

The

Global

NEW LIGHT of MYANMAR



Hot-air balloon flight services are currently operational to local and foreign visitors. **PHOTO:KANU**

Surge in foreign visitors enjoying breathtaking Bagan hot-air balloon rides

As of the first week of October, three hot-air balloon companies have been providing balloon flight services for both local and foreign tourists in Bagan.

MANY foreign visitors have been enjoying the beauty of Bagan’s ancient city, often referred to as the heart of Myanmar, and rich in ancient heritage, by riding hot-air balloons. This experience is particularly enchanting during the cold season. As of the first week of October, three hot-air balloon companies have been providing balloon flight services for both local

and foreign tourists in Bagan, offering breathtaking views of the city’s famous pagodas and temples from the sky. During the Thadingyut Festival, Bagan experienced a surge in visitors, and hotels, transport services, and travel companies are anticipating a similar influx during the Tazaungdine Festival in November. One Indian visitor, on his first visit to Bagan and experiencing a hot-air

balloon ride for the first time, expressed delight, stating that the experience was not scary but easy and wonderful. He praised the beauty of Bagan’s pagodas and temples and expressed love for the people of Myanmar. The cold season in Bagan, cooler than Poppa in the early morning and evening, is appreciated by international travellers.

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Kyaukpyu SEZ Management Committee reestablished

KYAUKPYU Special Economic Zone Management Committee was reconstituted, according to Directive 3/2023 of the Central Committee on Myanmar Special Economic Zone released on 20 November.

Under Chapter V, Section 9 (D) of the Myanmar Special Economic Zone Law 2014, the central committee reformed the Kyaukpyu Special Economic Zone Management Committee and appointed U Kyaw Shwe Tun from the Commerce Ministry as chairman of the committee.

Then, U Win Myint, retired deputy director-general of the Department of Urban and Housing Development, will act as vice-chairman. The members consist of U San Shwe Maung from the Rakhine State government, head of the Planning Department (Rakhine State) under the Ministry of Planning and Finance, the district administrator of Kyaukpyu District General Administration Department under the Ministry of Home Affairs, an officer of Myanma Port Authority (Rakhine State) under the Ministry of Transport and Communications and director of the Department of Urban and Housing Development Department (Rakhine State) under the Ministry of Construction.

Additionally, the committee appointed Dr Kyaw San Oo as secretary and deputy director-general of the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization under the Ministry of Commerce as joint secretary. The functions of the Kyaukpyu Special Economic Zone Management Committee strictly adhere to the tasks of the SEZ committee stipulated in the Myanmar Special Economic Zone Law. — NN/EM

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Peanut oil price dips tracking decline in peanut price

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MAEX expands with two new facilities, offering over 1,900 stalls at Danyingon Wholesale Market

NATIONAL

Theme of 103rd Anniversary of National Victory Day 2023

From peace of the Union towards development of the State

Objectives of 103rd Anniversary of National Victory Day 2023

10th Waning of Tazaungmone 1385 ME
7 December 2023

- To build the Union based on the democratic and federal system through united strengths of all National people
- To implement a comprehensive education system accessible to all
- To nurture youths endowed with five physical and mental strengths and a patriotic spirit
- To encourage MSME businesses by emphasizing the economic drive

Surge in foreign visitors enjoying ...

FROM PAGE-1

Visitors explore pagodas and temples in the ancient cultural zone using various means such as carts, electric bikes, Tok Tok (three-wheel) cars, bicycles, and hot air balloons.

Currently, three companies offer hot-air balloon flight services in Bagan in collaboration with travel companies and hotels. Balloon flights typically take place at sunrise, with breakfast provided before liftoff and champagne service offered after landing as a mark

of honour to the inventors of the balloon.

An official from Balloon Over Bagan expressed expectations for a higher number of visitors in this year's tourist season compared to the previous year, with promotions being offered. The price of a hot-air balloon ride varies by month but is fixed at US\$170 in November. The Bagan Cultural Heritage Zone is ready to warmly welcome customers and create lasting memories for them.

Travel services, which were halted during the COV-

ID-19 pandemic, have now resumed, and Bagan, along with Ngapali Beach, has become one of the busiest destinations. The majority of visitors entered Bagan's Ancient Cultural Zone, rich in the country's cultural heritage, during this year's Thadingyut Festival, indicating a likelihood of increased visitors during the Tazaungdine Festival. Notably, tourists have been enjoying balloon rides, which provide astonishing views of Bagan and the Ayeyawady River. — Nyein Thu (MNA)/ZS

Miss Heritage Myanmar competes in Miss Heritage International 2023

HTET Thinzar, representing Myanmar in the Miss Heritage International 2023 held in Bangkok, Thailand, shared that she participated in the National Costume Competition on the third day of the pageant, showcasing a Myanmar traditional puppet costume.

Miss Htet Thinzar expressed, "I competed with the Myanmar puppet costume in the National Costume Competition on the evening of 20 November. I was excited about this, and I faced some difficulties as the costume was challenging to wear. However, everything went well. I am grateful to my mentors and all the people who supported and encouraged me."

Beauty queens from over 30 countries are partaking in the Miss Heritage International 2023, taking place from 18 to 27 November. — ASH/TRKM



Miss Htet Thinzar.

Kalaw's Lighting Festival returns in late November after 3-year hiatus



Kalaw damsels delight in annual Lighting and Fire Tower Festivals in the previous years.



KALAW, a picturesque and charming city in southern Shan State, plans to re-hold its two traditional fireworks festivals in Tazaungdine, known as the 'Fire Tower Festival' and the 'Traditional Lighting Festival.' These festivals, which showcase the city's unique traditional style of lighting, were deferred for three years and are now set to take place this year, according to the festival celebration organizing committee.

The former festival is locally called the Meeshawdine Festival, while the latter is referred to as the Traditional Meekyarsan Conveying Festival.

A member of the committee, U Zaw Zaw Win, mentioned that the festival is scheduled to be held from 28 November to 1 December, spanning four days.

Both Kalaw's Fire Tower Festival

and Traditional Lighting Festival are considered rival fireworks festivals to the Taunggyi Tazaungdine Hot-air Balloon Festival, providing an equally stimulating experience for the public.

This year marks the 18th celebration of Kalaw's fireworks festivals since their inception in 2002. The city couldn't organize its traditional firework festivals due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

U Zaw Zaw Win explained, "It has been more than three years since the traditional Fire Tower Festival couldn't be convened. This year, we will organize it from 28 November to 1 December for four days. Usually, it used to be celebrated for around seven days. However, this year will be only for four days. There are 11 residential wards in Kalaw, and each ward participates in lighting the fire tower. For the 'Meek-

yarsan conveying festival', people take part by creating their preferred and different designs of fireworks and go round the city in a systematic column by wearing traditional outfits."

Kalaw residents refer to the lighting festival as the 'Fire Tower Festival' instead of the Tazaungdine Festival, he added.

The Fire Tower Festival is planned to be held in Kalaw Mawmyayoo Park, located beside the Clock Tower of Kalaw. There will also be a small product trade fair at the event.

The fire tower is at least 25 feet long and made up of pine trees, twisted with threads made of bamboo strips. Gunpowder coins are also used in combustion. Nearly 20 people are engaged in carrying a fire tower into the field where the festival is celebrated. — ASH/TMT

NATIONAL

Public financial management special refresher course opened

THE opening ceremony of the Public Financial Management Special Refresher Course No 6 was held yesterday morning at the Public Financial Management Training School of the Ministry of Planning and Finance.

The opening of the course was attended by Deputy Prime Minister Union Planning and Finance Minister U Win Shein, Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations Dr Kan Zaw, Union Auditor-General Dr Khin Naing Oo, deputy ministers, the deputy auditor-general, permanent secretaries, management members of the Public Finance Management Training School and departmental officials, trainers, and trainees among others.

Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister U Win



Deputy Prime Minister Union Planning & Finance Minister U Win Shein addresses the opening event yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

Shein spoke about how the development of the country's politics, economy and social sectors completely depends on the strengthening of public financial management. It is necessary to have a good public

financial management system and to produce competent civil servants. The field of public finance management is to increase the sources of financing and systematic distribution of expenses. It is a wide-ranging

field with various step-by-step processes such as monitoring whether allocated expenses can be used effectively and efficiently.

Public Finance Management Training School opens ba-

sic courses, special short-term courses and public financial management special refresher courses. The Public Financial Management Special Update Course has been opened five times. A total of 187 director-level officials from central organizations and Union ministries have participated in the course.

As for trainees attending this course, he added that trainees should study and learn the content of public financial management thoroughly and use it properly in their work.

Public Financial Management Special Refresher Course No 6 will be attended by 27 director-level and deputy director-level officials in charge of organizations from the Ministry of Planning and Finance and the course will last five weeks. MNA/TS

Myanmar delegates attend Russian cultural forum, engage in discussions



Union Minister U Tin Oo Lwin participates in the Ninth St Petersburg International Cultural Forum in St Petersburg, the Russian Federation, on 16-18 November 2023.

MYANMAR delegates participated in the Ninth St Petersburg International Cultural Forum and engaged in three discussion topics, as reported by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture.

The delegation, led by U

Tin Oo Lwin, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture, attended the forum held in St Petersburg, the Russian Federation, from 16 to 18 November.

The forum featured eight discussion topics related to art and culture. Myanmar del-

egates actively participated in three discussions: "Learning History through Culture", "Historical Memory and Artistic World", and "Historical Heritage as a Formative Environment" on 16 November.

The event brought togeth-

er cultural experts from over 70 countries and organizations, including the BRICS Institute and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

On 17 November, Myanmar delegates held a meeting with Ms Olga Lyubimova, Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation, along with representatives from 41 countries. During the meeting, Union Minister U Tin Oo Lwin highlighted the forum's emphasis on the importance of regional cultural cooperation to enhance mutual understanding and deepen relationships. He expressed that the forum served as a platform to exchange ideas, concepts, and experiences necessary for formulating and implementing policies related to culture and art.

Ms Olga Lyubimova called for increased bilateral cooperation among partner countries through cultural diplomacy to address current issues. She

encouraged cultural experts to strengthen friendships for the perpetuity of their cultures.

Subsequently, the Union minister attended a meeting with Russian President Mr Vladimir Putin, where President Putin delivered a speech and addressed questions from the guests.

On 18 November, the Myanmar delegation attended the Heritage Award Ceremony at the State Heritage Museum and explored the museum. They also enjoyed the Opera and Ballet Stars Gala at the 140-year-old Mikhailovsky Theatre, a gala dinner hosted by the deputy prime minister of the Russian Federation, a concert at the State Academy Mariinsky Theatre, and an orchestra performance at the Capella Theatre, along with other invitees.

The Myanmar delegation arrived back yesterday evening. — ASH/NT

NATIONAL

Counter-argument to false information

KNPP, PDF terrorists spread false news of rescuing faculty members, families, and Loikaw University rector

KNPP and PDF terrorists launched attacks on Loikaw University in Kayah State which is not a military target on 13 and 14 November with heavy and small weapons and abducted faculty members and families including the rector. After such doings, they also disseminate misinformation on social media.

When they raided Loikaw University, they threatened faculty members, families and the rector that they might be killed for not joining CDM, and abducted them as human shields while

some faculty members were brutally killed. Moreover, some educational buildings were destroyed in their attacks, and the examination for the third shift of the University of Distance Education scheduled on 13 November was stalled indefinitely causing huge losses to students.

It was also found out that they broadcast false news that they rescued faculty members, families and the rector and placed them safely even though they forcefully seized them and video files of faculty members



Online images validate KNPP and PDF terrorists' raid on Loikaw University, a non-military facility.

and the rector who are just saying the plot they created via misinformation media outlets on 20 November aiming at destroying the peace and stability of the country.

Tatmadaw is now making concerted efforts for rescue operations to ensure the safe return of faculty members, families and the rector of Loikaw University who are serving their duties and showing their loyalty to the country without joining the CDM and are being abducted by KNPP and PDF terrorists. — MNA/KTZH

Misinformation spreads that Tatmadaw is using gas bombs

SAKHAN Thit Security Camp in Namhkam Township, Shan State (North) is being attacked by terrorists named TNLA and PDF.

False news released by the TNLA is being distributed on the online media, saying that the Tatmadaw has attacked using poison gas bombs while carrying out security operations necessary for the security of the area and the rule of law.

The false statement of the TNLA group, including Khit Thit Media, which does not want national peace and stability, has been published on social media pages and has broadcast false information.

Tatmadaw has not used poison gas bombs in any battles. TNLA and PDF terrorists have been killed due to the brutal attacks of the military with the help of effective heavy weapons in counter-terrorist operations. Their group was demoralized and no longer willing to fight, so they falsely claimed that Tatmadaw had used poison gas bombs and relied on subversive media to spread false news



Screenshot validates the dissemination of false information regarding Tatmadaw's alleged use of gas bombs and misinformation.

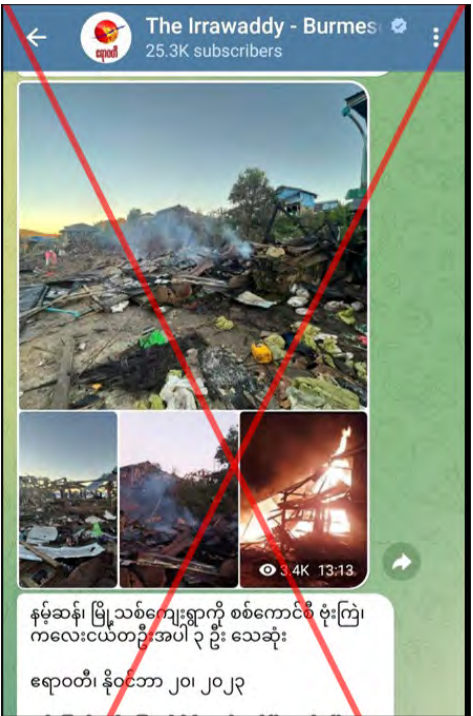
Tatmadaw affirmed that it will continue to carry out counter-terrorism operations for regional security and law enforcement. — MNA/KZL

False news about Tatmadaw airstrike spreading on social media

MISINFORMATION about Tatmadaw's airstrike causing civilian casualties near Myothit Village of Namsang Township in Shan State (North) at 11 pm on 19 November went viral on social media.

Tatmadaw conducts counter-terrorist operations to ensure security and law enforcement. During the armed engagement near Myothit Village of Namsang Township on the night of 19 November, artillery shells of terrorists fell into the village and exploded.

Tatmadaw did not launch airstrikes in those areas, and the false information outlets that do not support the counter-terrorist operations of Tatmadaw and people spread false news and misinformation to cause dissension between the people and Tatmadaw. — MNA/KTZH



Screenshot validates viral spread of false news regarding Tatmadaw airstrike on social media.

Official denies false news of forced porters in Yangon, no cause for concern

AN official from the Union Government has stated that the news about people in Yangon being taken away to work as porters is just misinformation, and there should be no cause for

concern. Residents assert that there are fewer pedestrians at night due to the circulating social media reports about people being forcibly taken as porters.

"Young people are refrain-

ing from going out because of false news about people being taken away as porters in our township. However, if you ask for specific details about where these incidents are occurring, no

one can provide accurate information. Therefore, based on the best of my knowledge, I advise you not to believe this news as it is unfounded," said a resident of Pazundaung Township.

Recently, there have been false information circulating about banks and university students being compelled to undergo military training. — Myo Khaing/KZW

NATIONAL

Bilateral pilot project commences for repatriation of displaced persons from Rakhine State

THE repatriation process of displaced persons from Rakhine State is being conducted under a bilateral agreement as the pilot project, and the Immigration and Citizenship Verification Work Committee discussed further repatriation plans at its 3/2023 meeting yesterday.

Speaking at the meeting, Committee Chairman Union Minister U Myint Kyaing said that the committee verified the lists sent by Bangladesh until 31 October 2023 and made replies for over 138,000 persons — over 91,000 who used to live in Myanmar, about 1,200 who are on the lists of terrorists by the Ministry of Home Affairs and over 47,000 who have no documents to prove that they lived in Myanmar via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Moreover, the two coun-

tries agreed to launch a pilot project for repatriation and it is estimated to accept over 700 people. But the Bangladesh side sent an additional list containing over 400 family members of these 700 people. The inspection team inspected these over 400 family members in Bangladesh via Maungtau township in March, and the 2/2023 meeting approved to accept over 1,100 people including over 700 estimated population and over 400 families.

Despite that decision, the Rakhine State Stability, Peace and Development Work Coordination Committee decided to accept over 2,800 people under the pilot project, and it found out further 300 families of these 2,800 people. The Bangladesh side requested the verification group to inspect in Go and Talk trip and



Union Minister U Myint Kyaing chairs the meeting 3/2023 of the Immigration and Citizenship Verification Work Committee yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.



the group verified these people on 31 October and 1 November. Among 300 people, 142 were examined and the result showed there were 126 who can be accepted under a bilateral agreement, 11 in inspection progress whether they can be accepted, four deaths and one on the wrong list. Therefore, the meeting will discuss repatriating 142 people

who completed the verification process of the verification group and over 2,800 persons under the pilot project. The approved lists will be submitted to the central committee via the coordination committee.

Then, the secretary of the work committee the permanent secretary presented the decisions made at the 2/2023 meet-

ing and the director-general of the Immigration Department reported on the findings of the inspection team and facts to be reviewed.

Vice-Chair of the Work Committee Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Lwin Oo, committee members and attendees coordinated the discussion. — ASH/KTZH

Myanmar hosts tourism meetings related to Mekong Sub-Region



Union Minister Dr Thet Thet Khine addresses the MSR tourism meeting yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

MYANMAR held the 52nd Meeting of the Greater Mekong Sub-Region Tourism Working Group and the Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office Board Meeting via a hybrid system at Mingala Thiri Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism Dr Thet Thet Khine said that the Greater Mekong Sub-Region is a world-renowned region due to its diverse culture and attractive destinations, as well as its ability to continuously attract international tourists.

“It is an attractive region for visitors from all over the world due to its abundant tourism resources. Tourism development plays an impor-

tant role in the economic cooperation and development goals described in the Greater Mekong Sub-Regional Strategy 2030. The strategy aims to promote sustainable and inclusive development and to strengthen connectivity and cooperation among member countries.

“Before the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2019, 73.6 million tourists entered the Greater Mekong sub-region and earned US\$101 billion. Although there are challenges due to the pandemic, the member countries made efforts to revive the tourism sector and to recover the international tourism industry”, the Union minister added.

She expressed that the meetings to be held today will

build strong relations and cooperation between the member countries and create a brighter future for the tourism sector in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region. In addition, she believed that it would contribute to balanced and sustainable development among member countries.

The director-general of the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism acted as the chair and discussed the development of the tourism sector among the member countries, digital tourism and destination areas, issues related to infrastructure development, and issues that will continue to cooperate with the Greater Mekong Tourism Sector Strategy 2030.

In the evening, the Union minister attended the welcome dinner hosted for the representatives of the Greater Mekong Sub-Region, delivered a speech and warmly greeted the leaders and representatives of the Tourism Authority. The Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office Board Meeting will continue today. — MNA/KZL

Illegal immigrants handed over to relevant authorities for legal process

THE national government is paying attention to national stability and law and order, including the border areas, and as some foreign nationals are illegally entering and living in Myanmar through the border areas, the administrative organizations are conducting the necessary checks and handing them back to the relevant countries under the law.

A total of 1,859 illegal immigrants including 1,816 males and

43 females were repatriated to the Chinese officials. Therefore, a total of 3,918 illegal immigrants in total including 3,733 males and 185 females have been repatriated to China from 31 October to 21 November.

The national government will continue to carry out the process of screening and repatriation of foreign nationals who have illegally entered and resided in the border areas. — MNA/KZL

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www.gnlm.com.mm

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NATIONAL

Peanut oil price dips tracking decline in peanut price

A drop in peanut prices pushed down the price of peanut oil in Monywa and Mandalay markets on 20 November.

The wholesale prices stood at K11,500 per viss of peanut oil and K12,000 per viss of sesame oil at the Monywa commodity depot that day. The prices touched a high of K13,000-K13,500 per viss of peanut oil and K12,000-K12,500 per viss of sesame oil in early July.

The wholesale reference price for palm oil is set around K4,990 per viss for a week ending 26 November.

The gap between peanut oil wholesale price in the Mandalay market and the wholesale reference price for palm oil is estimated at K6,000-K7,000 per



The photo shows the traditional production of peanut oil by a cow-driven oil mill in the central Myanmar region.

viss. The price difference with the 18-litre jerrycan palm oil narrows to K3,000-K5,000 per

viss. The price gap between Yangon's retail reference price

of palm oil and peanut oil price widened to K10,000 per viss, whereas the peanut price is

around K7,000 per viss higher than the price of the jerry can palm oil.

The prevailing peanut price is down by K1,000 per viss amidst the sluggish demand and in the absence of foreign demand. The price hit K7,000 per viss in mid-2023.

The productivity of peanut oil varies depending on the peanut quality. About 50 ticals of peanut cake and 38-43 ticals of peanut oil were produced per viss of peanut. The highest production is 45 ticals of peanut oil.

At present, Chinese buyers eye new monsoon sesame as they pass the acidity test. Subsequently, the sesame prices have risen to K100,000 per 15-viss basket. — TWA/EM

Weekly market update of dry groceries at Bayintnaung Wholesale Centre

Onion

The Bayintnaung Wholesale market saw the entry of 120,000 visses of old onions from various regions on 21 November. The wholesale prices moved in the range of K2,400 and K3,800 per viss depending on the quality, size and producing areas (Seikphyu and Myingyan) that day.

Garlic

The prices of garlic from Shan State dipped to K10,300-K12,000 per viss depending on varieties and qualities, whereas Kyukok garlic fetched K12,000 per viss on 18 July.

Potato

Chinese potatoes were priced at K3,500-K3,600 per viss, which plunged from K4,000 per viss recorded on 15 November.

Chilli pepper

The wholesale prices of chilli peppers were K6,000-K95,000 per viss for long chilli pepper and Moehtaung variety. The long chilli processed in cold storage fetched K12,000-K15,000 per viss. The prices of bell peppers from the Sinphyukyun area and delta regions were K19,500-K23,000 per viss.



A retail shop seen selling kitchen dry groceries.

Rice

The prices hit K65,000-66,000 per sack of low-grade monsoon rice, K83,000 for old short-mature rice (90 days), K75,000 for rice grown under an intercropping system and K92,000-93,000 for Pawkywe variety. The high-grade Pawsan rice prices ranged between K103,000 and K150,000 depending on producing areas (Myaungmya and Shwebo).

Palm oil

For a week from 20 to 26 November 2023, the wholesale reference price of Yangon Region was set at K4,990 per viss, indicating an increase of K310 per viss compared to last week's rate. The FOB price hit US\$820 on 10 November; \$870 on 15 November and \$865 on 20

November respectively.

Pulses

The prices of various pulses stood at K2,870,000 per tonne of black gram (Fair Average Quality/RC), K3,105,000 per tonne of black gram (Special Quality/RC), K3,250,000 per tonne of pigeon pea (red gram) RC, K3,430 per viss of green gram (Shwewah variety) and K5,700-K6,000 per viss of chickpea in Yangon's wholesale markets on 21 November.

The prices were registered at K2,891,000 per tonne of black gram (Fair Average Quality/RC), K3,850,000 per tonne of pigeon pea (red gram) RC, K3,500 per viss of green gram and K5,7500 -6,100 per viss of chickpea on 15 November. — TWA/KK

2 killed, 3 wounded in cement-carrying ship fire in Insein township

AN outbreak of fire on a cement-carrying ship behind a steel factory in Insein township at noon on 19 November resulted in two fatalities and three others sustaining injuries, as reported by the Myanmar Fire Services Department.

Firefighters from Insein and Mayangon township fire stations successfully extinguished the fire within about half an hour.

The Insein Red Cross, in col-

laboration with a social rescue association, assisted in transporting three injured individuals to Insein General Hospital using two ambulances.

Similarly, the two deceased individuals were conveyed to Insein General Hospital with the help of the Kanaung social assistance association. The cause of the fire is currently under investigation. — TWA/MKKS



Vessel laden with cement cargo engulfed in flames.

MAEX expands with two new facilities, offering over 1,900 stalls at Danyingon Wholesale Market



A general view of the Danyingon Wholesale Market in Yangon where seasonal fruits are traded.

MYANMAR Agro Exchange Public Ltd (MAEX) will soon open two more facilities for dried and green commodities at the Danyingon wholesale market with over 1,900 stalls.

The construction of market buildings No 5 and 7 was completed. The No 5 building accommodating over 680 stalls is dedicated to sellers of dried commodities and fish paste and dried fish, whereas fresh produce, vegetables, flowers and green commodities will be sold at the No 7 building with over 1,232

stalls.

On 1 October, a fresh produce market building accommodating over 1,100 shops was opened at the Danyingon wholesale market.

The fresh produce market located in the compound of Danyingon wholesale market has been offering seasonal and other fresh produce.

Additionally, the market is equipped with two cold storage facilities. It might help reduce the wastage of fruits and improve the shelf life of fruits and veg-

etables by storing them at a cool temperature. It is opened at the No 1 market building to save transport costs and labour wages.

Fresh produce traders are invited to run business in the Danyingon wholesale market. For further details, traders can contact phone numbers 09 261 289 462, 09 940 838 847 and 01 361 8938 of the market or enquire at Building B 12 of Danyingon wholesale market in Insein Township, Yangon. — NN/EM

People's Park hosts industrial goods, machinery technology, Tazaungdine fair, lighting festival on 25-27 Nov

THE three-day industrial goods, machinery technology, Tazaungdine fair and lighting festival will take place at People's Park from 25 to 27 November, according to the Yangon Region government.

The regional government organized the festival and a coordination meeting was held at meeting hall 3 of the government on 20 November.

Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein gave a remark at the meeting that as per the guidance of the State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister, laying down economic objectives for the State's economic growth, improving financing, technical assistance and human resources for the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME), fulfilling the needs to explore markets, promoting local products substituting imports, bolstering export sector and assisting in local products to penetrate global markets are included. The Yangon Region government held the festivals like this to follow the guidance.

Afterwards, Secretary U Nyi Nyi Min of the regional government explained the formation of committees in each sector. U Tin Maung Kyi, secretary of the organizing sub-committee also elaborated on preparation agendas and installation of festival booths.

The regional chief minister highlighted the security matters and coordination with authorities concerned to hold the festival successfully.

The festival will feature over 455 booths selling local products from the region and state, products of the MSMEs and the industrial zones in the region and the staple food (rice, oil).

Visitors can enjoy e-Sport Games, charity events, musical performances, circus, magic shows, dancers' shows, comedian shows, lighting and firework programmes during the festival. There are also bus services to ensure smooth transport for visitors. — NN/EM

World of Coffee Dubai 2024 invites Myanmar coffee suppliers

MYANMAR coffee suppliers who wish to expand international markets are invited to participate in World of Coffee Dubai 2024 which will be held in Dubai on 21-23 January, Myanmar's Commercial Attaché in Dubai said.

DXB Live of Dubai World Trade Centre will organize World of Coffee Dubai 2024 to showcase vast network activities to promote partnerships between exhibitors and visitors while exploring opportunities in the growing coffee industry.

World of Coffee Dubai 2024 will consist of various programmes; Roaster Village, Cup Room and Brew Bar.

Additionally, it will feature specialized workshops on sustainability, best practices for utilizing resources, and spaces designated to highlight the importance of sustainable practices in the industry through discussions and commitments of the international coffee community to responsible production through specialized workshops.

It will set the stage to launch new



A cup of Myanmar's coffee.

products like Franchise Village that will bring together leading brands seeking to expand in the region and investors enthusiastic about establishing branches of renowned coffee brands. That platform will reinforce the role of the World of Coffee as a key event in exploring growth and collaboration opportunities.

Of the exhibition's features and programmes, the Buyers Programme and Buyers Lounge will enable meetings between buyers, coffee growers, traders, distributors, roasters, and food and beverage managers from the tourism

and hospitality sectors. It will also encourage interaction and communication among the stakeholders concerned in the coffee industry and offer an ideal setting for potential partnerships and payment transactions.

Furthermore, this 2024 exhibition will provide two large theatres to accommodate more participants for the series of dialogues and free workshops. One theatre is dedicated to hosting dialogues of the speciality coffee association whereas unfiltered sessions will be held in another theatre to elaborate on the latest trends, innovations and coffee products, with the presence of global experts and specialists.

Consequently, this exhibition will enable the participants to bridge networks with international coffee enterprises and act as a pavilion to expand markets and explore great opportunities in the coffee industry through a variety of programmes. Thus, those enthusiastic can visit dubai.worldofcoffee.org to join the exhibition. — NN/EM

OPINION

Create fashions of pageants aligned with national culture

PAGEANTS, as vibrant cultural activities, serve as platforms that not only celebrate the empowerment of women but also showcase artistic performances on a global stage. Countries worldwide organize miss contests in diverse formats, each uniquely tailored to spotlight the beauty, intelligence, and charm of women, captivating audiences on an international scale.

Local miss contests, characterized by a plethora of awards and incentives, attract attention through engaging programmes that encourage audience participation in voting for contestants. These competitions often serve as preliminary rounds before participants advance to regional championships. Furthermore, international organizations orchestrate inter-continental miss contests, fostering cross-cultural exchanges that go beyond aesthetics, incorporating aspects of general knowledge and contributions to social welfare.

Pageants must compete at different levels without compromising national prestige, integrity, and cultural heritage. Simultaneously, fashion designers should approach their creations with a sense of responsibility, recognizing their potential impact on society and the global populace. By infusing these events with cultural authenticity and social consciousness, pageants can transcend mere showcases of beauty and become powerful vehicles for positive change.

provocative presentations. When miss performances focus excessively on stimulating lust and potentially perpetuating sexual abuse in addition to harming their own cultural heritages, they contribute little to societal advancement. The value of a missing crown diminishes when contestants fail to showcase their skills and talents, inadvertently steering young individuals toward misguided paths and derailling their ambitions with a loss of life value.

Fashion designers contributing to these contests must respect and reflect the cultural identities of the contestants. Designs should serve as a testament to the unique cultural properties of the relevant ethnicities and nationalities, preserving the sovereignty, character, prestige and integrity of each nation. Failure to do so risks the perception of designs as inappropriate and disrespectful.

Pageants must compete at different levels without compromising national prestige, integrity, and cultural heritage. Simultaneously, fashion designers should approach their creations with a sense of responsibility, recognizing their potential impact on society and the global populace. By infusing these events with cultural authenticity and social consciousness, pageants can transcend mere showcases of beauty and become powerful vehicles for positive change.

ALL workplaces including manufacturing industries, construction sites, management and human resource measures, transport, healthcare, academies, security and so on are formed with different numbers of employees to operate respective functions.

Nature of workplaces

Depending on the missions and visions of the employers, the nature of workplaces is different even though they are in similar businesses. For example, the academic sector shows some private schools can admit hundreds of students in different classes with the strengths of teachers and teaching staff but some private schools limit the enrolment of students aimed at managing the proper ratio of students to teachers in order to thoroughly produce qualified students although they have the capacity to accommodate larger number of students.

Likewise, some private hospitals do not admit inpatients for treatment beyond the limit of beds. They do not commit careless treatment for patients rather than the capacity of physicians and health staff. Due to such a decision, not only hospitals and hospital management personnel but patients can avoid accidentally and inappropriately bad measures.

Grasping chances to show off capacity

Employees need to seek the best chance to show off their skills and capacity and how they

Build a compromise between employers and employees to set up a decent workplace

BY APRIL SON



Asian colleague male and female friends in casual dress meeting work together with happiness at a successful brainstorming workplace. **PHOTO: FREEPIK**

can tackle the assigned issues. But, such kinds of chance will not appear many times. Sharpened employees can seek the chance and assess the opportune time when they should express their skills and capacity. Those who are sharpened and active to serve their duties and have skills to tackle assigned issues can contribute much to their workplaces as well as themselves. Such outstanding employees will have rewards in

the workplace. If they are outstanding more than others, professional workmates will never envy them for their rewards. One day, those outstanding employees will reach the deserved positions equal to their skills and capacity. So, if someone wishes to secure such kinds of positions, they need to follow the ways and means of outstanding employees and observe how they try hard to improve their skills and capacity so as to

contribute to the workplace. If not, their anticipation cannot meet the similar goals of the outstanding employees.

Try to understand the opportune time

It is not an easy process. Most of the persons do not have such kind of IQ to overcome challenges in workplaces. It is because they do not have the skills to know the opportune time to do something.

I those who are outstanding in workplaces cannot understand the opportune time to show off their skills and tackle the problems to be known by superior personnel, they will not have complete success in their professions. It is because every employee expects incentives from employers, such as rank promotion, chances in work, the chance to pursue advanced techniques, increased salaries or wages, cash awards, good recommendations, praise of workmates, putting their endeavours on record and so on. Hence, all employees need to analyze and assess themselves and seek weak points to improve themselves. If so, their future will be filled with good fortunes.

Responsibilities of employers

Primarily, employers need to boost their businesses with high-quality products meeting the set standards. They must emphasize management for the businesses to obtain the proper profits. This being so, they have to recruit qualified human resources aligned with their workplaces. It is a significant point that somebody qualified with high knowledge and techniques,

learning in famous universities and institutions and receiving certificates which mention the higher grade of qualification cannot be aligned with the workplaces. It is because those employees do not change their mindsets to be familiar with the relevant societies to accomplish the assigned jobs. As such, employers need to take care of recruiting human resources not picking out the inappropriate persons for the workplace. If not, the mindset of those inappropriate employees may cause downheartedness and depression to other workmates. That is why employers need to carefully recruit newcomers who must be new blood for the society, leaving those who are not conformed to the society.

Additionally, employees are responsible for directly or indirectly checking the workplaces and participants in various ways and means. It is aimed at fulfilling the requirements of the workplace and enhancing the physical and mental situations of the employees. Moreover, employers have to solve any problems in workplaces as well as workmates without delay. It is because such a problem will spark for destroying the society.

Skilful management of employers will contribute to the workplace achieving success and encourage employees to expedite their efforts in manufacturing or work procedures of the workplace.

Negotiate all measures between employers and employees

Any workplace cannot be established without employees. Conversely, employees cannot do any business under the leadership and management of employees. Both sides have to rely on each other to achieve accomplishments in running the jobs. Only when employers thoroughly manage the workplaces with necessary facilities and fulfilment will employees and workplaces meet development. On the other hand, only when employees make utmost efforts and show off excellent skills in work processes will workplaces improve with remarkable achievements and will employers earn greater profits.

An important role of unity in workplaces

Individuals in any society and workplace may be different in attitudes and perceptions. It is acceptable as these are the natures of living beings. However, those who rigidly grasp negative attitudes to analyze anything are unacceptable for relevant societies and workplaces. Those with different opinions can contribute much to development of the societies because their different opinions are useful for considering all issues. ■

Acupuncture a gamechanger when antibiotics don't do the trick

Anita is relieved to see her daughter Sophie's improving condition, though she regrets not seeking treatment at MRCTCM earlier. She expresses readiness to continue acupuncture sessions to prevent a recurrence of digestive problems.

ACUPUNCTURE has done a world of good to Sophie Biro, an eight-year-old girl who has been struggling with acute digestive problems.

"I felt a little painful during the treatment, but afterwards I did not feel a thing, and then I felt better," she told Xinhua after her second treatment this week at the Mediterranean Regional Centre for Traditional Chinese Medicine (MRCTCM) in Malta.

"I can eat more after acupuncture," she said, chatting

away happily about the joy of eating some toast, porridge, and rice without experiencing nausea.

Sophie and her family moved from London to Malta in May 2021. This is when Sophie started to develop symptoms like recurrent diarrhea, stomach pain, vomiting, and fever. These problems have left her weakened physically, much to the concern of her mother, Anita Tompai.

Long-Term Impact

Anita said none of Sophie's

hospital treatments had so far had long-lasting effects, and she was reluctant to let her daughter continue with antibiotics.

So, when she came across some information about the MRCTCM on social media a few weeks ago, the 42-year-old mother decided to for traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) as a "last resort".

The fact that acupuncture has no side effects has weighed heavily in Anita's decision.

"My daughter felt much better right after the first acupuncture treatment," she said. "I am very happy and grateful for the results," Anita said with tears in her eyes.

Sophie is one of the youngest patients the MRCTCM has treated, said Feng Hua, head of the Chinese medical team in Malta and also Sophie's attending physician.

Feng described her as both brave and cooperative. Luckily, Sophie's digestive symptoms quickly subsided after the first treatment, leaving only slight

abdominal pain. By the second treatment, her complexion had greatly improved, indicating steady recovery, Feng said.

Now Sophie is eager to share her experiences with others.

Sophie Recommends Acupuncture

"I want my best friend to try acupuncture too," Sophie said, adding that her friend, who is one year younger, has a habit of biting her nails and frequently complains of stomachaches.

Seeing her daughter's condition now steadily improving, Anita breathed a sigh of relief but regretted not bringing Sophie to the MRCTCM sooner. She said she was ready to continue with acupuncture treatments for Sophie to prevent a recurrence of the digestive problems.

Since 1993, the Chinese government has sent 19 medical teams to Malta, treating approximately 250,000 patients. In 1994, China and Malta signed an agreement to cooperate on TCM



Photo taken shows the entrance of the Mediterranean Regional Centre for Traditional Chinese Medicine (MRCTCM), in Paola, Malta, 7 May 2022. **PHOTO: CHEN WENXIAN/XINHUA**

and established the MRCTCM.

Over the past 30 years, TCM became deeply rooted in Malta, Feng said. The centre also re-

ceives patients from all over Europe, and provides professional trainings in TCM, she said.

SOURCE: Xinhua

NATIONAL

ROK nods financial, technical support for green efforts

THE Republic of Korea has pledged further financial and technical support for the Korea-Myanmar REDD+ Joint Project, as announced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The agreement was revealed during a business lunch hosted by the Korea Forest Service in South Korea on 20 November. The delegation, led by Dr Thaung Naing Oo, Director-General at the Forest Department of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, and U Thant Sin, Myanmar's Ambassador to the ROK, participated in the lunch.

The bilateral meeting focused on financial and technical support, as well as cooperation regarding forest-related rural development plans and research within the framework of the Korea-Myanmar REDD+ Joint Project. Following the lunch, the Myanmar delegates visited the National Institute of Forest Science (NIFoS) and met with its chairman, Mr Jae Soo Bae, to discuss cooperation between



The bilateral meeting between Myanmar and the ROK.

the two countries.

Myanmar delegates then toured the laboratory where high-grade fiberwood is manufactured. Additionally, they discussed the details of the Dry Zone Greening Project in Bagan, sponsored by the Korean government.

The delegation led by Dr Thaung Naing Oo is visiting the ROK to participate in the International Seminar on Strengthening Climate Resilience through Mangrove Forest organized by the Korea Forest Service at Seoul National University. — ASH/NT

Movie stars donate money at Monmyat Seikhtar Home for the Aged

ACTORS and actresses made a cash donation and performed at the third respect-paying ceremony of the Monmyat Seikhtar Home for the Aged located in North Okkalapa Township, Yangon Region, on 19 November, according to actress Saung Eaindray Tun.

Actors and actresses who attended the ceremony included Shin Min Sett, Thuzar Pwint, Hnin Oo Wai, Saung Eaindray Tun, Kyaw Kyaw Nanda, Shwe Phyu Nann Nwe, Yan Shin, owner of Bhone Young Shan Movie Production Ko Jack, and many others. Actress Saung Eaindray Tun said, "Today, I came here to donate money for the elders, and I did the same last year. Other actors and actresses gave performances, but I was not part of the entertainment group."

At the Monmyat Seikhtar Home for the Aged, there are 50 elderly people aged 70 and above, and actress Saung Eaindray Tun donated K10,000 to each of them. — ASH/TRKM



Actress Mama Saung (C) seen at the third respect-paying ceremony of the Monmyat Seikhtar Home for the Aged.

CRIME NEWS

Illegal timbers, foodstuffs, medications, consumer goods, industrial materials and vehicles confiscated

THE combined on-duty teams under the Mandalay Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force seized 4,320 bottles of Justus beer, 4,824 bottles of Maximus beer, and 750 cartons of Esse cigarettes, estimated at a value of K28.44 million, at a warehouse in Amarapura township on 20 November. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

Additionally, the joint team confiscated 60 bottles of Two-Shrimp palm oil (one litre) worth K330,000 in Pakokku township, a total of 1.268 tonnes of illegal teak, and 0.505 tonnes of other timber valued at K138,232 in Minbu district. They also seized a Nissan Diesel truck (estimated



Seized illegal machinery at the Thilawa Port terminals.

ed value of K35 million) heading to Yangon from Myawady, carrying 1,500 kilogrammes of toys worth K2.25 million without offi-

cial documents near Kamawkasin village in Hpa-an township. The actions were taken under the Essential Supplies and Services Law, the Forest Law, and Customs procedures.

On the same day, the Customs on-duty teams confiscated 12 rolls of tipping paper estimated to be worth K1.3 million, which were not declared in the Import Declaration (ID), from a container at the Asia World Port Terminal container checkpoint. They also seized two kinds of goods worth K16.737 million, including 50 Yokoshima water pumps without an Import Licence, from a container at the Hteedan checkpoint, and two types of goods valued at K56.575

million, including 1,008 boxes of Mydot tablets without an Import Licence at the Yangon International Airport (Import Desk). Another Nissan Diesel truck (approximately worth K25 million), headed to Yangon from Myawady, carrying two kinds of goods worth K6.24 million, including 480 boxes of Khian Guan that were not declared in the ID, was seized at the Mayanchaung permanent checkpoint. The actions were taken under Customs procedures.

A total of 12 arrests were made on 20 November, with an estimated value of K206,086,954, as reported by the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS

‘City of jinn’: magical myths haunt ancient Omani oasis

DEEP in Oman’s parched interior, the ancient oasis town of Bahla abounds with myths of camel-eating, fire-mouthed hyenas and men turning into donkeys — a reputation for magic and mystery that persists to this day.

Some superstitious Omanis still shun the isolated desert settlement because of its stories of “jinn”, the spirits that have been part of Arab folklore since before the dawn of Islam.

Bahla, a quiet town of palm groves and eerie, abandoned mud-brick homes, lies about 200 kilometres (125 miles) southwest of the capital Muscat in Al-Dakiliya governorate, with an imposing double-archway at its entrance.

Here, in one of Oman’s oldest inhabited settlements, belief is firm in jinn, which are described



A picture shows a view of Bahla Fort, one of four historical forts located at the foot of the Green Mountain highlands of Oman, and the only fort in the country designated a UNESCO Heritage Site, in Bahla, 200 kilometres north of Muscat, on 5 October 2023. PHOTO: AFP

as supernatural beings distinct from humans and angels that live alongside mankind.

“We believe that jinn are among the creations of God... so it is not strange,” said tour guide Hamad Al Rabaani at Bahla’s medieval fort, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Magical stories permeate Bahla, including the popular myth that supernatural forces built the 13-kilometre wall around the town in a single night, to protect it from invaders.

“The legend is of two sisters, both jinn, one of whom built the wall for protection... and the other who created an ancient irrigation system for agriculture,” said Rabaani, 55. The concept of jinn predates Islam but descriptions of the spirits feature in Islamic texts, which declare them subjects of God. — AFP

Fans flock to anime director Shinkai’s Los Angeles artwork pop-up



Visitors enjoy the displays in the private pop-up installation showcasing the complete works of Japanese animation filmmaker Makoto Shinkai in Los Angeles on 19 November 2023. PHOTO: KYODO

A pop-up installation featuring materials from the complete works of Japanese animation filmmaker Makoto Shinkai drew fans to Los Angeles on Sunday.

The event “Makoto Shinkai: A Journey from Voices of a Distant Star through Suzume” was the first exhibition featuring his films in the United States, according to Japanese anime company CoMix Wave Films Inc, one of the organizers.

Over 300 pieces of artwork and materials from eight of Shinkai’s films, spanning film proposal documents to storyboarding, were on display. Included was a panel with an illustration from the film Suzume,

which visitors were permitted to photograph.

“Los Angeles is the centre of the film industry, so for a Japanese independent animation artist like me to have a special exhibition there is like a dream in itself,” Shinkai told Kyodo News. Many of Shinkai’s film stills were on display, which for one visitor was one of the many aspects that drew her to his work. “It’s his use of imagery, especially the animation style and the way the environment is reflected into the story is what drew me to it,” said Keisha Tara, 27. Shinkai also said, “The younger generation (in Japan) is still having fun doing what

they can to engage with their everyday life” even though the country is shrinking in terms of population and economy.

“So, I want to depict young people who live their lives in a positive and resolute manner even in such a shrinking country.”

Since making his commercial debut in 2002 with “Voices of a Distant Star,” Shinkai’s films have all been well received.

Both “your name”. and “Weathering With You” made Shinkai an international sensation, with the former claiming several awards at the 2017 Japan Academy Film Prize and the latter representing Japan in the Best International Feature Film category at the 2020 US Academy Awards.

“Anime doesn’t sometimes get the credit it deserves as an art form globally, especially when it comes to winning awards, perhaps. So we wanted to make sure that we showcase his work here and also elevate the art of anime,” said Brian Eley, vice-president of communications for Crunchyroll LLC, another organizer of Sunday’s exhibition. — Kyodo

Careful what you ‘Wish’ for: Disney brings back the villain



US actor Chris Pine arrives on 5 September 2022 for the screening of the film “Don’t Worry Darling” presented out of competition as part of the 79th Venice International Film Festival at Lido di Venezia in Venice, Italy. PHOTO: AFP

FROM Cruella de Vil to Scar, Disney has created many of cinema’s most memorable villains — but bombastic baddies have been notably absent from the studio’s recent hits.

In movies such as “Frozen 2” and “Raya and the Last Dragon”, heroes have battled abstract enemies like mistrust and xenophobia rather than puppy-playing prima donnas or regicidal uncles, leaving some fans disappointed.

That is about to change with

“Wish”, an old-school animation out in theatres Wednesday, which celebrates the 100th anniversary of Disney with dozens of throwbacks to the studio’s earliest films — including their dastardly antagonists.

“We hear what people are saying out there — the fans are like, ‘Just give us a villain! A real good old-fashioned villain!’” director Chris Buck told AFP.

“And a good-looking villain!” added his fellow director Fawn Veerasunthorn. — AFP

ECONOMY
WORLD

UK and S Korea to agree closer ties at historic state visit

SOUTH Korea President Yoon Suk Yeol is set to launch negotiations a new free trade deal with the UK during this week's three-day state visit, Downing Street said Monday.

President Yoon and First Lady Kim Keon Hee formally begin the trip on Tuesday, with King Charles III hosting his first state visitors since his coronation in May.

Yoon will also hold bilateral talks with UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.

"Trade and investment is expected to be a key focus of the visit, with... trade secretaries from both countries preparing to sign an agreement to launch the negotiations for an upgraded modern, world-leading Free Trade Agreement (FTA) on Wednesday," said Downing Street.

The UK government is keen to strike new deals with countries around the world following its departure from the



South Korea's President Yoon Suk Yeol and his wife Kim Keon Hee disembark from an aircraft after landing at London Stansted Airport on 20 November 2023 for a three-day state visit to the UK. PHOTO: AFP

European Union, including with fast-growing economies in the Indo-Pacific region.

London also hopes that a

new "Downing Street Accord", set to be signed on Wednesday, will help secure "robust supply chains" and increase technology

sharing and defence cooperation.

"As two nations focused on innovation, harnessing new

technologies and defending the international rules-based order, the UK and Republic of Korea are natural partners," said Sunak.

"Through our new Downing Street Accord, we will drive investment, boost trade and build a friendship that not only supports global stability, but protects our interests and lasts the test of time.

"I know a Free Trade Agreement fit for the future will only drive further investment," he added.

London said the visit had secured £21 billion (\$26.2 billion) investment by South Korean firms into the UK, backing renewables and infrastructure projects.

Yoon, meanwhile, told his cabinet last week that "the upcoming visit will serve as a springboard for further deepening economic cooperation between the two countries," according to local media. — AFP

Viet Nam's vegetable exports set to surpass US\$1 bln by 2030



This aerial photo shows vendors selling vegetable at Vi Thanh market in Hau Giang province on 25 October 2023. PHOTO: AFP

VIET Nam's vegetable export revenue is forecast to reach about 1-1.5 billion US

dollars by 2030, Vietnam News Agency (VNA) reported Monday, citing a project recently

approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

According to the project, Viet Nam's vegetable production is set at 23-24 million tonnes with about 1-1.3 million tonnes designated for processing.

Viet Nam will develop safe and concentrated vegetable growing areas with clear origins in order to meet domestic and export demand, contributing to national food security, food safety and hygiene, and improving community health, VNA reported. — Xinhua

Hawaii may allow Japanese tourists to pass border checks from Japan

THE US state of Hawaii is working with its national and Japanese immigration authorities to create a system that allows Japanese tourists to complete immigration and customs procedures before departing their country, Hawaii Gov Josh Green said recently.

Speaking in an interview with Kyodo News, Green said the new initiative would allow direct flights from Japan to more Hawaiian islands, even those with no immigration facilities, making

travel more convenient and in turn boosting local economies that have seen a downturn in tourists from Japan since the coronavirus pandemic. The plan would include the island of Maui, which was devastated in August by wildfires that left more than 100 people dead or missing. "It's very important that people travel to Maui because our recovery will be accelerated if people do visit anywhere in Maui, anywhere at all," Green said during a recent visit to Japan. — Kyodo



Tourists soak up the sun at Waikiki Beach in Honolulu on Hawaii's Oahu island on 17 November 2023. PHOTO: KYODO

Germany freezes parts of budget after court blow

THE German government has frozen future spending pledges across almost its whole budget for the rest of 2023, a finance ministry source said Tuesday, after a court ruling blew a massive hole in its finances.

The Constitutional Court decided last week Chancellor Olaf Scholz's coalition had broken debt rules when it transferred 60 billion euros (\$65 billion) in loan authorizations earmarked for pandemic

support to a climate fund. The move upended the government's spending plans, and the finance ministry of Europe's biggest economy immediately suspended most projects under the fund from 2024. — AFP

Hyundai opens high-tech Singapore electric car factory

HYUNDAI opened a high-tech electric vehicle factory in Singapore on Tuesday that the South Korean auto giant says will be a “pillar” of its electrification strategy in the coming decades.

Half of the tasks at the Hyundai Motor Group Innovation Centre Singapore will be done by 200 robots, and it will use new production methods that will move away from

traditional conveyor belts, the company said in a statement.

The facility, which has been in operation since early this year but formally opened on Tuesday, can build 30,000 electric vehicles a year, according to the company.

The Singapore plant “will establish itself as one of two Hyundai Motor Group innovation pillars that will lead the company’s future in the elec-

trification era over the next 50 years”, the statement said.

The facility “synchronizes the virtual and physical worlds in real time”, enabling humans and robots “to cooperate in ways not seen before”, it added.

Human employees “can simulate tasks in the digital virtual space — or metaverse — while robots physically move components on the production line”. — AFP



Chang Jae-hoon, president and chief executive officer of Hyundai Motor, speaks at the opening of Hyundai Motor Group’s first smart urban mobility hub in Singapore on 21 November 2023. PHOTO: AFP

Markets retreat but traders confident of Fed rate hikes ending

STOCK markets mostly retreated Tuesday, though analysts said there was still confidence on trading floors that the Federal Reserve is finished hiking interest rates.

Expectations that financial conditions will become easi-

er in the new year as inflation comes down have fanned a rush back into risk assets in recent weeks and pushed the dollar down against its peers.

All three main indexes in New York extended their gains Monday, with the Nasdaq hit-

ting a 22-month high thanks to an advance in tech giants including Amazon, Microsoft and Nvidia.

The rally was boosted by the successful sale of 20-year US Treasuries that sent yields on other notes lower. — AFP



A man (R) looks at an information board at Hong Kong International Airport on 6 July 2023. PHOTO: AFP

Paul Chan expects HK airport passenger traffic to fully recover in 2024

PAUL Chan, financial secretary of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government, said Tuesday that the passenger traffic at the Hong Kong Airport is expected to fully recover in 2024.

Speaking at the ongoing Asian Logistics, Maritime and Aviation Conference here, Chan said that the passenger traffic at the Hong Kong Airport will return to 80 per cent of the pre-pandemic level this year.

On the global economic prospect, Chan expected that high interest rates to persist for a longer period of time, and the global economy will grow more slowly in 2024 than this year, with higher downside risks, given the complexity and volatility of the geopolitical and economic external environment, as well as the fragility of the economic and financial

system as a result of the deficits in a number of economies affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

He pointed out that with growing challenges brought by climate change, green transformation, innovation and development of digital economy are highlighted in the world, and the HKSAR government will also continue to promote multilateral trade and enhance connectivity and cooperation with economies around the world.

The conference, jointly held by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council and the HKSAR government on 21-22 November, focuses on diversified strategies to cope with the changes and uncertainties in global trade, and at the same time, promotes Hong Kong globally. — Xinhua

Baidu posts modest revenue growth in Q3

CHINESE internet giant Baidu on Tuesday announced modest year-on-year revenue growth of 6.0 per cent in the third quarter of 2023, beating analyst expectations.

Facing increased domestic competition and a sluggish economy, the company — which operates a major search engine and map service — has sought to diversify into cloud computing,

autonomous driving, artificial intelligence (AI) and other sectors.

The company unveiled the newest version of its AI chatbot ERNIE in October, claiming it rivalled the capabilities of OpenAI’s ChatGPT.

Baidu said in an earnings report on Tuesday it made a profit of \$996 million in the three months through September, a year-on-year increase of 23 per

cent.

Revenue was \$4.7 billion, up 6.0 per cent from the equivalent period last year and beating predictions by Bloomberg analysts who had estimated a growth of 5.1 per cent. “Baidu reported solid third-quarter financial results, demonstrating resilience in a challenging economic climate,” Baidu’s CEO Robin Li said in a press release. — AFP



(FILES) An employee walks past the company logo at Baidu’s headquarters in Beijing on 6 September 2022. Chinese internet giant Baidu on 21 November 2023 announced modest year-on-year revenue growth of 6.0 per cent in the third quarter of 2023, beating analyst expectations. PHOTO: AFP

ROLLING UPDATES WORLD

UN chief highlights development as path to hope at UNSC, thanks China for hosting such debate

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Monday emphasized the significance of development and expressed gratitude to China for organizing a debate on this vital issue at the Security Council.

“Human development lights the way to hope — promoting prevention, security, and peace. This is why advancing peace and advancing sustainable, inclusive development go hand-in-hand,” the top UN official told the Security Council open debate on promoting sustainable peace through common development.

“I thank the Government of China for convening this debate on the vital link between development and sustaining peace,” said the secretary-general.

Guterres further said that development by itself is not enough to secure peace, adding that no peace is secure without inclusive and sustainable development.

“And no failure is more calamitous than the failure to prevent conflict. Indeed, development gains are often among the first casualties of war,” Guterres added.

The UN chief said the closer a country is to conflict, the farther it is from sustainable and inclusive development.

“Nine of the ten countries with the lowest Human Development Indicators have experienced conflicts or violence in the past ten years,” he noted. — Xinhua



Representatives attend a UN Security Council open debate on promoting sustainable peace through common development at the UN headquarters in New York, on 20 November 2023. **PHOTO: ESKINDER DEBEBE/UN PHOTO/HANDOUT VIA XINHUA**

Indonesia unveils investment plan for \$20 bln energy transition pact



Smoke rises from the chimneys of the Suralaya coal-fired power plant in Cilegon on 14 September 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

INDONESIA on Tuesday launched an investment plan to attract \$20 billion pledged by Western nations in a renewable energy transition pact agreed last year for the archipelago to slash emissions and wean itself off coal. The roadmap, which comes less than two weeks before the COP28 summit in Dubai, outlines Jakarta’s vision to reach net-zero power sector emissions by 2050 using cash from the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP).

Under the Comprehensive Investment and Policy Plan

(CIPP), the Southeast Asian nation will seek to slash its carbon dioxide emissions to 250 million metric tons for its on-grid power sector by 2030. That is down from a previous cap of 290 million.

“The CIPP provides a strategic roadmap for the ambitious energy transition in Indonesia by considering challenges including technical, financial, and social justice,” acting minister of maritime and investments, Erick Thohir said during the launch in Jakarta.

“We need to move quickly

because 2030 is less than seven years away,” he said.

Indonesia also plans to boost its renewable energy generation share to 44 per cent by 2030, up from an initial target of 34 per cent.

Jakarta has said it would need at least \$97.3 billion worth of investments, nearly five times more than the funding promised by the JETP investors, to achieve its target.

The public and private financing for the JETP, released last year, follows a model first trialled in South Africa and then announced for Viet Nam and Senegal, with rich countries pledging funds for the developing world’s energy transition.

But Jakarta is reportedly unhappy about the deal’s proposed mix of financing, worried it will be offered mostly market-rate loans that saddle it with heavy debt.

The United States, Japan, Canada, and six European nations signed the deal with Indonesia — one of the world’s top coal exporters and coal power generators — to shift it away from its coal reliance. — AFP

Maldives to battle rising seas by building fortress islands

RISING sea levels threaten to swamp the Maldives and the Indian Ocean archipelago is already out of drinking water, but the new president says he has scrapped plans to relocate citizens.

Instead, President Mohamed Muizzu promises the low-lying nation will beat back the waves through ambitious land reclamation and building islands higher — policies, however, that environmental and rights groups warn could even exacerbate flooding risks.

The upmarket holiday destination is famed for its white sand beaches, turquoise lagoons and

vast coral reefs, but the chain of 1,192 tiny islands is on the front-lines of the climate crisis and battling for survival.

Former president Mohamed Nasheed began his administration 15 years ago warning citizens they might become the world’s first environmental refugees needing relocation to another country. He wanted the Maldives to start saving to buy land in neighbouring India, Sri Lanka or even far away in Australia.

But Muizzu, 45, while asking for \$500 million in foreign funding to protect vulnerable coasts, said his citizens will not be leaving their homeland. — AFP



A general view of the island of Hulhumale, in the south of North Male Atoll, Maldives on 16 November 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

SPORTS

Southgate expects Euro charge despite drab draw with North Macedonia

GARETH Southgate insists England's lacklustre finish to the Euro 2024 qualifying campaign will mean nothing when they start their bid to win the tournament in Germany.

Such are the expectations that Southgate is working under these days that qualifying with an unbeaten record from a potentially tricky group including Italy and Ukraine earned him few plaudits.

Being held to a 1-1 draw by North Macedonia on Monday meant England failed to beat a side as low as 66th in the FIFA rankings for the first time since 2016, when they drew with Slovenia. But with a runners-up finish at the last European Champi-

onship in 2021, as well as World Cup semi-final and quarter-final appearances in the Southgate era, England's status as one of the Euro favourites is well earned after six victories from their eight qualifiers.

And Southgate is confident England's drab end to the qualifying campaign will prove nothing more than an irrelevant blip.

"The really big results were in March against Italy and Ukraine. It meant coming here was a completely different test," he said. "I thought that given we had already qualified and everything had been achieved the mentality of the players was excellent. — AFP



England's striker (20) Harry Kane (2R) celebrates a goal with England's midfielder (8) Phil Foden during the UEFA Euro 2024 group C qualification football match between North Macedonia and England at National Arena "Todor Proeski" in Skopje on 20 November 2023. PHOTO: AFP



Italy's goalkeeper (1) Gianluigi Donnarumma celebrates at the final whistle of the UEFA EURO 2024 Group C qualifying football match between Ukraine and Italy at the BayArena Stadium in Leverkusen, western Germany on 20 November 2023. PHOTO: AFP

Holdovers Italy secure Euro 2024 place, Czech Republic and Slovenia qualify

REIGNING champions Italy secured their ticket for Euro 2024 on Monday after holding on for a nervy goalless draw against Ukraine in their final qualifier, while the Czech Republic and Slovenia also clinched places at next year's finals.

Italy only needed the draw in a game played in Leverkusen, Germany, in order to qualify but a defeat against their direct rivals in Group C would have left their fate to be decided in play-offs next March. That was a scenario they desperately

wanted to avoid following the trauma of failing to qualify for the 2018 and 2022 World Cups after losing in play-offs, either side of winning the last European Championship in 2021.

The high stakes made it a tense occasion and Italy goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma had to produce a firm hand low down to keep out an early Georgiy Sudakov strike.

However, Luciano Spalletti's side threatened at the other end with Ukraine 'keeper Anatoliy Trubin saving from Nicolo

Barella and racing out to deny Davide Frattesi before the half-hour mark.

Donnarumma blocked a Mykhailo Mudryk attempt in the 65th minute and there was a flashpoint in stoppage time when the Ukraine winger went down in the Italy box under a Bryan Cristante challenge, but no penalty was given. The two nations finish level on 14 points behind England in Group C, but Italy have the better head-to-head record having won 2-1 in Milan in September. — AFP

Myanmar face big loss to North Korea in World Cup Qualifier

MYANMAR national football team suffered a 1-6 loss to North Korea in the second-round World Cup qualifier played at Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon yesterday.

Due to the big difference in the world level, the Myanmar team could not play at the same level as the North Korea team.

The first goal for North Korea was found at 30 minutes which was superbly scored by I Jong amidst the ruined Myanmar back line. The North Korean attack was never stopped and the second goal was scored by J Choe at 34 minutes as he got a chance to shoot a penalty-kick. Four min-

utes later, North Korean Kwang-Song Han touched the ball into the net to make the third score.

The first half ended with North Korea winning three goals.

In the second half, Myanmar's play increased, but they could not control North Korea's play and conceded more goals.

North Korea star player I Jong made a hat-trick as he scored the fourth and fifth goals at 54 and 56 minutes. Next, North Korea produced the sixth and final goal at 70 minute-mark as the goal was scored by Hyong-Jin Ri at 70 minutes.

In turn, Myanmar found a

single goal with Win Naing Tun's action at 77 minutes.

At the final whistle, North Korea celebrated a 6-1 victory over Myanmar. Since team Myanmar lost both matches, it is not a good situation to advance to the next round of the World Cup qualifiers. — KZL

Myanmar's Zwe Khant Min (12) vies for the ball with the North Korean player during the 2nd round World Cup Qualifier at Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon on 21 November 2023. PHOTO:MFF





Chinese company gives leftover hotpot oil second life as jet fuel

AT AN upmarket restaurant in the hotpot-loving Chinese city of Chengdu, diners plunge sliced meat and vegetables into cauldrons of spicy, oily broth, largely unaware that their leftovers are set to take on a second life as jet fuel.

With around 150,000 tonnes of used hotpot oil thrown out by restaurants in the city each year, local business Sichuan Jinshang Environmental Protection has found a niche processing the greasy waste and exporting it to be turned into aviation fuel.

“Our motto is, let oil from the gutter soar in the sky,” Ye Bin, the company’s general manager, told AFP.

Ye said his company, which launched in 2017, was now producing up to 150,000 tonnes of industrial-grade oil annually from a combination of hotpot restaurants and other eateries across Chengdu, including KFC outlets.

On a typical night, collectors hired by Jinshang visit hundreds of these restaurants around the southwestern metropolis.

The process begins right after customers leave, with waiters emptying their hotpot broth — so rich it is used purely as a cooking medium — into a special filter that separates oil from water.

Donning thick aprons and elbow-length rubber gloves, collectors then



This photo taken on 21 October 2023 shows a restaurant employee taking away a pot of oily broth, which will be recycled, at an eatery in Chengdu, China’s southwest Sichuan province. **PHOTO: AFP**

arrive to pick up jerrycans of the scarlet grease.

“It’s a great job — I play mahjong during the day and work at night,” one collector named Zheng told AFP as he packed a minivan with containers of the pungent sludge.

That sludge is then ferried to a business park on the city’s outskirts where Jinshang’s mostly spotless plant is based.

The only trace of the oil there is a faint scent of hotpot at the unloading dock

and telltale orange stains at the bottom of some equipment. The oil is piped into massive vats and undergoes a refining process that removes remaining water and impurities, resulting in a clear, yellow-tinged industrial-grade oil. — AFP

Gaza hostage talks ‘closest’ to deal since start of war: Qatar

NEGOTIATIONS to free hostages seized in Hamas’s 7 October attacks on Israel are at their “closest point” to a deal and have reached the “final stage”, mediator

Qatar said Tuesday.

“We are at the closest point we ever had been in reaching an agreement,” foreign ministry spokesperson Majed Al-Ansari said, adding negotiations have reached a “critical and final stage”.

Qatar has helped broker talks aiming to free some of the 240 hostages in return for a temporary ceasefire, a mediation effort that has so far led to the release of four hostages.

“We are very optimistic, very hopeful,” Al-Ansari told a briefing.

“But we are also very keen for this mediation to succeed in reaching a humanitarian truce,” he said. Israel has vowed to destroy Hamas in response to the 7 October attacks, which Israeli officials say killed about 1,200 people, most of them civilians. — AFP

Indian workers trapped in tunnel for 10 days seen on camera

FORTY-ONE Indian workers trapped in a collapsed road tunnel for 10 days were seen alive on camera for the first time Tuesday as workers attempted to create new passageways to free them.

One of the proposed routes is nearly half a kilometre (over a quarter of a mile) long.

Looking exhausted and anxious, with thick beards, the men could be seen peering at the endoscopic camera sent by rescuers down the thin pipe through which air, food and water are being sent.

“We will bring you out safely, do not worry,” rescuers can be heard telling the helmet-wearing men trapped inside as they gather near the camera, video released by state authorities shows. — AFP



Palestinians receive bags of flour at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) distribution centre in the Rafah refugee camp in the southern Gaza Strip on 21 November 2023 amid ongoing battles between Israel and the Palestinian Hamas movement. **PHOTO: AFP**