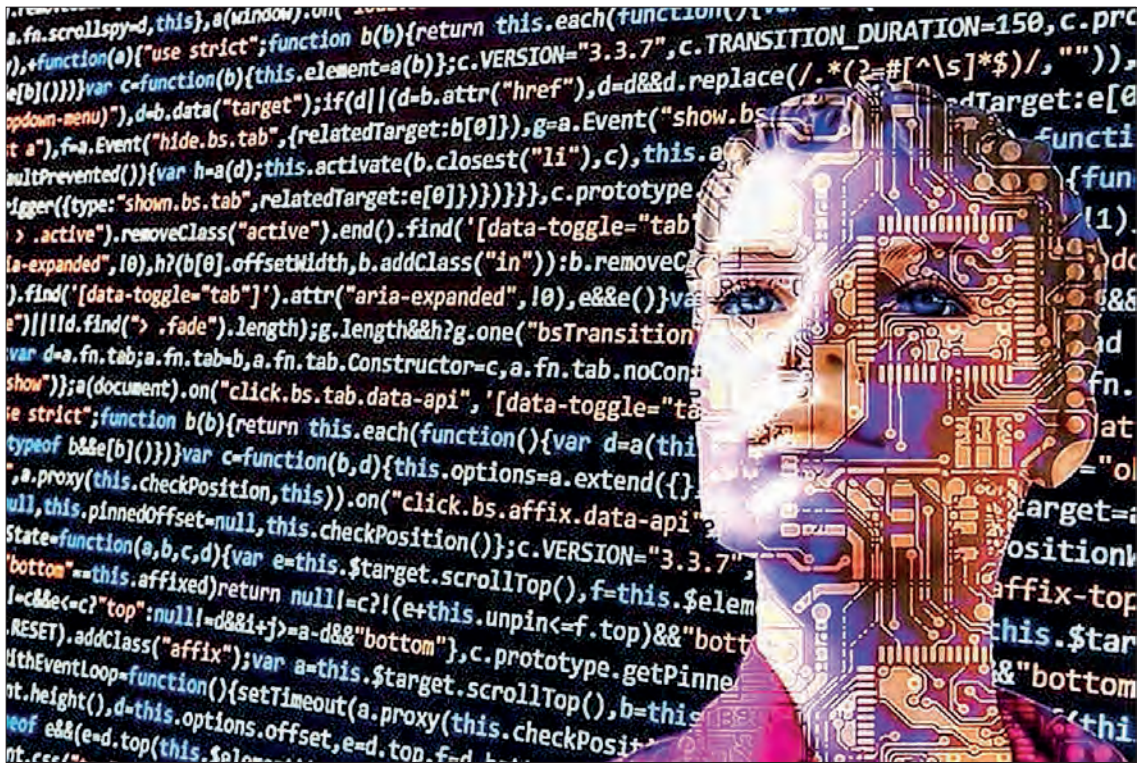
Source: Chinese Embassy

■

TECH/ENVIRON WORLD

ChatGPT can now search for data on the internet

ChatGPT's new capability allows it to browse the internet to gather current and authoritative information.



OpenAI has made a significant advancement in its generative AI platform, ChatGPT. The platform can now access and fetch data directly from the internet in real-time. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ PIXABAY**

THE generative AI platform ChatGPT can now fetch data directly from the internet and gather up-to-date information in real-time, its creator OpenAI said Wednesday, in a major milestone for the software.

Until now, ChatGPT's responses to user queries were based on a vast database, which did not contain information from after August 2021.

"ChatGPT can now browse the internet to provide you with current and authoritative information, complete with direct links to sources," OpenAI said in a post on X, formerly Twitter. "It is no longer limited to data before September 2021."

It also said that the latest feature would allow sites to control how ChatGPT interacts with them.

OpenAI launched the update for its paying subscribers in June, but suspended it after users managed to bypass paywalls on internet content.

The feature, dubbed "Browse with Bing", is also reserved for paying subscribers of ChatGPT Plus and Enterprise services, but OpenAI said it would soon be available to all users.

OpenAI partner Microsoft already offers Bing Chat, an integration of GPT-4, the language model used to develop ChatGPT, with its internet search engine, as does Google with its conversational robot Bard.

ChatGPT will provide direct sources alongside its responses, which will no longer be based on the single database the programme's publisher controls. — AFP

California's green drive leaves its oil towns behind

FRED Holmes watches with satisfaction as pumps pull oil from deep under his California farm, tapping a supply he thinks could last another century.

But he knows the state's ambitious environmental policies will put an end to the practice much sooner than that.

Oil extraction "could continue for another 100 years", he told AFP. But it won't.

"Twelve to 14 years" for his company at the rate things are changing, he says.

Oil jacks dot the landscape around Taft. **PHOTO: AFP**

California produces 311,000 barrels of crude oil every day, around 2.4 per cent of all US production, making it the seventh largest producing state in the union.

But it is also at the leading edge of environmentalism in the United States, and is determined to shrink its dependency. — AFP

UK government to push back on 'anti-car measures'

BRITAIN'S Conservative government on Friday announced new plans to "support drivers" and push back on "anti-car measures" as some opposition-led areas move to impose restrictions on the use of motor vehicles in the name of environmental protection.

"The clamp down on drivers is an attack on the day to day lives of most people across the UK who rely on cars to get to work or see their families," Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said in a statement announcing the new plans.

"This week the UK government will set out a long-term plan to back drivers, slamming the brakes on anti-car measures across England. We are taking the necessary decision to back the motorists who keep our country moving." — AFP

Crossing glaciers and fjords: Norwegian reindeer migrate for winter

A herd of reindeer with white, brown or grey coats climb mountains and swim between glaciers on their great migration to their winter pasture in Norway's far north.

Over fourteen days, an AFP photographer followed the Kautokeino reindeer on their way back from their summer pasture in Seglvik to the Kautokeino lands near the Finnish border.

The reindeer — bred by the indigenous Sami reindeer herders that span northern Europe — are semi-nomadic and travel across vast expanses as they move between their winter and summer grazing grounds.

To make their journey home, the reindeer bypass two glaciers before arriving at the foot of the Jokelfjord glacier — the only one in Europe which drains into the ocean.

The Sami follow their animals on quad bikes, on foot, or by boat.

Ante Niillas Gaup, a 37-year-old Sami herder, whistles towards the herd to show them the path to take. But the herder, accompanied by his barking dogs, says mostly they are driven by their instinct to follow the right route. — AFP

AFP followed the reindeer on their way back from the summer pasture in Seglvik to the Kautokeino lands near the Finnish borde. **PHOTO: AFP**

In face of corporate behemoths, an indie music festival thrives

BACK in 2006, Spotify was a nascent start-up, your average stateside concert tickets went for $40 and many fans learned about the best new music from blogs like All Things Go.

Nearly twenty years later, most people find new artists via algorithms and the average US concert ticket costs $250 — double what it was just five years ago.

All Things Go, however, has grown into a thriving indie music festival in a world where live events are increasingly owned by a handful of companies.

Now in its ninth year, the festival — whose name derives from a Sufjan Stevens lyric — embodies the same ethos as that of music blogging's turn-of-the-millennium heyday.

It focuses on emerging artists while prioritizing the experience of live performance over creating viral moments or appealing to social media influencers, both now dominant forces at more corporatized festivals.

The event kicked off its 2023 edition on Saturday at Maryland's historic Merriweather Post Pavilion amphitheater, spanning two days for the first time, with a women-led bill and headliners including Lana Del Rey, boygenius, Carly Rae Jepsen and Maggie Rogers. — AFP

Canadian singer Carly Rae Jepsen performs onstage during the All Things Go music festival at Merriweather Post Pavilion in Columbia, Maryland. **PHOTO: AFP**

TOP STORY

'Harry Potter' actor Michael Gambon dies aged 82

BRITISH-IRISH actor Michael Gambon, best known for playing Albus Dumbledore in six of the eight "Harry Potter" films, has died in hospital aged 82, his family announced Thursday.

Celebrated British-Irish actor Michael Gambon, best known for playing Albus Dumbledore in six of the eight "Harry Potter" films, has died in hospital aged 82, his family announced Thursday, prompting a flood of tributes. Gambon won four television BAFTAs and Olivier awards during an acclaimed decades-spanning acting career across television, film, radio and theatre. It was capped by his beloved role as the headmaster of the wizarding school Hogwarts in the Potter series. "We are devastated to announce the loss of Sir Michael Gambon," a statement issued on behalf of his family said.

"Beloved husband and father, Michael died peacefully in hospital with his wife Anne and son Fergus at his bedside, following a bout of pneumonia." Once described by fellow acting legend the late Ralph Richardson as "The Great Gambon", he earned a reputation as one of British theatre's leading lights while enjoying sustained success on the small and big screen. — AFP

UK satire 'Spitting Image' celebrated in new exhibition

During its heyday in the 1980s, "Spitting Image" was immensely popular, attracting up to 15 million viewers each week. It was known for its sharp political satire.

John Lloyd, producer of Spitting Image, stands next to a puppet of Margaret Thatcher at Cambridge University Library. **PHOTO: AFP**

MARGARET Thatcher wore a man's suit and smoked a cigar, Ronald Reagan was a liability who came close to causing nuclear war while Queen Elizabeth II's mother slugged from a half-empty gin bottle.

At the height of its 1980s popularity, British satirical television programme "Spitting Image" pulled in 15 million viewers each week.

Now, nearly 40 years after it first aired, puppets of some of its best-known targets including Thatcher, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and Princess Diana have gone on display at an exhibition in Cambridge.

Created by British caricaturists Peter Fluck and Roger Law, Spitting Image was merciless in its depiction of the leading public figures of the day.

Producer John Lloyd said he had been determined to work on the show as soon as he heard about it and immediately got in contact.

"They said, 'we already have two producers we don't need you, thank you very much', so I said, 'I'll work for nothing'," he told AFP.

Spitting Image quickly became a roaring success, with people from all walks of life tuning in every Sunday evening.

One of the show's most famous puppets was of former prime minister John Major, leading a terminally dull life, including one sketch showing him eating peas with his wife, Norma. — AFP

Sexual wellbeing industry revels in swelling sales

FROM creams and oils promising to take the user to seventh heaven to multi-sensory vibration devices and erotic lingerie, the sex accessory market has become more feminine over the years, even feminist.

In doing so, it has managed to broaden its market and is reaping the dividends, enjoying impressive growth.

The global market was estimated to be worth around $19 billion in 2021, with the United States leading the way ($4.4 billion), according to a study by consultancy firm PwC. — AFP

Lora Haddock DiCarlo (right), founder of Lora DiCarlo and inventor of the Ose sextoy, alongside a teammembers, pose for pictures in Las Vegas. **PHOTO: AFP**

ECONOMY
WORLD

Illicit trade hinders India's $5 trillion economy goal: Anurag Thakur

Union Minister Anurag Thakur expressed concern about the rise in illicit trade, which he sees as a consequence of globalization, impacting India's progress toward achieving a $5 trillion economy.

India is the fastest growing major economy in the world and is all set to achieve $5 trillion GDP by 2024-25. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ANI**

UNION Minister Anurag Thakur on Friday said that the surge in illicit trade is a troubling consequence of globalization which casts a shadow on the country's progress toward achieving a 5 trillion-dollar economy.

Addressing the 9th edition of FICCI CASCADE's 'MASCRADE 2023', Anurag Thakur said, "Illicit trade, whether conducted through activities like smuggling, counterfeiting, or tax evasion, exacts a considerable socio-economic toll. It not only hinders our advancement but also drives up expenses, pushing these crucial goals even further from our reach."

"We not only protect our economy but also contribute to a safer and more peaceful world. The fight against illicit trade is not just an economic battle; it is a battle for peace, stability, and the future of our world," he added.

Speaking on the various initiatives by the government, Anurag Thakur said, "We have been enacting laws that not only align with our international commitments but also exhibit a progressive outlook. However, given the intricate and alarming expansion of illicit trade, it underscores the need for enhanced intergovernmental collaborations and public-private partnerships to formulate a comprehensive strategy."

The Minister also said that illicit trade is a multi-billion-dollar business with severe economic, social, and environmental impacts, which are especially accentuated during periods of economic downturn. — ANI

Hong Kong maintains 4th place in global financial centres index

HONG Kong maintained the fourth place in an index of global financial centres published Thursday by British and Chinese think tanks, showing its resilience as a leading financial center despite challenges.

Photo taken on 22 June 2022 shows the view at the Victoria Harbour in Hong Kong, south China. **PHOTO: LI GANG/XINHUA**

The Global Financial Centres Index (GFCI) 34 report, released by British think tank Z/Yen Group and the China Development Institute in Shenzhen, showed that Hong Kong's overall rating increased notably.

"Hong Kong's global rankings in the four areas of business environment, human capital, financial sector development, and reputation and general have risen to fourth, reflecting recognition of Hong Kong's sustained strength and robustness as an international financial centre in the post-COVID era," said a spokesperson for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government. — Xinhua

Key US inflation measure ticks up in August

THE key US inflation measure used by the Federal Reserve to set interest rates ticked up again in August, fueled by rising energy prices, according to government data published Friday.

But aside from volatile food and energy costs, which are still paining Americans at grocery stores and gas pumps, inflation actually slowed last month to reach its lowest annual rate since 2021.

This is a welcome development for policymakers hoping to slow price increases without crashing the economy.

The Fed has raised interest rates 11 times since March 2022 in a bid to tame inflation and bring it firmly down to its long-term target of two percent. — AFP

France's Mayotte feels left high and dry as water crisis worsens

Despite appeals from Mayotte's residents and representatives for assistance from the French government, the response has been perceived as inadequate and fragmented.

WATER has been cut off two days out of every three this month in France's poorest department Mayotte, an Indian Ocean archipelago left underdeveloped in one of the world's wealthiest nations.

Although Mayotte's people and representatives have pushed for help from Paris, they have been left disappointed by a piecemeal government reaction.

"People are furious, but exhausted," Estelle Youssouffa, one of the archipelago's two MPs in the Paris parliament, told AFP.

Mayotte, located north of Madagascar, faces extended water shortages due to a severe drought, with reservoirs nearly depleted. Without further restrictions, daily water availability could drop significantly below the population's needs by the end of October, leading to health issues and disruptions in schools and hospitals.

Boiling water is recommended despite authorities deeming it safe for consumption.

At the National Assembly in Paris on Tuesday, he told MP Youssouffa that the government had set up additional water pipes to improve distribution, installed water tanks in schools, and was distributing 5.4 million bottles of water to 50,000 "vulnerable" inhabitants.

Paris has also committed 35 million euros ($37 million) to plugging leaks in the water system, and says two long-promised desalination plants would be completed by the end of 2024.

This is not enough, Youssouffa told AFP. — AFP

Austria rail operator OeBB unveils new night trains

Austrian rail operator OeBB introduced new sleeper trains with modern design, increased privacy, and more shower facilities, responding to traveller demand for eco-friendly alternatives to planes and cars.

The new trains feature a modern design, more privacy and more shower facilities. **PHOTO: AFP**

AUSTRIAN rail operator OeBB on Saturday unveiled its new generation of sleeper trains — a response to demands from travellers for less pollutant alternatives to planes and petrol or diesel cars.

Night trains are starting to make a comeback in Europe thanks to their low-carbon footprint and after years of neglect, operators are now investing heavily to replace their ageing rolling stock.

State-owned OeBB, which operates 20 rail routes across Europe, has been a pioneer in reviving such services.

The company has Europe's largest fleet of sleeper trains and hopes to double the number of its overnight passengers from 1.5 million to three million by 2030.

The new trains feature a modern design, more privacy and more shower facilities.

The first of 33 — ordered from German conglomerate Siemens in 2018 for a total investment of 720 million euros ($760 million at current value) — will come into service on 10 December.

It will connect the Austrian cities of Vienna and Innsbruck to the German port of Hamburg.

Between then and 2028, it will be phased in on other routes in Austria, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

"France will have to wait a bit because this requires new approvals from the national railroad authority," OeBB CEO Andreas Matthae told AFP.

"Unfortunately, we are not yet a unified Europe in the railroad sector." — AFP

Yosemite National Park is a renowned national park located in the Sierra Nevada mountain range in California, United States. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

US government shutdown to close iconic national parks

US national parks, from the iconic Yosemite and Yellowstone in the west to Florida's Everglades swamp, will close to the public from Sunday in the increasingly likely event of a federal government shutdown.

Barring any last-minute deal in Congress, visitors to most of the national parks and hundreds of other popular sites will meet with padlocked gates from midnight Saturday due to a freeze in federal funding, the Department of the Interior said early Friday.

"In the event of a lapse in annual government appropriations … the majority of national parks will be closed completely to public access," it said.

Only certain areas that are generally accessible to people, like the National Mall in the center of Washington and Gateway National Park in San Francisco, will be accessible.

"At national park service units across the country gates will be locked, visitor centers will be closed and thousands of park rangers will be furloughed," a senior Interior official told reporters, insisting on anonymity.

The National Park Service operates 63 official national parks and hundreds more designated historical sites, seashores and monuments, which last year drew more than 300 million visitors. — AFP

Truckers in Germany end 'unprecedented' strike

TRUCK drivers who transport goods around Europe ended a weeks-long work stoppage in Germany including a hunger strike after reaching a pay deal at the weekend, labour representatives said.

Edwin Atema, head of the Road Transport Due Diligence Foundation, which monitors and addresses violations of work standards in Europe, said Saturday that the striking truckers had seen their demands met.

"All claims and charges against the Graefenhausen drivers are withdrawn, money has been paid and the strike is over," he said on X, formerly known as Twitter, referring to the location in western Germany where some 80 drivers had set up a protest encampment.

Atema, who led the negotiations on the labour side, said the drivers had been previously "invisible" in European road transport supply chains but achieved "fundamental changes" with their industrial action. — AFP

Truck drivers walk past parked trucks outside Frankfurt am Main, western Germany, 22 September 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

ROLLING UPDATES
WORLD

Nigeria announces measures to offset rising costs as strikes loom

The President has initiated economic reforms, which include ending the long-standing fuel subsidy.

NIGERIA'S President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Sunday proposed a temporary minimum wage hike and more cheap gas-powered public transport among other measures to help offset the impact of his economic reforms as labour unions threatened a national strike.

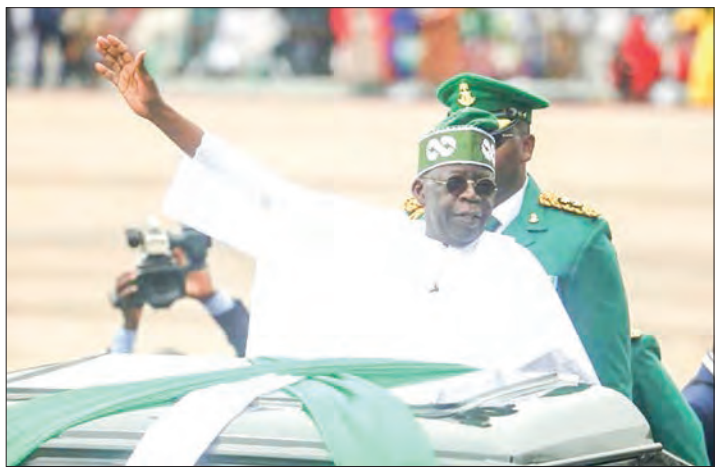
Speaking in a national broadcast to mark Nigeria's 63rd independence day anniversary, Tinubu's announcement came after he ended a long-standing fuel subsidy that cost the government billions of dollars a year and also liberalised the naira currency.

Government officials say the reforms were needed to revive Africa's largest economy and investors have applauded them, but Nigerians are struggling with a tripling of fuel prices and inflation now at 25 per cent.

"Reform may be painful, but it is what greatness and the future require," the president said.

"There is no joy in seeing the people of this nation shoulder burdens that should have been shed years ago. I wish today's difficulties did not exist. But we must endure if we are to reach the good side of our future."

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) — the two major unions who represent industries from aviation workers and nurses to teachers and bankers — called an indefinite strike for October 3 because they say the government failed to address their concerns. — AFP



Nigeria's president Bola Tinubu has sought to offset the impact of his economic reforms. **PHOTO: AFP**

Stopped train left hundreds of migrants stranded in Mexican desert

MIGRANTS were stranded in northern Mexico's harsh desert after the freight train they were riding on halted for 24 hours, though they were trundling toward the border again on Saturday.

Around 1,800 people, mostly Venezuelans and Central Americans, became stuck overnight in the northern state of Chihuahua when the freight train they had hitched a ride on stopped without explanation in the Ahumada municipality Friday.

"All night, the cold didn't let up, and during the day, (there was no relief) from the sun," Venezuelan Jose Martin told AFP. These migrants are among many who ride on freight trains as a means of heading north, where they hope to cross into the United States after fleeing poverty and violence in their home countries.

"Not bus or car, nothing, nobody will take us, so we hopped on a train, because supposedly they (trains) don't stop," said Maria Fernanda Molina, also from Venezuela.

"But look what happened to us," she said.

In Mexico, where most railroads are more than 100 years old, freight trains often move slowly or stop altogether — sometimes for the very purpose of discouraging migrants.

Just last week, the country's largest railway suspended 30 per cent of its operations due to being overwhelmed by the flow of foreign stowaways. — AFP

1,800 mostly Venezuelan and Central American migrants were stranded overnight in Chihuahua, Mexico, when the freight train they were riding suddenly stopped in Ahumada municipality without explanation. **PHOTO: AFP**

WORLD : TOP HEADLINES

Japan, ASEAN to beef up private sector cybersecurity cooperation

JAPAN and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations will seek to beef up private sector cybersecurity cooperation amid China's growing regional influence, Japanese government sources said Sunday.

Stakeholders and relevant parties from both sides, including nongovernmental organizations, will sign an agreement in Tokyo this week ahead of a summit in the Japanese capital in December to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Japan-ASEAN friendship and cooperation, according to the sources.

The agreement, which will see cybersecurity collaboration between Japan and ASEAN nations reinforced, will be included in a joint statement at the December summit, they said.

The Japanese government has been providing support for developing professionals among governments of ASEAN members through training programmes at the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre in Bangkok, operated under the leadership of Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. — Kyodo

Türkiye says 'terrorist attack' took place in Ankara

A "terrorist attack" took place near Türkiye's parliament in Ankara on Sunday leaving two police officers injured, the interior ministry said.

The powerful explosion, which was followed by large flames, was heard for several kilometres from the site of the attack.

The ministry said two attackers arrived in a commercial vehicle around 9:30 am (0630 GMT) "in front of the entrance gate of the General Directorate of Security of our Ministry of the Interior, and carried out a bomb attack".

"One of the terrorists blew himself up and the other was neutralised," the ministry added on social media, saying two officers received "minor injuries".

The targeted district is home to several other ministries and the Turkish parliament, which was due to reopen today with an address from President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, according to Turkish media.

Media said the president was due to speak to deputies during the day's session. — AFP

Australia fires force evacuations as country swelters

OUT-OF-CONTROL bushfires forced hundreds of residents and tourists to flee several towns in rural southeast Australia Sunday, as the country sweltered in extreme temperatures.

People in four towns in Victoria state's Gippsland, a region of national parks and wineries popular with tourists, were told to evacuate immediately while residents of three other towns and surrounding areas were warned to prepare to leave.

Among those who escaped was Briagolong resident Rob Saunders, who saw the flames reach his house.

"I watched the main water tank, the plastic tanks melt away," he told public broadcaster ABC.

"The car port is gone, the camper trailer and bits and pieces all went up (in flames).

"I looked to the side of my house, it's a mud brick, raw timber house, one of my verandah posts was on fire…it was time for me to go." — AFP

SPORTS

Thailand sweep women's golds as Hong Kong's Kho makes Asiad golf history

THAILAND'S Arpichaya Yubol snatched Asian Games women's gold on Sunday after India's Aditi Ashok blew a seven-shot overnight lead, while rising star Taichi Kho made history for Hong Kong golf in the men's event.

Kho kept his nerve despite a charge by PGA Tour star Im Sung-jae for a one-stroke victory at 27-under par and Hong Kong's first golf medal ever at the Asian Games.

Im still secured team gold, a feat that will exempt him and his three teammates — Kim Si-woo, Jang Yu-bin and Cho Woo-young — from compulsory military service back home.

Thailand won men's team silver and Hong Kong took a second medal with the bronze.

Ashok, who shot an incredible 11-under-par 61 on Saturday, slumped to a final-round 77 on the par-72 West Lake International Golf Course in Hangzhou but still secured silver.

LPGA Tour rookie Arpichaya's final-round 68 took her to 19-under par and victory over Ashok by two strokes.

"When I hit the second shot on 18 I felt it was straight, but when I saw it land on the green, I cried a little bit," said the world number 206, who was mobbed by her equally emotional Thai teammates after holing the final putt.

The 21-year-old's four-under round also sealed the women's team gold for Thailand on a 34-under aggregate, six clear of South Korea, with China taking bronze. — AFP

Thailand's Arpichaya Yubol hits a shot during the women's golf event at the 2022 Asian Games in Hangzhou. **PHOTO: PHILIP FONG / AFP**

Myanmar's Thiha Htet Zaw competes during the Archery (men's) recurve event at the Fuyang Yinhu Sports Centre in Hangzhou, China, on 1 October 2023.

Myanmar Sepak Takraw team will face Indonesia in the men's a team of four event today 9 am and Viet Nam will take on Myanmar at 2 pm.

In the women's a team of four event of Sepak Takraw Myanmar will fly in the face off Indonesia at 2 pm. In the Archery Recurve Mixed Team event, Myanmar will compete with Indonesia at 9 am.

The first day of the four-man Sepak Takraw competition at the Asian Games began on 1 October in Hangzhou, China, where Myanmar teams competed.

In the Men's event, the Myanmar team won the Lao team 2-1 and secured a good result in the opening match. The Myanmar team was defeated by 19-21 points in the first game, but won the second game with 21-18 points and 22-20 points in the third.

Deputy Sport Minister enjoys Myanmar team matches in Asian Games

The XIX Asian Games hosted by the People's Republic of China are being held at designated locations. Myanmar Olympic Committee General Secretary Deputy Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs U Myo Hlaing and officials of the governing body attended the archery competition held at the Fuyang Yinhu Sports Centre in Hangzhou at 9 am local time yesterday morning.

In this competition, Thiha Htet Zaw from Myanmar competed in Archery (men's) recurve event and ranked 30th with a total score of 639 out of 84 contestants. At 2 pm local time, Pyae Sone Hnin continued to compete in Archery (Women's) Recurve and ranked 63rd with a total score of 578 out of 84 contestants.

The Myanmar team defeated the Lao team by 2:1 in the men's (a team of four) event of Sepak Takraw held at 9 am local time. In the women's (a team of four) competition, the Vietnamese team won the Myanmar team by two games. At 2 pm, the Myanmar team crushed the Japanese team 2-0.

Team Myanmar will take on Indonesia at 7 am Myanmar Standard Time and Viet Nam at 12 pm Myanmar Standard Time today. In the women's competition, the Myanmar team competed in two groups, winning one and losing one. In the first game, the Myanmar team lost to the Vietnamese team with 15-21 and 10-21 points, but in the second game, they won over the Japanese team by 21-14 and 21-4 points.

Team Myanmar will play decisive match against Indonesia today. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

Asian Games: Xie strikes men's 100m gold, Kiryu, Koike out in semis

YOSHIHIDE Kiryu and Yuki Koike, two of Japan's top sprinters, failed to reach the men's 100-metre final at the Asian Games on Saturday, the second day for athletics.

Later in the eight-man 100 final, China's Xie Zhenye stormed to the gold medal in 9.97 seconds, 0.05 ahead of Thai runner-up Puripol Boonson. Malaysia's Muhammad Azeem bin Mohd Fahmi rounded out the podium an additional 0.09 back.

"I've waited for this gold since my first Asian Games at Incheon 2014," the 30-year-old Xie said. "Heaven rewards those who wait."

"I've doubted myself before. But today, I've shown everyone that I've never given up, I always kept working hard."

In the semifinal round, Kiryu was fourth in 10.23 seconds in Heat 1, while Koike was fifth in 10.22 in Heat 3. Koike and Kiryu finished 10th and 11th overall at Hangzhou Olympic Sports Centre Stadium. Kiryu did not have high expectations for himself as he just returned to competition earlier this month from a muscle tear in the back of his left thigh.

"I kept calm and raced until the end," Kiryu said. "I tried to increase my top speed from the first round. I just need to keep training without getting injured." — Kyodo

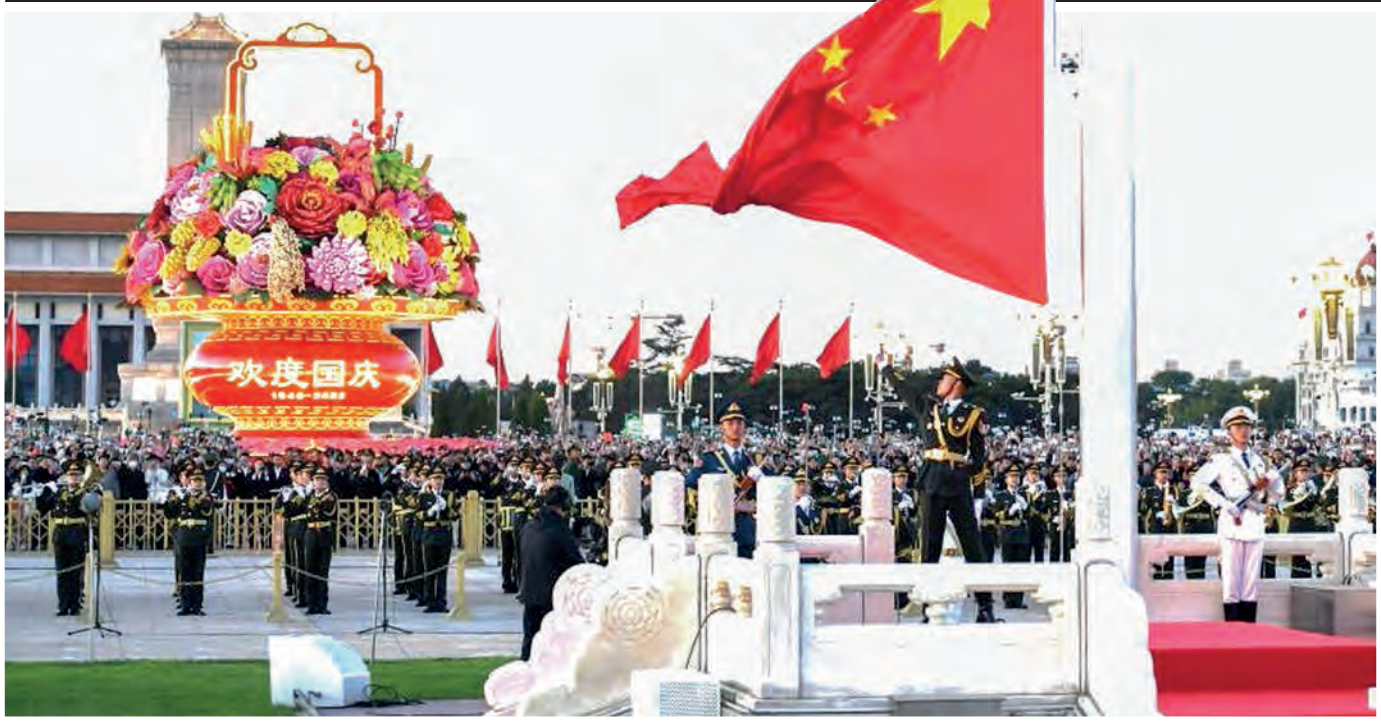
Chinese sprinter Xie Zhenye (C) wins the men's 100-metre final at the Asian Games in Hangzhou, China, on 30 September 2023. **PHOTO: KYODO**

WORLD

ROLLING UPDATES: WORLD

Nigeria announces measures to offset rising costs as strikes loom

PAGE-14



A flag-raising ceremony to celebrate the 74th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China is held at the Tian'anmen Square in Beijing, capital of China, 1 October 2023. **PHOTO : JU HUANZONG/XINHUA**

Flag-raising ceremony held at Tian'anmen Square to celebrate 74th founding anniv. of PRC

1st October is a national holiday in China known as National Day, and it is a time when various celebrations and activities take place across the country.

SUNDAY marked the 74th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. As officials attended the flag-raising ceremony, a secondary school choir sang the national anthem and helicopters and boats passed through the harbour.

The founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 marked the end of a long period of civil war and the establishment of the People's Republic under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, with Mao Zedong as its first Chairman.

In the meantime, Russian President Vladimir Putin congratulated his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, on the 74th anniversary of the founding of China and expressed confidence that the upcoming talks between the two leaders would serve the interests of ensuring security in Eurasia and throughout the world, the Kremlin said on Sunday.

"I am confident that our upcoming talks during the One Belt One Road international forum will further extend the entire range of constructive Russian-Chinese ties benefitting our countries' peoples and ensuring safety and stability in the Eurasian continent and the entire world," Putin was quoted as saying by the press service. — Xinhua/SPUTNIK

Slovak populists opposed to Ukraine aid win election

A populist party that wants to stop military aid to Ukraine and is critical of the EU and NATO has won Slovakia's election, results showed on Sunday.

The Smer-SD party led by former prime minister Robert Fico scored 23.3 per cent, beating the centrist Progressive Slovakia on 17 per cent, with almost all votes counted.

The 59-year-old Fico has vowed that Slovakia will not send "a single round of ammunition" to Ukraine and has called for better relations with Russia.

Analysts predict a Fico government could radically change Slovakia's foreign policy to resemble that of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban.

Smer is set to clinch 42 seats in the 150-member parliament and so will need coalition partners for a majority.

The leftwing Hlas-SD, which emerged in 2020 when a group of Smer lawmakers quit Fico's party, is one potential partner, with an expected 27 seats.

Hlas is led by Peter Pellegrini, who became Slovakia's premier in 2018 after Fico had to step down amid nationwide protests following the murder of journalist Jan Kuciak and his fiancee.

Kuciak uncovered links between the Italian mafia and Fico's government in his last article published posthumously.

Pellegrini told reporters it was not a good idea to have two former prime ministers in a single government, but "that doesn't mean such a coalition is impossible". — AFP

EVs produce zero tailpipe emissions. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Electric vehicles see growing demand in Laos amid fluctuating cost of fuel

The government in Laos is actively promoting the use of electric vehicles (EVs), likely through incentives, policies, or initiatives to encourage their adoption.

DUE to the spiraling cost of fuel, more and more people in Laos are switching to electric vehicles (EVs) with the aim of saving fuel costs and reducing air pollution.

Sengchan Khamxay, a 35-year-old trader in Vientiane province, decided to shift to using an electric vehicle five months ago, and now he is very happy because it helps cut cost of living.

"My job requires me to drive to various locations several times a day. Previously, I used a diesel-powered car and my expense on petrol costs was high at 200 to 300 US dollars per month," Sengchan told Xinhua on Friday.

"I think electric car will be the best way to help save my money, and I was right."

"Besides saving money, electric vehicles are environmentally-friendly. With its competitive price, modernly designed, advanced technology, and safety features, I think many people can afford to buy one," he said. — Xinhua