

The Global NEW LIGHT of MYANMAR

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Myanmar's ongoing quest for internal peace receives assistance from India

Indian Deputy National Security Adviser arriving in Myanmar to join NCA anniversary celebration calls on Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, in his talks with the Indian guest, unveiled that the government and the Tatmadaw are striving to restore internal peace while India is assisting in the peace process of Myanmar on one hand.

At the parlour of the SAC Chairman's Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon, Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received a delegation led by Deputy National Security Adviser to India Mr Vikram Misri, currently in Myanmar to attend the 8th Anniversary of Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement-NCA to be marked on 15 October.

The Senior General continued his clarification on the peace process, saying that the government and Tatmadaw are firmly standing for the NCA as well as continuously walking on the path of the multiparty democratic system.

SEE PAGE-3



SAC Chair Premier Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and Indian Deputy National Security Adviser Mr Vikram Misri share warm handshake during courtesy call.

Shan State Investment Committee greenlights 21 new projects with local, foreign investments

SHAN State Investment Committee permitted US\$22.785 million and K32,220.744 million worth of 21 new Myanmar citizens' and foreign investments that can create 1,430 local job opportunities in September, according to U Lay Naing,

director of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (Shan State).

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Palm oil reference price declines following high import

Pwe Gauk (BE.FALLS) Waterfalls Resort

Now, Sky Cable car has been just opened, you can see and enjoy the beauty of Pyin Oo Lwin(Flower City) while riding the Sky Cable car.

PYIN OO LWIN(Flower City)

NATIONAL

Myanmar highlights misconduct of country-specific human rights mechanisms

AT the 54th Regular Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council which was held in Geneva from 11 September to 13 October 2023, two unsupportive country-specific events against Myanmar were included. These are the Interactive Dialogues (IDs) on the report of the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM) and on the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, organized on 11 September 2023 and 26 September 2023 respectively. Subjective modalities of such country-specific dialogues never enjoy the support of the countries concerned. Convening the IDs behind Myanmar further prejudiced the already one-sided dialogues.

The Human Rights Council, which does not have prosecutorial power with no authority to establish such a mechanism, creates IIMM beyond its mandate. Since IIMM originated from a politicized country-specific Human Rights Council resolution, Myanmar never recognized and accepted the mandate of IIMM since its inception. The accuracy of the so-called twenty-three million pieces of information items said to be collected by IIMM remains unknown since a functional tool to scrutinize them is not mentioned. Moreover, IIMM has been openly receiving additional remuneration from certain governments though such practice is strictly prohibited for the United Nations Special Procedural mandate-holders. Therefore, IIMM merely serves as a tool to hatch a conspiracy against Myanmar to entertain the desire of its sponsors.

The High Commissioner for Human Rights released the report on the situation of human rights in Myanmar shortly before the Interactive Dialogue without giving adequate time to respond. The specific incidents accused in the report are found to be referred to either unreliable dissident sources or biased media which support terrorists. It is disappointing to observe that the verified and reliable information provided by the Government was intentionally omitted in the report while adding accusations without any verification with the Government.

The report significantly watered down the heinous crimes committed by NUG and PDF terrorist groups responsible for the killings of over 6,600 innocent civilians including 228 children and 274 civil servants. Brutal killings against civilians, infightings and murders within the factions of terrorist organizations are inevitably uncovered while such widely available reports do not attract the attention of the biased author of the report.

Many youths who fell into the trap of the NUG terrorists have returned to the legal fold and the Government has reintegrated a total of 667 persons with their families as of 5 October 2023. Since February 2021, the Government has granted amnesty 22 times based on humanitarian grounds with the aim of giving an opportunity to contribute in nation-building tasks. A total of 76,230 prisoners were released accordingly.

The root cause of the displacement of over 500,000

people from Northern Rakhine was the terrorist attacks launched by ARSA aka Aqua Mul Mujahidin in 2016 and 2017 which killed hundreds of Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims who did not follow their agenda. Those attacks triggered forced displacement from Rakhine State. The Government of Myanmar has been working closely with Bangladesh to commence the repatriation of verified displaced persons from Rakhine State and an attempt to discredit these efforts by the High Commissioner is inappropriate. Myanmar reiterates its position of not recognizing the term "Rohingya", which was never found in any historical and legal records of Myanmar. The High Commissioner further made unacceptable conclusions and recommendations including reference to ICC while developments in Myanmar do not pose any threat to international peace and security. Therefore, Myanmar categorically rejects such inappropriate references made by the High Commissioner and certain countries.

The Government registers its appreciation to the friendly countries and the countries which express their understanding and constructive position towards Myanmar during the IDs. The Permanent Mission of Myanmar in Geneva has already responded to respective IDs and details can be found on the Mission's webpage.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Nay Pyi Taw
14 October 2023

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission

Statement No 11/2023

1. The Myanmar citizens were unable to fully enjoy a stable and peaceful state due to the armed conflicts that emerged following Myanmar's independence, the successive Governments of Myanmar made concerted efforts to attain peace but they were unable to reach this objective. On 15 October 2015, the Government signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) with eight ethnic armed organizations. The agreement was signed in the presence of representatives from both local and foreign organizations, including the United Nations, who participated as witnesses. Countries around the world also welcomed and offered their support. All these together with the approval of the NCA by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw marked a significant milestone in Myanmar's history. Today, on 15 October 2023, the NCA celebrates its 8th anniversary.
2. The "Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace" through Resolution No 39/11 of the United Nations General Assembly affirms that "... Recognizing that the maintenance of a peaceful life for peoples is the sacred duty of each State, solemnly proclaims that

the peoples of our planet have a sacred right to peace...". Furthermore, Article 38 of the ASEAN Declaration on Human Rights also states that all people and individuals in ASEAN countries have the right to enjoy peace.

3. The protection and promotion of human rights contribute to the establishment and maintenance of peace and peace is indispensable for the full enjoyment of human rights. It is only when armed conflicts end and genuine peace prevails that the well-being of all citizens can be fully realized.
4. The Myanmar National Human Rights Commission hopes that the successful implementation of the NCA process to ensure State stability and equality for all ethnic peoples will be a significant step forward for the emergence of the Union based on the democracy and federal system as desired by all the people of Myanmar and the Commission congratulates the 8th anniversary of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement.

Myanmar National Human Rights
Commission
DATE: 15 October 2023



Flood Warning

(Issued at 11:30 am MST on 14-10-2023)

ACCORDING to the 10:30 am MST observation today, the water level of Dokhtawady River at Myitnge is observed as about 2½ feet (72 cm) below its danger level. It may reach its danger level during the next one day.

It is especially advised to the people who settle near the river banks and low lying areas at Myitnge, to take precaution measure. — DMH

Myanmar's ongoing quest for internal peace receives assistance from India

FROM PAGE-1

The Senior General and the Deputy National Security Adviser to India frankly exchanged views on further plans of India to give a helping hand to the peace process of Myanmar and its firm belief in NCA in addition to the political progress of Myanmar and the need for further improvement of bilateral trade and investment between Myanmar and India.

The Senior General highlighted endeavours for the development of the country and forging peace and stability, building the Union based on democratic and federal systems, cooperation with India in peace and stability measures in border regions, and progress of friendly relations and cooperation between the two countries.

The meeting was also attended by SAC Joint Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo and SAC member Union Minister for Home Affairs Chairman of National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee Lt-Gen Yar Pyae. The Deputy National Security Adviser to India was accompanied by Indian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Vinay Kumar and officials.

— MNA/TTA



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing joins India's Deputy National Security Adviser for the group photo at the event yesterday.



Union Minister U Ko Ko Lwin holds talks with officials from the Russian oil industry in Moscow during his observation tours.

Union Energy Minister meets officials from oil companies in Moscow

UNION Minister for Energy U Ko Ko Lwin and delegates who are in Moscow, Russia, met officials from four companies engaged in the oil industry and oil refining in Russia separately while attending the Sixth Russian Energy Week International Forum (REW).

During the meeting, they discussed the conditions for cooperation in ways to meet Myanmar's energy needs.

The Union minister presented his view on technical assistance and investment issues needed to increase Myanmar's oil and natural gas production and to produce petroleum products up to international standards. — MNA/KZL

MoST Union Minister visits Institutes and Universities in Russia

UNION Minister for Science and Technology Dr Myo Thein Kyaw along with officials from Rosatom visited Moscow Power Engineering Institute, National Research Nuclear University, RUDN universities and institutes in Russia on 13 October. Pro-rectors from the universities explained academic and research programmes plus data and infrastructures of the universities.

The Union minister met Myanmar students who are studying at these universities and helped meet their needs. In meeting with officials, the

Union minister discussed cooperation in academic and research programme of Myanmar universities with Moscow Power Engineering Institute, National Research Nuclear University, RUDN universities. When the Union minister arrived at the Rosatom Technical Academy (Moscow Branch), the Rosatom Technical Academy's managing director explained the information about the course and had a friendly and open discussion on cooperation issues for the development of human resources.

— MNA/KZL



Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Kyaw poses for the group documentary photo in Moscow.

NATIONAL

MoEP UM continues observation tours on electricity facilities in Moscow

MYANMAR delegation led by Union Minister U Nyan Tun of the Ministry of Electric Power, visited the Zagorskaya PSPP hydropower plant near Moscow, Russia, on 13 October.

The Union Minister and his team viewed the water intake at the plant. They also visited the observation deck, the 500 KV switchyard, the power generators, and the control room around the power plant for further study.

The Zagorskaya PSPP hydropower plant, located near Moscow, regulates water flow from the Kunya River using sluice gates. With a catchment area of 22.4 million cubic metres (18,160 acre-feet), it generates 1,200 MW, primarily during daily peak consumption periods of about four hours. During off-peak



Union Minister for Electric Power U Nyan Tun and officials from Zagorskaya PSPP hydropower plant pose for the documentary group photo in Moscow, the Russian Federation, on 13 October.

hours, surplus water is pumped back into a 100-metre-high water storage tank, making it a pump-storage hydropower plant

with significant benefits.

Next, in the plant's meeting hall, Mr Tatiana Ivankina, the Chief Expert of RusHydro's In-

ternational Cooperation Department, discussed the production of turbine generators required for power plants. He provided

technical assistance for hydroelectric power production, including the design and distribution of construction techniques and the development of human resources and technical services to maximize water resource utilization. Mr Satin Ilya, the Rosatom Project Manager, also presented information on small hydropower generation and investment opportunities in Myanmar.

The Union minister expressed the desire for enhanced cooperation between Russia and Myanmar in the field of electricity production, driven by friendship. He also mentioned the importance of inviting Russian friends and companies to invest in Myanmar and discussed their specific areas of interest and continued further discussions. — MNA/KZW

Myanmar migrant workers in Malaysia permitted to access their provident funds



The photo shows the Embassy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to Malaysia.

THE Myanmar Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, has announced that Myanmar workers in Malaysia can withdraw their employee support savings.

Myanmar workers have reportedly contributed to EPF savings under the Employee

Provident Fund Act of 1991 in Malaysia.

According to the statement of the embassy, the Myanmar citizens who deposited their savings returned to Myanmar without withdrawing their savings.

Therefore, the Employees'

Provident Fund (EPF) stated that the savings of members who have not added savings for three consecutive years will be transferred to the Unclaimed Money Management Division (BWTD).

In addition, the statement mentioned that Myanmar nationals who have deposited EPF savings can withdraw their savings before returning to their country, and those who returned to Myanmar without withdrawing the savings can submit the necessary documents to EPF or BWTD to withdraw them. Myanmar nationals who have deposited EPF savings can visit the EPF website at www.kwsp.gov.my if they want to enquire about their savings. — TWA/CT

Myanmar expatriates to secure EV import permits with remittances

THE Ministry of Commerce allows its citizens living and working abroad to import electric vehicles and motorcycles as another measure if they transmit their salaries or other earnings to the country through the official bank.

In the statement, it said it



The Ministry of Commerce Office building in Ottarathiri of Nay Pyi Taw.

will grant import permits for one EV per year which is equal to five per cent of remittance if those who receive regular salaries including semen make a money transfer of US\$200,000 and above in a year.

If those with other kinds of earnings make money transfers of \$50,000 and above in a year, they will be allowed to import electric vehicles or motorcycles that are equal to five per cent of their remittance.

The EV permits intend to ensure the widespread use of EVs and support for environmental conservation.

It will grant individual permits and group permits if the individuals do not meet the prices of vehicles. — TWA/KTZH

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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.

NATIONAL

Mrs Myanmar competes in Mrs Supermodel Worldwide 2023



Mrs Moon representing Myanmar competes in the Mrs Supermodel Worldwide 2023 competition being held in New Delhi, India.

ACCORDING to the Myanmar Beauty Paradise Organization, Mrs Moon representing Myanmar is competing in the Mrs Supermodel Worldwide 2023 competition, which is being held for the second time in New Delhi, India.

Moon is a married beauty queen sent by the Myanmar Beauty Paradise Organization, and competing with beauty queens from more than 40 countries including Mexico, Australia and Ukraine.

“Now I am in India. I also had to cut down on food to compete in this competition. I am very excited about the competition. I am happy too. I am trying my best to represent Myanmar. In the talent section of the competition, I will compete with Shan traditional dance. I will also compete in the National Costume contest with Shan traditional dress,” said Moon. Mrs Supermodel Worldwide 2023, which is being held for the second time in New Delhi, India, will be held from 14 to 22 October. — ASH/KZL

Balloons over Bagan service resumes

GAS-POWERED balloon services over Bagan resumed for the coming winter, said U Nan Tint, Chairman of NyaungU Township Administration Body.

The Shwe Lay Tagun (reddish brown) balloon team resumed its Balloons over Bagan services on the morning of 7 October from Hotel Zone (4) in Gantga Ward of Bagan Myothit of NyaungU Township.

The team flew two gas-powered

balloons – XY-AKH balloon by pilot KX-Gavm and XY-AKY by pilot K-Andy for 16 passengers each over Bagan to enjoy the beautiful scene of the city.

The tour lasted 45 minutes. It starts at Hotel Zone (4) in Gantga Ward of Bagan Myothit and ends in the southeast of Bagan Lodge Hotel, east of Bagan Myothit.

The travellers can explore the Ba-

gan Ancient Cultural Zone, the picturesque scenes of the Ayeyawady River, palm trees, Htanaung (Acacia leucophloea), neem trees and ancient buildings. The balloon tour was suspended in the COVID-19 period and is now resumed on the morning of 7 October. The Oriental Blooms Company launched the Balloons over Bagan service in 2013 with six balloons and the Golden Eagle Company also introduced the service in 2014 with three balloons. —ASH/KTZH



Hot-air balloons are seen in the sky of Bagan. PHOTO: DIPALIN

7th Pre-Thadingyut Small-Scale Industrial Products Fair held



Booths showcase products from 74 registered small-scale enterprises in the Yangon Region yesterday.

THE 7th Pre-Thadingyut Small-Scale Industrial Products Fair commenced on 14 October in a compound of the Small-Scale Industries Department (Yangon Region) in North Okkalapa township, according to Director U Thet Naing Oo of the Small-Scale Industries Department (Yangon Region).

The Small-Scale Industrial Products Fair will be held from 14 to 17 October with 74 booths of small-scale industrial enterprises in the Yangon Region.

“The fair is a gathering of products from 74 registered small-scale industrial enterprises in the Yangon Region, as well as a market-seeking fair. The businesspersons will get to meet each other through the fair and we aim to be cooperative activities and develop the business,” said U Thet Naing Oo.

At the fair, the small-scale industrial products from the Yangon Region such as consumer goods, foodstuffs, handicraft products, and local (natural) products are displayed at the 74 booths. — ASH/MKKS

Shan State Investment Committee greenlights...

FROM PAGE-1

The committee allowed seven foreign investments worth \$16.163 million and 14 Myanmar citizen investments worth K32,220.744 million including \$6.158 million in the Shan State and they created job opportunities for 1,362 locals and 68 foreigners.

“The Shan State Invest-

ment Committee meeting 7/2023 held on 4 October permitted 14 Myanmar citizen investments and seven foreign investments, totalling 21 investment projects. The approved capital amount is \$22.758 million and K32,220.744 million. The projects will generate new jobs for 1,362 locals and 68 foreigners,” he said.

Moreover, they allowed the ongoing businesses including the new investments to increase investment amount and workforce in September alone.

The committee also approved the new local and foreign investment projects as per the law and procedures monthly to provide job opportunities in the region. — ASH/KTZH



NATIONAL

King Mindon's 145th Anniversary: Mandalay to offer special meals

THE alms offering ceremony will be held on 20 October, marking the 145th anniversary of King Mindon's demise, the founder of Mandalay.

The first part of the ceremony will be held at the Maha Dhammika Rama Shwegyin Taikma, receiving precepts from the Shwegyin Taikma Sayadaw, sharing merits gained, offering rice to the 65 monks, and the offering of alms.

According to the plan, the second part of the ceremony will take place at the Golden Palace of Myanansankyaw Golden Palace. It has been indicated



The portrait of the invitation letter for the 143rd celebration of demise of King Mindon.

that administering Dhamma is scheduled and the details of whether the programmes will proceed or not are to be confirmed.

The ceremonies were conducted to express gratitude to King Mindon and to allow participation of his royal relatives and friends. — TWA/KZW

Short film competition entries, forms to be submitted by 15 December



The photo shows the entrance to the Myanmar Motion Picture Organization.

THE Myanmar Motion Picture Organization announced that the application forms and competition entries for the Short Film Competition 2023 must be submitted by 15 December, according to the International Relations Committee, Myanmar Motion Picture Organization.

The title is "Myanmar Traditional Culture" which must highlight Myanmar Culture by

creating a polite living community. There are two types of competition entries_ the short film (less than five minutes) and the short film (5-25 minutes).

Not only the producer/director of the short films must be 20-40 years old but also the songs and background music that are used in the short story do not contain copyright and

the short films must be submitted to the competition are not allowed to be withdrawn.

The winners will be deservedly awarded and the creators of the Top Ten short films will be given a certificate.

In addition, the winning short films and the Top ten short films will be sent to the International Film festivals. — TWA/MKKS

NEWS IN BRIEF

Plan to despatch 500,000 reserved rice bags to disaster-affected areas

ACCORDING to the National Disaster Management Committee's plan, 500,000 bags of reserved rice will continue to be distributed to disaster-prone areas, as discussed in the work coordination meeting of the Emergency Rice Procurement Supervisory Committee. In May of last year, 200,000 bags of reserve rice were delivered to areas affected by natural disasters for the first time.

Ngamoeyeik Dam expected to prevent further stream rise

IN Yangon, there is no need for people to be concerned about the misinformation circulating on social media networks claiming that water will be drained out from the Ngamoeyeik reservoir in Hlegu township. These claims are baseless as there is no construction activity happening. The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation assures the public that the Ngamoeyeik Dam is stable and faces no threat of further water level rise. This statement has been confirmed by the Department of Irrigation and Water Utilization Management.

CMP exports cross US\$4 bln, surpassing previous period

UNION Minister U Myint Naung discussed the development of the garment industry, noting that the export value of CMP from January to September 2023 was US\$4.31 billion, exceeding the previous year. He said, "The garment industry can offer employment opportunities to our citizens. To boost the export sector and stimulate national economic growth, we will collaborate with partner organizations, including garment manufacturers. As employers, we aim to enhance the socio-economic well-being of our workers. we encourage everyone to work together in the pursuit of our country's economic development."

Writer Hein Latt receives 2023 Dr Abdul Kalam International Award

MYANMAR writer, Hein Latt, has been honoured with the 2023 Dr Abdul Kalam International Award by the Dr Abdul Kalam Foundation, presented by the former President of India. The award ceremony will be attended by the Vice-President and Ministers of India and will recognize exceptional individuals from the fields of literature and journalism in various countries, including the United States, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Bhutan, India, Bangladesh, Germany, Thailand, Nepal, Qatar, Australia, Japan, the UAE, Singapore and Malaysia.

No change in daily wage of K4,800

THE minimum wage for workers remains at K4,800 per day for 8 hours of work, with an additional allowance of K1,000. Overtime pay will continue to be calculated based on the K4,800 rate, as per the Ministry of Labour. — Htun Htun/ KZW

Palm oil reference price declines following high import

THE palm oil inflows from importing countries these days have risen when the foreign oil price stood at US\$800 per tonne on 11 October, resulting in wholesale reference price reduction.

About 15,000 tonnes of palm oil in early October and 14,000 tonnes on 11 and 12 October were imported respectively.

The wholesale reference price was set lower to K4,340 per viss in the second week

from K4,390 in the first week of October. The foreign palm oil price dipped to \$825 per tonne on 4 October and \$812.5 on 9 October from \$832.5 per tonne on 29 September.

Some importing companies sell the cooking oil to some big stores where the oil is distributed to the small stores at K4,600 per viss in Yangon, K4,700 in Nay Pyi Taw, K4,950 in Mandalay, K4,800 in Patheingyi/Magway and K5,000 in Monywa.

The peanut oil prices move in the range between K12,500 and K16,000 per viss.

Daw Sein Sein, a seller from Myingyan said that palm oil was sold at K5,000 per viss as she was allowed to buy three barrels of oil six times from the district association concerned in September and October.

Meanwhile, an 18-litre jerry can of palm oil was sold at K85,000-90,000 depending on the brands. — TWA/KK



The photo shows imported jerry cans of palm oil at the warehouse in Yangon.



Gold ornaments is seen being displayed at the gold outlet in Yangon.

YGEA sets gold reference price higher as spot gold price rises

THE spot gold price gained to US\$1,930 per ounce, prompting the Yangon Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA) to set the reference price higher to K3,020,000 per tical (0.578 ounce or 0.016 kilogramme) in mid-October.

The spot gold price surged to \$1,933 per ounce on 14 October from \$1,820 in early October, indicating an increase of over \$100 within two weeks.

Pure gold fetches K3.42 million per tical in the grey market, showing a price gap of K400,000 per tical between the YGEA's reference price and unofficial market value.

Yangon Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA) switched to the Central Bank of Myanmar's exchange rate (K2,900) for interbank transactions in calculating the reference price for pure gold. At present, the US dollar is exchanged at K3,350.

Therefore, the YGEA's reference price and current market value differ depending on the US dollar exchange rate.

Myanmar's gold price is highly tied to the spot gold price and US dollar exchange rate. The soaring dollar exchanging up to K4,000 drove the gold price up to a record high of K4 million per tical in late August 2023. — NN/EM

Rubber price rebounds to K1,750 per pound after two-week fall

THE price of rubber bounced back to around K1,750 per pound in Mon State's rubber market after a two-week decline.

The prices touched a low of K1,590 per pound of Ribbed Smoked Sheet Local 3 and K1,610 for sun-dried rubber at the end of September.

The prevailing prices moved up to K1,730 per pound for sun-dried rubber and K1,750 for RSS Local 3. The figures showed a two-week increase of K150 per pound.

Rubber tapping business halted for a while in the monsoon season and resumed in mid-September at the opening prices of K1,770 per pound of Ribbed Smoked Sheet Local 3 and K1,750 for sun-dried rubber. This being so, the current market value has not reached the opening prices of the season.

Global demand for rubber,



Myanmar bagged more than US\$449 million in revenue from rubber exports in the previous financial year 2020-2021. The picture captures snapshot of sun-dried rubber.

rubber production in the South-east Asian nations and the market supply are contributing factors to Myanmar's rubber prices.

The rubber price in Mon State, a major rubber production

state in Myanmar, is related to those factors as well, the traders elaborated.

Myanmar's annual rubber production is estimated at some 300,000 tonnes. Seventy per cent

of rubber produced in Myanmar goes to China. It is also shipped to Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Viet Nam, the Republic of Korea, India, Japan, and other countries.

The association aims to achieve rubber exports of 300,000 tonnes in the current 2023-2024 financial year beginning 1 April.

The rubber production in the last FY 2022-2023 reached over 360,000 tonnes, more than 200,000 tonnes of which were shipped to foreign trade partners.

Rubber is commonly produced in Mon and Kayin states and Taninthayi, Bago, and Yangon regions in Myanmar. As per 2018-2019 rubber season data, there are over 1.628 million acres of rubber plantations in Myanmar, with Mon State accounting for 497,153 acres, followed by Taninthayi Region with 348,344 acres and Kayin State with 270,760 acres.

Myanmar bagged more than US\$449 million in revenue in rubber exports in the 2020-2021 FY. — NN/EM

OPINION

ARTICLE BOOKRACK

Shape the nation with durable peace for new generations

IN A historic moment on 15 October 2015, the entire populace of Myanmar, comprising various ethnic nationalities, achieved a momentous milestone by signing the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). The NCA represented an ardent commitment to usher in an era of enduring peace for the nation, heralding the cessation of hostilities and armed conflicts in all their manifestations.

The NCA garnered resounding support from not only the diverse populace of Myanmar but also from global organizations and communities worldwide. On this momentous day, representatives from the government, the Hluttaw (Parliament), the Tatmadaw, and various ethnic armed organizations affixed their signatures to the agreement, witnessed by diplomats from China, India, Japan, Thailand, the United Nations, and local observers.

Myanmar, a beloved motherland, extends its loyalty to all its citizens, regardless of ethnicity. In return, all citizens, including diverse ethnic groups, must reciprocate this loyalty by joining hands in the nation-building endeavours that will span generations. The profound truth that peace can mould the destiny of a nation must be etched in the hearts of every citizen.

Understanding that harbouring hatred can lead to the detriment of the country, it is imperative for all stakeholders to unite in the pursuit of durable peace for the collective benefit of the people. The government has made a steadfast commitment to advance towards this objective, urging all parties to work together without suspicion or animosity. Ethnic armed organizations, too, must engage in peace discussions, discarding past grievances and resentments.

For those who have experienced life in a conflict-ridden environment, the yearning for peace and stability is profound. Armed groups, in particular, comprehend the manifold disadvantages of living in a state of perpetual unrest. A glance at the world stage reveals the stark contrast between peaceful and prosperous nations and those marred by discord and instability.

Therefore, the time has come for all Myanmar citizens, armed or unarmed, to seize the opportunity to build a unified nation grounded in democratic and federal principles, ensuring a brighter future for both the present and future generations. It is never too late to embark on the path of peace and nation-building.

Myanmar, a beloved motherland, extends its loyalty to all its citizens, regardless of ethnicity. In return, all citizens, including diverse ethnic groups, must reciprocate this loyalty by joining hands in the nation-building endeavours that will span generations. The profound truth that peace can mould the destiny of a nation must be etched in the hearts of every citizen.

Actually, the motherland of Myanmar is loyal to all citizens. So, all citizens including ethnic nationalities have to reciprocally be loyal to the motherland of Myanmar. They all have to firmly join hands in nation-building endeavours to improve generation to generation. Everybody needs to understand that peace can shape everything and the future of the nation.



An aerial shot taken in April 2022 shows the reach of the landslide that struck a village in Baybay, Leyte after Tropical Storm Agaton whipped the province and other parts of the Visayas and Mindanao, Philippines. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Disasters cause US\$3.8 tln in crop loses over 30 years: FAO

Agriculture around the world is increasingly at risk of being disrupted due to multiple hazards and threats such as flooding, water scarcity, drought, declining agricultural yields and fisheries resources, loss of biological diversities and environmental degradation.

NATURAL and man-made disasters have caused \$3.8 trillion in crop and livestock losses over 30 years, the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization said on Friday.

Floods, droughts, insect infestations, storms, disease and war have caused about \$123 billion per year in lost food production between 1991 and 2021, the equivalent of five per cent of total production or enough to feed up to half a billion people per year, the FAO said in a report.

This is the first time the UN body has tried

to compile such an estimate, with the aim of putting into context the scale of the cost of disasters on both a global and personal scale.

"The international community is taking stock of the fact that disasters are... increasing tremendously... quadrupling since the 1970s" and are having an increasing impact on food production, the deputy head of FAO's statistics department, Piero Conforti, told AFP.

The FAO report, entitled "The Impact of Disasters on Agriculture and Food Security", found that disasters are increasing in severity and frequency, from 100 per year in the 1970s to

around 400 events per year in the past 20 years.

Climate change a systemic risk

Climate change is increasingly responsible, as well as human and livestock diseases.

"Agriculture around the world is increasingly at risk of being disrupted due to multiple hazards and threats such as flooding, water scarcity, drought, declining agricultural yields and fisheries resources, loss of biological diversities and environmental degradation," said the FAO.

SOURCE: AFP



Book Title	-	Aputhit Hnit Yai Gya Barthi
Writers	-	Maung Sein Win (Badeegon) and Hein Set Thwin
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Publication Date	-	October 2023 (1st Edition)
Price	-	K4,000

Aputhit Hnit Yai Gya Barthi

AT a time when books written by only one writer are mostly published, Maha dared enough to publish a book written by two writers who are strange to each other. They are not friends and their writings have never been mentioned together in a book, journal or magazine. These two writers are Saya Maung Sein Win (Badeegon) and Hein Set Thwin, a young writer. And, the title was a combination of the shortened titles of two different writers. The novel of Saya Maung Sein Win [Badeegon] is titled 'Aputhit Hnit Lu Phyt Say Thadee' whereas that of Saya Hein Set Thwin is titled 'Ma Yai Ya Ywe Yai Gya Barthi.' Both novels are of medium length, and the book is believed to give some taste to the

liking of the readers.

Saya Maung Sein Win composed his novel based on the miserable life of the employees of a factory where he worked as an engineer. During that period, even the officers are paid a four-digit salary whereas the clerks and the blue staff are paid a three-digit salary. However, luckily enough, the cooking oil price is only K34 per viss. People can have one Bayagyaw (a fried bean cake) for Pyas 35 only - i.e., merely above one-third of a Kyat. The main characters are a blue-collar worker Maung Thein Htoo and his fellow female worker Ma Aye Myint. They are both working under the writer who is an engineer at that factory. Saya Maung Sein Win depicts the miserable

life of the two main characters who have extreme difficulty getting married because they both have to look after their own families. They have to educate their younger brothers and sisters and spend much on the healthcare of their parents. Additionally, they also have their own problems at work. This is a love story but with a miserable ending. They cannot be romantic as they are deeply worried about their family affairs.

When asked in an interview, Saya Maung Sein Win said, "The story happens in the period of the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP). I met them at a small factory where I work in my capacity as an engineer. This is a true story. Our factory has an iron melting plant. However

hard the metal and iron may be, we can forge them into what we want them to be. In those days the Press Scrutiny Board was rather strict with its censoring, and thus, my novel was banned from publishing. I would like to compare the process of forging the metal and iron with the hard life of the two lovers who are beaten by the eight vicissitudes."

His novel ends with the words of advice given by the father of the main character Maung Thein Htoo who said, "Yes. We are poor. But we cannot give our abject poverty an excuse to do the wrong things. What you must do is to imitate the metal and iron that have resisted the heating only to give birth to metal and iron blocks which are useful to mankind."

In another novel, the young writer depicted the life of a young man called Piya, who has never wavered from his dream of becoming a writer. Despite his friends going abroad to earn more income, he has not relented in his effort to become a writer. He is so firmly confident that he has relinquished his fiancé who calls him to accompany her abroad to lead a far more prosperous life.

In fact, both novels are great for young readers in particular because they provide guidance and advice as to how they ought to overcome the eight vicissitudes - the eight worldly joys and sorrows.



Book Title	-	Khinbunthe Tayauk Ye Hmatsu Myar
Writer	-	Maung Thar Cho
Publishing House	-	Seikku Cho Cho
Publication Date	-	October 2023 (3rd Edition)
Price	-	K4,000

Khinbunthe Tayauk Ye Hmatsu Myar

THIS book provides some knowledge on the lifestyle inclusive of the marriage life as well as the healthy living guidelines. The style of writing is based on the letters from the more educated husband to the less educated better half. This edition was published by Seikku Cho Cho and it was already published twice by Hnit Karla Myar. Seikku Cho Cho has added two new stories to the third edition. And each story bears an illustration by Awpikyai.

In the story titled, 'Ah Hmway Dai Ma Tun De Ein,' the husband explains to his better half the danger of lighting incense sticks. Usually, when Buddhist devotees say prayers, paying homage to Lord Bud-

dha, they light candles and incense sticks, the latter of which yields the toxic gas. This gas is polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon, which is a class of organic compounds. He said to his wife, "Phoo, this is a toxic gas, which can cause lung cancer. The chemical symbol is PAH 5. This gas prevails most in a Chinese temple. In Taipei, the PAH 5 level prevailing in the atmosphere around the motor road intersections is less than that in the atmosphere of a Chinese temple. This gas also includes benzopyrene, Phoo."

In the story titled, 'Andarai Gaung Gyi Ga Wa-lo Phee-lo,' the writer explained to his wife how dangerous genetically modified foods are. He elaborated

on the details of how GM foods have come into being, how they are grown and how harmful they are. The major health risks potentially associated with GM foods are toxicity, allergenicity and genetic hazards.

In the story under the title of "Htaminn Ma Wa Thaw Nay Myar Hsi Thoh," the readers can be overwhelmed with sorrow. This is a tear-jerker in which a woman passenger on board a ship jumped into the river to commit suicide. Suffering from acute diabetes, the woman cannot eat much, particularly rice, which she is used to eating a lot. She had one of her legs amputated. As she could not bear the agony of her miserable life, she decided

to leave the world of us. When her daughter was sleeping, she stealthily jumped down into the river leaving behind a letter, saying she would join the majority. In this story, the writer emphasized the woes of the deadly disease, reminding his wife to lead a healthy lifestyle so that she would not be afflicted with diabetes. True, people should not lose their lives for preventable diseases. The good news is that prediabetes and type 2 diabetes are largely preventable. About nine in 10 cases in the US can be avoided by making lifestyle changes. These same changes can also lower the chances of developing heart disease and some cancers. The key to prevention can be boiled down to five words - stay lean and stay active. If you want to prevent diabetes from afflicting you, you have to achieve a healthy weight, eat a balanced carbohydrate-controlled diet and get regular exercise to improve your blood glucose control. Such and such suggestions are provided by the writer to avoid being inflicted by diabetes.

In a nutshell, this book under review is composed of 22 articles which are all aimed at enabling the readers to lead a happy, healthy and long-lasting marriage life.

Entertainment



Celebrity

Model : Ei Chaw Po
Dress : Su Nandar Hlaing (Myanmar Glam Couture)
Make up : Pan Pan
Photo : Phyo Min Zaw

Ei Chaw Po

The wedding news of actress Ei Chaw Po that she will hold a wedding reception with her boyfriend Moeset Mone at Phuket Marriott Resort & Spa on 17 November is spreading on social networks. Even though she said nothing regarding this news, she replied to the media that “he allows me to continue my work. Therefore, I can do it peacefully. I think it is a little early to get married. If it is drawing near, I will announce to my fans.” She donated K200,000 for the 46th respect-paying ceremony to aged film artistes.



Recipients of Academy Awards for 2019, 2020 and 2021 pose for the group photo in 2022.

2023 Academy Awards presentation ceremony set for February 2024

THE Ministry of Information said they will organize the Academy Award presentation ceremony for 2023 in February 2024 in Nay Pyi Taw.

Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn declared the plans to hold the event during the 103rd Myanmar Motion Picture Day and 46th respect-paying ceremony to aged film artistes held on 13 October.

Speaking at the ceremonies, the Union minister said that all the artistes we see on this stage are the ones who carried out for the interests of the country, regions and the public with their outstanding performances. We pay respect on behalf of our country.

Moreover, the Academy Award presentation ceremony for 2023 will be held very soon to encourage the film industry. It will be in February coming year. We negotiated with the Myanmar Motion Picture Organization to hold it in Nay Pyi Taw just like the previous year he added.

The 62nd Myanmar Motion Picture Awards presentation ceremony, which presents the awards for the years 2019, 2020, and 2022, was held in Nay Pyi Taw on 6 May 2023.

The year 2024 will mark the 63rd Academy Award presentation ceremony for 2023.

The Film Academy Award presentations have been held since 1952. – ASH/KTZH



La Min Mo Mo

AUTHOR La Min Mo Mo and her family recently donated foodstuffs to flood victims in Bago on 15 October in memory of seven months of her deceased father. “We sent the donated items to the flood-affected area in the emergency period and we didn’t wait until 15 October. Bago is my father’s native town and I hope my father will be satisfied with our donation from a holy place,” she posted on her Facebook page.



Su Pan Htwa

ACTRESS Su Pan Htwa made donations with actor Wai Lu Kyaw and his wife Yay Kyi Chan Mya for victims of the flood in Bago on 12 October. Moreover, Ko Okkar Kyaw and Su Pan Htwa donated alms at Naga Cave Nunnery in Yangon and chicken and bean curry and rice to 150 households in the ward on 23 September.



Wah Wah Win Shwe

THREE-TIME Academy Award winner Daw Wah Wah Win Shwe donated K300,000 in person for the 46th respect-paying ceremony to aged film artistes on 12 October. She also sells her jewellery online without taking any charges for gems but only for gold.

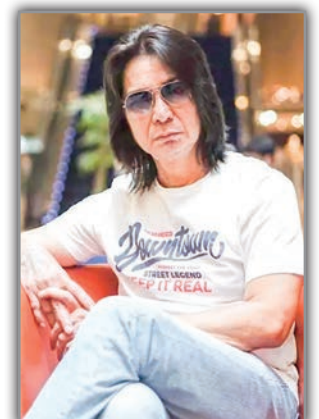


Aung Ye Lin

ACTOR Aung Ye Lin, who joined the film industry when he was 18, is now 36 years old as he has 18 years of experience in that field. He said he stands in the field successfully because of his good mentors. Moreover, he added that he was grateful for the support of all film industry crews. Even if he gets above himself, he has to think of his past as he sacrificed a lot to be an actor.

Saw Khu Sae

“Some sing my songs without my permission. Then, they use the wrong cords and it makes me sad. Although the singers sing the songs, we don’t get any benefits. However, I am happy that my songs will not disappear from the audience. If we don’t allow them to sing our songs, these songs will not reach the public. I grant permissions if someone seeks permission. Only then, will my songs remain in this world if I am not here on earth” he said. – Htun Htun/KTZH



WORLD

Saudi pauses talks on normalization with Israel

The suspension of talks is linked to the ongoing war between Israel and the Palestinian group Hamas.

SAUDI Arabia has suspended talks on potentially normalizing ties with Israel, a source told AFP on Saturday, amid the war raging between Israel and the Palestinian group Hamas.

Hamas launched a large-scale attack on Israel on 7 October which killed 1,300 people, sparking a retaliatory bombing campaign that has killed at least 1,900 in the Gaza Strip ahead of a potential Israeli ground invasion of the territory.

“Saudi Arabia has decided to pause discussion on possible normalization and has informed US officials,” a source familiar with the discussions told AFP.

The Gulf kingdom, home to the holiest sites in Islam, has never recognized Israel and did not join the 2020 US-brokered Abraham Accords that saw its Gulf neighbours Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates as well as Morocco establish formal ties with Israel.

US President Joe Biden’s administration had been pushing hard in recent months for Saudi Arabia to take the same step.

Under de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, son of the ageing King Salman, Riyadh had laid out conditions for normalization including security guarantees from Washington and help developing a civilian nuclear programme. — AFP



Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Centre-right parties surge to early lead in New Zealand election

Voters are seen as punishing the incumbent Labour government following the surprise resignation of Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern earlier in the year.



The National Party and ACT were projected to secure a majority in the 120-seat parliament. PHOTO: IVAN TARLTON / AFP

A centre-right coalition Saturday surged to an early lead in New Zealand’s election, as voters punished an incumbent Labour government

rocked by Jacinda Ardern’s surprise resignation earlier this year.

The National Party and its coalition partner ACT

were projected to win 65 seats with more than 30 per cent of the vote tallied — enough to secure a majority in New Zealand’s 120-seat parliament.

Meanwhile the ruling Labour party, which secured a landslide victory under Ardern in 2020, was on track to suffer one of its heaviest-ever election defeats with forecasts pointing to 32 seats.

Results began trickling into counting centres after polls closed on Saturday evening, with the country collectively holding its breath to see if the numbers would deliver a widely anticipated change of government. — AFP

US healthcare provider, unions reach strike deal

US healthcare provider Kaiser Permanente and unions representing tens of thousands of its staff said Friday they had reached a tentative deal to end what was billed as the sector’s biggest ever strike.

The stoppage was the latest labour dispute to rock the United States in a year that has seen workers downing their tools from Detroit to Hollywood.

“We are excited to have reached a tentative agreement with the frontline healthcare workers of the @UnionCoalition this morning,” the corporation wrote on social media.

More than 75,000 members of the SEIU-UHW and other unions walked out last week in a three-day stoppage that chiefly affected Kaiser Permanente’s operations in California, Colo-

rado, Oregon and Washington state.

Staff had complained that they were overworked and underpaid, with salaries that were not keeping up with rising prices.

“The frontline healthcare workers of the Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions are excited to have reached a tentative agreement with Kaiser Permanente,” the SEIU-UHW wrote on social media with a picture that included an all-caps “VICTORY”.

The strike added to the drumbeat of discontent that has seen workers all over the country down tools.

American consumers are battling inflation and a cost-of-living crisis that is shrinking real pay packets as prices for everyday staples like gas, groceries and rent continue to rise. — AFP



Kaiser Permanente and unions representing thousands of workers have reached a tentative deal to end industrial action, the two sides say. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

FATAL SCHOOL STABBING

France on top alert, deploys 7,000 soldiers after teacher’s murder

FRANCE will deploy 7,000 soldiers after a Chechen-origin man fatally stabbed a teacher and severely wounded three other adults at a school in the northeastern town of Arras, the Elysee presidential palace said Saturday.

France on Saturday said it will deploy 7,000 soldiers after declaring a top-level alert following the fatal stabbing of a teacher by a Chechen-origin man, who also severely wounded three others at a school.

The attack took place

in the northeastern town of Arras, home to large Jewish and Muslim populations. The deployment of the soldiers from Operation Sentinelle will be completed by Monday evening, according to the Elysee presidential palace. — AFP

ECONOMY WORLD

Russia to build nuclear power plant in Burkina Faso

The primary purpose of this nuclear power plant is to address the energy needs of Burkina Faso's population. It is worth noting that less than a quarter of the population in Burkina Faso currently has access to electricity.

BURKINA Faso's government said Friday that it had signed an agreement with Russia for the construction of a nuclear power plant to "cover the energy needs of the population", less than a quarter of which has access to electricity.

Burkina Faso has been ruled by a military junta since last year and has sought to diversify its



Nuclear power reactor fuel assembly at the Novosibirsk Chemical Concentrate Works. PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ SPUTNIK

international partners, moving closer to Russia in particular.

"The government of Burkina Faso has signed a memorandum of understanding for the construction of a nuclear power

plant," it said in a statement.

"The construction of this nuclear power plant in Burkina Faso is intended to cover the energy needs of the population," it added.

The agreement was signed at the Russian Energy Week in Moscow which was attended by Burkina Faso's energy minister Simon-Pierre Boussim.

The document "fulfils the wish of the president of (Burkina) Faso, Captain Ibrahim Traore, expressed last July at the Russia-Africa summit during a meeting with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin," the statement said. Russia's state atomic energy agency Rosatom said in a statement that "the memorandum is the first document in the field of the peaceful use of atomic energy between Russia and Burkina Faso." — AFP

G20 notes uneven global economic outlook, deep concern over wars

THE Group of 20 finance chiefs on Friday highlighted the increasingly uneven and uncertain nature of the global economic outlook, acknowledging that geopolitical and security issues can have significant consequences but did not single out either Russia or Israel.

Capping two days of talks in Morocco, the G20 finance ministers and central bank governors adopted a joint statement, noting with "deep concern" the human suffering and other adverse impacts of wars and conflicts.

While reiterating that G20

is a forum to discuss economic and financial issues, the finance chiefs urged all states to uphold the principles of international law and ensure territorial integrity and sovereignty.

It is the first time in seven meetings that the finance chiefs have agreed on a joint communique, after deep divisions among them, primarily between Western nations on the one hand and Russia and China on the other, made it difficult for the diverse group to build a consensus. — Kyodo



The Hamas attacks on Israel will have oil market repercussions if the conflict widens to include Hezbollah or Iran. There will likely be calls to ratchet up sanctions enforcement on Iranian oil exports, which have increased in the past six months. PHOTO: HAZEM BADER/AFP

Chickens keep Indigenous Guatemalans from migration agonies, for now

A brood of chickens cluck in the barn as Rebeca Perez collects eggs to sell in her village in western Guatemala — an endeavour she hopes will keep her from emigrating to the United States as her brothers did, driven by poverty.

Many of her neighbours in the Mayan settlement of Santa Maria Nebaj have left, but the single mother of two children aged eight and 11 is intent on providing for her family with her feathery flock.

"You can generate income here, not only there" in the United States, the 28-year-old told AFP.

With about 250 other farmers from seven municipalities in the Quiche department, Perez is learning agricultural production and marketing techniques thanks to a programme created in 2020 by the NGO Save the Children.

Run with US and Guatemalan government support, the project seeks to ensure that the children in Quiche — one of the poorest regions of the country — are fed with



Peasant Rebeca Perez, 28, collects the eggs she will later sell, in the municipality of Santa Maria Nebaj, Quiche Department, Guatemala, on 7 September 2023. PHOTO: JOHAN ORDONEZ / AFP

local food.

Although curbing migration was never the project's main aim, coordinator Lucrecia Mendez said it has lessened the push factor.

"Local producers have increased their incomes to cover their needs and improve the lives of their families, which has helped reduce irregular migration," she said.

In Santa Maria Nebaj, Jacinto Perez delivers vegetables to local schools. In San Juan Cotzal, Edwin Lopez sells chickens and grows crops with modified seeds from an NGO.

Despite Guatemala's poverty and gang violence, they see no other future. In 2022, the US deported 40,713 Guatemalans, over double the 2021 number. — AFP

Japan to offer shopping points to promote contactless delivery

THE Japanese government will start giving online shopping points to people who choose to have packages delivered outside their front doors to ease the burden on delivery staff, according to a policy package compiled in early October.

The step is part of efforts to cope with the impact of tougher overtime regulations for truck drivers next year. It aims to halve the percentage of items redelivered when people are not at home



A man uses a smartphone app to unlock an automatic entrance door at an apartment in Tokyo on 2 March 2023 to deliver a parcel without making contact with the receiver. **PHOTO: KYODO**

from the current 12 per cent to six per cent in fiscal 2024 starting next April.

“Logistics is an important social infrastructure which supports people’s lives and the economy,” Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said on 6 October at a meeting of related ministers to compile measures to deal with an expected decline in truck transport capacity.

To promote a shift to other means of transportation, the government

will also aim to double the amount of items transported by ship and rail in the next 10 years from 50 million tonnes and 18 million tonnes in fiscal 2020, respectively.

“We will include steps which will have immediate impact in our stimulus measures and swiftly implement them,” Kishida said, referring to the government’s economic package to be compiled by the end of this month.

The government in-

tends to include the plan in a draft supplementary budget to fund the economic package, government officials said. In the project, the government plans to give points to people who choose to receive packages outside the front door, at convenience stores, or with flexible delivery dates when they place orders online.

The government is working to decide the amount of points to be offered and when to start the measure. — Kyodo

Pfizer cuts earnings outlook on lower Covid-19 drug sales

THE US pharmaceutical giant Pfizer sharply scaled back its earnings outlook for the year, blaming lower-than-expected sales of two drugs used to treat Covid-19, the company said Friday.

It now “anticipates full-year 2023 revenues to be in the range of \$58.0 to \$61.0 billion, versus its previous guidance range of \$67.0 to \$70.0 billion,” Pfizer announced in a statement.

Earnings per share – the benchmark for the markets – should come in at between 1.45 and 1.65 dollars, compared with

3.25 to 3.45 dollars previously anticipated.

The cut to Pfizer’s guidance was “solely due to its COVID products”, the company said.

“Full-year 2023 revenues for Paxlovid and Comirnaty are expected to be approximately \$12.5 billion, a decline of \$9.0 billion versus original expectations,” it added.

The sharp revision to expected sales of Paxlovid, an oral antiviral drug, and the Covid-19 vaccine Comirnaty sent Pfizer’s stock tumbling.

The company’s shares were more than

three per cent lower in after hours trading at 5:30 pm local time in New York (2130 GMT).

After a late summer surge, Covid-19 rates have since come down sharply.

Test positivity rates, hospitalizations and deaths due to the virus are all down over the last week, according to CDC data. In the statement, Pfizer’s chief executive, Albert Bourla, insisted that the company’s non-Covid product portfolio is still on track for robust growth this year. — AFP

US banks rise on results, but warn on inflation and wars

SHARES of US banks jumped Friday following strong results, but executives cautioned that beneficial industry conditions were moderating and said wars in Ukraine and the Middle East adding uncertainty.

The robust earnings at JPMorgan Chase, Citi and Wells Fargo reflect a continued boost from higher interest rates, as well as the lift from a persistently healthy US employment market that has limited loan delinquencies.

Executives said household balance sheets had eroded somewhat in



The strong profits reported by JPMorgan Chase, Citi, and Wells Fargo indicate that they are still benefiting from the impact of higher interest rates. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

recent months, but were still above the pre-pandemic level. “US consumers and businesses generally remain healthy, although,

consumers are spending down their excess cash buffers,” said JPMorgan Chase Chief Executive Jamie Dimon. —AFP

Disposable diaper scare causes Panama-Florida flight to turn around

A flight from Panama to the United States made a u-turn Friday after the discovery of a suspicious package in the toilet that turned out to be... an adult diaper, airport officials said.

Panama’s civil aviation authority at first announced the Copa flight between Panama City and Tampa, Florida, had to turn around due to a presumed “bomb threat”.



A Copa airlines plane taxis on a runway as others sit on the tarmac at Tocumen International Airport on 22 March 2020. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/LUIS ACOSTA /AFP/FILE**

Back on the tarmac, the plane was emptied of passengers and searched by a police explosives unit.

The agents discovered that the object was in fact “a disposable adult diaper” carefully wrapped in a black rubbish bag, airport security head Jose Castro said.

Police posted a photo of the suspect package on social media. — AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V CONTRIVIA VOY.NO. (054N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V CONTRIVIA VOY.NO. (054N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **15-10-2023** 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

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

EU warns Google over YouTube disinfo in wake of Hamas attack

The EU has raised concerns about online content and disinformation, emphasizing the need for tech companies, including Alphabet, to comply with the new Digital Services Act.



Palestinians look at destruction caused by Israeli airstrikes on Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on 9 October. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE EU's top tech enforcer, Commissioner Thierry Breton, warned Google parent Alphabet on Friday to be wary of potential "illegal content and disinformation" on its YouTube platform.

In the latest in a series of messages to tech CEOs that has already seen him sparring with Elon Musk on X, formerly Twitter, the EU industry commissioner wrote to Alphabet CEO Sundar Pichai.

The letter was also posted online on the Bluesky social media platform, an upstart rival to Musk's X, and warns YouTube to comply with the terms of the EU's new Digital Services Act (DSA).

"Following the terrorist acts carried out by Hamas against Israel, we are seeing a surge of illegal content and disinformation being disseminated in the EU via certain platforms", Breton wrote.

This warning mirrored the previous letters to Musk, Facebook and Meta's Mark Zuckerberg and Chinese giant TikTok's Shou Zi Chew earlier this week.

Breton noted that YouTube in particular is used by many children and teenagers and warned that Google thus has a special responsibility to protect users from propaganda and violent or harmful images.

"Notwithstanding the fact that my team will follow up with a specific request on a number of issues to establish DSA compliance, I urge you to proactively report in a prompt, accurate and complete manner to the aspects raised in this letter," Breton wrote.

"As you know, following the opening of a potential investigation and a finding of non-compliance, penalties can be imposed." — AFP

Two dead as floods hit central Viet Nam

The heavy rainfall and flooding in central Viet Nam have resulted in evacuations and unfortunate casualties.

TWO people died after being swept away in floodwaters in central Viet Nam, state media reported Saturday.

Almost 500 houses were inundated with water in recent days, according to Vietnamese disaster management authority.

The coastal city of Da Nang has been hit with heavy rain, as have areas from Ha Tinh to Quang Nam provinces

since Tuesday.

A 61-year-old man and a 13-year-old boy drowned in the floods, according to state media website VnExpress.

Around 5,000 people were evacuated from homes in Da Nang on Friday night and Saturday morning, it said.

"The floodwater rose to my thighs and all of my family had to move upstairs, before the rescuers came and evac-

uated us," city resident Dinh Thi Tu Uyen told VnExpress.

In Hue city on Friday, roads flooded by the Perfume River, with water reaching nearly chest-high levels in some areas.

Last weekend three people died in flash floods and landslides in northern Vietnam.

Heavy rain is forecast to continue across the middle of the Southeast Asian nation in coming days.

Viet Nam is frequently lashed by harsh weather in the rainy season between June and November.

Natural disasters including floods and landslides have claimed around 100 lives in the country since the beginning of the year, according to the country's General Statistics Office.

Scientists have warned extreme weather events globally are becoming more intense and frequent due to climate change. — AFP



This photo taken on 13 October 2023 shows local workers removing fallen trees on a flooded road by the Perfume River in Hue city in central Viet Nam. **PHOTO: TAM GIANG / AFP**

Republicans nominate Jordan for speaker of paralyzed US House



US Representative Jim Jordan (centre), Republican of Ohio, arrives for a Republicans caucus meeting at the Longworth House Office Building on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. **PHOTO: AFP**

REPUBLICANS nominated conservative hardliner Jim Jordan as their candidate for speaker of the US House of Representatives on Friday, as the lower chamber of Congress entered its 10th day of a leadership vacuum that has paralyzed Washington.

The party has been in disarray since right-wing rebels forced out Kevin McCarthy, leaving the Republican-controlled House unable to address mounting crises including a looming government shutdown and US

ally Israel on a war footing. Louisiana Representative Steve Scalise was initially seen as the best hope for a new standard-bearer who could heal the party's bitter divides, and he beat Jordan to the nomination in a secret ballot earlier this week.

But the 59-year-old Ohioan, backed by former president Donald Trump, gets a second chance now that Scalise dropped out, after it became clear he lacked the 217 votes necessary to prevail in the full House. — AFP

SPORTS

Myanmar leaves for MSAR to take on World Cup Qualifier

THE Myanmar national football team left for Macau on the morning of 14 October to compete in the second leg of the 2026 World Cup first-round qualifiers.

Team Myanmar has arrived three days before the qualifiers and will play the second-round match on 17 October at 6 pm Myanmar time at the Macau Olympic Complex.

Myanmar won the first-leg match on 12 October with a score of five goals to one, so they are in a good position to

advance to the next round.

Due to the difference in skill between the Myanmar team and the Macau team in the first-round match, Myanmar is likely to get a good result in the second leg as well. Myanmar had to wait for a long time to get the big win.

If the Myanmar team can overcome the Macau team, they will be allowed to advance to the second round, falling in the same group as North Korea, Japan and Syria. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL



Myanmar team players are seen cheering at the previous World Cup Qualifiers. PHOTO: THAW GYI

France, Belgium, Portugal survive late scares to reach Euro 2024

FRANCE, Belgium and Portugal all blinked with a Euro 2024 place in their grasps but clung on for one-goal victories on Friday night which made them the first sides to qualify for next year's tournament.

Belgium led by three goals in Vienna and won 3-2 with 10 men to ensure a top-two finish in Group F and a ticket to the finals in Germany.

France led by two Kylian Mbappe goals in Amsterdam and beat the depleted Dutch 2-1.

Cristiano Ronaldo was another to score twice but Portugal also

wobbled with a two-goal lead before beating Slovakia 3-2 in Porto in Group J.

In Amsterdam, Mbappe leapt to hook home a volley after seven minutes and then added a second eight minutes into the second half with a sumptuous curler. It was his 42nd international goal, overtaking French legend Michel Platini and putting him fourth in

the all-time list.

Quilindschy Hartman replied on his Dutch debut but Mbappe almost clinched his hat-trick, when his late drive hit the crossbar.

"We mustn't get carried away, but we must appreciate and not trivialize things," said France coach Didier Deschamps.

"To qualify with two games to go, with six wins, 13 goals scored and just one conceded, I'm very proud of what the group has achieved, both in terms of spirit and on the pitch."

"We got the result we wanted, we achieved our objective." — AFP



France forwards Antoine Griezmann and Kylian Mbappe embrace after securing Euro 2024 qualification. PHOTO: AFP

Big-serving Hurkacz powers into Shanghai Masters final



Poland's Hubert Hurkacz hits a return against USA's Sebastian Korda. PHOTO: AFP

BIG-SERVING Hubert Hurkacz blasted his way into the final of the Shanghai Masters on Saturday with a ruthless 6-3, 6-4 win over Sebastian Korda of the United States.

The 16th-seeded Pole sent down 14 aces as he barrelled his way into a meeting with either fifth seed Andrey Rublev or 18th seed Grigor Dimitrov.

They play their semi-final later on Saturday.

The 26th seed Korda, who was contesting his first Masters semi-final, was always up against it in the face of a barrage from Hurkacz.

The 26-year-old Pole did not face a single break point on his powerful serve and wrapped

up the last-four encounter on his second match point after 77 minutes.

"Seb is a really tough opponent and great returner so you need to play well against him otherwise he ends up taking advantage of your shots," said Hurkacz, who has six titles already including winning the Miami Masters in 2021.

Hurkacz, who has the highest number of aces in the tournament with 77, said his serve is "a big thing for me".

"It's really important to set up the point with the serve and if I am serving well that puts pressure on the opponent and they know they need to serve well," he said. — AFP

Vietnamese automaker sends EVs to Laos for electric taxi service

GSM CEO Nguyen Van Thanh mentioned that Laos serves as an ideal starting point for GSM's international expansion and that their objective is to introduce Vietnamese electric vehicles to global consumers.



Vietnamese first homegrown car manufacturer is hoping to compete with EV giants such as Tesla, and is trying to crack international markets. **PHOTO: APU GOMES/AFP**

Vietnamese automaker VinFast on Friday sent 150 cars to neighbouring Laos for the launch of an electric taxi service, months after starting a similar scheme at home.

Vietnamese first homegrown car manufacturer is hoping to compete with EV giants such as Tesla, and is trying to crack international markets. The taxi service in Laos will be run by Green and Smart Mobility JSC (GSM), which shares

the same parent company as VinFast — the Vietnamese conglomerate Vingroup. “Laos is an ideal starting point for GSM to expand internationally,” said GSM CEO Nguyen Van Thanh. “GSM has set the goal to promote Vietnamese electric vehicles to global consumers.”

The announcement follows the launch of Vingroup’s electric taxi service in Viet Nam in April. The conglomerate is owned by Vietnamese richest man, Pham Nhat Vuong, who runs hotels, apartments and hospitals across the country. — AFP

Kiwis, sheep, world’s steepest street: Key facts about New Zealand

Sheep outnumber people in New Zealand by nearly five to one, which is the smallest difference since the 1850s.

NEW ZEALANDERS vote in a general election this Saturday with Prime Minister Chris Hipkins’ centre-left government seeking to be elected for a third term. Let’s explore key facts about the South Pacific nation with a population of five million people and a staggering 25 million sheep.

Sheep to people ratio

New Zealand is one of the world’s biggest wool exporters, last year sending US\$284 million worth overseas. At the

same time, it exported US\$2.5 billion of sheep meat. Over time, rising farming costs and falling wool prices have led national sheep numbers to dwindle from a high of 72 million in the 1980s to the latest tally of 25.3 million. Sheep outnumber people at just under five to one, according to the government body Stats NZ, their lowest lead over humans since the 1850s.

World’s steepest street

In 2020, Baldwin Street in Dunedin, New Zealand, was reinstated as the

world’s steepest street, regaining the title from Ffordd Pen Llech in Harlech, Wales. The Guinness Book of Records officials conducted a review and determined that Dunedin’s gradient was steeper at 34.8 per cent compared to 28.6 per cent on the Welsh road. The issue was technical in nature, and there were no ill feelings toward Harlech.

Return of wild kiwis

New Zealanders are nicknamed ‘kiwis’ after the flightless native birds that are under threat in the wild. There are only around 70,000 wild kiwis left in New Zealand but more than 90 nationwide community initiatives are working to protect their numbers by removing invasive predators. — AFP



New Zealand, with a population of five million people and a remarkable 25 million sheep, is known for its unique combination of human and animal inhabitants. **PHOTO: AFP**

LuckyFes beating drum for future of music festivals

THE annual Rock in Japan Festival, one of the country’s iconic outdoor music events, was relocated last year to a new venue as the pandemic-caused cancellations wrought damage to its original host city. The city of Hitachinaka in Ibaraki Prefecture, northeast of Tokyo, missed the chance to generate significant income when the rock fest was cancelled for two years straight and moved to Chiba — an easier-to-access location from the metropolitan area. Hitachinaka, however, found its way back by launching its own music festival in 2022, hoping to keep the local culture alive. That proved successful and this year, over 40,000 people attended the three-day event named LuckyFes. And good fortune will follow as



Photo taken in July 2023 shows LuckyFes being held at Hitachi Seaside Park in Ibaraki Prefecture. **PHOTO: IBARAKI BROADCASTING SYSTEM/ KYODO**

it has been decided that Rockin’, short for the Rock in Japan Festival, will be staged in both Hitachinaka and Chiba next year on two separate occasions.

In mid-July at LuckyFes, a woman in her 40s who came with her family from Kanagawa Prefecture, just west of Tokyo, was in the crowd that sang along and twirled their towels to the music of “Shonan No Kaze”, one of the acts who performed at Hitachi Seaside Park in Hitachinaka. A woman attending the event on 15-17 July praised the available facilities like a nursing room and children’s play area, making it family-friendly. The Rockin’ festival was a long-standing event at Hitachi Seaside Park until it had to be canceled in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic. It was relocated to Soga Sports Park in Chiba in 2021, resulting in an estimated loss of about 1.1 billion yen. Dismayed by this, Yoshito Hori, owner of LuckyFM, organized the LuckyFes music festival at Hitachi Seaside Park within six months with the help of an experienced firm, attracting around 40 per cent first-time festival-goers. — Kyodo