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

The Global NEW LIGHT of MYANMAR

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Vigilance required against powerful nations' interference through varied means and comprehensive warfare

VICE-SENIOR General Soe Win alerts all to monitor the attempts of some powerful countries to interfere in the internal affairs of developing countries like Myanmar through various ways and means by applying soft and hard powers in multiple warfares.

Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win delivered a speech at the meeting with officer instructors and cadets at the Convocation Hall of the Defence Services Academy in PyinOoLwin yesterday.

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A grower in Inbubaw Village elaborates they reap success with grapefruit cultivation funded by the State Economic Promotion Programme.

One-Region One-Product initiative flourishes as grapefruit trees thrive in Machanbaw

GRAPEFRUIT cultivated in Machanbaw township, PutaO District, Kachin State in northern Myanmar, the popular fruit with health benefits, is listed in the One-Region One-Product programme and is also one of the signature fruits in PutaO District where one can explore traditional food highlighting local delicacies, herbs, beautiful mountain ranges with scenic beauty and fascinating sights and landmarks.

There are 62.05 acres of grapefruit cultivation in Machanbaw Township. Under the guidance of the Kachin State chief minister, the Department of Agriculture is also providing grapefruit seedlings free of charge to expand sown acrage and ramp up production,

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MoC aims to elevate production of value-added coconut products

THE Union minister of the Ministry of Commerce highlighted manufacturing of value-added coconut products including food and consumer goods at the value-addition training on coconut-based products held on 2 October.

The Union minister urged the trainees to scale up their skills to manufacture coconut-rooted food products with value addition as those products can penetrate foreign markets. That project aims to fulfil the needs of coconut producers and coconut-based products businesspersons.

The experts will offer courses with practical and theoretical approaches to manufacture value-added food products such as coconut ice cream, jelly, coconut oil, coconut powder and coconut candies and non-food products such as soaps and coconut shell charcoal.

The exports of fresh coconut and dried coconut declined this year compared to the volume of the previous years. Therefore, it is necessary to endeavour coconut export promotion as well, he emphasized.

Myanmar commenced coconut exports with 16 tonnes in the 2020-2021 financial year. The export volumes were registered at 206 tonnes worth US$0.082 million in the 2021-2022 FY and 319 tonnes worth $0.128 million in six months (April-September) of the 2022-2023 FY, as per the Commerce Ministry. — TWA/EM

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Pilgrims explore No 1831 cave pagoda in Bagan, delving into its architecture, mural paintings

THE people can study the structure of the No 1831 cave pagoda in the Bagan ancient cultural heritage region of Mandalay Region including its architecture, stupas inside the temple and mural paintings, according to the Department of Archaeology and National Museum (Bagan Branch).

The picture depicts the standing and sitting Buddha images in the archways of the cave pagoda.

The cave pagoda, No 1831 edifice in the Bagan region, is located in the Khaymingha pagoda compound beside Nyaung-gU-Bagan old road. There are five archways at the cave pagoda, there is a sitting Buddha image in the east archway while four standing Buddha images at the remaining four sides respectively.

The No 1831 cave pagoda with five archways was Eainyarkyaung constructed in the housing compound of King Narapati Sithu's son Prince Kinkathu and his wife Nyaungyankyi Thamee (daughter of Nyaungyankyi). It is also called Eainyarkyaung Ngamyathna Cave Pagoda. It has distinctive features of the Sinhalese-type structure.

The general view of the No 1831 cave pagoda.

The visitors can read the stone instructions of Nyaungyankyi Thamee at the Archeological Museum (Bagan). These are also depicted on the wall of the Eainyakyaung Ngamyathna cave pagoda.

The Khaymingha pagoda is located to the south of No 1831 cave pagoda while Hteelominlo pagoda, Shwelatetuu pagoda, Shwelatepauk pagoda, Thikya pagoda, Thikyahit pagoda, Upalithein to the east, Satumukha pagoda and Yinmana pagoda to the north, Min-O-Chantha pagoda, Minmhaw Yaza pagoda and Ananda temple to the west. — Dipa Lin/KTZH

Kyaikkhami mid-water pagoda's Buddha Pujaniya Festival set for full moon of Thadingyut

THE Buddha Pujaniya festival of Kyaikkhami mid-water pagoda in Thanbyuzayat Township of Mon State will be held on the full moon of Thadingyut, according to U Phoe Nyein, member of the pagoda board of trustees.

The annual Buddha Pujaniya festival will be from 23-27 October and include a Maha Pathana recitation event.

"The Buddha Pujaniya festival of Kyaikkhami mid-water pagoda will be organized from 23-27 October. The ceremony of floating the alms bowl will be at 3 am on the full moon of Thadingyut and the Abhidhamma Day event will be at Sasana the Beikman of the pagoda. The pagoda festival marking the successful conclusion of Buddha Pujaniya will contain free and ticketed theatrical shows from 30 October to 3 November. To conserve the Myanmar traditional Chinlone sports, the young women will show the techniques with various moves creatively and beautifully with the best of their skills (free). Then, there will be free football matches of eight teams," said U Phoe Nyein.

An aerial panoramic view of the Kyaikkhami Pagoda.

The plots for stalls will be sold on 21 October. There are three kinds of Kyaikkhami mid-water pagoda festivals – the festival of pouring water on the Bodhi tree on Kason full moon day, the honey-offering ceremony and rice donation ceremony on the 14th waxing of Tawthalin and Buddha Pujaniya festival on the full moon of Thadingyut. — ASH/KTZH

MYANMAR GAZETTE

Head of Service Organization appointed

THE State Administration Council has appointed Dr Thaung Naing Oo, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Forest, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, as Director-General of the same department on probation from the date he assumes charge of his duties.

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Moreover, the Vice-Senior General stressed that the State, Tatmadaw and the people have to make collaborative efforts in unison to overcome challenges.

He said that the emergence of the State Administration Council was based on voting fraud in the 2020 general election, adding that the general election to be held by the State Administration Council must be free and fair.

Hence, he disclosed that IT technology is being applied in the enumeration of correct and basic population and household census and verifying citizenship scrutiny cards.

With regard to the peace process, the Vice-Senior General noted that the State and the Tatmadaw are holding peace talks with NCA signatories and non-signatories and opening the door for the restoration of durable and perpetual peace. He continued that arrangements are being made to hold the ceremony to mark the 8th anniversary of signing NCA in Nay Pyi Taw on 15 October.

> Vice-Senior General stressed that the State, Tatmadaw and the people have to make collaborative efforts in unison to overcome challenges.

State Administration Council Vice-Chairman Deputy C-in-C of Defence Services C-in-C (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win meets officer instructors and cadets at the Defence Services Academy in PyinOoLwin yesterday.

The meeting was also attended by Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Maung Maung Aye, high-ranking senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief, the commander of the Central Command, and the commandant of DSA.

The Vice-Senior General also attended the choice of arms for cadets of the 66th Intake of DSA in PyinOoLwin yesterday.

Also present at the choice of arms were Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Maung Maung Aye, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Moe Aung, Commander-in-Chief (Air) General Tun Aung, high-ranking military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief, the commander of the Central Command, the commandant of DSA and officials. They asked cadets in individuals about outstanding measures of literature and military arts, hobbies and industry and selected proper arms of the army, navy and air force corps.

— MNA/TTA

SAC Member holds meeting with Pa-O self-administered zone officials, local community

SAC Member Khun San Lwin meets departmental personnel and locals in the Pa-O self-administered zone yesterday.

STATE Administration Council Member Khun San Lwin, along with Shan State Chief Minister U Aung Zaw Aye, state ministers, the state attorney-general, the chairman of the Pa-O Self-Administered Zone administration body, and state-level departmental officials, convened a meeting with township-level departmental officials, local elders, indigenous cultural groups, and Pa-O entrepreneurs at the town hall in the Pa-O Self-Administered Zone yesterday.

Khun San Lwin provided an overview of the five-point road map and nine objectives of the State Administration Council, along with updates on preparations for a free and fair election. The purpose of the meeting was to align the region's education, health, transport, social, and economic needs with relevant departments, addressing them at the Union level when necessary. The state chief minister committed to resolving issues within the state's authority, while matters falling under the Union's purview would be forwarded to the Union level.

Following this, U Khun Ye Htway, Chairman of the Pa-O Self-Administered Zone administration body, presented a brief overview of the region, and U Myint Tun, Chairman of the Management Committee of Hopong Township, shared information about Hopong Township.

Subsequently, attendees, including millers, coffee growers, livestock breeders, and butter producers, along with village-track officials, discussed sector-wise requirements and challenges. The state chief minister coordinated the points raised.

The meeting concluded with a closing speech by the SAC member, and grants were disbursed to departments in the Pa-O Self-Administered Zone. The state chief minister provided food supplies to local militia members of Long Hkok and Pawng Lin, while state ministers awarded funds to ethnic literature and culture troupes. The SAC member, the state chief minister, and officials warmly greeted the attendees.

— MNA/TS

NATIONAL

MoNREC UM leaves for 3rd International Cooperation Forum in China

Union Minister U Khin Maung Yi is seen before leaving for China yesterday.

U Khin Maung Yi, Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, led a Myanmar delegation to the Third International Cooperation Forum between the countries of Himalayan Mountains region. The delegation departed from Yangon yesterday afternoon for Nyingchi, People's Republic of China, where the forum is scheduled to take place from 4 to 6 October.

The forum aims to foster cooperation and development among Himalayan region countries, harmonious development between humans and nature, and environmental conservation. Over 300 representatives from 12 countries are expected to participate in this significant event. — MNA/TS

30th Myanmar Tatmadaw Medical Conference commences

THE opening ceremony of the 30th Myanmar Tatmadaw Medical Conference was held at the hall of the No 1 Military Hospital (700-bed) in PyinOoLwin yesterday morning.

The academic session of the 30th Myanmar Tatmadaw Medical Conference was inaugurated with an opening speech delivered by the Director of Tatmadaw Medical Corps.

As part of the first-day programme of the Medical Conference, Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Healthcare 4.0, medical topics and five Special Talks were discussed during the Symposium of the Conference.

A total of 24 research papers on medicine, obstetrics and gynaecology, public health and anesthesiology, including four research papers from the Ministry of Health and one research paper from the Royal Thai Army General Hospital, were read out.

A total of 314 specialists, medical officers, experts and nurses attended the conference in person and 112 from other military hospitals in the country and the Indian Army Medical Corps online. The conference will continue until 5 October.

The Director of the Tatmadaw Medical Corps met the teams led by Lt-Gen Kong Saly, Director of the Cambodian Military Medical Corps, Brig-Gen Piyalarp Watsuwat, Deputy Superintendent of the Royal Thai Military Hospital, Brig-Gen Le Van Dong, Deputy Director of the Medical Staff of the Viet Nam Medical Corps, and Colonel Phouvilay Phounsavath, Deputy Director of Medical Staff of the Laos Medical Corps, and specialists from India and the Republic of Korea in the reception hall of No 1 Army Hospital (700-bed) yesterday afternoon and discussed cooperation in medical science. — MNA/KZW

The 30th Myanmar Tatmadaw Medical Conference underway yesterday in PyinOoLwin.

Online vendor registration opens: Online payment only required

The inaugural and awareness event for the eComReg system in progress on 2 October in Yangon.

THE Ministry of Commerce has announced that online vendors will have the opportunity to register starting from 2 October. Only online fees will need to be paid during the pilot project period, as stated by U Kyaw Soe Win, Deputy Director of the Trade Department.

He made this statement during the introduction and awareness-raising ceremony for the eComReg system, which facilitates online seller registration. The ceremony took place on 2 October at the Wedding Hall of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Dagon Township, Yangon Region.

From 2 October 2023, until the end of December, registration fees will be waived for those who register online. Additionally, a police station certificate and a recommendation letter from the local ward are required.

Furthermore, starting 1 January 2024, actions will be taken against unregistered online vendors. It has been reported that the Ministry of Commerce designated online trading as an important commodity and service business under Section 4, Subsection (c) of the Essential Goods and Services Law on 21 July. — ASH/KZW

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NATIONAL

K1 mln donated to Myanmar's oldest grandmother in Magway

DAW Khin Thuzar, Head of the Department of Social Welfare in Magway Region, stated that they have donated K1 million to Daw Chaw Yin aged 123, the oldest grandmother of Myanmar, who lives in Magway.

The donation was made at the International Elderly Day Celebration in Magway Region on 1 October.

At the ceremony, 70 elderly grandfolks in Magway Region were given cash assistance and homage gifts. In addition, the Magway Region Health Department provided healthcare services to them. — ASH/CT

An 123-year-old grannie celebrates International Older Persons Day on 1 October 2023.

Four Myanmar beauty contestants to compete in India, Malaysia

THE Myanmar Beauty Paradise Organization will send four Myanmar beauty contestants to the beauty pageants to be held in India and Malaysia, according to Layauk Naw, founder of the organization.

I am Model Search Mrs International Myanmar 2023 Mrs Shwe Ma Ma Aung and Mrs Mu Mu Lwin who represent Myanmar will compete in I am Model Search Mrs International 2023 to be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 2 to 9 October.

Similarly, Mrs Supermodel Worldwide Myanmar contestant Moon will compete in the 2nd Mrs Supermodel Worldwide 2023 to be held in New Delhi, India, from 14 to 22 October.

A group documentary photograph of Myanmar beauty contestants and organizers.

"Please support our beauty contestants. They will make the best preparations for the competitions. The Pageant Industry of Myanmar is left behind when compared with other countries. The industry has been operated just for one decade. The number of contestants in international competitions become high and the industry will also develop more and more. Therefore, we want to support and want the people to give positive encouragement," said Layauk Naw.

Miss Myanmar Beauty Paradise Teen Winner 2019 Shin May Kha will compete in Miss Beauty Paradise Teen 2024 to be held in Malaysia in January 2024. — ASH/KTZH

Myanmar beauty queen to compete for 71st Miss World 2023 in India

MISS Pintaya Yoon Theint Theint Nway has been selected to represent Myanmar for the upcoming 71st Miss World 2023 to be held in India in December.

Danu ethnic beauty queen Yoon Theint Theint Nway, who represented Pintaya of southern Shan State, won the crown and two titles in the Miss World Myanmar 2023 Final held in Yangon on 1 October.

"Being a winner of Miss World Myanmar 2023, I will carry out social welfare programmes of the beauty queen with a purpose project together with the Miss World Myanmar Organization for one year. I will do my best in the 71st Miss World 2023," Yoon Theint Theint Nway said.

Beauty contestant Yoon Theint Theint Nway won the Media's Choice Award, People's Choice Award, Beauty With A Purpose, Brand Ambassador and Special Award in addition to the Miss World Myanmar 2023 crown. — ASH/KTZH

Danu ethnic beauty queen Yoon Theint Theint Nway (Front) is seen at the Miss World Myanmar 2023 Final on 1 October.

Government of Republic of Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Natural Resources & Environmental Conservation

Central Committee on Holding Myanmar Gems Emporium

Information about Mid-Year Myanmar Gems Emporium 2023

1. The significant Mid-Year Myanmar Gems Emporium 2023, under the supervision of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, will be held from 20 to 28 October 2023 at Maniyadana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw. Genuine Myanmar pearls, gems and rough jade lots will be sold at the Emporium.

2. Under the Myanmar Gem Law, local gems entrepreneurs who got the permit to make gems extraction and local gems merchants who got the licence to operate in the finished gemstone making and dealing will be allowed to attend and purchase the Lots at Mid-Year Myanmar Gems Emporium 2023, according to the terms and conditions.

3. For further information in detail about granted admission to purchase Lots at Mid-Year Myanmar Gems Emporium 2023, gemsmerchants can enquire and keep in contact with Emporium Central Committee, Myanmar Gems Enterprise (Head Office), Myanmar Pearl Enterprise (Head Office) in Nay Pyi Taw.

Emporium Central Committee

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NATIONAL

Sugar price peaks again two months before release of fresh sugar

A sugarcane farmer is working amidst cut-down sugarcane trees.

ACCORDING to the sugar market, sugar prices have risen once again, just two months before the release of new sugar into the market. On 28 September, in the Yangon sugar market, the wholesale price for a viss of sugar was K3,750, and there were fewer buyers and more sellers. However, the wholesale price increased to K3,800 per viss on 29 September, as reported by Ko Kyaw Min, a trader dealing with goods in the delta region, to The Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM).

A sugar seller from a brokerage house on Yaytama Road told the GNLM that the auction price of sugar, sold in the factory before the sugar mill's operation began, had increased, leading to a rise in sugar prices in the market. While the exact auction price of sugar remains undisclosed, there has been a slight uptick in sugar demand in the Yangon market, according to Ko Thein Zaw, a sugar dealer, who spoke to GNLM.

Sugar factory companies no longer have sugar in stock, and currently, only those who have stored sugar are selling it at open prices. Due to market conditions, it's believed that sugar stocks are low. However, with the new sugar set to be released in just a few months, fewer buyers are storing it, and they are purchasing based on regional orders.

A seller of sugar and brown slab sugar from Aungthapyae Road mentioned that the price of a viss of sugar increased by approximately K3,400 after news surfaced that the sugar auction price had reached K3,330 per viss at the end of July 2023.

Domestic sugar production stands at around 500,000 tonnes per year. This year, two new sugar mills, each with capacities of 12,000 and 5,000 tonnes, will commence operations in Shan State (North) and Sagaing Region. Domestic consumption and business usage of sugar amount to approximately 450,000 tonnes per year, leaving a surplus of around 50,000 tonnes per year, which is exported abroad. In 2022, 11.1 million tonnes of sugar were exported, but as of September 2023, only 6.1 million tonnes of sugar have been shipped. — TWA/CT

FD plans to plant 101.54 mln fingerlings nationwide in 2023-2024FY

Cooperation is needed to prevent the destruction of fish, and shrimp and make them sustainable by only consuming them when needed.

ACCORDING to the Department of Fisheries, there are plans to release 101.54 million fish fry throughout the country in the 2023-2024 financial year.

To promote the long-term and sustainable development of the fishing industry, the government annually releases various types of juvenile fish into dams, rivers, and creeks. This initiative aims to enhance the socio-economic livelihoods of rural communities reliant on the fishing industry.

To maintain the country's fish resources, diversify the fish population, and improve fish growth rates, the government has scheduled the release of 101.54 million two-inch-sized fish fry. As of August 2023, a total of 45.4229 million have already been released.

It is crucial to adhere to fishing bans, avoid prohibited fishing equipment and methods, and refrain from harvesting fish with eggs, as such actions can negatively impact fish populations. The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation emphasizes the importance of collaborative efforts to prevent the depletion of water resources, fish, and shrimp by consuming them at the appropriate time and age. — TWA/CT

The Department of Fisheries planting 100,000 fish hatchlings into the Myittha River in Kalay Township in 2020.

COVID-19 report, 3 October 2023

NEW TESTS	NEW CASE	CASUALTIES
3,488	1	0

One-Region One-Product initiative flourishes as grapefruit ....

FROM PAGE-1

intending to enhance the livelihood of the local communities.

Grapefruit is a citrus fruit that is rich in vitamins and minerals. It has flavours ranging from bittersweet to sour. The visitors purchase grapefruits as a souvenir in PutaO on account of their proven health benefits such as reducing blood pressure, cholesterol and risk of heart disease, lowering cancer risks, improving digestion and supporting growing skin.

A grower Nan Mon Htin, who ran grapefruit cultivation under the State Economic Promotion Fund allocated for Inbubaw village in Machanbaw Township delightfully elaborated that grapefruit cultivation on a trail run reaped a fruitful result. There is mixed farming with other fruits such as tangerine and American lemon. He has 3.5 acres of farms with over 300 trees.

The grapefruit trees started producing about five to six years of planting. The trees reach maturity in eight years with abundant fruits. Trimming dead branches and killing weeds every three months are required, along with fertilizer treatment.

It is harvested at the end of December and in the early January. About 10,000 fruits are produced per year. The income was estimated at K1.5 million per acre last year. The earnings are expected to hit at least K2 million this year. This business also creates jobs for local ethnic people.

With the State Economic Promotion Fund, the local farmers will expand the cultivation of American lemons. They are calling for technical assistance from the respective department to execute value-added businesses on a manageable skill. — Yaw Shwe Ni/EM

Low-grade rice prices fall back in domestic market

THE prices of low-grade rice experienced a bear market after the price rallies in previous months, indicating a decrease of K2,000-10,000 per sack depending on the rice varieties, according to the Myanmar Rice Traders Association (Wahdan Rice Depot).

The prevailing prices of low-grade rice move in the range between K60,000-88,000 per sack depending on varieties (Pawkywe, Kunni, Ngasein, Aemahta, Thipu and rice grown under intercropping system).

The prices of those rice varieties touched a high of K68,000-98,000 per sack.

Meanwhile, the prices of high-grade Pawsan rice from the Pyapon and Dedaye areas also declined to K96,000-98,000 per sack in early October from K100,000 recorded at the end of September.

Varied kinds of rice are organized for sale at one of the rice retail outlets in Yangon.

However, the prices of high-grade Pawsan from Myaungmya, Pathein and Shwebo remain unchanged at K100,000-125,000 per sack.

MRF, in cooperation with affiliated associations, rice companies, millers and traders, are offering the rice at a fairer price through respective sales programmes; sales for civil staff and factory workers, sales at rice depots, distribution plan to regions and states, mobile market scheme and selling rice at tax free markets in some townships.

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

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

Significant slowdown in kyat depreciation against US dollar

KYAT'S fall against the greenback has slowed down tracking the Central Bank of Myanmar's action.

Kyat devaluation against the dollar stops at approximately K3,300 in the shady dealings. At present, the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) sets the reference exchange rate at K2,100.

CBM has set the currency trading band at 0.3 per cent for the Kyat to fluctuate between these two specified upper and lower exchange rates for transactions, selling or buying, according to a directive issued by the CBM on 10 August 2022.

Therefore, financial institutions including the banks and informal money exchanges are instructed to set a dollar value at K2,094 for buying and K2,106 for selling. Nevertheless, the over-the-counter Kyat-dollar exchange rate was K3,270 for buying and K3,320 for selling on 3 October.

There is a large price difference between the reference rate of the CBM and the unofficial market rate. Yet, there is no way for the CBM to set the new price, as per the notification released in May 2023.

Foreign currencies are seen at the forex counter.

The dollar gained to around K4,000 on 19 August 2023.

Under Section 9 of the Foreign Exchange Management Law, only those entities holding foreign exchange dealer licences are allowed to deal in foreign currency and travellers' cheques. Those holding foreign currencies without valid licences and permits will face legal actions under the law, according to the CBM's notification released on 21 August 2023.

According to the notification (7/2014) dated 30 September 2014 issued by the Central Bank of Myanmar, stating that under stanza 15 of the Foreign Exchange Management Law, domestic residents are allowed to keep US$10,000 in a maximum or equivalent amount of foreign currencies for six months. If those foreign currencies that have been unused for over six months have to be exchanged in local currency at the market price through authorized dealers or deposited into bank accounts.

Those illegally holding foreign currencies will be taken action under the Foreign Exchange Management Law, the CBM warned again.

Following that notification, the foreign exchange transaction calmed down and the rate dropped gradually. — NN/EM

Black gram prices on downward trajectory

THE price of black grams continued plummeting after the demand of the main buyer India faltered, touching a low of K2.465 million per tonne.

The prices hit K2.634 million per tonne on 22 September, whereas it plunged to K2.465 million per tonne on 3 October, indicating a sharp drop of K169,000 per tonne in the past 11 days.

Myanmar's various pulses export earnings were estimated at over $682 million from over 827,000 tonnes over the past five months of the current financial year 2023-2024. Of them, Myanmar shipped over 350,000 tonnes of black grams to foreign countries with an estimated value of over $311 million.

Myanmar's pulses exports earned over US$1.47 billion from over 1.9 million tonnes in the previous FY 2022-2023, the Ministry of Commerce's statistics indicated. Myanmar primarily exports black grams, green grams and pigeon peas to foreign markets. Of them, black grams and pigeon peas are mostly shipped to India while green grams are exported to China and Europe.

Black grams which India primarily purchases are commonly found only in Myanmar, whereas pigeon peas, green grams and chickpeas are grown in African countries and Australia, Myanmar Pulses, Beans, Maize and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association stated. — NN/EM

Pulses and beans are seen at the retail outlet in the market.

OPINION

Seek the best way for peace entire people aspire to

THE pursuit of lasting peace is a shared aspiration of the entire populace. To achieve this noble goal, it is imperative to halt armed conflicts and prioritize peaceful dialogues. Such a path not only safeguards the integrity of the state but also offers respite to those residing in conflict-ridden regions, alleviating their sufferings and losses.

On 15 October 2015, a significant milestone was reached with the signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). This accord stands as a beacon of hope, embodying the collective desire of the Myanmar people to establish enduring and perpetual peace. Eight years ago, representatives from the government, the Hluttaw (Parliament), and ethnic armed organizations came together to sign the NCA. The event bore witness to the participation of officials from the United Nations, diplomats from the international community, and local observers. It is worth noting that the NCA is a robust agreement that remains in force, undeterred by the passage of time.

It is crucial to emphasize that the door to peace remains open to all Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs). They are invited to engage in peace talks, whether with the government or through dialogue with teams despatched by the Tatmadaw. These discussions offer a platform for all parties to voice their aspirations for peace and outline their requirements along the path to reconciliation. The comprehensive adoption of resolutions in these talks brings all stakeholders closer to the goal of establishing durable and perpetual peace.

Recent criticism has arisen, with some armed ethnic organizations asserting that the NCA has been nullified due to alleged voting irregularities in the 2020 multiparty democratic general elections, which led to the Tatmadaw assuming state responsibilities under the Constitution. However, this criticism has been unequivocally rejected by the Head of State. He affirmed the Tatmadaw's unwavering commitment to the NCA and the Constitution as indispensable pillars in the pursuit of peace.

It is crucial to emphasize that the door to peace remains open to all Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs). They are invited to engage in peace talks, whether with the government or through dialogue with teams despatched by the Tatmadaw. These discussions offer a platform for all parties to voice their aspirations for peace and outline their requirements along the path to reconciliation. The comprehensive adoption of resolutions in these talks brings all stakeholders closer to the goal of establishing durable and perpetual peace.

The root cause of internal armed conflicts lies in political issues, manipulation, and the influence of neocolonialist forces. Myanmar's citizens must engage in a thorough analysis of these factors to effectively address the challenges to peace. It is now incumbent upon the entire nation to set aside animosity and hostility, choosing instead the path of political solutions to secure lasting peace. The people of Myanmar, united in their vision, must relinquish the bitter experiences of instability and embark on a journey towards a future characterized by peace and prosperity.

■

ARTICLE

Feline Fantasy That Throws Wide The Enigmatic Tongue Of Cats

By Yin Nwe Ko

PETER Pongrácz, a proud owner of four housecats — Cookie, Sushi, Crumbles, and Stinky — has an insatiable curiosity about the enigmatic inner lives of the world's second most popular domesticated pets. In his quest to fathom their sentiments and thoughts towards humans, he grapples with the challenge of finding graduate students with the patience and determination required for this intricate research. The allure of dogs, ever-eager for human validation and a tasty bone, often diverts potential researchers. This challenge hit home during an incident at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest in 2005, when a cat, brought into their laboratory, promptly vanished into an air conditioning duct, prompting a laborious rescue mission.

It took over a decade for Pongrácz to find a willing graduate student to reattempt cat research. Passionate about studying cats, he eagerly awaits students keen on delving into this intriguing domain. Stepping back into the realm of "cat cognition", Pongrácz and his team decided to study cats in their natural habitats to avoid the earlier disappearing act. They queried cat owners about their feline companions, exploring various aspects of their behaviour and understanding. The subsequent observations revealed fascinating insights into feline abilities to interpret human intentions, particularly in following a person's gaze. Notably, indoor and outdoor cats displayed distinct cognitive habits, shedding light on the impact of lifestyle on their behaviours.

This resurgence in cat research marks a departure from decades of dogs dominating the realm of animal studies within households. Pongrácz's earlier experiments with dogs in the '90s and early 2000s fuelled the current renaissance in cat cognition research, breathing new life into a once-neglected field despite the challenges posed by these often elusive and unpredictable feline subjects.

In the years since research laboratories have emerged globally, dedicated to delving into the intricate minds of dogs — measuring their ability to comprehend and interpret human emotions and cues, grapple with abstract concepts and social dynamics, and address fundamental inquiries regarding the human-canine relationship, notably whether dogs genuinely harbour love for us. However, during most of this period, cat enthusiasts faced a dearth of such opportunities. Recent times have witnessed the emergence of an enthusiastic cohort of cat lovers, driven by a profound allegiance to their beloved feline companions and a conviction that cats have been persistently and unjustly misunderstood. These fervent advocates have started adopting experimental models and incorporating lessons gleaned from canine studies. In this process, they are unravelling longstanding questions that have intrigued cat owners, dispelling prevailing misconceptions.

Contrary to the belief of them being solitary and aloof, contemporary understanding reveals that many cats possess the capacity for intricate social relationships and form meaningful attachments to their human caregivers. Their intelligence is more substantial than commonly assumed; they can recognize their names, and their owners' voices and faces, interpret complex human signals, learn rules and routines, decipher basic human cues, and make conclusions based on limited information. Above all, mounting evidence indicates that the bond between humans and cats is reciprocated, genuine, and enduring. Cats, the evidence suggests, not only like us — they truly love us. Their expression of affection is simply more subtle compared to dogs, an aspect that has taken time for us to comprehend fully.

The love we hold for our dogs is readily apparent — manifested through their exuberant displays of affection, their sheer delight at our presence evident in joyful leaps, enthusiastic licking, tail-wagging, and expressive pleas for attention. On the other hand, the human-feline relationship has always been nuanced. While some cats may tolerate a gentle scratch or a few moments of attention, they often exude an air of regality and indifference to our overtures, seemingly asserting ownership over us and bestowing their attention as a favour. Instances of territorial behaviour, like peeing on the couch in our absence or their ingenious efforts to awaken us when hungry, add to this enigmatic dynamic. Yet, akin to dogs, cats have seamlessly integrated into the fabric of our domestic lives and families, showcasing an ability that warrants thorough scientific exploration.

The financial investment and emotional bond with cats are substantial, mirroring their immense appeal in modern society. In 2022, Americans allocated a staggering $136.8 billion for their pets, with a significant portion dedicated to cats. Presently, there are approximately 220 million pet cats worldwide, nearly 58.8 million of which reside in the United States alone (in comparison to roughly 471 million dogs). This enduring charisma of cats has been documented throughout human history. Archaeological finds, such as a 9,500-year-old burial site on Cyprus, reveal a human adult interred with an eight-month-old cat, likely transported to the island by ancient seafarers. Ancient Egyptians revered deities that bore both human and feline attributes, exemplifying the deep-rooted connection between humanity and cats. The feline-human relationship is a rich tapestry deserving of continued exploration and understanding.

PHOTO CREDIT: NEWSWEEK (22.9.2023)

In the sacred precinct of Bubastis, nestled in the Delta city of Bubastis, scores of mummified cats and miniature cat sculptures have been unearthed, a testament to the reverence bestowed upon the feline goddess Bastet, daughter of the Sun God. Columns adorned with cat imagery adorned this hallowed place, showcasing the ancient Egyptians' deep-rooted belief in the mystical nature of cats. Leslie A. Lyons, a geneticist at the University of Missouri's College of Veterinary Medicine, reveals that the intertwined history of cats and humans spans over 12,000 years. Her genetic analysis, published in the science journal Nature in November 2022, unveils the profound connection between these two species.

This extraordinary companionship began over 10,000 years ago when humans transitioned into agrarian societies in the fertile crescent between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, following the retreat of glaciers. The emergence of grain stores and refuse lured mice, attracting cats who diligently maintained the food supplies by keeping disease-carrying rodents at bay. This symbiotic relationship between humans and cats led to a distinctive bond, distinct from that with dogs. Early pet dogs had to entice humans for food scraps, evolving an ability to tug at human emotions. Cats, on the other hand, thrived by maintaining a discreet presence, independently hunting for sustenance. Their evolutionary path forged them into cautious, curious creatures, often evading danger by fleeing and hiding, an instinctual behaviour borne from their vulnerable position in the food chain.

Understanding this evolutionary trajectory allows us to grasp why cats, although more recently selectively bred by humans, have successfully become integral parts of households. Their ability to trigger our inherent parental instincts, akin to dogs, plays a pivotal role in this success. Jonathan Losos, an evolutionary biologist at Washington University, emphasizes this attribute, highlighting a study revealing that the purrs of cats, particularly in the 220-to-520 hertz frequency range, akin to a baby's cries, engage our innate response to caregiving. Cats have subtly moulded their communication, notably their meows, deviating from their wild ancestors, further enhancing their compatibility with humans. This unique interplay of ancient history and subtle evolutionary shifts underpins the enigmatic and enduring appeal of cats as beloved pets.

Pongrácz finds the proposition intriguing, suggesting that more research is warranted to delve deeper into this idea. Cats possess a distinctive facial structure with a flat face, short nose, and prominent forward-facing eyes, resembling the features of a baby — an aspect less prevalent in most livestock, whose eyes are typically situated on the sides of their heads. An adult house cat typically weighs between 8.8 to 11 pounds, close to the average weight of a newborn baby, which is about 7.5 pounds. However, devoted cat lovers contend that this likeness is just the surface.

Kristyn Vitale, an assistant professor specializing in animal health and behaviour at Unity College in Maine, passionately argues that cats hold a prowess for earning our affection far beyond what is conventionally acknowledged. She embarked on a decade-long mission to dispel the misconceptions that label felines as inherently antisocial, untrainable, and unfriendly. Drawing from her own cherished experiences with her cats during childhood, Vitale sought to reveal the social and affectionate nature of cats. Through meticulous studies, she has substantiated that cats possess the ability to form significant attachment bonds with human owners, akin to those observed between human parents and children. This bond, cultivated during a critical developmental window, is so profound that it has left lasting genetic imprints through domestication, shaping the enduring cat-human relationship. In the wild, this window lasts about two weeks, whereas in domesticated cats, it extends to approximately two months, solidifying the foundation of their attachment to humans.

The motive driving Pongrácz and his colleagues at Eötvös Loránd University in 2005, during the now-famous air vent experiment, was to uncover a question that perplexes many cat owners daily: How much do our feline companions truly comprehend? They aimed to answer this by employing a test adapted from the realm of human and primate developmental psychology, a test designed to assess an animal's ability to infer the location of hidden food based on human cues.

In this experiment, researchers hid food in various containers and employed cues like staring at, nodding toward, or pointing to the correct container. Success in this seemingly straightforward task denotes a profound understanding — recognizing that the person pointing intends to assist. Human infants typically develop this capacity at around four to nine months, marking a significant communicative milestone. Astonishingly, cats exhibited comparable abilities to some infants and dogs, showcasing their remarkable aptitude for this form of communication.

However, conducting this experiment posed its own set of challenges. Even in familiar home environments, cats often froze or lost interest when strangers were present, hindering smooth data collection. Yet, the outcomes revealed a fundamental truth: cats could respond effectively to human cues to locate hidden food, aligning them with dogs in this social cognitive capability. Pongrácz underscores that both cats and dogs swiftly grasp the core rules of the human household they inhabit, illustrating their adaptability and attentiveness to human interactions. Recent research continues to underline the social intelligence of cats, illustrating their capacity to recognize and respond to their owners through auditory and visual cues, affirming the intricate interplay between humans and their feline companions.

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ARTICLE/TECH/ENVIRON WORLD

Feline Fantasy That Throws Wide The Enigmatic Tongue Of Cats

FROM PAGE-9

In further exploration of feline cognition, Saho Takagi from Kyoto University engaged in an experiment involving the voices of cat owners played through various speakers in a room. The feline subjects displayed surprise by looking around or twitching their ears when the voices appeared to move faster than anticipated. This behaviour suggests that cats were attentively listening and could create a mental map of their owner's location. Remarkably, these cats also exhibited signs of jealousy, reacting more intensely to a soft-toy cat previously petted by their owner.

The contentious nature of feline-human relationships can be attributed partly to misunderstandings. Cats often respond to human approaches with indifference, fear, or aggression, fuelling the misconception that they don't appreciate human company. Kristyn Vitale and other cat advocates argue that this could stem from communication barriers. Cats lack the facial muscles to exhibit expressions like dogs, making their signals less apparent. Unlike dogs with their highly expressive faces, cats cannot raise their eyebrows or make sad faces. This limited facial expression can confuse, as evidenced by a study where participants struggled to interpret cat facial cues accurately.

Cats, primarily solitary animals in nature, have less evolutionary pressure to develop overt signalling capabilities compared to pack-oriented dogs. Nonetheless, cats convey subtle signals, requiring an understanding of their specific cues. Insights into cat signalling have been gleaned from studies of feral cats, revealing gestures like slow blinking, mutual grooming, and rubbing cheeks — a lexicon of communication allowing them to express relaxation, friendliness, and social acceptance.

Understanding these subtle cues is vital in unravelling the complex language of feline communication and nurturing meaningful connections with our enigmatic feline companions.

When cats approach another cat with their tail held up, it's generally a sign of peace, according to experts. They communicate largely through body language; for instance, direct eye contact is often interpreted as a threat, prompting defensive responses like hissing and making their body smaller. Despite their sometimes aloof demeanour, cats pay close attention to their owners. Research by Atsuko Saito from Sophia University in Tokyo in 2019 showed that cats can recognize their owners' voices and respond to familiar words and even their names, though they may not understand the meaning. Cats also pick up on the intonation of human speech, particularly responding to higher-pitched, baby-like voices.

Understanding feline behaviour is essential in fostering a strong bond. While cats can appear finicky, they have distinct preferences and communication methods. Cats prefer frequent but low-intensity social interactions, similar to how they would approach captured prey in the wild. Contrary to the misconception that cats are untrainable, they can be effectively trained given the right conditions. Kristyn Vitale's study showcased that cats respond to rewards like food, toys, preferred scents, and human interaction, demonstrating their trainability, comparable to dogs. Recognizing and respecting these nuances allows for a deeper and more meaningful relationship with our feline companions.

In 2020, Fumi Higaki, a dog trainer, highlighted the importance of understanding a cat's boundaries during interactions. Research indicates that a positive and lasting interaction with a cat occurs when the cat initiates contact, rather than being approached by humans. Cats, being inherently in control, prefer setting the pace of social engagement, and feeling free to retreat when they desire. Additionally, cats have distinct motivations regarding food, differing from dogs. While they appreciate a good meal, providing food doesn't automatically forge a friendship with them. Unlike dogs, cats are typically occasional grazers. Fascinating instances like an 11-year-old cat in Ichinomiya, Japan, displaying learned behaviours demonstrate the depths of feline abilities. Researchers like Pongrácz eagerly anticipate future studies comparing domesticated cats with their non-domesticated counterparts, exploring behaviours in group living situations and unravelling further mysteries of feline behaviour. In the years ahead, a promising influx of feline-loving graduate students offers hope for insightful discoveries in feline science.

Reference: Abridged from Newsweek (22.9.2023)

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China's FAST telescope discovers 76 new faint pulsars

This aerial panoramic photo taken on 26 July 2023 shows China's Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical Radio Telescope (FAST) in southwest China's Guizhou Province. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

USING the Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical Radio Telescope (FAST), or the "China Sky Eye," Chinese scientists have discovered 76 new faint and occasionally emitting pulsars, including a group of the faintest pulsars known today.

These pulsars are very special in that they only occasionally radiate a pulse in many rotation periods, so that they are known as rotating radio transient sources (RRATs), said the study, which was published on Monday in the journal Astronomy and Astrophysics Research.

Unlike most pulsars which emit pulses continuously, an RRAT is hard to find in a normal pulsar search regime. They are identified pulse-by-pulse from a huge amount of data obtained by a highly sensitive radio telescope.

Since the first RRAT was discovered in 2006, more than 160 RRATs have been detected by radio telescopes around the world. Detailed studies of a few RRATs suggest that they should be pulsars but with special physical properties in the magnetosphere, accounting for about five per cent of the total number of pulsars. A research team of the National Astronomical Observatories under the Chinese Academy of Sciences (NAOC) developed a new efficient single pulse search pipeline and systematically searched for single pulses using data of the FAST Galactic pulsar Snapshot Survey recorded since 2020. — Xinhua

Japan sees hottest September since records began

JAPAN has seen its hottest September since records began 125 years ago, the weather agency said, in a year expected to be the warmest in human history.

The scorching September's average temperature was 2.66 degrees Celsius higher than usual, the Japan Meteorological Agency said on Monday.

This was "the highest figure since the start of statistics in 1898", the agency said in a statement.

This year is expected to be the hottest in human history as climate change accelerates, with countries including Austria, France, Germany, Poland and Switzerland each announcing their warmest September on record.

Across Japan last month, 101 of 153 observation locations broke an average temperature record, including in Tokyo, with an all-time high of 26.7 degrees Celsius (80 degrees Fahrenheit), in Osaka with 27.9C and in Nagoya with 27.3C. — AFP

A security guard walks past an overhead water misting system on a hot day in the Ginza district of Tokyo on 10 July 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

German professor expresses his love for China in poetry

ON Mourad Alami's office desk are two bilingual books, "The Legend of the White Snake" and "Mencius", available in both German and Chinese, which have piqued his interest in traditional Chinese culture.

Hailing from Germany, Mourad Alami, 71, is a professor of German language at Hainan College of Foreign Studies located in the city of Wenchang in south China's island province of Hainan.

Mourad Alami's serendipitous connection with China began about 50 years ago. During the early 1970s, while he was a university student in Germany, one of his classmates travelled to China and described the experience as "an unknown adventure".

"It was also very strange and interesting to me," Mourad Alami said, adding that it marked his initial encounter with China. He first visited China in 1995 as the interim President of the German-Arab Chamber of Industry and Commerce. What impressed him most was that there were few cars and hundreds or thousands of people were cycling on the streets.

"It was a very interesting experience and I wanted to know more about China," Mourad Alami reminisced, noting that he started collecting books about China, delving into Chinese history and exploring further.

"China has rich history and heritage, like the Great Wall, and the Terracotta Warriors in Xi'an, some things that only exist in China and you cannot find in other parts of the world," he said.

He also gradually fell in love with traditional Chinese culture and extensively read German translations of Chinese literature, including the creations of renowned Chinese poets like Su Shi and Li Bai. — Xinhua

German professor Mourad Alami reads a book in the library of Hainan College of Foreign Studies in Wenchang, south China's Hainan Province, 14 September 2023. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Green issues dominate Paris fashion for LV, Stella McCartney

Models present creations by British designer Stella McCartney during her show next to the Eiffel tower as part of the Womenswear Spring/Summer 2024 Paris Fashion Week in Paris on 2 October 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

ENVIRONMENTAL activists tried to disrupt Louis Vuitton's event at Paris Fashion Week on Monday, while Britain's Stella McCartney made green technologies central to her own show as climate issues increasingly dominate the industry.

One of France's biggest YouTube stars, Jeremstar, was briefly arrested after dressing like a "dismembered snake" to protest Louis Vuitton's use of animal skins, outside the brand's show on the Champs-Elysees.

Activists also spray-painted the brand's nearby boutique, saying in a statement: "The deaths from climate precariousness are on their conscience."

Inside the venue, stars including Cate Blanchett and Zendaya seemed unconcerned and joined a standing ovation for artistic director Nicolas Ghesquiere's breezy spring-summer collection.

The bohemian-chic collection was full of airy skirts, loose shirts and pastel tones.

There were elaborate, though informal, suits of mini skirts and loose jackets, with white tights and arty heeled shoes. Meanwhile, across town, Stella McCartney tried to give a more positive example, setting up a showcase for "cruelty-free and conscious material innovations". The market stalls included several types of vegan leather, organic cotton and a seaweed-based yarn grown from regenerative kelp.

Getting these new technologies off the ground has proved difficult, however.

McCartney backed a US start-up, Bolt Threads, that was considered a leader in mushroom-based leather, but it announced in July that it was halting production after failing to gather enough investment.

As for the clothes, some were inspired by her parents — Paul and Linda McCartney — during their time on tour with Wings in the 1970s, including ruffled shirts and crystal-encrusted waistcoats.

It was a highly varied collection, with a relaxed but high-end take on jeans and croptops, a sumptuous cape over a casual white tank top, and a silk gown gathered in two billowing balloon shapes around the shoulders.

McCartney said 95 per cent of the outfits were made from "responsible materials".

Blanchett was also present for that show, along with fellow Hollywood stars Robert Downey Jr and Chris Rock.

"The eclectic, ageless collection blurs the lines between genders and generations — reinterpreting pieces from Stella's archive as well as those she borrowed from her parents, and (that) her daughters now borrow from her," the press release said. — AFP

NW China museum launches digital exhibitions of ancient bamboo, wooden slips

THE Gansu Jiandu Museum in northwest China's Gansu Province on Sunday launched four online exhibitions related to the ancient Jiandu culture.

"Jiandu" are the bamboo and wooden slips on which ancient Chinese people wrote using ink and brushes before the invention of paper.

The exhibitions include high-resolution images of the museum's cultural artifacts, accompanied by detailed text and voice explanations to help audiences gain a deeper understanding of the items on display, said Xu Rui, the museum's deputy curator.

The digital exhibitions also include interactive experiences such as riddle challenges and Jiandu-making games, aiming to attract young visitors, Xu said.

The museum is China's only provincial-level museum focusing on bamboo and wooden slips. It has a collection of nearly 40,000 such slips dating back to the Qin Dynasty (221-207 BC) and Western Jin Dynasty (265-317), and it also houses more than 10,000 other artifacts, including paper, textiles, woodenware, lacquerware and ironware. — Xinhua

Bamboo slips are exhibited at the new hall of Gansu Jiandu Museum in Lanzhou, northwest China's Gansu Province, 7 September 2023. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

ECONOMY
WORLD

Workers slice ripe mangoes at the Zhong Bao (Cambodia) Food Science & Technology Co Ltd in Kampong Speu province, Cambodia, on 7 March 2023. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Experts say RCEP helps Cambodia diversify economy, exports

THE Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement, which took effect in 2022, has helped diversify Cambodia's economy and exports, a World Bank's senior economist said on Monday.

Aaditya Mattoo, chief economist of the World Bank's East Asia and Pacific Region, said the RCEP agreement and Cambodia's new law on investment have created greater market access and helped generate new trade and investment flows for the kingdom.

It will help Cambodia diversify its economy and exports which have been heavily reliant on garment so far, he said during a video press conference on the launch of the World Bank's East Asia and Pacific economic update report.

Mattoo suggested Cambodia improve its skilled labour and connectivity in order to sustain its economy and exports in the long run.

In the update report, the World Bank said the RCEP and other newly ratified free trade agreements (FTAs) have helped Cambodia strengthen its exports and attract more foreign direct investment (FDI).

The RCEP free trade deal comprises 15 Asia-Pacific countries, including 10 ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) member states — Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam — together with their five trading partners, namely China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. Cambodia's total export to the RCEP member countries amounted to 4.59 billion US dollars from January to July 2023, a year-on-year increase of 21 per cent, according to the country's Ministry of Commerce's report. — Xinhua

Japan eyeing all possible steps amid weak yen: finance chief

THE government is monitoring foreign exchange movements with "a heightened sense of urgency" and an eye on all possible steps, Finance Minister Shunichi Suzuki said Tuesday, as the yen was trading just shy of the psychologically important 150 line against the US dollar.

Suzuki reiterated that Japanese authorities are looking at volatility, not specific levels, when it comes to possible currency intervention, amid market vigilance about another yen-buying, dollar-selling operation.

"It's important that currency movements are stable and reflect fundamentals," Suzuki said at a press conference after a Cabinet meeting. "We will continue to monitor developments with a heightened sense of urgency and respond with all possible measures." His remarks were the latest verbal warning by Japanese authorities, who often issue multiple warnings before actually intervening in the market.

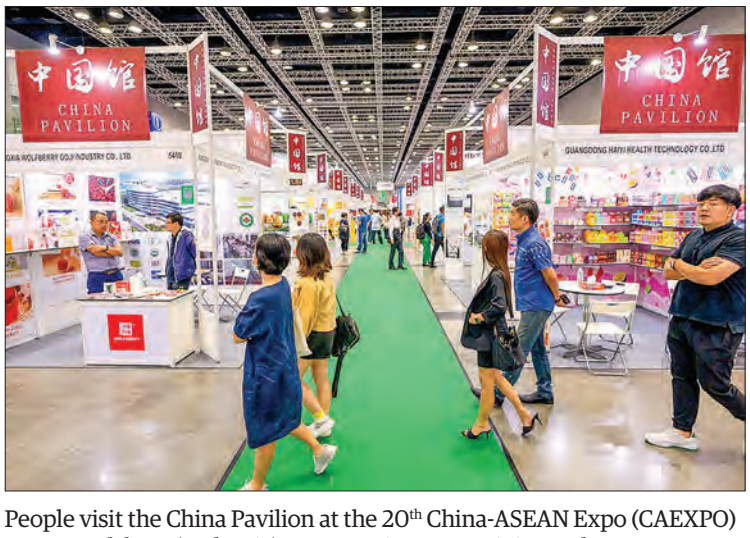
The weaker yen has been inflating import costs for Japan, which relies heavily on foreign energy and raw materials.

Financial markets have been pricing in a further divergence in the monetary policy paths of Japan and the United States, due partly to the difference in the pace of inflation.

The Bank of Japan has ruled out a near-term shift from ultra-low interest rates, in stark contrast with the Federal Reserve that is expected to go ahead with another rate hike by the end of this year. The dollar has passed the levels at which Japanese authorities stepped in last year to slow the yen's depreciation.

Asked if the 150 mark is a threshold for deciding on intervention, Suzuki said, "Currency levels are not our criteria. It is volatility that matters." — Kyodo

File photo taken in April 2018 shows the Finance Ministry in Tokyo. **PHOTO: KYODO**



People visit the China Pavilion at the 20th China-ASEAN Expo (CAEXPO) 2023 Roadshow (Malaysia) & Guangxi Export Fair in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 12 July 2023. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

China-ASEAN Expo continues to bear fruit for Malaysia's economy

MALAYSIA continues to benefit greatly from its economic engagement with China via the China-ASEAN Expo (CAEXPO), an official said on Monday.

China remains Malaysia's largest and most important trade partner, Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) chief executive officer Mohd Mustafa Abdul Aziz said in a statement after the country's successful participation in the expo. "Malaysia's participation in CAEXPO has secured significant value of export sales and business partnerships," he said.

"The continued sourcing by the Chinese buyers demonstrates the quality, resilience and competitiveness of Malaysian products and services, rolling on the growth momentum of the trade dealings between Malaysia and China in CAEXPO for the past 20 years," he added.

The official said that MATRADE will continue focusing on enhancing the close engagement with Chinese business communities to drive export to China.

Malaysia sent 107 Malaysian companies and nine government agencies to the 20th China-ASEAN Expo held from 16 to 19 September in Nanning, capital of south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. — Xinhua

New Zealand enhances infrastructure support for aerospace industry

THE New Zealand government is helping the aerospace industry take off with further infrastructure support for the Aerospace Centre at Kaitorete in Canterbury of the South Island, Infrastructure Minister Megan Woods said on Tuesday.

The government will provide a 5.4 million-NZ dollar (3.21 million US dollars) grant to the joint venture to fund a sealed runway and hangar facilities to encourage investment, growth and continued research and development in New Zealand's aerospace industry, Woods said.

"New Zealand has natural advantages in aerospace which can help secure its position as a leading place to safely test, trial and adopt aerospace technologies," Woods said, adding that aerospace technologies will greatly improve the response to issues like climate change, emergency management and the monitoring of ecosystems and natural resources.

The current facility at Kaitorete is already being used by local companies including Kea Aerospace, Aerosearch and Swoop Aero, as well as the University of Canterbury, she said, adding that the new infrastructure will be used by a wider range of aerospace companies onshore and abroad, and research institutes, with the intention to scale up over time.

Over the next 10 years this development will contribute to more than 1,300 highly skilled, high-paying jobs and up to 2.4 billion NZ dollars (1.43 billion US dollars) in economic benefits, she said. — Xinhua

Malta to replace struggling national airline

MALTA will shut down its loss-making national carrier, Air Malta, next year and replace it with a new government-owned airline, Prime Minister Robert Abela has announced.

The Maltese government had been negotiating with the European Commission for more than 18 months in the hope of being allowed to inject around 290 million euros ($304 million) in state aid into the airline. However, Abela announced late Monday that Brussels had refused the government's requests, and there was no other course of action than to close down Air Malta and replace it with a new airline. "We are ensuring that Malta will continue to have a national airline... One that is stronger, one that makes a profit, and one that serves this country on an economic and social level," Abela said.

Passengers disembark from an Air Malta Airbus A320 at the Malta International Airport (MLA) in Luqa, on 6 September 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

He said the Mediterranean island nation "cannot be dependent on foreign airlines, we need to retain control of our national airline which can meet Malta's needs while making financial sense".

Air Malta will operate its last flight on 30 March, 2024 — two days before what would have been its 50th anniversary — and be replaced by an airline operating under a newly established company called KM Malta Airlines plc.

The new airline will retain Air Malta's fleet of eight Airbus A320 aircraft, but drop more than half of its routes, flying to 17 destinations, down from 37.

The government said 350 million euros has been set aside to be invested into the new airline, 50 million euros of which will be its working capital. — AFP

Markets fall on rate concerns

A man walks in front of electronic boards showing the rate of the Japanese yen versus the US dollar (R) and a share price of the Tokyo Stock Exchange (L) along a street in Tokyo on 28 September 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

MARKETS fell Tuesday on concerns over interest rates following hawkish comments by a senior Federal Reserve official indicating the central bank was likely to keep them higher for longer.

US inflation remains stubbornly above the Federal Reserve's long-term target of two per cent despite falling sharply over the past 12 months, leading most Fed officials to predict last month that another hike is needed this year.

Federal Reserve Vice Chair for Supervision Michael Barr told a conference in New York on Monday that he expected rates would need to remain at a "sufficiently restrictive level" for "some time" to rein in inflation.

Barr's comments echo the views of the majority of his colleagues who recently lowered the number of rate cuts they expect in 2024, suggesting a longer period of high rates.

The Fed has raised its key lending rate 11 times since March 2022, lifting to a 22-year high.

With inflation well above its target, "the Fed is gonna keep rates high and we are expecting higher rates for longer", Xi Qiao, managing director for wealth management at UBS, told Bloomberg Television.

"That could be good for the US dollar, but more caution on the equity markets."

Wall Street ended mixed following a congressional deal to avert an immediate US government shutdown, with traders fuelling a bond market selloff.— AFP

Members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 230 and their supporters walk the picket line in front of the Chrysler Corporate Parts Division in Ontario, California on 26 September 2023 to show solidarity for the "Big Three" autoworkers currently on strike. Some 5,600 UAW members walked out of 38 US parts and distribution centres at General Motors and Stellantis at noon 22 September 2023, adding to last week's dramatic worker walkout. **PHOTO: AFP**

Ford temporarily lays off 300 more US workers due to strike

FORD announced Monday that over 300 more workers have been temporarily laid off due to "knock-on effects" from the ongoing strike against the company and two other US automakers.

The strike against the so-called "Big Three" car manufacturers — Ford, Stellantis and General Motors — began on 15 September when a previous contract expired without a replacement.

Instead of calling for all of its 146,000 members to strike at once, the United Auto Workers (UAW) union has deployed a targeted approach, adding more sites as the weeks drag on. Around 25,000 members have so far been called to stop work. — AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V WISDOM GRACE VOY.NO. (0UV42E1NC)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V WISDOM GRACE VOY.NO. (0UV42E1NC)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **4-10-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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ROLLING UPDATES
WORLD

NEWS IN BRIEF

Stabilization fund proposed in Viet Nam to control petrol price

THE appropriate use of a stabilization fund is important to restrain increases in petroleum price and reduce its impacts on Viet Nam's socio-economic development, Vietnam News reported Tuesday, citing the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

The ministry said that in order to restrain increases in petrol price, it proposed solutions to the prime minister, including the efficient use of the stabilization fund.

Petrol prices are forecast to continue to increase towards the end of the year due to moves by major world producers to tighten supply. — Xinhua

Dozens feared killed as explosion rocks illegal oil refinery in south Nigeria

NIGERIAN authorities on Tuesday launched an investigation into an explosion that recently rocked an illegal oil refinery in the country's delta region, with dozens feared killed.

The explosion occurred Monday at the illegal oil refinery in the Emohua local government area of the southern state of Rivers, Olufemi Ayodele, a spokesman for the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) in the state, told Xinhua over the telephone.

Ayodele, who declined to give a figure of casualties following the explosion, said that "the anti-vandal unit (of the NSCDC) has been dispatched to investigate the incident." — Xinhua

Trio win Nobel physics prize for opening door to world of electrons

THREE scientists shared this year's Nobel Prize in physics for demonstrating that extremely short pulses of light can be used to explore the world of electrons inside atoms and molecules, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences said Tuesday.

The contributions of Pierre Agostini, Ferenc Krausz and Anne L'Huillier have "enabled the investigation of processes that are so rapid they were previously impossible to follow", the academy said.

Agostini, an emeritus professor at the Ohio State University, and Krausz, director at Max Planck Institute of Quantum Optics and a professor at Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich in Germany, were awarded the prize for separate experiments with short light pulses lasting attoseconds.

An attosecond is so short that the amount in one second is roughly equivalent to the number of seconds that have elapsed since the universe began.

L'Huillier, a professor at Lund University in Sweden, laid the foundation for the breakthroughs in 1987 through her discoveries in how laser light interact with atoms in a gas.

"We can now open the door to the world of electrons. Attosecond physics gives us the opportunity to understand mechanisms that are governed by electrons", says Eva Olsson, chair of the Nobel Committee for Physics. — AFP

Member of the Nobel Committee For Physics Mats Larsson speaks to the media during the announcement of the winners of the 2023 Nobel Prize in Physics at Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in Stockholm on 3 October 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

India economy robust despite headwinds: World Bank

A worker sits atop sacks of grains at a wholesale market in Kolkata on 31 August 2023. India's GDP grew by 7.8 per cent in the June quarter, official figures showed 31 August despite government fears over the impact of higher consumer prices on household budgets. **PHOTO: AFP**

INDIA will stay one of the world's fastest-growing economies thanks to strong domestic demand and investment helping it weather inflation and challenging global conditions, the World Bank said Tuesday.

Like other countries, India has been buffeted by global headwinds including tightening financial conditions and the effects of the war in Ukraine on global food and oil markets.

Its economy nonetheless grew 7.2 per cent in the last financial year, the second-highest among G20 countries.

The World Bank said in a regular report that growth would taper slightly to 6.3 per cent for the current financial year because of "challenging external conditions and waning pent-up demand".

Inflation spiked to 7.8 per cent in July after a surge in prices for food staples, including wheat and rice, caused in part by bad weather and pest attacks in production belts.

India's central bank warned the following month that higher food costs were expected to get worse, and the government put curbs on some rice exports to put downward pressure on prices.

"While the spike in headline inflation may temporarily constrain consumption, we project a moderation," said Dhruv Sharma, senior economist at the World Bank and lead author of Tuesday's report.

"Overall conditions will remain conducive for private investment," he said.

The World Bank forecast the government's fiscal deficit to decline from 6.4 per cent to 5.9 per cent of GDP in the current financial year, with debt stabilizing at 83 per cent of GDP. — AFP

UN voices concern about unilateral, competing reconstruction initiatives in flood-hit Libya

THE Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Libya Abdoulaye Bathily has voiced his concern about the unilateral and competing initiatives from various Libyan actors and institutions on the reconstruction of the flood-hit areas in the North African country.

The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) said in a statement on Monday that Bathily expressed his concern after his 16 September visit to Derna, the city that was hit hardest by the deadly floods.

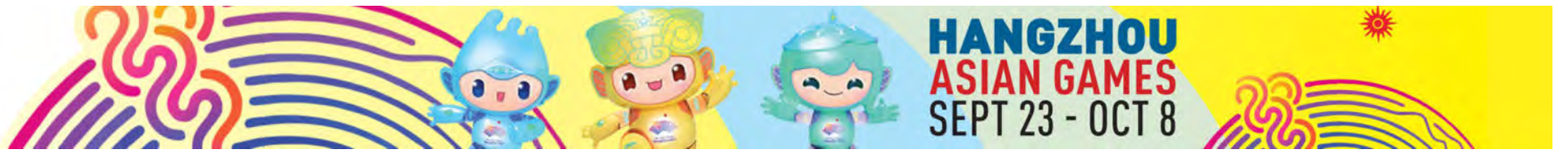
The UNSMIL warned that such unilateral efforts would deepen the existing divisions and impede reconstruction efforts in the country, and are at odds with the Libyan people's solidarity and national unity in response to the disaster.

The statement underlined the importance of having a unified national mechanism to effectively and efficiently move forward the reconstruction.

The statement also raised the Libyan people's concerns about arbitrary cost estimates and unilateral reconstruction initiatives announced without transparency. On 10 September, Mediterranean storm Daniel triggered the largest and worst floods in Libya for decades. Thousands of people were killed and went missing, while the infrastructure in the flood-hit region was severely damaged.

Shortly after the floods, the Tripoli-based Government of National Unity announced the allocation of 2.5 billion Libya dinars (approximately 510 million US dollars) to rebuild the flood-hit areas, while the eastern-based House of Representatives announced the allocation of 10 billion dinars for the same purpose. — Xinhua

SPORTS



Myanmar Sepak Takraw team reach Final at XIX Asian Games

The Myanmar Sepak Takraw team is seen posing for a group photo. **PHOTO: MSTAF**

MYANMAR Sepak Takraw team has already advanced to the final game after competing in the semifinal matches for the XIX Asian Games on 3 October. At the semifinal spot for the men's team events, Myanmar beat Japan 2-1 while Indonesia thrashed the Philippines 2-1.

Team Myanmar won the first match with 21-9 points but lost the second match with 18-21 points, and the third match became decisive. In the third game, the Myanmar team played without mistakes and won by 21-15 points.

As the Myanmar Sepak Takraw team made it to the finals, Myanmar will certainly win its first medal at the current XIX Asian Games. Myanmar will face Indonesia in the final game today. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

Kazakhstan's Lutsenko claims 3rd consecutive Asiad crown in road cycling

THE Hangzhou Asian Games road cycling competition kicked off on Tuesday, with Kazakhstan's Alexey Lutsenko successfully defending his title in the men's individual time trial.

Gold medallist Alexey Lutsenko (C) of Kazakhstan, silver medallist Xue Ming (L) of China and bronze medallist Lau Wan Yau Vincent of China's Hong Kong attend the awarding ceremony for Men's Individual Time Trial of Cycling Road at the 19th Asian Games in Chun'an County, east China's Zhejiang Province, 3 October 2023. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

The 31-year-old, who had previously claimed the event's golds at Incheon 2014 and Jakarta 2018, finished with a time of 48 minutes and 5.75 seconds. China's Xue Ming secured the silver medal, and Lau Wan Yau of Hong Kong, China earned the bronze.

"Today's achievement was the main goal for this year, and I put in a lot of effort for it." The gold medalist also stated his readiness for the upcoming men's road race, hoping to win another gold.

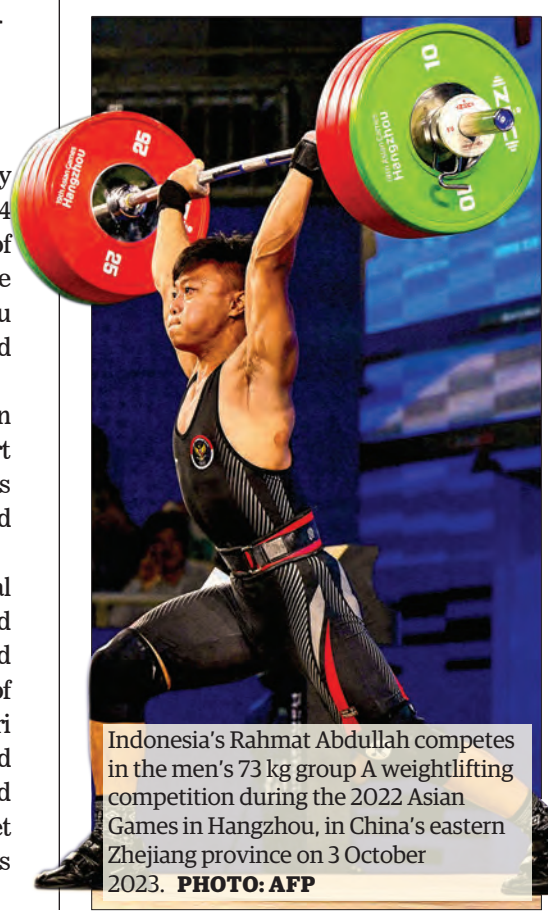
The women's individual time trial covered a distance of 18.3 kilometres, and Olga Zabelinskaya of Uzbekistan claimed the gold medal with a remarkable time of 24 minutes and 35.99 seconds. Japan's Eri Yonamine earned the silver medal, and Kazakhstan's Rinata Sultanova secured the bronze. The women's road race is set to unfold on Wednesday, while the men's road race on Thursday. — Xinhua

Indonesian weightlifter collects gold at Hangzhou Asiad, set new world record

22-YEAR-OLD Indonesian weightlifter Rahmat Erwin Abdullah, who took bronze in the men's 73 kilogrammes at the Tokyo Olympic Games, clinched gold in the same event at Hangzhou Asiad on Tuesday, lifting 158 kg in the snatch and 201 kg in the clean and jerk for a total of 359 kg and presenting a world record-breaking performance in the clean and jerk, one kilo better than his own previous best.

"It's an absorbing contest as I expected," said Abdullah, adding that he really enjoyed the process of the competition.

Follow Abdullah, 19-year-old Weeraphon Wichuma from Thailand, who won gold in the men's 73 kg at the 2023 world weightlifting championships in Riyadh last month, collected silver, lifted 156 kg in the snatch and 195 kg in the clean and jerk for a total of 351 kg. DPR Korean weightlifter Oh Kum Thaek came third with 344 kg. China's Wei Yinting, who won gold in the men's 73 kg at the 2023 Asian weightlifting championships this May, lifted 161 kg in the snatch and failed to lift 180 kg for three attempts in the clean and jerk. — Xinhua



Indonesia's Rahmat Abdullah competes in the men's 73 kg group A weightlifting competition during the 2022 Asian Games in Hangzhou, in China's eastern Zhejiang province on 3 October 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

ROLLING UPDATES:
WORLD

Trio win Nobel physics prize for opening door to world of electrons

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This aerial picture taken on 2 October 2023 shows a peatland fire spreading through a plantation in Ogan Ilir, South Sumatra. **PHOTO: AFP**

Indonesian city closes schools over peatland fire haze

AN Indonesian city with a population of hundreds of thousands has shut schools for three days because of haze caused by large peatland fires, its mayor said Tuesday.

A prolonged dry season has caused higher risks of wildfires on the archipelago nation's major islands, stoking fears of repeat haze-belching forest fires that have also affected neighbouring Malaysia and Singapore in recent years.

The city of Jambi on the western island of Sumatra, which has a population of around 600,000, has forced students to online learning from home over the toxic smog.

"The thick smog made us lay off students from preschool to junior high school," the city's mayor Syarif Fasha told reporters at Jambi city hall.

The school ban was from Monday to Wednesday, but would be extended if the haze continued, he said.

Authorities said the haze was caused by fires elsewhere, without specifying. Peatland fires have been raging in neighbouring Palembang province for more than a month.

On Monday, air quality levels in Jambi reached 154 PM2.5 — fine particles that can penetrate deep into the lungs — at "unhealthy" levels 11.4 times the annual air quality value set by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The local government has also asked residents to wear masks and reduce outdoor activity as the air quality deteriorates. It has been distributing masks on the street and at markets, according to an AFP journalist.

Schools in Palembang in South Sumatra and Banjarmasin in South Kalimantan — all affected by haze — have also shifted to online classes, according to local media reports. Parents in Jambi said they agreed with the decision.

"The haze is dangerous for health," said 35-year-old office worker Kusnadi Putera. "There are additional costs (of children at home), but we have got used to it since the pandemic." — AFP

Two dead in Bangkok mall shooting, 14-year-old boy arrested

A 14-year-old boy was arrested Tuesday after a shooting at a packed Bangkok mall that left two people dead and five wounded, and sent hundreds of panicked shoppers running in terror into the streets.

Witnesses told AFP of chaotic scenes as shots rang out at the upmarket Siam Paragon mall in the heart of the thai capital around 4:30 pm (0930 GMT).

The shooting comes just days before the first anniversary of the deadliest massacre in modern thai history, when an ex-policeman armed with a gun and knife attacked a nursery in the country's north, murdering 24 children and 12 adults.

National Police Chief Torsak Sukwimol told reporters that two women — one Chinese, one from Myanmar — were killed in the mall shooting, and five other people wounded.

He said the 14-year-old suspect was in custody but was too confused to undergo questioning.

"He is a mental patient at Rajavithi hospital and he has not been taking his medication," Torsak said.

"He said it was like there was another him telling him who to shoot."

Video footage showed a long-haired boy wearing a black shirt, glasses and a cap with a US flag motif being taken into custody by police.

Yuthana Srettanan, director of the Erawan Emergency Centre, told reporters that all but one of those who were shot were women.

Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin offered condolences to the victims' families and said he was monitoring the situation closely. — AFP

This handout from the Central Investigation Bureau of the Royal Thai Police released on 3 October 2023 shows the arrest of a 14-year-old boy suspect of a shooting at Siam Paragon shopping centre in Bangkok. **PHOTO: HANDOUT / CENTRAL INVESTIGATION BUREAU OF THE ROYAL THAI POLICE / AFP**

Iran rejects US claims about its latest nuclear development

IRANIAN Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani on Monday rejected the US government's anti-Tehran claims in its latest report on "Strategy for Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction (CWMD)".

"These are baseless claims. Iran is a committed signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and has signed the comprehensive safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency and is implementing it," Kanaani said at a regular press conference in the Iranian capital Tehran. — Xinhua

China to firmly uphold UN-centred intl system, says envoy

A Chinese envoy said Monday that China will steadfastly support the international system centred around the United Nations.

"China works tirelessly to promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind, and firmly upholds the UN-centred international system," Dai Bing, China's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, told the opening of the main session of the Fifth Committee of the 78th UN General Assembly, which deals with internal UN administrative and budgetary matters.

The ambassador said that facing the ongoing global challenges, member states should work together to strengthen the role of the United Nations and "adhere to true multilateralism".

"Finance serves as the foundation of and an important element underpinning the UN governance," Dai said. "To maintain the role of the UN and deliver on their commitment to multilateralism, all member states must shoulder their responsibilities and fulfil their obligations." — Xinhua