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The Global NEW LIGHT of MYANMAR

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A sweeping overview of the Mid-Year Myanmar Gems Emporium 2023 in Nay Pyi Taw, unfolding on 20 October 2023.

Mid-Year Myanmar Gems Emporium 2023 to sell 300 pearl lots, 160 gem lots, 4,025 jade lots

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing views round displays of pearl, gem and jade lots at the opening of Mid-Year Myanmar Gems Emporium 2023.

CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing attended the opening ceremony of the Mid-Year Myanmar Gems Emporium 2023 at Maniyadana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

The Senior General and attendees to the ceremony watched a video clip on sales of jade and gems at the gem emporiums, production of pearls and sales, production of jewellery items, and preparations to hold the emporium 2023.

In Maniyadana Jade Hall, the Senior General and party viewed displays of jade, gem and pearl lots to be sold at the mid-year emporium and the Senior General gave necessary guidance to officials.

They also viewed round private jewellery showrooms and displays of uncut jade lots displayed outside the hall.

Also present at the ceremony were Council Joint Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo and council members, Union ministers and Union-level officials, and local and foreign gems merchants.

The Myanmar Gems Emporiums have been held since 1964 for selling gems and jade to earn foreign exchange for the State and ensure economic development of citizens. The current emporium will put 300 lots of pearl, 160 lots of gems and 4,025 lots of jade on sale to local and foreign gem merchants through an open tender system under the prescribed rules and regulations. In selling pearl and gem lots, the floor prices were set in the US dollar, and foreign merchants can buy pearl and gem lots in the US dollar, euro, yuan and baht but local merchants can purchase them in Myanmar kyat. Jade lots were classified in three groups. Jade lots of A and B classes will be sold in foreign currency and C class is set for encouraging MSME businesspersons.

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World Events and Lessons to Learn Double Standard and Charter of Powerful Nations

By Myint Myat

Myanmar's mineral export bags US$158.878 mln as of 13 Oct

The value of Myanmar's mineral exports swelled to US$158.878 million over the past six months of the current financial year 2023-2024, the Ministry of Commerce's statistics showed.

Between 1 April and 13 October 2023, the public sector performed mineral exports valued at $22.47 million whereas the private sector saw mineral exports worth $136.4 million.

The figures slightly declined from $178.6 million registered in the corresponding period last FY2022-2023.

Myanmar exports agricultural produce, livestock, fisheries, minerals, forest products, finished industrial goods and other items, whereas it imports capital goods, intermediate goods, consumer goods and raw materials by manufacturing enterprises working on Cutting, Making and Packing basis.

Myanmar's external trade totalled $17.064 billion over the past six months this FY, comprising exports worth $8.056 billion and imports worth over $9 billion.

—TWA/KK

NATIONAL

Russian delegation visits Maravijaya Buddha Image

The Russian delegation pays a visit to the Maravijaya Buddha Image in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

RUSSIAN delegation led by External Relations Committee Chairman Mr Grigoriev Evgeny Dmitrievich, a member of the St Petersburg Government, visited the world's tallest Maravijaya Buddha Image in Dekkhinathiri Township of Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

First, the Russian delegation visited the Buddha Image and observed the 24 special chambers around the platform of the Buddha Image, Agga Dhipati Sasana Beikman and stone plaques bearing inscriptions on Tri Pitaka treatises in Pali and Romanized languages in stone plaque chambers on which small pagodas are built.

Then, they headed to the white elephant shed in the precinct of the pagoda and fed the white elephants.

Moreover, they went to Maniyadana Jade Hall to observe the sale of pearl lots, jade, jewellery and raw jade at the 2023-Mid Myanmar Gems Emporium.

In the evening, Mr Dmitry Krutoy, Chief Special Officer of the Department of International Relations of External Relations Committee and Director Vladimir M Moiseyenko of NP Napalkov Centre for Oncology of St Petersburg went to Yangon General Hospital.

At the Training Centre of the hospital, Dr Thida Hla, Reactor (Medical Superintendent/Treatment) greeted them and other Professors/Department Heads of the Department of Medical Oncology and Department of Radiation Oncology and explained the processes of departments.

Then, the Russian delegation clarified the work processes of the Napalkov Centre, technological exchange and cooperation for the medicinal development of the two countries.

They also observed the cancer department that offers treatment with radiation, Brachytherapy, PET/CT, Cyclotron Centre and wards for patients.

Additionally, Mr Grigoriev Evgeny Dmitrievich-led delegation visited the Shwedagon Pagoda. — MNA/KTZH

Russian Orthodox Church to be built marking 75th Anniversary of Myanmar-Russia diplomatic ties

A Russian Orthodox Christian Church will be built in Dagon Myothit (North) Township marking the 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties between Russia and Myanmar, according to Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC).

The Russian Orthodox Christian Church will be built on 1.25 acres of land in Ward 34 extension of Dagon Myothit (North) Township and the construction will be cooperated by the YCDC Engineering Department (Buildings).

Yangon Mayor U Bo Htay and a team led by the Russian Orthodox Christian Bishop for Southeast Asia discussed the construction process of the Church on 19 October. — ASH/MKKS

Discussions between Yangon Mayor U Bo Htay and the Russian Orthodox Christian Bishop for Southeast Asia underway on 19 October.

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Mid-Year Gems Emporium 2023 kicks off

THE first day of the Mid-Year Gems Emporium 2023 was held at the Maniyadana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning

Starting in the morning, local and foreign jewellers were able to see pieces of pearl and jade lots on display inside the Maniyadana Jade Hall. They also enjoyed the jade lots on display outside the hall, and proposed prices were put in tender boxes.

The pearl lots will be sold on 21 and 22 October; gem lots will be sold on 23 October and jade lots will be sold from 24 to 28 October.

In addition, gems and jewellery shops are opened in the Maniyadana Jade Hall and are alive with shoppers.

At the emporium, 300 pearl lots, 160 gem lots, and 4,025 jade lots will be sold through an open tender system, and pieces of pearl and gems are priced in US dollars. Foreign jewellers can pay in the US dollar, euro, yuan, and Thai baht, and local gem merchants can pay in Kyat. — MNA/CT

A gem trader viewing pearl lots at the Mid-Year Gems Emporium 2023 yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

Low Pressure Area Condition

Issued at (19:00) hours MST on 20-10-2023

ACCORDING to the observations at (17:30) hrs MST today, the low pressure area over the Southwest Bay and adjoining Southeast Bay of Bengal still persists. It is likely forecast to move Northwestwards and further intensify into a depression over the Westcentral Bay of Bengal on (22.10.2023).

NATIONAL

Mid-Year Myanmar Gems Emporium 2023 to sell 300 pearl lots, 160 gem lots, 4,025 jade lots

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A total of 500 lots of jade in Class A were set floor price in US dollar, and not only foreign gem merchants but local merchants must buy these jade lots in US dollar, euro, yuan and baht.

A total of 1,733 lots of jade in Class B were set at floor price in US dollar. Foreign merchants have to buy them in foreign currencies and local merchants in Kyat or foreign currencies.

A total of 1,792 lots of jade in Class C were set at floor price in Kyat for encouraging MSME businesspersons, and only local gems merchants can buy them in Kyat for payment.

The current Mid-Year Myanmar Gems emporium lasts from 20 to 28 October. — MNA/TTA

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing views the exhibits at the Mid-Year Myanmar Gems Emporium 2023 yesterday.

SAC Member DPM MoTC UM-led delegation arrives back

MYANMAR delegation led by State Administration Council Member Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Transport and Communications General Mya Tun Oo arrived back in Myanmar on Thursday after attending the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation held in Beijing of the People's Republic of China on 17 and 18 October.

General Mya Tun Oo was accompanied by Union Minister at the Union Government Office 2 U Ko Ko Hlaing, Deputy Minister for Industry U Yin Maung Nyunt, high-ranking officials from the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation and the Ministry of Industry during the trip to China.

The Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation marked the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) under the Theme "High-quality Belt and Road Cooperation: Together for Common Development and Prosperity". Moreover, during the forum, three high-level forums on connectivity, green development and digital economy, and six thematic forums were also held.

Deputy Prime Minister MoTC Union Minister General Mya Tun Oo speaks on the occasion of the High-Level Forum on Digital Economy in Beijing on 18 October.

Chinese President Xi Jinping attended the opening ceremony of the forum at China Great Hall and delivered a keynote speech on 18 October. At noon, the Myanmar delegation attended the High-Level Forum on Digital Economy held at the China National Convention Centre (CNCC).

At the forum, Union Minister General Mya Tun Oo participated as a Speaker together with Digital Economy Ministers from 15 BRI partner countries under the topic of "The Opportunities of Digital Economy for shared benefits and mutual learning".

Moreover, Union Minister at the Union Government Office 2 U Ko Ko Hlaing and Deputy Minister for Industry U Yin Maung Nyunt attended the Thematic Session on People-to-people Bonds while Permanent Secretary U Hla Maung Thein of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation to High-Level Forum on Green Development. The third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation released joint statements "Beijing Initiative on the Belt and Road International Digital Economy Cooperation" and "Initiative on International Trade and Economic Cooperation Framework for Digital Economy and Green Development".

On 17 October, the deputy minister for Industry met officials of the China Association of Science and Technology and discussed potential cooperation in electronic vehicle maintenance training at vocational schools of the ministry, mineralogy and industrial technology.

Additionally, Union Minister General Mya Tun Oo and Union Minister U Ko Ko Hlaing attended the dinner reception hosted by the Chinese President on the evening of 17 October. The forum was attended by state leaders of 25 countries, the UN Secretary-General and ministerial officials and representatives of over 150 countries and representatives and experts of over 30 international organizations, totalling some 4,000 delegates. — MNA/KTZH

NATIONAL

MoI UM makes inspection tours in Mandalay

UNION Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn delivered the national building and media role subject at the special refresher course No 23 for the faculty members of the universities and colleges at the Yadanabon Hall of the Civil Service Academy (Upper Myanmar) yesterday.

During the knowledge augmentation, the Union minister highlighted the progress in the current political, economic and social sectors of the country, efforts of the government for prosperity and food security of the nation, the construction of the Maravijaya Buddha Image, the 75th Anniversary of Union Day, Diamond Jubilee Independence Day, State-level ceremonies, exhibitions, competitions and festivals, rehabilitation activities after Cyclone Mocha under the leadership of Union, holding of the Eighth Anniversary of NCA, activities of Ministry of Information in the fight against false news/misinformation including its attendance to local and foreign media outlets' meetings, development in media relations and media sector and other matters for the trainees.

Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn inspects the printing process for school textbooks in Chanmyathazi Township, Mandalay Region on 20 October 2023.

The training will last five weeks and a total of 397 trainees joined it.

On the same evening, he met the staff of Upper Myanmar Government Printing Press (Mandalay) of the Printing and Publishing Department in Chanmyathazi Township of Mandalay.

Then, he inspected the printing operations and gave instructions to make preparations to print more school textbooks when it reached the stage of 70 GSM school textbooks as the newsprints for the newspaper were being tested after receiving the raw materials from the Thaboung Paper Mill and the need to meet the fixed quality of texts for 2024-2025 academic year, complete the work before deadline and be aware of occupational safety. — MNA/KTZH

ASEAN's Science, Tech & Innovation Meeting held in RP

The group documentary photograph of the COSTI-84 in the Philippines on 16-20 October 2023.

THE 84th Meeting of ASEAN Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation – COSTI-84 and related subcommittees meeting were held at "Bellevue Resort" in Bohol, the Philippines from 16 to 20 October. Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Science and Technology Dr Sai Kyaw Naing Oo and COSTI Technology Subcommittee team leaders attended the event.

At the opening ceremony of COSTI 84, the rotating chairman, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Transport and Information Communication of Brunei, Mr Mohammad Nazri Mohammad Yusof gave an opening speech and the Philippines' Ministry of Science and Technology Undersecretary Dr Leah J Buendia gave a welcome speech.

Afterwards the opening ceremony of the ASEAN Textile Science and Technology Exposition continued, and the display of textile technology and traditional clothing by ASEAN countries was launched.

Discussions were presented according to the COSTI technical subcommittee, and negotiated issues related to the establishment of an ASEAN Technology Hub among ASEAN countries and the holding of workshops on Artificial Intelligence, the Network on Bio-Circular and Green Economy, and the strategic implementation of regional research infrastructure.

They also talked over the issue of selecting and approving research papers on science and technology and innovation related to ASEAN and partner organizations such as the United States, England, and the European Union, as well as discussing the issues of jointly holding workshops and conferences and allowing more women researchers to participate and be rewarded. — MNA/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

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

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gnlmnews@gmail.com,
newsroom@gnlm.com.mm
www.gnlm.com.mm

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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

MoHT UM receives Russian delegation, Travel & Agency of Thai separately

UNION Minister for Hotels and Tourism Dr Thet Thet Khine met Chairman Mr Grigoriev Evgeny Dmitrievich of the External Relations Committee, a member of the Government of St Petersburg of the Russian Federation and delegation and received Ms Kulchalee Preechayadeekul, Executive Officer of Best International Travel and Agency based in Thailand and delegation separately in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The meetings were attended by U Phyo Zaw Soe, Deputy Minister for Hotels and Tourism, the permanent secretary, directors-general, officials, Russian delegates, officials from the Embassy of the Russian Federation to Myanmar, officials from the Russia-Myanmar Friendship and Cooperation Association and delegation members led by Best International Travel and Agency executive officer.

The Russian delegation calls on Union Minister Dr Thet Thet Khine yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

Both parties cordially discussed matters on promoting tourism cooperation, cooperation on human resource development, visiting tourist destinations between the two countries in Myanmar and St Petersburg, the expansion of domestic and foreign airline flights and the smooth travel of Russian tourists to destinations in Myanmar.

During the meeting with the executive officer of Best International Travel and Agency, discussed matters related to cooperation for the development of tourism between Myanmar and Thailand, in addition to visiting the Yangon-Bago-Kyaiktiyo routes, which are the most frequented by Thai tourists and visit to new destinations.

Filming videos of Myanmar's destinations and publishing them in the news media in Thailand and expanding the number of flights between Yangon and Bangkok.

Best International Travel and Agency is a company that promotes tours for Thai tourists to Myanmar and tours to more than 30 countries around the world. It also records local television videos of Myanmar's trips and televises on Thai media such as Thai Channel 5, Thairath, Workpoint and Mono 29. — MNA/TS

An aerial view of the Monghein Forest.

Monghein Forest confirmed as protection area

BY exercising the powers granted under Subsection (e) of Section 6 of the Forest Law of 2018, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Republic of the Union of Myanmar has designated an area of 8,841 acres Mansi Township, Bhamo District, Kachin State as Monghein extend protected public forest as per Notification No 124/2023 released on 20 October 2023.

The Ministry is establishing the protected public forest to preserve the water sources and watershed areas such as rivers, creeks and lakes, and ensure the stability of the ecological system.

By establishing the forest, the valuable tree species including teak and local species growing in the area can be preserved. It is protecting endangered plant species and wild animals and increasing their habitats. Endangered plant species and wild animals can be protected and the habitats of wild animals can be increased.

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation

Smuggled medications, industrial materials, foodstuffs, consumer goods and vehicles confiscated

THE on-duty team under the supervision of the Yangon Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force confiscated a Yutong express bus (estimated value of K130 million), headed to Yangon from Myawady, carrying three kinds of goods worth K14,224,000 including 9,200 ampoules of sterile diluent vaccine without official documents near the Milepost Zero on Yangon-Mandalay expressway on 17 October. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

The on-duty teams under the management of the Customs Department made inspections on 17 and 18 October and seized four kinds of goods worth K10,303,252 including 40 Vertical blue light sprayers and 1,139 kilogrammes of textile that were not declared in the Import Declaration (ID) from two containers at the Myanmar Industrial Port and the goods worth K71,137,500 including 14,570 kilogrammes of plastic bottle that were not declared in the ID from four containers at the Asia World Port Terminal container checkpoint. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

On 18 October, the combined team captured an Isuzu Bighorn car, a Station Wagon car and a Mitsubishi Pajero car (approximately K35.7 million), headed to Bhamo from Lweje, carrying nine kinds of goods worth K8.7 million including 450 kilogrammes of plastic waterproof roll and 160 kilogrammes of Mala noodle sack without official documents at the 5th-Mile Sihe combined checkpoint in Bhamo township. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

Similarly, the combined teams impounded 26 kinds of goods worth K10.08 million including three auto parts (engine cooling radiator) that were smuggled and piled up by the side of road over the Sinphyu checkpoint in Muse township and a Zhongtong express bus, a Sunlong express bus and a Kinglong express bus (estimated value of K140 million), travelling from Myawady to Mandalay and from Myawady to Yangon, carrying 39 kinds of goods worth K49,942,000 including 10 sets of Canon printer and 12 backpacks without official documents at the Thanlwin bridge combined checkpoint (Tayokhla side). The action was taken under Customs procedures.

On the same day, an on-duty team nabbed a Nissan Condor vehicle (estimated value of K20 million), headed to Mudon from Phayathonzu, carrying two kinds of goods worth K20.12 million including 1,400 kilogrammes of shrimp without official documents on Mudon-Chaungwa road in Mudon township. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

A total of 27 arrests were made on 17 and 18 October, with an estimated value of K501,506,752, as reported by the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS

NATIONAL

The two Nawalawha Yadanapada Buddha's Footprints.

Two Nawalawha Yadanapada Buddha's Footprints cast in bronze placed at Shwedagon Pagoda

THE consecration ceremony of two Nawalawha Yadanapada Buddha's Footprints cast in bronze was held at the Bawdi Mandaing Prayer Hall of the Shwedagon Pagoda on 19 October.

It was dedicated to U Aung Aung Moe's Pyaewa Myanmar handicraft bronze casting industry in Tampawadi, Mandalay, under the auspices of Hla Yadana Sayadaw.

Presiding Monk Hlayadana Sayadaw of Nyaungdon Monastery placed an order for two new Nawalawha Yadanapada Buddha's Footprints at Pyaewa Myanmar, handicraft bronze casting industry in Mandalay run by U Aung Aung Moe, to replace the decayed former Buddha's footprints pagodas.

The footprints were brought from Mandalay on 14 October and kept at the Bawdi Mandaing Prayer Hall of the Shwedagon Pagoda on 19 October. — TWA/CT

YCDC to build underpass between Shwedagon and People's Square

THE Yangon City Development Committee has stated that an underpass will be constructed to connect the Shwedagon Pagoda and the People's Square on U Wisara Road in Dagon Township.

The underpass that will connect the west entrance to Shwedagon Pagoda, the People's Square, and the People's Park will be 23 feet wide and 461 feet and nine inches long and includes four exits, four escalators, and two lifts for people with disabilities that can accommodate just 10 passengers each at a time. It is said that the project period will take about 14 months.

According to the YCDC, the construction of the underground pedestrian tunnel (underpass) is aimed at making traffic safty and comfortable for people to travel to the Shwedagon Pagoda and the People's Square and to create a modern infrastructure. — TWA/CT

The scale model of the underpass to be built was shown in photographs at the groundbreaking ceremony held on 19 October.

Chilli pepper, bell pepper prices set lower in Yangon market

The photo shows a new supply of dried chilli pepper (Moehtaung variety).

THE prices of long dried chilli pepper (Moehtaung variety) and dried bell pepper are down by K5,000-10,000 per viss in Yangon's market in the third week of October compared to those registered in the year-ago period.

Mandalay Region offers higher prices than Yangon's. Consequently, supply to Yangon declined.

"Despite the price drop, the consumer demand is slow-moving. The market is quite sluggish this year," Ko Hla Han, a seller of chilli pepper and tamarind in Seinpan Street of the Bayintnaung Commodity Wholesale Centre, told The Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM). New dried chilli pepper (Moehtaung) from Thazi Township fetches only K10,000 per viss in Bayintnaung market in the third week of October 2023, he added.

Moehtaung chilli peppers from Pyawbwe, Thedaw and Yamethin areas are priced at K10,000-15,000 per viss. The price of long chilli peppers from the delta region is only K6,000-8,000 per viss, according to the warehouses in Yetama and Nguwah streets.

The long chilli pepper processed in cold storage fetched K12,000-12,500 per viss on 20 October in the wholesale market, which dropped from K14,000 per viss in the previous months. The bell pepper prices are K14,000-16,000 per viss, while Sinphyukyun bell peppers processed in cold storage are priced higher at K18,500-20,000 per viss.

With the prices of chilli pepper declining in late 2023, the traders cut investment amount by K100,000-150,000 per 20-viss sack compared to that of the previous year, Ko Pyae Phyo, who sells Moehtaung chilli pepper from delta region told the GNLM. — TWA/KK

Times City to hold Thadingyut Jewellery Festival

AN announcement says that the Thadingyut Jewellery Festival has been taking place at Times City starting from 20 October. The exhibition will be hosted at the Jewellery Mall in Times City, with the participation of over 130 jewellery shops. It will be held from 10 am to 5 pm on 20-22 October.

Shops will offer special discounts, ranging from 3 to 50 per cent, as part of their customer promotion efforts. Additionally, the festival organizers will include valuable lucky draw prizes to express their gratitude to the buyers who take part in the jewellery fair. — TWA/CT

An advertisement for the jewellery festival to be held in Times City.

NATIONAL
BUSINESS

MoC issues over 400 Form E certificates at Muse trade zone within 15 days

THE Ministry of Commerce has issued over 400 Form E certificates at Muse 105th-mile trade zone within 15 days this month.

Exporters can apply for Form E (ASEAN-China Free Trade Certificate of Origin) tax relief for some of Myanmar's export items. The Form E certificate is granted in line with rules and regulations.

A total of 414 Form E certificates were issued between 1 and 15 October 2023 for frozen crab, crab, eel, cotton, rice, broken rice, dried plum, black sesame and gum karaya.

Additionally, export/import licences can be sought via the Tradenet 2.0 platform or manually at border posts.

Muse border saw 776 export trucks and 1,191 import trucks between 1 and 15 October. Trade value totalled US$31.706 million, comprising exports worth $14.317 million and imports worth $17.389 million, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

At present, the Chinese Yuan and US dollar are used as the official currency for border transactions for Sino-Myanmar trade. Transactions for pulses, corn, sesame and peanuts can be made in Yuan in addition to dollars. Meanwhile, trade for rice, broken rice, agricultural produce and fisheries such as crab and eel are allowed to be paid in Yuan.

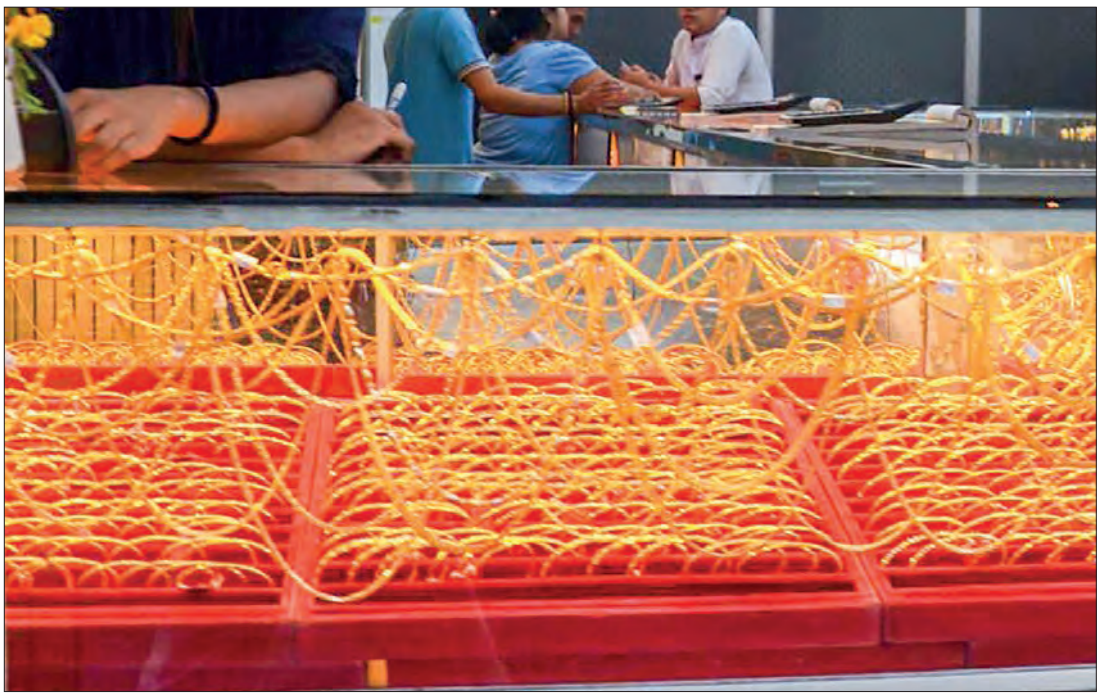
Exporters are depositing the export earnings following the directives of the Central Bank of Myanmar.

Trade is steadily flowing at the Muse border, with over 100 trucks in and out of the zone daily.

The main export items are green gram, onion, cotton, eel, peanut, zinc mineral, gum karaya, corn, frozen crab, crab, broken rice, rice, cashew nut, sesame and plum. Meanwhile, vehicles and machinery, motorcycle parts under a Semi-knocked-down system, petrol, nickel, iron rods, batteries, battery cycle, footwear and carbon powder are primarily imported into the country. — NN/EM

Export cargo loaded lorries are pictured on the Myanmar-China border.

YGEA raises gold reference price higher tracking rise in spot gold price


A snapshot of gold jewellery items at the gold outlet in Yangon.

THE spot gold price rallied to US$1,980 per ounce, prompting the Yangon Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA) to set the reference price at another high of around K3.1 million per tical (0.578 ounce or 0.016 kilogramme) on 20 October.

The spot gold price surged to $1,980 per ounce on 20 October up from $1,820 in early October, indicating a significant increase of over $160 within three weeks.

Pure gold fetches K3.47 million per tical in grey market, showing a price gap of nearly K400,000 per tical between the YGEA's reference price and unofficial market value.

Yangon Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA) switched to the Central Bank of Myanmar's exchange rate K2,900 for interbank transactions in calculating the reference price for pure gold. At present, the US dollar is exchanged at K3,320 in the grey market.

As a result of this, the YGEA's reference price and current market value differ depending on the US dollar exchange rate.

Myanmar's gold price is highly tied to the spot gold price and US dollar exchange rate. The soaring dollar exchanging up to K4,000 drove the gold price up to a record high of K4 million per tical in late August 2023. — NN/EM

COVID-19 report, 20 October 2023

NEW TESTS	NEW CASE	CASUALTIES
2,835	Nil	Nil

Black gram price hits new record high to over K2.7 mln per tonne

THE black gram price hit a new record high of over K2.71 million per tonne on 19 October, indicating a sharp rise of K245,000 per tonne within three weeks.

The price surged from K2.465 million per tonne on 3 October.

Nonetheless, the pigeon pea price stayed the same on the high side at K4.075 million per tonne.

The main buyer India's strong demand drove the prices of Myanmar pulses.

Myanmar's various pulses export earnings were estimated at over $715 million from over 860,000 tonnes in the H1 of the current financial year 2023-2024 beginning 1 April.

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 gram, green gram and pigeon peas to foreign markets. Of them, black gram and pigeon peas are mostly shipped to India while green grams are exported to China and Europe.

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

Black grams are seen for sale at the market.

OPINION

Eradicate illegal trade to boost the State economy

MANUFACTURING and trade are essential pillars in propelling a State's economy to new heights. Unfortunately, illegal trade activities often disrupt the manufacturing and trade processes, undermining the State's economic stability. These illegal practices include illicit export and import operations, as well as smuggling goods without paying the rightful taxes to the government.

Every nation grapples with illegal trade to some extent, and governments worldwide are determined to combat these unscrupulous activities. The objective is not only to curb illegal trade but also to reduce inflation rates and maintain reasonable commodity prices. In Myanmar, the challenge of illegal trade has persisted across successive eras, demanding rigorous legal action against the culprits.

Public servants, as stewards of the State, hold significant responsibility in this endeavour. Their conduct directly influences the socio-economic well-being of the people and the State's economic prospects. Therefore, taking strong action against those engaging in illegal trade is paramount to fostering economic development and advancing the State's economic growth.

> Presently, illegal trade seeks to infiltrate Myanmar's domestic market. However, it need not be an insurmountable threat. A strong partnership between the government and the business community can ultimately succeed in eliminating illegal commodities. This endeavour serves the people by ensuring fair prices for goods and maintaining a stable inflation rate for society.

To achieve this, relevant government departments must closely monitor the hindrances to the State's economic progress. Eradicating illegal trade can significantly contribute to enhancing the State's economic prospects. Additionally, officials must prioritize countering illegal trade activities that hinder the competitive ability of domestic businesses in the local market.

Government personnel involved in this mission must face challenges and risks in carrying out their duties. They encounter hostility and danger from unscrupulous individuals who profit from illegal trade. In response, government ministries and organizations should employ a balanced approach, offering incentives to outstanding employees who perform exceptionally in combating and intercepting illegally imported and smuggled goods. Simultaneously, they should impose strict penalties on those who violate rules, regulations, and laws, thereby deterring further violations.

Presently, illegal trade seeks to infiltrate Myanmar's domestic market. However, it need not be an insurmountable threat. A strong partnership between the government and the business community can ultimately succeed in eliminating illegal commodities. This endeavour serves the people by ensuring fair prices for goods and maintaining a stable inflation rate for society.

Tackling illegal trade is pivotal for the State's economic well-being. By eradicating this menace, the State can secure a brighter economic future, protect its domestic businesses, and provide its citizens with the stability and affordability they deserve. It is a collective effort, with both the government and the private sector working hand in hand to pave the way for a thriving economy.

■

ARTICLE

World Events and Lessons to Learn

Double Standard and Charter of Powerful Nations

By Myint Myat

THE Israel war has broken out amid the Ukraine war. The world is encountering new lessons such as the lesson for Zelensky who can be a pariah from the world's pages after one or two days of the attack of Hamas against Israel and Ukraine that cannot rely on Western support anymore, the US and EU that use the word terrorism as a double standard, and the surprise attack with an unusual strategy of Hamas on Israel is a new lesson for our country as we have once faced similar case.

Agonistic war

If we look at the today's wars, they are lack of law. Those who launch the war without law are the wild ones. The Israeli-Palestine conflict, Israel-Hamas crisis and Israel-Hezbollah war have been happening for many years in the Middle East and now the Gaza-Israel war is the most brutal attack. The innocent civilians, elderly, infants and women are brutally killed. The schools, hospitals and the convey of war refugees were attacked and such doings raise questions like "Are they normal or who or what organization is involved in it… based on the cases of the past".

They use white phosphorus, a pyrophoric that ignites when exposed to oxygen, producing thick, light smoke with intense 815 degrees Celsius heat.

They cut off water, electricity and ration to Gaza where Palestinians and Hamas live. The declaration to take mighty vengeance for new generations to remember the war by the humble leader of society shows that he fails to consider that his doings will spread his hatred for the next generations.

Until the world is filled with hatred, there will be endless terrorist attacks. This time, the consequences of the Israel-Hamas war are likely to spark international-level terrorism attacks. The attack of Russia in Ukraine is just a limited special operation. The wars launched by Israel might be endless ones, the experts considered.

The previous Arab-Israeli wars after four-time war declarations were just prolonging civil wars over territory between Jews and Palestinians. The current Hamas-Israel war can be endless affecting politics, religions and races and the world might be in the dark due to the fuel of wars without making peace for the world. We haven't heard any peaceful words from certain countries except Russia and China that warn both sides not to put civilians in danger using the rights of self-defence. Moreover, any move by Israel to occupy the Gaza Strip again would be a "big mistake", US President Joe Biden said, and we all should notice his unrealistic words.

Ongoing conflicts in the Middle East have been particularly intense and long-lasting. The Israel war has broken out amid the Ukraine war. **ILLUSTRATION: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ PIXABAY**

War applied for interests

There are many potentials that the war is likely to spread from Gaza to Arab and then globally. Even though the US has the authority to stop the attacks that kill the UN staff and war refugees, their stage to be wider war seems to disrespect the world people.

The US has no responsibility and accountability for the world at all and the perception of Biden to spread wings to the Mediternal escape to regain domestic and international authority and establish a powerful country along with political crisis and recession, and they might create World War III if necessary.

At least, they might divide the Arab world. When we look at the past, they create situations to fight each other South-North Koreans, Chinese Taipei-Chinese, Russians-Ukrainians and Myanmars-ethnic people, and Africans. Now, Arabs fight each other and it can be seen the dishonest activities of neo-colonialists that kill five birds with one stone.

How are the human rights measured?

Let's study the double standard. The US, theUN and Western countries have been exercising the double standard for a long time. They might be heroes in certain places and terrorists in other places. There are inconsistencies in such cases as when some individuals died they are labelled as having "died", while others are labelled as "killed". Those who emerged as voices of conscience on bomb attacks over one or two targets keep quiet on the current bomb attacks on 3,500 targets killing 700 babies.

The US stayed silent on the counterattack of Myanmar Tatmadaw when 30 police stations in the west of the country were attacked by ARSA now emerges as a voice on attacks of Hamas on 22 targets of Israel and it is so amazing. Moreover, the US accused Myanmar of fleeing about 100,000 Bengalis into another country in the attack of Tatmadaw also now neglects the evacuation of 1.1 million Palestinians from Gaza. The UN also makes soft voices just for show in order to get their high salaries.

Can the Gambia and their parties that filed cases under genocide to ICJ send those who commit war crimes in the current Gaza genocide? I don't think so. Such instabilities occur in the world due to the unfair policymakers of double standards. The US urges not to cause heavy causalities of civilians in war and also provides Israel with arms. Cutting off the water, electricity and ration is concerned with human rights and evacuation of patients from hospitals and about 1.1 million people from Gaza within 24 hours is also concerned with rights to humanitarian assistance. Could the liberals who are sensitive to human rights solve with the same standard for it? It must.

Under unfair double standards

There is no significant action in the Middle East Policy of the US. It is obvious that they do give favour to their ally Israel rather than Palestine.

Every policy of Americans does not bring a fair solution for peace to the world. Now, due to their one-sided policy, the war broke out and numerous innocent civilians died. If they want to be real-world leaders, they should say words for peace rather than inveigling. Although they should have had the ability to calm the tension between the two sides with peaceful words, they showed off military power immediately by sending the best warships to the Mediterranean. Moreover, on arrival at Israel, Secretary of the State Blinken said he arrived here as a Jew without saying fair words for the two countries neglecting the causalities of innocent civilians and showing their stand with their ally to the world, so, these actions are just fanning the flame.

Americans try to make almost all the world countries condemn and impose sanctions on the country that they don't want but, they are happy with every movement of their ally. That is called an unfair double standard. If they keep adapting such standards, the world will have to encounter crises. However, the Palestinian case shows that only the mutual recognition of fair and correct pathways under one common standard can bring a fair solution.

Real strength and security alert

We should place Ukraine leader Zelensky as an example to know who is our friend indeed. We should know that we should have self-reliance indeed from the case of Ukraine as they became the priority of the Americans. If there is no support from the US, the Ukraine war will end instantly. Currently, the Gaza war occurs and their eternal ally is in a critical situation. We can also see that Taiwan Chinese Taipei, South Korea and Japan are not in the role of priorities of the US.

Those who totally rely on others might face actions themselves in real situations if they are dependents. What the most important is that self-reliance is the true strength and the Ukraine and Gaza war makes it more obvious. Another lesson we need to learn is the surprise attack of Hamas on Israel's territory at the beginning of the current Israel-Hamas war. Even though they were under the influence of the famed CIA and Mossad, Hamas attacked Israel. We can compare this case with the attack of ARSA against 30 police stations in the western part of Myanmar in 2016 and arson attacks on Rakhine and Bengali villages that killed the local ethnic people.

> We should be in unity to stand the pressure between the double standard and powerful nations, to ensure self-defence and not face bullying. Finally, the humanitarian assistance, equality, justice and human rights used by the Western group are just words and we all should learn lessons not to be pawns.

The tactics they used might mislead to other side with disinformation, if not, how they practise destroying the early warning communication and supportive negotiation systems. These aspects should be learnt for the security and defence of our country.

Fundamental facts that should be known

The main thing is that the changing global events show who is right and who is wrong, and so there is no way except to build up the military, economy and own strength by ourselves. As long as there are people who do not follow any ethics but wear democracy and human rights as masks, there will be no peace in the world. The egotism causes damage to properties and houses and some people become homeless while others die. Moreover, we should take lessons from the case of Israel and Palestinian people being victims between two sides and we, especially the youths, need to hate war not to destroy our lives.

It should analyze the global politics and geopolitics as well as the misinformation and disinformation. Some information regarding the Israel-Hamas conflict is false news. There are some well-known media outlets lost their good reputation, so they should not make decisions immediately. It should take lessons in Myanmar just from the cases happening in the world. I think all may notice what is the cause of the problem? What is the current situation? Where does the war lead to… including the linkage between cause and effect and manipulators behind the case, war condition, just focus on their own national interests and willingness to protect the country and territory with patriotism … from Israel-Hamas war.

Moreover, it should know the history to be able to consider it in practice and not to prioritize the feeling or emotion.

In conclusion, the people of our country must learn lessons from the current global events. We should be in unity to stand the pressure between the double standard and powerful nations, to ensure self-defence and not face bullying. Finally, the humanitarian assistance, equality, justice and human rights used by the Western group are just words and we all should learn lessons not to be pawns.

Translated/KTZH

Belt and Road Initiative: A Road of Peace for the New Era

Harmonious coexistence has been the aspiration of the Chinese nation for thousands of years. During President Xi Jinping's visit to Kazakhstan and Indonesia in autumn 2013, he put forth the major initiatives of building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Over the past decade, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), with the aim of promoting peaceful development and better lives for the world, has increasingly become a road of peace where dreams and aspirations come true.

When the world is in great turbulence and transformation, with greater deficits in governance, trust, development and peace, where should humanity go? There are important choices to be made. Do we choose cooperation or isolation, solidarity or division, going forward together or in our separate ways? The answer provided by the BRI is to uphold multilateralism and build a community with a shared future for mankind, so as to address global challenges and maintain lasting peace together.

Peace requires mutual respect. The BRI was proposed by China and is shared by the world. It is not a soliloquy by China but a chorus of all partner countries, featuring extensive consultation and joint contribution for shared benefit. In pursuing this initiative, China never interferes in other countries' internal affairs, and it never exports its social system or development model or imposes them on other countries; China does not play geopolitical games, but creates a new model of win-win cooperation; and China wants no small blocs but a big family where all countries coexist in harmony. As Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Malaysia's former prime minister, puts it, there is equality among all countries participating in the BRI despite their varied sizes and wealth. He describes the BRI as being different from that promoted by other advanced countries in the past, in which small countries "did not have a say", and believes the BRI "will benefit all participating countries".

Peace brings win-win results. The BRI aims to build more partnerships and make the pie bigger, and it opposes creating small clubs or seeking selfish interests. Over the past decade, synergy has been fostered between the BRI and the UN. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Eurasian Economic Union, the African Union's Agenda 2063, the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity, as well as other international and regional development strategies. In May this year, the China-Central Asia Summit was successfully held to further synergize the BRI with the development strategies of the five Central Asian countries. Greater economic integration and deeper cooperation will inject new vigour into global peace and stability.

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Peace enables development. Embodied in the BRI is the vision of open, integrated and mutually beneficial cooperation, which is demonstrated by numerous examples. The Smederevo Steel Plant in Serbia brims with renewed vigour; the Piraeus port in Greece is among the top ports in the Mediterranean in terms of throughput; cataract patients in Uzbekistan are provided with opportunities to regain their sight; and villagers living in arid areas in Senegal now have better access to safe drinking water. Such development dividends cannot be achieved without a peaceful and stable environment. And thus, the pursuit of peace and development has gained stronger public support.

More than 2,100 years ago, Zhang Qian, a royal emissary of China's Han Dynasty, travelled westward and opened an overland route linking the East and the West. In the early 15th century, Zheng He, a famous navigator in the Ming Dynasty, made seven voyages to the Western Seas, a feat that is still remembered today. These pioneers won their place in history not as conquerors with warships, guns or swords. Rather, they are remembered as friendly emissaries leading camel caravans and sailing treasure-laden ships. Thousands of years on, China continues to follow the path of peaceful development, strive to build the Belt and Road into a road of peace, and march hand-in-hand with other countries toward security and development for all.

(Source: Chinese Embassy)

Belt and Road Initiative: A Road of Openness for the New Era

Spanning thousands of miles and years, the ancient Silk Road brought together people of various civilizations, religions, nationalities and races across Asia, Europe and Africa. It opened up windows of friendly engagement among nations and added a splendid chapter to the history of human progress.

As a key measure to advance opening up, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) grows from China but serves the world. Over the past decade, an open China has joined hands with more and more partners for a better world.

Boosting benefit sharing and inclusiveness through opening up. The BRI welcomes all countries with open arms, following the Silk Road spirit of peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit. The BRI is not ideologically driven, still less with values-related strings attached. It is not created for the sake of power confrontation or forming blocs. In contrast to those "small circles" or "exclusionary groups" pieced together by some countries, Belt and Road cooperation is a big family guided by the principle of extensive consultation and joint contribution for shared benefit. As of June this year, more than 150 countries and 30-plus international organizations have signed over 200 Belt and Road cooperation documents with China. Some international observers comment that no country in history has ever tried to roll out policies to build economic ties among so many countries across various continents.

Enhancing cooperation through opening up. As a highly popular global public good and cooperation platform, the BRI promotes connectivity, facilitates the effort of relevant countries and regions to better integrate into global supply, industrial and value chains, and creates greater development opportunities. The initiative is a broad path along which China and other countries share opportunities for common development. Over the past decade, the BRI has galvanized nearly USD 1 trillion of investment, launched more than 3,000 cooperation projects, and created an array of national landmarks, livelihood projects and milestones of cooperation. The China-Laos Railway helps make land-locked Laos a land-linked country. The Mombasa-Nairobi Railway adds more than two percentage points to local economic growth. The China-Europe Railway Express has completed over 73,000 freight services. Indeed, the BRI has become a "belt of development" and a "road to happiness".

Addressing development problems through opening up. As an open platform for cooperation, the BRI aims to build a fair, equitable and transparent system of international trade and investment rules, and make economic globalization more open, inclusive, balanced and beneficial to all. The effective operation of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the Belt and Road Special Lending Scheme, the Silk Road Fund, Silk Road theme bonds, and other new instruments will help ease the problem of inaccessible and expensive financing. New platforms for international development cooperation, including the Belt and Road Sustainable Cities Alliance and the BRI International Green Development Coalition, will create more development opportunities and brighter prospects for developing countries, and help narrow development gaps. According to data from the World Bank, Belt and Road cooperation is on course to help lift 7.6 million people from extreme poverty and 32 million from moderate poverty across the world by 2030.

> The effective operation of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the Belt and Road Special Lending Scheme, the Silk Road Fund, Silk Road theme bonds, and other new instruments will help ease the problem of inaccessible and expensive financing.

As an ancient Chinese saying goes, "Ceaseless inflow of rivers makes the ocean deep." China will host the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation this year. A more open China will further integrate itself into the world and deliver greater progress and prosperity for both China and the world at large.

(Source: Chinese Embassy)

Bollywood star Priyanka Chopra sends best wishes to cousin Mannara in Bigg Boss 17

Mannara Chopra. **PHOTO: INSTA/MEMANNARA**

Priyanka Chopra gave a shoutout to her cousin Mannara, a participant in 'Bigg Boss 17', with a throwback picture on Instagram.

ACTOR Priyanka Chopra gave a shoutout to her cousin Mannara Chopra who is currently seen as a participant in 'Bigg Boss 17'.

Taking to Instagram Story, Priyanka shared a throwback picture with Mannara and wrote, "Throwback to little @memannara Good Luck little one", followed by a red heart, folded hands, and flexed biceps emoji.

The photo captures Priyanka embracing Mannara, and it dates back to 2000, evident from former Miss World's crown.

Mannara is Priyanka's paternal cousin. Her mother is the sister of Priyanka's late father Ashok Chopra. She has acted in the Telugu film Rouge (2017) directed by Puri Jagannadh, Anubhav Sinha's Zid (2014), Prema Geema Jantha Nai (2014), Jakkanna (2016), Thikka (2016) and Sita (2019).

Mannara's real name is Barbie Handa. Prior to coming to 'Bigg Boss', she was landed in a controversy when her film 'Thiragabadara Saami' director AS Ravi Kumar Chowdary, allegedly kissed her during promotions.

Apart from Mannara, celebrities like Munawar Faruqui, Ankita Lokhande, Vicky Jain, Neil Bhatt, Aishwarya Sharma, and Jigna Vora, among others are also part of the 17th season, which kickstarted on 15 October. The show is being hosted by Salman Khan. — ANI

Fake bus stop calms Swedish dementia sufferers who want to go home

IN a Swedish nursing home, residents wait for a bus that never comes.

Staff have installed a fake bus stop in a hallway to ease the minds of anxious dementia patients eager to leave.

A bench is pushed up against the wall under an authentic-looking bus stop sign for the municipal transport company, complete with a map of the town of Sodertalje.

An imaginary bus schedule is even posted on the opposite wall. Caroline Wahlberg, who runs the Tallhojden nursing home, sat down with Edward, a resident in his 80s whose piercing blue eyes looked vaguely off into the distance.

"It is very common... that they have this worry and want to go home" at a certain stage of Alzheimer's and dementia, she told AFP.

"Some have their bags packed" as they wait on the bench, she said.

The bus stop was installed four years ago and has helped patients on numerous occasions. "I had a lady who lived here and she would come to me several times a day and ask for her parents to come and pick her up," Wahlberg said.

"We used to sit on the bench with her and just wait. And then we started to talk... and then she was calmer (and) happier. And we could then go eat or watch TV," she said.

Brings back memories

Fake bus stops were erected in parks outside some retirement homes in Germany in 2008 to give wandering patients a place where they would instinctively go to sit.

At the Swedish nursing home 35 kilometres (22 miles) southwest of Stockholm, where 17 people currently live, the measure is part of the patients' treatment. "It has brought some change here, it's like therapy," said Louise Bass, a nurse who has worked at the home for 13 years. — AFP

TikTok moms nurture 'detox for kids' misinformation

A TikTok army of American moms claiming to be "detox" specialists is pushing unproven treatments for childhood behavioral disorders — while hiding that their misinformation is actually a marketing campaign aimed at making money. Influencers with a large following, these mothers typically cite personal testimonies to passionately endorse detox sprays or bath treatments, claiming without evidence that they help rid children of toxins such as heavy metals and parasites. Their videos, which often garner millions of views on platforms including TikTok, illustrate how unqualified nutrition influencers deftly skirt content moderation rules to peddle potentially harmful health misinformation that experts say is difficult to police.

Claiming to have the answer to mood swings, picky eating and even autism, the influencers are accused of preying on desperate parents and reaping financial rewards through what researchers call predatory multi-level marketing (MLM) schemes. — AFP

Swedish study shows snoozing in the morning isn't bad

Hitting the snooze button in the morning doesn't have a negative impact on performance, Swedish researchers found.

Researchers at Stockholm University conducted two studies to better understand the habit of hitting the snooze button on alarm clocks, as it remains a relatively understudied behaviour. **ILLUSTRATION: PIXABAY**

YOU snooze, you lose? Swedish researchers said Wednesday that might not be the case, after their study even saw some benefits for those struggling with morning drowsiness.

While for many, a reach for the snooze button on the alarm clock is how most days start, researchers at Stockholm University noted that little is still known about the habit, prompting them to conduct two studies, the results of which where published Wednesday.

The first sought to identify who the snoozers actually were via the use of questionnaires collected from 1,732 respondents.

"In the first study we found that in general younger people were the ones snoozing and they were to a high degree night owls," Tina Sundelin, sleep researcher at Stockholm University, told AFP, noting that the initial finding was not too surprising. — AFP

ECONOMY
WORLD

EU's Digital Services Act mandates crackdown on problematic content by tech giants

Brussels has initiated investigations into X (formerly Twitter), Facebook's Meta, and TikTok following the 7 October Hamas attack on Israel.

THE EU's milestone legislation, known as the Digital Services Act, demands digital giants crack down on illegal and problematic content.

Brussels is bearing its teeth, launching investigations into X, formerly Twitter, as well as Facebook parent Meta and TikTok following Hamas' assault on Israel on 7 October and its aftermath.

The DSA is a mammoth law that will force digital giants to aggressively police content online in the European Union and could see them hit with major fines.

Here are the regulation's key elements:

The DSA is a comprehensive law that compels digital platforms to proactively monitor and address content within the European Union, potentially leading to significant fines for non-compliance. **PHOTO: DAMIEN MEYER/AFP**

Rules for all platforms

The law kicks in for all platforms from 17 February 2024, but since August it already applies for very large platforms with more than 45 million active monthly users.

Among their obligations, all platforms must quickly remove illegal content or make access to it impossible as soon as they are aware of the issue.

The companies must also rapidly inform the authorities when they suspect a criminal offence that threatens people's lives or the safety of others.

Every year the platform must publish a report that provides details about actions taken on content moderation and how long they took to respond after notification of illegal content. They will also report on the decisions taken in disputes with users. — AFP

US Fed notes softening labour market across the country

THE tight US labour market is continuing to ease, the Federal Reserve announced Wednesday, underscoring the progress it is making as it seeks to tackle inflation while avoiding a recession. The Fed has raised interest rates to a 22-year high as it looks to tame high inflation, which remains stuck above its long-term target of two per cent.

Nevertheless, price increases have slowed sharply since last year, while the economy has remained resilient, raising hopes of a so-called "soft landing", in which inflation is quashed through rate hikes without causing a damaging recession.

In its regular summary of economic conditions published Wednesday, the Fed noted "little to no change in economic activity" since its last report, along with "modest" inflation and a softening in the labour market. – AFP

France insists on nuclear for 'green' hydrogen

Nuclear power can be used to generate low-carbon electricity for hydrogen production. This project aims to transport hydrogen from the Iberian peninsula to the rest of Europe.

FRANCE on Wednesday repeated calls to class hydrogen produced with atomic power as "green", lining up a new clash with Germany over nuclear's role in Europe's energy plans.

"The development of the hydrogen market will be delayed if there is no equal treatment between renewable and low-carbon hydrogen," the French ambassador to Germany Francois Delattre said in Berlin.

Low-carbon electricity for hydrogen production included nuclear power, Delattre said at an event to mark German network operator OGE's move to join the H2Med project to bring hydrogen from the Iberian peninsula to the rest of Europe. Discussions are ongoing between EU member states on a package of regulations that will determine whether volumes of the gas produced with nuclear power can be considered "green". — AFP

Low-carbon electricity for hydrogen production included nuclear power. **PHOTO: AFP**

ECB greenlights next stage of digital euro project

More than 100 central banks worldwide are exploring or preparing to put in place digital currencies as electronic payments grow. **LUSTRATION: COINCODEX.COM**

THE European Central Bank moved closer to creating a "digital euro" Wednesday by greenlighting the next stage in the project, even as questions persist about the potential benefits and risks.

The ECB's governing council has agreed to launch a two-year "preparation phase" from November, the bank said in a statement, while stressing that the final decision on launching a virtual currency had not yet been made.

"We need to prepare our currency for the future," said ECB president Christine Lagarde, adding that a digital euro would "coexist alongside physical cash" while "leaving no one behind".

From China to the United States, Jamaica to Japan, more than 100 central banks worldwide are exploring or preparing to put in place digital currencies as electronic payments grow, changing the way people spend their money.

A digital euro would be an electronic version of euro notes and coins, issued by the ECB and held in a digital wallet. — AFP

Tesla disappoints in quarterly results as discounts bite

TESLA'S results for the third quarter missed analyst estimates on Wednesday, as the Elon Musk-run company was hit by higher costs and the fallout from price discounts.

The Texas-based electric vehicle giant said sales in the July to September period reached $23.35 billion, lower than the $24.19 billion forecasted by analysts polled by Factset.

The company also saw net profits come in less than hoped for, at 66 cents per share instead of 73 cents forecasted.

Musk has undertaken multiple price cuts throughout 2023 on vehicles, telling investors in April that the company has taken the view that pushing for higher sales is the right choice versus taking a bigger margin.

The move, which saw some prices cut by one third, came as more EVs from legacy carmakers like General Motors and Ford are hitting dealerships.

But those rivals have been punished by a major strike in the United States, something that Tesla will not have to navigate.

The price cuts have made investors nervous and Tesla's share price slid more than seven per cent in the last month.

Visitors inspect a Tesla model 3 car on display at the International Motor Show held in Munich, southern Germany, on 4 September 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

The Tesla stock valuation however still dwarfs other US car makers and it has more than doubled in 2023, comforting Musk's position as one of the world's two richest people.

Also rattling nerves, Tesla reported earlier this month that its new auto deliveries fell in the third quarter to 435,059 units because of downtimes at factories in Shanghai and Austin.

Production overall declined 10 per cent from the second quarter to 430,488, according to the figures.

But Tesla on Wednesday confirmed that its full-year volume target of 1.8 million vehicles remained unchanged. — AFP

Renault shares fall as sales disappoint

SHARES in French auto giant Renault sank on Thursday as the group's third-quarter sales performance disappointed investors.

Renault confirmed its outlook for 2023, with cash flow equal or above 2.5 billion euros and an operating margin of between seven and eight per cent. **PHOTO: KIRILL KUDRYAVTSEV/AFP**

Sales grew 7.6 per cent to 10.5 billion euros ($11 billion) as a drop in volume was offset by price increases for its vehicle lineup.

The company has moved to a strategy of selling fewer cars but at higher prices.

Renault confirmed its outlook for 2023, with cash flow equal or above 2.5 billion euros and an operating margin of between seven and eight per cent. — AFP

Nestle sales volume fall but outlook unchanged

NESTLE reported on Thursday a drop in sales volume as the Swiss food giant hiked prices in the face of inflation, but the group confirmed its outlook for the year. The company — whose brands range from Nespresso capsules to Purina pet food to Gerber baby products — said sales fell 0.6 per cent in terms of volume in the January-to-September period from a year earlier.

Revenue reached 68.8 billion Swiss francs ($76.6 billion) — 0.4 per cent lower than the same period last year due to the strength of the Swiss currency. But its organic sales growth — which excludes currency fluctuations and acquisitions — rose 7.8 per cent as the company raised prices. — AFP

Nestle has slowed its prices increases as they reached 8.4 per cent over the nine-month period after rising by 9.5 per cent in the first six months of the year. **PHOTO: AFP**

The Global New Light of Myanmar
www.gnlm.com.mm

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V BANGKOK VOY.NO. (156N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V BANGKOK VOY.NO. (156N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **21-10-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V METHI BHUM VOY.NO. (405N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V METHI BHUM VOY.NO. (405N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **21-10-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES

ROLLING UPDATES
WORLD

Macron bows to inevitable in Niger with worst Africa setback

France faces the challenge of withdrawing 1,500 troops and equipment from a country led by military leaders it opposes while dealing with concerns about its entire military mission against jihadists in the region.

FRANCE is finally facing up to reality by withdrawing both its ambassador and military from Niger two months after a coup ousted the pro-Paris president, but the pullout marks the most severe setback yet for President Emmanuel Macron's Africa policy, observers say.

Macron had staked France's strategy in the Sahel region of Africa on the political future of President Mohamed Bazoum, making the country a hub for its forces after successive coups in Mali and Burkina Faso forced the withdrawal of French troops.

Paris long appeared reluctant to accept the ousting of Bazoum in a military coup on 26 July. But while still insisting Bazoum remains the legitimate president, Macron announced in a TV interview Sunday that France's ambassador would soon leave, followed by all French troops by the end of the year. France must now grapple with the logistical headache of pulling out 1,500 troops and hardware from a country ruled by military leaders it bitterly opposes, as well as urgent questions about the fate of its entire military deployment to fight jihadists in the region.

"This third blow in less than two years against the presence of French military forces in Africa is the most serious setback for the head of state on the continent since his election in 2017," said France's Le Monde daily. — AFP

A Nigerien National Police officer stands guard as supporters of Niger's National Council of Safeguard of the Homeland (CNSP) protest outside the Niger and French airbase in Niamey on 30 August 2023 to demand the departure of the French army from Niger. **PHOTO: AFP**

Argentina wraps up campaigns ahead of presidential poll

The presidential election on Sunday is happening while Latin America's third-largest economy is struggling with nearly 140% annual inflation and 40% of the population living in poverty.

Javier Milei (center) greets supporters during a campaign rally on 16 October in Lomas de Zamora, Buenos Aires province, Argentina. **PHOTO: LUIS ROBAYO/AFP**

ARGENTINA'S tough-talking former security minister Patricia Bullrich wrapped up her presidential campaign Thursday, vowing to tackle crime, corruption and record inflation, while taking aim at her main rivals.

Bullrich's rally in Lomas de Zamora, a city south of the capital, capped an electoral campaign marked by the spectacular surge of political outsider Javier Milei, who has seized on deep voter content with traditional parties.

Bullrich, 67, the presidential candidate for the center-right opposition coalition, slammed Milei's proposals – including one to make it easier to buy guns. "In the United States they go to the schools and kill children. Do we want that for Argentina? We are a civilized country, it's not the law of the jungle," said Bullrich.

She also criticized her other competitor, Economy Minister Sergio Massa, who has overseen record inflation levels, as the "worst economy minister we have ever had". — AFP

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE HOSTED BY EGYPT

Top Japan diplomat to visit Egypt for forum on Israel-Hamas war

JAPAN'S foreign minister said Friday that she will visit Egypt this weekend to attend a multinational meeting convening to discuss the escalating conflict between Israel and the Palestinian militant group Hamas.

Yoko Kamikawa said she will leave Japan later in the day to join the international conference hosted by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, where she is expected to explain Tokyo's eagerness to improve the humanitarian situation in the Middle East.

The forum, scheduled to be held on Saturday, will seek to address the worsening humanitarian crisis in the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip, currently besieged by Israel, and deescalate tensions in the region, according to Egyptian media reports.

So far, more than 30 governments and three international bodies have expressed their intention to participate in the gathering, the Japanese Foreign Ministry said. – Kyodo

PROTECTIVE BAIL

Pakistan court grants bail to exiled ex-PM Nawaz Sharif ahead of his return

A Pakistan court granted bail Thursday to exiled former prime minister and graft convict Nawaz Sharif, removing the threat of arrest when he returns to the country this weekend, his lawyer said.

After nearly four years in self-imposed medical exile in the United Kingdom, Sharif is hoping to lead his Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party through elections scheduled for January 2024.

The court's decision allows him to return to his heartland of Lahore on Saturday for a welcome home rally, while his primary opponent Imran Khan languishes in jail.

"The honourable Islamabad High Court has granted Nawaz Sharif protective bail until 24 October," his lawyer Amjad Pervaiz told AFP.

"He can not be arrested on his arrival," said Pervaiz.

Sharif has been prime minister three times but was ousted in 2017 and given a lifetime disqualification from politics after being convicted of corruption. – AFP

SPORTS

Liverpool defender Robertson faces shoulder surgery

LIVERPOOL defender Andy Robertson is set for a lengthy spell on the sidelines as he prepares to have surgery on a shoulder injury.

The Scotland captain sustained the problem on international duty and the club have decided an operation is the best solution.

"There is a little bit there, I think the decision is we go towards surgery," said manager Jurgen Klopp. "There is a little chance we could try without, but talking to pretty much all experts it looks like surgery will be the best thing, especially in the long term definitely, and that means he is out for a while.

"I don't know exactly how long but it is shoulder surgery so not exactly an easy one. — AFP

Messi should have own Ballon d'Or category, says Guardiola

Messi, who moved from Paris Saint-Germain to Inter Miami, is the favourite to win the Ballon d'Or for an eighth time, having led Argentina to World Cup victory. Haaland is a strong contender, with 52 goals in 53 games for Manchester City's treble-winning season.

Lionel Messi poses with the World Cup trophy. **PHOTO: AFP**

PEP Guardiola says Lionel Messi should have his own category at the Ballon d'Or after he was asked whether the World Cup winner or Erling Haaland should win this year's award.

Messi, who recently left Paris Saint-Germain for Inter Miami, is favourite to win the award for a record-extending eighth time after leading Argentina to World Cup glory last year.

Haaland could be his main rival for the prize after scoring 52 goals in 53 games to help Manchester City win the treble of Champions League, Premier League and FA Cup last season.

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola managed Messi at Barcelona and currently coaches Norway forward Haaland.

"Always I said that the Ballon D'or should be in two sections, one for Messi, and after look for the other one, so Haaland should win, yes," Guardiola said on Friday. "We won the treble because he scored 50 million goals but of course Messi, if you tell me the worst season for Messi is the best for the rest of the players. — AFP

'Exhausted' Lindelof available for Man Utd despite trauma of Brussels attack

UEFA stated the match won't be replayed, and points will be shared.

Manchester United's Swedish defender Victor Lindelof. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

VICTOR Lindelof is available for Manchester United on Saturday even though he is "exhausted" following the fatal shooting of two Swedish fans before the country's Euro 2024 qualifier against Belgium.

Monday's attack in Brussels was carried out by an Islamist gunman who was subsequently killed by police.

The match went ahead as scheduled before being abandoned at the request of the two teams at half-time with the score at 1-1. European football's governing body UEFA on Thursday said the game would not be replayed and the points would be shared. Sweden captain Lindelof expressed his horror and offered his condolences to the victims of the attack earlier this week.

"I'm shocked and devastated by the terrible incidents in Brussels with the cold-hearted attacks on our fellow Swedes," Lindelof wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter. Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag told reporters on Friday that despite his ordeal, Lindelof "has energy" and is available to face Sheffield United on Saturday.

"A terrible situation, and I feel really sad for the victims, for all the relatives, family, friends of the victims in Brussels," he said. "It's a crazy world". — AFP

Schauffele fights back at windy Zozo Championship

XANDER Schauffele finished with a flourish to move three strokes off the lead heading into the last two days of the US PGA Tour's Zozo Championships in Japan on Friday.

The American, playing his first competition since the Ryder Cup, braved fierce winds to fire three birdies on the final five holes and card a 69 at Narashino Country Club.

Beau Hossler took the second-round lead at 7-under, one stroke ahead of fellow American Justin Suh and two in front of Japan's Satoshi Kodaira.

Schauffele had three bogeys before hauling himself back in contention at 4-under, and the Tokyo Olympics champion said the conditions were "hard" to deal with. "It seemed to be a lot of crosswinds on most of the holes — made it hard to hit it close," he said. — AFP

Xander Schauffele had three bogeys before hauling himself back in contention at 4-under. **PHOTO: AFP**

ROLLING UPDATES
WORLD

Macron bows to inevitable in Niger with worst Africa setback

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A woman and a girl hold pet carriers and other belongings as they prepare to depart from Kiryat Shmona in northern Israel near the border with Lebanon on 19 October 2023. **PHOTO: JALAA MAREY/AFP**

Israel army orders evacuation of northern city after Lebanon clashes

Israeli authorities are evacuating northern frontier communities, with an influx of reservists, tanks, and armoured vehicles into the region.

THE Israeli army announced plans to evacuate the northern city of Kiryat Shmona on Friday, after days of clashes with Hezbollah fighters along the border with Lebanon.

"A short while ago, the Northern Command informed the mayor of the city of the decision. The plan will be managed by the local authority, the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Defence," the military said in a statement.

Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah and allied Palestinian factions have traded cross-border fire with Israel for days, after Hamas gunmen attacked communities in southern Israel on 7 October, killing at least 1,400 people, most of them civilians, according to Israeli officials.

More than 3,700 Palestinians, mainly civilians, have been killed across the Gaza Strip in retaliatory Israeli bombardments, according to figures from its Hamas-run health ministry.

Israel's military said its forces continued to target Hezbollah targets as tensions grew along the border.

"The IDF (Israel Defence Forces) carried out a number of attacks against Hezbollah infrastructure, including observation posts," the army said early Friday.

"In addition, IDF fighter jets struck three terrorists who attempted to launch anti-tank missiles towards Israel."

Israeli authorities have been steadily evacuating communities across the northern frontier, as reservists and columns of tanks and armoured vehicles poured into the area. — AFP

ILLEGAL PRIVATE ZOOS AS STATUS SYMBOLS

Like Escobar, Ecuador's drug lords build 'narco-zoos'

A pair of jaguars discovered in a cage on a ranch exposed a cruel new fashion among Ecuador's drug lords. In the style of Colombian cocaine baron Pablo Escobar, they are erecting private, illegal zoos as a status symbol.

In May, police came upon the sorry sight of the two endangered felines perched on a log surrounded by iron bars.

They were held on a property owned by Wilder Sanchez Farfan – alias "Gato" (The Cat) – a suspected drug lord with ties to Mexico's Jalisco New Generation cartel and wanted in the United States.

He was arrested in Colombia in February.

Along with the jaguars, police have also found parrots, parakeets and other exotic birds.

The phenomenon is a relatively new one that coincides with the rise of an underground drug industry in Ecuador in the last few years, said Darwin Robles, head of the police's Environmental Protection Unit (UPMA).

"Where there is drug trafficking, you can be sure that there will be... wildlife trafficking," he told AFP. – AFP

Italy's Giorgia Meloni announces separation from partner after sleazy comments

Giorgia Meloni, aged 46, is marking her first year in power as the head of a right-wing government that strongly upholds traditional family values.

ITALIAN Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni announced Friday she was separating from her partner, the father of her daughter, after he was recorded making sleazy comments and seemingly admitting an affair. "My relationship with Andrea Giambruno, which lasted almost 10 years, ends here," Meloni wrote in a message on social media, saying their paths "have diverged for some time". The announcement comes after Giambruno, a television presenter, was caught making overtly sexual and sexist comments to female colleagues off-air on the sidelines of his talk show "Diario del giorno" (Daily diary) on the Rete 4 commercial station.

Giorgia Meloni and Andrea Giambruno. **PHOTO: AFP**

"How do you do, darling? Do you know that (name redacted) and I are having an affair? All of (television company) Mediaset knows it, and now you do too," he is heard telling a woman who is also off camera. — AFP