

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR



Kawkareik-Myawady segment of Asia Highway returns to normal operations

Vehicles admitted to roll on already-built Bailey bridge on landslide section of Asia Highway

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One injured in collapse of Nagayon Pagoda under construction

Businesspersons contributing to State economy to receive impetus

Economic Committee needs to persuade businesspersons to invest in agriculture, livestock and manufacturing industries directly benefiting the State and the people

Salient points of Senior General Min Aung Hlaing's speech in Economic Committee meeting

- to upgrade border trade camps in Kampaiti, Muse, Chinshwehaw, Tachilek and Myawady
- to construct the Muse-Mandalay railway as well as the Chinshwehaw-Lashio railway
- to implement a railway project from Kyaukpyu deep seaport to Mandalay for the improvement of commodity flow
- to strive for the resumption of the Tamu road contributing to the India-Myanmar-Thailand tripartite communication route

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Myanmar set to temporarily curtail rice exports in coming two months

The rice shipment will be slowed down in two months, U Ye Min Aung, President of the Myanmar Rice Federation recently told The Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM).

“It is just in early discussion. We are trying to stabilize the rice prices locally. We have already talked about it to reduce the rice shipment process in September and October. But we are still discussing. We have not finished in policy-related matters. There is food security. The main point is to urge the hoarders to make pending. It is to raise the prices which means luring those make storage with an export scheme. If we reduce the export, there will be a large volume of cooking oil and rice from hoarders. We will reduce rice export volume in coming September and October,” he said.

India’s government stopped exporting non-basmati white rice to help lower rice prices. Currently, the rice prices of Thailand and Viet Nam become higher in the global market.

The MRF is expected to export 2.5 million tonnes of rice and broken rice and to earn US\$1 billion in the 2023-2024 financial year.



Journeying Beyond Borders: Export rice bags being loaded onto the overseas merchant vessel at Yangon Port.

Currently, Myanmar’s rice export was down by 56 per cent in the last four months. The country exported 320,000 tonnes of rice and earned only US\$138 million between April and July of this

year while it received over US\$800 million from rice and broken rice exports last financial year. MRF’s data indicated that Myanmar’s rice is exported to China, EU member states and the Philippines.

“The countries that purchase Myanmar’s rice are EU member states that buy 30-40 per cent while China about 30 per cent and the Philippines 25-20 per cent,” said the MRF president. — TC/KTZH

NATIONAL

Bago Region's tourist destinations draw 146,880 visitors within seven months in 2023

IN the seven months from January to July 2023, the tourist destinations in the Bago Region attracted 146,880 local and foreign visitors, including Thai tourists, U Tin Oo, Economic Minister of Bago Region government told the Global New Light of Myanmar yesterday.

The popular tourist sites in the region are Shwemawdaw Pagoda, Shwethalyaung reclining Buddha Image, Hinthagon Pagoda, Kyaikpun Pagoda, and Kanbawzathadi Palace in the eastern Bago Region and Shwesandaw Pagoda, Shwemyethman Pagoda, Shwebonthamuni Pagoda, and Akauk Hill in the western Bago region. Visitors to the aforementioned locations increased this year compared



Captured amidst Bago's splendour: Thai visitors pose with the Shwethalyaung Reclining Buddha Image.

to the same period last year.

“The seven-month period from January to July this year saw 140,110 homegrown tourists and 6,770 overseas tourists totalling 146,880, and it is 27,290 more than last year’s same period of 119,590,” U Tin Oo said.

The region saw 35 package tours that accounted for 532 visitors in the seven months.

During three weeks of August alone the region has seen a total of 28 package tours (582 visitors), he said.

The majority of overseas tourists visiting the Bago Region are from Thailand and many of them visit Shwemawdaw Pagoda, Shwethalyaung reclining Buddha Image and Kanbawzathadi Palace. — ASH/TH



Electric vehicles, motorcycles arrive at Yangon Port

A total of 65 GAC Toyota bZ4X electric vehicles have been imported by Innogen Myanmar Co Ltd, along with a BYD Dolphin electric vehicle imported by Earth Renewable Energy Co Ltd, totalling 66 electric vehicles through the Yangon Port. A total of 633 Kanbo Type electric motorcycles, imported by Aung Kan Bo Motorcycle Industrial Co Ltd, have arrived at the Muse 105th-Mile trade zone. The importation of EVs and electric motorcycles is allowed with an exemption from Customs tariffs. — MNA/KZW



Glimpses of fresh arrivals: Captivating shots of EVs and E-bikes.

Kawkareik-Myawady segment of Asia Highway returns to normal operations

A temporary Bailey bridge already built on the landslide-affected Thaton-Hpa-an-Kawkareik-Myawady section of the Asia Highway in the Kawkareik Township of Kayin State allows the passing of vehicles, according to the Ministry of Construction.

Torrential rains hit Kayin State from 1 August, causing a series of landslides section between mileposts 149 and 150 near Tawnaw waterfall on 6 and 7 August. In the incident, the landslides happened on 33-foot wide earthen layers and some 150-foot-long asphalt road section.

As such, the Ministry of Construction managed the construction of the 70-foot-long and 19-foot and 10-inch-wide steel decking Bailey bridge with the 55-tonne withstanding, starting from 10 August. The Bailey Bridge bears a 13-foot and eight-inch wide motorway. On 25 August, the bridge resumed the linkage of transport on the highway as usual.

“The incident of landslides which occurred last week absolutely halted the flow of commodity. In fact, Myawady at the Myanmar-Thai border is the most imperative camp for commodity flow and passing of vehicles. At a time when the Myawady-Kawkareik road section at the Myanmar-Thai border suspended its functions, the commodity flow of maize, rice and broken rice heading for Thailand from Myanmar was totally halted. At the same time, the imported goods such as foodstuffs from Thailand to Myanmar faced remarkable difficulties in transport. Now, the resumption of transport routes can help smooth and swift the flow of commodities. I think, it may help decline high prices of commodities at home to normalcy,” a businessperson from the UMFCCI told the Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM).

According to the Ministry of Construction, a culvert or a bridge will be built to recover the landslide section of the highway in open season after calculating the volume and pressure of water there. — TC/TTA



State Administration Council Chair Premier Senior General Min Aung Hlaing addresses the Economic Committee meeting 7/2023 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Two terms of democratic government left more than US\$12 billion each of trade deficiency, totalling some \$25 billion. These trade deficiencies were propped with cash assistance and loans, said Chairman of the Economic Committee Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the committee meeting 7/2023 at the SAC Chairman Office yesterday morning.

Amid sanctions and destructions, the Senior General recounted the government strived to promote the State economy to hug above nine per cent of GDP (+3 per cent of GDP in the 2021-22 financial year from -5.9 per cent of GDP

“As neighbouring countries expose the operation of trade and services based on illegal remittance agencies (Hundi), action must be taken against Hundi agencies that harm the State economy whereas the trade process should be done in linking banks for monetary affairs.”

Businesspersons contributing to State economy to receive impetus

Economic Committee needs to persuade businesspersons to invest in agriculture, livestock and manufacturing industries directly benefiting the State and the people

in 2019-20 FY).

Currently, the government spends more than US\$600 million on the import of cooking oil yearly. Hence, the State economic promotion fund was allotted to ensure local oil sufficiency, with a plan to increase the production of cooking oil at home in 2025 and to shape the country to become an oil exporter country.

The Senior General recounted that attempts were made to hinder the ways for the country not get deserved foreign exchange so as to face economic crises, adding that unscrupulous persons made misinformation to raise commodity prices.

The Senior General stressed the need to prioritize the businesses to have a quick win and instructed officials to take action against manipulators of the commodity prices under the procedures.

The Economic Committee needs to persuade businesspersons of investing in agriculture, livestock and manufacturing industries directly benefiting the State and the people, urging them not to do businesses which can be easy to earn incomes.

As neighbouring countries expose the operation of trade and services based on illegal remittance agencies (Hundi), action must be taken against Hundi agencies that harm the State economy where-

as the trade process should be done in linking banks for monetary affairs.

The Senior General pointed out that some banks have not been operating their processes in a correct way since the current government took office. As such, it is necessary to systematically monitor the work processes of banks.

The Senior General underscored that it is necessary to implement Kyaukpyu, Dawei and Thilawa special economic zones to have quick progress to benefit the State and neighbouring and regional countries. Likewise, projects of Kyaukpyu and Dawei deep seaports must be implemented as quickly as possible.

The government must provide impetus to the businesspersons doing business to contribute to the State economy.

The Senior General pointed out that agriculture and livestock zones and industrial zones must be supervised to allocate the land plots to those who will actually run the businesses.

Regarding the tourism sector, the Senior General urged regional and state authorities to make preparations for enhancement of the inbound and outbound tourism services in the open season, and they all must review the measures of State economic promotion.

The Senior General gave guidance

that relevant ministries have to cooperate with companies in building crude oil mills and oil refineries at the strategic sites for the production of cooking oil. Use of cultivable lands in other ways must be supervised under the rules and regulations.

Operating economic zones is the best to expedite the momentum of the State's economic promotion. Officials need to restrict the process for businesspersons not to spend unnecessary payments along the trade routes.

The Senior General stressed the need to upgrade border trade camps in Kampaiti, Muse, Chinshwehaw, Tachilek and Myawady. He unveiled that the government is considering the construction of the Muse-Mandalay railway as well as the Chinshwehaw-Lashio railway. The project of railway from Kyaukpyu deep seaport to Mandalay is being implemented for the improvement of commodity flow. The Senior General instructed officials to strive for the resumption of the Tamu road contributing to the India-Myanmar-Thailand tripartite communication route.

In conclusion, the Senior General underscored that the export of commodities should not harm local consumption, urging all to try hard to secure success in the implementation of the projects. — MNA/TTA

NATIONAL

Myanmar and ASEAN collaborate with Japan, China, and Korea for environmental conservation and climate action: MoNREC Union Minister

DURING the 17th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Environment and the 18th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transboundary Haze Pollution Control held in Laos, Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Khin Maung Yi unveiled that Myanmar and ASEAN are committed to enhancing cooperation with Japan, China, and Korea in the realms of environmental protection, conservation, and climate change measures.

Myanmar has outlined a comprehensive strategy for climate change mitigation and adaptation within the national framework for the years 2021 to 2030. This strategy encompasses various sectors, including energy, electricity, forests, land



Union Minister U Khin Maung Yi attends the 17th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Environment and the 18th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transboundary Haze Pollution Control in Laos.

utilization, mixed crop and forest, all with specific objectives. Furthermore, Myanmar

lends its full support to Japan's proposed ASEAN Climate and Environment Strategic Process,

aimed at addressing the intertwined challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, and

pollution on a global scale.

Discussions at the meetings centred around fostering collaboration between ASEAN and its three partner nations. Action plans were devised to combat marine plastic pollution, conserve the environment and biodiversity, ensure sustainable resource utilization, mitigate the impacts of climate change, and find solutions for marine plastic litter issues.

The events also highlighted the shared commitment to advance regional and national climate change targets, promote a low-carbon future, stimulate innovation, bolster climate change funding, and provide backing for environmental and biodiversity conservation initiatives. — MNA/TS

MoI Deputy Minister encourages teachers, students to benefit nation



Books, periodicals and sports equipment are presented to BEHS No 18 in Mandalay yesterday.

DEPUTY Minister for Information U Ye Tint met teachers and students from No 18 Basic Education High School in Aungmyaythazan township in Mandalay yesterday morning. The deputy minister urged students to learn to benefit the nation and teachers to train students who can benefit the Nation.

The deputy minister presented books and periodicals for the school library provided by the Ministry of Information and sports equipment provided by the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs. In addition, he inspected the school library and instructed students to make use of it and cultivate a habit of reading. — MNA/MKKS

MoE Dy Minister conducts comprehensive review of educational processes

DEPUTY Minister for Education Dr Zaw Myint visited West Yangon University yesterday morning to give the necessary instructions and supplies.

The deputy minister first toured the university's administration department and the library. He met with students in the lecture halls of the Mathematics, History, Geography and English departments and encouraged them to master the subjects they learned in their studies.

He then arrived at Yangon University of Foreign Languages and viewed a sample of the university exhibition that YUFL will be participating in the China-ASEAN Education Cooperation Week (CAECW) 2023 and One Belt One Road University Presidents' Forum 2023 to be held in the People's Republic of China on 29 and 30 August 2023, and left the necessary items.

More than 100 university galleries from 21 countries will be displayed at the event, and a gallery will be displayed from the



Deputy Minister for Education Dr Zaw Myint is pictured (R) during his inspection tours in Yangon yesterday.

Yangon University of Foreign Languages.

The deputy minister also toured the campus and lecture halls of YUFL to see the state of learning and the departments.

He met professors, department heads and lecturers and discussed the issues of promoting the use of the library and

Internet-based teaching and learning system that encourages thinking.

The deputy minister proceeded to the Department of Ethnic Languages of Myanmar; received advice from the Myanmar language commission members, and discussed the future work plans. — MNA/KZL

NATIONAL



Kayin's wrist-tying ceremony

By Saw Myo Min Thein (IPRD)

HISTORIANS claimed that the original places of Kayin's ancestors were the highlands surrounded by high mountains in central Asia and that they introduced the wrist-tying habit while exploring new locations in the Southeast. They tie a white thread on their wrists to recognize their relatives along the way from the Tibetan plateau. It can be easily known that a person with white thread on his or her wrist is Kayin. Traditionally, all the Kayin living in local or foreign countries celebrate their festival in Wagaung.

The festival aims to preserve the traditions and cultures of the Kayin people, share knowledge with other ethnic people, preserve and value the traditions and characteristics of the Kayin people while participating in the event. Moreover, during the event, the senior Kayin people meet their family members at the end of the farming season. The young seek advice from elders, and the elders mentor the family members regarding their wrong opinions and thoughts and discuss social-related affairs to promote mutual relations among the attendees.

The Kayin people of ancient ancestors and great-grandmothers and grandfathers thought that there was a flood usually in Wagaung and there was no food security and lived in fear of different spirits. Therefore, they used white thread, which they tied on the wrists after calling back their spirits. It meant that the person and one's spirit would stay together and could live free from fear.

The wrist-tying ceremony can create an atmosphere where families can meet each other, are in unison, and discuss and exchange their experiences with young and old people. It is such a lovely sign to create a warm atmosphere for the families and relatives.

Moreover, if a family member is



The festival aims to preserve the traditions and cultures of the Kayin people, share knowledge with other ethnic people, preserve and value the traditions and characteristics of the Kayin people.

sick or lives in fear of something, he or she is cured with the traditional white thread. While recalling the spirit of the sick person, the practitioners, heads of villages and elderly couples have to conduct the processes.

Although the wrist-tying ceremony was held at every house of Kayin people in the past, it is held as a traditional culture currently, and so it can boost unity and friendship among the families and also beef up ethnic unity and preserve

the national characteristics of ethnic people as different ethnic people can join the event.

White thread tying falls into three categories;

- (1) Wedding
- (2) Calling back spirit when one of the family members dies
- (3) Calling back one spirit who is sick for fear of the devil

Although the periods for the wrist-tying events for these three cat-



egories are different, the Wagaung wrist-tying event is held collectively in Wagaung at monasteries, some do just in their families and some collectively. The wrist-tying seems to be usual, but the materials used in the event carry significant meanings.

There are seven materials used for the tying ceremony:

- (1) Banana: Bananas represent good discipline and loyalty.
- (2) Lumps of sticky rice: it represents solidarity and sharpness.
- (3) Rice balls: The rice balls stand for being united. We eat rice every day to be strong and able to work. Therefore, the Kayin people should feed each other.
- (4) The branch of flowers (Paw Wee): it represents the ability to settle and grow anywhere.
- (5) White thread- it represents unity among Kayin people as only a string of thread can be cut but a knot cannot.
- (6) Water: it represents peace of mind and strength, cleansing the body and mind.
- (7) Sugarcane: it represents the progress of lives step by step.

Such a meaningful wrist-tying ceremony is held in Kayin State in Wagaung to preserve the traditional culture and the ethnic people can visit and enjoy the culture of the Kayin people at the event.

It is commonly held in Hpa-an, the capital of Kayin State. The wrist-tying ceremonies held at Zweekabin Hall, Taung Kalay Kayin New Year Ground, Kyauk Ka Lat, Htunt Patine and Thamanya are the most popular among the people. Moreover, there are adequate hotels and guesthouses in Hpa-an and the visitors can visit the famous pagodas, traditional caves, waterfalls, and recreational sites including the wrist-tying event and taste the unique food tying the white thread on their wrists.

Translated/KTZH

CURRENT AFFAIRS



A rescue operation is in progress in the aftermath of the Nagayon Pagoda's collapse.

One injured in collapse of Nagayon Pagoda under construction

THE collapse of Nagayon Pagoda, which was under construction in Dagon Myothit (North) Township, has injured one person, according to the Myanmar Fire Brigade.

The Nagayon Pagoda that has been under construction in the vicinity of the monastery near Toeyounggale Railway Station of The-ingu Pagoda Road in Ward 16 of Dagon Myothit (North) Township collapsed at 10:30 am on 25 August. The respective township fire brigade and the search and rescue team led by the Director of the Myanmar Fire Brigade conducted a rescue operation after receiving the report that a person was trapped by the collapse of the Nagayon Pagoda.

"We could rescue a man who was trapped in the collapse. Currently, he is transported to Thingangyun Sanpya Hospital by the ambulance of the Myo Oo Lulin Social Assistance Association," said a member of the rescue team.

Further investigations are underway by relevant authorities regarding the collapse. — TWA/CT

Yangon River's water level surging over 20 feet beyond datum

THE Myanma Port Authority has issued a warning that the Yangon River will experience an exceptionally high tide, exceeding 20 feet above the datum.

If the height of the Yangon River exceeds 20 feet above the datum between 30 August and 5 September, the people living near the river bank have been warned to make preparations in advance.

In 2014 and 2015, the water level in the Yangon River reached 22 feet above the baseline, and the warning stated that there was no cause for concern. — TWA/KZW



Navigating the Deluge: Individuals braving a 22-foot surge of Yangon River's flash floods in 2015.

Swift Action Needed: Clearing complex telecom cables from utility poles in Yangon Region

DURING a coordination meeting on 23 August, the regional cabinet minister stressed the importance of simplifying the network of communication cables in Yangon Region townships.

Currently, four major telecommunications operators and four Smart Pole companies manage the cables running along roads and electricity poles in the region. The regional cabinet minister emphasized the urgency for the six last mile companies and 23 telecommunication companies registered under the Yangon City Development Committee to swiftly organize the complicated cable arrangements. In 2021, ten contracted companies were assigned tasks, including the untangling of cables. Along Pyay Road and Kaba Aye Pagoda Road, failure to complete underground transmission work on Waizayanta Road within the specified



timeframe will result in contract-based work progression. All companies must ensure the security and stability of internet lines. Companies failing to comply risk non-renewal of contracts in the 2024-2025 financial year, with ongoing operations contingent on adherence to contract terms.

For any challenges encountered during these endeavours, immediate reporting is encouraged. The Yangon Region government prepares to collaborate and provide necessary assistance to those operators. —TWA/KZW

Dried Shan chilli peppers enter Yangon market in mid-August

WHEN the chilli pepper market was sluggish, dried long chilli peppers from Shan State flooded the Yangon market in mid-August. Moehtaung chilli pepper varieties from Shan State will soon flow to the market, said U Aung Win, an owner of the chilli pepper depot.

The long chilli pepper entered the market at a wholesale price of K14,200 per viss on 17 August. The prices of red chilli peppers dipped to K11,000-14,200 per viss on 24 August from K15,000-15,500 per viss on 17 August.

The price of red chilli pepper stood at K16,000 per viss in the year-ago period (24 August 2022).

Shan Moehtaung chilli

peppers are processed at present and they will be sent to the Yangon market in the upcoming days. The price is estimated at K15,000 per viss.

The prices of old Moehtaung chili pepper range between K14,500 and K15,500 per viss depending on the producing areas (Pyawbwe and Hinthada).

The prices of dried chilli pepper are declining as the market is moving at a slow pace. However, those bell peppers processed at cold storage factories are priced at K19,000-20,000 per viss.

Some traders holding the stocks in hand make losses owing to the price decline when they resell them at the beginning of the season.



The photo shows dried chilli peppers flowing into the Yangon market.

The majority of the traders who keep the stocks in hand make a handsome profit due to the inflation in the Yangon market. However, chilli pepper traders reap a loss this year.

Shan Moehtaung chilli pepper and Yamethin chilli peppers will enter the Yangon market in September. Long chilli peppers from Salin, Kyaukse and Sinphyukyun bell peppers are supplied to the market at the end of the year. Those chilli peppers from the delta region usually flow into the market before the Thingyan festival (mid-April).

The bell peppers processed at cold storages from Sinphyukyun and delta regions hit a record high of K31,000 per viss on 17 November 2022. One month later, the price of Sinphyukyun bell pepper plunged to K12,000-13,000 per viss after the influx of new bell pepper to the Yangon market on 24 November 2022. — TWA/EM

LOCAL BUSINESS

Stakeholders in edible oil industry discuss price stability

STAKEHOLDERS in the edible oil industry including the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI), affiliated associations, edible oil importing companies, distributors and traders emphasized the price stability and edible oil security at the meeting held on 25 August at the UMFCCI.

UMFCCI president U Aye Win gave an opening remark that he attended the Union Committee on the Commodity Price Stability 1/2023 as one of the members. The UMFCCI will intensify coordination with the related businesspersons and the affiliated associations to secure the staple food (rice and edible oil) and ensure reasonable prices to lessen consumer concerns. Furthermore, he called for the edible oil importing companies to stop doubting one another and work together to reduce the price. They need to act now as it poses a burden to people.

Afterwards, the chair of the Edible Oil Dealers Association and officials highlighted mat-



The coordination meeting 1/2023 of the Union Committee on the Commodity Price Stability in progress.

ters to lower the oil prices, oil security plans in the market, cooperation plans of the edible oil companies, subsidy plans, selling oil at reference price by the companies, law enforcement on price manipulation and daily market reporting.

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.

The wholesale reference rate of palm oil for the Yangon market was set at K4,065 per viss for a week from 21 to 27 August.

Nevertheless, the palm oil

market price is exorbitantly high compared to the reference price.

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 also trying to secure edible oil sufficiency, supervise the market to offer reasonable prices to the consumers, maintain price stability and mitigate the consumers' concern over the possible shortage of palm oil.

At present, mobile market trucks operated by oil importing companies, in coordination with the Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association, were back to business in some townships on 17 July 2022 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 the palm oil at 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



The vessel loaded with 2,615-tonne of export rice onboard is seen sailing to Bangladesh from the Ayeyawady International Industrial Port in Patheingyi in 2022. PHOTO: KANU

Myanmar rice aimed for Bangladesh market under G-to-G pact

BANGLADESH has proposed to purchase Myanmar's rice on account of good quality under the government-to-government agreement this year, according to the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization.

Bangladesh's Ministry of Food bought Myanmar's rice last year and good quality appealed to them to buy it again this year. Bangladesh will sign rice deals by setting prices depending on the grain quality.

"Bangladesh is expected to make a contract again this year. If they send the government contract proposal through diplomatic channels, we will engage in the bilateral negotiation to achieve the agreement," Naw Mutakapaw, director general of the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization.

To negotiate the price depending on global rice prices, Myanmar's rice market and foreign exchange rate and monetary policies, and sign a sale and purchase rice contract between Myanmar and Bangladesh, officials of the Myanmar Rice Federation have planned to go to Bangladesh in mid-September.

The coordination meeting for signing the sale and purchase rice contract between Myanmar and Bangladesh was held virtually in the third week of August, with the presence of officials from the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization, Bangladesh's Ministry of Food and the Myanmar Rice Federation.

Following India's ban on rice export, the global rice prices are soaring. Thus, Asian countries are eyeing Myanmar's rice and the Indonesian National Logistic Agency Bulog is also observing to buy Myanmar's rice. — ASH/EM

COVID-19 report, 25 August 2023

NEW TESTS	4,510
NEW CASES	5
CASUALTIES	0

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

OPINION

Enhancing the global atmosphere for societal safety

THE delicate balance of Earth's atmosphere, essential for the well-being of humanity, is bestowed by nature. A vast expanse of air envelops our planet, spanning over 1,000 kilometres, which contains an intricate mixture of gases extending beyond 30 kilometres in altitude. This layer, comprised mainly of oxygen, nitrogen, argon, carbon dioxide, and other elements, provides the foundation for sustaining life.

Yet, the unchecked actions of humans have led to the alarming escalation of air pollution. This daily accumulation of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, and other particulates in the atmosphere threatens all life forms inhabiting land and water. The repercussions are profound, impacting not only living beings but also jeopardizing the health of trees and ecosystems.

To avert such environmental degradation, a pivotal step is the reduction of bio-fossil fuels, including coal, oil, and firewood.

The imperative is clear: humans and societies alike must unite to safeguard the environment. Through these concerted actions, the prospect of a prolonged and secure existence becomes attainable, shielded from the imminent hazards posed by the fragile natural order.

This pivotal shift away from these sources will mitigate air pollution. Instead, embracing renewable energy sources such as solar, hydro, and wind power is imperative. This transition is incumbent not only upon industries but also within the daily routines of households.

Furthermore, the menace of acidification looms large, triggered both by irresponsible human activities and natural events like volcanic eruptions and forest fires. The utilization of bio-fossil fuels and the practice of forest clearance through controlled burning contribute significantly to acidification. This, in turn, contaminates drinking water

with corrosive agents, imperilling the natural balance.

Emissions from electricity generation, manufacturing plants, and transport reliant on coal, gasoline, and diesel emit harmful sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide. These pollutants mix with raindrops, leading to the phenomenon known as acid rain. This poses a grave threat to aquatic life, affecting fish reproduction and jeopardizing the insects that serve as their sustenance. The resultant disruption in the food chain is bound to trigger shortages.

As acidification pervades, it wreaks havoc on forests and fertile soils. Ecosystems deteriorate, forests wither, and vital natural spaces degrade. This, in turn, takes a toll on human health, primarily through respiratory ailments. The intimate connection between air and water pollution exacerbates the danger, intertwining the threats to human survival.

Consequently, a collective responsibility rests upon each individual to uphold the preservation of our natural environment. Diligent efforts must be exerted to cleanse the atmosphere and safeguard territories, mitigating the severe decay of ecosystems. Only through steadfast dedication to environmental conservation can humanity envision a future free from the perils of a deteriorating natural world.

The imperative is clear: humans and societies alike must unite to safeguard the environment. Through these concerted actions, the prospect of a prolonged and secure existence becomes attainable, shielded from the imminent hazards posed by the fragile natural order.

SOMETIMES when people go on trips, they think about the weather. They want to go when the weather is nice so they can have a good time. But sometimes, a lot of people go on trips at the same time and it can get really crowded. That can make it hard to take good pictures and enjoy the places you visit.

But did you know that some people actually like to go on trips during the rainy season? Even though it might rain and be a little harder to get to the places you want to see, there are some really cool things about going during the rainy season.

One of the best things is that there are fewer people around. That means you can enjoy the places you visit without all the noise and crowds. Even the beach can be nicer with fewer people.

In some places, they call the rainy season the "green season" because everything gets really green and beautiful. The rain can make the tourist spots even more interesting. The cooler temperature during the rainy season can be more comfortable than the hot summer weather.

Sometimes people think that clear, sunny skies are the best for taking pictures. But actually, when it's drizzling a little bit, the colours in the pictures can look even better. The lighting is softer and it can make your skin look nice. And during busy times, you might have to wait for clouds to cover the sun before taking pictures.

Another cool thing about going during the rainy season is that you can be more flexible with your plans. During busy times, you have to book your flight and hotel months in advance. But during the rainy season, you can book just a few days before. You can also decide where to go at the last minute.

And when you're done exploring for the day, you can relax in a nice hotel room with a beach view. After a tiring but fun day, it's nice to have a big room to relax in. And during the rainy season, you can get big discounts on hotel rooms.

So, even though the rainy season might not be what most people think of for a vacation, it can still be a really nice time to go on a trip.



Analysis of statistics reveals interesting information about renowned destinations including Bagan, Mandalay, PyinOoLwin, Pintaya, and Inlay Lake. PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/PIXABAY/GNLM

Journeying Through Rain-Kissed Wonderlands

BY AUGUSTIN

Simple Tips for a Smooth Trip

Preparing for a trip in the rainy season necessitates careful planning. Anticipate rain and the possibility of getting wet, necessitating protective measures for yourself and your belongings.

Carrying a foldable waterproof jacket and utilizing waterproof bags ensures you stay dry while on the move. A travel umbrella is a useful tool to have for unexpected rain.

Invest in water-resistant accessories like watch or phone cases to safeguard your valuable items. Proper attire is essential: lightweight, quick-drying rain jackets and moisture-wicking shirts are recommended. Opt for fast-drying materials like linen, polyester, or nylon for T-shirts.

Quick-dry shorts and water-repellent pants aid mobility in wet environments. Suitable footwear with a strong grip enhances safety on slippery surfaces, be it city streets or nature trails. Adequate preparation guarantees a smoother, more enjoyable rainy season travel experience.

Destinations for a Unique Travel Experience

Here are some places that

are great to visit during the rainy season.

China, with its vastness and diversity, offers an intriguing travel experience during the rainy season. Destinations like Guilin and Zhangjiajie become ethereal landscapes with mist-shrouded mountains and emerald-green rice paddies. This period also coincides with the blooming of lotus flowers in places like Hangzhou's West Lake, adding to the country's visual splendour.

India, with its diverse topography and cultural tapestry, presents an intriguing experience during the monsoon season. The landscapes come alive with vibrant greenery, and iconic sites like the Taj Mahal acquire a serene and poetic allure. The rain-washed streets offer a unique backdrop to immerse oneself in the rich heritage and traditions of this country.

Thailand, with its lush landscapes and vibrant culture, transforms during the rainy season. While the occasional downpours occur, they bring about an enchanting atmosphere, especially in regions like Chiang Mai and Koh Samui. These rains also lead to fewer crowds, allowing you to explore its temples, mar-

kets, and natural wonders in a more tranquil setting.

New Zealand, often associated with its breathtaking scenery, becomes even more picturesque during the rainy season. The raindrops accentuate the country's natural beauty, enhancing the allure of its fjords, lakes, and mountains. Additionally, this season is perfect for those seeking adventure through activities like white-water rafting and exploring the stunning Fiordland National Park.

Hawaii, renowned for its tropical splendour, offers a different perspective during the rainy season. The showers bring out the islands' vibrant flora and add an ethereal touch to the landscapes. Visiting the lush rainforests and enjoying the waterfalls in their full glory can be a memorable experience during this time.

The Philippines, with its myriad of islands and pristine beaches, comes alive in the rainy season. The tropical showers enhance the beauty of its marine life and lush surroundings. The rice terraces in Banaue, as well as the stunning beaches of Palawan, take on a tranquil and rejuvenating ambience.

Colombia, with its rich bio-

diversity and vibrant cities, is a great choice for a rainy-season getaway. The rains enhance the lushness of its rainforests, and urban centres like Cartagena exude a captivating charm amidst the occasional showers.

Costa Rica, often celebrated for its ecotourism, flourishes during the rainy season. The rainforests burst with life, making it an excellent time for wildlife enthusiasts. Exploring the Arenal Volcano National Park and immersing in its thermal springs becomes a rejuvenating experience amidst the rain.

Réunion Island, a French overseas territory in the Indian Ocean, is a hidden gem for rainy-season travellers. Its dramatic landscapes, including lush valleys and towering peaks, are best explored during this time, as the rain adds an ethereal quality to its natural beauty.

Cameroon, with its diverse ecosystems and cultures, offers a distinctive rainy season experience. The lush rainforests and picturesque landscapes are at their best during this time, making it an opportune moment to witness the country's natural and cultural riches.

Rainy Season Insights: My-

anmar

Looking at the statistics, we notice something interesting about famous places like Bagan, Mandalay, PyinOoLwin and Inlay Lake that many tourists like to visit. These places, which are considered important places to see, only have rain about 25 per cent of the time during the "rainy season."

And what's even more interesting is that when it does rain, it's usually just for a short time, often in the evenings. This kind of rain might not stop travellers from enjoying their holidays.

For instance, Bagan, with its amazing temples and history, doesn't get a lot of rain for a big part of the rainy season. When rain does come, it's usually on and off quickly. This means visitors can explore the beautiful landscapes and impressive buildings without the weather causing big problems.

Similarly, Mandalay, known for its rich culture, doesn't get rain on a lot of rainy season days. The rain is often short and doesn't last long.

Sometimes, it even adds a nice touch to the city's atmosphere. This kind of rain helps keep the special things about Mandalay intact, and visitors can still experience its cultural treasures.

PyinOoLwin, also known as Maymyo, is a hill town situated close to Mandalay. During the rainy season, the town transforms into a picturesque landscape adorned with colourful flowers and lush green trees, offering an ideal opportunity for sightseeing and exploration. While in PyinOoLwin, you can relish the refreshing climate and explore colonial houses and train stations. Additionally, don't miss the opportunity to wander through Myanmar's largest botanical garden located within the National Kandawgyi Park. You can also capture stunning photos at breathtaking waterfalls like Anisakhan, Pwe Kauk, Nat Kyone, and Yay Pyan Taung.

Shan State is renowned for its captivating landscapes, cultural heritage, and religious sites. Within Shan State, there is a remarkable place known as the Danu Autonomous Region, which holds a special gem within its boundaries - the Golden Cave Natural Cave Pagoda and Monasteries in Pintaya Town.

Inlay Lake, a calm and pretty

place to visit, follows this weather pattern too. It only rains on a few days during the rainy season. This means people can explore the peaceful lake and the area around it without the weather getting in the way too much.

Inlay Lake, and others, showcase a trend where rain is not as frequent or disruptive as one might assume.

The intermittent and often brief nature of the showers adds a unique charm to these places, allowing travellers to explore and enjoy without significant hin-

drances. Embracing the rain can lead to memorable and distinct travel encounters, showcasing the beauty that can emerge even in wet weather.

In conclusion, embarking on a journey through rain-kissed wonderlands presents a unique opportunity to witness the harmonious dance between nature and human exploration. The destinations that come alive during the rainy season illuminate the beauty that can be found amidst the raindrops. ■

POEM

By Maung Swe Ngae

LIGHT, WHERE DARKNESS WAS

- ❖ *If Literature, like water, is high Nation, like lotus, will be high If the literary standard is low A nation will be at a low.*
- ❖ *So goes the saying we've heard Have taken root through successive periods But Myanmar literature remained in eclipse When under the yoke of imperialists.*
- ❖ *With its own kings and dynasties Myanmar has stood tall for centuries From Bagan to the late Konbaung Precious literary heritage was left around.*
- ❖ *With great losses, Myanmar was colonized For decades, literary activities were disorganized With unremitting diligence, writers strived Both swords and pens were organized.*
- ❖ *While fighting for independence in time And trying to open people's eyes A literary institute emerged for posterity Known as the 'Burma Translation Society'.*
- ❖ *At the majestic 'Palace of Literature' Literati and scholars flock together To promote fine Myanmar literary tradition Our forefathers laid a firm foundation.*
- ❖ *The motto 'Light, where darkness was' To perpetuate it, they urged us Upholding fine traditions with pens' might Paved the way for people's rights.*
- ❖ *Organizing the literary world in unity Produce fictional, informative works for the community Trying to disseminate 'BOOKS FOR ALL' May Sarpay Beikman be standing tall!*

(In honour of the 76th Anniversary of the Sarpay Beikman which falls on 26 August 2023.)

TECH/ENVIRON WORLD

AI chatbots offer comfort to the bereaved

Staying in touch with a loved one after their death is the promise of several start-ups using the powers artificial intelligence, though not without raising ethical questions.

RYU Sun-yun sits in front of a microphone and a giant screen, where her husband, who died a few months earlier, appears.

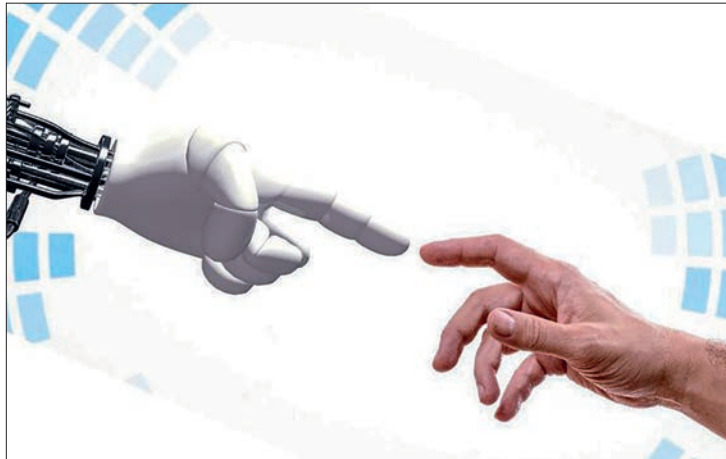
“Sweetheart, it’s me,” the man on the screen tells her in a video demo. In tears, she answers him and a semblance of conversation begins.

When Lee Byeong-hwal learned he had terminal cancer, the 76-year-old South Korean asked startup DeepBrain AI to create a digital replica using several hours of video.

“We don’t create new content” such as sentences that the deceased would have never uttered or at least written and validated during their lifetime, said Joseph Murphy, head of development at DeepBrain AI, about the “Rememory” program.

“I’ll call it a niche part of our business. It’s not a growth area for us,” he cautioned.

The idea is the same for company StoryFile, which uses



Some start-up companies are using artificial intelligence to create digital replicas of deceased loved ones. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/PIXABAY**

92-year-old “Star Trek” actor William Shatner to market its site.

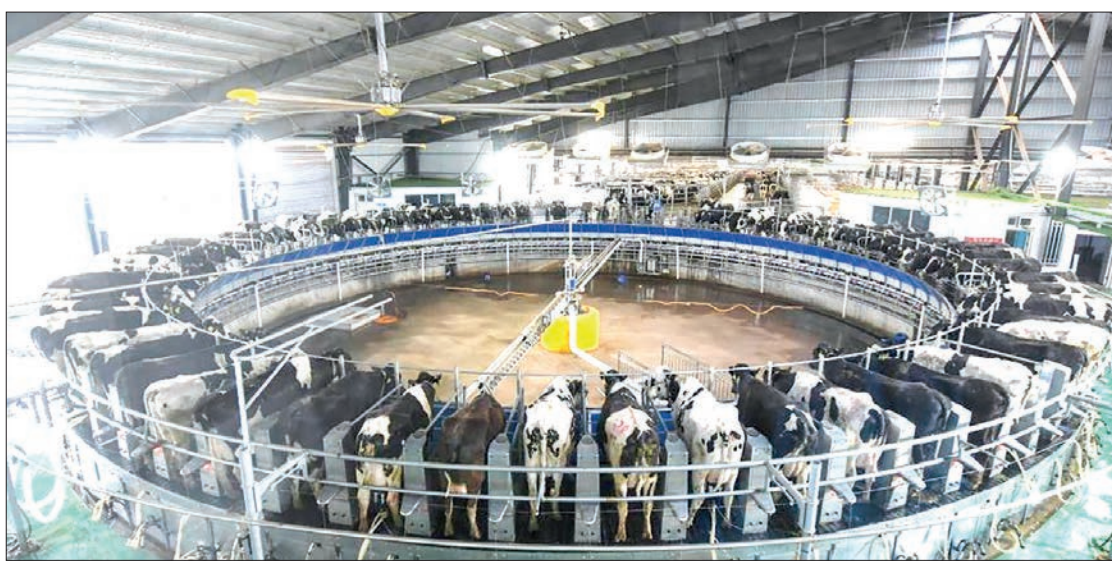
“Our approach is to capture the wonder of an individual, then use the AI tools,” said Stephen Smith, boss of StoryFile, which claims several thousand users of its Life service.

Entrepreneur Pratik Desai caused a stir a few months ago when he suggested people save

audio or video of “your parents, elders and loved ones,” estimating that by “the end of this year” it would be possible to create an autonomous avatar of a deceased person, and that he was working on a project to this end.

The message posted on Twitter set off a storm, to the point where, a few days later, he denied being “a ghoul”. — AFP

AI-powered devices boost efficiency of dairy farm in Wuwei, NW China



Each cow wears a monitoring necklace that collects a range of data about the animal. This includes information about the cow’s breath, rumination frequency (chewing cud), feeding patterns, and the number of steps it takes. This photo taken on 7 May 2023 shows cows on a rotary milking machine at a dairy farm in Wuwei, northwest China’s Gansu Province. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

AI-POWERED devices have boosted efficiency of the farm, making animal monitoring and management more accurate.

A monitoring necklace attached to each cow collects mul-

tipale data of the animal such as breath, rumination frequency, feeding situation and number of steps. These data are transmitted in real-time to veterinarians who can monitor the cows’ milk-

ing and health conditions.

Additionally, electronic ear tags provide a convenient method for identifying and managing individual cows, similar to giving each cow an ID. — Xinhua

Top science publisher withdraws flawed climate study

TOP science publisher Springer Nature said it has withdrawn a study that presented misleading conclusions on climate change impacts after an investigation prompted by an AFP inquiry.

AFP reported in September 2022 on concerns over the peer-reviewed study by four Italian scientists that appeared earlier that year in the European Physical Journal Plus, published by Springer Nature.

The study had drawn positive attention from climate-sceptic media.

The paper, titled “A critical assessment of extreme events trends in times of global warming”, purported to review data on possible changes in the frequency or intensity of rainfall, cyclones, tornadoes, droughts and other extreme weather events.

Several climate scientists contacted by AFP said the study manipulated data, cherry-picked facts and ignored others that would contradict their assertions, prompting the publisher to launch an internal review. — AFP



Experts point to widespread concerns about peer-review standards in the lucrative academic publishing industry. **PHOTO: AFP**

Norway tries to stop costly reindeer escapades into Russia

NORWEGIAN authorities said Thursday they would mend a fence near Norway’s border with Russia in the far north to stop its reindeer from making costly crossings over the international boundary.

In a bid to prevent the four-footed intrusions, a fence already exists on the Norwegian side, spanning 150 kilometres (93 miles) of the countries’ shared 198-kilometre border.

But some sections, dating as far back as 1954, have fallen into such disrepair that the animals can easily pass through and cross into Russia.

“It is strictly forbidden to cross the border into Russia, for reindeer too,” the Norwegian Directorate of Agriculture said in a statement.

Since the beginning of the year, 42 Norwegian reindeer have crossed the boundary to graze in the Russian national park Pasvik Zapovednik.

Each time it happens, Russian authorities demand some 50,000 kroner (\$4,700) in damages and the animals are slaughtered on their return to Norway to prevent a recurrence.

The Directorate of Agriculture has therefore ordered the construction of a new fence on a seven-kilometre section by 1 October, at a cost of 3.7 million kroner. — AFP

Rise in Japan's unmanned rail stations creating concerns

AMID a declining population, an increasing number of stations on Japan's local train lines are switching to unmanned operations as railway companies target the bottom line amid decreasing passenger numbers.

The trend is evident even among the nation's biggest operators, with nearly 60 per cent of the 4,368 stations operated by the six Japan Railways Group passenger companies now running without staff.

However, unmanned stations bring with them their own set of concerns, not least compromises in convenience and safety.

One local government of-

ficial in his 40s recalled being left bewildered by the lack of information at Ozai Station in the southwestern Japan city of Oita earlier this month after Typhoon Khanun had rolled through Japan's southwestern Kyushu region, forcing cancellations and disruption to train services.

There were few remote announcements to inform passengers of the situation at the station, which went unmanned July 1, he said.

The inconveniences extend beyond emergencies or platform usage. One third-year high schooler said she finds it "annoying" that she is unable to renew her commuter pass



Photo taken on 14 August 2023 shows machines installed at JR Ozai station, which has been unmanned since July, in Oita. **PHOTO: KYODO**

through an attendant now that the ticket counter has closed.

The decision to remove staff from the station came

despite it serving as a stop for express trains in the morning and evening rush hour, and its proximity to a new residential development.

In fiscal 2021, Ozai Station saw an average of 1,789 passengers a day, making it one of the busiest stations across Kyushu Railway Co's entire network.

Even so, the company said its usage pattern justified its switch to unmanned status.

On JR Kyushu routes alone, 338 stations -- 59 per cent -- are now unmanned. The pace has surged since 2015, when the firm decided to become a listed company and set its sights on improving revenues. — Kyodo

UK court concludes teenager behind huge hacking campaign

A UK court on Wednesday found a teenager responsible for a hacking campaign that included one of the biggest breaches in the history of the video game industry.

Arion Kurtaj, 18, was described by the prosecution as one of the "key players" in the Lapsus\$ group that hacked Rockstar Games in 2022 and published footage from its still unreleased "Grand Theft Auto 6".

Following a two-month case at London's Southwark Crown Court, a jury unanimously concluded that Kurtaj, whom psychiatrists deemed was unfit to stand trial, had carried out 12 offences.

They included carrying out an unauthorised act to impair the

operation of a computer; blackmail and fraud. Kurtaj also threatened Rockstar Games he would leak the hacked source code for its latest Grand Theft Auto releases onto internet forums.

Grand Theft Auto 5, the last iteration of the game that revolves around heists and street violence, was released in 2013 and has since sold 170 million copies and generated some \$7 billion in revenue. Kurtaj and a 17-year-old youth, whose name cannot be published because of his age, were also accused of hacking software company Nvidia in February 2022 and threatening to release its intellectual property. — AFP



Grand Theft Auto 5, the last iteration of the game, was released in 2013 and has since sold 170 million copies and generated some seven billion dollars. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Classic cars back on the road - in Gaza City



Munir al-Shandi drives his Gazelle down a Gaza street. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE vintage beige Mercedes would be eye-catching anywhere in the world, but it is especially so on the streets of impoverished Gaza City.

Munir al-Shandi, 42, is among a handful of vintage car enthusiasts in the Gaza Strip, defying a punishing Israeli siege imposed on the Palestinian coastal enclave to pursue a passionate hobby.

As he drives a 1929 Mercedes-Benz Gazelle, which he restored, through Gaza's cratered roads, young children run after him in excitement, reaching out to touch the car's pristine bodywork.

"Everyone in the street is amazed and asks to take pictures," Shandi, a mechanic, told AFP as he showcased the replica of the vintage car he had assembled in his workshop.

"The restoration would have been faster and the quality and shape better if the materials had been available."

Around 2.3 million Palestinians live in the territory, which has been under a crippling Israeli blockade since the Islamist group Hamas seized power there in 2007.

There is a ban on importing a range of goods, includ-

ing car parts, as Israel claims these may be used in producing explosives to be used against it.

Israel says that its land, air, and sea blockade of Gaza is necessary to protect it from rocket and other attacks from Hamas.

Sourcing spares

But such obstacles have not stopped Shandi, and the Gazelle is not the only vintage vehicle he has rebuilt.

He is also the proud owner of a 1946 Armstrong Siddeley Hurricane, which he has restored. — AFP

ECONOMY WORLD



Crowds gathered at the base of the Sydney Harbour Bridge to watch the arrival of the ship on 18 April 2022. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Global warming predicted to cost Australia billions

GLOBAL warming could cost Australia's economy hundreds of billions of dollars in the coming decades if workplaces cannot adapt to soaring temperatures, a government report said Thursday.

Working conditions will become so difficult in the already

sun-kissed and desert-scarred continent that officials predict a drop in output of between Aus\$135 billion (US\$88 billion) and Aus\$423 billion (US\$274 billion).

The forecast assumes global temperatures will increase by three to four degrees Celsius

by 2063, leaving labourers to toil in ever more difficult conditions.

Measures such as tree planting and changing how buildings are designed would only help sweltering workers "to some degree", the report said. — AFP

Malaysia to screen Japanese food imports following Fukushima radioactive wastewater release plan

MALAYSIA will screen Japanese food imports following its decision to release nuclear-contaminated water from the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, the health ministry

said on Wednesday.

Food products from Japan deemed to be high-risk will be subject to Level 4 (surveillance) inspection for radioactive materials, the ministry's

director-general Muhammad Radzi Abu Hassan said in a statement.

"The ministry takes note of consumer anxiety on this matter," he said. — Xinhua

Google unveils changes before strict EU rules kick in

GOOGLE vowed Thursday to be more transparent about content moderation across its services, including its ubiquitous search engine, as tech firms rush to meet stricter European Union rules that kick in this week.

Sweeping rules will apply from Friday to Google, alongside 18 other large social media platforms and websites including Meta-owned Instagram, Twitter (rebranded as X) and TikTok, forcing the companies to better

police content, or face the risk of billions of euros in fines.

Among the Google products listed were YouTube, Google Maps, Play, Search, and Shopping.

The wide-ranging Digital Services Act (DSA) means the EU will be able to get a closer peek at the 19 platforms — labelled as "very large" because they have at least 45 million monthly active users — and how their algorithms work.



Google is widely recognized for its search engine, which has become the most widely used search tool on the internet. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ PATRICIA DE MELO MOREIRA/ AFP**

Japan fisheries industry raps Fukushima water release as high-handed

THE fishery industry in Japan rapped the discharge of treated radioactive water from the crippled Fukushima nuclear complex into the sea starting Thursday, as a high-handed decision rammed through despite their opposition, while consumers urged the government to give a more detailed explanation of the safety measures in place.

"The government's decision, which ignored fishermen's persistent opposition, is ridiculous," said Seiji Oi, chairman of a fisheries cooperative association in Iwate Prefecture near Fukushima Prefecture, where the plant hit by the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami disaster is located.

The National Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Associations said in a joint statement with a local group in Miyagi Prefecture, which neighbours Fukushima, "Our opposition to the discharge has not changed a bit."

Yasuo Kumakami, who cultivates seaweed in Ofunato, Iwate Prefecture, was disappointed, saying that "The matter is out of our hands now that the discharge has started."

At Tokyo's Toyosu fish market, Yasuhiro Yamazaki, president of wholesaler Yamaharu Co, which exports sea urchins and young yellowtail, complained that business is already being affected. — Kyodo



Fishing boats are moored at a fishing port in Namie, Fukushima Prefecture, on 24 August 2023, with the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant seen in the background. **PHOTO: KYODO**

The DSA means stricter regulation on targeted advertising, and forces firms to implement a better mechanism to flag and remove illegal content.

Google's latest steps include expanding its "Ads Transparency Centre", where users will find more information about targeting for ads in the European Union, and giving researchers more data access to understand how Google's products work in practice. — AFP

Central China's Wuhan resumes nonstop flight to London

Airbus A350 resumes direct Wuhan-to-London flight route, connecting Europe after pandemic hiatus

AN Airbus A350 took off from the central Chinese city of Wuhan, capital of Hubei Province, with 270 passengers bound for London's Heathrow Airport on Friday morning, marking the resumption of the direct flight route from Wuhan to Europe after the pandemic.

Operated by China Southern Airlines, this air service will run once a week on Fridays. The outbound flight is scheduled to leave Wuhan Tianhe International Airport at 2:15 am and arrive in London at 7:10 am local time. The return flight leaves Lon-



Operated by China Southern Airlines, this air service will run once a week on Fridays. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ XINHUA**

don at 11:05 am local time and arrives in Wuhan at 5:00 am the next day. The first outbound

flight to London saw the passenger load factor reach 88 per cent, and that of the inbound flight hit 90 per cent, according to Li Shuwen, the vice-sales manager of China Southern Airlines' Hubei branch.

"We are very optimistic about the revenue that comes with the route. So far, over 80 per cent of the available seating capacity of the Wuhan-London flights in September has already been booked," said Li, adding that the company plans to add one more flight every week in November. — Xinhua

Central bankers head to Wyoming retreat seeking clarity on US interest rates

CENTRAL bankers and academics from around the world have descended upon the town of Jackson, Wyoming searching for clues on the US Federal Reserve's interest rate policy.

After 11 rate hikes in less than 18 months, the US benchmark lending rate now sits at a range between 5.25 and 5.5 per cent — its highest level for 22 years. However, the rapid cycle of interest rate increases has failed to definitively quash inflation, which remains stuck above the Fed's long-term target of two per cent, despite slowing sharply from recent multi-decade highs. Analysts expect Fed

Chairman Jerome Powell's opening remarks at the annual Jackson Hole economic symposium on Friday to address monetary policy ahead of the next interest rate decision in September.

They'll also be looking for clues about the Fed's likely policy trajectory in the coming months, when inflation is expected to approach its long-term target. "The main takeaway from the speech to me is essentially going to be how much he talks about keeping rates higher for longer," Peterson Institute for International Economics (PIIE) President Adam Posen told reporters earlier this month. — AFP

July duty-free sales at Japan dept stores top pre-pandemic levels

DUTY-FREE sales at department stores across Japan totaled 31.3 billion yen (\$214 million) in July, surpassing the pre-pandemic levels of 2019 for the same month thanks to the return of individual travellers from mainland China, data by an industry body showed Friday.

It marked the first time duty-free sales for a single month exceeded such levels since March 2020, when the number of foreign visitors to Japan plummeted, the Japan Department Stores As-

sociation said.

The return of Chinese travellers following the easing of restrictions related to COVID-19, coupled with a weak yen, has led to strong purchases of luxury brands and other high-end items, according to the association.

Overall sales at 181 stores operated by 70 companies increased 8.6 per cent from a year earlier to 475.8 billion yen, up for the 17th straight month, the association said. — Kyodo



File photo taken on 24 May 2023, shows Isetan department store in Tokyo's Shinjuku Ward. **PHOTO: KYODO**

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V DL MARIGOLD VOY.NO. (085)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V DL MARIGOLD VOY.NO. (085)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **26-8-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **IBTT** 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: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S RK SHIPPING & TRADING PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SPARROW VOY.NO. (04/2023)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SPARROW VOY.NO. (04/2023)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **28-8-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **WILMAR** 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: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S UNI SPRING LOGISTICS HOLDINGS PTE LTD

Invitation for Public Consultation Meeting

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report for "The Project on the Construction and Operation of Captive Power Plant (CPP) of Shwe Taung Cement Company Limited (STC) Cement Plant", which is located in Pyi Nyaung Village, Thazi Township in the Mandalay Region, is currently carried out by a third party, Myanmar Koei International Limited. Public Consultation Meeting will be held in two places for the scoping stage to present the project information related to the report as per the schedules below, so you are respectfully invited to attend and discuss.

Date: 28th August, 2023 (Monday)
Time: From 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM
Venue: Ku Byin Village

Date: 29th August, 2023 (Tuesday)
Time: From 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Venue: Pyi Nyaung Village

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ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD



The study indicates that approximately 80 per cent of cows globally are currently exhibiting signs of severe heat stress. **PHOTO: AFP**

Heat stress could threaten health of one billion cows

BY the end of century, more than one billion cows worldwide could suffer from heat stress if global warming continues unabated, threatening their fertility, milk production and lives, according to research published on Thursday.

Nearly eight out of 10 cows across the planet are already experiencing excessively high body temperatures, spiked respiration rates, bowed heads and open-mouthed panting —

all symptoms associated with severe heat stress, the study said.

In tropical climates, 20 per cent of cattle endure those symptoms year-round.

These numbers are projected to balloon if cattle farming continues to expand in the Amazon and Congo basins, where temperatures are on track to rise more quickly than the global average.

If emissions of cli-

mate-heating greenhouse gases continue to rise, the study predicts heat stress will become a year-round problem in Brazil, southern Africa, northern India, northern Australia and central America by 2100.

The study, published in Environmental Research Letters, found that in a worst-case scenario, cattle husbandry will nearly double in Asia and Latin America and increase more than fourfold in Africa. — AFP

RAPID NEWS INSIGHT

US Republican positions on climate change shock environmentalists

US environmental groups and experts expressed anger Thursday at positions on climate change expressed by Republican presidential hopefuls during their first televised debate the day before.

The subject of climate change prompted one of the most revealing exchanges of the debate, and was broached only 20 minutes into the clash by moderators who asked the eight

contenders for the Republican candidacy to raise their hand if “you believe human behaviour is causing climate change.”

Before anybody could raise their hand, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, second in the polls behind Donald Trump, a climate change denier who skipped the debate, stepped in to say: “We’re not school children, let’s have the debate.”

That left the candidates

free to keep their hands down. But one of them, entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy, who is enjoying a surge in polls, seized the opportunity.

“The climate change agenda is a hoax,” the 38-year-old political newcomer said. “The reality is, more people are dying of bad climate change policies than they are of actual climate change.” He did not back up this argument with evidence.

— AFP

Fukushima’s water release: what we know

JAPAN began releasing wastewater from the stricken Fukushima-Daiichi nuclear plant into the Pacific Ocean on Thursday, 12 years after it suffered one of the world’s worst atomic accidents.

Here is what we know about the discharge, how the water has been treated and concerns about the safety of the exercise: **Why the operation?**

Around 100,000 litres (26,500 gallons) of water — contaminated by cooling the plant’s wrecked reactors plus groundwater and rain seeping in — is collected at the site in northeastern Japan every day. Some 1.34 million tonnes — equivalent to almost 540 Olympic pools — are now stored in around a thousand steel containers at the seaside site, and now there is no more space, authorities say. Japan decided in 2021, after years of discussion, that it would release at most around 500,000 litres per day into the sea via a pipe one kilometre (0.6 miles) long.

The discharge will take around 30 years to complete. The release on Thursday was the first of four scheduled between now and the end of March.

What has been done to the water?

Plant operator TEPCO says that a special filtering system called ALPS has removed all radioactive elements — including caesium and strontium — except tritium.

TEPCO has said the water is diluted to reduce radioactivity levels to 1,500 becquerels per litre (Bq/L), far below the national safety standard of 60,000 Bq/L.

Is that safe?

Tony Hooker, a nuclear expert from the University of Adelaide, said that the level of tritium is well below the World Health Organization drinking water limit of 10,000 Bq/L.



Japan has commenced the controlled release of wastewater from the Fukushima-Daiichi nuclear plant into the Pacific Ocean. **PHOTO: KYODO**

“Tritium is regularly released from nuclear power facilities into waterways worldwide,” Hooker told AFP.

UN atomic watchdog the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has said the release meets international standards and “will not cause any harm to the environment”.

What else needs to be done?

The far more dangerous task is the removal of radioactive debris and highly dangerous nuclear fuel from the three reactors that went into meltdown in 2011.

TEPCO plans to use robots to remove the fuel but there are fears that radiation levels are so high that they could even disable the machines. The whole gargantuan process is expected to take 30 to 40 years and cost around eight trillion yen (\$55 billion). — AFP

SPORTS

World wrestling body suspends India after harassment scandal

THE Wrestling Federation of India has been suspended by the sports' world body for not holding elections after its chief was charged with sexual misconduct.

India's top wrestlers staged weeks of sit-in protests in the capital New Delhi earlier this year demanding the resignation of WFI president Brij Bhushan Singh. The 66-year-old, also a lawmaker for the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has since been charged with sexual harassment and stalking but is currently on bail. The federation's leadership was disbanded in the wake of the scandal, with fresh elections scheduled for earlier this month



Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh addresses a press conference in Gonda. **PHOTO: ANI**

but postponed indefinitely at the last moment. "The absence of a regularly elected president and a board does not comply with the UWW regulations and the conditions for membership," United World Wrestling said in its statement late Thursday. — AFP

Bonmati, Carmona and Kerr shortlisted for UEFA women's player of year

TWO Spanish Women's World Cup winners, Aitana Bonmati and Olga Carmona, and Chelsea's Australian striker Sam Kerr were on Friday named on the three-player shortlist for UEFA's women's player of the year award.

Bonmati, who plays for European champions Barcelona, captained Spain at the World Cup and was named player of the tournament. Carmona, of Real Madrid, scored the only goal in the final against England. Kerr, a semi-finalist with host country Australia, was Chelsea's top scorer as they won the English Super League and lost to Barcelona in the Champions League semi-final. The trio were chosen in a vote by coaches of clubs who played in last season's Champions League group stages, coaches of the 55 UEFA-affiliated countries and a panel of European journalists. England and Manchester United goalkeeper Mary Earps just missed out as the fourth-highest vote getter. The winner will be announced on 31 August in Monaco at the draw for the men's Champions League group stage. — AFP



Olga Carmona scored the winning goal in the Women's World Cup final. **PHOTO: AFP**

Myanmar junior team continue football journey in Japan

THE second day of the 11th U-12 Junior World Challenge 2023 continues on 25 August in Chiba, Japan.

After the group matches, the Myanmar U-12 team lost to Spanish club Barcelona and Japanese clubs Daiwa House Dream U-12 team and JEF United Ichihara Chiba U-12 team, so they stood at the bottom of the group and could not qualify for the

knockout stage, so they had to continue competing for the ranking. The Myanmar U-12 team won the match against the Japanese club Tokyo Verdy U-12 team 1-0 and qualified for the next round.

Aung La scored the winning goal for Team Myanmar. The Myanmar team will compete against the Japanese club Sargantotsu U-12 team today. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL



A Myanmar player (white) vies for the ball against a Japanese club player during their friendly match in Japan on 25 August 2023. **PHOTO: MFF**

'Nothing' in speculation linking Salah to Saudi, says Klopp



Jurgen Klopp is confident Mohamed Salah will remain at Liverpool this season. **PHOTO: AFP**

LIVERPOOL manager dismissed suggestions on Friday that Mohamed Salah could become the latest star name to depart European football for Saudi Arabia.

According to reports, Al-Ittihad are trying to lure the Egyptian to the Gulf state with a huge salary offer that would rival the deals that enticed Cristiano Ronaldo and Neymar to the Gulf kingdom.

Salah signed a three-year contract extension at Anfield just over 12 months ago and his agent has previously poured cold water on speculation of a move.

"If we considered leaving LFC this year, we wouldn't have renewed the contract last summer. Mohamed remains committed to LFC," Ramy Abbas posted on X, formerly Twitter, earlier this month. — AFP

Mayer's title defence ends early, Chopra spearheads Indian javelin success

KEVIN Mayer's defence of his world decathlon title lasted just two events on Friday in Budapest as the left Achilles problem that had been niggling him proved too much.

The morning session allowed the spotlight to fall on the decathletes and field events specialists as the track stars had a rest.

They will return to the limelight later Friday when Noah Lyles and Sha'Carri Richardson bid to add 200-metre gold to their 100m crowns.

Friday's early action proved a fiesta for Indian male javelin throwers, all three of them, headed by Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra, reaching Sunday's final.

Two Ukrainians, Yaroslava Mahuchikh and Iryna Geraschenko, will bid to bring some joy to their compatriots back home in Sunday's high jump final after qualifying on Friday.

The writing had been on the wall for two-time world champion Mayer from the start as his 100m time of 10.79 seconds was well off his best.

The long jump confirmed his problems as a leap of 7.25m — some way off his personal best of 7.80m — left him shaking his head ruefully. — AFP



Iran reveals what percentage of its military equipment is homegrown

FACING decades of sanctions pressure from its pre-1979 go-to arms suppliers, the Islamic Republic has established a penchant for making its most important military equipment domestically whenever possible.

Over the past 40+ years, the country's defence industry has created world-class missiles, air defence systems and drones, mostly from scratch.

Iran produces as much as nine-tenths of its military equipment domestically, a senior defence official has revealed.

Speaking to Lebanese media, Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces Logistics spokesman Brig-Gen Reza Talaie-Nik indicated that since the Iranian Revolution of 1979, Iran has "transformed from an importer of weapons into a country that manufactures about 90 per cent of its military needs".

Characterizing the Islamic Republic as among the top ten nations in the world in terms of defence technology, Talaie-Nik nevertheless stressed that the country uses its equipment only for defence, and "has not and will never be the initiator of any war". Iran will also "spare no effort in decisively defending its independence and security", he said. — SPUTNIK

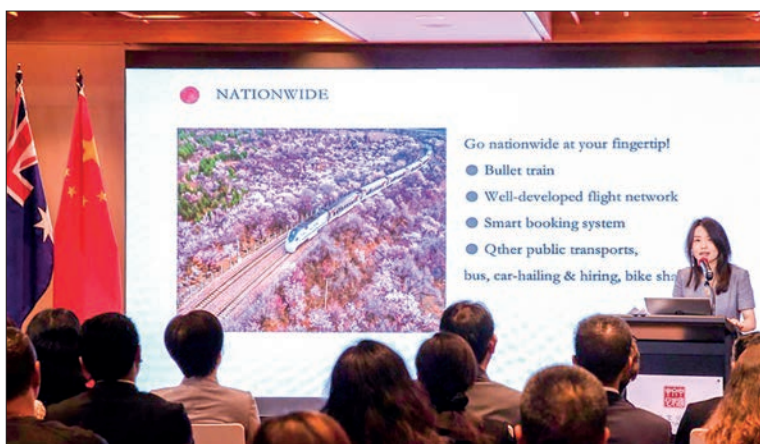
- Iran has faced significant sanctions pressure from its primary arms suppliers before 1979, prompting a shift towards domestic production of essential military equipment.
- The country has successfully achieved self-sufficiency in military manufacturing, with approximately 90 per cent of its military needs being produced domestically.



Pictured here is an exhibition of Iran's defence industry achievements on 23 August 2023, in Tehran. Iran unveiled its latest domestically built drone, on 22 August that can fly at a higher altitude and for a longer duration with enhanced weapons capabilities, state media reported. **PHOTO: ATTA KENARE/AFP**

"Nihao China" tourism logo unveiled in Australia's Sydney

The logo is designed to convey a global message that China is reopening and welcoming visitors from around the world.



Huang Jin, assistant director of the China National Tourist Office in Sydney, introduces tourism in China during a promotional activity in Sydney, Australia, 24 August 2023. **PHOTO: HU JINGCHEN/XINHUA**

A TOURISM logo featuring a cartoon panda, "Nihao China", was unveiled on Thursday at a promotional activity in the Australian city of Sydney, where local practitioners also learned about the latest development of cashless payment in China.

Held at the China Cultural Centre in Sydney, the promotion invited over 60 representatives from tourism-related institutions, including the China National Tourist Office, major Chinese airlines and banks, as well as travel agencies.

Huang Jin, assistant director of the China National Tourist Office in Sydney, made a detailed introduction of the tourism logo which consisted of a chubby cartoon panda, the colorful letters of "Nihao China" and a traditional Chinese seal.

"All these elements come together to form a logo and deliver a global message from China to the whole world that China is reopening and welcoming all friends from near and afar," said Huang.

Besides, participants were able to keep abreast of some convenient payment options popular in China, such as paying with a QR Code. Mark Haddad, a business development manager at a Sydney-based travel agency, told Xinhua that it was quite nice to see the new logo and also know that customers do not need to carry cash while enjoying their trip in China. — Xinhua

Trump arrested in election case, mug shot released

FORMER US president Donald Trump was arrested at a Georgia jail Thursday on racketeering and conspiracy charges and released on a \$200,000 bond after having a historic mug shot taken. Trump, who is accused of colluding with 18 other defendants to overturn the 2020 election result in the southern state, spent less than 30 minutes inside Atlanta's Fulton County Jail before leaving in a motorcade for the airport. Like the other defendants in the case who have surrendered so far, the 77-year-old Trump had his mug shot taken during the booking process — a first for any serving or former US president. — AFP