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The Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council: Five-Point Road Map

1. Priority will be given to fully realizing peace, stability and rule of law throughout the Union to safeguard the socioeconomic life of the people.
2. People-centred development work that enhances socioeconomic well-being will be undertaken to ensure the country's prosperity and food security.
3. Processes will further continue to consolidate a genuine, disciplined multiparty democratic system and build a Union based on democracy and federalism.
4. Priority will be accorded to work aligned with the agreements set out in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, in order to achieve enduring peace for the entire nation.
5. Upon accomplishing the provisions of the state of emergency, free and fair multiparty democratic elections will be held in line with the 2008 Constitution, and further work will be undertaken to hand over State duties to the winning party in accordance with democratic standards.

SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla host dinner to mark 76th Anniversary of Union Day 2023



SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla cordially greet the dignitaries at the dinner to mark 76th Anniversary of Union Day 2023 on 12 February 2023.

CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Prime Minister of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla hosted the dinner to mark

the 76th Anniversary of Union Day 2023 at the square in front of the City Hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday evening.

On arrival at the square in front of the City Hall at 6 pm, the Senior General and wife were welcomed by SAC Vice-Chair-

man Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Thiri Pyanchi Maha Thray Sithu Soe Win and wife Daw Than Than Nwe, Union ministers and their wives, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman U Tin Oo Lwin and cultural troupes from regions

and states.

The Senior General and wife, the Vice-Senior General and wife greeted attendee cultural troupes from regions and states, chairmen and representatives of political parties, leaders and representatives of NCA signa-

tory ethnic armed organizations, ethnic affairs ministers of regions and states, deputy ministers, senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief, Union ministers, Union level officials and SAC members.

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Ceremonies to hoist the State flag in commemoration of the Union Day 2023 held in townships

THE 76th anniversary Union Day ceremonies were organized in townships of the whole country yesterday. The events were attended by respective departmental officials, social welfare organizations, students and locals among others.

First, the flag of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar was hoisted by the flag hoisting troop together with the attendees. The officials and attendees saluted the National Flag, fallen heroes and soldiers, and relevant officials read out the message sent by SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing to mark 76th anniversary Union Day. —GNLM



PHOTO : LATHA IPRD



PHOTO : PHAKANT IPRD



PHOTO : HLA KYAW/BUTHIDAUNG IPRD



PHOTO : MAUNG MAUNG (MINBU)

76th Union Day commemoration gallery, ethnic traditional food and local product booths attract visitors

THE ministries, galleries of Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory, regions and states, ethnic traditional foods and local products sale booths honouring the 76th Anniversary of Union Day at the People's Square, Dagon Township in Yangon Region was bustling with visitors on the third day yesterday.

The exhibition to mark the 76th Union Day including traditional food galleries is being held from 9 am to 10 pm from 10 to 14 February for five days. At the celebration, 25 ministry galleries, 15 galleries of



Union Day exhibition crowded with visitors at People's Square in Dagon Township on 12 February.

Nay Pyi Taw Council, regions and states, 15 ethnic foods and 382 booths of MSME products, totalling 437 are displayed for public visits free of charge. —MNA/KZW



Student youths visit photo gallery of Union Day exhibition at People's Square in Dagon Township on 12 February. PHOTO : ZAW MIN LATT

2 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 12 February, total figure rises to 633,866

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **633,866** after **two** new cases were reported on 12 February 2023 according to the Ministry of Health.

The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **614,329**, including **one** new recovery.

The death toll from COVID-19 in the country remained unchanged **19,490** on 12-2-2023 with no new death reported from the pandemic.

The country has vaccinated **30,924,777** people aged 18 and above for COVID-19 vaccines and **6,812,638** people aged under 18 till 11 February 2023. —MNA

Public Notice for Elimination of Violence

1. Declaring themselves to be "for the people", the so-called CRPH, NUG and PDF terrorist groups are lawlessly killing Buddhist monks, civil servants including schoolteachers, and members of the general public, as well as looting and robbing.
2. Not encouraging, supporting, or assisting "CRPH", "NUG", and "PDF" terrorists, who are intimidating and killing people and committing destructive activities, is to protect the lives and property of the general public.
3. Giving information secretly to the authorities on terrorists and on the possession and transport of weapons/ammunition is tantamount to protecting the lives and property of innocent people.

Implementation of two national visions for prosperity and food sufficiency in the nation

THE government is implementing two national visions for prosperity of the nation and sufficiency of food. Some 70 per cent of the population are engaged in agriculture, and the country is striving for development of the State economy based on agriculture and livestock farms. Hence, the government prioritizes the food sufficiency, nutrition and food safety for all citizens.

(The excerpt from the speech made by Chairman of State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the opening ceremony of Myanmar Rice Conference-2022 on 6 October 2022)

SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla host dinner to mark 76th Anniversary of Union Day 2023



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and dignitaries watch entertainments on ethnic traditional dances of cultural troupes and artistes of Fine Arts Department at the open-air theatre at the honorary dinner in Nay Pyi Taw on 12 February.

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The Senior General and wife had the dinner together with those present at the dinner.

The Senior General and wife together with attendees enjoyed launching of fireworks to honour the 76th Anniversary of Union Day and portraying of the 76th Anniversary of Union Day letters, landmarks of ethnics, the State flag, the picture of the Senior General and the Union boat with the use of drones.

After the dinner, the Senior



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla present the flower basket to the ethnic cultural troupes on 12 February.

General and wife viewed entertainments on ethnic traditional dances of cultural troupes and artistes of Fine Arts Department at the open-air theatre.

At the entertainments, artistes of Fine Arts Department and cultural troupes from Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Bamar, Mon, Rakhine and Shan ethnics performed songs and dances.

The Senior General and wife presented the flower baskets to the ethnic cultural troupes.

The dinner was also attended by the SAC Secretary and wife, the SAC Joint-Secretary and wife, SAC members and their wives, members of the Advisory Body of SAC, retired senior military officers, Union ministers, Union level officials and their wives, senior military officers and their wives, the advisers to the SAC Chairman, the commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command, deputy ministers, region and state ethnic affairs ministers, leaders and representatives of NCA signatory EAOs, chairmen and representatives of political parties, departmental officials, ethnic cultural troupes from regions and states and guests.—MNA/TTA



The Senior General and wife cordially greets the ethnic cultural troupes at the dinner.



The ethnic cultural troupes perform dances at the dinner event.

SAC Vice-Chairman Deputy PM Vice-Senior General Thiri Pyanchi Maha Thray Sithu Soe Win attends State flag-hoisting and saluting ceremony on 76th Anniversary of Union Day



Vice-Chairman of the SAC Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Thiri Pyanchi Maha Thray Sithu Soe Win reads the message sent by the Senior General to the ceremony to mark the 76th Anniversary of Union Day 2023 at the ceremony to hoist the State flag in commemoration of the 76th Union Day 2023 on 12 February in Nay Pyi Taw.

A ceremony to hoisting the State flag in commemoration of the 76th Anniversary of Union Day 2023 was held in conjunction with the State flag saluting ceremony on the square in front of the Nay Pyi Taw City Hall yesterday morning, attended by Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Thiri Pyanchi Maha Thray Sithu Soe Win who read the Union Day message sent by SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Thadde Maha Thray Sithu Thadde Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing.

The 76th Anniversary of Union Day 2023 was held in line with the five point National Objectives with essence: to strive for the perpetual existence of national solidarity and perpetuity of the Union through the internal strength; to make collaborative efforts of all ethnic nationals to restore perpetual and durable peace; to join hands in harmony for ensuring the prosperity and food sufficiency of the nation as two national plans through the Union spirit; to help develop all regions and states on equal terms and increase employment opportunities with



The flag hoisting ceremony to commemorate the 76th Union Day in progress in Nay Pyi Taw.

ensuring the health and fitness of the entire National people, and to practise the genuine, discipline-flourishing multiparty democratic system through fraternity, solidarity and united endeavours of all ethnic national brethren for building the Union based on democratic and federal systems.

The flag of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar was hoisted by the flag hoisting troop together with ethnic nationals at 5.30 am.

The Vice-Senior General took salute of the Guard of Honour. The Vice-Senior General together with the attendees sa-

luted the State flag. Meanwhile, the Guard of Honour played the national anthem.

The Vice-Senior General read the message sent by the Senior General to the ceremony to mark the 76th Anniversary of Union Day 2023.

The ceremony was also attended by Union ministers, the auditor-general of the Union, the chairman of Union Civil Service Board, the chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council, officials, cultural troupes and guests. —MNA/TTA



The ethnic nationals together with Guard of Honour are pictured in saluting the State Flag.

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76th Anniversary of Union Day ceremony observed at assembly ground of Hluttaw in front of Yangon People's Square

THE 76th Anniversary of Union Day 2023 was observed at the assembly ground of the Hluttaw in front of the People's Square on Yangon's Pyay Road at 7:30 am yesterday morning.

Yangon Region Government Chief Minister U Soe Thein, Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Nyunt Win Swe, Yangon Region cabinet members, the Chief Justice of the Region High Court, the Advocate-General of the region, the Auditor-General of the region, military officers, departmental officials, ethnic people and invited guests at-

tended the event.

First, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein took the salute of the Guard of Honour and saluted the State flag together with attendees.

Next, the Yangon Region Chief Minister read the message sent by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Tadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing to the 76th Anniversary of Union Day ceremony 2023. —Ko Ko Zaw (MNA)/KZL



76th Union Day celebration observed on assembly ground of the Hluttaw in Yangon on 12 February. PHOTO: KO KO ZAW

Illegal teak, foodstuffs and consumer goods, medical accessories, electronic equipment, auto accessories, vehicles seized



Illegal Taungthayet sawn timber seized near Shwegyin-Madauk-Nyaunglebin road on 11 February.

AN illegal special eradication task force inspected at airport cargo of Yangon International Airport on 9 February and seized 17,000 test kits of Covid-19 Ag Tests Kit estimated at K25.5 million without official documents. The action was taken under the Customs procedures.

Similarly, customs inspection teams under the supervision of Customs Department inspected at YIA on 9 February and seized four goods including one iPhone-14 without official documents estimated at K31.3 million. On 10 February, officials seized five 120W K3 LED Linear High Bay Light, 660 kilogrammes of auto ballast choke with frame, 3,700 bulbs of 20W electric LED bulb, without official documents estimated at K10,405,500 from Myanmar Industrial Container Checkpoint, and 26,000 kilogrammes of U Bolt worth K27.3 million, not declared in the Import Declaration (ID) from a container in Asia World Container checkpoint, totalling K69,005,500 and the action was taken under

the Customs Procedures.

An on-duty team, under the supervision of the Customs Department of Mon State inspected at Mayanchaung checkpoint on 9 February and confiscated four goods including 218 cartons of Lactasoy Soy Milk estimated at K4,297,000 without official documents and two vehicles worth at K42 million. On 10 February, 500 kilogrammes of Cycle Back Mirror, 1,500 motorcycle tubes, 4,000 cotton men's wear T-shirt, 550 kilogrammes of car ball-bearing estimated at K19,621,900 not match in the Import Declaration (ID), and three vehicles worth at K195 million, totalling K260,918,900 and the action was taken under the Customs Procedures.

Then, an on-duty team under the supervision of the Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force of Kayin State conducted inspection at Kawkareik (Tadaky) combined checkpoint on 10 February and captured 120 pairs of NIKE walking shoe estimated at K3 million not declared in ID from

a vehicle. On 11 February, the inspection team from Customs Office of Myawady township inspected at the near of Asia Highway combined checkpoint and seized 320 old tyres estimated at K6.4 million and a Man Truck and a trailer worth K50 million, totalling K59.4 million and the action was taken under the Customs Procedures. No 2 Traffic Police Branch of Yangon Eastern District unlicensed vehicle seizure team under the supervision of Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force of Yangon Region seized a Toyota Mark II estimated at K3.5 million without licence near Bailey traffic light in South Oakkalapa Township on 11 February.

An inspection team led by Myanmar Police Force under the supervision of Sagaing region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force nabbed a Honda CRV estimated at K6 million without licence at Swunchat ward in Sagaing and the action was taken under the Export and Import Law.

Similarly, a combined team led by Nyaunglebin Township Forest Department under the supervision of Bago Region Illegal Trade Eradication Force captured 3.0968 tonnes of Taungthayet sawn timber estimated at K216,776 on Shwegyin-Madauk-Nyaunglebin road and the action was taken under the Forest Law.

Therefore, 20 arrests at an estimated value of K424,541,176 were made from 9 to 11 February, according to the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. —MNA/KZW

Sky Cable Car starts running at BE Falls resort honouring 76th Union Day

IT is reported that the Sky Cable Car running started at BE Falls Resort in PyinOoLwin, Mandalay Region to honour the 76th Anniversary of Union Day. Pwekawk Falls Resort (BE Falls) near PyinOoLwin-Lashio highway was upgraded to an international level resort. It was opened in December 2022 and is crowded every day with people who come to take relax.

Now, Pwekawk Falls Resort launched the Sky cable car service for the people to enjoy scenic beauties from a height and thrilling ride.

The route of the Sky cable car is 1,108 metres long and consists of Drive Station House and Return

Station House and six towers.

A total of 36 4-seat cabins are installed at sky cable car. It will take about 24 minutes for a full circle round trip.

Construction of Sky Cable Way, test drive, safety precautions, and emergency rescue drills have been successfully inspected and tested, and visitors and vacationers can ride the sky cable car safely, officials said.

It is reported that Pwekawk Falls Resort (BE Falls) will continue to carry out upgrading process so that visitors across the nation have to enjoy a peaceful and happy vacation.—MNA/KZL

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CURRENT AFFAIRS

Correctional Department invites open tender to purchase rice for prisons in some regions and states

THE Correctional Department extended an open tender for the purchase of rice for prisons in some regions and states, including the Yangon Region.

The open tender aims to buy rice for prisons and detention camps in Yangon, Bago, Ay-

eyawady, Magway and Taninthayi regions and Rakhine and Kachin states. A plan is underway to purchase 49,972 bags of reserved rice required for one month consumption prisoners and inmates for the financial year 2023-2024. In addition, it will

purchase the ration rice—16,308 bags for Ayeyawady Region, 32,382 bags for Bago Region, 12,210 bags for Magway Region, 17,984 bags for Taninthayi Region, 9,498 bags for Rakhine State and 17,780 bags for Kachin State. — TWA/KZW



Some prisoners released from Mandalay Central Jail.

Chinshwehaw border trade value reaches US\$52.455 mln in January



The photo shows a signboard of the Chinshwehaw border trade camp.

MYANMAR conducted trade worth US\$52.455 million with neighbouring countries through the Chinshwehaw border in January 2023, statistics released by the Ministry of Commerce indicated.

Myanmar conveyed exports worth \$27.245 million and imports worth \$25.21 million in January 2023, totalling \$52.455 million.

The country aimed to achieve a trade target of \$44 million comprising exports worth \$35 million and imports worth \$9 million.

The figures showed an increase of \$12.596 million in ex-

ports and \$22.404 million in imports last month compared to the corresponding period last year. The trade value was up by \$35 million from the year-ago period.

Exports of fishery products and forest products dropped in January 2023 compared to January last year, whereas export value in broken rice, kidney bean, rice bean, peanut, red bean, brown sesame, black sesame, white sesame, corn, sugarcane, fresh ginger, fresh chilli pepper and corn cake increased last month.

Imports of capital goods, intermediate goods and consumer

goods also showed an increase from the year-ago period.

The trade value at the Chinshwehaw border increased by \$10.016 million in January 2023 against that of December 2022, indicating a significant increase of \$8.946 million in imports and \$1.07 million in exports.

The agricultural produce exports including broken rice, black-eyed pea, green gram, kidney bean, rice bean, peanut, red bean, sesame, sugarcane, corn, fresh chilli pepper, fresh ginger and cotton rose last month compared to that of December 2022.

— TWA/EM

Over 180,000 students register for 2023 matriculation exam

OVER 180,000 students registered to sit for the matriculation examination to be held in March 2023, according to the data of the Department of Myanmar Examinations.

The three-hour tests will be held from 8 to 18 March. The candidates will have to take Myanmar, English and Mathematics exams on 8, 9 and 10 March respectively. Then, they will sit for Chemistry and Physics on 13 and 14 March and Biology and Economics on 15 March. Geography, History and Optional Myanmar exams will be on 16, 17 and 18 March respectively.

The final matriculation exam of the old format and cur-

riculums will be held in 2023 for those who failed in 2022 or did not sit for the exam the last academic year.

Union Minister for Education Dr Nyunt Pe said it should follow the procedures for the 2023 matriculation examination and the question types and sample questions for relevant subjects for the 2024 matriculation examination will be released in early May before the school days in June 2023.

There were over 280,000 students who sat for the exam in 2022 and over 130,000 students passed the exam accounting for 46.88 per cent nationwide.

— TWA/KTZH



The photo shows students who took the 2022 matriculation examination.

Plan to conduct 2nd Myanmar spelling training course

THE second Myanmar spelling training course will be conducted on 18 February, according to the Myanmar Publishers and Distributors Association.

During the three-day course, four veteran Myanmar language teachers such as Saya Dr Tun Tint, Saya Gonhtoo

U Thein Naing, Saya Takkatho Tin Han Kyaw and Saya Aye Kyaw Min will give lectures on proofreading and Myanmar spelling. The training hour is from 12 pm to 3:50 pm.

One Chinese and one Korean from YUFL joined the first Myanmar spelling

training that opened on 14 January. The numbers of people who are interested in the training are increasing and so the second course is conducted, said the association.

Those wishing to study Myanmar language and those missing to join the

first course and foreigners may apply for the second batch of training at K30,000 per head as training fee.

The location of the training is No 263, first floor (left), upper block of Seikkantha street in Kyauktada Township. — TWA/KTZH

LOCAL BUSINESS

Sugar price escalates in Yangon market

ON 10 February 2023, the price of sugar reached nearly K3,000 per viss in the Yangon sugar market.

The wholesale price of sugar went up to K2,850 per viss on 8 February and K2,950 per viss on 9 February. In the Mandalay market, a viss of sugar was priced at K2,830 as wholesale, adding around K100 per viss of freight to Yangon.

Despite the increasing price, there are difficulties in buying sugar in the market. Dealers are unable to purchase the desired amount of sugar, said a dealer, Ko Min.

Sugar mills cannot fulfil the demand of hoarders because

excess sugar from domestic usage is exported to foreign countries, causing the rise in the price of sugar. Sugar was shipped with the price rate of US\$600 per tonne.

Sugar from mills in Bago Region, which is commonly seen in the sugar market, is rarely traded in the Yangon market these days. Only sugar from sugar mills in upper Myanmar is mainly commodified in the market.

Domestic sugar mills only operate for five months a year, and even during a half of that operating time, the price of sugar can reach K3,000 per viss.

In 2022, the wholesale price

of sugar skyrocketed to K2,650 per viss, along with the palm oil, rice, chilli pepper, onion, and jaggery prices which rose to an unprecedented record in the chronicle of domestic commodity market. Only the price of sugar did not fall and rose again in early 2023.

Therefore, sugar is the only commodity whose price has risen above the record price of 2022 since 2023. In the domestic sugar market, the price of wholesale sugar was recorded at K1,750 per viss in October 2010 which is the highest price in the past 10 years until 2020.

Domestically produced



Bags sugar can be seen as samples in the market.

sugar is around 500,000 tonnes per year, and the surplus sugar from domestic consumption is around 50,000 tonnes. It is known that extra sugar is to be exported this year. — TWA/CT

Green gram (Kayan Shwewah variety) soared by K360,000 per tonne in five consecutive days



Green gram plants from Kayan and Thongwa areas are seen in the crop land.

THE prices of three types of beans and pulses are rising in the Yangon pulse market with in five consecutive days, especially the price of green gram (Kayan Shwewah variety) shoot by K360,000 per tonne.

Green gram (Kayan Shwewah variety) price was only K3,000-K3,120 per viss in the Yangon market on 4 February 2023. The price went up by K200 per viss on the opening day of depots,

6 February, and K100 each day till 10 February, according to the daily bean market prices.

Therefore, the price reached K3,600-K3,720 per viss in the Yangon market on 10 February and it remained unchanged on 11 February.

Pea trader Ko Thet said that in the Yangon bean market, the daily prices of beans are shown at the price of one tonne of black bean and chickpeas, but the price

of green beans is only shown at the price of one pound. In the Yangon market, the daily prices of black gram and pigeon pea are shown in tonne, but the price of mung bean is only shown in viss, said a trader Ko Thet told to the Global New Light of Myanmar.

The price of Kayan Shwewah green gram rose by K600 per viss within five days, increasing K360,000 per tonne. In the same week, black gram and pigeon pea prices were increased by only K60,000 and K120,000 per tonne respectively.

Although the price of mung bean is rising in the Yangon pulse market, it is known that there is only little change in price in the Mandalay pulse market.

Among the green gram, the highly cultivated beans in the Kayan region fetch the highest price. Despite rising input and fuel prices, huge profits were being made due to the handsome prices and the great yield of green gram in the lower part of Myanmar, according to the beans and pulses market reports. — TWA/CT

Over US\$9 bln earned from export of finished industrial goods abroad within nine months

DURING the nine-month period of the 2022-2023 financial year, US\$9.48 billion were earned from the export of finished industrial goods abroad, according to the statistics of the Ministry of Commerce.

From 1 April 2022 to 3 February 2023, the exports of finished industrial goods from the private sector to foreign countries were valued at more than US\$6.09 billion, and from the state-owned sector's exports, more than US\$3.38 billion.

Compared to the same period last year, it received US\$2.10 billion more, according to trade statistics.

Agricultural produce, animal products, aquatic products, minerals, forest products, finished industrial goods and other goods from Myanmar are being exported and the maximum export income is obtained from the export of finished industrial goods.

Among 10 main export items of Myanmar, the export of finished garments, which is an industrial product, takes the first position. Among the finished industrial goods, sugar, including ready-made cloth, jewellery, and natural gas are included. — TWA/KZL



Freight handling seen at the port to export of products from Myanmar to customer countries.

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OPINION

Make dreams true for new generations

MYANMAR initiates the plan to peacefully use nuclear energy in various sectors including agriculture, health, electric power and energy and socio-economic development measures in cooperation with Rosatom State Corporations of the Russian Federation.

Now is the time to raise public awareness for peacefully using nuclear energy. As such, the nuclear technology informational centre was inaugurated in Hline Township in Yangon Region recently to be able to smoothly disseminate information about nuclear energy to the people including students and youths so as to broaden their scope of knowledge.

Indeed, the Union Minister for Science and Technology of Myanmar and the Chief Executive Officer of Rosatom State Corporations of the Russian Federation signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in applying nuclear energy in St Petersburg City on 18 June 2015.

The plan of peacefully applying nuclear energy will be reliable for electrifying the whole nation to have better results in operating other important sectors so as to mostly benefit the socio-economic life of the entire people. It can be said that a better future is reachable for all Myanmar people. So, they all have to make their dreams true.

of Myanmar in the applying nuclear energy with offers to scholarships for Myanmar students from basic education high schools and technological universities in Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw in order to study nuclear science.

Thanks to the cooperation of Rosatom State Corporations of the Russian Federation, Myanmar will enhance the capacity of human resources who will participate in the construction of a small modular reactor (SMR) and turn out highly-qualified professionals in respective sectors to safely and peacefully use nuclear energy for the State, resulted from the long-lasting Russia-Myanmar diplomatic relations which turn 75th anniversary this year.

The plan of peacefully applying nuclear energy will be reliable for electrifying the whole nation to have better results in operating other important sectors so as to mostly benefit the socio-economic life of the entire people. It can be said that a better future is reachable for all Myanmar people. So, they all have to make their dreams true.

■

Meditation effective in reducing suffering for anorexia patients: Research

Mindfulness meditation, according to a team of researchers at Kyoto University's Graduate School of Medicine, does alleviate such worries. The study's findings demonstrate alterations in the activity of brain areas associated with anxiety

UNFORTUNATELY, many family members, acquaintances, and celebrities have suffered from anorexia nervosa, or AN, a severe mental condition characterised by excessive worries about weight, form, and self-esteem. An eating disorder, dietary restriction, purposeful vomiting, and acute emaciation are all symptoms of AN.

Mindfulness meditation has already become a widely accepted treatment for AN. Its usefulness in clinically treating

neurogenic emaciation, on the other hand, had not before been investigated.

Mindfulness meditation

Mindfulness meditation, according to a team of researchers at Kyoto University's Graduate School of Medicine, does alleviate such worries. The study's findings demonstrate alterations in the activity of brain areas associated with anxiety.

The team's mindfulness meditation program has seen a significant decrease in obsessive thoughts about the test

subject's self-image and brain activity associated with related emotions.

"Our results suggest that the participants in the study became better at accepting their anxiety as it is," says lead author Tomomi Noda.

Mindfulness and meditation work hand-in-hand. The former teaches practitioners to hone their awareness of their present experience and their ability to not judge and rather accept their circumstances. The latter is the medium by which

mindfulness can be approached.

"We focused on the possibility that patients with AN try to avoid their crippling anxiety about weight gain and self-image by restricting food or vomiting," adds co-author Masanori Isoe.

Mindfulness intervention program

A 4-week mindfulness intervention program examined neural changes using tasks designed to induce weight-related anxiety. The researchers

then regulated this anxiety by helping patients accept their current situations and experiences at face value, instead of avoiding them.

The researchers used functional magnetic resonance imaging -- or fMRI -- to analyze attention regulation in relation to eating disorders. The study's results support the subjective experiences of the researchers.

However, it was unexpected to them that several global events, such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russo-Ukrainian war,



Mindfulness meditation, according to a team of researchers at Kyoto University's Graduate School of Medicine, does alleviate such worries. PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/KYODO

were significant factors in patients' anxieties.

"We anticipate practical implications of our results in

clinical psychiatry and psychology and broader research into mitigating suffering through mindfulness, using the strategy

of self-acceptance to regulate attention," concludes group leader Toshiya Murai.

SOURCE: ANI

UN General Assembly hears call for worldwide pandemic warning system

EPIDEMIOLOGISTS and researchers briefing the UN General Assembly in the first of its kind science session earlier this week, called for pathogen surveillance and an open-source global early warning system that would include data from a wide range of sources and streams.

Participants in a panel headlined, Challenges and Opportunities in Creating an Early Warning System for Global Pandemics, on Tuesday warned that we are witnessing the dismantling of essential infectious disease monitoring programmes, at a time when climate change is driving greater risks to public health.

"Any platform will need to include data from outside of traditional public health epidemiology, specifically about land and water use changes affected by climate," Jim Golden, the Chief Data Officer of Pandemic Prevention Initiative at the Rockefeller Foundation, told an audience of Member States, Observers and Civil Society Organizations.

'Data philanthropy' reset

He called for "data philanthropy", a concept which refers



Rapid antigen tests search for protein pieces from the coronavirus. PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ AFP/ FILE

to private companies sharing data for public good, and new logistics of how that data is stored and shared in a "sovereign" and equitable way.

Data sovereignty is linked to data security and refers to the idea that the data is subject to the laws and governance structures of the nation where it was collected.

"We need new global dig-

ital collaboration", Dr. Golden said. "A global network of researchers connected through an open-source data science platform capable of quantifying, modeling and ultimately solving any climate and health problem at any scale."

Also speaking on the panel, Niamh O'Hara, CEO and co-founder of health tech company Biotia, stressed the impor-

tance of a "federated system" of data, particularly for international collaboration, where insights are connected and data sovereignty was preserved.

More data streams

"Any early warning system benefits from including genomics in combination with other data streams," Dr. O'Hara said, such as land use and climate

factors.

She spoke about some of the projects in which she is involved, among them checking the bird droppings and carrying out surveillance of viruses at avian migratory hotspots in Chile. She also cited data collection on co-infection of malaria and other viruses in patients, in rural communities in Nigeria.

About 17 per cent of all infectious diseases are vector-borne, meaning they transmit pathogens between humans or between animals and humans.

Such transmission is exacerbated by climate change and land use, said Rafael Maciel-de-Freitas, a researcher in public health at Instituto Oswaldo Cruz, Fiocruz (Brazil) and Institute for Tropical Medicine (Germany).

Zika in Brazil

He pointed to the transmission of Zika in Brazil, suspected to have been introduced into the country in 2013. More than 1,700 newborns have been diagnosed since then with congenital Zika syndrome.

While chemicals, pollutants

or malnutrition could be factors, Dr. Maciel-de-Freitas said an early warning system could include piecing together data and identify micro-regions with higher incidence of Zika cases, and microcephaly in newborns – an abnormal smallness of the baby's head, associated with the disease.

One of his current projects is developing an early warning system to identify dengue outbreaks – another mosquito-borne viral disease – on the border of Argentina and Paraguay.

The panelists also discussed early warning systems for bacteria and antibacterial resistance as measures which could save millions of lives.

Soojin Jang, the Head of Antibacterial Resistance Lab at the Institut Pasteur Korea said one of her projects includes researchers taking samples from toilets at hospitals, universities, markets and other public spaces to look for what types of pathogens are in communities and, on a wider scale, to check levels of anti-bacterial resistance.

Tracking antibiotic resist-

ance

"Targeting antibiotic resistance can also benefit from an early warning system," Dr. Jang said, adding that multi-layers of data need to be including, especially from local and community sources.

The concern is not a lack of data, scientist say. More than 5,000 pieces of information are analyzed daily, and interpreted by analysts around the world, according to Maria Almiron, Unit Chief of Health Emergency, Information and Risk Assessment at the WHO Regional Office for the Americas.

She noted that there are opportunities for a global early warning system to help identify future outbreaks and pandemics, as well as challenges.

While new technologies can be used, such as AI, it is ultimately the availability of skilled people working together, that will determine the quality of data, and there might be immediate barriers due to a lack of political will or limited financing.

Trust and communication

"In every early warning

system, collaboration, trust and timely communication is key," Dr. Almiron called for modernization of the information system to improve data quality and availability.

The panel was the third of an all-day Science Briefing convened by the President of the General Assembly, Csaba Kőrösi.

In other briefings, Member States heard prominent scientists and academics discuss the economics of water, climate, conflict and cooperation.

Since taking office, President Kőrösi has said one of his priorities for the 77th session of the General Assembly would be injecting science and verified data into policy-making.

The General Assembly currently has three out of 16 mandated processes, or workstreams, focusing on health. These include pandemic preparedness, Global Health Coverage and Tuberculosis.

SOURCE: UN NEWS

■

ENVIRON WORLD



Loading equipment operates at a coal yard of a thermal power plant in Berlin, Germany, 9 January 2023. **PHOTO: XINHUA/REN PENGFEI**

EU to take “pragmatic” steps to advance Green Deal Industrial Plan

THE leaders of the European Union (EU) member states decided to take pragmatic steps to advance work on the bloc’s Green Deal Industrial Plan for the Net-Zero Age, Charles Michel, president of the European Council, said on Friday.

These steps include making state aid available for targeted and temporary support; increasing the flexibility of EU funding; ensuring access to raw

materials and simplifying the regulatory environment to help foster greener industry; boosting skills; and closing investment gaps through private and public investment.

“The discussion on competitiveness in the EU is rooted ... in a very wide consensus: we need to reach climate neutrality by 2050, and we want the European clean tech industries to help us get there,” European Commis-

sion President Ursula von der Leyen said as she presented the plan to the participants in a special EU summit here on Thursday.

The Green Deal Industrial Plan is the EU’s response to the US administration’s Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), a plan signed last August that includes about 369 billion US dollars in incentives for climate and energy-related programmes.—Xinhua

NEWS IN BRIEF

SW China fossils reveal speed of marine life revival after catastrophe

A trove of newly-discovered fossils in southwest China revealed how modern marine animals like fish and lobsters thrived quickly in the immediate aftermath of a mass extinction event over 250 million years ago.

The study published on Friday in the journal *Science* described the finely-preserved fossil assemblages unearthed near Guiyang, southwest China’s Guizhou Province.

The assemblages represented the oldest ever-known lagerstätte, or a sedimentary deposit that exhibits extraordinary fossils with exceptional preservation, and demonstrated the rapid rise of a resilient modern-type marine ecosystem, according to the study.—Xinhua

China willing to work with Japan to deepen low-carbon cooperation: official

CHINA is willing to work with Japan to continue promoting cooperation in green development, a senior Chinese official said Saturday.

He Lifeng, head of the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), made the remarks in a keynote speech to the 16th China-Japan Comprehensive Forum on Energy Saving and Environmental Protection. Collaborations in low-carbon industries and technologies will be furthered, while relevant policy dialogues and people-to-people exchanges will be strengthened, He said.—Xinhua

Super Bowl snack hurting Colombian farmers, environment

DURING the Super Bowl between the Philadelphia Eagles and Kansas City Chiefs on Sunday, millions of armchair fans will tuck into a tasty snack of tortilla chips and guacamole.

But unbeknown to them, in far away Colombia, local farmers are paying the price for their gastronomic pleasure, while environmentalists are warning of water pollution.

The explosion of avocado plantations in central-western Colombia resulted in changing land-use patterns that, in turn, left Jose Hernandez’s coffee crops flooded.

Unlike his neighbours in the Pijao municipality in Quindio department, Hernandez refused to switch to growing the lucrative “green-gold.”

But rivers of water came cascading down from higher up in the mountains surrounding his farm and scouring out ditches up to two meters deep.



Workers sort avocados at the Los Cerritos avocado ranch in the state of Jalisco, Mexico. **PHOTO: AFP**

The 64-year-old lost 4,000 coffee plants and he points the finger at avocado multinationals who use copious amounts of water and even divert natural streams to satiate their thirsty crops.

“I lost 20 years of work with those waters that fell on me,” Hernandez told AFP.

‘More important than oil’

The Colombian countryside is rapidly being overtaken by crops of the Hass avocado that is mainly exported to the United States, the Netherlands, Spain and Britain.

It is the main ingredient in guacamole.—AFP

11 stranded pilot whales saved in Sri Lanka

ELEVEN pilot whales were saved on Saturday after they became stranded near the shore on Sri Lanka’s west coast in the early hours, wildlife officials told AFP.

A navy team aided the rescue effort alongside local fishermen who raised the alarm when they spotted the pod after midnight near the resort village of Kudawa.

“There were 14 of them and three were dead on coming

ashore,” wildlife officer Eranda Gamage told AFP.

“They had to be taken into the deeper seas to drop them there so that they would not come back to the shore. The navy took them in their boats and dropped them.”

Pilot whales — which can grow up to six metres (20 feet) long and weigh a tonne — are highly social.

The causes of mass strandings remain unknown

despite scientists studying the phenomenon for decades.

In November 2020, Sri Lankan rescuers managed to save 120 pilot whales in a grueling overnight effort that also involved the country’s navy.

Three pilot whales and one dolphin died of injuries following the mass beaching on the country’s western coast at Panadura, south of the capital Colombo.—AFP



A Sri Lankan fisherman tries to push the pilot whales into deeper water off Kudawa. **PHOTO: AFP**

HEALTH/PANDEMIC WORLD



People from less affluent backgrounds are far more likely to experience mental health issues later in life than people from more affluent ones. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ ANI**

Less wealthy people are more likely to have mental health disorders later in life: Study

ACCORDING to a study published in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, people from less affluent backgrounds are far more likely to experience mental health issues later in life than people from more affluent ones.

Furthermore, according to a Finnish study, more than half of those with poor educational attainment at the age of 30 will

be diagnosed with a mental disease 22 years later.

Previous research has revealed a link between socioeconomic status and the prevalence of mental diseases, but the significance of various indicators of socioeconomic status has rarely been compared.

A team of researchers from Finland analysed official national data on more than 1.2

million of the population born between 1966 and 1986 who were living in Finland when they turned 30.

They set out to investigate the association between socioeconomic position at the age of 30 and the subsequent risk of the most common major mental disorders - substance misuse, schizophrenia, mood, and anxiety disorders.—ANI

NEWS IN BRIEF

China releases plans to promote maternal, child health

CHINA has released a series of measures to enhance maternity and childcare services and the comprehensive development of children's health, a health official said Saturday.

The measures include two five-year plans to promote maternal health and the health of infants and young children, and a plan to strengthen the capability of preventing and treating birth defects, said Song Li, director of the maternal and child health department of the National Health Commission.—Xinhua

Türkiye-Syria quakes "worst" disaster of region in century, says UN as more aid needed

THE devastating earthquakes that shook southern Türkiye and northern Syria was the "worst event" to hit the region in a century, a senior official from the United Nations said on Saturday.

"What happened here on Monday, the epicentre of the earthquake, was the worst event in 100 years in this region," Martin Griffiths, UN under-secretary-general for humanitarian affairs and emergency relief coordinator, told reporters in the Turkish province of Kahramanmaraş.—Xinhua

Tanzania beefs up border surveillance as cholera kills over 1,200 in Malawi

TANZANIAN health authorities said on Friday that they have beefed up surveillance measures at health facilities and communities along the border with Malawi to control the spread of cholera to the east African nation.

Abel Makubi, the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Health, told Xinhua in a telephone interview that the measures included active search and follow-up for suspected cholera cases along the border with Malawi and health education to the community on cholera prevention.

Makubi was reacting to reports by the World Health Organization (WHO) on Thursday saying the deadliest cholera outbreak in Malawi's history has killed at least 1,210 people, while vaccines remain scarce as sever-



The file photo shows environmental officers disinfecting themselves after disinfecting a body at Bwaila hospital in Lilongwe, Malawi, on 17 January 2023. **PHOTO: ROY NKOSI/XINHUA**

al other African nations reported outbreaks of the disease.

WHO said it assessed the current risk of spread inside Malawi and to other neighbouring countries and termed it as "very

high."

But Makubi said healthcare workers along the border have been trained on case identification, surveillance and case management.—Xinhua

Study brings out risk factors in children with chronic kidney disease

CHRONIC kidney disease (CKD) in children is rare, which makes research difficult and leaves large gaps in the quantity and quality of information that is useful for pediatric patients with the condition.

The largest prospective studies also have limited usefulness, as they are constrained by selection bias and relatively small sample sizes for different causes and courses of the disease.

In a new study led by Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) and Nemours Chil-



Researchers have overcome the obstacle of scale by analyzing electronic health record data. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ANI**

dren's Health, researchers have overcome the obstacle of scale by analyzing electronic health record data from PEDSnet, a national multicenter pediatric network, to identify a large cohort of children with CKD, evaluate CKD progression, and examine clinical risk factors for kidney function decline. The findings were published in the *Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology*.

"The overarching goal of this project was to demonstrate that real world EHR data can

be used to model kidney function decline in children. Chronic kidney disease in children is rare and as such there are few high-quality studies that inform clinical decision making," said Caroline Gluck, MD, physician, Division of Nephrology at Nemours Children's Health, Delaware, adding, "In contrast to prospective cohort studies, this study represents an unbiased sample of the US source population and to our knowledge represents the largest cohort of children with CKD to date."—ANI

ECONOMY WORLD

China's warming foreign trade boosts global economic recovery



A container ship sails into the Qingdao Port on 2 June 2022. PHOTO: XINHUA

THE booming orders at the beginning of 2023 mark a robust rebound in foreign trade in south China's Guangdong Province, a primary economic hub, injecting new impetus into the global economic recovery.

With eased epidemic controls and resumed international communication, particularly the economic and trade contacts, some factories in Huizhou City, Guangdong, are facing surging orders from overseas and a growing demand for industrial workers. Fierce competition to grab orders in the broad overseas

markets is also in sight among Chinese enterprises.

The Guangdong One Nano Technology Co, Ltd in Zhongkai High-tech Zone of Huizhou is now fully engaged in the spring recruitment and plans to double the size of its staff in 2023, following an increase of 279 per cent in its revenue in 2022 and a busy order schedule for various nanomaterials before the second quarter of 2023.

"We are highly confident and motivated. We want to get our business off to a good start in the first quarter and strive to

increase our production value by 10 per cent this year," said Zhang Qian, general manager of Huizhou Macc Electronics Co, Ltd, which has sent a marketing team to visit clients for cooperation chances in the Middle East, Europe, the USA and the Republic of Korea. Overall, the economic operation saw a striking recovery trend as the upstream and downstream of the industrial chain strengthened and market expectations improved. Statistics show that Chinese enterprises have robust confidence and optimistic prospects. —Xinhua

Mass Paris rally urges EU terror listing for Iran guards

THOUSANDS of Europe-based Iranians, including relatives of victims of repression in the Islamic republic, lawmakers and campaigners, on Saturday urged the EU at a rally in Paris to list Iran's Revolutionary Guards as a "terror" group.

Speakers at the rally at Place Vauban in the heart of the French capital insisted that such a listing for the Guards was the biggest contribution EU ministers could make to help the protest movement that erupted in September.

The demonstrators chanted the slogan of the protest movement "Woman. Life. Freedom" and one of its anthems the song "Bella Ciao" as well as slogans against the Islamic republic.

"The main goal is to make



Protestors hold a giant Iranian flag during an opposition rally in solidarity with Iranian people on the 44th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, in Paris, on 11 February 2023. PHOTO: GEOFFROY VAN DER HASSELT / AFP

EU ministers finally hear the voices of the Iranians," Swedish MP Alireza Akhondi, a prominent voice in the campaign, told AFP on the sidelines of the rally before giving an impassioned speech in

Persian.

"We want the Revolutionary Guards to be labelled as a terror group. It is the key point," he said, saying he was "disappointed" with progress so far. —AFP

Türkiye, Syria quake could cost \$4 bln: ratings agency

THE earthquake that has devastated Türkiye and Syria could cause economic losses exceeding \$4 billion, ratings agency Fitch said on Thursday.

More than 17,500 people have died so far in the 7.8-magnitude earthquake that struck Türkiye and Syria on Monday, and the toll is expected to rise as rescuers

comb the rubble for survivors.

"Economic losses are hard to estimate as the situation is evolving, but they appear likely to exceed" \$2 billion and could reach \$4 billion "or more", Fitch Ratings said.

Insured losses will be much lower, possibly around \$1 billion, due to low insurance coverage in the area, it added. —AFP



Rescue efforts underway in Türkiye. PHOTO: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

India to become third largest economy before 2030: Tamil Nadu Governor

HIGHLIGHTING the country's growth trajectory, Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi said India has become the world's fifth largest economy because of the people and not the government.

Addressing students at an event in Coimbatore on Saturday, Governor Ravi said, "If today India is the 5th largest economy in the world, it is not because of government. It is because of our people. Before 2030 we will be the third-largest economy. In 2047, we will be the largest economy in the world. We have no doubt about it. Even the world has no doubt about it." — ANI

Beijing exchange to launch margin, securities lending

THE Beijing Stock Exchange (BSE) will officially launch margin trading and securities lending transactions next week, according to the bourse.

Eligible securities firms, entrusted by investors, can submit declarations for margin trading and securities lending transactions to the BSE from Monday.

The launch of margin trading and securities lending businesses is an important step to improve the BSE's market trading system as well as the pricing function of the secondary market, said the bourse.

As of Feb 10, a total of 169 companies were listed on the Beijing bourse, with a combined market value of over 240 billion yuan (about \$35.35 billion). —Xinhua

Ads

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China's Chengdu records 4,700 intl freight train trips in 2022

CHENGDU, the capital of Southwest China's Sichuan province, handled over 4,700 international freight train trips in 2022, up 12 per cent year on year, local authorities said.

The city's international freight train service, which was launched in 2013, boosted Sichuan's average import and export volume by more

than \$12 billion annually between 2013 and 2022, Chengdu Customs said.

During the period, the Chengdu International Railway Port operated more than 20,000 international freight train trips, linking with more than 130 cities across the world, opening a channel for enterprises in western China to expand busi-

ness opportunities in the world, the customs said. —Xinhua

Photo taken on 30 June 2022 shows a China-Europe freight train ready for departure at the Chengdu International Railway Port in Chengdu, Southwest China's Sichuan province. **PHOTO: XINHUA**



At New York Fashion Week, Proenza Schouler offers function, less fantasy



Models pose backstage at the Proenza Schouler show. **PHOTO: AFP**

US fashion label Proenza Schouler on Saturday presented a low-key, functional collection, without its past conceptual showiness, as the brand marks its 20th anniversary at New York Fashion Week.

This year, designers Lazaro Hernandez and Jack McCollough said they broke with their typical creative process.

Most often, "we get wrapped up in like a narrative or a theme or a vibe," Hernandez said after Saturday's show.

"This season... we started with literally headshots of the women in our lives that we look up to and respect on a personal level, on a stylistic level."

Those women included American actor Chloe Sevigny, who opened the show on Saturday wearing a suit and a long skirt of

leather, a material used prominently in the collection.

Long an avant-garde and conceptual label, Proenza Schouler has evolved in recent years to build a more pragmatic wardrobe. This fall and winter 2023 collection appears to be a culmination of that trend.

"We're tired of all this fantasy, and like, Instagram clothes," Hernandez said.

The collection — clothing with character but less swagger — includes several relatively classic pantsuits and many below-the-knee skirts, accentuated with high boots, often in leather.

Still, Proenza has not abandoned sophistication.

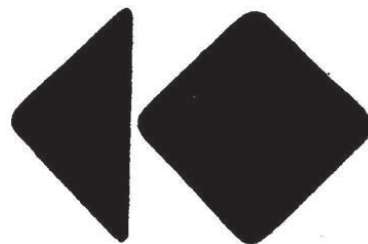
Fluid dresses opened in multicolored petals as models walked the runway. —AFP

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Dated: 13 February 2023

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M.V ISEACO GENESIS VOY.NO. (192N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ISEACO GENESIS VOY.NO. (192N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **13-2-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **HPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MSC FORTUNE F VOY.NO. (SB305A)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MSC FORTUNE F VOY.NO. (SB305A)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **13-2-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department
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GLOBAL AFFAIRS

New pension protests in France, unions vow to ramp up strikes



There were tensions when a car and a bin were overturned and set on fire. **PHOTO: AFP**

HUNDREDS of thousands of people took to the streets in France on Saturday in a fourth day of action against President Emmanuel Macron's pension reform, with unions planning to ramp up strikes if the plan is not dropped.

Unlike on the three previous protest days there was no call for a day of nationwide strikes,

although air traffic controllers at Paris' second airport staged a surprise walkout that resulted in the cancellation of half of flights.

Macron and his government face a two-way fight to implement the plan to raise to pension age from 62 to 64 by overcoming resistance on the streets and also pushing the legislation through parliament.

The CGT union said that 500,000 people were protesting in Paris alone, higher than the 400,000 it counted on the last protest day on 7 February.

The interior ministry, which generally give much lower numbers, said there were 963,000 protesters nationwide and 93,000 in Paris.

There were protests in other French cities up and down the country, with television pictures showing police using water cannons in the western city of Rennes.

Protesters in the French capital took the traditional protest route from Republique Square to Nation Square, behind a banner saying: "No to working longer!".

There were tensions when a car and a bin were overturned and set on fire, prompting shield-wielding police and the fire brigade to intervene. —AFP

China, Greece sign strategic cooperation agreement on shipping finance

THE Lujiazui Financial City Council in Shanghai, China, and the Association of Banking and Financial Executives of Hellenic Shipping signed a strategic cooperation agreement on shipping finance during an online event held on Friday.

Under the agreement, the two parties will establish a collaborative network to stimulate communication among shipping companies and financial institutions from both international shipping centers, speakers from both sides said.

Greece's Deputy Minister of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy Kostas Katsafados told the event that the agreement "will further strengthen the relations of the countries in the financing sector." —Xinhua



This aerial photo taken on 15 February 2019 shows a container ship of the COSCO Shipping approaching Piraeus port, Greece. **PHOTO: XINHUA/WU LU**

Belgian lawmaker charged in EU graft probe

PROSECUTORS on Saturday charged a Belgian lawmaker in the European parliament with corruption after searching his bank safe as part of a probe into a bribery scandal linked to Qatar that has rocked the EU.

The Socialist deputy Marc Tarabella, 59, was detained by police on Friday after Belgium's federal prosecutors said raids were carried out targeting his safe in the city of Liege and offices in the town hall of Anthisnes, where he is mayor.

Eric van der Sijpt, spokesman for the prosecutor's office, told AFP Tarabella had been indicted on charges of corruption, money laundering and for "participating in a criminal organization", as part of the Belgian investigation into suspected bribery linked to Qatar and Morocco.

The so-called Qatargate scandal has sent shockwaves through the EU's institutions and caused the parliament to hastily seek reforms looking to curb outside influence.

The parliament last week voted to lift Tarabella's immuni-



Tarabella, facing corruption charges, will appear in court again by Thursday. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

ty from prosecution, and that of Italian MEP Andrea Cozzolino, following a request by Belgian investigators.

Suspected of helping Morocco to weigh in on European parliament decisions, Cozzolino was arrested in Italy on an international warrant from Belgium on Friday, van der Sijpt said.

Italian media reported Saturday Cozzolino had been put under house arrest ahead of an extradition hearing on Tuesday.

Both have insisted they are

innocent, and Tarabella has said he was looking forward to the chance to clear his name.

Authorities in Qatar and Morocco have denied any involvement in the case.

Belgium authorities already have three suspects in custody after launching raids on several addresses in December — including those of lawmakers, ex-lawmakers and parliamentary aides — that turned up 1.5 million euros (\$1.6 million) in cash. —AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran's Raisi to visit China: state media

IRANIAN President Ebrahim Raisi will head to China within days for a three-day visit aimed at strengthening economic cooperation, state media reported on Sunday.

Raisi will set out for Beijing on Monday evening in response to an official invitation by Chinese President Xi Jinping, Iran's state news agency IRNA said. —AFP

Israel army says shoots down rocket fired from Gaza

ISRAELI air defences intercepted a rocket fired by Palestinian militants from Gaza on Saturday, the military said.

Sirens sounded in the community of Kibbutz Nahal Oz close to the border but the rocket was shot down without casualties or damage, it said in a statement. There was no immediate claim for the launch from any of the militant groups operating in the blockaded coastal enclave of Gaza. —AFP

Spurred by Ukraine fight, Russia's 'Women's Guard' learn to shoot

WIELDING Soviet-designed Kalashnikov rifles, a group of Russian women with elaborate manicures and clad in camouflage are drilling different firing positions, first aiming on their knees and then their stomachs.

The gym where the women have gathered in the Russian city of Yekaterinburg near the Ural Mountains is some 2,000 kilometres (1,200 miles) from the frontline in Ukraine.

But the year-long conflict raging in the eastern region of Donetsk has injected new militaristic fervour in Russia and fears that the fight could come back home. —AFP

Iran celebrates 44th anniversary of Islamic revolution



Iranians rally in front of Tehran's Azadi Tower to mark the 44th anniversary of the 1979 Islamic Revolution. PHOTO: AFP

TENS of thousands of Iranians rallied Saturday in Tehran and other major cities to mark the 44th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, as their president said months-long protests had been defeated.

For the past two years, the 1979 overthrow of the Western-backed shah was commemorated mainly by Iranians who drove around cities in their cars or on motorcycles due to Covid restrictions.

But this year, waving flags, they took to the streets of Tehran on foot and converged on Azadi (Freedom) Square, one of the capital's most prominent

landmarks, despite chilly temperatures.

They chanted "Down with the US", "Down with Israel", "Down with the UK" and "Down with the traitor Al Saud", in reference to Saudi Arabia, an AFP journalist said.

People held up pictures of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as well as the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, founder of the Islamic republic, and revered general Qasem Soleimani, killed in a US air strike on Baghdad airport in January 2020.

They also held placards reading "We stand to the end",

"A united, strong and stable Iran" and "We obey the leader".

Sejjil ballistic missiles and Shahed 136 drones were on display around the square where President Ebrahim Raisi said people had gathered to renew their "allegiance" to the revolution.

"This pledge of allegiance is much greater than a vote" of confidence in the Islamic republic, said the ultra-conservative president. Raisi also declared victory over the nationwide protest movement triggered by the death in custody of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini following her arrest for an alleged breach of Iran's dress code for women. —AFP

WORLD: TOP HEADLINES

US jet shoots down new mystery 'object' over Canada

A US fighter jet shot down an unidentified object over Canada on Saturday, the second such incident in North American skies since the dramatic downing of a suspected Chinese spy balloon a

week ago.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said a joint US-Canadian military operation led to the takedown of the object, the latest in a series of mysterious

air intrusions.

"Canadian and US aircraft were scrambled, and a US F-22 successfully fired at the object," Trudeau tweeted Saturday. —AFP

New York truck attacker may face death penalty despite Biden pledge

PRESIDENT Joe Biden promised to abolish capital punishment for federal crimes, but the US government is due to argue, beginning Monday, that an Uzbek man should get the death penalty for killing eight people

in New York half a decade ago.

The same 12 jurors who last month convicted Sayfullo Saipov of several murder and terrorism charges will decide whether he should be jailed for life or sentenced to death.

Although the Biden administration declared a moratorium on all federal executions, if Saipov receives the sentence he could be put to death, either under a future president or if the moratorium is lifted. —AFP

Scholz's Social Democrats risk upset at Berlin vote rerun

GERMAN Chancellor Olaf Scholz's Social Democrats face the prospect of an embarrassing loss on Sunday during the rerun of a chaotic 2021 regional election in Berlin.

The German capital, one of the country's 16 federal states, has been ordered by the courts to return to the ballot boxes as the last vote on September 26, 2021, failed to meet basic democratic standards.

Opinion polls in the run-up to the election put the CDU conservative opposition in pole position, ahead of Scholz's SPD, who came first in 2021.

If the trend is confirmed,

it would mark the first time in over 20 years that the CDU has topped the regional vote in the capital.

SPD general secretary Kevin Kuehnert underlined the impact of the local vote on a national level, warning that it could determine whether Scholz continued to have strong SPD-led states behind him as he seeks to implement his plans for Germany.

Any upset risks shifting the balance of power in the Bundesrat, the upper house of the federal parliament, which represents the regional states.

—AFP



Sunday's rerun of a chaotic 2021 regional election in Berlin takes place under the watchful gaze of international election observers, invited in by the city itself to restore trust. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Assange supporters hold London 'carnival' against extradition

SEVERAL hundred supporters of jailed WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange on Saturday launched a carnival-themed march through central London calling for his release as he risks extradition to the United States.

Costumed activists took part wearing pigs' heads, clowns' noses and orange jumpsuits and carrying a coffin and lanterns decorated with slogans calling for Assange's

release.

The march with the theme "darkness into light" was due to end with a rally in Westminster in central London with speakers including Assange's wife Stella.

The Australian publisher remains in custody in Britain pending a US extradition request to face trial for divulging US military secrets about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. —AFP



Supporters of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange take part in a 'Night Carnival for Assange' march in London. PHOTO: AFP



Yangon United players show off their team kits during the 2023 Kits Launching Ceremony. PHOTO: YUFC

Yangon United holds Kits Launching Ceremony for 2023 football season

YANGON United held the 2023 Kits Launching Ceremony on 11 February at the Yangon United Sports Complex.

Myanmar National League Chief Executive Officer U Soe Moe Kyaw, Yangon United FC Vice Chairman U Min Swe Oo, the Yangon United Chief Executive Officer, officials from sponsor

companies, distinguished guests, media, Yangon United team officials and players, and Yangon United fans attended the event.

Home and away jerseys, goalkeeper kits, Polo shirts, Tracksuit & bags of the 2023 season were introduced to the public during the event.

Yangon United Chief Exec-

utive Officer U Yazar Htwe presented a memorable gift to sponsor companies who will support the whole season of 2023. Next, an entertainment session continued to perform and the 2023 Kit and Sponsorship Launching ceremony of Yangon United was successfully accomplished.—KZL

Paul Pogba's Juventus return delayed further

PAUL POGBA'S return from injury has been further delayed, Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri said on Saturday.

"Pogba isn't available for selection at the moment," Allegri told the press conference ahead of Sunday's Serie A match against Fiorentina.

"He's working to get there but unfortunately I can't put a timescale on it."

The France midfielder is yet to play for Juventus since returning from Manchester United last summer, after injuring the meniscus in his right knee in July.

In late January, Allegri said ahead of a game with Monza that



Paul Pogba has yet to play for Juventus this season. PHOTO: AFP

Pogba was training again and would be available, but the midfielder did not make the squad.

On Saturday, Allegri said he would know more in around three weeks.—AFP

Foster out-duels Vargas for vacant WBC super-featherweight crown

O'SHAQUIE Foster outboxed previously unbeaten two-division champion Rey Vargas on the way to a unanimous decision Saturday in their fight for the vacant World Boxing Council super-featherweight title.

Foster, 29, grabbed his chance in his first world title bout, stretching his winning streak to 10 in a row and taking his record to 20-2 with 11 knockouts.

"Man, it feels great," said the 29-year-old Foster, whose career was slowed by a four-month spell in prison five years ago. "This journey has been crazy." Judges at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas, saw it clearly for Foster, whose speed and agility left Vargas groping. Judge Tim Cheatham scored it 117-111, Alejandro Rochin saw it 119-109 and David Sutherland made it 116-112.—AFP

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council: Twelve Objectives

1. Political affairs

- (a) To build a Union based on democracy and federalism, through a disciplined and genuine multiparty democratic system that is fair and just.
- (b) To prioritize the achievement of enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).
- (c) To continue implementing the principle of peaceful co-existence among countries through an independent, active, and non-aligned foreign policy.
- (d) To ensure peace, stability, rule of law, and the safe and smooth functioning of transport networks across the Union.

2. Economic affairs

- (a) To enhance development based on agriculture and livestock using modern production techniques and to strengthen all-round development in other sectors of the economy.
- (b) To develop a stable market economy and promote international investment in order to enhance the economic development of the entire National people.
- (c) To assure support for the sustainability of Micro-, Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) that prioritize import substitution, export production, and the use of domestically produced raw materials, in order to increase domestic production and generate employment opportunities.
- (d) To advance the socio-economic life of the people, in order to ensure the country's prosperity and food security.

3. Social affairs

- (a) To ensure a strong and dynamic Union spirit, the genuine spirit of patriotism.
- (b) To respect and promote the customs and traditions of all National people and preserve and safeguard their faiths, beliefs, culture, and characteristics of patriotic nationalism.
- (c) To strengthen basic health care in order to achieve the emergence of a health system that enhances the longevity and health of the entire nation.
- (d) To comprehensively promote the education sector to make it capable of producing the human resources necessary for building a modern, developed, and progressive democratic nation.

Strydom clinches victory in Singapore Classic with stunning comeback

OCKIE Strydom staged a remarkable comeback at the Singapore Classic Sunday when he posted a final-round, nine-under-par 63 to become the first South African winner of a DP World Tour event held in the city-state.



Faced with the prospect of a playoff against Sami Valimaki at 18-under, Strydom conjured one of the greatest shots of the week with a deft chip onto the 18th green, where he would go on to sink his birdie putt for a one-shot victory over the Finn.

Valimaki, playing two groups behind Strydom, still had a chance to force the tournament into extra time, but

South African Ockie Strydom's make-or-break chip on 18 and the birdie that followed effectively sealed his victory. PHOTO: AFP

his birdie putt on 18 stopped agonisingly close to the hole.

He was ultimately left to settle for an outright second place at the US\$2 million tournament, the DP World Tour's first in Singapore since 2014.—AFP