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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.

Grandeur celebration underway for Yangon Mayor Maha Thingyan festival



Preparations are seen for the Myanmar Traditional Thingyan Festival in Yangon. **PHOTOS: ZAW MIN LATT**

THE Yangon Region government and the Yangon City Development Committee are jointly making arrangements for holding the Walking Thingyan festival with many programmes in the Yangon City Maha Thingyan festival for 1384 ME on a grandeur scale more than in previous years.

This year, the Yangon City water-throwing pavilion will be organized in addition to the Walking Thingyan festivity on the People's Square along the route with colourful parasols. Moreover, YCDC has arranged Myanmar's traditional toddy palm sheds for the

relaxation of people.

"This year, 12 water-throwing pavilions have been built on the People's Square for contributing to the Walking Thingyan festival. Shops are also to be opened for revellers to have easy access to foodstuffs while enjoying the festival with entertainment programmes and refreshment donations at the pavilions. As funfair programmes are arranged for the Thingyan people, it is the best destination for people to take rest for the whole day. People know that the People's Square is a significant place where funfair

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Grandeur celebration underway for Yangon Mayor Maha Thingyan festival

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activities have been held, and they recognize the square as a funfair ground. So, arrangements have been made for the people to peacefully enjoy the water-throwing festival. The route of the Walking Thingyan festival is under showers for lessening the intense heat of summer," said Deputy Director-General Dr Toe Aung of the Public Relations and Information Department of the YCDC.

Preparations seen at the Yangon Mayor Maha Thingyan Pavilion yesterday.



The photo shows the venue for the Walking Thingyan alongside the Yangon Mayor Maha Thingyan Pandal.

Entertainment and water-throwing pavilions such as NwayU Kabyar, Hnitthit Chit Oo, Padauk Letsaung, Padauk Yeik, Thingyan Moe, Nway Ahla, Tupoh Tupoh, Padauk Myethna, Hnitthit Mingalar and Panmyo Tayar in addition to the pavilions to serve the people with refreshments and restaurants have been constructed for the Walking Thingyan Festival.

Especially, the Walking Thingyan festival will be arranged with music, songs and Thingyan choral dances from 8 am to 9 pm with the participation of artistes from the motion picture, theatrical and music associations and 68 Thingyan choral dance troupes will present varieties of entertainment. — Nyein Thu (MNA)/TTA

Dr Yi Yi Hla (Yuwady Khin Oo), Daw Tin Yi (Tin Yi Ma-NyaungU) secure Pakokku U Ohn Pe Lifetime Award for Literary Achievement

THE Pakokku Literary Award Fund Supervisory Committee yesterday announced prize winners for the 29th time.

The committee released winners in selected poems genre, novel genre, selected short stories genre, treatise genre and research literature genre.

Moreover, veteran writers Dr Yi Yi Hla (Yuwady Khin Oo) and Daw Tin Yi (Tin Yi Ma-NyaungU) secured Pakokku U Ohn Pe Lifetime Awards for Literary Achievement.

Ma Khaing Thazin Thein, a second-year movies and theatrical drama major student from the

National University of Arts and Culture (Yangon) and Ma Myat Shwe Sin Hmu, a second-year movies and theatrical drama major student at the National University of Arts and Culture (Mandalay) secured Pakokku U Ohn Pe scholarship awards.

The books of MP Maung My-

int, Aung Toe (Sein Chel) and U Myint Naing won the Pakokku U Ohn Pe Library Book Awards.

Winners of the Pakokku U Ohn Pe Lifetime Award for Literary Achievement will be presented K1 million, the first prize in literary award K700,000, the second K500,000 and the third

K400,000. Those winners are to contact the Chief Editor of the Sarpay Beikman at 529/531 on Merchant Street in Yangon, dialling 01-240048 and Admin Department, 01-381449. The timetable and venue for the prize awarding ceremony will be released later. — MNA/TTA

Three new cases of COVID-19 reported on 10 April, total figure registers 634,101

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases registered **634,101** after **three** new cases were reported on 10 April 2023 according to the Ministry of Health. The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **614,596**.

The death toll from COVID-19 in the country remained unchanged at **19,490** on 10-4-2023 with no new death reported from the pandemic. — GNLM

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Nation's strength stays put within

ONLY when all State service personnel, civil society organizations and entire ethnic people are to join hands with the government and Tatmadaw in building the Union based on democracy and federalism the entire ethnic people aspire to will they all reach the target in a short time. In line with the motto: "The strength of the nation lives only within" which plays a key role in marching towards the goal, all ethnic national people are to forge unity with patriotic spirit and the Union spirit and to protect the State in all aspects.

(Excerpts from the message sent by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing to ceremony of 71st Anniversary Kayah State Day which falls on 15 January 2023)

MoI Union Minister inspects preparations for Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan

NAY PYI TAW Walking Thingyan will be held along the road between Nay Pyi Taw Mayor Thingyan pavilion situated on Pynmana-Taungnyo road to Nay Pyi Taw City Development Committee guesthouse from 13 to 16 April.

Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn, who is also the chairman of the Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan Organizing Committee, Permanent Secretary U Myo Myint Maung and officials checked the preparations of the Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan. The Union minister then met officials from



Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn meets responsible personnel for the Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan yesterday.

ministries participating in relevant sectors and Brilliant Aura Co Ltd.

At the meeting, the Union minister said that all the necessary measures should be taken so that people can play with water freely and safely in the Thingyan festival, that artistes will take part in it and that arrangements should be made to ensure no fire hazard, shortage of water or breach of security. Then, he inspected the construction of pandals of ministries and those of ethnic peoples.

Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Maj-Gen Zin Min Htet, who is also the chairperson of the Security Subcommittee, attended the meeting between members of the Disciplinary subcommittee of the Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan and disciplinary officers of the ministries' pavilions. Then, he inspected the arrangements taken for security. — MNA/KZW



Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn and officials inspect the preparations for the Walking Thingyan.

Special commodity tax to be exempted for BEVs



The picture shows some imported battery electric vehicles (BEVs) in Myanmar.

THE Working Committee on Special Exemptions on Electric Vehicles and Related Industries notified that the special commodity taxes for EVs will be exempted until the end of March 2024.

In the 2023 Union Tax Law, the commercial tax on battery electric vehicles (BEVs) including battery-used electric two-wheeled and three-wheeled vehicles, accessories, and battery charging services, and the special commodity tax on EVs are spared from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

According to the release, they are working to allow tax exemption until the end of March 2024 since

the zero per cent customs duty set for electric vehicles imported from abroad under the CBU, CKD and SKD systems expired at the end of March this year.

It is mentioned in the statement that road/bridge tolls for EV vehicles need not be paid for two years from 1 April of this year until 31 March 2025.

In addition, it is reported that EVs initially registered from 2023 to 2025 have been exempted from 100 per cent wheel tax, city entrance fee, toll, charges for overweight load, showroom fee, business licence, overnight fee, property tax among others. — TWA/CT

Nay Pyi Taw to hold Walking Thingyan in four zones

DURING the 2023 Myanmar traditional Thingyan Festival, the Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan will be held in a grandeur and more thronged manner so that the employees, employees' families, and the public in Nay Pyi Taw can celebrate happily.

Starting from Thingyan Akyo Day, Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan will be held near the Nay Pyi Taw Mayor Maha Thingyan Pavilion on Pynmana-Taungnyo Road to the intersection of Sipin guesthouse Road and will be held with the aim of making everyone delighted with friendship and cheerfulness.

Four zones have been set to make it unique and magnificent during the Walking Thingyan.

Thanaka Thingyan is included in Zone 1 and Ethnic Thingyan in Zone 2.

International-level beauty and entertainment programmes are included in Zone 3 and youth game Thingyan programmes for youth and children are arranged in Zone 4, said Business Development Director Daw Su Myat Lwin from Brilliant Aura Co Ltd.

"Thanaka Thingyan is a very special programme. It will

working, and almost 90 per cent of the work preparations has been completed.

It is prepared with care to make not only young people but also adults happy and relaxed.

On Thingyan Akyo Day, the Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan will be open in the morning, and there will be more unique and innovative programmes in the afternoon.

"Starting Thingyan Akyo Day, we will launch Walking Thingyan at 9 am. After a break at noon, there will be entertainment programmes and other programmes from 3 pm to 7 pm. Visitors will also play games. In addition, we must be able to enjoy our favourite foods in the



Preparations are underway for the Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan including the Thanaka Thingyan, the Ethnic Thingyan, the ministries' pandals, fun programmes for adults and youths, the soft play area for children, food stalls, water skiing, and entertainment programmes among others (above and below photos).



play area for children. There will also be a large swimming pool that both young and old can play in, so I think it will be a new and fun event.

"Also, I would like to remind you not to bring dangerous weapons during the Walking Thingyan. Please refrain from bringing in outside food, demoralizing each other, and excessively consumption of alcohol.

"I want everyone to be free and happy. When you visit this Walking Thingyan, you will have international-class toys and food all in one place.

"For children, I would like to invite them to imagine the meaning of Thingyan together with their families. Recreation places have been arranged for them. I would like to invite you to visit because I believe it will be a fun and classy event for all," Daw Su Myat Lwin added.

In order to make Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan more packed with revellers, there will be music performances by famous actors/actresses and singers at the traditional Myanmar Thingyan pandals and the traditional Ethnic Thingyan pandals. Visitors will be able to enjoy the beauty of the dance groups from the ministries and have fun splashing in the water by enjoying food at the food donation pavilions. — Aung Ye Thwin, Aye Aye Thant/KZL



be the first of its kind. Thanaka will be applied on the face so that it can be enjoyed. Ethnic Thingyan Zone will showcase ethnic cultures. In the game zone, there are modern colour parties and playing areas, as well as foam parties and a lot of game programmes.

"If you come to visit, we have included all aspects so that you will not be bored," she added.

For the successful celebration of Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan, various sectors are

shops.

"We will also be able to enjoy the snack donation pavilions, and we will also be able to watch entertainment programmes," Business Development Director Daw Su Myat Lwin continued.

In addition, the Walking Thingyan has been prepared in a modern way so that the visitors can have fun at an international level.

The entrance fee is K3,000 each for adults and K1,000 each for children.

"After paying the entrance

fee, you will be given wristbands for international events. These wristbands also have Day 1, Day

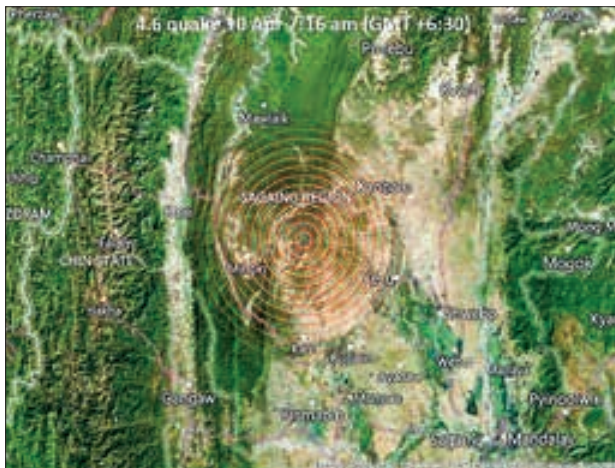
2, and Day 3. After purchasing the Day 1 entrance fee wristband, you can play the whole day. There will be water skiing which is a fun programme for adults and children.

"There will also be parties where you can play with soap powder foam. At the colourful party, DJ music and colourful powder spraying are planned for young people to have fun. An additional 150-foot adults-only water ski has been added.

"There will also be a soft



4.6-magnitude earthquake strikes near Shwebo



A 4.6-magnitude earthquake struck near Shwebo in Shwebo District, Sagaing Region on 10 April, the National Centre for Seismology (NCS) in India reported.

The photo shows the seismographic image of the earthquake near Shwebo, Shwebo District in the Sagaing Region.

At 6:46 am on 10 April, the quake struck at a depth of 135.3 kilometres, according to a press release from the NCS.

It is said the tremor was only slightly felt in Mawlaik, which is 87 kilometres away from the epicentre, Shwebo, which is 99 kilometres away, and Monywa, which is 101 kilometres away. — TWA/CT

YR govt to take effective action against drink-driving during Thingyan Festival



General view of the Thingyan festival in front of Inya Lake on Pyay Road, Yangon, in 2020.

DURING the Thingyan Festival, effective action will be taken against those who drink and drive recklessly, according to a statement from the Yangon Region government.

Announcements have been made for drivers in Yangon Region not to drive recklessly under the influence of drugs or alcohol, without exhaust or a vehicle number plate, a boot or side doors, or a wheel tax, flying international flags on the vehicle, honking in no-honk zones, and for small vehicles not to carry more than the specified load weight (people) and drive scrapped old/

used vehicles, unregistered vehicles or vehicles under repair, during the Thingyan Festival from 13 to 16 April, and if they do so, effective action will be taken against them under the existing law.

In addition, drivers will be examined by an alcohol tester whether they drink.

During Thingyan, if a vehicle breaks down and is parked in the middle of the road, it will be towed by a crane. The Yangon Region government also announced that riding motorcycles are not allowed within the municipal boundary of Yangon. — TWA/CT

Photo News



Firefighters are seen putting out the burning vehicle.

3 casualties in vehicle fire accident on Yangon-Mandalay Expressway

A Honda Civic crashed into a roadside barrier block and caught fire between mileposts 325/6 and 325/7 of the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway at around 10:30 am on 10 April 2023.

A fire engine, a water bowser and the fire brigade members from Pyinsi Expressway Fire Station rushed to the scene and put out the fire at about 11:40 am. In the incident, three men in the vehicle died on the spot and were taken to the Natogyi Public Hospital in the police vehicle. — MNA/CT

Weekly market update of dry groceries at Bayintnaung Wholesale Centre

BETWEEN 5 and 10 April 2023, the prices of rice and garlic went up at the Bayintnaung Wholesale Centre.

Before the Thingyan Festival, the demand from regions outside Yangon drastically fell. The supply of onions also drops.

Onion

Approximately 270,000 visses of onions from regions outside Yangon were supplied to the Bayintnaung commodity depot on 8 April. Around 70,000 visses of onions entered Yangon. The price remains unchanged.

The prices of onions move between K1,050 and K1,900 per viss depending on the producing areas and the size of the onions.

With 19,500 visses of onions entering the Seikphyu market on 10 April, the highest price was K1,075 per viss in the Seikphyu market, whereas 53,960 visses of onions flowed into the Myingyan market and they fetched K1,150 per viss in maximum on 10 April.

Garlic

The garlic prices stood at K2,800-3,700 per viss in the Yangon market on 10 April, while Kyukok garlic was priced at K4,450 per viss.

Potato

The wholesale prices of potatoes were K1,300 and 1,800 per viss in the Yangon market on 10 April.

Chilli pepper

The long chilli pepper prices were K10,000-11,700 per viss depending on the varieties and the prices of bell peppers were K12,000-13,500 per viss.

Rice

The rice supply to the Yangon market this week declined. Both large rice depots were temporarily suspended from 8 April during the Thingyan holidays. Only high-grade rice is highly demanded in the retail market. The prices spiked. The Pawsan prices were K84,000 per bag from the Pyapon area, K86,000 for the Myaungmya area and K120,000 per bag from the Shwebo area.



The photo shows a dry groceries outlet.

Palm oil

The wholesale reference price of palm oil for Yangon is set at K4,790 per viss for 10 and 23 April. The reference price was up by K245 per viss compared to that of last week. At present,

palm oil cannot be withdrawn from oil tanks. On 10 April, the wholesale market price was K6,550 per viss-K6,800 per viss.

Pulses

All depots of pulses are closed. — TWA/EM

CRIME NEWS

Illegal timbers, consumer goods, industrial materials, industrial raw materials and vehicles confiscated



Confiscated illegal commodities at the Asia World container checkpoint.

ON 6 and 8 April, the Unregistered Vehicles Seizure Team of No 2 Traffic Police Force captured an unregistered Toyota Corolla car (estimated value of K3.5 million) near the traffic light of an industrial zone in Hlinethaya township and an unregistered Toyota Crown car (approximately K4.5 million) near Kyatbezey traffic light in Thingangyun township. The action was taken under the Law.

The on-duty teams confiscated 324 toy small remote con-

trol cars, 500 pairs of Orissa Pan including P Trap and 1,600 kilogrammes of PVC Edge Banding worth K8.61 million that were not declared in the Import Declaration (ID), 25 kinds of goods including 4,436 kilogrammes of porcelains, 47,891 kilogrammes of glassware worth K74,321,625 without import licences and eight kinds of goods including 828 kilogrammes of Varem Pressure Tank worth K40,937,910 that exceeded 61 days of VPA from eight containers at the Asia World Port

Terminal container checkpoint on 6 and 7 April and 165,085 kilogrammes of galvanized sheet worth K225,341,025 from six containers that were to be cleared with forged port documents at the Myanmar Industrial Port Terminal container checkpoint on 8 April. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

In addition, on 8 April, an on-duty team at the Yepu permanent checkpoint in Shan State nabbed a total of 3.793 tonnes of illegal timbers worth K11,378,400

from a Hino Profia truck (estimated value of K35 million) heading to Muse from Mandalay. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

Similarly, on 8 April, an unregistered Mitsubishi car (approximately K3 million) was seized at the Koesu village checkpoint on Pathein- Yangon road in Pathein township. The action was taken under the Export and Import Law.

On 8 and 9 April, a total of 5.174 tonnes of illegal teak worth K1,853,256 in Ottwin, Toungoo and Paukhaung townships and the action was taken under the Forest Law.

Therefore, 17 arrests (estimated value of K408,442,216) were made on four consecutive days from 6 to 9 April, according to the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS



Seized illegal items at the Myanmar Industrial Terminal.

Heroin, stimulant tablets, ammunition nabbed in Sagaing Region, Shan State



Arrestees are pictured along with seized drugs, arms and ammunition.

K1.1 billion worth of 22 kilogrammes of heroin were captured in Kalay township of Sagaing Region and drugs and ammunition were seized in Shan State, Myanmar Police Force stated.

According to information, a combined team consisting of members of the Anti-Drug Police Force searched the house of Htun Naing Oo (aka) Ko Htun in Chanmyaungsi ward of Kalay township and captured 11 kilogrammes of heroin at 1:30 pm on 6 April.

Acting on a tip-off, Police Force arrested Htet Zaw (aka) A Nge Lay who gave the seized heroin in the Kalay-Tamu bus

terminal of Chanmyaungsi ward with a HiAce car at 4:30 pm on the same day.

According to the investigation, Police Force arrested Yan Paing Htay (aka) Ko Paing at his house in the Chanmyaungsi ward of Kalay township with 11 kilogrammes of heroin at 5 pm.

Offenders admitted the seized drugs to be carry from Mandalay to Kalay.

Police have taken legal action against the offenders and an investigation is underway to identify the perpetrators of the crime chain.

In addition, a combined team consisting of members of the Anti-Drug Police Force

searched the house of Aik Kaw (aka) Laukal in Muse township and arrested Gwam Mai (aka) Mar Gwam, ASaPha and Zaw Latt with weapons, ammunition and related items at 1:30 pm on 5 April.

Acting on a tip-off, Police Force examined the house of Aik Kaw (aka) Laukal in Muse at 2:30 pm and captured 13,050 stimulant tablets, eight kilogrammes of Ketamine and 99 kilogrammes of Happy Water with weapons and ammunition.

Police have taken legal action against the offenders and an investigation is underway to identify the perpetrators of the crime chain. — MNA/MKKS

Over K420 million worth of stimulant tablets captured in Tatkon township

MORE than K420 million worth of 280,000 stimulant tablets were captured in Tatkon township of Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar Police Force stated.

According to the information, a combined team consisting of members of the Anti-Drug Police Force searched a Surf car heading to Tatkon from Pinlaung driven by Than Oo accompanied by Kyaw Kyaw Lwin (aka) Kyaw Lwin and Than Su Zaw at the Kintha checkpoint on Pinlaung-

Tatkon road in Tatkon township at 5 pm on 8 April.

Police Force seized a total of 282,750 stimulant tablets worth over K420 million from the car and the offenders admitted the seized drugs to carry from Shan State (South) to Yangon Region to be distributed during Thingyan Festival. Police have taken legal action against the offenders and an investigation is underway to identify the perpetrators of the crime chain. — MNA/MKKS



Three offenders are seen together with seized drugs and a vehicle.

LOCAL BUSINESS

Myanmar pockets over \$700 mln from fishery exports in FY2022-2023

MYANMAR generated an income of US\$765.947 million from fishery exports between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023 in the 2022-2023 Financial Year, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The figures dropped from \$824.513 million in the 2021-2022 FY, showing a decrease of \$58.566 million.

Myanmar sends fishery

products to foreign markets by sea and border trade.

At present, fishery export is underway. The export volume is still declining.

Myanmar's fishery products are delivered to Japan, European countries, China, Thailand and neighbouring countries by maritime trade. Fish, shrimp, crab and fishery products are sent to



Myanmar ships fishery products to over 40 countries, mostly to Thailand and China. A fleet of fishing vessels and one of the thriving fishery markets are pictured (above and left photos.)

neighbouring countries through Muse, Myawady, Kawthoung, Sittway, Myeik and Maungtau borders.

More than 20 fish species including hilsa, rohu, catfish, and seabass are exported to foreign markets, according to the Myanmar Fisheries Federation.

Myanmar ships fishery products to over 40 countries, mostly to Thailand and China. — NN/EM

Myanmar ships fishery products to over 40 countries, mostly to Thailand and China. — NN/EM

Palm oil persists hike in wholesale reference price for Yangon Region

THE wholesale reference rate of palm oil for the Yangon market persists, according to the Supervisory Committee on edible oil import and distribution.

The reference price stood at K4,545 per viss in the week between 3 and 9 April. For the week ending 10 to 23 April, the price was set higher at K4,790 per viss, showing a small increase of K245 per viss this week.

The Supervisory Committee on edible oil import and distribution under the Ministry of Commerce has been closely observing the FOB prices in Malaysia and Indonesia including transport costs, tariffs and banking services, and issuing the wholesale market reference rate for edible oil every week.

Regardless of the reference price, the current market price is too high at over K6,000-8,000 per viss.

If those edible oil retailers and wholesalers are found overcharging, storing inventory intentionally and attempting unscrupulous action to manipulate the market, they will face legal action under the Essential Supplies and Service Act, MoC released a statement.

The Ministry of Commerce is striving for consumers not to worry over the supply of edible oil. The ministry is also trying to secure edible oil sufficiency, supervise the market to offer reasonable prices to the consumers and maintain price stability.

At present, mobile market

trucks operated by oil importing companies, in coordination with Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association, were back to business in some townships on 17 July to offer palm oil at a subsidized rate. They offer palm oil at a fairer price to the consumers directly depending on the reference price. However, there are limited sources of supply although they directly sell palm oil at a reference rate depending on the volume quota. The domestic consumption of edible oil is estimated at 1 million tonnes per year. The local cooking oil production is just about 400,000 tonnes. To meet the oil sufficiency in the domestic market, about 700,000 tonnes of cooking oil are yearly imported through Malaysia and Indonesia. — NN/EM



Residents queue up to buy palm oil at the palm oil wholesale reference rate in Yangon Region.

Prices of fuel oil, gold and dollar on 10 April 2023

Fuel Oil Price (Yangon)

Octane 92	K2,250
Octane 95	K2,315
Diesel	K2,150
Premium Diesel	K2,230

All of the prices are based on per litre.

Gold Price

High-purity gold in the gold market	K2,960,000 per tical
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US Dollar Vs Kyat

A US dollar set by the Central Bank of Myanmar	K2,100
A US dollar in the forex market	K2,855 to K2,870

The above prices may change from time to time.

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OPINION

Take security protection for staff in eradicating illegal trade

PUBLIC service personnel are accountable to the government. Reciprocally, the government needs to take responsibility for the public service personnel in discharging the duties assigned by the government.

With regard to eradicating illegal trade measures, the government assigns duties to service personnel from relevant departments and organizations in order to eradicate illegal trade and illegal traders whose acts may harm the legal activities of MSME businesspersons and their capability to compete in the market with their products.

Significantly, the assigned staff members are reliable for the State and the citizens. So, they should be loyal to the State and the citizens. They should avoid the malpractices involved in the illegal trade process. It is because the government has already decided to take action against the offender staff from the checkpoints and to trace the past events of the seizures of illegal trade.

On the ground situation, some traders not wishing to follow policies and procedures adopted by the State approach some ethnic armed organizations so as to pass the checkpoints assigned by the State to commit illegal trade in various ways and means. Hence, the authorities have instructed the assigned personnel to inform nearby region and state governments and relevant military command headquarters about their difficulties so as to take action against them under the law.

Moreover, those assigned staff need to strive for seizing the illegal commodities and not cross the border through collaborative efforts together with officials from neighboring countries. In fact, illegal trade is a problem that global countries including Myanmar are facing. Hence, those from the assigned task forces need to seek the best ways for other countries in eradicating illegal trade and offenders.

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On the other hand, the government needs to honour the staff who took risks of life and limbs in operations in eradicating the illegal trade process. It is because those assigned staff move in daily tasks amid various kinds of dangers to be posed by the law offenders. If so, those staff and their families need to be deserved to have the necessary security protection for the safety of their life and property as taking responsibility between the government and the assigned staff.

Such a thing is very important for hindrance to booming the State economy. If the State economy declines, the socioeconomic life of the people will directly be down. If so, undesirable consequences may cause in the nation, and finally, these will be burdens for the people. Hence, the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee expedites the eradication of illegal trade and traders with might and main.

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WHO calls for action to protect, support and expand global health force



A nurse walks into a hospital ward in Janakpur in Dhanusha District in southern Nepal. PHOTO: RUPADHAYAY/UNICEF

THE world has witnessed extraordinary health gains since the UN agency was established, including smallpox eradication, the near elimination of polio, and declines in maternal mortality. Millions of young lives have also been saved

through childhood immunization.

“The history of WHO demonstrates what is possible when nations come together for a common purpose,” Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a statement on Monday.

Major gaps, climate threat

Although there is much to be proud of, Tedros pointed to the work that remains to achieve WHO’s founding vision of a world where all people attain the highest standard of health.

“We continue to face vast

inequities in access to health services, major gaps in the world’s defences against health emergencies, and threats from health-harming products and the climate crisis,” he said.

To meet these challenges, WHO is urging governments to take urgent action to protect, support and expand the health workforce.

Projected health worker shortage

Investments in education, skills and decent jobs must be prioritized to meet the rapidly growing demand for care and avert a projected shortage of 10 million health workers by 2030, mainly in developing countries.

WHO recently announced a global education programme on basic emergency care tar-

geting 25 per cent of nurses and midwives from 25 low- and middle-income countries by the end of 2025.

A new appreciation

On Monday, Tedros also delivered opening remarks to the 5th Global Forum on Human Resources for Health in Geneva. Over 3,000 delegates from more than 140 countries are attending the three-day event, which coincides with World Health Worker Week and WHO’s 75th anniversary.

He again stressed that the vision of attaining the highest possible level of health for all can only be achieved with an adequate and well-supported health workforce.

Tedros said COVID-19 has given the world a new appreci-

ation for the incredible value of health workers, who “worked day in and day out to protect us”. They, and the health systems they work in, are badly over-stretched.

Millions of health and care workers were infected during the pandemic, he said. Thousands died, and many are simply exhausted from over-work.

Anxiety, depression and burnout

Furthermore, severe disruptions to health systems during the global crisis have led to excess mortality and avoidable deaths in many countries, reversing previous health gains.

“The single largest cause of disrupted health services during the pandemic was the shortage of health workers. And the single largest barrier to delivering

vaccines and other life-saving tools to combat COVID-19 was the shortage of health workers,” he said.

Tedros reported that since the onset of the pandemic, more than one in three health and care workers have suffered from anxiety and depression, and around half have experienced burnout.

“Workers are giving voice to their struggle,” he continued. “Strikes and industrial action are at record levels: dissatisfaction with working conditions is reported in more than 160 countries.”

Honour the legacy

Tedros underscored the need to protect health workers, including through upholding their labour rights. He also encouraged countries to invest in decent working conditions for

the sector, fair pay, and training and leadership.

The role of women must be addressed, he added, as they account for two-thirds of the health and care workforce.

“Too few women are in senior positions in the health sector, and there is a 24 per cent gender pay gap. The glass ceiling must be smashed,” he said.

The WHO chief called for all countries to work together, as the job should not just fall to Ministries of Health alone.

“We all have a role to play,” said Tedros. “There is no better way to honour the legacy of health and care workers who have lost their lives to COVID-19, or have faced unprecedented challenges, than to protect, invest, together.”

SOURCE: UN NEWS

Omicron variant behind COVID surge in India has higher effective reproductive number: Study

THE latest preprint new study shows XBB.1.16 Omicron variant, which is behind the COVID surge in India and will also spread worldwide in the near future, has an effective reproductive number (Re) 1.27 and 1.17-fold higher respectively than XBB.1 & XBB.1.5, suggesting that XBB.1.16 will spread worldwide in the near future.

“At the end of March 2023, XBB.1.16, a SARS-CoV-2 omicron XBB subvariant, emerged and was detected in various countries. Compared to XBB.1.5, XBB.1.16 has two substitutions in the S protein: E180V is in the N-terminal domain, and T478K in the receptor-binding domain (RBD). We first show that XBB.1.16 had an effective reproductive number (Re) that was 1.27- and 1.17-fold higher than the parental XBB.1 and XBB.1.5, respectively, sug-

gesting that XBB.1.16 will spread worldwide in the near future.” the study stated.

“In fact, the WHO classified XBB.1.16 as a variant under monitoring on 30 March 2023. Neutralization assays demonstrated the robust resistance of XBB.1.16 to breakthrough infection sera of BA.2 (18-fold versus B.1.1) and BA.5 (37-fold versus B.1.1). We then used six clinically-available monoclonal antibodies and showed that only sotrovimab exhibits antiviral activity against XBB subvariants, including XBB.1.16. Our results suggest that, similar to XBB.1 and XBB.1.5, XBB.1.16 is robustly resistant to a variety of anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibodies,” it read further.

“Our multiscale investigations suggest that XBB.1.16 that XBB.1.16 has a greater

growth advantage in the human population compared to XBB.1 and XBB.1.5, while the ability of XBB.1.16 to exhibit profound immune evasion is comparable to XBB.1 and XBB.1.5.” it said.

Earlier in the day, Union Health Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya chaired a review meeting with health ministers of all states and Union Territories through video conferencing.

Mandaviya asked all states to stay alert and remain prepared for the management of the disease.

Mandaviya further urged the State Health Ministers to conduct mock drills of all hospital infrastructure on 10 and 11 April and review the health preparedness with district administrations and health officials on 8 and 9 April.

SOURCE: ANI



The WHO classified XBB.1.16 as a variant under monitoring on 30 March 2023. PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ANI

Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Monday 10 April 2023)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is generally fair over the North and Westcentral Bay and a few cloud over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 11 April 2023: Rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Taninthayi Region and Kachin, Kayin and Mon states. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be generally fair in Nay Pyi Taw, Lower Sagaing, Region and Kayah State and partly cloudy in the remaining regions and states.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4 - 6) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of slight increase of day Temperatures in Nay Pyi Taw, Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions and Kayah and Kayin states.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 11 April 2023: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 11 April 2023: Partly cloudy.

SCI/ENVIRON WORLD

SpaceX prepares for rehearsal, test flight of Starship rocket



SpaceX conducted a successful test-firing of the 33 Raptor engines on the first-stage booster of Starship in February. **PHOTO: SPACEX**

SpaceX plans to carry out a launch rehearsal next week of Starship, the most powerful rocket ever built, and its first test flight possibly the following week, the private space company said Thursday. SpaceX published photos of the massive Starship, which is

designed to eventually send astronauts to the Moon and beyond, on its launchpad at the company's base in Texas.

"Starship fully stacked at Starbase," SpaceX said in a tweet. "Team is working towards a launch rehearsal next week followed by Starship's first integrated flight test ~ week later pending regulatory approval."

SpaceX will need a green light from the Federal Aviation Administration before being allowed to carry out the orbital test launch.

SpaceX conducted a successful test-firing of the 33 Raptor engines on the first-stage booster of Starship in February.

The 230-foot (69-meter) Super Heavy booster was anchored to the ground during the test-firing, called a static fire, to prevent it from lifting off.

Starship consists of a reus-

able capsule that would carry crew and cargo and the first-stage booster. NASA has picked the Starship capsule to ferry its astronauts to the Moon as part of the Artemis III mission, set for 2025 at the earliest.

The US space agency will take astronauts up to lunar orbit itself in November 2024 using its own heavy rocket called the Space Launch System (SLS), which has been in development for more than a decade. Starship is both bigger and more powerful than SLS.

It generates 17 million pounds of thrust, more than double that of the Saturn V rockets used to send Apollo astronauts to the Moon. SpaceX foresees eventually putting a Starship into orbit, and then refueling it with another Starship so it can continue a journey to Mars or beyond. — AFP

Senegal harvests first experimental homegrown wheat

WITH the whir of a mower, under a clear blue sky, Senegalese researchers have begun harvesting a crop of experimental homegrown wheat, the latest step in a years-long effort to reduce reliance on imports. The second most consumed cereal after rice, wheat is an important staple in the bread-loving West African nation. But Senegal, like many of its neighbours, depends entirely on foreign supplies.

It imports 800,000 tonnes of the grain per year. Its tropical climate is not naturally suited to wheat but domestic trials have been underway for years.

Supply chain problems, rising grain prices and inflation



One challenge is a lack of adequate water for irrigation. **PHOTO: AFP**

caused by the war in Ukraine have added urgency to the country's efforts to achieve self-sufficiency. Since late last week, researchers from the Senegalese Institute for Agricultural Research (ISRA), a

public research institute, have been harvesting four varieties of wheat on a demonstration plot in Sangalkam, 35 kilometres (22 miles) from the capital Dakar. — AFP

India's tiger population rises above 3,000

INDIA'S wild tiger population — by far the largest in the world — has risen above 3,000, according to a census released Sunday, boosting efforts to conserve the endangered species. The largest of all cats, tigers once roamed throughout central, eastern and southern Asia.

But in the past 100 years the tiger has lost more than 93 per cent of its historic range and now only survives in scattered populations in 13 countries, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The Indian census estimated there were 3,167 tigers in the wild across the country,

up from 2,967 reported in the last such exercise. Surveys are conducted every four years, using camera traps and computer programmes to individually identify each creature.

The rate of increase has slowed to less than seven per cent over the period, down from more than 30 per cent in the previous four years. But Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the new figure was a "proud moment".

"Our family is expanding," he said at a ceremony in the southern city of Mysuru. "This is a matter of pride not only for India but the entire world." — AFP



The largest of all cats, tigers once roamed throughout central, eastern and southern Asia. **PHOTO: AFP**

Plastic pollution is scourge of English coastal region

ON an early spring afternoon, Tregantle Beach is bathed in a dazzling light reminiscent of a painting by British landscape artist JMW Turner as sea, sky and sun merge.

"It's beautiful, right? But look at your feet," says Rob Arnold, 65, an environmental activist and artist, crouching

down to pick tiny plastic balls, or "nurdles", sometimes nicknamed "mermaids' tears", out of the Cornwall sand.

The size of a lentil, the tiny bits of plastic are used by industry to manufacture plastic products.

But when spilt at industrial facilities, they can be swept into

drains and then out into the sea.

Some 11.5 trillion nurdles end up in the ocean each year, according to UK charity Fauna & Flora International.

Once released into the natural environment, the nurdles circulate on ocean currents and often wash up on beaches and other shores. — AFP

HEALTH/WELLNESS: WORLD

Walking 8,000 steps daily on weekends enough to cut death risk: study

WALKING 8,000 steps per day just on weekends can lower the risk of death, a Japanese research group has found.

People who walked at least 8,000 steps daily on one or two days per week saw a drop in the risk of death after 10 years that was about the same as that among people who walked the same amount three to seven days per week, said the group, which included Kyoto University's Graduate School of Medicine.

The study was published in the American Medical Association's JAMA Network Open

medical journal last month.

Previous research had shown that walking 8,000 steps or more per day can reduce the risk of death. But it was unclear how the risk may vary depending on the number of days spent walking that many steps.

The team used data from a US national health survey conducted between 2005 and 2006, studying the relationship between daily steps walked by 3,101 people aged 20 or older with the average age at 50.5 and the risk of death 10 years later.

Among those who walked

at least 8,000 steps per day on zero days, one or two days and three to seven days, the three-to-seven-day group logged a mortality rate 16.5 per cent, lower than that for the zero-day group, while the rate for the one-or-two-day group was 14.9 per cent.

When the research group limited the cause of death to diseases related to the heart and blood vessels, the rate was 8.4 per cent lower for the three-to-seven-day group and 8.1 per cent lower for the one-or-two-day group.

"There is no need to feel



Two young women walk a dog on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea in Beirut, Lebanon, 3 December 2022. PHOTO: XINHUA

pressured to walk every day," said Kosuke Inoue, assistant professor at Kyoto University Graduate School of Medicine

at the time of the research's publication, and who recommends walking on weekends. — Xinhua

Italy's Berlusconi steadily improving, doctors say

ITALIAN former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, who has been in hospital for leukaemia and a lung infection, is getting progressively better, doctors said Monday, expressing "cautious optimism" over his con-

dition.

Berlusconi, a billionaire and larger-than-life figure in Italian politics, has been in intensive care at Milan's San Raffaele Hospital since Wednesday.

"The last 48 hours have

seen a progressive and steady improvement in monitored organ function," his doctors said in a bulletin Monday.

Treatment was producing "the expected results, allowing us to express cautious optimism".

He remains in the intensive care unit, they said.

Doctors revealed Thursday that Berlusconi was being treated for a lung infection and was suffering from chronic myelomonocytic leukaemia (CMML), a rare type of blood cancer affecting mainly older adults.

The three-time premier — who currently serves as a senator and leader of the Forza Italia far-right party — has been in declining health in recent years, marked by frequent hospital stays. He is rarely seen in public. — AFP



Reporters work outside the San Raffaele hospital on 8 April 2023 in Milan, where former Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi is hospitalized for leukaemia and a lung infection. PHOTO: AFP

China's special health zone sees more visitors: newspaper

A special medical zone in southern China's island province of Hainan, which provides world-class medical tourism services to domestic and international patients, has experienced an increase in visitors, reported China Daily on Monday.

In the first two months of 2023, the Boao Lecheng International Medical Tourism Pilot Zone, China's first and currently only special medical zone, received more than 34,000 visitors, up over 37 per cent year on year, according to the news report.

Established in 2013, the zone has set up an independent regulatory system to optimize the approval, customs clearance, use and supervision

of imported medical devices and drugs, and introduced its own insurance system to fill the gap in insurance for imported medicines, the newspaper said.

"Lecheng is able to make use of medical devices and drugs licensed abroad but not yet in China, providing patients with advanced international-standard diagnosis and treatment," Yan Lukai, an official with the zone's administration, was quoted as saying. To date, the zone has introduced some 300 urgently needed medical devices and drugs, and established relations with nearly 80 pharmaceutical device and drug manufacturers in 18 countries, the news report noted. — Xinhua

Health concerns loom ageing population in Viet Nam

MANY elderly people in Viet Nam struggle with multiple diseases and short healthy lifespan, local media reported on Monday.

With the average number of healthy years for Vietnamese citizens hovering at just 64, health concerns loom large for the aging population, local newspaper Vietnam News

reported. Research by the Institute of Population, Health and Development shows that 62.3 per cent of elderly people in Viet Nam have high blood pressure, and only 86.3 per cent have access to healthcare services, the newspaper said.

The research also reveals that 67 per cent of the elderly have poor health. On average,

an elderly person has three diseases that need monitoring and medical care.

It is forecasted that in 2049, the number of elderly people needing medical support will increase by 2.5 times compared to the current level of four million people.

Pham Thang, head of the Viet Nam Association of the

Elderly, said healthcare for the elderly is an urgent need while medical services for the elderly in Viet Nam are still limited.

He added that the system of nursing homes and social protection centres is still limited in quantity and quality.

The number of elderly people in Viet Nam has continuously increased rapidly in

recent years. There are about 11.4 million elderly people, accounting for 11.86 per cent of the population.

The Southeast Asian country officially entered the aging population phase in 2011, six years faster than previous forecasts. — Xinhua

ECONOMY WORLD

Asian markets mixed as traders weigh US jobs data



Pedestrians walk past an electronic quotation board displaying the closing numbers of share prices of the Tokyo Stock Exchange in Tokyo on 5 April 2023. **PHOTO:AFP**

ASIAN equities were mixed Monday in holiday-thinned trade after US jobs data indicated the Federal Reserve would likely have to hike interest rates again but soothed recent worries about a possible recession.

The closely watched non-farm payrolls reading on Friday followed a string of figures last week showing the world's top economy was slowing down and dented investor sentiment.

Focus is now on the release of inflation figures later this week, which will play a crucial role in the Fed's decision-making when it meets early next month.

While rates are seen going

up, bets are for officials to end their hiking cycle earlier than previously thought, with a nervous eye on the banking sector after last month's turmoil that saw two lenders go under and Credit Suisse taken over.

Some commentators have even suggested that the Fed would announce cuts by the end of the year.

"It seems the Fed will unlikely 'budge' on cuts unless the US economy is amid a deep downturn," said SPI Asset Management's Stephen Innes.

"And given the still sticky inflation outlook and the less dovish drumbeat from the Fed

speaks, cuts may need to be removed from the market unless we enter an actual recession — and of course, neither outcome is an excellent backdrop for equities."

He added that the jobs report "was encouraging, signaling a subtle rebalancing of the labour market that again points to a soft landing".

With much of the region still closed for the Easter break, trading was light again on Monday.

Tokyo, Seoul, Mumbai, Bangkok and Taipei rose but Shanghai, Singapore and Jakarta turned negative. — AFP

Labour shortages dampen hope for tourism recovery in Viet Nam

VIETNAMESE tourism operators are finding it hard to recruit enough workers to cope with demand as tourists are coming back after the tough years of COVID-19, local media reported on Monday.

Viet Nam's tourism sector is among the world's hardest hit as the country saw almost one third of all job losses occur in the industry, according to the International Labour Organization.

Many workers who were placed on furlough or lost their jobs during the pandemic decided to leave the sector, said the National Administration of Tourism, adding that 44 per cent of workers with 5-10 years of experience and 90 per cent of

those with graduate degrees moved into other areas less affected by the pandemic to make a living.

Acute staff shortages are forcing owners of hotels, bars, restaurants and travel agencies in Viet Nam to offer better pay for full-time workers responsible for multiple tasks, recruit more seasonal semi-qualified or unqualified workers and cut services, the VnEconomy reported.

Many tour operators said they had planned to address the issue of recruitment at the end of last year, however, they have managed to fill only 60 per cent of open positions so far this year. — Xinhua

World Bank, IMF spring meetings to get underway in complex economic environment

THE World Bank and International Monetary Fund's spring meetings get underway later this week with an ambitious reform and fundraising agenda likely to be overshadowed by concerns over high inflation, rising geopolitical tension and financial stability.

"Growth remains historically weak — now and in the medium term," IMF managing director Kristalina Georgieva said during a speech last week.

The fund now expects global growth to fall below three per cent this year, and to remain at close to three per cent for the next half a decade — its lowest medium-term prediction since the 1990s.

Close to 90 per cent of the world's advanced economies will experience slowing growth



A woman walks past a sign for the 2023 Spring Meetings of the World Bank/International Monetary Fund on the IMF building in Washington, DC, on 5 April 2023. The Spring meetings will take place in person from 10 April to 16 April. **PHOTO:AFP**

this year, while Asia's emerging markets are expected to see a substantial rise in economic

output — with India and China predicted to account for half of all growth, she said. — AFP

S Korea's forex trading grows in Q1

SOUTH Korea's foreign exchange (FX) trading grew in the first quarter on higher demand for the US and Chinese currencies, central bank data showed on Monday.

The daily average transaction of foreign currencies and foreign currency derivatives in the local interbank market amounted to 32.26 billion US dollars in the January-March quarter, up 4.99 billion dollars from the previous quarter, ac-

ording to the Bank of Korea (BOK).

It stemmed from stronger demand for the US and Chinese currencies, of which the daily average trading increased 3.15 billion dollars and 0.97 billion US dollars respectively.

Demand for FX swaps gained to 14.24 billion dollars in the first quarter from 13.80 billion dollars in the prior quarter on a daily basis. — Xinhua

Cambodia's intl trade down 14.5% in Q1: report

CAMBODIA recorded 11.25 billion US dollars in its international trade during the first quarter (Q1) of 2023, down 14.5 per cent from 13.16 billion dollars over the same period last year, said an official report released Monday.

The kingdom's total export was valued at 5.39 billion dollars during the January-March period this year, down 5.7 per cent year-on-year, and total import was registered at 5.86 billion dollars, down 21.3 per cent, according to the General

Department of Customs and Excise's report.

The report showed that the Southeast Asian nation exported garment, footwear and travel goods products worth 2.42 billion dollars in Q1 this year, down 22 per cent from 3.12 billion dollars in the same period last year.

The garment, footwear and travel goods industry is the largest foreign exchange earner for Cambodia. The sector consists of roughly 1,100 factories and branches, employing about

750,000 workers, mostly female.

Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen said last month that the current global economic situation was not good, both in the United States and Europe, and that although the problem was not serious yet, it has affected the global economy through inflation.

He added that people in those countries have earned less income, so purchase orders from those countries are also declining. — Xinhua

Japan, land of the hybrid car, takes slowly to EVs

ATSUSHI Ikeda loves his car so much that he founded a club for Tesla owners, but his embrace of an electric vehicle makes him something of an outlier in Japan.

As markets from China to the United States race to put more EVs on their roads, the pedal is nowhere near the metal yet in Japan, where the hybrid still reigns supreme.

Last year, 59,000 new EVs were sold in Japan, a record and a three-fold annual increase, but still less than two per cent of sales of all cars in the country in 2022.

It's a situation that might seem counterintuitive, given Japan's auto

industry — which employs eight per cent of the country's workforce, and accounts for a quarter of all its exports — pioneered hybrid and electric cars.

But experts say the popularity of hybrids has actually hindered uptake of EVs, with Japanese automakers in no hurry to abandon existing line-ups.

The scepticism is no secret, and the former chief of Toyota, the world's top-selling carmaker, regularly questioned the growing focus on electric.

"I think Toyota didn't want the trend to tilt towards plug-in hybrids and electric vehicles because of their focus on hybrids and also their significant

investment," said Ken-ichiro Wada, president of the Japan Electrification Research Institute, who helped develop early EVs at Mitsubishi Motors in the 2000s.

He compared the company to a top-ranking sumo wrestler, eager to "maintain the status quo for as long as possible".

When Ikeda went looking for a car that was "affordable, safe, with no pollutants", he quickly turned to Tesla.

"I like high-performance cars," he told AFP, describing the few Japanese options on the market when he bought in 2016 as small and unattractive. — AFP



This photo taken on 30 March 2023 shows a man walking past one of Nissan's electric vehicles (EV), the Leaf, at the global headquarters of Japanese automaker Nissan Motor in Yokohama, Kanagawa prefecture. Last year, 59,000 new EVs were sold in Japan, a record and a three-fold annual increase, but still less than two per cent of sales of all cars in the country in 2022. PHOTO: AFP

ChatGPT developer eager to open office in Japan amid concern over use



Sam Altman, chief executive of US-based OpenAI, speaks to reporters after meeting Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at the premier's office in Tokyo on 10 April 2023. PHOTO: KYODO

A developer of ChatGPT said Monday that his company plans to open an office in Japan amid growing concerns about the chatbot's unauthorized collection of personal data and impact on learning environments.

Sam Altman, chief executive of US-based OpenAI, met Prime Minister Fumio Kishida in Tokyo, as the risks of artificial intelligence are expected to be discussed at the Group of Seven ministerial gathering on digital issues, which

Japan will host in late April.

Altman told reporters that he explained to Kishida, who will preside over the G-7 summit in his constituency of Hiroshima in May, about the pros and cons of ChatGPT while saying the premier showed an interest in the AI technology. Chatbots are software applications trained using massive amounts of data from the internet, enabling them to process and simulate human-like conversations with users. — Kyodo

Japan Display, China's HKC to jointly produce organic EL displays

JAPAN Display Inc and Chinese display maker HKC Corp have agreed to jointly build factories in China to produce a next-generation organic electroluminescent display, with plans to start mass production in 2025, JDI said Monday.

The total investment for the joint project could amount to hundreds of billions of yen, the Japanese firm

said. HKC will cover the costs of factory construction while JDI will provide the expertise for manufacturing the product.

The two companies will work on the production of a new type of EL display called eLEAP, which was developed by JDI and is of a higher quality than existing models in terms of brightness and product life. — Kyodo

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V BIENDONG STAR VOY.NO. (23009N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V BIENDONG STAR VOY.NO. (23009N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **11-4-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S X-PRESS FEEDERS LINE

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V BLPL BLESSING VOY.NO. (2306S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V BLPL BLESSING VOY.NO. (2306S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **11-4-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S BLPL SHIPPING LINE

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V NEGAR VOY.NO. (SCY1149)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V NEGAR VOY. NO. (SCY1149)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **11-4-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT** 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 LAND AND SEA INTERMODAL LOGISTICS
SDN BHD LINE**

GLOBAL AFFAIRS



A Belarusian volunteer soldier from the Kastus Kalinouski regiment, a regiment made up of Belarusian opposition volunteers formed to defend Ukraine, fires a 120mm mortar round at a front line position near Bakhmut in the Donetsk region, on 9 April 2023, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine. **PHOTO: AFP**

Moscow-backed official claims visit to frontline city Bakhmut

A Moscow-backed official announced Monday that he had visited the frontline city of Bakhmut in Ukraine, suggesting that Russia's forces have made significant gains there.

The battle for Bakhmut is the longest and bloodiest of Russia's offensive, and the city has taken on huge symbolic importance even though analysts say it has little strategic value.

Denis Pushilin, the Russia-installed head of the eastern Ukrainian Donetsk region, posted a video of himself on Telegram in

the heavily destroyed city.

"Here is our Artemovsk," Pushilin said, using the Soviet-era name for Bakhmut.

"It is being liberated by Wagnerites," he added, in reference to the Wagner mercenary group spearheading Russia's battle in the city.

Destroyed buildings and ruins could be seen in the background behind Pushilin, who wore a camouflage helmet.

He appeared to be standing in the central Svoboda square of the city.

The sound of artillery could be heard in the video.

The head of Wagner, Yevgeny Prigozhin, last week claimed the group had "in a legal sense" captured Bakhmut because he said it had taken control of city hall.

The Russian army reported no such gains, and Ukraine has said it is continuing to defend the city.

In a sign that Wagner has made significant gains, several Russian war correspondents have in recent days published videos from Bakhmut. — AFP

Rescuers find sixth body after French Alps avalanche

EMERGENCY workers found two more victims of an avalanche near Mont Blanc in southeastern France on Monday, bringing the death toll from the tragedy to six.

A massive body of snow swept down the Armancette glacier in the Alps on Sunday, killing two mountain guides and four of their clients.

Searchers recovered the bodies of the guides and a couple in their twenties on Sunday, and the remaining victims were found on Monday morning, said prosecutor Karline Bouisset.

They were a 39-year-old woman and a man in his early forties who was "probably" her partner, she said.

One person also suffered

slight injuries in the avalanche while eight others also swept up were unharmed, the prefecture said.

The avalanche occurred without warning on a sunny day, covering an area of 1,600 metres (nearly one mile) by 500 metres.

Skiing conditions had been "good" on Easter Sunday, the mayor of the town of Contamines-Montjoie, Francois Barbier, told AFP.

"I think it's the most deadly avalanche this season."

Weather authority Météo France had not issued any avalanche alert for the region, but a combination of warmth and wind may have been behind the disaster, local authorities said.

— AFP

Saudi delegation in Yemen for peace talks with rebels

A Saudi delegation was in Yemen's capital on Sunday to negotiate a potential new truce with the Iran-backed Huthi rebels who control the city, diplomats said, as Riyadh seeks a way out of the war.

Huthi media showed the group's political leader, Mahdi al-Mashat, shaking hands and meeting with Saudi officials including the kingdom's ambassador to Yemen, Mohammed Al-Jaber.

The Saudi officials are "in Sanaa to discuss moving forward to create peace in Yemen," said a Yemeni diplomat based in the Gulf region, information that was confirmed by a second dip-



A handout picture released by the Huthi-affiliated branch of the Yemeni News Agency SABA on 9 April 2023 shows the Huthi group's political leader Mahdi al-Mashat (L) welcoming the Saudi ambassador to Yemen Mohammed Al Jaber and a delegation in Sanaa. **PHOTO: AFP PHOTO / HO / SABA**

lomat.

Saudi officials did not re-

spond to requests for comment.

— AFP

Iraqi Kurds protest Turkish bombardment of airport

SEVERAL hundred Iraqi Kurds protested on Sunday against repeated Turkish military bombardments of their region, two days after an attack near the Sulaimaniyah airport.

The bombardment on Friday caused an explosion near the airport wall while the commander of the Kurdish-led and US-allied Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) was present. US troops were also in the area but there were no casualties, the Pentagon said.

Around 400 protesters, many of them middle-aged, walked in



This handout picture released by the office of Iraq's national security adviser Qassem al-Aaraji dated 8 April 2023 shows him (R) and other top Iraqi advisers standing by an impact crater during a visit to the site of an attack that took place the previous day near the airport of Sulaimaniyah in the autonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq. **PHOTO: "AFP PHOTO / HO / OFFICE OF IRAQ'S NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER"**

the centre of Sulaimaniyah, the second city in Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region.

They waved the flag of Iraqi Kurdistan and held a banner denouncing the airport bombardment as a "terrorist act".

Organized by activists and former parliamentarians, the demonstrators also shouted against the "dictator" President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Türkiye, according to an AFP correspondent.

"This is not the first Turkish aggression against civilian targets in the region," said Ali

Amine, 66, a retired civil servant.

"It has become a permanent attack. Sometimes it's villages, sometimes civilian targets -- agricultural land, water or electricity installations."

Another protester, Fatma Hamid, 55, denounced "the lax positions" of authorities in the region which has been autonomous for three decades. Türkiye has long maintained military positions inside northern Iraq, where it regularly launches operations against Turkish Kurdish fighters from the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). — AFP

Iran says reducing US dollar influence will minimize West's domination over global economy

A top Iranian security official said on Sunday that reducing the US dollar's influence on regional and international trade will minimize the West's domination over the global economy.

Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Shamkhani made the remarks in a meeting with the Russian president's aide Igor Levitin in Iranian capital Tehran, according to SNSC-affiliated Nour News.

During the meeting, Shamkhani said the process

to reduce the dollar's clout on regional and international transactions has already started, noting that many countries are joining the path.

He described the initiatives finalized between Iran and Russia in the area of monetary and banking transactions as an "effective" method for "dooming the illegal Western sanctions to failure".

Shamkhani expressed satisfaction with the improved level of economic cooperation between Iran and Russia over the past months, highlighting

the need to accelerate the joint economic projects' implementation.

He said completing the International North-South Transport Corridor and expansion of the transportation sector cooperation between the two countries constitute an important part of the joint projects.

For his part, Levitin said Moscow is ready to make investments in different Iranian economic sectors, including those pertaining to the steel, oil and petrochemical industries. — Xinhua



A man passes a foreign exchange office in Cairo, Egypt, 25 December 2022. PHOTO: XINHUA

Japan looks to scrap foreign trainee programme for new system

A Japanese government panel plans to propose scrapping the country's controversial trainee programme for foreigners and creating a new system to address issues related to human rights violations, a draft interim report showed Monday.

The new system, according to the draft, should clearly state it is intended to "secure" and "develop" human resources, unlike the existing programme, which only mentions the latter despite

it, in practice, often being used as a means to obtain workers in the face of the nation's graying population and severe labour shortages.

As of the end of 2022, around 325,000 foreign technical trainees were enrolled in the programme to transfer knowledge and skills to developing countries from Japan. Established 30 years ago, it has been criticized for simply allowing companies to import cheap labour and has received

multiple allegations of trainee abuse.

With the government planning to base the new system on conclusions from the 15-strong expert panel of academics and local government heads, its launch could mark a new turning point for accepting foreign workers. The panel aims to compile an interim report as soon as the end of April and finalize it by fall 2023. In calling for the current programme to be abolished, the panel's draft said it is "undesirable to continue accepting (trainees) as workers while saying that the programme's only goal is human resources development."

Speaking to reporters, Japan International Cooperation Agency President Akihiko Tanaka, who heads the panel, said as many businesses have "no choice but to rely heavily on the labour of foreign trainees," it is important to "create a new system that takes the good parts of the programme, rather than scrapping the entire thing." — Kyodo



A Japanese government panel tasked with reviewing the country's foreign technical intern programme holds a meeting in Tokyo on 10 April 2023. PHOTO: KYODO

NEWS IN BRIEF

Sand, dust hit Beijing, raising blue alert

GALES, floating sand particles, and dust are expected to hit Beijing from Monday to Tuesday, said the Beijing meteorological bureau on Monday noon.

Under the effect of cold air and the Mongolian cyclone, sand and dust weather and gales affecting the Chinese capital will last until Tuesday evening, with weather authorities issuing blue alerts.

Starting from early Monday morning, Beijing experienced dusty weather. With stronger winds in the evening, the concentration of sand and dust would significantly increase, with the lowest visibility of 1 km to 4 km, said Zhang Linna, chief forecaster at the Beijing Meteorological Service.

Elderly people, children, and those with respiratory allergies are advised to reduce outdoor activities as much as possible and take necessary precautions.

China has a four-tier colour-coded weather warning system for sandstorms, with red representing the most severe, followed by orange, yellow, and blue. — Xinhua

Indonesia's 1st high-speed train to begin operation in August

INDONESIA'S first high-speed railway built with Chinese technology will begin operation in August, an investment minister said Monday.

Indonesian Coordinating Minister for Maritime and Investment Affairs Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan said in a press conference the Jakarta-Bandung 140-kilometre service is expected to commence on the country's Independence Day national holiday of 18 August following a trial run in May.

The new train will cut the three-hour travel time between the two cities to about 40 minutes. — Kyodo

Egyptian FM calls for end to terrorism, foreign interference in Syria

EGYPTIAN Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry on Sunday calls for an end to all forms of terrorism and foreign interference in Syria in order to restore its se-

curity and stability.

During a phone call with the United Nations Special Envoy to Syria Geir Pedersen, the top Egyptian diplomat reiterated

Egypt's full support for Pedersen's efforts to reach a comprehensive political settlement in Syria, in line with Security Council Resolution 2254, according to

a statement by the Egyptian Foreign Ministry. For his part, the UN envoy thanked Egypt for its contribution and ongoing support in resolving the Syrian crisis.

Shoukry and Pedersen also discussed ways to alleviate the sufferings of the Syrian people, according to the statement. — Xinhua



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 socioeconomic 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.

Myanmar U-23 team leaves for Thailand ahead of SEA Games' training

THE 26 preliminary players of Myanmar U-23 team selected for the 2023 SEA Games, which will be hosted by Cambodia, left for Thailand yesterday for their training sessions, according to the Myanmar Football Federation.

Team Myanmar is mainly made up of young players from

Myanmar National League clubs including Yangon United, Shan United, and Ayeyawady United, and the team will be handled by German national Michael as the team's head coach.

The preliminary Myanmar U-23 team will stay and take training in Thailand, play friendly matches with Thai league clubs

and continue to select the final player squad ahead of the Cambodian SEA Games, the football federation officials said.

Hein Htet Aung from Malaysian club Selangor has not joined the current player list, and he will be able to join the U-23 team only near the SEA Games. — KZL

Guardiola ready to pit his wits against old rival Tuchel

PEP Guardiola is relishing the chance to pit his wits against Bayern Munich manager Thomas Tuchel as the Manchester City boss looks to avenge his team's 2021 Champions League final defeat at the German's hands.

City host Bayern in the Champions League quarter-final first leg on Tuesday as Guardiola continues his quest to lead the team to their first title in Europe's elite club competition.

It will be an intriguing tactical battle between two of the world's top managers, with Guardiola coming face to face with Tuchel two years after the German won their Champions League final showdown.

Tuchel was in charge of Chelsea when they beat City 1-0 in the final in Porto two years ago.



Manchester City's Spanish manager Pep Guardiola attends a press conference at Manchester City training ground in Manchester, north-west England on 10 April 2023, on the eve of their UEFA Champions League quarter-final first leg football match against Bayern Munich. **PHOTO: AFP**

Guardiola was accused of over-thinking his team selection for the final against Chelsea,

who also beat City in the FA Cup and the Premier League during Tuchel's reign. — AFP

Top-seeded Tiafoe beats Etcheverry to win ATP Houston title

FRANCES Tiafoe defeated Thomas Etcheverry 7-6 (7/1), 7-6 (8/6) to win the ATP clay court title in Houston on a double-duty day in Texas.

The American, playing his first ATP tournament as the top seed, had to win twice on Sunday to secure the crown thanks to the weather delays earlier in the week.

After beating Gijs Brouwer 6-4, 6-1 in the semi-finals he said he was up for the challenge.

"I'm running on adrenaline," Tiafoe told the crowd after beating Brouwer. "I'm on a mission so I'm happy."

By Sunday night it was mission accomplished as Tia-

foe claimed his second ATP title and his first since 2018 in Delray Beach.

Since then he'd come up empty in four finals appearances.

The soggy week meant Tiafoe in fact had to win four matches in two days, playing his first two of the week on Saturday.

He didn't drop a set and was broken just once — when he served for the title against Etcheverry at 5-4 in the second set.

He trailed 1-3 and 3-5 in the tiebreaker but clinched the victory on his second match point with his 12th ace of the contest. — AFP

Assistant ref stood down after Robertson elbow incident



Liverpool's German manager Jurgen Klopp (R) gives instructions to Liverpool's Scottish defender Andrew Robertson during the English Premier League football match between Liverpool and Arsenal at Anfield in Liverpool, north west England on 9 April 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

ASSISTANT referee Constantine Hatzidakis will not be involved in any matches while the Football Association investigate whether he elbowed Liverpool's Andrew Robertson.

The extraordinary incident occurred just after the half-time whistle had been blown during Liverpool's explosive 2-2 draw against Premier League leaders Arsenal at Anfield on Sunday.

Robertson appeared to confront Hatzidakis on the pitch, reaching to grab the arm of the official, who reacted by jabbing his elbow towards the Liverpool left-back. — AFP