ADMM-Plus counter-terrorism tabletop exercise bolsters regional security cooperation

Senior military officers from 12 nations gather in Nay Pyi Taw to enhance anti-terrorism measures and foster mutual understanding.
## Retirement from duty assignment

The State Administration Council has allowed the following SAC members to retire from the duty assignment under Section 419 of the Constitution:

1. U Maung Kyaw Nyein
2. Dr Aung Kyaw Min

**By order,**

Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary

## Transfer and Assignment

The State Administration Council has transferred and assigned SAC Member Dr Kyaw Tun as a member of the Central Advisory Body of the State Administration Council under Section 419 of the Constitution.

**By order,**

Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary

## Retirement from duty assignment

The State Administration Council has allowed Union Chief Justice U Htun Htun Oo to retire from the duty assignment on health grounds under Section 419 of the Constitution.

**By order,**

Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary

## Reformation of State Administration Council

The State Administration Council is reorganized as follows under Section 419 of the Constitution.

1. Senior General Min Aung Hlaing
   Chairman
2. Vice-Senior General Soe Win
   Vice-Chairman
3. Lt-Gen Aung Lin Dwe
   Secretary
4. Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo
   Joint Secretary
5. General Mya Tun Oo
   Member
6. Admiral Tin Aung San
   Member
7. Lt-Gen Moe Myint Tun
   Member
8. Lt-Gen Soe Htut
   Member
9. Lt-Gen Yar Pu</dd>
10. U Wunna Maung Lwin
    Member
11. Daw Dwe Bu
    Member
12. Porel Aung Thein
    Member
13. Mahn Nyein Maung
    Member
14. Dr Hnin Htin
    Member
15. Dr Ba Shwe
    Member
16. Khin San Lwin
    Member
17. U Shwe Kyaw
    Member
18. U Yan Kyaw
    Member

St/Min Aung Hlaing
Senior General
Chairman
State Administration Council

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## Retirement from duty assignment

The State Administration Council has allowed the following persons to retire from the duty assignment on health grounds under Section 419 of the Constitution.

1. U Ko Ko
   Union Minister
   Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture
2. U Thaung Han
   Union Minister
   Ministry of Electric Power
3. U Tin Oo
   Union Auditor-General
4. Dr Htay Aung
   Chairman
   Anti-Corruption Commission
5. U Hla Myint
   Chairman
   Myanmar National Human Rights Commission

**By order,**

Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary
Economic driving force key mechanism

— A country has to function by the political, economic and defence driving forces. Among them, the economic driving force is the most essential.
— Only when the economic driving force improves will it contribute to political and defence driving forces. And, it will lead to the prosperity of the State and food security.

(The excerpt from the speech made by Chairman of State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting with SAC members, Union ministers, region and state chief ministers, chairpersons of self-administered zone and division administration bodies on 24 March 2023)

Myanmar delegation returns from productive study tour on China’s development initiatives

At the invitation of the Department of International Affairs, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the People’s Republic of China, a Myanmar delegation led by U Myint Thein, a member of the Union Election Commission, recently concluded a study tour to the People’s Republic of China. The delegation arrived back at Yangon International Airport yesterday.

During the study tour, the Myanmar delegation closely observed and engaged in discussions on various aspects of China’s development projects. These included initiatives focused on improving transport for the development of the western province, enhancing basic agricultural activities in rural areas, setting goals for poverty elimination, preserving ethnic solidarity and cultural heritage, promoting tourism, and facilitating modern development in the eastern province of the People’s Republic of China. These transformative initiatives were executed under the guidance of the Communist Party of China.

The study tour offered valuable insights and potential areas of collaboration, paving the way for further interactions between Myanmar and China in the realm of development strategies and policies. — MNA/TS

Maravijaya Buddha Image welcomes worshipers for 9-day celebration on 8-16 Aug

The Maravijaya Buddha Statue will be open from 8 to 16 August for the Sangha and the public to be able to pay homage to it. During that period, although pilgrims—Buddhist monks as well as the public—do not have to pay entrance fees, they will have to undergo necessary security check-ups.

The ceremonies to consecrate the Maravijaya, the world’s tallest sitting Buddha Statue, to hoist golden umbrellas atop small pagodas on the stone plaque chambers and to share merits gained were successfully held in the precinct of the Buddha Park in Dekkhinathiri Township of Nay Pyi Taw on 1 August. — MNA/KZW

11 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 2 August, total figure registers 641,074

Myanmar’s COVID-19-positive cases rose to 641,074 after 11 new cases were reported on 2 August 2023 according to the Ministry of Health. Therefore, a total of 11,036,844 laboratory samples were examined to date and the confirmed COVID-19 cases reached 641,074. The total number of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 in the country reached 619,865 including 25 new recoveries. The death toll from COVID-19 in the country registered 19,494 on 2-8-2023 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
26th ASEAN Senior Level Committee-SLC on Financial Integration Meeting held virtually

THE 26th ASEAN Senior Level Committee-SLC on Financial Integration Meeting was held yesterday morning using a hybrid format and Dr Lin Aung, Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar attended the meeting.

In the meeting, the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero (GFANZ) and the Asia Pacific Network Office shared information on the state of global and regional financial developments while the ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO) presented the most recent macroeconomic developments in the region.

In the afternoon, the representatives from the ASEAN secretariat conferred on prioritized subjects and their growth for the financial integration, and the development of implementation works under processes of the ASEAN Economic Community-AEC. The co-chairs of the meeting discussed the Risk Monitoring Report drafted based on the Risk Monitoring Template (RMT) submitted by ASEAN Finance Working Groups.

At noon, the final progress of the ASEAN Banking Integration Framework-ABIF, the Capital Account Liberalization-CAL, the Capital Market Development-CMD, the Financial Inclusion-FINC, the Financial Services Liberalization-FSL, the Payment and Settlement System-PSS and the Steering Committee on Capacity Building – SCCB, was explained by respective working committees, and deputy governors gave their guidance.

The Senior-Level Committee Working Group co-chairs then discussed recent developments in sustainable finance and the next steps to be taken while the Central Bank of Indonesia discussed the ASEAN Cybersecurity Resilience and Information Sharing Platform-CRISP and the Central Bank of the Philippines about the ASEAN Swap Arrangement.

The co-chairs of the Capital Account Liberalization-CAL presented the updates of the ASEAN Local Currency Transactions-LCT Task Force and ASEAN LCT Framework. They also reviewed the tasks of ASEAN working committees from Indonesia before the Monetary Authority of Singapore, a co-chair of the committee made conclusion remarks. — MNA/TH

Prisoners under trial released from Kyaukpyu prison

THE State Administration Council granted pardon for 72 prisoners under trial from the Kyaukpyu prison in commemoration of the full moon of the Second Wado and on humanitarian grounds yesterday.

Officials from the Kyaukpyu District Administration Body, Kyaukpyu District Police Force and Kyaukpyu prison delivered speeches to releasees. The order was announced under Article 419 of the Constitution to close pending criminal cases of 72 members of ethnic armed organizations and related individuals who are still facing trials in various courts in the country and to release the defendants. — Tint Htun Oo, Phyo Wai Lin (IPRD)/KZW

Family members and relatives embrace the released individuals in Kyaukpyu.

Exciting EV car exhibition to be held in People’s Square

ACCORDING to the Yangon Region Government Office, the 2023 Rainy Season Expo, Industrial Product Exhibition and Electric Vehicle (EV) Exhibition will be held at People’s Square in Dagon Township, Yangon Region.

Not only products produced in Yangon Region but also products from other regions and states are planned to be displayed and sold in the exhibition from 4 to 6 August.

People can buy products from 29 industrial zones in Yangon Region, MSME products, and products produced by manufacturing cooperatives.

During the exhibition, value-for-money restaurants will be opened and sold for the vendors and visitors, and entertainment programmes will also be included.

Products from the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Myanmar Rice Federation, Retailers Association, Myanmar Oil Traders and Oil Industry Association and other associations and various industrial zones will be sold at the expo. — ASH/KZL

Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email aunghthuya@gnlm.com.mm with your name and title.

Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish “Letter to the Editor” that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.
MoL to issue licences to agencies handling labour affairs in foreign countries

The Ministry of Labour is in the process of issuing foreign employment brokerage agency licences only to the agencies that can solve labour issues that arise in foreign countries, according to the overseas employment supervision committee. If labour issues arise in foreign countries, the responsible agencies need to provide full protection. To prevent nominal agencies and agencies from operating illegally, only agencies that are truly accountable and able to operate are being verified to be licensed.

In addition to this, the two sides of Thailand-Myanmar have negotiated for Myanmar workers who have completed four years of the MoU in Thailand to return to work through the MoU U-turn system. Preparation of despatch procedures is underway with the MoU U-turn system. Thailand is the country where most Myanmar workers go to work. By sending these workers back through an official MoU U-turn system, the family remittances of these workers will be able to be sent back to the mother country through an official route, which will increase the country’s foreign income.

Besides, workers who have completed the MoU four-year passport renewal at the Myanmar Embassy in Thailand will be issued an OWIC card if they re-enter Myanmar and leave through the MoU U-turn system. Workers holding a PJ passport and renewing their passports will have to verify their information and issue an OWIC card at the Labour Skill Training Institute in Dagon Myothit (North) Township upon departure after re-entering Myanmar.

Similarly, plans are being made for Myanmar workers to remit 25 per cent of the basic salary to the family through the official banking system. — ASH/KZL

**CRIME NEWS**

Illegal industrial materials, rice and broken rice bags, car parts and vehicles confiscated

The on-duty teams under the supervision of the Customs Department confiscated 304,698 kilogrammes of pre-painted galvanized iron sheets in coil from 11 containers at the Thilawa Special Economic Zone on 31 July, K86,526,300 worth of 34 kinds of goods including 36,000 electrical taps and three kinds of goods including 36,000 electrical taps that were not declared in the Import Declaration (ID) at the 26/4 Milepost at Mandalay-Muse townships. The action was taken under customs procedures.

On the same day, a combined team made inspections near the bypass in Lashio township and captured a Nissian diesel, a Mitsubishi Fuso and an Isuzu Giga (estimated value of K84 million), headed to Muse from Mandalay, carrying 350 bags of rice and 690 bags of broken rice (worth K84.6 million) without official documents. The action was taken under customs procedures.

Therefore, 23 arrests (estimated value of K841,993,069) were made on 12, 30 and 31 July, according to the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS

Drugs seized in Chanmyathazi, Mahaaungmyay, Nawngthio Tsps

A combined team consisting of members of the Anti-Drug Police Force examined a suspect by the name of Win Moe (aka) Nyan Moe Myint in Chanmyathazi township at 8 pm on 31 July and captured 0.02 kilogramme of ketamine and 0.025 kilogramme of Happy Water. After interrogating Win Moe (aka) Nyan Moe Myint, the police seized 150 ecstasy tablets, 2.02 kilogrammes of Ketamine and 1.45 kilogrammes of Happy Water from a hotel room in Mahaaungmyay township where Thila Tin Soe (aka) Puak Keng Po was staying and 0.07 kilogramme of Happy Water charger from a house in Mahaaungmyay township, which was rented by Win Moe (aka) Nyan Moe Myint at 11 am on 1 August.

In addition, the police searched a Toyota Corolla car driven by Hla Myo Aung near a tollgate on Lashio-Mandalay Road in Nawngthio township at 9:50 pm on 1 August and captured 50,000 stimulant tablets. At 10:30 am, the police stopped and inspected a motorbike driven by Hlaing Moe at 10:30 am and captured 50,000 stimulant tablets. Officers are prosecuting under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. — MNA/MKKS
SAC forms committee to monitor commodity prices

THE State Administration Council formed the Union Steering Committee to stabilize commodity prices on 27 July for commodity price stability.

The committee is led by Union Minister U Aung Naing Oo of the Ministry of Commerce as chair and 19 members are assigned to it, as per the SAC’s notification (114/2023).

The tasks and responsibilities of the committee are to give priority to stabilize dry groceries including staple food such as rice and edible oil, maintain a balance between domestic production and consumption, form organizations for coordination matters to stabilize the commodity prices and work together with the stakeholders concerned to deal with high freight rates and unnecessary measures. Additionally, coordination and support regarding smooth trade flows and improving staple food production and monitoring market abuse and manipulation cases that disrupt the price stability of staple food are also included in those tasks and responsibilities. Moreover, objectives contain necessary support to bolster production in agriculture and livestock sectors, to develop businesses on a manageable scale, to be persuasive in businesses and come up with ideas to enhance gross domestic production by the region and state governments.

The MoALI deputy minister takes the role of vice-chair of the committee and officials from the respective ministries are also on the committee. — TWA/EM

Weekly update prices of Bayintnaung Commodity Market

IN the Yangon market, the prices of black grams and pigeon peas, which had fallen during the last week (from 26 to 31 July), have now risen again. Additionally, there have been notable changes in the wholesale reference prices of onions, sugar, and palm oil, while the market price of palm oil has dropped.

Onions
On 31 July, the Yangon market received various regional onions weighing 150,000 visses. The wholesale price per viss of Seikphyu and Monywa onions ranged from K1,800 to K2,250, depending on their size and quality. Meanwhile, at the Pakokku depot, 45,000 visses of onions were supplied, with the highest price reaching K2,100 per viss. Another 12,000 visses of onions entered the Seikphyu commodity depot on the same day, priced at only K1,950 per viss.

Garlic
On the same date, in the Yangon market, Shan garlic was priced at K1,100 per viss for S2, K7,600 for S3, K8,000 for S4, and K8,400 for S5. Kyuukok garlic fetched K7,050 per viss.

Potato
Interestingly, the Yangon potato market only published the price of Chinese potatoes from 11 to 31 July and did not include prices for potatoes from the Aungban area of Shan State.

Chilli Pepper
In the Yangon chilli pepper market on 31 July, the prices of Eainme and Panye long chilli peppers were approximately K10,000–K12,000 per viss, while Sinphyukyun and delta region bell peppers were valued at K15,000–K16,000 per viss.

Rice
On 31 July, retail demand surged in the Yangon rice market. The price per bag of rice grown under multiple cropping was K64,000, the 90-day rice variety was K74,000, and the Pawkye rice variety was K85,000. Pawsan rice varieties ranged from K80,000 to K117,000 per bag, depending on the rice-producing regions.

Palm Oil
Although the wholesale reference price of palm oil from 31 July to 6 August 2023 remained fixed at K4,295 per viss, the market wholesale price on 31 July was K8,100 per viss, as reported by a trader from the Nyaungpinlay market in Lammadaw. In the Meiktila oil market, the wholesale price of palm oil was K8,500 per viss on 24 July and K8,400 on 31 July. On 25 July, the wholesale price of palm oil ranged from K2,900 to K5,200 per viss, while on 29 July in the Mandalay market, it was K8,950 per viss.

Beans and Pulses
On 31 July 2023, the price of black gram was K2,327,500 per tonne for RC and K2,537,000 per tonne for SQ/RC. Meanwhile, a tonne of pigeon peas was valued at K3,115,000. The price per tonne of pigeon pea surged to K3.1 million on 31 July after having dropped to K3 million before. Additionally, the price of green gram (Kayan Shwewah variety) fetched K2,665 per viss, while that of gram was K5,800–K6,000 per viss. — TWA/CT

Thukha Dagon Housing to issue rental permits for 1,168 completed apartments in Aug

AS per the Urban and Housing Development Department, Thukha Dagon Housing, situated near the junction of No 2 Highway and No 7 Ring Road in Dagon Myothit (South) Township, will begin issuing rental permits in August.

During the period from 1 July to 31 July, a total of 16,000 application forms for rental permits were sold at the respective township administration offices. These forms were made available to low-income individuals facing housing difficulties, retired employees, and civil servants. This marks the first issuance of rental permits for the 1,168 completed apartments, scheduled for August.

As of 28 July, application forms were sold to 8,000 people, 2,400 retired civil servants, and 6,500 civil servants still in service. The monthly rental rates set by the housing committee are K57,000 for the first floor, K60,000 for the second floor, K65,000 for the third floor, and K66,000 for the fourth floor, with a lease term of five years.

The housing project encompasses 171 acres of land, with 194 buildings and 3,104 apartments currently under construction for the first phase. Notably, the Myanmar Construction Entrepreneurs Federation (MCEF) and the Myanmar Licensed Contractors Association (MLCA) have each been allocated 97 buildings for the construction endeavour. — TWA/MLKGs

The apartments of Thukha Dagon Housing near the junction of No 2 Highway and No 7 Outer Ring Road in Dagon Myothit (South) Township.
Local sugar price surges to K3,400 per viss

THE price of sugar jumped to K3,400 per viss in the domestic market amid the low stocks and inflation panic sparked by the issuance of the new K20,000 notes by the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM).

The CBM notified on 23 July that the new K20,000 notes will be issued from 31 July. The price of sugar hit K3,240-3,250 and then rocketed to K3,300-3,400 per viss on 2 August, showing an increase of over K100 within two weeks.

Following the soaring sugar price, intending to help sugarcane growers, some companies have reportedly planned to contribute K200,000 per acre in advance for those new sugarcane growers for the 2023-2024 season.

In the 2023-2024 season, new advanced machines will be added. Moreover, sugarcane expansion is also expected on account of soaring sugar prices, as per the Myanmar Sugar and Cane Related Association.

Myanmar’s annual sugar production is estimated at 450,000 tonnes. Myanmar earlier sent sugar to China and Viet Nam beyond self-sufficiency. At present, it is delivered to Viet Nam only, said U Win Htay, vice-chair of the association.

Sugar export to China via border was conducted under the state-level Memorandum of Understanding. However, it came to an abrupt stop due to the COVID-19 policy in China. Therefore, the sugar industry called for a government-to-government agreement to legally export sugar to China under quota.

At present, Myanmar’s sugar is shipped to Viet Nam and it can be granted tax exemption by presenting the Certificate of Origin. Only three registered Myanmar companies are entitled to sugar exports to Viet Nam so far.

Sugarcane is commonly found in the upper Sagaing Region, followed by the northern Shan State. It is also found in the western and eastern Bago Region, Yangon Region and Mandalay Region. The sugarcane is grown in December-January. It can be harvested from November to February of the following years. The sugarcane growing rotation cycle lasts four years in Myanmar. — NN/EM

CBM crackdowns ZX Digital Store for scams

THE ZX Digital Store social media page is found to be attempting phishing to trick the people and the Central Bank of Myanmar will take action against that scammer in line with the existing laws.

The CBM has granted licences for banking, non-bank financial institution registration, licences for mobile wallet services, foreign exchange licences, remittance licences, digital banking services for bank institutions, i-banking, mobile banking, mobile pay and mobile financial services, in accordance with the law.

Under Section 159 of the Financial Institutions Law, any entity is not allowed to provide service without registration for a non-bank financial institution (NBFI) issued by the Central Bank of Myanmar. Under Section 38 of the Foreign Management Law, no one shall provide remittance services without holding a money changer licence. ZX Digital Store is found to violate those rules without holding any valid licence. It is trying to convince the people through an illegitimate money transfer scam with incentives, the CBM warned on 29 July.

The CBM will take legal action against the ZX Digital Store and those involved in scams under Section 171 of the Financial Institution Law and Section 42 of the Foreign Exchange Management Law.

Furthermore, CBM will carry out investigations and prosecutions against those involved in phishing scams and illegal financial services under the Financial Institution Law, Anti-Money Laundering Law, Foreign Exchange Management Law and existing laws.

On 23 June, under the guidance of the Monitoring and Steering Committee on Gold and Currency Market, the CBM clamped down on over 50 individuals and three companies that are found to be engaged in hundi business without the relevant licence and foreign exchange business without money changer licence under the existing laws. — NN/EM

Gold and jewellery export, import commence

EXPORTATION and importation of gold and jewellery have started, as per the Trade Department under the Ministry of Commerce.

The ministry has re-formed the evaluation and inspection team of the One Stop Service Centre (OSSC) to apprise the gold and jewellery designated for exports depending on the international prices, supply and demand and notified the relevant organizations and departments concerned of the gold export/import matters.

The Trade Department notified the relevant institutions on 28 July to send the representatives to carry out the tasks at the OSSC located at the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, starting from 31 July.

International remittance for Myanmar’s value-added gold exports can be made using either Letter of Credit (LC) or the Telegraphic Transfer (TT) system, according to the news bulletin, 12/2023 dated 3 July released by the Trade Department under the Ministry of Commerce.

Exporters of value-added gold products, jewellery, gold arts and accessories must comply with the Export/Import Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). The procedures for SOP activities include registration for exporters/importers, applying for value appraisal, seeking export/import licence, tax payment and customs clearance procedures.

Those criteria mentioned in the news bulletin are effective from 3 July. The news bulletin 10/2020 released by the Ministry of Commerce on 12 August 2020, the payment method was changed to LC only. With the use of LC, payments can take about two months, cost banking service charges by two sides, increase the charges for security matters in transportation and suspend trading amid volatile prices in the spot gold market.

From 30 December 2021, the TT system has been allowed for gold exports worth US$50,000 and the LC system needs to be used for exports worth above $50,000.

Gold and other jewellery are primarily purchased by Japan and the Republic of Korea, and other tourists also buy them, the Yangon Gold Entrepreneurs Association stated. — NN/EM
Rehabilitation measures in the aftermath of flooding

By Than Htun (Geoscience Myanmar)

The Burmese Circle of the Geological Survey of India and their Contributions to the Geology of Myanmar

In February 1914, Noetling was working in the Geological Survey of India, but the outbreak of WWI dramatically altered his life. Noetling was arrested on 20 November 1914 and imprisoned the following day for transfer to New South Wales. His record notes that he was interrogated “for making dealings with the Burmese and communicating information to Germany by means of correspondence.” The correspondence which was interpreted by the Commissary consisted of numerous letters written in German, many newspaper cuttings with comments thereon, and tables of figures regarding troops, etc., addressed to General Mackintosh of the German Army. “Noetling was declared a German spy and repatriated to Germany. He died in Baden-Baden in Germany in 1922.”

Prehistory of Burma

Fritz Noetling (1873-1922) was a German palaeontologist and geologist who worked extensively in Burma. He was born in 1873 in Leipzig, Germany, and died in Baden-Baden, Germany, in 1922. Noetling was a member of the Deutsche Gesellschaft fü r Völkerkunde. He was a well-respected member of the scientific community, and his work on the geology of Burma was highly regarded.

Noetling’s interest in the geology of Burma was awakened by the discovery of chipped flint flakes in the Pliocene of Burma, which he collected during his stay in the country. He published several papers on the geology of Burma, and his work was highly regarded by the scientific community.

The relationship of wide areas to each other, the nature of the Tertiary deposits, and the fauna and flora of the Tertiary deposits were the main areas of research for Noetling. He made extensive collections, many of which are now in the collections of the Geological Survey of India.

Noetling’s work on the geology of Burma was highly regarded, and his contributions to the understanding of the geology of the region were significant. His work laid the foundation for further research in this area, and his legacy continues to be felt in the field of geology today.

Through his work, Noetling contributed to the understanding of the geology of Burma, and his research has provided valuable insights into the geological history of the region.

The work of Noetling and other geologists has been instrumental in the development of the geological understanding of Burma, and has contributed to our understanding of the region’s natural history.

In conclusion, Noetling’s work on the geology of Burma has been highly regarded, and his contributions to the understanding of the region’s geological history have been significant. His legacy continues to be felt in the field of geology today, and his work remains an important contribution to our understanding of the geological history of the region.

Note: The text above provides a brief overview of the contributions of Fritz Noetling to the geology of Burma, and highlights his role in the development of our understanding of the region’s geological history.

Further reading:
Meta starts blocking news in Canada

META on Tuesday started blocking Canadians’ access to news on Facebook and Instagram in response to a new law requiring digital giants to pay publishers for such content.

Google, another critic of the Online News Act, has said it is considering a similar move, among an ongoing global debate as more governments try to make tech firms pay for news content.

“News links and content posted by news publishers and broadcasters in Canada will no longer be viewable by people in Canada,” Meta said in a statement.

News posted on foreign sites will also not be viewable by Canadian Facebook and Instagram users, and they will no longer be able to share articles on the two platforms.

Meta noted that the changes starting Tuesday would be implemented “over the course of the next few weeks”.

An AFP reporter was still able to see news on Facebook Tuesday, but some users reported already getting messages saying such content was being blocked.

— AFP

Meta, the owner of Facebook and Instagram, has begun blocking news links in Canada in protest at a new law requiring digital publishers to pay for such content.

PHOTO: JOSH EDELSON / AFP

Less power, lower emissions: improving AC technology

WITH air conditioner demand surging, scientists are looking for ways to improve the energy efficiency of cooling systems and limit damaging emissions that accelerate global warming.

Improve efficiency

Innovation is focused on three major fronts, with much of the attention on energy consumption. Air conditioning units account for six percent of electricity used in the United States. Several breakthroughs have already cut power consumption by half since 1990, according to the US Department of Energy. — AFP

Air conditioning units, while helping keep people cool, are also responsible for emissions that warm the planet. PHOTO: AFP

X sues hate speech tracker over Twitter reports

X is suing a nonprofit group in US federal court over reports that hate speech has flourished at the platform formerly known as Twitter. Elon Musk-owned X accused the Centre for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH) of generating “flawed” studies that have cost the tycoon’s tech firm tens of millions of dollars, a copy of the lawsuit showed.

However, the legal basis outlined in the suit filed in San Francisco late Monday was an accusation that the nonprofit violated X’s terms of service in the way it accessed data for its reports. CCDH chief executive Imran Ahmed on Tuesday contended that Musk’s legal move is an effort to silence criticisms that come “straight out of the authoritarian playbook”.

Ahmed stood by the group’s research, saying it shows that hate and disinformation are “spreading like wildfire” at Musk-run X.

The eccentric billionaire’s lawsuit asks a court to grant X unspecified cash damages and to order CCDH to stop the way it has been getting data for its reports. — AFP

NASA hears from Voyager 2 after brief blackout

NASA’s distant Voyager 2 probe has signaled it is in “good health” after mission control mistakenly cut contact for several days, the US space agency said in its latest update.

Launched in 1977 as a beacon from humanity to the wider Universe, it is currently more than 12.3 billion miles (19.9 billion kilometres) from our planet, exploring interstellar space along with its twin, Voyager 1.

A series of planned commands sent to Voyager 2 on 21 July “inadvertently caused the antenna to point two degrees away from Earth,” NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) said in a recent update.

This left it unable to transmit data or receive commands to its mission control — a situation that was not expected to be resolved until it conducted an automated re-orientation maneuver on 15 October. But late Monday, NASA’s Sun & Space account posted on social media that contact had been re-established.

“The Deep Space Network has picked up a carrier signal from @NASAVoyager 2, letting us know that the spacecraft is in good health,” the agency said.

The Deep Space Network is NASA’s international array of giant radio antennas.

While JPL built and operates Voyager spacecraft, the missions are part of the NASA Heliophysics System Observatory.

Voyager 2 left the protective magnetic bubble provided by the Sun, called the heliosphere, in December 2018, and is currently traveling through the space between the stars.

Before leaving our solar system, it became the first and so far only spacecraft to have visited the outer planets Uranus and Neptune. — AFP

This NASA file image obtained 9 August 2002 shows one of the Voyager spacecraft. PHOTO: NASA/AFP

FILE
Tuareg flock to Algerian desert oasis for ancient festival

IN a riot of colour, music and dance, thousands of Tuareg have flocked to the Sebeiba festival that marks the end of an ancient tribal feud and which once a year transforms an oasis town deep in the Algerian Sahara.

The Tuareg are a semi-nomadic people of Berber descent who practice Islam and whose traditional desert homeland stretches across parts of Algeria, Libya, Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso. The annual Sebeiba festival, held in Djanet, 1,500 kilometres (900 miles) southeast of Algiers, forms an oasis town deep in the Algerian Sahara.

During the 10-day event, male dancers, dressed as warriors and wielding swords, perform to the singing and drumbeat of women who are adorned with glittering jewellery and henna tattoos.

The men parade their weapons and “then stand in a ritual circle rattling their swords continuously as the women sing traditional songs to the rhythm of the tambourine”, says the UN cultural organization. — AFP

Chinese zoo denies rare sun bear is human in disguise

A Chinese zoo has been forced to deny that its sun bear is actually a human in disguise.

A video clip of a bear rear ing up and interacting with a group of people at a zoo in eastern Hangzhou city went viral on Chinese social media.

Many users posted comments doubting that the bear was real, with some alleging that its bipedal posture and wrinkled skin suggested that it was actually a human in costume.

But the zoo dismissed the rumours, saying in a statement written from the bear’s perspective on Sunday that the animal was real and its detractors “really don’t understand me”.

“The zoo director called me after work yesterday and asked if I’d been slacking off by finding a two-legged beast to replace me,” the bear, named Angela, said in the statement.

“Some people thought the way I stand up looks too human... so I will stress again: I’m a sun bear!”

Native to Southeast Asia, sun bears are named for a patch of bright orange or cream-colour ed chest fur that stands out against the rest of its jet-black coat.

It is the smallest bear — about the size of a large dog — and is listed as a vulnerable species due to deforestation and the global wildlife trade. — AFP

German mud mires world’s top heavy metal festival

DRIVING rain, rivers of mud and traffic jams in northern Germany led organizers of Wacken Open Air, billed as the world’s biggest heavy metal festival, to ask fans Tuesday to stay away.

The giant annual outdoor event known as W:O:A is set to kick off Wednesday, with 85,000 headbangers due to descend on a venue of farmland and cow pastures to hear 150 bands on eight stages over four days.

Although often a muddy affair, Wacken is facing severe accessibility problems this year, prompting both promoters and police to tell anyone who has not already arrived at the showgrounds to turn back.

“The persistently difficult weather situation with rain quantities of around 40 litres (11 gallons) per square metre (yard) in the last 24 hours and the resulting condition of the campgrounds, fairgrounds and access routes means that the area could not be made ready in time,” W:O:A said in a statement.

“We apologize profusely to all metalheads for the delay in providing information.” — AFP

Popstar Lizzo named in employee harassment suit

US performer Lizzo has been sued by three of her former dancers who allege the body-positive pop diva created a hostile work environment, court filings seen by AFP showed Tuesday.

The suit filed in Los Angeles accuses Lizzo, whose self-love message has resonated around the globe, as well as other defendants of various violations of California labour law.

“Plaintiffs Arianna Davis, Crystal Williams and Noelle Rodriguez allege sexual, religious and racial harassment, disability discrimination, assault and false imprisonment, among other things,” the law firm representing them said in a statement.

“Davis and Williams were eventually fired while Rodriguez resigned over the appalling behaviour,” it added. — AFP
Japan’s average gas price rises to 15-yr high on lower gov’t subsidy

THE average retail gasoline price in Japan has climbed to its highest level in 15 years, industry ministry data showed Wednesday, as the government subsidy to curb price hikes has been gradually scaling down.

The average price for regular gasoline stood at 176.70 yen ($1.24) per litre as of Monday, advancing 1.90 yen from 24 July and hitting its highest level since August 2008. PHOTO: KYODO/FILE

HSBC reports bumper profits on rising interest rates

“There was good broad-based profit generation around the world, higher revenue in our global businesses driven by strong net interest income, and continued tight cost control,” chief executive Noel Quinn said in a statement.

The firm also said second-quarter earnings came in better than forecast, jumping almost 90 per cent to US$8.8 billion, thanks to the bumper income from surging interest rates. With regards the outlook, it said: “Given the current market consensus for global central bank rates, we have raised our 2023 full-year guidance for net interest income, and are confident of achieving our revised mid-teens return on tangible equity target in 2023 and 2024,” chief executive Noel Quinn said in a statement.

Oil majors still profitable even if super-profits gone

FROM BP to ExxonMobil to TotalEnergies, none of the oil and gas majors have repeated the exceptional profits posted in 2022 when prices surged in the wake of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, but they nevertheless remain comfortably profitable this year.

BP was the last to report earnings, reporting Tuesday a second-quarter net profit of $1.8 billion, which was just a fifth of what it earned in the same period last year.

Before it, the US giant ExxonMobil saw its second-quarter profits tumble 56 per cent to $7.9 billion, while rival Chevron saw a similar fall to $6 billion.

Shell saw a 64 percent drop in net earnings to $3.1 billion, while TotalEnergies fared better with just a 28 per cent slide to $4.1 billion.

All of them saw their financial performance “impacted by fluctuating prices of oil, gas and refined products,” as BP described it on Tuesday.

In 2022, the five oil majors earned a combined total of $151 billion in net profits thanks to the double-whammy of the Russian invasion of Ukraine causing supply concerns, with Moscow cutting gas supplies to most of Europe, just as the emergence of the global economy from pandemic lockdowns boosted demand.

“2022 was clearly an exceptional year and not the norm,” said Moez Ajmi, an energy analyst at the consulting firm EY.

“Oil and gas prices are now much lower,” — AFP
Uber reports surprise profit in Q2

UBER reported a surprise profit on Tuesday, pointing to strong growth in its core mobility and delivery businesses despite missing revenue estimates. Profits for the second quarter were $394 million, compared with a loss of $2.6 billion in the year-ago period. The results included the company's first-ever quarterly operating profit. Its results were also boosted by a gain in Uber's equity investments.

"It's a great day," Chief Executive Dara Khosrowshahi said on CNBC.

"Everything came together this quarter," he said. "The team executed really well and we plan to be profitable for every quarter going forward."

Revenues rose 14 percent to $9.2 billion, but stood below the $9.3 billion expected by analysts. The company scored sharp increases in revenues tied to customer rides and delivery, more than offsetting declines in its much smaller freight business. "People are buying more services," Khosrowshahi said of the fall in freight.

"But our mobility and delivery businesses are growing at huge rates and larger than ever," Khosrowshahi also cited "cost discipline" as a driver, with general and administrative expenses down sharply from the year-ago period. — AFP

Subaru to produce EVs in US from 2027 to accelerate shift

SUBARU Corp said Wednesday it will start producing electric vehicles in the United States as early as 2027, as the Japanese carmaker accelerates its shift toward battery-driven vehicles under its new president. "We have decided on production in the United States," President Atsushi Osaki said at a press conference in Tokyo. "Considering the speed of the shift to EVs in the US, we thought it was about time." Osaki, who took the helm at the company in June, said it is still undecided on where production will take place, though joint production with a partner such as Toyota Motor Corp remains under consideration. — Kyodo

Pfizer trims 2023 revenue outlook as profits tumble

PFIZER reported a steep drop in profits Tuesday on much lower Covid-related revenues as it curtailed its full-year sales outlook in part due to tornado damage to a key manufacturing facility. Profits in the second quarter were $2.3 billion, down 77 percent as revenues fell 14 percent to $12.7 billion. Quarterly revenues for Pfizer's Covid-19 vaccine and Paxlovid therapeutic were $1.6 billion, far below the $16.9 billion in the year-ago period.

The drugmaker pointed to a "few near-term individual product revenue" challenges as it trimmed its full-year sales forecast. These include US approval for a drug combination for prostate cancer and a needed recommendation on the Abyovo vaccine from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. — AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V CONTRIVIA VOY.NO. (047N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3-8-2023 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AWPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

ONE OCEAN NETWORK EXPRESS LINE

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V CHERRY VOY.NO. (207N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3-8-2023 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AWPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V OS KANO 35 VOY.NO. (2306) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 4-8-2023 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT-T 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 ELDER TRIUMPHNAT SHIPPING LINES PTE., LTD

INVIATON FOR OPEN TENDER

NO. 3 / 2023 - 2024

(1) Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, No(1) Mining Enterprise Invites to submit the tender quotation sale open tender with United State Dollars (USD) (a) Myanmar Kyats (Worker Remittance Rate) USD for serial (a) and United State Dollars (USD) for serial (b) -

(a) Cathode Copper (3208) M/T Lot 100 M/Tons each, 32 Lots. Monywa, Mine Site Base price of Cathode Copper shall be based on the London Metal Exchange Copper price on the date of tender opening.

The highest proposal amount (Premium amount added to the L.M.E price and deduction of transportation and handling expenses ) shall be winning tender.

(b) Lead Ore and other mixed (3) M/Tons Ywangan (Pb – 4.03 %)

(2) Tender Closing Date and Time is 23rd August, 2023 (13:00) am and Opening Tender (15:00) PM.

(3) Tender documents are available from Nay Pyi Taw, Office Building No.(19), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, No.(1) Mining Enterprise, the Procurement Department and details can be asked to +95-(0) 67- 3409162 , 3409012 within the office hours.

Tender Committee
No.(1) Mining Enterprise

PHOTO: KYODO/FILE

Supplied photo shows Subaru Corp.'s electric vehicle “Solterra.”

WORLD/AD

PHOTO: UBER/AFP

Both the mobility and delivery businesses have been essential components of Uber's growth and diversification strategy.
Singapore PM mounts defence of scandal-hit ruling party

SINGAPORE’S prime minister mounted a vigorous defence of his long-ruling People’s Action Party on Wednesday, even as he acknowledged it had “taken a hit” after a rare spate of political scandals.

Lee Hsien Loong vowed, however, to “show Singaporeans that we will uphold standards and do the right thing, so that trust is maintained, and the Singapore system continues to work well”.

Singapore has capitalized on its reputation for clean government to attract massive foreign investments and turn the city-state into a financial and commercial hub.

But that reputation has been threatened by two major furores: a cabinet minister’s arrest amid a corruption probe; and two PAP legislators resigning because of an affair.

Before that, two heavyweight cabinet members were investigated for allegedly getting favours in their rental of sprawling colonial-era bungalows, but were subsequently cleared of any wrongdoing.

“Let me assure Singaporeans that we will protect the integrity of our system of government. For the good of our country, we will carry through what needs to be done in accordance with the law, even if it may be politically embarrassing and painful to the party,” Lee said. — AFP

Most oil removed from decaying tanker off Yemen: UN

MOST of the oil on board a rusting supertanker off war-torn Yemen has been moved to a replacement vessel in a bid to avert a catastrophic spill, the United Nations has said.

The transfer of 1.14 million barrels of Marib light crude from the 47-year-old FSO Safer to a new vessel started last week.

“More than half the oil aboard the decaying FSO Safer has been transferred to the replacement vessel Yemen in the past seven days,” the UN resident coordinator for Yemen, David Gressly, said on social media on Tuesday.

Gressly had previously said the entire transfer would take less than three weeks.

The UN Development Programme project manager for the Safer, Mohammed Mudawi, said more than 636,000 barrels of oil had been pumped to the replacement tanker: “We reached the 55 per cent mark today (Wednesday) at 9:00 am (0600 GMT),” Mudawi told AFP. — AFP

Iran Guards launch naval drills near strategic Gulf islands

IRAN’S Revolutionary Guards launched naval drills on Wednesday near strategic Gulf islands controlled by Iran but claimed by the United Arab Emirates, state media said.

The manoeuvres, which were being held mainly near Abu Musa island but also around Greater and Lesser Tunb, came two weeks after the United States boosted its naval presence in the Gulf. It was not immediately clear how long the exercises would last.

“After two weeks of the US practice to the war in Ukraine, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps naval exercise started Wednesday morning for the defence of the Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf,” the official IRNA news agency reported.

It quoted Guards navy commander Ali Ozmaee as saying that the drills “were held in Abu Musa island and Greater and Lesser Tunb”.

The three islands — located near the Strait of Hormuz, the vital sea passage between the Gulf and the open ocean through which a fifth of world oil output passes — have been a source of contention between the UAE and Iran for decades.—AFP

Pope health in focus ahead of global Catholic festival in Lisbon

POPE Francis heads to Lisbon Wednesday, where a million youngsters from across the world are expected for a major Catholic festival, held as the Church reflects on its future.

The 86-year-old underwent major abdominal surgery just two months ago. That has not stopped him from lining up a packed 42nd trip abroad, with 11 speeches and around 20 meetings scheduled. The Argentine Jesuit, whose direct and spontaneous style is very popular with young people, is expected to address youth-focused themes, from ecology and social justice to the war in Ukraine.

— AFP

Most oil removed from decaying tanker off Yemen: UN

MOST of the oil on board a rusting supertanker off war-torn Yemen has been moved to a replacement vessel in a bid to avert a catastrophic spill, the United Nations has said.

The transfer of 1.14 million barrels of Marib light crude from the 47-year-old FSO Safer to the new vessel started last week.

Workers prepare to transfer oil from the 47-year-old supertanker FSO Safer (L) to a UN-purchased replacement vessel in a bid to avert a catastrophic spill in the Red Sea off war-torn Yemen. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

PHOTO:  PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ AFP/FILE

The main focus of the drills was near Abu Musa island, but exercises were also conducted around Greater and Lesser Tunb islands. PHOTO: TASNIM NEWS AGENCY/SPUTNIK

PHOTO: AFP/FILE
Germany want more creativity in crunch South Korea clash

GERMANY coach Martina Voss-Tecklenburg has urged her team to be more creative as they look to bounce back from a shock defeat when they meet South Korea in a crunch Women’s World Cup clash on Thursday.

The 2003 and 2007 champions were one of the pre-tournament favourites, but a stunning 2-1 upset at the hands of Colombia on Sunday threw a spanner in the works after they thumped Morocco 6-0 to open their account.

A win in Brisbane would guarantee passage to the last 16 and a point would also be sufficient unless Morocco beat Colombia. If Germany lose and Colombia win, it would come down to goal difference.

Voss-Tecklenburg felt they should have been “smarter” at the end against Colombia and settled for a draw. But instead they pressed for the win and were beaten by a stoppage-time header.

She said patience would again be key against a South Korea side that must win to keep their slim hopes alive.

Euros. “(South Korea coach) Collin Bell has brought in more intensity and made them more courageous.

“They press a lot and we know it could give us some space. It’s about courage and creating spaces,” she added. — AFP

Diani hits hat-trick as France beat Panama 6-3 to make World Cup last 16

KADIDIATOU Diani hit a hat-trick as France marched into the last 16 of the Women’s World Cup on Wednesday in a 6-3 thriller against Panama.

It was a polished recovery after Marta Cox’s wonder strike on 67 seconds left the French reeling, swerving a freekick into the corner from 30 yards for her country’s first-ever World Cup goal.

She spun away in celebration and was mobbed by teammates as the tears flowed at a sold-out Sydney Football Stadium.

But the euphoria was short-lived as France ran riot, with Diani scoring twice — one a penalty — and Maelle Lakrar and Lea Le Garrec adding a goal apiece before half-time. Paris Saint-Germain striker Diani got her third from the spot after the restart, but Panama refused to give up.

Somersaulting onomi Le Sommer also made way for Marie Le Gall as Hervé Renard shuffled the deck, probably Colombia.

With only a point needed, France coach Herve Renard shuffled the deck, making five changes.

They press a lot and we know it could give us some space. It’s about courage and creating spaces,” she added. — AFP

KADI Diaditou Diani scored a hat-trick against Panama.

PHOTO: AFP

Yomira Pinzon added their second with a crisply-struck penalty and Lineth Cedeno scored again in an exciting finale, before Vicki Becho finished well to seal the game for France in injury time.

The win ensured France finished top of Group F to set up a knockout round clash with the second-placed team in Group H — most likely Germany.

Jamaica held Brazil 0-0 in the other game to finish second and face a showdown with the Group H winner, probably Colombia. With only a point needed, France coach Herve Renard shuffled the deck, making five changes.

He rested inspirational captain Wendie Renard, with Grace Geyoro assuming the armband. Veteran striker Eugenie Le Sommer also made way with Clara Mateo and Diani up front.

But the perennial World Cup underachievers were caught on the hop as play got underway and Cox surged forward, with Le Garrec tripping her.

Cox lined up the kick and curled it into the top left-hand corner for one of the goals of the tournament. — AFP
Singapore PM mounts defence of scandal-hit ruling party

Winning party in Thai election excluded from coalition

Tunisia president dismisses PM as country faces ‘colossal challenges’

BAE profit jumps as Ukraine war boosts defence spend