

## Maravijaya Buddha Image set to become world's tallest sitting marble statue

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing explains the progress of building Maravijaya Buddha Image, Buddha Park to well-wishers

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Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and attendees view scale models of the Maravijaya Buddha Image and the Buddha Park at the ceremony to explain the progress in building the Maravijaya Buddha Image in Nay Pyi Taw on 29 July 2023.

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Black gram, pigeon pea prices hit fresh peaks

## MRF to launch sale of 50,000 bags of reserved rice at more equitable prices

**M**YANMAR Rice Federation (MRF) will sell off a total of 50,000 bags of reserved rice to stabilize the rice prices in the market, according to MRF Chair U Ye Min Aung.

The reserved rice with the cooperation of rice export companies and under other plans will be sold in the market as quickly as possible ensuring the price stability.

The federation will sell 50-kilo-

gramme 50,000 bags of rice (25 per cent – single polished and sorted) initially and the number of rice bags will be increased if necessary.

“We will sell 50,000 bags of reserved rice of the federation. We will do more depending on the situation. We will make sales via the wholesale centres and retail shops. Then, we will also sell for the factory workers of industrial zones.

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Rice bags are seen being organized at the warehouse.

*Pyin Oo Lwin*


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# NATIONAL



## MYANMAR Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Saturday 29 July 2023)

**BAY INFERENCE:** According to the observations at (17:30) hrs MST today, the low pressure area over North Odisha and adjoining West Bengal Coasts, India still persists. Monsoon is strong to vigorous over the Andaman Sea and South Bay and strong elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 30 July 2023:** Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Lower Sagaing and Magway regions, fairly widespread in Mandalay Region and Northern Shan and Kayah states and widespread in the remaining regions and states with likelihood of regionally heavyfalls in Taninthayi Region and Kayin and Mon states and isolated heavyfalls in Upper Sagaing, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions and Kachin and Rakhine states. Degree of certainty is (100%).

**STATE OF THE SEA:** Squalls with rough seas are likely at times off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35-40) mph. Wave height will be about (9-11) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

**OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS:** Increase of rain in Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions and Rakhine, Kayin and Mon states.

**FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 30 July 2023:** Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

## Bagan embraces progress: Transformation into 11 sections to enhance cleanliness and beauty

Bagan, an archaeological zone with more than 3,000 ancient buildings, has been divided into 11 parts, and its beautifying process is underway.



An ancient pagoda from the Bagan Archaeological Zone is seen being cleaned and beautified by local people.

BAGAN Archaeological Zone, which has more than 3,000 ancient buildings, has been divided into 11 sections and is being cleaned and beautified, according to the Department of Archeology and National Museum (Bagan Division).

Bagan has more than 3,000 ancient buildings, and due to the large area, the department has continuously carried out cleaning with security guards. Because of the rapid regrowth of weeds, it is difficult to clean and beautify the Bagan area.

So, cleaning and beautification is carried out by dividing it into 11 sections.

In such doing, the weeds that are clinging to the upper steps of the pagodas are removed. If there are any Buddha statues, they are cleaned and polished to make them shiny, and the department has formed work supervision teams to oversee the cleanliness and beauty of the premises of the pagodas and Buddha statues.

In addition to this, the department also informed that

ancient building numbers: 2,189, 2,176, 406, 394, 2,158, 1,459, 1,339, 1,492, 748, 560, 676 and 680 which were affected by the Mocha storm that hit last May, are repaired and maintained following UNESCO guidelines.

In the same way, water channels are constructed to improve the flow of water in the areas where the flood occurs, the original water sources are re-identified and box culvert works are also done.

— ASH/KZL

## 14 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 29 July, total figure registers 641,053

MYANMAR'S COVID-19-positive cases rose to **641,053** after **14** new cases were reported on 29 July 2023 according to the Ministry of Health. Therefore, a total of **11,019,607** laboratory samples were examined to date and the confirmed COVID-19 cases reached **641,053**. The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached **619,820** including **17** new recoveries. The death toll from COVID-19 in the country registered **19,494** on 29-7-2023 with no new death reported from the pandemic. COVID-19 information can be browsed on the internet page moh.gov.mm of the Ministry of Health. — GNLM

## MRF to launch sale of 50,000 bags of reserved rice at more equitable prices

### FROM PAGE-1

"We will make the sale at the reasonable prices lower than the market prices. Yangon is our first priority. The products go across the nation including Rakhine via the Yangon wholesale centre and so we will sell at the wholesale centres of Yangon. There are many factory

workers in Yangon and it is a basic need of them," he said.

The MRF released statement saying there is enough rice for domestic consumption and the surplus rice is exported systematically. Therefore, there is no need to worry about rice due to the disinformation and rumours that spark panic buy-

ing and the consumers should buy the rice if necessary.

Currently, the rice demand is high in the market and price is also on the rise for transportation charges. The rice priced at only K40,000 per bag is now K100,000 and the price stood at K60,000 per bag becomes K150,000. — ASH/KTZH



Varieties of rice are organized for sale at the rice outlet in Yangon.



## Underground and aboveground natural resources

Citizens have the right to manage underground and aboveground natural resources. Relevant ministries need to encourage the emergence of qualified human resources for the State.

*(The excerpts from the speech delivered by State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing in inspecting the No 2 Steel Mill (Pinpet) on 8 March 2023)*

## Maravijaya Buddha Image set to become world's tallest sitting marble statue

### Senior General Min Aung Hlaing explains the progress of building Maravijaya Buddha Image, Buddha Park to well-wishers

A ceremony to explain progress in building the Maravijaya Buddha Image which would be the world's tallest sitting marble Buddha image, located in Dekkhinathiri Township of Nay Pyi Taw took place yesterday.

On the occasion, Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing made clarifications on the building of the Abhaya Rajamuni Buddha Image in the Buddha Park near Pankwe Village of Kengtung in 2018 for strengthening peace and stability in Shan State (East), increasing the number of local and foreign visitors to the Buddha image to create job opportunities for

preparations to carve the Buddha image in Bhumi Phassa mudra, conveyance of marble rocks, seeking advice from member Sayadaws of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, carving stone inscriptions on Tri Pitaka treatises in Pali and Romanized languages, printing Pitakat the treatises in Pali and Romanized languages and inserting them into the tablets.

He also highlighted work progress in the construction of the Maravijaya Buddha Park, placing the land of victory in front of the Maravijaya Buddha Image, uplifting the Buddha image through collaborative efforts of engineers from the Myanmar Engineering Council and military engineers, enshrining religious



The Senior General receives cash donations from the Indian well-wisher at the ceremony to explain the progress in building the Maravijaya Buddha Image in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

... the building of the Abhaya Rajamuni Buddha Image in the Buddha Park near Pankwe Village of Kengtung in 2018 for strengthening peace and stability in Shan State (East), increasing the number of local and foreign visitors to the Buddha image to create job opportunities for the residents, and for enhancement of socioeconomic life of the people.

the residents, and for enhancement of socioeconomic life of the people.

The Senior General also explained

objects and jewellery items donated by well-wishers into the central parts of the throne, and construction of Sasa-

na Beikman Aggadipati Withongama ordination hall which is 296 feet long, 213 feet wide and 94 feet high to accommodate 900 members of the Sangha and 1,200 laypersons at the ceremonies.

Importantly, the Senior General unveiled the plans to consecrate the Buddha Image, hoist umbrellas atop small pagodas on stone plaque chambers and share merits gained on the full moon of Second Waso 1385 ME (Dhammacakka Day), 1 August 2023.

The Senior General accepted cash donations from well-wishers. At the ceremony, 274 well-wishers at home and abroad donated K5.04 billion, US\$23,000

and 100,000 baht for the construction of the Buddha image and the Buddha park.

The Senior General expressed his thanks to all well-wishers for their cash donations.

Those attendees viewed scale models of the Buddha image and the Buddha park, printed Tri Pitaka treatises in Pali and Romanized languages and inserted treatises into the tablets. The Senior General explained the construction progress of the image and the park. The attendees also paid homage to the Buddha image and visited the park. — MNA/TTA

## Daily newspapers available online

FOR those who would like to read the Myanmar Alinn, the Kyemon and the Global New Light of Myanmar, published daily by the Ministry of Information, please visit [www.moi.gov.mm/mal](http://www.moi.gov.mm/mal), [www.moi.gov.mm/km](http://www.moi.gov.mm/km), [www.moi.gov.mm/nlm](http://www.moi.gov.mm/nlm) and [www.gnlm.com.mm/e-paper](http://www.gnlm.com.mm/e-paper).



# NATIONAL

## Myanmar delegation seeks information on Aadhaar & MOSIP systems in India



Union Minister for Immigration and Population U Myint Kyaing and delegates convene the meeting with Professor Debabrata Das and officials from the International Institute of Information Technology Bangalore (IIIT-B) in Electronic City, Bangalore, on 28 July 2023.

MYANMAR'S Union Minister for Immigration and Population U Myint Kyaing, along with a delegation, paid a visit to the Unique Identification Authori-

ty of India (UIDAI) Technology Centre in Bangalore, India on 28 July.

Deputy Director-General Ms Tanusree Deb Barma and

officials from the UIDAI Technology Centre in Bangalore explained the current operations carried out with the help of the Aadhaar system, data input

under the Aadhaar system and measures for the continuous improvement of the record verification process, assessment of Technology Centre on benefits of Aadhaar system.

The Union minister and delegation then went to the Network Operation Centre (NOC) of the UIDAI Technology Centre to see how the Aadhaar control systems operated round-the-clock and to ask questions about more details, to which UIDAI staff members responded.

The meeting ended with the exchange of souvenirs after the Union minister and the deputy director-general posed for a documentary group photo.

The International Institute of Information Technology

Bangalore (IIIT-B) in Electronic City, Bangalore, welcomed the Union Minister and delegation when they arrived there in the afternoon. There, they were given information about the institute's founding, its partnership with the University of Information Technology in Myanmar, how India supports some other countries with its Modular Open-Source Identity Platform (MOSIP), and the opportunities for the two nations to work together on e-ID systems.

Union Minister U Myint Kyaing and the delegation were welcomed back by Indian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Vinay Kumar and officials at Yangon International Airport yesterday. — MNA/TH

## Confiscation of illegal items: industrial materials, consumer goods and vehicles

A combined team under the management of Bago Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force conducted inspections a long with Mandalay-Yangon trade road, according to information, on 26 July and confiscated a Mitsubishi Fuso vehicle (estimated value of K55 million) carrying three kinds of goods worth K10,610,773 including 2230 kilogrammes of 100 per cent polyester fabric that were not declared in the Import Declaration (ID) near a fuel shop in Indagaw township. The action was conducted as per Customs procedures.

An on-duty team at the Kawkareik (Tadakyoe) combined checkpoint captured four kinds of goods worth K4.225 million including 1200 bags of smart softener and 960 bottles of golden

mountain oyster source without official documents from a Toyota HiAce Minibus (approximately K40 million) heading to Kyondoe from Myawady on 27 July. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

Similarly, a Customs on-duty team conducted inspections at the Yangon International Airport (Import Desk) on 27 July and nabbed a Clasp sample worth K42,000 that was different from the personal effect from luggage. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

An on-duty team impounded a Nissan diesel tractor head and a trailer (estimated value of K65 million) carrying three kinds of goods worth K26.342 million including 100 sets of Sun Sir sewing machines that exceeded the Import Declaration (ID) near the

Indaing checkpoint along with Myawady-Hpa-an-Yangon trade route on 27 July. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

An unregistered Toyota Hi-Ace car (approximately K3.5 million) at the combined checkpoint in Tanaing township and an unregistered Toyota Voxy car (estimated value of K7 million) and an unregistered Honda Insight car (approximately K8 million) near Pyidaungsu highway road at the junction of city bypass road in Mohnyin township on 27 July. The action was taken under the Export and Import Law.

As a result, a total of 12 arrests were made on 26 and 27 July, with an estimated value of K219,719,773, as reported by the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS



Confiscated illegal items like some oyster sauce in Kayin State and a vehicle in Yangon Region (above and right photos).



# NATIONAL

## UMFCCI holds meeting with EuroCham Myanmar

PRESIDENT U Aye Win of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) U Aye Win received CEO Ms Karina Ufert of the Euro Chamber of Commerce in Myanmar and members in Yangon yesterday.

The EuroCham Myanmar is formed of Europe-based companies running investments in Myanmar.

During the event, members of Eurocham Myanmar, the entrepreneurs and representatives of the logistics sector, food and commodities, farming products (seedlings), solar energy and health and medicinal sectors reported on holding awareness seminars

regarding the facilitation of businesses, creation of jobs, streamlined import licence processes, effective measures against illegal trade, creation of community comply with the policies, lower the trade barriers, raw material import, payment system for border trade and registration processes for online sales.

In his response to the presentation, the UMFCCI President said the federation will submit the needed things including the challenges of respective industries to the ministries concerned and working committees to promote foreign investments and create job opportunities in the country. Moreover, it will also cooperate



The discussion between the EuroCham Myanmar and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry in progress in Yangon yesterday. PHOTO: MYO MIN THURA

with the relevant ministries to organize awareness seminars to ensure the right to true in-

formation. The UMFCCI makes efforts to establish Public Private Dialogue and strategic

communication between the ministry and private sectors. — Myo Min Thura/KTZH

## Myanmar-Thai tourism operators engage in talks

ACCORDING to the association's statement, a discussion was held between the Union of Myanmar Travel Association (UMTA) and the Thai Travel Agents Association (TTAA) regarding the development of bilateral tourism between Myanmar and Thailand.

Discussions delved into organizing a familiarization trip (FAM trip) to Myanmar, exchanging information, and outlining a cooperation framework, including joint marketing initiatives and support for tourism activities.

To leverage the strengths of each country



Several Thai tourists are seen visiting the Botahtaung Pagoda's guardian spirit.

and address visa support issues, strategies were developed and submitted to overcome common barriers, such as transport, communications and marketing activities.

Both countries signed a memorandum of under-

standing (MOU), and with rich cultural heritage and enchanting landscapes, along with numerous tourist attractions, they intend to strengthen bilateral relations and enhance cooperation for mutual benefit. — TWA/KZW

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## Mandalay market sees bustling trade of wheat crops

MYANMAR'S wheat crop yield rate is good this year and the sellers are doing a roaring trade in the Mandalay market, traders said.

There is a brisk sale of wheat crops in the Mandalay market. The price has remained unchanged at K180,000 per three-basket bag since February. The price stability benefits the consumers, U Soe Win Myint, an owner of the Soe Win Myint depot, highlighted.

"Mandalay market is bustling with trading activities of wheat crops at high prices. Wheat is highly consumed in the external markets. It is the second highest-demanded crop in Myanmar

after the staple food rice. The fast-moving market allows wheat growers to make profits this year. Earlier, wheat was commonly imported. To minimize the outflow of foreign currency, I like to suggest the growers add more acres and ramp up the production. The domestic consumption of wheat is also growing year over year. The wheat has become one of the essential crops in Myanmar", he elaborated.

Wheat is a winter crop. It is grown mostly in Mandalay and Sagaing Region and is also commonly found in southern and northern Shan State, Chin State and Kayah State. — Min Htet Aung/EM

## Bitter gourd farmers reap bigger crop profits

THIS year's prices are helping the bitter gourd farmers reap healthy profits, said U Myint Swe, a bitter gourd farmer from Seltawlay Village of Patheingyi Township of Mandalay Region.

After the plum cultivation season, the farmers grow bitter gourd among the plum trees as double-crops. The bitter gourd was planted starting in March and the production rate is high and the farmers

get good prices. Currently, the bitter gourd is priced at K800 per viss and it is profitable for the farmers.

"We grow the bitter gourd after the plum season by cutting the branches among the plum trees with an irrigation system. I only grow on two acres of land. The bitter gourd season starts in March and ends in September. The production rate is fine and it

fetches good prices and so the farmers receive extra incomes. The bitter gourd is the most profitable crop among the crops. It makes a large profit. We grow mostly Myarni and Parli. We pluck out the bitter gourd three days a week and 100 visses per day. It is 300 visses on the third day. The merchants come and buy here. The transaction is good. We grow yearly as we get extra

income," he said.

There are 50 acres of bitter gourd plantation in that village. The production cost is K1 million per acre and it makes K2.5 million profits after the season. The farmers grow ridged gourd and eggplant in addition to the bitter gourd. The crops are transported to Mandalay and PyinOoLwin. — Min Htet Aung(Mdy Sub-Printing House)/KTZH



Bitter gourd.



# CURRENT AFFAIRS

## PHOTO NEWS

### Sayadaws from five countries pay homage to Shwedagon Pagoda



REVERED monks from India, Thailand, Laos, Nepal and Sri Lanka and their pilgrims are seen paying homage to the Shwedagon Pagoda under the arrangement of the Sitagu Sayadaw. PHOTO: SITAGU STAR

### Applications reach over 7,000 for building permits within YCDC boundaries



A building is seen under construction in the Yangon Region.

ACCORDING to the Yangon City Development Committee-YCDC, there are 7,398 building permit applications and 4,608 buildings that have been approved for construction within the boundaries of the YCDC.

YCDC, Yangon Electricity Supply Corporation (YESC), Yangon Region Fire Services Department and related departments of the committee are processing building permits through the online system

at [ybps.ycdc.gov.mm](http://ybps.ycdc.gov.mm).

Building construction permits and building completion certificates are being processed online only starting from 7 April 2020. All the required information, the things to be submitted and the building forms are being processed through the paperless system.

In addition to the lists of construction permits applied for and approved lists and ongoing cases within the boundaries of the YCDC, the

lists of buildings approved for construction by various townships and buildings that have been issued with a certificate of completion can be easily accessed online by anyone with a smart phone or computer at [ybps.ycdc.gov.mm](http://ybps.ycdc.gov.mm).

There were 7,398 building permit applications, 4,608 buildings that were approved for construction, and 43 approved buildings that were cancelled by the landlord because they did not want to build as of 25 July 2023.

In addition, 260 buildings could not be approved because they could not be implemented, and one construction permit was kept as a record, 703 construction permits were re-notified due to the need of the building permit applicants, and 1,418 construction permits that are still being verified by the department, according to the YCDC. — TWA/KZL

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Petition to eliminate additional charges for gold trading

THE Yangon Region Gold Entrepreneurs Owners Association urged gold shops in Yangon Region not to charge an additional handling fee when selling gold.

### Major river water levels expected to surge in August, crossing alarming thresholds

DURING August 2023, the water of the Ayeyawady River reaches Shwegu, Katha, Mandalay, Sagaing, Myinmu, Pakokku, NyaungU, Seiktha, Hinthada and Zalon, as well as the water level of Chindwin River in Khamti, Homalin, Phaungpyin, Mawlaik, Kalewa, Mingin, Kani and Monywa may reach above the danger level approximately once each.

In the same way, the water of the Toe River rises once in Maupin, the Kalatan River rises about once in Kyauktaw, and the water level of the Bilin River rises once in Bilin, according to the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology.

### Online sale registration made effortless with e-commerce registration platform

THE Ministry of Commerce announced that preparations are underway to enable the registration of online sale activities through the e-commerce registration system. The date and procedures for starting the online registration application will be published.

The validity of the registration certificate is two years from the date of issue. If the registration period expires, certificate holders need to apply for an extension of 60 days in advance.

### Belgium receives over 40 tonnes of exquisite coffee this July

MORE than 40 tonnes of coffee produced in the southern Shan State were exported to Belgium for the third time, as reported by the Shan State Coffee Cultivation Cooperative Association. Each time, 40.2 tonnes of coffee were exported, bringing the total coffee exports to Belgium to 120 tonnes.

### Parental information sought to verify involvement of 4 Myanmar nationals in Malaysian ship sinking

ACCORDING to the Myanmar Seafarers' Federation, they have requested information from the parents of four Myanmar nationals who were involved in the sinking of the Malaysian ship.

Last 20 July, a Malaysian cargo ship loaded with gravel sank off the coast of Pulau Burung in Malaysian waters, and nine people, including four Myanmar crew members, went missing, and only five bodies have been found so far.

### Progress and continuity in ODA projects for Myanmar

THE Japanese government continues to carry out ODA projects in Myanmar, according to NHK news agency. Among these ODA projects, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has provided 31 billion yen for the Bago River No 3 Thanlyin Bridge Project, and it was announced in April that 75 per cent of it has been completed.



# LOCAL BUSINESS

## Rising fuel prices batter freight-forwarding businesses

ROCKETING fuel prices have a knock-on effect on the freight forwarding businesses.

Freight flows and the number of passengers normally decline in the monsoon season. A Mawgyun-Yangon ferry consumes 150 gallons of diesel on average, Ko Thein, a ferry driver, told the Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM).

Double-deck ferries have a capacity of 4,000-7,000 bags of rice. The ferry freight fare was K400 in 2020. This year, the fare soared to K550 per bag. The ferry operators link directly with the rice millers for the loads.

The domestic fuel price has risen tracking the international crude oil price. The diesel prices touched a high of K289,425 per 50-gallon barrel in August 2022 and K110,776 in 2023.

As the volume of loads de-

creases on the Patheinyangon road trip, the number of trucks declines accordingly. The truck fares have risen for the Yangon-Patheinyangon route. It is charged K100 per viss of load.

Despite the increase in truck fare for the Yangon-Patheinyangon trip, the truck fare for the Patheinyangon trip declines due to low truck loads. Soaring diesel prices resulted in a low profit, the truck owners running the Patheinyangon trip elaborated.

The truck fare is estimated at K100-140 per viss of loads.

Sometimes, truck owners yield losses as they cannot charge higher for the return trip, a truck owner stressed. Earlier, the profit for a six-wheel truck was K70,000-80,000 per round trip. The profit narrowed to K50,000 this month, a truck owner continued. — TWA/EM



The photo shows trucks running Yangon-Bago freight-forwarding in the Bayintnaung Wholesale Centre.

## Black gram, pigeon pea prices hit fresh peaks



The photo shows a shop of pulses and beans in the Yangon market.

PRICES of black grams and pigeon peas moved up in Yangon's pulses market.

The price of black gram (FAQ/RC) bounced back to over K2.3 million per tonne after 28 days of fall, while the pigeon pea price was above K3 million per tonne on 29 July. Approximately 130 containers (3,120 tonnes) of black gram were traded between 1 and 29 July 2023.

The price of black gram hit a new record high at K2.461 million per tonne on 1 June 2023 in the past eight years. Thereafter, the price declined.

Similarly, the price of pigeon peas peaked at K3.33 million per tonne on 5 June 2023. Then, the price plunged to under K3 million per tonne on 21 July. The price fluctuated around K3 million per tonne between 24 and 27 July and rebounded to above K3 million on 29 July.

The FOB prices were US\$990-110 per tonne for black grams and \$1,240-1,260 in June 2023.

The newly harvested pigeon peas will flow into the market at the end of the year as pigeon pea is grown in the

central Myanmar region from May. Black gram is cultivated under the mixed farming system after the harvest season of the monsoon paddy. The black gram usually enters the market in the early months of the year.

Prices plummeted to K300,000 per tonne of pigeon peas and K400,000 per tonne of black grams owing to the market suspension resulting from India's policy changes in mid-2017. Six years later, the market raised its head and the pulses growers received a handsome profit. — TWA/EM

## Peanut prices set for another high on strong demand

AN upward trend of peanut prices persists on the back of strong foreign and domestic demand and the price hit a high of K9,500 per viss, according to the Mandalay Commodity Wholesale Centre.

Prices jumped to K7,100-9,500 per viss depending on different varieties presently.

The local oil millers and exporters have been increasingly purchasing them in the competitive market.

The high price of peanuts drove the peanut oil price up to K14,000 per viss.

Myanmar has been shipping oil seeds (sesame seeds and peanuts) to foreign coun-

tries. Last April 2022, the world's top palm oil exporter Indonesia, which is one of the main oil suppliers to Myanmar, declared an export ban on cooking oil export to reduce the domestic shortage. Consequently, Myanmar's Trade Department under the Ministry of Commerce temporarily suspended exports of oil crops (peanut and sesame) from 9 May 2022 to have oil self-sufficiency.

The country shipped more than 87,000 kilogrammes worth US\$13.565 million to foreign markets through the border trade channels over the first three months of the current financial year 2023-2024. — NN/EM



A man shows some of the white peanut in Monywa market. PHOTO: MYO WIN TUN (MONYWA)



# OPINION

# ARTICLE BOOKRACK

## Controlling hepatitis diseases: A global effort

**E**NVIRONMENTAL degradation and chemical abuse pose an increasing threat to people worldwide, leading to the emergence of various hepatitis diseases that afflict a significant number of individuals year after year.

Those suffering from various types of hepatitis disease often face numerous challenges in society, struggling to keep pace with others due to their compromised health. Moreover, those suffering from any type of hepatitis disease triggered by problems from the liver cannot harmonize their physical structures with mental activities.

Unclean water and chemical residues spreading in the environment are the primary factors contributing to the outbreak of hepatitis diseases. Thus, it is imperative for individuals and communities to collaborate with health personnel in cleaning up their surroundings to prevent not only hepatitis but also other major diseases.

Recognizing the severity of the situation, countries across the globe are striving to control hepatitis diseases. Authorities must raise awareness about the various types of hepatitis, including A, B, C, D, and E, which are infectious diseases. Improving testing and treatment coverage is crucial to achieving the global elimination goals by 2030.

Governments play a vital role in promoting the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of hepatitis. This disease affects millions of people annually, causing both acute and chronic conditions, resulting in approximately 1.34 million deaths each year. Hepatitis B, in particular, is a common cause of cirrhosis and can lead to liver cancer in some cases.

In acknowledgement of the efforts made by health professionals and volunteers in combating hepatitis, the World Health Organization designated 28 July as World Hepatitis Day. This day serves as an opportunity to bolster national and international efforts to combat the disease, encouraging actions and engagement from individuals, partners, and the public. The WHO's Global Hepatitis Report of 2017 highlights the need for a more substantial global response.

In line with this year's theme, "One life, one liver," health professionals and scientists must continue their research on hepatitis diseases. The goal is to develop more potent drugs to control and manage these illnesses effectively, ensuring that people worldwide do not miss out on deserved opportunities in society. Currently, Myanmar manufactures Hepatitis B vaccine for the people for local consumption as well as export purposes.

To achieve lasting success, it is essential for all nations to collaborate in creating cleaner environments, raising awareness, and providing access to testing and treatment. Together, it is necessary to keep hepatitis diseases under control and work towards a healthier, brighter future for everyone.

# UNESCO education report advises ban on smartphones in schools

*A new UN report raised concerns on Wednesday about the excessive use of smartphones, calling for them to be banned in schools worldwide. According to the UN's education, science and culture agency UNESCO, the over-use of mobile phones impacts learning.*



Students in Cebu, Philippines take a selfie at school. PHOTO: JOSHUA ESTEY/UNICEF

**U**NESCO'S report on technology in education urges countries to carefully consider how technology is used in schools.

It emphasises the need for a "human-centred vision" where digital technology serves as a tool rather than taking precedence.

Speaking to UN News, UNESCO's Manos Antoninis also warned of the danger of data leaks in educational tech, as only 16 per cent of countries guarantee data privacy in the classroom, by law.

### Abuse of data

"We know that vast amounts of data are being used without the appropriate regulation, so this data ends up being used for other non-educational purposes, commercial purposes and that's of course a violation of rights that needs to be regulated."

The UNESCO report also highlights the disparities created by digital learning. During the COVID-19 pandemic, half a billion students worldwide were left out due to the shift to online-only tuition.

Geographically, the report

noted a significant imbalance in online resources favouring Europe and North America.

UNESCO is urging countries to set their own standards for the way technology is designed and used in education such that it never replaces in-person, teacher-led instruction and supports the shared objective of quality education for all.

### Huge potential

"The digital revolution holds immeasurable potential but, just as warnings have been voiced for how it should be regulated

in society, similar attention must be paid to the way it is used in education," warned UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay. "Its use must be for enhanced learning experiences and for the well-being of students and teachers, not to their detriment."

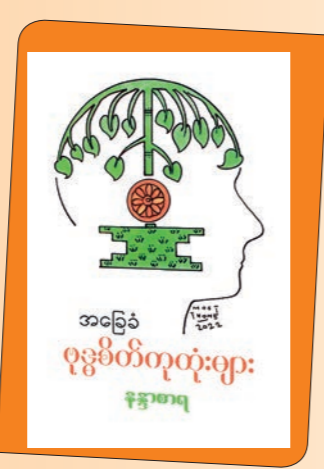
The report, Technology in education: A tool on whose terms? was launched at an event in Montevideo, Uruguay hosted by UNESCO and the Ministry of Education and Culture of Uruguay, with additional support from the Ceibal Foundation and

18 ministers of education from around the world. It proposes four questions that policymakers and educators should reflect upon as educational technology becomes increasingly accessible and utilized around the globe.

### Appropriate use

The first question focuses on the appropriate use of technology in class. Disabled children who may struggle in a traditional, in-person setting may also benefit from the option of technological assistance.

SOURCE: UN News



Book Title	-	Ahchaygan Buddha
	-	Seik Ku Htone Myar
Writer	-	Rev Nandacara
Publishing House	-	Thar Nge
Publication Date	-	July 2023 (2 <sup>nd</sup> Edition)
Price	-	K3,800

## Ahchaygan Buddha Seik Ku Htone Myar

By Rev Nandacara

BORN in Mogok town, the writer graduated from the University of Yadanabon, majoring in Myanmar Literature. Upon obtaining his Bachelor's Degree, he entered the monkhood. He studied Buddhist literature at Kelaniya University in Sri Lanka. In 2020, he obtained a Master's degree. Currently, he is living in Colombo, Sri Lanka, providing counselling to those who are living with mental problems while doing his doctoral research in Buddhist Counselling.

As known to all, the discipline of Psychology is popular among all strata of people these days. Even the workers from

the factories are interested in the subject of Psychology. The writer said Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and behaviour, analyzing the behaviour of human beings. He added that Psychology is aimed at attempting to understand human behaviour, find out oneself and change the mindset as and where necessary.

In this regard, it would not be out of place to describe Lord Buddha as a psychologist, who knows the mind of all beings and can cure their mental diseases through his sermons. In fact, most of His Teachings are based on the mind, matter and

their interaction. It is needless to say that His Dhamma is highly related to the discipline of philosophy.

Although the writer has used a lot of references most of which are psychology and the Buddhist Pitaka, he has avoided using the technical terms as much as possible. As a consequence, this book is not much difficult to understand.

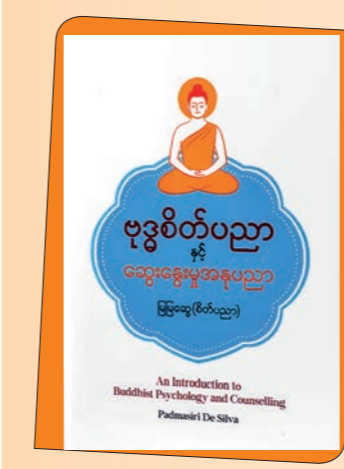
This book under review has two parts – the first part is concerned with the psychology as expounded by Lord Buddha as well as with His way of counselling. He explained the root causes of mental problems and the

Buddha way of counselling. Part two deals with clinical psychology.

The writer monk said that the interaction between the mind and matter is analogous to a motorcar and a battery. The car can be likened to the matter whereas the battery is like the mind. Just as the battery supports the starting of the engine, the mind stimulates the matter. Matter-of-factly, mind and matter are interdependent.

In the conclusion part, the writer has encouraged the readers to avoid doing evil things and do meritorious deeds, to have a positive attitude towards events so that they can have peace of mind, to preserve Metta, Karuna and Mudita, to practise mindfulness and to observe the Five Precepts.

Reading this book will give knowledge on the nature of the mind and the ways to mitigate the stress acquired from daily activities. This book is strongly recommended to readers because it is not only giving knowledge but also brings peace to their minds.



Book Title	-	An Introduction to Buddhist Psychology and Counselling by Padmasiri De Silva
Translator	-	Mya Mya Swe (Seik Pyinnya)
Publishing House	-	Thar Nge
Publication Date	-	July 2023 (2 <sup>nd</sup> Edition)
Price	-	K4,800

## Buddha Seikpyinnya Hnit Swaynwayhmu Anupyinnya

(An Introduction to Buddhist Psychology and Counselling)

By Padmasiri De Silva

THE writer of the original book is Padmasiri De Silva, who is a member of the faculty of Sri Lankan University. This Buddhist monk is also doing the counselling. In addition to his being an expert on Buddhism, he is also a psychologist. Among the Buddhist psychologists from Sri Lanka, he is the most popular academician. He is noted for his ability to present Buddhist psychology from the aspect of the academic

discipline of psychology.

The foreword for this translated version is written by Reverend Nandacara. He said that Daw Mya Mya Swe, the translator, is a psychology lecturer and that as she is a Buddhist, she can translate the book of Rev Padmasiri. Additionally, he said that her translated version would be beneficial not only to the general readers but also to the academicians and researchers.

This book has two parts, and Part One is about Buddhist Psychology whereas Part Two deals with Buddha's Mindfulness-Based Therapies. You can read about psychotherapies, the methods of Buddhist meditation, management of stress, distress, laziness, worries and anxieties, ways to suppress anger, fighting against drug abuse, self-assessment regarding pride and arrogance, donation and altruism.

Additionally, the readers will obtain some knowledge of Neurotics and Psychotics as well as hysteria as discussed by Freud.

The original writer has encouraged the readers to practice Buddhist meditation – i.e., mindfulness to be able to reduce greed, which is one of the three root causes of suffering. After meditation, the yogis will be able to avoid gossiping, be kind to other people, and be patient, resilient and free from laziness, ultimately resulting in the realization of the absolute truth. The writer elaborates on stress management at four levels—physiological level, emotional level, behavioural level and cognitive level. In mitigation of the stress, he has recommended Buddha's Mindfulness in addition to doing physical exercises, walking/jogging, recreation and relaxation.

He has also written the background history of Buddha's psychology, the Western concepts of psychology and the comparative study of Buddha's psychology and Western psychology. Last but not least, the original writer, Padmasiri De Silva mentions clinical psychotherapies.



# SCI/TECH WORLD

## China's gigantic telescope deciphers relativistic jets of black hole

AN international research team led by Chinese astronomers revealed the complex dynamic features of relativistic jets of a black hole, according to a study published in the journal Nature.

Powerful relativistic jets are one of the features of accreting black holes, and GRS 1915+105 is a well-known fast-spinning black-hole X-ray binary with a relativistic jet, termed a "microquasar", as indicated by its superluminal motion of radio emission, according to the study.

It has exhibited persistent X-ray activity over the last 30 years, with quasiperiodic oscillations in the X-ray band.

From 2020 to 2022, researchers from the Department of Astronomy of Wuhan University, the National Astronomical Observatories of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and other



This aerial panoramic photo taken on 26 July 2023 shows China's Five-hundred-metre Aperture Spherical Radio Telescope (FAST) in southwest China's Guizhou Province. **PHOTO: OU DONGQU/XINHUA**

institutions employed China's Five-hundred-metre Aperture Spherical Radio Telescope (FAST), the world's largest single-dish radio telescope, to observe the radio continuous spectrum light change and polarization of GRS 1915+105.

With FAST's high sampling and sensitivity, the research team detected two instances of transient periodic oscillation of about 0.2 seconds in January 2021 and June 2022, respectively. The transient periodic oscillations remain unstable and unable to be detected most of the time. It is therefore named quasiperiodic oscillations.

This is the first time that sub-second low-frequency radio quasiperiodic oscillations in a microquasar have been observed in the world, which also directly links the phenomenon with relativistic jets. — Xinhua

## Ageing Takahama nuclear reactor restarted after 12-yr halt



Photo taken from a Kyodo News helicopter on 27 July 2023, shows the No 1 (R) and No 2 reactors at Kansai Electric Power Co's Takahama nuclear power plant in Fukui Prefecture. **PHOTO: KYODO**

KANSAI Electric Power Co on Friday rebooted a nuclear reactor at its Takahama power plant in central Japan's Fukui Prefec-

ture for the first time in 12 years, making it the oldest operating reactor in Japan.

The operator plans to re-

start power generation and transmission at the No 1 reactor on Wednesday before resuming commercial operation on 28 August, it said.

The reactor, which started commercial operation 48 years ago, went offline in January 2011 for regular inspection and remained so following the Fukushima nuclear crisis, triggered by the earthquake and tsunami in March of that year.

The reboot comes after the Nuclear Regulation Authority gave the green light in 2016 for the reactor to operate beyond the 40-year service period, which was set in the wake of the crisis.

The reactor was originally scheduled to restart around early June, but the plan was postponed due to the need for additional work on fire protection infrastructure. — Kyodo

## Ex-intel officer says US hiding info on alien craft

WE are not alone — and American authorities are covering up the evidence, a former US intelligence officer told a congressional committee on Wednesday.

David Grusch testified that he "absolutely" believes the government is in possession of unidentified anomalous phenomena, or UAPs — which has replaced the term UFO in official parlance — as well as remains of their non-human operators. "I was informed, in the course of my official duties, of a multi-decade UAP crash retrieval and reverse-engineering programme," Grusch said.

"I made the decision, based on the data I collected, to report this information to my superiors and multiple inspectors-general, and in effect becoming a whistleblower," he said.

Pressed for details in the course of the hearing, Grusch repeatedly said he could not comment in a public setting because the information is classified. He said the US government is hiding information on UAPs not only from the public but from Congress, and that he personally interviewed people with direct knowledge of non-human craft. — AFP



UAP is the current term used in official contexts to replace the more familiar UFO (Unidentified Flying Object). **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/GETTY/AFP**

## Sahara dust enhances removal of methane: Study

A study found a newly proposed mechanism in which blowing mineral dust combines with sea spray to create Mineral Dust-Sea Spray Aerosol (MDSA).

According to the findings,

sunlight activates MDSA to produce a large number of chlorine atoms, which then use photocatalysis to oxidize atmospheric methane and tropospheric ozone. The study finds that MDSA is

the main source of atmospheric chlorine over the North Atlantic. MDSA is primarily made up of blowing dust from the Sahara Desert mixed with sea salt aerosol from the ocean. — ANI



## Mexico's Copper Canyon train lures intrepid travellers

FROM the heartland of a notorious drug cartel to rugged mountains home to remote Indigenous communities, Mexico's "El Chepe" train takes adventure-seeking travellers on a spectacular journey through the Copper Canyon.

The Chepe Express, recognized by National Geographic as one of the world's greatest rail trips, pulls out of Los Mochis in the northwestern state of Sinaloa, heading for the town of Creel in the mountains of Chihuahua.

It was in Los Mochis that Sinaloa cartel founder Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman, one of the world's most infamous criminals, was captured in 2016.

The US government warns its nationals not to travel to Sinaloa — and to reconsider going to Chihuahua — due to the risk of crime and kidnapping.

But that did not deter Adair Margo from making the trip with her family, including seven grandchildren aged two to 12, from her home in El Paso, Texas to ride El Chepe through the Sierra Madre Occidental mountains.

"Life is filled with perils," the 69-year-old told AFP.

"You don't want to stop living. On tours like these you're not walking in the midst of drug cartel wars," she said. — AFP



Mexico's "El Chepe" train journey through the Copper Canyon offers adventure-seeking travellers a remarkable and memorable experience, showcasing stunning landscapes, indigenous cultures, and the transformation of an area with a troubled past into a safe and captivating tourist destination. **PHOTO: AFP**

## China-Britain photography competition to showcase cultural richness and exchanges

"BEAUTY Across Borders: China-Britain Photography Competition" was launched here on Wednesday with an aim to showcase China's landscapes and the richness of its culture, as well as the dynamic exchanges between China and Britain.

Jointly organized by the China National Tourist Office in London, Nouvelles d'Europe Britain Edition, and Shangtufang Image Art Studio, the competition also enjoys support from the Cultural Section of the Chinese Embassy in Britain, Britain's Royal Photo-

graphic Society, Global Photographic Union, Sino European Arts, as well as Beijing-London Short Video Festival.

The competition, open to photography enthusiasts from around the world, is divided into three sections: "Beautiful China", "Splendid China" and "Impressions of China and Britain". It is important to understand the people and the culture of other countries, and "photography is the best way to do that", said Michael Pritchard, programs director of the Royal Photographic Society. — Xinhua

## Citroen 2CV classic car meet gets show on the road

AROUND 5,000 Citroen 2CVs from across the globe are tooting into the Swiss countryside this week for a mass gathering celebrating the instantly recognizable French classic car.

The 24th World Meeting of 2CV Friends, in Delemont in the Jura region, has brought 2CVs of all shapes, sizes and colours to northwest Switzerland.

The 2CV — which stands for "deux chevaux", meaning "two horsepower" — was launched in 1948 as French carmaker Citroen's answer to Germany's Volkswagen Beetle.

Considered an economical choice for consumers, more than five million 2CVs rolled off the production lines until 1990, when Citroen had to stop producing them due to emissions standards.

The six-day event in Delemont began on Tuesday and ends on Sunday.

2CVs from 30 countries are taking part, from neighbouring countries including France, Germany and Austria, elsewhere in Europe such as Greece and the Netherlands, and some from as far



Cars are parked, lined up in a field during the 24th World meeting of Citroen 2CV friends near Delemont, northern Switzerland on 26 July 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

as Australia.

"I think the magic of the 2CV, it's iconically French. It's the perfect design. But it's so simple, it's so easy to maintain, it's so easy to understand," said Matt Damper, who came from Britain with his son.

"It's almost adopted as a member of the family.

"It's a way of life; it's not just a car."

**Zen vibe**

The event is taking place on a site covering 53 hectares,

which includes 43 hectares of camping space.

Food trucks and concerts — spanning alphorns to classic rock, ska to bell-ringing — are laid on to keep the participants going, while spare parts stalls attract keen interest.

"Here come a lot of people because my parts are rare. It's not many people in the world repairing complete parts. This is original Citroen parts but refurbished," said Miran, 42, a mechanic from Slovenia. — AFP

## It's fantastic: Movie boosts world's top Barbie collection



She's been living the pink dream for 28 years, lending her bevy of Barbies to museums and shopping malls which put them on display for a few months. **PHOTO: AFP**

WITH her whopping 18,000 Barbies, Bettina Dorfmann was already in the record books, but the release of the blockbuster about the blonde icon has thrown a spotlight on her historic col-

lection.

"As a child I always played with Barbies," Dorfmann, 62, told AFP at her shrine to the plastic doll in the western German city of Duesseldorf.

"When I got out my dolls for my daughter, she wasn't interested because they were too old-fashioned. That's when I started collecting them myself."

She's been living the pink dream for 28 years, lending her bevy of Barbies — recognized by Guinness World Records as the globe's biggest — to museums and shopping malls which put them on display for a few months. "They usually draw between 5,000 and 20,000 visitors during the exhibitions but since the movie came out (last week), I heard the interest has really grown."

Demand for her catalogues, which list her lovingly preserved Barbies representing various eras, ethnicities and professions — as well as a few Ken dolls — has also soared over the past week, she said. — AFP



# ECONOMY WORLD

## Japanese rice imports delayed at Chinese customs amid Fukushima row

RICE imports from Japan are among food and beverage items facing delays at Chinese customs after authorities announced blanket radiation testing for seafood imports from the country, sources familiar with the bilateral relationship said Friday.

The Japanese government is considering expressing its opposition to the prolonged Chinese customs procedures and asking Beijing to explain why the measures have been introduced, the sources said. Imports of rice, as well as other food and beverage items, have been held up after China started blanket radiation testing on seafood imports from

Japan earlier this month.

The testing measures are believed to have been adopted in order to apply pressure on Tokyo over its plan to begin releasing treated radioactive water from the crippled Fukushima nuclear power plant into the sea around sometime this summer. China has voiced its strong opposition to the planned discharge. Businesses have been concerned about China's decision to keep imports of fresh seafood and other marine products from Japan at customs for up to one month before clearance, prompting some Chinese firms to seek alternative procurement sources. — Kyodo



A large screen in Beijing on 6 July 2023, shows news on Japan's plan to release treated radioactive water from the crippled Fukushima nuclear plant into the sea from around this summer. **PHOTO KYODO**



Paris is a major global tourist destination, and tourism plays a significant role in the city's economy. The River Seine flows through the heart of Paris, providing a beautiful backdrop to the city. Visitors can enjoy boat cruises along the Seine, offering picturesque views of the city's landmarks and historic bridges. **PHOTO: AFP**

## French economy surprises with 0.5% second-quarter growth

THE French economy saw a surprisingly robust performance in the second quarter, with 0.5 per cent growth that exceeded forecasts, official data showed on Friday. The figure was well above the INSEE statistics office's own forecast of 0.1 per cent growth for April to June compared to the first quarter, and better than expected by analysts.

The strong showing came despite a fall in household consumption in the period as shoppers struggled with inflation but was boosted by exports, the manufacturing industry and energy production. In further positive news, year-on-year inflation in

July dropped to 4.3 per cent, mostly due to falling energy prices and cooling food inflation, after running at more than six per cent earlier this year, INSEE added.

The robust growth is set to be highlighted by President Emmanuel Macron's government at a time of multiple domestic political challenges and Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire described the performance as "remarkable".

"For the first time, French growth is driven much more by exports," he told RTL. "It starts a virtuous circle where it is production that is financing our social model and redistribution." — AFP

## Shanghai bourse starts synthetic rubber futures trading

SYNTHETIC rubber futures and options were listed for trading on the Shanghai Futures Exchange on Friday, which increased the total number of futures derivatives listed in China to 120.

In morning trading, 75,000 lots of the new futures changed hands, with a turnover of 3.99 billion yuan (about 559.3 million US dollars).

Synthetic rubber is a synthetic polymer elastomer, which is among three major synthetic

materials widely used in industry, together with synthetic resin and synthetic fibre. China is the world's largest producer, consumer and importer of synthetic rubber.

"The listing of synthetic rubber futures and options will help enterprises better manage risks," said Zhang Suiqi, manager of the chemical department of Sinopec Shanghai Gaoqiao Petrochemical Co Ltd. — Xinhua



Tourists admire the skyline view of Lujiazui area at the Bund in Shanghai, east China, 6 January 2020. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/WANG XIANG/XINHUA**

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Italy's Eni profits down on falling oil and gas prices

ITALY'S Eni reported a 92 per cent drop in second-quarter net profit on Friday, the latest energy firm to see its earnings fall as oil and gas prices have weakened.

The company said its net profit fell to 294 million euros (\$322 million) in the April-to-June period.

Adjusted net profit — a closely watched indicator which excludes exceptional items — also fell, down 49 per cent to 1.93 billion euros.

Like its competitors, Eni benefited last year from the spike in gas and oil prices, fuelled by the economic recovery after the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Eni posted a record net profit of 13.8 billion euros in 2022, its best result in more than two decades. But the situation has changed dramatically.

The price of a barrel of Brent North Sea crude oil was an average \$78.39 during the second quarter of 2023, down 31 per cent, Eni said in a press release. — AFP

### Zimbabwean currency gains ground against US dollar as forex rate volatility eases

THE Zimbabwean dollar continued to gain ground following government measures aimed at stabilizing foreign exchange rate and curbing a freefall that had resulted in soaring prices.

The currency traded at 4,517 Zimbabwean dollars per US dollar on wholesale foreign exchange auction Thursday, up from 6,713 per US dollar recorded on 16 June, central bank figures showed.

After experiencing exchange rate volatility between April and June, the Zimbabwean government implemented policy measures to stabilize the rate, including a directive for import duties to be paid in Zimbabwean dollars, except for luxury items. — Xinhua



## Kenzo presents first fashion show in China



China's vast pool of consumers is critical to the luxury market, and top brands like Kenzo are turning to wooing them on their own turf. **PHOTO: AFP**

AGAINST Shanghai's glittering river skyline, Kenzo-clad models strutted down a breezy open-air runway on Friday for the French fashion brand's first-ever show in China.

The country's vast pool of consumers is critical to the luxury market, and top brands like Kenzo are turning to wooing them on their own turf as domestic high-end shopping rises.

Kenzo already operates 40 stores in mainland China, and the show is part of its policy of "reinforcing its strong commitment and growing presence in the Chinese market", a statement announcing the show said. "Despite the slowing econ-

omy, China is sending positive signs (to design houses)," said Lisa Nan, correspondent for Jing Daily, a publication which reports on the luxury sector in the country.

Consequently, "brands are engaging with local consumers through their highest standard of presentation, runways... Consumers really appreciate these exclusive events".

On Friday, dozens of models in dark blues and pastels paraded down the riverfront catwalk that took Shanghai's Oriental Pearl Tower as a backdrop, with bemused tourists scrambling to take pictures as they sailed past on LED-lit cruise boats. — AFP

## UK railways hit by latest staff walkout

RAIL workers in Britain held their latest strike over pay and conditions on Saturday, as more than a year of walkouts on the country's train network grinds on.

Members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) union working for train operating

companies staged the day-long stoppage, leading to the widespread cancellation of services and misery for travellers.

In some areas only about half of train services will run, while others will have none at all. The repeated strikes by rail staff have

been mirrored across the public and private sectors in Britain, as workers demand pay rises in response to decades-high inflation and the worst cost-of-living crisis in a generation.

Those who have taken to picket lines over the last 18 months have ranged from health sector employees and teachers to lawyers and dock workers. The RMT's dispute with 14 train operating companies running services, over salary and working conditions such as overtime, has been worsened by contentious plans to close most ticket offices across the UK. RMT general secretary Mick Lynch has accused the Conservative government, which has overall responsibility for rail transport and provides strategic direction and funding, of trying to "artificially keep the dispute going". — AFP



The repeated strikes by rail staff have been mirrored across the public and private sectors in Britain. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

## P&G shares jump as it forecasts profit growth

PROCTER & Gamble reported another quarter of solid profit growth behind price hikes on Friday as shares rallied on an earnings forecast that topped analyst expectations.

The company behind Bounty paper towels, Gillette razors and Tide detergent scored higher net sales across its five divisions in the fourth

quarter of fiscal 2023. Revenues rose five percent to \$20.6 billion.

However, overall volumes declined one per cent while prices rose seven per cent.

Quarterly profits came in at \$3.4 billion, up 11 per cent from the year-ago period.

P&G expects 2024 profits growth of between six and nine

per cent, with a midpoint of \$6.34 per share, well above analyst expectations.

Chief Financial Officer Andre Schulten declined to detail specific planned pricing actions but signalled that the company expects a moderation in approach after several hikes over the last 18 months. — AFP

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### US oil giants report lower profits but lift shareholder payouts

EXXONMOBIL and Chevron reported profits Friday that were much lower than last year's due a drop in commodity prices, but still lofty enough to enable increased shareholder distributions.

The two US oil giants joined European rivals Shell and Total in seeing steep declines in their bottom-line results compared with the heady year-ago period when Russia's invasion of Ukraine sent crude and natural gas prices sky bound. ExxonMobil reported profits of \$7.9 billion, down 56 per cent on a 28 per cent drop in revenues to \$82.9 billion. Chevron reported profits of \$6.0 billion, down 48 per cent, while revenues declined 28 per cent to \$48.9 billion. — AFP

#### Yen swings after Bank of Japan policy tweak, Asian equities mixed

THE yen fluctuated Friday after Japan's central bank tweaked its ultra-loose monetary policy, while other Asian stocks were mixed after forecast-beating US data revived concerns the Federal Reserve could hike interest rates further. After a closely watched meeting, the Bank of Japan said it would allow "greater flexibility" in government bond markets, having allowed them to move in a tight band in a process known as yields curve control. — AFP



Procter & Gamble, which makes Crest toothpaste and other household items, reported solid profits, lifting shares. **PHOTO: AFP**



# ROLLING UPDATES

## WORLD

## Russia retains allies, despite Ukraine conflict

DESPITE the military intervention in Ukraine and efforts by the West to paint Russia as a pariah state, Moscow can still count on support from several African, Latin American and Asian governments, including that of heavyweight China.

Visibly satisfied, Russian President Vladimir Putin stood shoulder to shoulder on Friday with a score of African heads of state at a Russia-Africa summit in Saint Petersburg.

The message from the family photo was, he said, that Moscow was working hand in hand with the continent and its one billion people. "Russia's attention to Africa is steadily growing," Putin said on Friday. He added the relations with each country on the African continent, where the Soviet Union had already forged strong

ties, "have a bright future in the emerging multipolar world".

The previous day, Putin had pulled a diplomatic rabbit out of his hat, offering free grain to six African countries, just as the latter were wondering how to cope with the consequences of Russia's withdrawal from a Ukraine grain deal. That pact enabled Ukraine to export its cereal crops to global markets despite the war, thus easing pressure on food prices in Africa and elsewhere.

Putin's overtures to Africa go back long before the Ukraine conflict. For several years now, the Kremlin has openly engaged in diplomatic and economic offensives on the continent and offered "security" in the form of the Wagner mercenary army to African governments fending off jihadist insurgencies. — AFP



Russia's Vladimir Putin (C) surrounded by African leaders at the Saint Petersburg summit this week. PHOTO: TASS HOST PHOTO AGENCY/AFP

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Beijing on alert as typhoon Doksuri sweeps northwards

A swathe of northern China, including the capital Beijing, was put under alert Saturday as Typhoon Doksuri swept inland, bringing high winds and torrential rain. Doksuri, which smashed into Fujian province on Friday morning with gusts of up to 175 kilometres per hour (110 miles per hour), is already being felt further north, according to China's meteorological services.

Anticipating flooding, Beijing has issued an orange alert, the second-highest in the four-tier system. — AFP

## Funding crunch forces WFP to cut operations: official

A funding crunch is forcing the World Food Programme (WFP) to cut its operations, said a high-ranking official on Friday.

"WFP is in the midst of a crippling funding crisis that is forcing us to scale back life-saving assistance right as acute hunger is hitting record levels," Carl Skau, deputy executive director and chief operating officer of the WFP, told reporters at the UN Headquarters in New York.

At least 38 of 86 WFP country operations have already cut, or plan to soon cut, the size and scope of life-saving food, cash and nutrition assistance programs, he said.

In Afghanistan, the WFP was forced to cut rations from



Aiming to reach 15 million of the most vulnerable people with emergency food assistance in 2023, WFP's emergency response in Yemen is its largest anywhere in the world. PHOTO: AFP

75 per cent to 50 per cent for communities facing emergency level of hunger in March; in Syria, the WFP cut assistance

in July for 2.5 million of the 5.5 million people who rely on the agency for their basic food needs; and in Yemen, the agency will be forced to scale down its work as early as next month, with cuts for seven million people across the country, he said.

Most of the countries in West Africa are facing extensive ration cuts, particularly the seven larger crisis operations of Burkina Faso, Mali, Chad, the Central African Republic, Nigeria, Niger, and Cameroon, where acute hunger is on the rise, said Skau.

"Less funding means WFP is forced to stop assisting people who are only in the hunger category known as 'crisis level'." — Xinhua



Almost 72,000 people accused of belonging to criminal gangs are imprisoned in El Salvador. PHOTO: EL SALVADOR'S PRESIDENCY PRESS OFFICE/AFP/FILE

## Critics of El Salvador mass trials suspect reelection ploy

A new law allowing as many as 900 alleged gang members to be tried at a time in El Salvador, where tens of thousands have been arrested in a crackdown, has alarmed justice experts and rights groups who fear it is a reelection ploy by President Nayib Bukele.

Almost 72,000 people accused of belonging to criminal gangs are imprisoned in El Sal-

vador under a state of emergency that allows arrests without a warrant in what rights groups have described as "arbitrary detention".

Bukele has also built a mega prison — which he says is the largest in the Americas — to lock up 40,000 suspected gangsters in harsh conditions also decried by human rights organizations. Now, collective trials will fur-

ther violate "the rights to an adequate defence, to a fair trial and the presumption of innocence," Amnesty International Americas director Erika Guevara Rosas told AFP. The measure was approved by a Bukele-friendly Congress Wednesday under the state of emergency in place since March 2022, which critics say has seen innocent people caught in the dragnet. — AFP



## S Korea first country to submit plan for pavilion at 2025 Osaka Expo

SOUTH Korea has become the first foreign country to submit a basic plan for building its own pavilion at the 2025 World Exposition in western Japan, a source familiar with the matter said Saturday, amid concerns about the slow progress being made by overseas participants concerning preparations for the event.

It is expected some 50 countries will build their own pavilions for the expo, to be held in Osaka, but the city had not received a basic design plan from any participating country, a requirement before seeking construction permission, until it received South Korea's on Friday. The ability of participating countries to design and build their own pavilions is supposed to be one of the event's key attractions, but a shortage of construction workers and the

prospect of various unique designs and installations have made domestic construction companies reluctant to sign contracts.

It takes about two months for the event's authorities to grant construction permission for a design after the basic plan is submitted. In addition to "self-built" pavilions, known as Type A, participants also have the option of renting pavilions made by the event's organizer or sharing an area inside an organizer-made pavilion with others.

Under the current plan, participating countries are supposed to complete the bulk of the construction for their Type A pavilions by July 2024, finalize work on their interiors by January next year and have their planned exhibits completed later in March. — Kyodo



An artist's rendering shows the proposed venue for Osaka-Kansai Japan Expo 2025. PHOTO: JAPAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE 2025 WORLD EXPOSITION / VIA KYODO

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Macron makes 'historic' stop in Sri Lanka

EMMANUEL Macron made a short stopover in Sri Lanka on Friday, the first visit by a French president to the island nation, which is undergoing a difficult economic recovery.

The French leader, who spent less than two hours in the country, was welcomed by his Sri Lankan counterpart Ranil Wickremesinghe.

Macron made the stop en route home from Oceania, after visiting Papua New Guinea, the French territory of New Caledonia and the sea-threatened archipelago of Vanuatu.

During the airport meeting, Macron and Wickremesinghe were to talk about economic recovery and maintenance of the rule of law. "This is a historic visit," the Elysee said of the meeting, which occurred after Macron disembarked around 11:30 pm local time (1800 GMT).

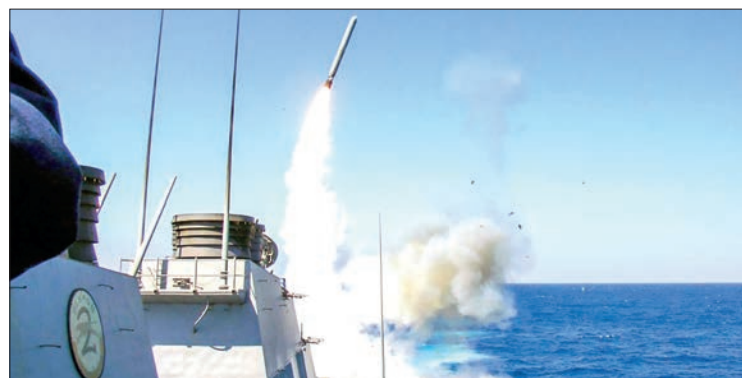
Wickremesinghe came to power a year ago after his predecessor fled the country, driven out by massive protests amid the country's worst economic crisis since independence in 1948. — AFP

## US to help Australia develop guided missile systems by 2025

THE United States said Saturday it will help Australia produce guided multiple-launch rocket systems by 2025, with the two countries stepping up cooperation in the face of China's growing influence over Pacific Island nations. The commitment is among "several mutually beneficial initiatives" that the Pentagon is pursuing with Australia's defence industry, US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin told a press conference following bilateral security talks in Brisbane. The United States is also "racing to accelerate Australia's access to priority munitions through a streamlined acquisition process," he added.

Earlier in the day, Austin and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met Australian Defence Minister Richard Marles and Foreign Min-

ister Penny Wong for an annual dialogue, known as the Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations. — Kyodo



A guided multiple-launch rocket system, often referred to as a Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System (GMLRS), is a type of artillery weapon designed for precision strikes against various targets. PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/CHRISTOPHER SENENK/U.S. NAVY/GETTY



The body of a Royal Bengal tiger which was killed by local people lies in the grass in Khalishabunia village, Satkhira, Bangladesh on 2 July 2009. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

## Bangladesh major hub for tiger poaching: study

BANGLADESH remains a major hub for the poaching of endangered tigers despite government claims of a successful crackdown on pirate groups involved in the trade, according to research published Friday.

The vast Sundarbans mangrove forest straddling India and Bangladesh hosts one of the world's largest populations of Bengal tigers.

Their pelts, bones and flesh are bought by black marketers as part of a broader illegal wildlife trade valued at an estimated \$20 billion globally each year.

Research from big cat conservation group Panthera and the Chinese Academy of Sciences said tiger parts harvested in the Sundarbans have been exported to 15 countries,

with India and China being the most common destinations.

"Bangladesh plays a much more significant role in the illicit tiger trade than we previously realized," study co-author Rob Pickles said in a statement.

Pirate groups operating in the Sundarbans found a lucrative trade in tiger poaching before a government crackdown starting in 2016. — AFP





The Myanmar futsal squad is seen posing for their group photo. **PHOTO: MFF**

## 18 players shortlisted for Continental Futsal Championship 2023

MYANMAR Football Federation has selected 18 players to compete in the Continental Futsal Championship 2023 in Thailand.

Team Myanmar, which is preparing for the Asian Futsal Qualifiers, started

training on 17 June. A total of 24 players were initially selected for the team, which is currently reduced to 18. Team Myanmar is placed in Group B of the Futsal Championship with host Thailand and Solomon Islands.

The group stage matches will be played from 7 to 9 August. Myanmar will face host Thailand on 7 August (7 pm Myanmar Standard Time) and Solomon Islands on 8 August (7 pm MST).

Although only 16 players are allowed to compete in the Continental Futsal Championship 2023, all 18 players will be taken to Thailand for a friendly tour, as stated by the Myanmar Football Federation. — KZL

## Top-seeded Fritz flies past Nishikori into ATP Atlanta semi-finals



Japan's Kei Nishikori serves against Taylor Fritz in the quarter-finals of the ATP Atlanta Open, Nishikori's first ATP event since 2021. **PHOTO: AFP**

TOP-SEEDED Taylor Fritz powered past former world number four Kei Nishikori 6-4, 6-2 on Friday to reach the semi-finals of the ATP Atlanta Open. Fritz, ranked ninth in the world, reached his seventh tour-level semi-final of the season with his first career win in four meetings with Nishikori. Nishikori was playing his first ATP event since 2021 as he returns from left hip surgery in January 2022.

"I'm super happy how I played today, getting better and better each day I feel like," Fritz said in his post-match on-court interview.

"A lot of positives I can take into the next match. Kei has been around since I first started. He's an incredible player and a great guy. "I'm just happy to see him back playing again, having good results and hitting the ball well after being injured for so long," added Fritz, who had lost three prior meetings with Nishikori but hadn't played him since 2019. Nishikori, owner of 12 ATP titles and runner-up at the US Open in 2014, launched his comeback this season on the lower tier Challenger Tour, capturing the title at the Caribbean Open Challenger in Puerto Rico in June. — AFP

## Five-star Sweden crush Italy to reach World Cup last 16

SWEDEN coach Peter Gerhardsson described Amanda Ilestedt as a candidate for the Women's World Cup golden boot after the towering defender scored twice with her head in a 5-0 thrashing of Italy on Saturday that booked her country's berth in the last 16. A tight contest was blown open in a seven-minute spell late in the first half when the Swedes, ranked third in the world, found the net three times, through Ilestedt, Fridolina Rolfo and Stina Blackstenius.

Arsenal centre-back Ilestedt bagged her second soon after the interval to give her three goals for the tournament -- all headers from corners -- including a late match-winner in their opening 2-1 defeat of South Africa. Substitute Rebecka Blomqvist rounded out the rout in stoppage time in front of nearly 30,000 in Wellington. — AFP



Sweden defender Amanda Ilestedt heads in their fourth goal. **PHOTO: AFP**



Norway head coach Hege Riise (R) passes on instructions to her players at a training session in Auckland on Saturday. **PHOTO: AFP**

## Norway without injured Hegerberg for must-win World Cup clash

NORWAY will be without star striker Ada Hegerberg for their must-win Women's World Cup clash with the Philippines on Sunday because of injury, coach Hege Riise said.

The former Ballon d'Or winner has not recovered from the groin injury that forced her to pull out of Tuesday's 0-0 draw with Switzerland just before kick-off.

"She is not ready for this game," Riise told reporters at Eden Park on Saturday. "It came too early after her injury. She is still working to be ready for the next game."

Lyon striker Hegerberg, the all-time top scorer in the

UEFA Champions League, had lined up for the national anthems just before kick-off against Switzerland.

However, she then promptly headed back to the dressing room, saying later that she had felt a pain in her groin in the warm-up. Without her Norway again toiled in front of goal, the goalless draw coming after a 1-0 defeat against co-hosts New Zealand in the tournament's opening game. That means the 1995 World Cup winners have to beat the Philippines in Auckland just to stand a chance of advancing to the knockout phase from Group A. — AFP