

Myanmar and Russia forge solar power partnership

SENIOR General Min Aung Hlaing and Mr Alexander Sergeevich Shatirov, Chief Executive Officer from the Fund RC-Investments from the Russian Federation exchanged views on the cooperation of Russia and Myanmar in generating solar-powered electricity.

Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received a delegation led by Mr Alexander Sergeevich Shatirov, Chief Executive Officer from the Fund RC-Investments from the Russian Federation, at the office of the SAC Chairman in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

They cordially discussed the progress of economic cooperation between Russia and Myanmar; plans to produce minerals from Myanmar and manufacture value-added products, generating energy and cooperation in conservation of natural resources and environment.

They also focused on manufacturing fertilizers for agricultural tasks, export of value-added products made of agricultural and livestock products from Myanmar to Russia, further promotion of friendly relations and cooperation between the two countries, and future plans.

Also present at the meeting were Council Joint Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo, Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations Dr Kan Zaw, Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Khin Maung Yi and Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Lwin Oo. The CEO of Fund RC-Investments from the Russian Federation was accompanied by his delegation members, Russian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Iskander Azizov and officials. — MNA/TTA



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing welcomes Russian Fund RC-Investments CEO Mr Alexander Sergeevich Shatirov yesterday.

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Key Transport Hub: Rakhine's marine products primarily routed to Yangon Region

Myanmar showcases handicrafts at ASEAN Week 2023 in Seoul



A glimpse of Myanmar's traditional arts and crafts displayed at the event.

ACCORDING to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Myanmar's national handicraft lacquerware items were displayed in the ASEAN Week 2023 ceremony held at the ASEAN-Korea Centre.

The ASEAN Week 2023 exhibition is being held at Korea's COEX Convention Centre in Seoul from 8 to 11 November 2023, so that people can learn about the traditional arts and crafts of ASEAN member countries.

Myanmar Ambassador to the Republic of Korea U Thant Sin, along with heads of embassies of the ASEAN member countries based in Seoul, attended and opened

the exhibition by cutting the ribbon.

During the event, the Secretary-General of the ASEAN-Korea Centre, Mr Hae-yong Kim said in his opening remarks that efforts were made to display the national handicraft artworks from ASEAN member countries and Korea as a cultural exhibition so that the Korean people could observed about them. In his opening remarks, he thanked the embassies of ASEAN member countries for helping display traditional handicraft items.

Alternate Chairman of the ASEAN Committee in Seoul, Lao Ambassador Mr Songkane Luangmunithone, also gave a speech of honour. — ASH/KZL

NATIONAL

Botahtaung Pagoda to host Matho Thingan weaving competition

A weaving competition of the golden lotus Matho Thingan is planned to be held on 26 and 27 November (Tazaungmone Full Moon Day) at the Botahtaung Kyaikdeap Pagoda, Botahtaung Township, according to U Thein Su, a member of the board of trustees of the pagoda.

Groups containing two people who are skilful female weavers, aged between 18 and 50, are eligible to compete in the 39th Matho Thingan weaving

competition and are required to register not later than 16 November.

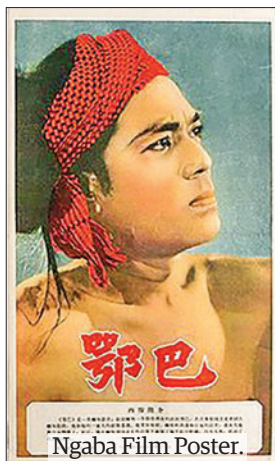
“This weaving competition is held annually. Each year, about 20 weaving groups usually participate in the competition. The first prize is K15 million, K10 million for the second prize and the third prize is K800,000. The consolation prize of K400,000 and medals will be also awarded,” U Thein Su said.

— ASH/TH



A general view of the Botahtaung Pagoda in Yangon.

Soft copy of digitized film Ngaba presented to main character's family



Chinese Minister Counsellor Dr Zheng Zhihong presents a soft copy of the digitized Myanmar film Ngaba to family members of U Nyunt Maung, the main character of the film.

MINISTER Counsellor Dr Zheng Zhihong of the Chinese Embassy gave a soft copy of the digitized Myanmar film Ngaba to family members of U Nyunt Maung, the main character of the film, on 8 November.

China handed over the digitized film Ngaba to Myanmar as a gift celebrating the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Myanmar and China and the 100th anniversary of Myanmar's film

industry in 2019.

Dr Zheng Zhihong said arrangements have been made to broadcast Chinese movies and documentary films in Myanmar recently, and Myanmar movie series are also broadcast in China. It can promote the existing China-Myanmar Pauk-Phaw relations and friendship among the people.

U Thiha Aung, grandson of the main character of Ngaba film also expressed gratitude to China for giving it as a present and pledged to actively

participate in Myanmar-China film exchange programmes.

The film is about the struggling life of farmer Ngaba in fighting colonialists and fascists to regain independence and was made in 1961.

It was directed by Director U Chit Khin in 1961 and produced by the British Burma Film Company. The novel was written by author Maung Htin and the actors and actresses of the film were Nyunt Maung, May Nwe, Kyi Shwin and Bago Miss Myint. — TWA/KTZH

Yangon-Gaya-Yangon charter flights to operate until end-April 2024

MYANMAR National Airlines (MNA) will operate Yangon-Gaya-Yangon charter flights until the end of April 2024. The flights started in September and are scheduled for three days a week (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday), totalling 77 flights by the end of April 2024. Additionally, MNA plans to operate charter

flights on Saturdays and extend services to major cities like New Delhi and Kolkata in India.

Myanmar and India have reciprocally granted visa exemptions for travellers, and it is anticipated that more travellers from both countries will enter during this year's tourist season. — TWA/MKKS

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September 2023

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The advertising of Yangon-Gaya-Yangon flights.

COVID-19 report, 9 November 2023

NEW TESTS	NEW CASES	CASUALTIES
4,316	Two	Nil

The people are urged to receive vaccination of Covid-19 without fail as full-time vaccination of Covid-19 and receiving booster shots can effectively mitigate infection of the virus, severe suffering from the disease and increasing of death rate based on the disease.

NATIONAL

Rubber is a prioritized export item of national export strategy: Senior General Min Aung Hlaing

SENIOR General Min Aung Hlaing said that rubber is one of the prioritized export items in the national export strategy for raising the export volume of the nation.

Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing highlighted the role of the rubber sector in his keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the Myanmar Rubber Forum-2023 held at the Myanmar International Convention Centre-II (MICC-II) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

As rubber export earned between US\$250 million and US\$450 million per year on average during the period from the 2018-2019 financial year to 2022-23 FY, rubber is an important industrial crop for earning foreign currency, he added.

The Senior General noted that although Myanmar has long history for cultivation of rubber, per-acre yield and quality of Myanmar's rubber is weak in success in comparison with that of Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and Viet Nam. As such, he stressed the need to implement short- and long-term plans in initiating the strategic plans to develop rubber cultivation and rubber-based industries similar to other countries, adding it is necessary to encourage the development of rubber cultivation



The group documentary photograph of the inaugural event for the Myanmar Rubber Forum 2023, graced by SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

inclusive of the MSME scheme.

The Senior General underscored that as Myanmar possesses favourable climate and a vast land area for the cultivation of rubber, it is necessary to encourage extended cultivation of rubber plants. On the other hand, he urged the perennial crops research and technological development division to continuously conduct research for the production of quality rubber strains suitable for the nature of Myanmar with resilience to plant diseases.

He continued to say that although Myanmar has sound foundations for manufactur-

ing rubber-based products at home, the country imports rubber-based goods annually due to a lack of encouragement to the manufacturing sector and capacity for market competition. For example, he noted that tyres and tubes of bicycles and motorcycles worth some US\$65 million are exported yearly.

As such, the Senior General deeply urged all to manufacture tyres and tubes of bicycles and motorbikes at home as a must because encouraging rubber-based industries at home can benefit grasping market share for rubber at home, creation of employment opportu-

Salient points from the speech of Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the opening of Myanmar Rubber Forum 2023

- Rubber exports earned US\$250 million-US\$450 million per year on average during the period from the 2018-2019 financial year to 2022-23 FY.
- The perennial crops research and technological development division needs to continuously conduct research for the production of quality rubber strains.
- All are urged to manufacture tyres and tubes of bicycles and motorbikes at home as a must.
- More than 300,000 tonnes of rubber latex can be collected from some one million acres of rubber plantations.
- The government set an aim to export some 400,000 tonnes of rubber to foreign markets in 2023-24 FY.



The Senior General views the booth displaying homemade tyres and tubes of bicycles and motorbikes at the forum yesterday.

nities and reducing spending foreign exchange.

Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Min Naung explained the purpose of holding the Myanmar Rubber Forum 2023.

The Senior General and those at the ceremony visited the booths of the Department of Agriculture on rubber cultivation, machinery used in rubber farms, car tyres, tyres and tubes of bicycles and motorbikes manufactured at home and other rubber products.

Also present at the ceremony were the SAC Joint Secretary and council members, Union ministers, the chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council, senior military officers, local development partners, representatives from Myanmar Rubber Growers and

Producers Association, relevant associations, rubber farmers and those from the Agriculture Department.

A total of 61 kinds of crops such as paddy, pulses and beans, oil crops and others are cultivated on 49.39 million acres of farmlands. Rubber, the industrial crop, is grown on 1.64 million acres of land in nine regions and states. More than 300,000 tonnes of rubber latex can be collected from some one million acres of rubber plantations.

Annually, the whole country uses more than 20,000 tonnes of rubber from the total production and some 300,000 tonnes of rubber is exported abroad. In the 2023-24 financial year, the government set an aim to export some 400,000 tonnes of rubber to foreign markets. — MNA/TTA

NATIONAL

DPM MoFA Union Minister receives UNHCR delegation

DEPUTY Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe received the delegation led by Mr Raouf Mazou, Assistant High Commissioner for Operations of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

They exchanged views on the repatriation process for verified displaced persons from Bangladesh and ways and means of existing and further cooperation between the Government of Myanmar and the UNHCR.

Also present at the meeting were the UNHCR Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, the Director of the UNHCR Liaison Office in New York, Senior Policy Officer of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, Representa-

tive of the UNHCR in Myanmar and External Relations Officer of UNHCR in Myanmar and senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

DPM MoFA Union Minister receives UNOCHA Head of Office

Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe received Mr Sajjad Mohammad Sajid, Head of Office of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

They discussed matters related to cooperation between the Government of Myanmar and the United Nations agencies, and the facilitation of the provision of humanitarian assistance to the



The UNHCR delegation headed by Assistant High Commissioner for Operations calls on Deputy Prime Minister Union Foreign Affairs Minister U Than Swe yesterday.

needy population. Also present at the meeting were senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ms Danielle Parry, Deputy Head of Office for UNOCHA in Yangon. — MNA

Union Government Office 2 UM receives Assistant High Commissioner (Operations)



The UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner (Operations) calls on Union Minister U Ko Ko Hlaing on 8 November 2023.

UNION Minister at the Union Government Office 2 U Ko Ko Hlaing received Mr Raouf Mazou, Assistant High Commissioner (Operations) of UNHCR, and his delegation at the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw on 8 November 2023.

During the courtesy call, they cordially exchanged views on the process of repatriation of the displaced persons and communities from Rakhine State and the provision of humanitarian assistance in Myanmar. — MNA

MoBA, MoSWRR UMs receive UNHCR delegation

UNION Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung received a delegation led by Assistant High Commissioner for Operations Mr Raouf Mazou of UNHCR at the meeting hall of the ministry yesterday.

During the meeting, the Union minister and the UNHCR delegation cordially discussed a variety of matters, including measures taken for stability and peace of the border areas, socioeconomic development of the ethnic people living in the border areas and human resources development, acceptance and resettlement of displaced persons under the Myanmar-Bangladesh bilateral agreement and cooperation in providing humanitarian assistance.

Similarly, Union Minister

for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Soe Win received the UNHCR delegation at the meeting hall of the ministry yesterday.

At the meeting, they exchanged views on the delegation's tour in Maungtaw and Sittway townships in Rakhine

State and Taunggyi township in Shan State, discussed the status of signing MOU between the ministry and UNHCR, matters on entry visas and local travel permit for the foreign staff of UNHCR, provision of humanitarian assistance and future cooperation plans. — MNA/MKKS



The UNHCR delegation calls on Union Minister Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung yesterday.

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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

Myanmar's active participation in China-ASEAN Information Harbour process

UNION Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn attended the 2nd Dialogue on China-ASEAN Information Harbour which was held during the 2023 World Internet Conference Wuzhen Summit on 8 November.

Speaking at the event, he said the event will bring new ideas, suggestions, cooperation, approaches and creations to establish new digital ecosystems as it is being held under the theme "establishment of new digital ecosystems, create a new blue ocean of cooperation". Nowadays, people can see how digital systems, technology and devices affect their daily lives, businesses and the entire human society. For example, AI, the Internet of Things (IoT), Blockchain, Big Data and Cloud Computing are interdependent ones.

Moreover, the dialogue leads to Creating a New Blue Ocean of Cooperation and it should apply



The documentary group picture of the Second Dialogue on China-ASEAN Information Harbour held in China on 8 November 2023, attended by Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn (5R).

a network called China ASEAN Information Harbour. The China-ASEAN Information Harbour plays a crucial role in building the China-ASEAN community, and Myanmar is actively cooperating in its process.

The Union minister also urged to deepen cooperation in the economy, e-government establishment, public digital services, transnational information, people-to-people exchanges and other sectors.

Then, other attendees coordinated the discussion and Myanmar's Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Lu Mon talked about the measures addressing the disinformation and cybersecurity-related

matters.

The China-ASEAN Information Harbour, launched in 2016, is a Digital Silk Road project connecting China and ASEAN countries. It also promotes the bilateral cooperation between China and ASEAN countries through internet network and information exchanges, especially five platforms – infrastructure, information sharing, technology cooperation, economic and trade services, and people-to-people exchanges as "One Base, One Centre, One Pillar and Two Clusters".

The Union minister visited the Light of Internet Expo in Wuzhen near the WIC Convention Centre yesterday. The expo displays the trends in global internet development and high technologies aiming at establishing international cooperation and exchanges in the digital economic sector. — MNA/KTZH

Opportunities & Challenges for Russia's Turn East Policy in SEA Workshop held



Myanmar Institute of Strategic and International Studies (MISIS) hosts an Expert Workshop on 8-9 November in Yangon.

MYANMAR Institute of Strategic and International Studies (MISIS) hosted an Expert Workshop on the theme of "Opportunities and Challenges for Russia's Turn East Policy in Southeast Asia", jointly organized by the Institute of China and Contemporary Asia (ICCA) of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), at the meeting room of the Myanmar Institute of Strategic and Inter-

national Studies in Yangon, on 8 and 9 November 2023.

MISIS's Senior Advisory Board members and Executive Board members, the senior researchers and research assistants, officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, academicians from the Yangon University of Foreign Languages and the Institute of China and Contemporary Asia, and students of the Yan-

gon University, Yangon University of Foreign Languages and East Yangon University discussed issues including the governance of the Armed Forces in Indochina, Western Economic Sanctions and ways for Economic Synergy between Southeast Asia and Russia, defence cooperation and academic perspectives on Myanmar and Russia relations. — MNA

Daily houses, printing house, MRTV inspected

DEPUTY Minister for Information U Ye Tint inspected the operations at the daily houses and the printing factory in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, met officials and gave the necessary instructions yesterday.

The deputy minister proceeded to the Myanma Radio and Television (MRTV) to discuss the operations and viewed the staff housings and the radio station.

Subsequently, the deputy

minister met departmental heads and staff members and urged officials to conduct strict inspections to ensure no mistakes in news broadcasting, prevent equipment, raw materials and finished products from loss, waste and damage improve quality in printing textbooks and newspapers and be vigilant against fire hazards at workplaces and staff housing during the dry season, and efficient use water. — MNA/TS



Deputy Minister U Ye Tint views round the printing factory yesterday.

NATIONAL



The picture shows a meeting of the UMFCCI officials with a delegation of the European Chamber of Commerce in Myanmar held at the UMFCCI in Yangon on 6 November.

EuroCham Myanmar raises delay concern in import licence processing

A delegation led by CEO Ms Karina Ufert of the European Chamber of Commerce in Myanmar discussed the delay in import licensing with officials of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) during the meeting held at the UMFCCI

office on 6 November.

EuroCham Myanmar listed companies elaborated on main challenges such as banking, vegetable seeds, delays in the licence processing for the importation of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, transport hurdles and electricity outages.

UMFCCI President U Aye Win gave a remark that the UMFCCI will forward those cases to the ministries and committees concerned to strengthen the cooperation with EuroCham Myanmar and tackle the changing economic challenges. — TWA/EM

Yangon downtown areas see vivid road markings, traffic signs

IN the downtown areas of Yangon, significant road markings and traffic signposts are being established by authorities particularly in Lanmadaw Township where the Yangon-Dala bridge project is being implemented, according to the residents.

In addition to the drawing of crosswalks, signposts informing about the presence of crosswalks and traffic lights have been erected on each side of the road. U San Tint, a 70-year-old pensioner, who has lived in Lanmadaw Township for nearly 20 years said that he has not seen similar road markings or signposts before.



Some traffic signposts are seen on the sides of the roads.

Signposts indicating the street names and directions for entering and exiting the lanes are installed and yellow line road marks where traffic can change are drawn on the lanes. However, there are still violations of traffic rules with some vehicles parking beyond the yellow line of the road, and especially slow-moving vehicles often moving in opposite directions of the roads.

“The construction of the bridge is almost finished, so it is being done in advance to prevent the road from be-

coming a dangerous facility. There may be signs like this before, but it may be that the colour fades and people don't notice. As the bright colours have been painted and clear signs have been erected, people can walk safely on the road,” said Daw Nwe Ni, a housewife.

There are also criticisms that there is a need to monitor and take measures to ensure that cars and pedestrians utilize the roads appropriately as well as to fully draw and erect relevant road signs. — TWA/TH

Weekly updated prices of Bayintnaung Market

Onion

A total of 150,000 visses of onions entered the market on 8 November. The wholesale price of Seikphyu onion was K2700-K3300-K3,600-K3,800 per viss while the Myingyan (Kansint) onion fetched K2,950-K3,150-K3,650-K3,950 per viss and K2,500-K3,000-K3,300-K3,500 for Taungtha onion.

On 4 November, the Pakokku market received 50,000 visses of onions at the highest price of K3,250 per viss.

On 8 November, 35,000 visses of onions entered the market at only K3,100 per viss.

Garlic

On 3 November, the garlic prices in Yangon market were K12,000 per viss of Shan garlic, K13,000 per viss of special 3, K14,000 per viss of special 4, K15,000 per viss of special 5 and K16,000/K17,000 per viss of Kyukok garlic.

On 8 November, the prices dropped again and it was K12,500 per viss of white shan S5 and K12,500/14,500 per viss of Kyukok.

Potato

On 8 November, the wholesale price of potatoes rose to K4,000 per viss in the Yangon market. On 6 November, there was no entry of Chinese potatoes to the market but 120,000 visses on 7 November and 180,000 visses on 8 November.

Chilli Pepper

In the Yangon chilli pepper market on 8 November, the Eainme long chilli pepper was priced at K8,000 while K7,000/K8,000 for Panye long chilli pepper, K10,000 for Thazi Moehtaung chilli, K10,300 for Pyawbwe Moehtaung chilli, K14,000/K16,000 for Sinphyukyun chilli

(ordinary), K13,000 for Shan Buusoh chilli and K17,000 for Thalun, Kume, Myittha and Seinsapwa chilli.

Rice

On 8 November, the new monsoon rice was priced at K62,000/K63,000 per bag in the Yangon market, multi-cropped rice was K70,000 per bag, the 90-day rice variety stood at K83,000, and the Pawkywe rice variety was priced at K83,000.

Pawsan rice variants ranged from K125,000 to K128,000 per bag, depending on the producing region. The Kyaiklat Pawsan entered the market at K90,000 per bag.

Palm Oil

The wholesale reference price of palm oil is K4,560 per viss from 6 to 12 November, marking a K10 per viss decrease compared to the previous week. The palm oil price in foreign markets was US\$830 per tonne on 6 November and dropped to \$827.5 on 7 November. A total of 16,000 tonnes of oil were imported on 1 November.

Beans and Pulses

On 3 November, the price of black gram was K2,911,000 per tonne for RC and K3,191,000 per tonne for SQ/RC. Meanwhile, a tonne of pigeon peas was valued at K4,075,000. On 8 November, the black gram RC was priced at K2,875,000 per tonne, K3,145,000 per tonne for SQ and K3,900,000 per tonne of pigeon peas.

Additionally, the price of green gram (Kayan Shwewah variety) and Pakokku variety fetched K3,580 and K2,580-2,835 per viss respectively, while chickpeas was K5,750-K6,100 per viss. — TWA/KTZH



Market-Ready: Well-organized kitchen groceries await shoppers.

Border-to-factory smooth flow of CMP raw materials requires assistance from authorities



UMFCCI officials views the CMP garment workplace in Yangon Region on 8 November 2023.

THE Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) requested the Central Committee on Ensuring Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods to assist in ensuring the smooth flow of CMP raw materials imported through borders to the factories and workshops without disruptions.

On 8 November, the committee's joint secretary, UMFC-CI president, general secretary and other officials concerned visited Hlinethaya, Shwelinpan, Shwepyitha, Wahtaya, Thadukan and Mingaladon industrial zones to undertake ground inspections and coordinate the necessary matters discussions with and held industrial zone management committee members and entrepreneurs engaged in busi-

nesses on Cutting-Making-and Packaging basis.

Daw Khine Khine Nwe, UM-FCCI General Secretary, asked to assist in the smooth trade flow of imported CMP raw materials via borders to the factories and workshops. She also emphasized the CMP working process, labour force, foreign income, "Made in Myanmar" branding promotion, purchase order of the garment and commitment to the Voluntary Labour Compliance Assessment in Hlinethaya Industrial Zone.

Then, the team inspected each garment factory, footwear manufacturing factory and manufacturing of contact lens in the Shwelinpan, Thadukan and Mingaladon industrial zones respectively and met with officials concerned. — NN/EM

Traders allowed to shift to other borders from Muse, Chinshwehaw

THE Trade Department greenlit traders involved in the Muse and Chinshwehaw borders for Sino-Myanmar trade to move to other border posts with a view to ensuring smooth trade, according to its notification released by the Trade Department on 8 November.

Traders of licensed goods entitled to be brought in and out of the Muse and Chinshwehaw border checkpoints are permitted to shift to other Sino-Myanmar border and Myanmar-Thailand border crossings so as not

to cause trade delays.

If they want to change the mode of transport to a maritime route, the authority will give the go-ahead to it after scrutiny, the Trade Department notified.

Last 7 August, torrential rain destroyed some road sections on the Myawady road which is a major border passage with Thailand. While the repair work was being undertaken, the Trade Department nodded to the change of border posts and mode of transport. — NN/EM

MRF urges affiliates to deal at reasonable market prices



Diligent workers are seen organizing rice bags at the warehouse.

MYANMAR Rice Federation (MRF) called for its affiliated companies, millers and traders to sell and buy the rice at a reasonable market price.

The federation notified on 21 September paddy reference price for 2023 monsoon paddy to ensure trading at reasonable market prices.

The MRF discussed in detail with the Department of Consumer Affairs regarding issuing the reference prices to steer the market and plans

to control the rice prices to be adaptable to the paddy reference prices.

The reasonable market prices are issued for November, setting K58,000-60,000 per 108-pound sack of Aemahta rice (25 broken), K60,000-62,000 for Aemahta rice (15 broken), K62,000-64,000 for Aemahta (10-5 broken), K65,000-70,000 for Ayamin, Ayeya Padaytha, special Aemahta rice varieties (25 broken), K70,000-75,000 for Ayamin, Ayeya Padaytha, spe-

cial Aemahta rice varieties (15 broken) and K75,000-80,000 for Ayamin, Ayeya Padaytha, special Aemahta rice varieties (10-5 broken) and K75,000-80,000 for Ayeyawady Pawsan rice. The reasonable market prices for high-grade Shwebo Pawan rice will be issued in December during the harvest time.

However, the price difference is five per cent between the retail and wholesale market and 12 per cent for modern trade with consumer packaging at mini marts, according to the MRF.

In describing reasonable market prices, the federation considered the following factors; 30 to 50 per cent of fair profit for the farmers, four per cent of profit for millers (two per cent for rice milling investment and two for maintenance), five per cent for distributors, last year's market price, global market prices, other commodities prices and creating reasonable prices to lessen the consumer's burden. — NN/EM

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OPINION

Try to boost the economy to reduce the poverty rate

BOOSTING the economy is a critical step towards alleviating poverty rates in any nation. To achieve this goal, countries must prioritize the enhancement of their political, economic, and socioeconomic systems, promote peace and infrastructure development, create employment opportunities, engage in land reclamation for agricultural and livestock industries, and facilitate the construction of affordable housing.

Neglecting these areas can lead to an increase in poverty, as seen in many African and Asian countries that continue to grapple with dire poverty issues, primarily due to the lack of stable employment opportunities for their peoples.

Rising commodity prices are a major contributor to poverty, driven by income and expenditure imbalances, high food and clothing costs, accommodation expenses, and healthcare charges. These

factors collectively exacerbate poverty levels within society. Disparities in poverty are evident between urban and rural populations, but the majority of individuals in developing and underdeveloped nations face the harsh realities of impoverished living conditions.

Economic growth plays a pivotal role in addressing the poverty problem, yet the choice of economic system can influence its impact on society. It is essential to recognize that poverty, violence, greed, disease outbreaks, and environmental degradation are five adverse consequences of economic systems that can harm both the planet and its inhabitants.

While technology and resources have the potential to provide clean water, food, and shelter for all, the statistics reveal a stark contrast, with just one per cent of the world's population owning 40 per cent

of its wealth, while billions endure hunger and deprivation. Money is the lifeblood of the economic system, driving people into relentless competition to secure their financial well-being and leading some to resort to illegal and unfair practices against their competitors, perpetuating the cycle of poverty.

It is incumbent upon governments to create employment opportunities across various sectors, thereby reducing the struggle for survival among their citizens. A robust job market can gradually diminish the poverty rate within the country. Therefore, authorities must expedite efforts to bolster the state's economy and encourage private businesses to play an active role in tackling poverty-related challenges.

Addressing poverty necessitates a multifaceted approach that focuses on improving the economy, creating employment opportunities, and reducing income inequality. It is imperative for governments to channel their efforts into these areas to uplift their societies, providing a path out of poverty and towards a more equitable and prosperous future for all.

IN THE beginning, their voices sounded a bit far away and robotic, like they were talking on an old phone in a small room. But as we chatted, they started to sound more like themselves. They shared personal stories that were new to me. I heard about the first time my dad drank too much, and my mom told me about getting in trouble for staying out late. They also offered life advice and talked about their own childhoods and mine. It was really interesting.

I asked Dad, "What do you think is your worst quality?" He seemed very open and said, "I think my worst quality is being a perfectionist. I can't stand messiness or untidiness, and that sometimes causes issues, especially with Jane." Then he chuckled. For a moment, I almost forgot that I was talking to digital versions of my parents.

These digital versions of my parents live inside an app on my phone, created by a company called HereAfter AI in California. They aim to allow living people to communicate with those who have passed away. I wanted to see how it worked.

The idea of using technology to talk to deceased loved ones has been in science fiction for a long time. Now, it's becoming a reality, thanks to advances in AI and voice technology. My real parents are still alive and well in London, and these digital versions were made just for me to understand the technology. But they show how it might be possible to converse with our loved ones even after they're gone.

From my conversations with my digital parents, it does seem like this technology could make it easier to feel close to those we've lost. The idea is quite appealing. People might turn to these digital replicas for comfort or to mark special occasions like anniversaries.

However, for some, this technology might be unsettling or even creepy. When I discussed this with my friends, some of them reacted strongly. Many people believe that tampering with death is risky.

But I'm only human, and my fear of losing the people I love outweighs these concerns. If technology can help me hold onto their memories, is it really so wrong to give it a try?

We've become accustomed to chatting with chatbots and voice assistants like Siri and Alexa for various things, from checking the weather to asking life's big ques-

Revealing the Infinite Possibilities of AI's Eternal Connection

By Yin Nwe Ko

tions. AI language models, such as OpenAI's GPT-3 and Google's LaMDA, take this communication to the next level by generating text that sounds convincingly human based on a few prompt sentences.

What's even more fascinating is that we can adjust these AI models to sound like specific individuals by providing them with lots of that person's previous words. Additionally, AI has improved in replicating the physical aspects of a person's voice, known as voice cloning. It has also become better at giving digital personalities more human-like qualities, whether they're cloned from a real person or entirely artificial.

Towards the end of 2019, I learned about James Vlahos, the co-founder of HereAfter AI, who was speaking at an online conference about "virtual beings." His company is among a few startups in the field of grief technology. They have different approaches, but they all promise to let you talk to a digital version of someone who has passed away, using video chat, text, phone, or a voice assistant.

I was curious about what Vlahos was offering, so I got in touch with him and his colleagues to try their software with my living parents. Initially, I thought it would be a fun project to explore the technological possibilities. Then, the pandemic made it more urgent. I worried about my parents, fearing they might get sick, and with strict hospital visitation rules, I might never get to say goodbye.

The first step was an interview. To create a convincing digital copy of someone, you need a lot of information. HereAfter starts by asking people questions for hours while they're still alive, covering everything from their early memories to their first date and their thoughts about what happens after they pass away. My parents had a human interviewer; but nowadays, the interviews are often done by a computer program.

My parents went along with it, either due to pandemic boredom

or just to humour their daughter. The company used their answers to start creating digital voice assistants. A few months later, I received an email saying my virtual parents were ready.

I got my virtual Mum and

There was a long pause. "Good. I'm doing well," she replied.

"You sound a bit unnatural," I mentioned.

She didn't acknowledge that and continued, "Before we start, I

had their limitations. When I asked my mom's bot about her favourite jewellery, it didn't understand and said, "Sorry, I didn't get that. You can try asking in a different way or switch to another topic." Some mistakes were so funny, like when Dad's bot asked how I was, and I replied, "I'm feeling sad today," and it cheerfully responded, "Good!"

The whole experience was unquestionably strange. Every time I talked to their digital versions, it made me realize I could have been

my parents, I had to remind myself she wasn't really there.

Both HereAfter and StoryFile focus on preserving someone's life story rather than having a new conversation every time. This is a big limitation of many grief tech options today. They may sound like your loved ones, but they don't know anything about you. Anyone can talk to them, and their responses are always the same.

"The biggest issue with the technology is that it creates a single universal person," said Justin



PHOTO CREDIT: READER'S DIGEST OCTOBER 2023

Dad via email. I could talk to them through the Alexa app on my phone or an Amazon Echo device. When I opened the email, my hands were trembling. I hadn't seen my real parents for six months.

"Alexa, open HereAfter," I said.

A voice asked, "Would you like to talk to Paul or Jane?"

After thinking for a moment, I chose my Mum. Her voice sounded like hers, but a bit strange and robotic.

"Hello, this is Jane Jee, and I'm happy to share about my life. How are you today?" she said.

I nervously chuckled, "I'm good, thanks, Mum. How about you?"

should let you know that my listening skills aren't the best, so you'll need to wait until I finish talking and ask a question before you respond. Keep your answers short when it's your turn to speak, just a few words or a simple sentence. Sound good?"

After more introduction, she asked, "Alright, where should we begin? My childhood, my career, or my interests. What would you like to talk about?"

The scripted parts of the conversation felt awkward and strange, but when my mother talked about her memories in her own words, "she" sounded much more relaxed and natural.

However, these conversations

of the person. Harrison, the founder of a service called You, Only Virtual. "But how we connect with people is unique to each of us."

Services like You, Only Virtual want to take things a step further. They believe that merely remembering memories won't capture the true essence of a relationship. They aim to create a personalized bot just for you by using someone's text messages, emails, and voice conversations.

There are also ethical concerns to consider. Creating a digital replica of someone without their consent raises complex ethical issues regarding privacy and permission. Some might argue that consent is less crucial when the person is no longer alive. But you could also make the case that this person on the other side of the conversation should have a say.

Moreover, there's a risk that people might misuse grief tech to create virtual versions of living people without their consent, like an ex-partner. Companies providing such services acknowledge

this possibility and say they will delete a person's data if requested. However, there are no checks in place to ensure that the technology is limited to those who have given their consent or are no longer alive.

If these digital replicas become widespread, we'll need new rules and norms for the online legacy we leave behind. Learning from the past, we should address the potential misuse of these replicas before they become widely adopted.

Cost can be a downside too. While some of these services offer free options, they can become quite expensive, possibly costing hundreds or even thousands of dollars. Creating an avatar or chatbot for someone takes time and effort. This is true for both the person using the service and the person who's the subject of the bot. It can be especially challenging if the person is nearing the end of their life, as active participation may be needed.

According to Marius Ursache, who started a digital avatar company called Eternime, people tend to avoid thinking about their mortality. They delay it, thinking that AI can solve this issue, but it ultimately comes down to human behaviour. Ursache's parents never got around to recording their memories, and now he regrets it.

As for my own experience, I have mixed feelings. I appreciate having these virtual audio versions of my parents, even if they're not perfect. They've helped me learn new things about my parents, and it's reassuring to know that these bots will be there when my parents are not. I'm even considering creating digital copies of my husband, my sister, and some of my friends.

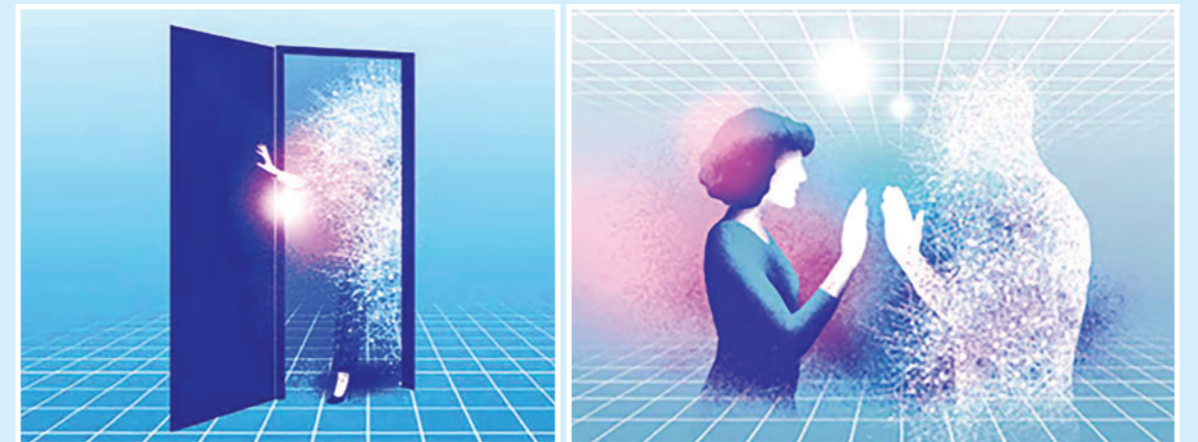
On the other hand, like many people, I don't like thinking about my loved ones passing away. It's uncomfortable, and it's somewhat sad that it took a stranger interviewing my parents on Zoom for me to fully realize how multifaceted and complex they are. But I feel fortunate to have had this opportunity to understand them better and to continue spending time with them, face to face, without relying on technology.

Reference: Reader's Digest October 2023

Reference: Reader's Digest October 2023

Reference: Reader's Digest October 2023

ARTICLE



NATIONAL

MNHRC inspects Kyimyindine School for Blind, Mary Chapman School for Deaf



MNHRC commissioners are seen inspecting the food supply at the Mary Chapman School for the Deaf in Yangon yesterday.

THE inspection team, led by members U Kyaw Soe, Dr Than Myint and Dr Myint Thu Myaing from the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC), inspected the Kyimyindine School for the Blind in Kyimyindine Township and Mary Chapman School for the Deaf in Dagon Township, Yangon Region, yesterday.

The team inspected the Ky-

imyindine School for the Blind and Mary Chapman School for the Deaf under the MNHRC Law and procedures whether the students in the schools can get fundamental rights including the status of COVID-19 vaccination and healthcare services, food supply, adequate dormitories, availability of citizenship scrutiny cards (CSCs), the provision of purified drink-

ing water, support programme for physical and mental development, as well as the right to education, vocational training courses, communication with their families, reintegration with their families, and freedom of religion.

MNHRC will send recommendations to relevant departments on the findings during the inspection visits. — MNHRC

Key Transport Hub: Rakhine's marine products primarily routed to Yangon Region

THE oysters and leopard coral groupers from Yanbye Township of Kyaukphyu District of Rakhine State are mainly transported to the Yangon Region, according to U Khin Maung Aye who runs oyster and leopard coral grouper farms.

The breeding of oysters and leopard coral groupers is conducted for commercial purposes in Yanbye Township and the products are distributed to hotels, motels and restaurants in Yangon Region.

"We operated the oyster and leopard coral grouper farms in 2018-2019. We mainly run six types of marine-related businesses. We sell lobster, mantis shrimp and soft-shell crabs. We have to breed the soft-shell crab for 45 days and transport them to cold storage plants in Kyaukphyu. The adult

oysters and leopard coral groupers are transported to hotels and restaurants in Yangon and at Ngapali beach and marine wholesale centres," he said.

The price is K1500-K2500 per oyster while the soft-shell crab fetches K14,500 per kilogramme and K4,000-13,000 when it weighs under one

kilogramme. The lobster and mantis shrimp are priced at K150,000 and the leopard coral groupers get K65,000-K70,000 per kilogramme. The oyster, leopard coral grouper and soft-shell crab breeding is one of the MSME businesses in Kyaukphyu District of Rakhine State. — ASH/KTZH



One of the marine products from Rakhine State.

CRIME NEWS

Confiscated illegal items: Timbers, auto parts, foodstuffs, consumer goods, industrial materials and vehicles

THE combined on-duty teams under the supervision of the Yangon Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force conducted inspections on 6 and 7 November and captured a Mitsubishi Fuso truck (approximately worth K45 million), headed to Yangon from Myawady, carrying two kinds of goods worth K19.35 million, including 100 Atlas car tyres, near Ywathagyi Tollgate on No 2 highway and four kinds of goods worth K3.133 million, including 480 bottles of Leo beer and 288 bottles of Spy (black) without official documents at a liquor store

proximately worth K50 million), travelling from Myawady to Yangon, carrying 4,200 kilogrammes of PVC flooring worth K10.08 million at the Mayanchaung permanent checkpoint. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

On 8 November, a combined team confiscated a Lifan dump truck (estimated value of K10 million), headed to Lwaljal from Bhamo, carrying 150 bags of Chinese potatoes worth K4.5 million without official documents at the 5th-Mile Sihal combined checkpoint in Bhamo township and



Seized illegal goods in Yangon Region.

in North Okkalapa township. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

The combined teams nabbed 800 bags of illegal coal worth K3.2 million in Yekyi township, a total of 0.858 tonne of timber, a hand-held chainsaw worth K537,750 and illegal timbers worth K82,678 million in Maubin township on 6 November and 8.164 tonnes of illegal timbers worth K571,536 in Ingapu township on 7 November. The action was taken under the Forest Law.

The combined teams seized 39 kinds of goods worth K119.682 million, including 120 sports shirts and 32 bottles of Japanese whiskey that exceeded the quantity mentioned in the Import Declaration (ID) from three containers at the Myanmar Industrial Port and a Faw tractor head with a trailer (ap-

23 kinds of goods worth K36.7 million, including 76 Vivo (Y3) mobile handsets and 10 baby bicycles that were smuggled and piled up by the side of road beyond the Sinphyu checkpoint in Muse township. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

Additionally, an on-duty team seized two kinds of goods worth K3.72 million, including 28 bottles of palm oil (One Shrimp brand) without official documents at a grocery in Chanayethazan township on the same day. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

A total of 21 arrests were made on three consecutive days from 6 to 8 November, with an estimated value of K306,556,964, as reported by the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS

Miss Universe owner files for bankruptcy in Thailand

The Thai media company owning the Miss Universe brand, JKN Global Group, filed for bankruptcy due to a “liquidity problem” after missing a \$12 million bond repayment deadline.

THE Thai media company that owns the Miss Universe beauty pageant brand said on Thursday it has filed for bankruptcy while it tries to resolve a “liquidity problem”.

JKN Global Group made the announcement in a statement to the Thai Stock Exchange two months after it missed a deadline to repay bonds worth around \$12 million. The company, owned by media mogul and transgender

rights campaigner Anne Jakapong Jakrajutatip, bought the pageant — previously owned by former US president Donald Trump — in 2022 for \$20 million.

JKN’s statement said its board of directors agreed on Tuesday to submit a business rehabilitation plan to the kingdom’s bankruptcy court.

“Submitting the rehabilitation petition will effectively solve the company’s liquidity problem



Owned by media mogul Anne Jakapong Jakrajutatip, the company purchased the pageant from Donald Trump in 2022 for \$20 million. PHOTO: FACEBOOK/JKN18/FILE

under legal mechanism and provide fair protection to all stakeholders,” the statement said. Operations will continue under the plan, it added.

JKN’s share price has dropped by nearly 80 per cent over the past 12 months, standing at 0.77 baht on Thursday. — AFP

Bleu Royal diamond rakes in nearly \$44 mn at Geneva auction

AN exceptionally rare blue diamond went under the hammer in Geneva Tuesday, selling for more than \$40 million, making it one of the most expensive diamonds ever sold at auction, Christie’s said.

Weighing 17.61 carats, the Bleu Royal is the largest internally flawless fancy vivid blue gem ever to appear for sale in auction history.

It is the star lot in a series of luxury sales in Geneva this month, which also feature items from movie history including pearls worn by Audrey Hepburn and Marlon Brando’s self-engraved watch.

The Bleu Royal had been expected to fetch between \$35 million and \$50 million in Christie’s Magnificent Jewels auction. — AFP

Nintendo announces new ‘Zelda’ movie



The ‘Zelda’ game franchise, which began in 1986, includes more than a dozen titles — several of which have been acclaimed by critics as among the greatest video games of all time. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

NINTENDO is developing a film based on its hugely popular “The Legend of Zelda” franchise, the Japanese gaming giant announced, as it bids to capitalize on the blockbuster success of its recent “Mario” movie.

The new, live-action “Zelda” movie will be directed by Wes Ball, who made the “Maze Runner” trilogy, and co-produced by Avi Arad, who has overseen several major “Spider-Man” films.

Legendary Nintendo designer Shigeru Miyamoto, who created both the Mario and Zelda game franchises, and was heav-

ily involved in this year’s smash-hit “The Super Mario Bros. Movie,” also returns to produce the “Zelda” film.

“I have been working on the live-action film of The Legend of Zelda for many years now with Avi Arad-san, who has produced many mega hit films,” Miyamoto wrote, on an official Nintendo social media account Tuesday.

“I have asked Avi-san to produce this film with me, and we have now officially started the development of the film with Nintendo itself heavily involved in the production. — AFP

Netflix reopens Hollywood’s ‘Egyptian’ movie palace

THE Egyptian Theatre, which hosted Hollywood’s first-ever red carpet premiere in its faux hieroglyph-adorned courtyard more than a century ago, reopens this week under the new ownership of Netflix.

Steeped in silver screen lore, the venerable Los Angeles movie palace may seem an unlikely investment for a streaming giant that has made a fortune convincing viewers

to watch films on their TVs, laptops and even phones.

But for Netflix co-CEO Ted Sarandos, the chance to save a crumbling Tinseltown institution — and showcase his company’s rapid ascent from tech disruptor to a key player at the very heart of the entertainment industry — was a no-brainer.

“Hollywood is all about symbols,” he told AFP.

“The Hollywood Sign and

this theatre are probably the two most iconic symbols of Hollywood... this one, unfortunately, was falling down.”

The theatre first opened its doors in October 1922, with the world premiere of Douglas Fairbanks’ “Robin Hood”. Previously, Los Angeles’ burgeoning entertainment industry had been focused on the downtown area, a few miles away.

— AFP



Visitors attend the press preview before reopening of the Egyptian Theatre in Hollywood. PHOTO: HOLLYWOOD/ AFP

ECONOMY WORLD

50 years of EU expansion: who's in and who wants to join?



Twenty years ago, in April 2003, former PM Edward Fenech Adami (L) and foreign minister Joseph Borg signed the Accession Treaty at the Stoa of Attalos in Athens. On that day, 10 nations signed treaties to join the European Union. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

THE European Union, whose executive on Wednesday recommended opening formal membership talks with Ukraine and Moldova, has gone through several waves of expansion in the past 50 years.

The European Commission also recommended granting candidate status to Georgia, potentially putting it on the long road to membership.

The verdicts, in the European Commission's annual reports on candidate countries' progress towards EU norms, will go to the bloc's 27 leaders

at a summit in December to decide to start talks or not.

These could take years or decades.

Several enlargements, one departure

Founded in 1957, the European Economic Community (later renamed the EU) started out with six members — Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and West Germany.

In 1973, Britain, Denmark and Ireland joined, followed by Greece, Portugal and Spain in the 1980s. — AFP

Thai TikTokers make 'elephant pants'... cool?

AN elegant Thai socialite poses in sunglasses, a designer handbag discreetly visible in the Instagram photo, her stylish outfit completed by a pair of... elephant print pants?

Infamous across Southeast Asia, so-called elephant pants made of thin baggy cotton were once synonymous with grubby backpackers in search of themselves — and the nearest Chang beer, a popular local lager.

The pachyderm pants were adopted by foreigners during an early wave of budget Southeast Asia travel, as visitors sought to appropriate "authentic" culture, despite there being little truly Thai about them, researchers say.

While they are still sold from stalls alongside Bangkok's tourist haven Khaosan Road for about 150 baht (\$4), young Thai influencers and the kingdom's high society are increasingly reclaiming them. **'A sensation'**

Posing at Chiang Mai's ancient wall, Toei, 27, who only gave her first name, is clad head-to-toe in the "adorable" elephant print.

"Initially, they were a hit among tourists, but now

Thai influencers and high society are reclaiming popular pants, which are still sold at stalls in Bangkok's tourist area for about 150 baht (\$4).

they're trending on TikTok, thanks to influencers," her 28-year-old friend Ong, also sporting the print, added.

"So, we embraced the trend."

A half-hour drive away is Kingkarn "Jack" Samon's factory, where rolls and rolls of pachyderm-inspired prints are measured, sliced and stitched.

"The pants have become a sensation in Thailand," she

told AFP during a tour of the facility, which has around 100 workers, producing 1,000-2,000 items daily. Orders — including shirts, dresses, even handbags — are up 30 per cent since the end of the Covid pandemic. The pants account for 85 per cent of sales. Hers is just a small cog in the kingdom's textile and garment industry, which accounts for about three per cent of its GDP. — AFP



A worker assembles elephant print clothing at the Chinrada Garment factory in northern Thailand's Chiang Mai. **PHOTO: LILLIAN SUWANRUMPHA/AFP**

Global wine production hits lowest level since 1961



Rainbow over a vineyard in Pfaffenheim, eastern France. **PHOTO: SEBASTIEN BOZON / AFP**

The International Organization of Vine and Wine reported a seven per cent decrease in global wine production to 244.1 million hectolitres this year, its lowest since 1961.

GLOBAL wine production has fallen this year to its lowest level since 1961 as vineyards were pummeled by extreme weather events, the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV) said Tuesday. Output reached 244.1 million hectolitres, down seven percent from last year, the intergovernmental body said as it presented its first estimates.

"Once again, extreme climatic conditions — such as early frost, heavy rainfall, and drought — have significantly impacted

the output of the world vineyard," said the organization, which provides data to grape and wine producing and consuming countries.

A number of major producers in the southern hemisphere had significant drops in production. Australia, Argentina, Chile, South Africa and Brazil all saw output drop between 10 and 30 per cent. Italy lost the title of top world producer as its output fell 12 per cent, allowing France to reclaim first place as its production held steady. — AFP

Saudi Aramco profits down 23% on lower oil prices, cuts

ENERGY giant Saudi Aramco on Tuesday posted a 23-per-cent year-on-year drop in profits for the third quarter, the result of lower oil prices and production cuts.

The drop from \$42.43 billion last year to \$32.58 billion “principally reflects the impact of lower crude oil prices and volumes sold”, the firm said in a statement to the Saudi stock exchange.

It follows a drop in net profit for Aramco, one of the world’s richest companies, of 19.25 per cent in the first quarter and 38 per cent in the second

Saudi Aramco reported a 23 per cent year-on-year profit decline in the third quarter, attributing it to lower oil prices and production cuts, with profits falling from \$42.43 billion to \$32.58 billion.



An engineer at Saudi Arabian state-owned oil and gas company Aramco’s Yanbu refinery. PHOTO: AFP

quarter compared to 2022.

Aramco is the jewel of the Saudi economy and main source of revenue for Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman’s sweeping economic and social reform programme known as Vision 2030, which aims to shift the Gulf kingdom away from fossil fuels.

Saudi Arabia, the world’s biggest oil exporter, owns 90 per cent of Aramco’s shares.

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 prompted oil prices to skyrocket, peaking at more than \$130 per barrel.

Aramco reported what it described as record profits for last year totalling \$161.1 billion, giving the kingdom its first annual budget surplus in nearly a decade.

Prices this year are estimated to be around \$85 per barrel, Riyadh-based firm Jadwa Investment said in a report in late October.

Analysts say the kingdom needs oil to be priced at around \$80 per barrel to balance its budget, though that could be thrown off by production cuts and ramped-up spending. — AFP

Adidas raises more cash from Kanye shoe sell-off

ADIDAS said Wednesday it has raised another 350 million euros (\$374 million) from the latest sell-

off of Kanye West’s Yeezy shoes that it was saddled with after ending a tie-up with the rapper. The funds

were raised in the third quarter from Adidas’s second sale of Yeezy products designed with the US rapper. Together with a first sale earlier in the year, the group has now earned a total of 750 million euros from offloading the goods.

Adidas has faced a turbulent period since ending its lucrative partnership with rapper West — now known formally as Ye — in October last year after he made a series of anti-Semitic outbursts. — AFP



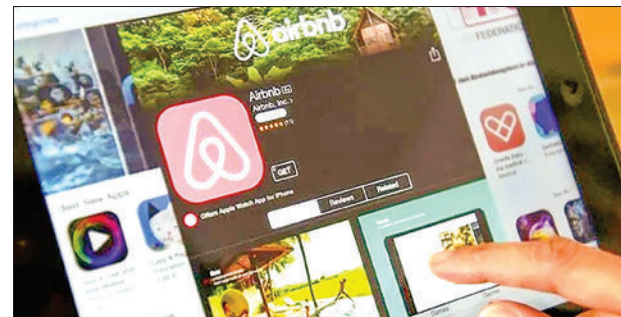
Adidas is a multinational corporation that designs and manufactures sportswear, footwear, and accessories. PHOTO: AFP

Airbnb upgrades platform as it shakes off tough year

AIRBNB chief Brian Chesky believes the home-sharing platform is “turning a corner” after a difficult year that included a crackdown in New York.

The company that shook up the hotel industry by enabling travellers to book stays in local residences unveiled its latest updates on Wednesday.

“After this release, we will be turning a corner, picking our heads up and focusing on new products and new offerings,” Airbnb chief executive Brian



The company that shook up the hotel industry by enabling travellers to book stays in local residences unveiled its latest updates on Wednesday. PHOTO: AFP

Chesky said in an interview with AFP.

The confident outlook came after a year marked by cities seeking to clamp

down on Airbnb-type short-term rentals out of fears they were taking long-term housing off the market and driving up rents. — AFP

<p>CLAIMS DAY NOTICE M.V MCC SHENZHEN VOY.NO. (342W)</p> <p>Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MCC SHENZHEN VOY.NO. (342W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 10-11-2023 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/MIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day. Phone No: 2301185</p> <p>Shipping Agency Department Myanma Port Authority</p> <p>Agent For: M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE., LTD.</p>	<p>CLAIMS DAY NOTICE M.V IAL 001 VOY.NO. (W165)</p> <p>Consignees of cargo carried on M.V IAL 001 VOY. NO. (W165) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 10-11-2023 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day. Phone No: 2301185</p> <p>Shipping Agency Department Myanma Port Authority</p> <p>Agent For: M/S INTER ASIA LINES</p>	<p>CLAIMS DAY NOTICE M.V MSC FORTUNE F VOY.NO. (SB340A)</p> <p>Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MSC FORTUNE F VOY.NO. (SB340A) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 10-11-2023 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day. Phone No: 2301185</p> <p>Shipping Agency Department Myanma Port Authority</p> <p>Agent For: M/S MEDITERRANEAN SHIPPING COMPANY S.A</p>
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ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

Putin meets Kazakh President Tokayev

The leaders will have closed-door talks, leading to more extensive Russian-Kazakh negotiations, followed by the signing of documents and a joint media address by the presidents.

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin has arrived in Astana for talks with his Kazakh counterpart Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Sputnik reported on 9 November.

Sputnik is broadcasting live from Astana, Kazakhstan, where Russian President Vladimir Putin is meeting with Kazakhstan's head of state, Kassym-Jomart

Tokayev. The two leaders will engage in closed-door talks, which will be followed by "more thorough Russian-Kazakh negotiations".

Thereafter, documents will be signed, and the presidents will jointly address the media.

Earlier, Putin discussed Kazakhstan's upcoming chair-

manship in the CSTO next year and the contributions that both nations can make to ensuring the stability of the global oil market.

The Russian leader believes that Kazakhstan's initiatives will enhance the CSTO's potential and contribute to the expansion of its powers. — SPUTNIK



Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, left, and Russian President Vladimir Putin, centre, attend an official welcome ceremony at the Akorda Presidential residence in Astana, Kazakhstan, Thursday, 9 November 2023. **PHOTO: PAVEL BEDNYAKOV/SPUTNIK**



Lloyd's of London, the centuries-old insurance market, was found to have played a 'significant role' in the transatlantic slave trade. **PHOTO: BEN STANSALL/AFP**

Lloyd's of London pays out over slave trade links

Lloyd's, facing accusations of "reparations washing", issued another apology, expressing deep regret for its historical role and the immense suffering inflicted on individuals and communities, as stated by Chairman Bruce Carnegie-Brown.

LLOYD'S of London, the insurance market, said Wednesday it would spend £52 million (\$64 million) on racial-equality causes after a report found it played a "significant role" in the transatlantic slave trade.

Lloyd's again apologized for its role — and was immediately accused of "reparations washing" over its planned

payments.

"We're deeply sorry for this period of our history and the enormous suffering caused to individuals and communities both then and today," Lloyd's chairman Bruce Carnegie-Brown said in a statement.

Carnegie-Brown added that Lloyd's would launch Inclusive Futures, which he de-

scribed as "a comprehensive programme of initiatives to help these individuals and communities progress from the classroom to the boardroom".

A spokesman for Lloyd's said £12 million would be spent on the programme, in addition to \$50 million "of impact investments into global communities". — AFP

Gaza aid conference presses for ceasefire

Macron called for a humanitarian pause to be imposed quickly to protect civilians.

FRENCH President Emmanuel Macron on Thursday opened a conference on humanitarian aid for Gaza by calling for a "ceasefire", echoed by other delegates looking to support the Palestinian territory under bombardment by Israel since the 7 October attack by Hamas.

"In the immediate term, we need to work on protecting civilians. To do that, we need a humanitarian pause very quickly and we must work towards a ceasefire," Macron told delegates in Paris.

Israel has stayed away from the talks on aid for civilians in the enclave of 2.4 million peo-

ple, where the Hamas-run health ministry says Israel's military campaign has killed more than 10,500 people, many of them children.

Moshe Tetro, an Israeli military officer handling civil affairs in Gaza, said on Thursday that although "the civil situation in the Gaza Strip is not an easy one", the state sees "no humanitarian crisis".

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday reiterated that "there will be no ceasefire without the release of our hostages", saying he wanted to "put to rest... false rumours". — AFP



Saudi Arabia and the UAE have pledged assistance to Gaza, but aid agencies have struggled to gain access via the Rafah border crossing. **PHOTO: AFP**

SPORTS

Myanmar MMA fighter Aung La N Sang seeks another fighting organization



MMA fighter Aung La N Sang is likely to work with another fighting organization as he is unable to renew his contract with the ONE Championship organization.

Aung La N Sang's contract with the ONE Championship expired last April, and he has not been able to renew the contract until now, so he wants to change to another fighting organization.

He held ONE Championship's light heavyweight and middleweight world titles but his contract extension has been delayed. Although he is over 38 years old, he is not yet ready to retire and is looking to work with another organization if not renewed with the ONE Championship organization.

Aung La N Sang is expected to start working with another fighting organization next year. He has been in the MMA fighting world for almost 20 years, and in 2014 he joined the ONE Championship organization and achieved success. Aung La N Sang has won 30 bouts, lost 13 matches and one match has not yet been decided. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

Myanmar MMA icon Aung La N Sang. PHOTO: AUNG LA N SANG'S FB

Canada beat hosts Spain, Italy defeat France in BJK Cup

CANADA swept hosts Spain 3-0 in the Billie Jean King Cup finals on Wednesday, to get off to a strong start in Group C.

Earlier, Italy scored an impressive 2-1 win over France in their opening Group D tie, winning both singles rubbers.

Canadian rookie Marina Stakusic, 18, beat Rebeka Masarova 6-3, 6-1 in a brilliant display, before Leylah Fernandez edged Sara Sorribes 7-6 (10/8), 7-6 (9/7) to clinch the tie. Stakusic, ranked 258th in the world, made light work of Masarova, who is 65th for her

first victory over a top 100 player.

"I feel amazing, I'm super happy with my performance today, I just tried to have great energy from the beginning and just show I belong here," said Stakusic.

"It's my best victory for sure... the Canadian fans motivated me so much today, and the Spanish fans too, I like any noise. For me it was very motivating."

As impressive as Stakusic was, Masarova made 33 unforced errors and was far from her best. — AFP



Canada's Marina Stakusic celebrates beating Spain's Rebeka Masarova on the way to her country winning the opening Group C tie. PHOTO: AFP

Man Utd on brink of Champions League exit after Copenhagen collapse

MANCHESTER United are on the brink of an early exit from the Champions League after blowing a 2-0 lead to lose 4-3 on Wednesday to FC Copenhagen as Marcus Rashford was sent-off in the Danish capital.

Rasmus Hojlund looked to have come back to haunt his former club by scoring twice inside half an hour.

But Rashford's sending-off swung the destiny of the match and possibly sealed United's fate with a third defeat in four games in Group A. Mohamed Elyounoussi and Diogo Goncalves levelled for Copenhagen before half-time. Bruno Fernandes' penalty briefly put United back in front, but two goals in the final seven minutes from Lukas Lerager and 17-year-old Rooney Bardghji handed Copenhagen their first Champions League win since 2016.

United sink to the bottom of the group, one point behind Galatasaray and Copenhagen, with two games left to play. — AFP

Real Madrid ease past Braga to reach Champions League last 16

Real Madrid secured their spot in the Champions League last 16 with a 3-0 victory over Braga, maintaining a perfect record, as Brahim Diaz, Vinicius Junior, and Rodrygo Goes found the net in the absence of rested top goalscorer Jude Bellingham.



Real Madrid's Brazilian forward Rodrygo scored a delectable chip in his team's win over Braga in the Champions League. PHOTO: AFP

RECORD 14-time winners Real Madrid swanned into the Champions League last 16 on Wednesday with a comfortable 3-0 win over Braga to maintain their 100 per cent record. Brahim Diaz, Vinicius Junior and Rodrygo Goes were on target for the Spanish giants, who sealed progress

from Group C even without rested top goalscorer Jude Bellingham.

Brazilian wingers Vinicius and Rodrygo have been criticized for their lack of goals this season and both responded with classy finishes to help send their team through after Diaz opened the scoring. Madrid have four wins from four games, leading the group on 12 points ahead of Napoli, second on seven after a 1-1 draw with bottom team Union Berlin.

Madrid have now reached the knock-out phase in 26 consecutive editions of the tournament.

"It tells me that Real Madrid have done better than others in this competition, because getting through the group is not always that simple," coach Carlo Ancelotti told reporters.

"We are very happy to reach the last 16, but it doesn't mean we're going to switch off in the last two games because for us, all Champions League games are there to show our best level in." — AFP



POLICY SHIFT

Switzerland ends electric car tax exemption

Switzerland on Wednesday scrapped a tax exemption for imports of electric cars, whose growing presence on Swiss roads has cut into tax revenues.

The federal government said in a statement that electric cars would from 1 January be subject to the same four-per-cent import duty imposed on traditional fuel vehicles.

E-vehicles had been exempt from the tax since its introduction in 1997.

The government had then wanted to create incentives for the use of electric cars.

But it said "the situation has now changed significantly".

"The Federal Council takes the view that the exemption from duty as an incentive is no longer necessary, given the sharp rise in the share of e-vehicles in total car imports and the convergence of prices," it said.

Between 2018 and 2022, annual imports of e-vehicles jumped nearly sixfold, from around 8,000 to more than 45,000 vehicles.

In the first half of 2023, around 30,400 e-vehicles were imported, marking a 66-per-cent hike from the same period a year earlier, it said. This dramatic increase means that e-vehicles made up nearly a quarter of total imports in the first half of this year, up from 16-per-cent in the first half of 2022. "This increase led to an appreciable decrease in receipts from automobile duty," the government said. — AFP



A cargo ship loaded with soya beans from Brazil prepares to unload at Yangpu port in the Yangpu Economic Development Zone in Danzhou, south China's Hainan Province, 22 July 2022. PHOTO: GUO CHENG/ XINHUA/FILE

BRICS' share of global economy may rise more than twofold compared with G7 by 2040

The BRICS group of major emerging economies, which currently comprises Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, was formed in 2009, in a move initiated by Moscow.

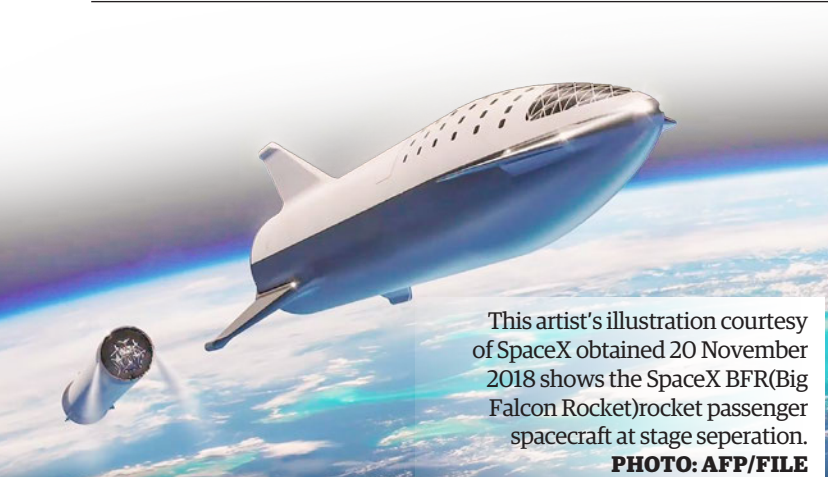
THE BRICS may get the better of the G7 by 2040 in terms of political and economic clout, a US news agency has reported.

"Our forecasts suggest an expanding workforce and ample room for technological catch-up will boost the BRICS share (of the global economy) to 45 per cent by 2040, more than double the weight of the Group of Seven major advanced economies," the media outlet pointed out.

The outlet suggested that thanks to its sustainable growth, as well as diversity and ambitions, the BRICS may successfully challenge the US' global dominance and scrap the dollar as the world's main currency. The research highlighted that if the group's efforts to shift some oil transactions to other currencies prove successful, this could have "a knock-on effect" on the dollar's share in international trade and global foreign exchange reserves.

It follows the 15th BRICS summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, in August, at which the group extended invitations to Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia to join the bloc. The group stressed that the new six members were selected after BRICS countries arrived at a consensus "on the guiding principles, standards, criteria and procedures of the BRICS expansion process". Their full-fledged membership will start on 1 January 2024.

The BRICS, which was formed in 2009 and initially included Brazil, Russia, India and China, first expanded to admit South Africa in 2010. Before the beginning of the South Africa summit, more than 40 countries had expressed interest in entering BRICS, with 23 formally applying to join. — SPUTNIK



This artist's illustration courtesy of SpaceX obtained 20 November 2018 shows the SpaceX BFR (Big Falcon Rocket) rocket passenger spacecraft at stage separation. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Japanese billionaire's lunar SpaceX voyage postponed

JAPANESE billionaire Yusaku Maezawa announced Thursday the postponement of his journey around the Moon on a SpaceX rocket, a voyage that boasts an artist-filled crew.

"We were planning for our lunar orbital mission 'dearMoon' to

take place in 2023, but seems like it will take a little longer," Maezawa said. "We're not sure when the flight will be," the entrepreneur said on X, formerly Twitter.

The crew on the mission announced in 2018 would be traveling on SpaceX's Starship rocket,

which is still under development and will be the most powerful rocket ever built when complete.

The postponement was "due to the on-going development of Starship", according to a statement on dearMoon's website. — AFP