

# THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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## The Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council: Five-Point Road Map

1. Priority will be given to fully realizing peace, stability and rule of law throughout the Union to safeguard the socioeconomic life of the people.
2. People-centred development work that enhances socioeconomic well-being will be undertaken to ensure the country's prosperity and food security.
3. Processes will further continue to consolidate a genuine, disciplined multiparty democratic system and build a Union based on democracy and federalism.
4. Priority will be accorded to work aligned with the agreements set out in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, in order to achieve enduring peace for the entire nation.
5. Upon accomplishing the provisions of the state of emergency, free and fair multiparty democratic elections will be held in line with the 2008 Constitution, and further work will be undertaken to hand over State duties to the winning party in accordance with democratic standards.

## Maungtaw, Chinshwehaw, Kawthoung border trade crosses US\$14 mln on 1-17 April



In a bid to conduct surveillance of the offshore fishing vessels in Kawthoung District, the VMS devices have been located in Myeik, Taninthayi Region, Yangon Region, Rakhine State and Mon State and Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: KANU**

THE value of Myanmar's border trade through Maungtaw, Chinshwehaw and Kawthoung borders totalled US\$14.434 million from 1 to 17 April, the Ministry of Commerce's statistics indicated.

Between 1 and 17 April, the cross-border trade via the Maungtaw checkpoint with the neighbouring country Bangladesh was estimated at \$0.264 million, with exports worth \$0.26 million and imports worth \$0.004 million.

Myanmar shipped areca nut, coconut, dried plum, fresh ginger, mango, Marian plum, rohu, dried fish, hilsa, footwear, dried rice noodles, Thanaka cakes and plum jam to Bangladesh, while PVC tank, plastic pipe and aluminum water pot were imported.

Similarly, Myanmar's border trade with China through Chinshwehaw totalled \$12.603 million, including exports worth \$3.234 million and imports worth \$9.369 million. The trade value

showed an increase of \$2.297 million in exports and \$5.229 million in imports compared to those recorded in the corresponding period last year.

Myanmar increasingly exported broken rice, corn, green gram, butter bean, rice bean, peanut, dried tea leaf, grain, fresh ginger, raw rubber, fresh chilli pepper, dried yam, onion and cotton to Thailand, while capital goods, raw materials and consumer goods were imported.

Between 1 and 16 April, the

Kawthoung border saw trade worth \$1.567 million comprising exports of \$0.859 million (848 tonnes) and imports of \$0.708 million (538 tonnes).

Myanmar mostly delivered fishery products to Thailand under the FOB system. Exports surpassed imports at the Kawthoung border. The main export items are fish, shrimp, salted fish, crab, squid, molluscs, soda powder, sodium carbonate, alum, lime powder and coloured powder.—TWA/EM

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# Ancient unglazed clay-fired Jataka tablets at Bagan's Ashayphatleik Pagoda, Anoutphatleik Pagoda eye study tours



The Ashayphatleik Pagoda and Anoutphatleik Pagoda are works of the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD.

LAWKANANDA Trustee Secretary U Htin Lin Oo said that people can come and study the ancient unglazed clay-fired Jataka tablets in Ashayphatleik Pagoda and Anoutphatleik Pagoda near Bagan's Lawkananda Swetawmyat Pagoda, NyaungU Township, Mandalay Region.

The Ashayphatleik Pagoda and Anoutphatleik Pagoda are the works of the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD. It is reported that the ancient unglazed Jataka tablets were found during the clearing and repair of the broken brick ruins in the lower part of these two pagodas around 1905.

When it was originally built, there were connecting archways around the two pagodas.

Square-shaped Jataka (stories) tablets and old artefacts

have been found inside the base and inner walls of the pagoda.

The Jataka tablets that were found were arranged regularly and placed under concrete roofs to prevent damage.

It has been found that the upper part of the Anoutphatleik Pagoda is similar to the Seinnyetnyima Pagoda.

To the southwest of Ashayphatleik Pagoda and Anoutphatleik Pagoda are situated Lawkananda Swetawmyat Pagoda and the monument to Myanmar's tallest woman Daw Zee Kwet (Zee Kwet Sein), to the south Lawkananda Garden and to the north Seinnyetahma Pagoda, Kyaukmyethmaw Pagoda, Apalyadana Pagoda and Nagayon Pagoda. — Dipa Lin/KTZH



It is reported that the ancient unglazed clay-fired Jataka tablets were found during the clearing and repair of the broken brick ruins in the lower part of these two pagodas around 1905.

## Myanmar National Human Rights Commission Statement No 5/2023

1. The Chairman of the State Administration Council issued Order No 28/2023 on 17 April 2023 under which a total of 3,015 prisoners serving sentences in respective prisons, jails and camps have been pardoned under the Code of Criminal Procedure Section 401 (1) in commemoration of the auspicious Myanmar New Year occasion and the interest of public peace of mind and on compassionate grounds.
2. Furthermore, the sentences of 98 foreign prisoners from respective prisons and jails have been remitted and they have been deported by Order No 29/2023 and five Sri Lankan citizens serving prison terms have been remitted and deported by Order No 30/2023 under the Code of Criminal Procedure Section 401 (1) in view of friendly bilateral relations.
3. This action is a positive step from a human rights perspective and as a result, the pardoned persons have the opportunity to be reunited with their families, and the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission is delighted together with relevant family members.
4. The Commission hopes that similar positive steps will be continued in future.

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission  
Date: 18 April 2023

## Nine new cases of COVID-19 reported on 18 April, total figure registers 634,174

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases registered **634,174** after nine new cases were reported on 18 April 2023 according to the Ministry of Health.

### Status of new COVID-19 patient (as of 18 April 2023) (8:00 PM)

New COVID-19 Patient	New Patient	Percentage (%)
People returned from foreign countries	6	66.7 %
People infected within the country	3	33.3 %
Total	9	100 %

Therefore, a total of **10,234,225** laboratory samples were examined and the confirmed COVID-19 cases reached **634,174**. — MNA

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

## Regional administration key to long-term interests of respective regions and country

- Administrative officials assigned in the region need to perform their duties conscientiously and correctly in the long-term interests of their own region and the country.
- If local authorities are absent to warn against unlawful acts, it will be terrible impacts on the interests of the region and the country in the future.

*(Excerpts from the speech delivered by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at a meeting with businesspersons of the hotels and tourism sector in Thandwe, Rakhine State on 20 January 2023)*

## SAC Member attends donation ceremony at Jivita Dhana Sangha Hospital (Kandawgyi-Mandalay)

THE donation ceremony of alms food, offerings and cash endowment was held at Jivita Dhana Sangha Hospital (Kandawgyi-Mandalay) in Chanmyathazi Township of Mandalay Region yesterday.

It was attended by State Administration Council Member U Maung Ko, Mandalay Region Chief Minister U Myo Aung, Central Command Commander Maj-Gen Ko Ko Oo and invitees.

First, the attendees took five precepts from Presiding Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Jotika Bhivamsa of Moe Kaung Yadana Theingi DaikU Monastery of Chanayethazan Township.

Then, SAC Member U Maung Ko reported on religious matters and sought advice from

Sayadaws.

The SAC member, the Mandalay Region chief minister and the Central Command commander donated offerings and a K5 million cash endowment for the hospital.

They also donated alms food to the invited Sayadaws and other monks who are receiving medical treatment at the hospital.

The SAC member and party then paid homage to State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Chair Mandalay's Bhamo Monastery Sayadaw Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Dr Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa who is receiving healthcare at the Manntaungyeik general medical ward of Mandalay General Hospital —MNA/KTZH



SAC Member U Maung Ko is seen offering alms food at Jivita Dhana Sangha Hospital in Mandalay yesterday.

## SAC Information Team Leader hosts dinner for Russian Bloggers

INFORMATION Team Leader of the State Administration Council Director of the Directorate of Public Relations and Psychological Warfare Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun hosted a dinner in honour of the team of Russian Bloggers at Myat Taw Win Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Also present at the dinner were chair of Myanmar-Russia Friendship and Cooperation Association Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Aung Thaw, relevant officials, Russian Bloggers Leader Russia-Myanmar Friendship and Cooperation Association Secretary Mr Seferov Rushen and members.

First, Maj-Gen Zaw Min



The Russian Bloggers team attending the dinner hosted by SAC Information Team Leader Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun yesterday.

Tun greeted the guests and an official of the Russian Bloggers said words of thanks. Then,

Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun and leader of the Russian Bloggers Mr Seferov Rushen exchanged

gifts.

The Russian Bloggers visited Myanmar at the invitation

of Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun and they arrived in Myanmar on 12 April. They paid a visit to the tourist destinations in Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Bagan and PyinOoLwin among others and also participated in the Myanmar traditional Thingyan festival. They broadcast famous locations and the Thingyan festival via their online website and such doings can contribute to sharing knowledge on culture, tradition, food and picturesque scenes of Myanmar. The visit of the Russian Bloggers can also strengthen the bilateral relations between the two countries and support the development of the tourism industry.—MNA/KTZH

## Daily newspapers available online

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

# MoI Union Minister inspects preparations for Myanmar Motion Picture Academy Award Ceremony

THE Myanmar Motion Picture Academy Award Event for 2019, 2020, and 2022 will be held on 6 May at the open-air theatre near Nay Pyi Taw City Hall.

Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn accompanied by Deputy Minister U Ye Tint, Permanent Secretary U Myo Myint Maung and officials inspected preparations for the event yesterday.

The Union minister heard reports and explanations from departmental and company officials on the placement of the MRTV National Orchestra and Myanmar Hsaingwaing (Myanmar traditional orchestra), the selection of songs to be performed, roles of masters of cer-



Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn and officials inspect preparations for the Myanmar Motion Picture Academy Award Event in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.



emony (MCs), the programme to invite guests, reception and accommodation arrangements

for guests. He then gave instructions on what was needed.

Afterwards, the Union min-

ister and party inspected the construction of the stage for the ceremony, the arrangement of

seats and the laying of the red carpet for the artistes. — MNA/KZL

## Preliminary coord meeting for Myanmar National Education Conference 2023 held



THE preliminary coordination meeting for the Myanmar National Education Conference 2023 was held at the Ministry of Education yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

The meeting was attended by the MoE deputy ministers, permanent secretaries, directors-general, rectors, principals, deputy permanent secretaries, deputy directors-general and responsible personnel from rel-

evant ministries.

First, Deputy Ministers Dr Zaw Myint and Dr Moe Zaw Htun urged all relevant ministries to discuss the draft plan for the Myanmar National Education Conference 2023 and put forward suggestions for forming sub-committees among others.

Afterwards, attendees from related ministries discussed and suggested the topics of the conference, the discussion agendas and work to be carried out by sub-committees.

Deputy Minister Dr Zaw Myint then coordinated the discussions. — MNA/TS

The preliminary coordination meeting for the Myanmar National Education Conference 2023 in progress yesterday.

## Companies in Japan to recruit over 1,200 Myanmar workers

ANOTHER 1,200 Myanmar workers will be recruited to work at companies in Japan, according to the Myanmar Embassy to Japan in Tokyo.

During the period from 1 to 18 April, altogether 383 job-of-

fering letters from companies and factories from Japan were scrutinized and a total of 1,258 workers are to be hired for various kinds of work.

The types of jobs include agriculture, catering services

and care services for the elderly. — TWA/KZW

One of the Care Centres for the Elderly in Japan.



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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.

# Pulses' prices on upward trajectory in post-Myanmar New Year holidays

THE prices of black grams and pigeon peas are moving on-wards after the Myanmar New Year holidays in the domestic pulses market.

The prices stood at K2,400,000 per tonne of pigeon pea and K2,070,000 per tonne of black grams on 8 April. The prices were K2,395,000 per tonne of pigeon pea and K2,067,000 per tonne of black grams on 18 April.

The prices are expected to stay on the rise. Foreign demand pushed up the prices. They are currently delivered to India and China.

India forecast Myanmar's black gram output is estimated at 650,000 tonnes. This year, the yield rate is likely to fall by half owing to a reduction in sowing acres and threats of invasive pests, the growers said.

Afterwards, the growers can generate a profit only if the black gram is priced at K60,000-70,000 per basket amid the high cost of agricultural inputs.

The price of black gram



Myanmar yearly produces approximately 400,000 tonnes of black grams and about 50,000 tonnes of pigeon peas. The photo shows the pulses retail outlet.

(urad in India) increased slightly in India as well. The price of black gram (urad in India) is expected to be around Rs 8,500-9,000 per quintal in Chennai until August, Agri World Mumbai forecast.

Myanmar earned over

US\$1.4 billion from over 1.9 million tonnes of pulses in the current financial year 2022-2023, the Ministry of Commerce said.

Of them, black gram export earned \$531.797 million from 649,940.23 kilogrammes, while pigeon pea export pocked

\$187.393 million from 239,537.733 kilos, the Ministry of Commerce's statistics showed.

Myanmar primarily exports black gram, green gram and pigeon peas. Of them, black gram and pigeon peas are mainly sent to India while green grams are

shipped to China and Europe.

India has growing demand and consumption requirements for black grams and pigeon peas. According to a Memorandum of Understanding between Myanmar and India signed on 18 June 2022, India will import 250,000 tonnes of black gram and 100,000 tonnes of pigeon peas (tur) from Myanmar for five consecutive years from 2021-2022 financial year to 2025-2026 FY. This G-to-G pact will not affect the pulses' annual quota set by India. Myanmar's exporters are also entitled to deliver the pulses to India under that annual quota.

Myanmar yearly produces approximately 400,000 tonnes of black grams and about 50,000 tonnes of pigeon peas. Myanmar is the top producer of the black gram that is primarily demanded by India, while pigeon peas, green grams and chickpeas are cultivated in Australia and African countries besides Myanmar. — NN/EM

## Illegal timbers, mining products, foodstuffs, communication devices and vehicles confiscated

AN on-duty team of Mandalay Region Customs Department confiscated 60 kilogrammes of stones supposed to be jade and 1,584 kilogrammes of ornamental stone dust (red) mixed with small stones (worth K18.84 million) near the 31.5-kilometre milepost on the bypass road of the 16th-Mile Kyaukchaw checkpoint on 16 April. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

On 17 April, the on-duty teams captured 150 cartons of M-150 energy drink worth K2.4 million without official documents from a Toyota Hiace ve-

hicle (approximate value of K18 million) heading to Bago from Myawady at the Mayanchaung permanent checkpoint in Mon State and 12 pairs of professional wireless intercom worth K3.2 million without official documents from a plane that arrived at the Yangon International Airport from China. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

In addition, the combined teams led by the Forest Department seized a total of 17.606 tonnes of illegal timbers worth K4,865,656 in Yedashe, Lepadan, Thaegon, Oktwin and

Oakpho townships respectively. The action was taken under the Forest Law.

Similarly, 12.760 tonnes of illegal timbers and 3.330 tonnes of illegal charcoal worth K1,252,217 were captured in Pyinmana, Lewe, Tatkon and Ottarathiri townships of Nay Pyi Taw Council Territory. The action was taken under the Forest Law.

Therefore, 16 arrests (estimated value of K48,557,873) were made on 16 and 17 April, according to the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS



Confiscated illegal commodities in Mandalay Region.



A view of the Aungmyingala Express Bus Terminal.

## Bus fares rise during Thingyan Holiday

DURING the Thingyan holidays, people who work in Yangon go back to their native towns.

Talking to the Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM), Ma Myint Khine who works in Lanmadaw Township said, "Normal ticket fares from Yangon to Aunglan was K7,000 but the advance one rose to K25,000 on 10 April."

She added, "Taxi fare is K20,000 from Lanmadaw to Aungmyingala Coach Station, costing her over K40,000 to return to her hometown. Therefore, the ticket fares are a lot more expensive than the normal rate."

Although the authorities concerned usually warn the highway bus lines not to charge more than the normal rate during the Thingyan holidays, the ground situation is always the opposite. — TWA/KZW

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# CURRENT AFFAIRS

## PHOTO NEWS

### Paritta recitation held; holy water splashed into reservoirs on Myanmar New Year's Day



THE Paritta recitation and listening ceremony on the occasion of the Myanmar New Year Day in 1385 ME was held and the holy water was scattered into reservoirs supervised by the

Yangon City Development Committee-YCDC for the residents free from all kinds of dangers, live peacefully and carry out their activities successfully. —TTO/MKKS



YCDC Chairman Yangon Mayor U Bo Htay and his wife Daw San San Aye, Vice Mayor U Nyi Nyi, Secretary U Nyunt Pe and members of YCDC donated offerings to Sayadaws. **PHOTO: MIN PAING PHYO**

### Tax imposition on taxis commences on 11 April

TAXES have been applied to Taxis running in Yangon Region depending on the income and the traffic and drivers will pay tax at the Yangon City Development Committee's Revenue Department.

Except for the privately owned and public bus lines, tax is to be collected depending on the hail cab types.

The tax rates are three per cent per 0.5 kilometres, five per cent per one km and 8.5 per cent per two km for CNG-powered taxi drivers.

For gas-fuelled taxis, the tax rates are two per cent per 0.5 km, 3.5 per cent per one km and 6.5 per cent per two km.

"I found a notification about taxation for taxis. I have no clue as to why tax is imposed on taxis. We are battered by rocketing oil prices and decreasing the num-

ber of passengers. Consequently, we are forced to raise taxi fares amid the tax burden. The taxi drivers are now struggling. This action adversely affects the passengers, taxi owners and drivers. The number of passengers is likely to drop accordingly," Ko Kyaw Oo, a taxi driver, shared his opinion.

The tax officials concerned will collect tax from the registered taxi drivers at the Yangon Region Private Transport Supervision Committee. Yet, those taxi drivers who do not own the ones are entitled to enjoy tax exemption. The owners will be charged instead. The tax imposition on the taxi running in eastern Yangon District (South Okkalapa, Dagon Myothit (Seikkan), Dagon Myothit (South), Dagon Myothit (North), Dagon Myothit (East), Pazundaung, Botahtaung,

North Okkalapa and Thingangyun), western Yangon District (Kyauktada, Kyimyindine, Sangyoung, Dagon, Pabedan, Bahan, Lanmadaw, Latha and Ahlon), southern Yangon District (Seikkyi Kanaungto, Tamway, Dala, Dawbon, Mingala Taungnyunt, Yankin and Thakayta) and northern Yangon District (Kamayut, Mingaladon,

Mayangon, Shwepyitha, Hlaing, Hlinethaya and Insein) is effective from 11 April, the Revenue Department stated.

The private-run hailing service owners can directly pay the tax by transferring them to the Revenue Department's banking account MD 001473 at the Myanma Economic Bank Branch-5. —TWA/EM



The Yangon City Hall where the office of YCDC's Tax Department.

### Delta region rice prices on the rise during Thingyan holidays

DURING the Thingyan holidays in 2023, the price of rice in the delta areas increased, and some dealers purchased rice at the mills that opened during the Thingyan holidays with instant payments.

According to the notification of daily rice purchase prices, the price of 100 baskets of eight varieties of rice increased by K10,000 each on 14 April, compared to 13 April, the eve of Thingyan. On 14 April, the rice price per 100 baskets rose by K80,000 for the Pawsan variety, K60,000 for the Ayeya Padaytha variety, K50,000 each for the monsoon Thukha rice variety

and Hnankar variety, and K30,000 for low-grade summer rice variety, compared to the price on 11 April.

On 14 April, the price per 100 baskets of Pawsan rice variety surged to K2,010,000, the statement of purchase prices of depots in Wakema Township, the delta region stated. The price of the Ayeya Padaytha rice variety soared from K1,370,000 per 100 baskets on 25 October 2022 to K1,760,000 per 100 baskets on 14 April 2023. The prices per 100 baskets of low-grade monsoon Thukha rice variety and summer Thukha rice variety shoot up to K1,730,000 and

K1,630,000 on 14 April respectively. Other delta rice prices have also increased by tens of thousands per hundred baskets.

In addition, some mills purchased rice without closing during the Thingyan holidays, making it convenient for those who want to sell rice.

It is reported that not only the rice traders but also the consumers are closely monitoring the rice prices that will be traded, as the supply of rice from all over the country will begin to arrive in the Yangon rice market on the very first day of the Myanmar New Year. —TWA/CT

### Fraudulent ways used to apply for Japanese visas

THE Japanese Language Training schools and brokers are using incorrect and fraudulent methods to apply for a visa to visit Japan, the Japanese Embassy in Yangon stated.

It is common that the incomplete documents of visa applicants and the work or long-term stay visa with a Certificate of Eligibility-COE which is issued by the immigration authority in Japan are found to be incorrect.

The Japanese Embassy intends to carefully handle the cases of those who want to visit Japan and visas will not be issued when they apply with incorrect documents.

The Japanese Embassy stated the notification that COE applicants have to not only prepare, check and confirm the required documents by themselves without brokers but also check carefully the original COE through the brokers. —TWA/MKKS



The Japanese Embassy in Yangon.

# LOCAL BUSINESS

## Border trade tops US\$8 bln in 2022-2023 FY

MYANMAR'S border trade totalled US\$8.57 billion in the 2022-2023 financial year. Myanmar's exports outperformed imports in border trade, with the exports worth \$6.086 billion and imports valued at \$2.484 billion, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The value of border trade was estimated at \$7.75 billion in the FY 2021-2022, including exports worth \$5.413 billion and imports valued at \$2.338 billion.

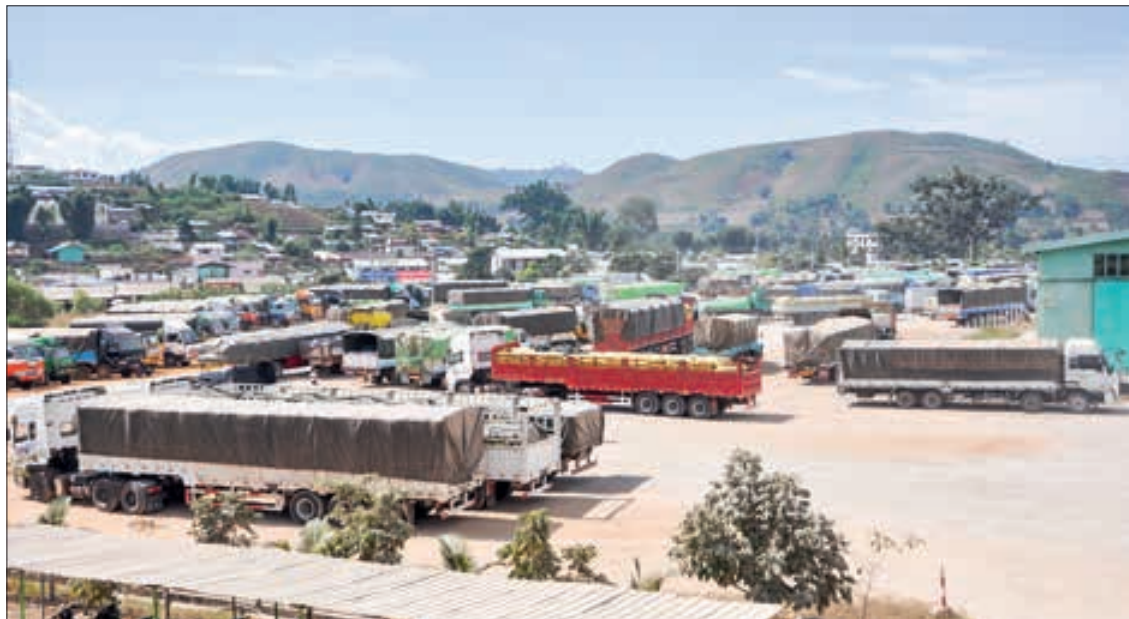
The figures showed an increase of \$818.268 million in the FY2022-2023 compared to that recorded in the FY 2021-2022.

Myanmar conducts cross-border trade with neighbouring countries (China, Thai-

land, Bangladesh and India). Of them, Thailand was ranked first with exports worth \$3.479 billion and imports worth \$1.876 billion. China was placed second in border trade with exports worth \$2.5 billion and imports worth \$561.938 million.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, livestock products, fishery products, minerals, forest products, manufacturing goods and other goods to the neighbouring countries.

Myanmar imports capital goods, consumer goods, intermediate goods and raw materials from the CMP enterprises. — NN/EM



Myanmar exports agricultural products, livestock products, fishery products, minerals, forest products, manufacturing goods and other goods to the neighbouring countries.

## Fuel oil persists in high prices



Every country lays down different patterns of policy to fix the oil prices. Myanmar also levies only a lower tax rate on fuel oil and strives for energy consumers to buy the oil at a cheaper rate.

THE fuel price stayed on the rise in the domestic market.

On 17 April, the prices stood at K2,235 per litre of Octane 92, K2,300 for Octane 95, K2,095 for diesel and K2,175 for premium diesel.

The domestic fuel prices are set depending on the price index set by Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS), the pricing basis for many refined products in southeast Asia, according to the Supervisory Committee on Oil Import, Storage and Distribution of Fuel Oil.

Last August 2022, the oil prices surged to K2,605 per litre for Octane 92, K2,670 for Octane 95, K3,330 for premium diesel and K3,245 for diesel.

The committee is therefore governing the fuel oil stor-

age and distribution sector effectively not to have a shortage of oil in the domestic market and to ensure price stability for energy consumers.

The Petroleum Products Regulatory Department, under the guidance of the committee, is issuing the daily reference rate for oil to offer a reasonable price to energy consumers. The reference rate in Yangon Region is set on the MOPS's price assessment, shipping cost, premium insurance, tax, other general cost and health profit per cent.

The rates for regions and states other than Yangon are evaluated after adding the transportation cost and the retail reference rates daily covered on the state-run news-

papers and are posted on the media and official website and Facebook page of the department daily starting from 4 May.

The committee is inspecting the fuel stations whether they are overcharging or not. The authorities are taking action against those retailers of fuel stations under the Petroleum and Petroleum Products Law 2017 if they are found overcharging rather than the set reference rate.

As per the statement, 90 per cent of fuel oil in Myanmar is imported, while the remaining 10 per cent is produced locally. The domestic fuel price is highly correlated with international prices. The State is steering the market to mitigate the loss between the importers, sellers and energy consumers. Consequently, the government is trying to distribute the oil at a reasonable price compared to those of regional countries.

Some countries levied higher tax rates and hiked oil prices than Myanmar. However, Malaysia's oil sector receives government subsidies and the prices are about 60 per cent cheaper than that of Myanmar. Every country lays down different patterns of policy to fix the oil prices. Myanmar also levies only a lower tax rate on fuel oil and strives for energy consumers to buy the oil at a cheaper rate. — NN/EM

## Prices of fuel oil, gold and dollar on 18 April 2023

### Fuel Oil Price (Yangon)

Octane 92	K2,175
Octane 95	K2,270
Diesel	K2,070
Premium Diesel	K2,150

All of the prices are based on per litre.

### Gold Price

The reference price of high-purity gold set by YGEA	K2,358,600 per tical
High-purity gold in the gold market	K2,970,000 per tical

### US Dollar Vs Kyat

A US dollar set by the Central Bank of Myanmar	K2,100
A US dollar in the forex market	K2,850 to K2,865

The above prices may change from time to time.

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# OPINION

## Reunite trafficked victims into society with job opportunities

**M**YANMAR is implementing the fourth five-year plan on trafficking in person which will last from 2022 to 2026. It is important that anti-trafficking in person must be implemented as a national duty for all Myanmar citizens with consideration to save the trafficked victims in any way.

The primary reasons for trafficked victims depend on persuasion based on misinformation. It is because human traffickers recruit their victims with incentives through social networks and internet technology. They search for some citizens as their victims with job opportunities, monetary incentives and technological persuasion.

The root cause in occurrences of the cases of trafficking in persons is the lack of income for individuals or families of trafficked victims. It is because no one can stand tall without income for their lives. To have income, they need to seek jobs in conformity with their qualification. Actually, if authorities concerned create job opportunities for all, the cases of trafficking in persons will remarkably decline. If so, the victims can escape from their bitter lives.

In some cases, children become trafficked victims due to a lack of reliance on parents or guardians or relatives. Hence, those children spend their lives as trafficked victims because they do not have any strength against human traffickers. Moreover, most of the traffickers commit cases of trafficking in persons with their followers and companions in various arenas so as to control the human trafficking arena.

The root cause in occurrences of the cases of trafficking in persons is the lack of income for individuals or families of trafficked victims. It is because no one can stand tall without income for their lives. To have income, they need to seek jobs in conformity with their qualification. Actually, if authorities concerned create job opportunities for all, the cases of trafficking in persons will remarkably decline. If so, the victims can escape from their bitter lives.

The government is striving for booming micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. Consequently, these MSMEs will generate job opportunities for all people. Jobs in correct ways do not bring regrets to the life of citizens. As such, the entire people need to expose human traffickers while saving the trafficked victims to be reunited into society with job opportunities for their future.

# Unlocking the Secrets to a Fulfilling Life

By Yin Nwe Ko

**W**HAT does it mean to live a fulfilling life? This is a question that has been pondered by philosophers, theologians, and thinkers throughout history. While the answer may vary depending on one's beliefs, values, and experiences, there are some universal truths that can guide us toward unlocking the secrets to a fulfilling life. Here, we will explore key principles that can help individuals live meaningful, purposeful, and fulfilling life. As life is a journey filled with twists and turns, challenges, and opportunities. Many people seek the key to a fulfilling life, a life that is rich in meaning, purpose, and happiness. But what are the secrets to unlocking this kind of life? We can also explore the essential elements that contribute to a fulfilling life and delve into practical strategies that can help you unlock its secrets.

One of the fundamental secrets to a fulfilling life is discovering your passion and purpose. Passion is the fire that ignites your soul and fuels your drive to pursue what you love. The purpose is the sense of meaning and direction that guides your actions and choices. When you are aligned with your passion and purpose, you experience a deep sense of fulfilment and satisfaction.

To discover your passion and purpose, take the time to reflect on your interests, values, and strengths. What activities or causes bring you joy and fulfilment? What are you naturally good at? What do you care deeply about? Reflecting on these questions can help you gain clarity on your passions and purpose.

Once you have identified your passions and purpose, take action to pursue them. Set goals, create a plan, and take steps towards realizing your dreams. Embrace challenges and setbacks as opportunities for growth and learning. When you are living in alignment with your passions and purpose, you will experience a sense of fulfilment that can transform your life.

Passion is also a burning desire, that deep sense of enthusiasm and excitement that comes from doing something that truly resonates with you. Purpose, on the other hand, is the sense of meaning and significance that comes from living in alignment with your

core values and contributing to something larger than yourself.

Discovering your passion and purpose requires self-reflection and introspection. Take the time to reflect on your interests, strengths, and values. What activities bring you joy and make you lose track of time? What are you naturally good at? What do you care deeply about? By understanding yourself on a deeper level, you can identify your passion and purpose in life.

After you have identified your passion and purpose, do align your actions and choices with them. Pursue activities that align with your interests and strengths, and find ways to contribute to causes or communities that resonate with your values. Living a life in alignment with your passion and purpose can bring a sense of fulfilment and purpose that transcends the mundane and ordinary aspects of life.

Human beings are social creatures, and relationships are crucial to our overall well-being and fulfilment. Positive relationships can bring joy, support, and meaning to our lives. Cultivating healthy and meaningful connections with others is one of the secrets to unlocking a fulfilling life.

Invest in building and maintaining positive relationships with family, friends, colleagues, and your community. Practice effective communication, empathy, and active listening. Show appreciation and gratitude towards the people who enrich your life. Surround yourself with people who inspire, motivate, and support you in your journey towards fulfilment.

Nurture your relationships by spending quality time with your loved ones, sharing your thoughts and feelings, and being present and attentive. Engage in acts of kindness and service, as helping others can also contribute to your sense of fulfilment. Remember, meaningful connections are a cornerstone of a fulfilling life, so make them a priority in your life.

Gratitude and mindfulness are practices that can significantly impact our well-being and contribute to a fulfilling life. Gratitude involves recognizing and appreciating the blessings and positive aspects of life, while mindfulness involves being fully present in the moment without judgment.

Cultivating gratitude involves shifting our focus from what we lack to what we have. It involves intentionally recognizing and appreciating the simple joys, relationships, opportunities, and experiences that bring us happiness and fulfilment. Practising gratitude regularly, such as by keeping a gratitude journal or expressing gratitude to others, can help shift our mindset towards positivity and contentment.

Mindfulness, on the other hand, involves being present in the moment, fully engaged in our thoughts, feelings, and sensations without being carried away by them. Mindfulness can be practised through meditation, deep breathing, or simply paying attention to our senses as we go about our daily activities. Being mindful allows us to fully experience and appreciate the richness of life, and it can enhance our well-being and fulfilment.

Taking care of yourself is not selfish; it is essential for living a fulfilling life. Self-care involves nurturing your physical, mental, and emotional well-being. When you prioritize self-care, you are better equipped to face life's challenges, and you have the energy and resilience to pursue your passions and purpose.

Make self-care a non-negotiable part of your routine. Take time to engage in activities that bring you joy and relaxation, such as exercise, meditation, reading, or hobbies. Get enough sleep, eat healthily, and stay hydrated. Set boundaries and learn to say no when necessary to protect your well-being.

Invest in your personal growth and development. Engage in self-reflection, self-improvement, and learning. Seek support from trusted friends, mentors, or professionals when needed. Remember that self-care is not a luxury but a necessity for a fulfilling life.

As mentioned above, human beings are social creatures, and fostering meaningful connections with others is crucial to a fulfilling life. Relationships can bring us joy, provide support during challenging times, and give our lives meaning and purpose. Investing in

healthy and meaningful relationships with family, friends, partners, colleagues, and communities can greatly contribute to our overall well-being and fulfilment.

To foster meaningful connections, it's important to prioritize quality over quantity. It's not about having a large number of friends or followers on social media, but rather about building authentic and deep connections with others. Invest time and effort in building and maintaining relationships that are based on trust, respect, empathy, and mutual support. Be present and attentive in your interactions with others, and cultivate qualities such as empathy, compassion, and kindness. Building meaningful connections takes effort, but the rewards in terms of fulfilment and well-being are invaluable.

In addition, your relationships with others play a significant role in your sense of fulfilment. Authentic connections with others are vital for our emotional well-being, personal growth, and overall happiness. Building and maintaining meaningful relationships require time, effort, and vulnerability, but they are key ingredients to a fulfilling life.

Foster authentic connections by cultivating empathy, compassion, and understanding toward others. Show genuine interest in their lives, thoughts, and emotions. Listen attentively without judgment and be willing to share your own thoughts and feelings as well. Create a safe space for open and honest communication, and be willing to forgive, apologize, and reconcile when conflicts arise.

Moreover, building meaningful connections with others, it's also important to establish a healthy relationship with yourself. Practice self-compassion, self-care, and self-love. Treat yourself with the same kindness, understanding, and respect that you would offer to others. Nurture a positive and nurturing relationship with yourself, and it will lay the foundation

Practising gratitude and mindfulness are two powerful techniques that can greatly enhance your mental and emotional well-being. They are simple yet



profound practices that can be incorporated into our daily lives, helping us cultivate a positive mindset, reduce stress, and increase our overall sense of happiness and contentment.

Furthermore, gratitude is the practice of intentionally focusing on the positive aspects of your life and expressing appreciation for the things you have, rather than dwelling on what you lack. It involves acknowledging and being grateful for the simple pleasures, the kindness of others, and the blessings in your life, no matter how big or small. Practising gratitude can shift our attention away from negative thoughts and emotions, and help us develop a more optimistic and appreciative outlook on life.

One way to practice gratitude is to keep a gratitude journal. Each day, take a few moments to write down three things you are grateful for. They can be as simple as a beautiful sunset, a warm cup of tea, or a kind word from a friend. Reflecting on the positives in your life can help shift your focus from what you lack to what you have, fostering a sense of abundance and contentment.

Mindfulness, on the other hand, is the practice of paying attention to the present moment with an open and non-judgmental attitude. It involves being fully present and engaged in the here and now, without being overly focused on the past or the future. Mindfulness can be practised through various activities such as meditation, mindful eating, or simply being fully present in everyday tasks like walking or brushing your teeth.

To practice mindfulness, find a quiet and comfortable space where you can sit or lie down. Close your eyes and take slow, deep breaths, paying attention to the sensation of your breath as it goes in and out. Notice any

thoughts, feelings, or sensations that arise without judgment or attachment, and gently bring your focus back to your breath whenever your mind wanders. By practising mindfulness regularly, you can become more aware of your thoughts and emotions, develop a greater sense of self-awareness, and cultivate a sense of inner calm and tranquility.

Practising gratitude and mindfulness can work hand in hand, as they both encourage us to be fully present and appreciative of the present moment. When combined, they can amplify their positive effects, helping you become more aware of the abundance in your life and fostering a deep sense of gratitude and contentment. They can also help you develop resilience and cope with challenges, as you learn to shift your focus away from worries about the past or the future, and instead anchor yourself in the present moment with a positive and appreciative mindset.

In today's fast-paced and often stressful world, incorporating gratitude and mindfulness into our daily lives can be a powerful way to promote our mental and emotional well-being. They are practices that can be cultivated with time and effort and can lead to profound positive changes in our outlook on life and our overall sense of happiness and fulfilment. So, take a moment to pause, reflect on the positives in your life, and be fully present at the moment. The benefits of practising gratitude and mindfulness are well worth it.

In sum, a lot of words of mine might be vague to understand clearly the theme of the article. Therefore, I would like to suggest if the three things (at least) are remembered from reading and you can be able to practice them daily, some kind of benefit will be surely seized.

## Hello, Myanmar New Year!

A gust of wind pushes strong,  
Dried leaves fluttering down.

Whiling away with a season's transit,  
Summer is fading to exit.

"Thingyan" brings a year new,  
Prosperity is aspired, too.

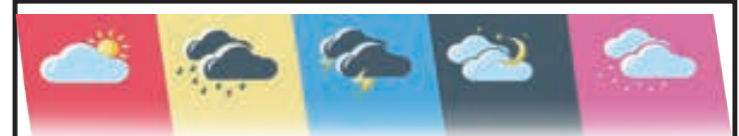
Pouring water on one another,  
Sins are washed off far.

Aplenty of good deeds done,  
Young and old having fun.

Locals and visitors are well-amused,  
Serenity is amazingly cool.

Resolutions are made fresher,  
With a warm heart, we usher.  
Hello, Myanmar New Year!

by  
Chit Ko Pe



## Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Tuesday 18 April 2023)

**BAY INFERENCE:** Weather is a few cloud over the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 19 April 2023:** Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Upper Sagaing, Mandalay and Taninthayi regions and Kachin, Shan and Kayah states. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining regions and states.

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

**OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS:** Likelihood of isolated to scattered rain or thundershowers in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State.

**FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 19 April 2023:** Partly cloudy.

**FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 19 April 2023:** Partly cloudy.

**FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 19 April 2023:** Partly cloudy.



# SCI/ENVIRON WORLD

## Indigenous peoples hold many solutions to climate crisis, says UN chief

INDIGENOUS Peoples hold many solutions to the climate crisis and the world has much to learn from them, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Monday.

In his speech marking the opening of the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Guterres highlighted the challenges indigenous peoples are facing.

Indigenous peoples make up around five per cent of the world's population, but account for 15 per cent of the world's poorest, he said.

Living on the frontlines of the climate emergency, indigenous peoples have done nothing



UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres (at podium) addresses the opening of the 22nd session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at the UN headquarters in New York on 17 April 2023. **PHOTO: ESKINDER DEBEBE/UN PHOTO/HANDOUT VIA XINHUA**

to cause the climate crisis but often face the worst and most immediate impacts, he added.

"My message today is clear: the United Nations stands with you," said Guterres.

The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was established by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 2000. The forum provides expert advice and recommendations on indigenous issues to the UN system through ECOSOC.

The priority theme for this year's session, which runs till 28 April, is "indigenous peoples, human health, planetary and territorial health and climate change: a rights-based approach"

In his remarks, Guterres saluted indigenous peoples for the pioneering role they play in efforts to protect nature and preserve biodiversity.

For thousands of years, indigenous peoples have pioneered sustainable land management and climate adaptation, in places as varied as the Amazon, the Sahel and the Himalayas, he said.

"Indigenous peoples hold many of the solutions to the climate crisis and are guardians of the world's biodiversity," said Guterres. "We have so much to learn from their wisdom, knowledge, leadership, experience, and example." — Xinhua

## SpaceX reschedules Starship test flight for Thursday

SPACEX has rescheduled for Thursday the first test flight of Starship, the most powerful rocket ever built, designed to send astronauts to the Moon, Mars and beyond, after a technical glitch forced a halt to the countdown.

A planned liftoff Monday of the gigantic rocket was called off less than 10 minutes ahead of the scheduled launch because of a pressurization issue in the first-stage booster, SpaceX said.

The private space company continued with the countdown in what it called a "wet dress rehearsal" stopping the clock with 10 seconds to go, just before the massive en-

gines on the booster were to have been ignited.

SpaceX founder Elon Musk said a frozen pressure valve forced a scrub of the launch, which had been planned for 8:20 am Central Time (1320 GMT) from Starbase, the SpaceX spaceport in Boca Chica, Texas.

"Learned a lot today, now offloading propellant, retrying in a few day," Musk tweeted.

Before announcing Thursday as the new target for liftoff, SpaceX had said the inaugural flight would be delayed for at least 48 hours to recycle the liquid methane and liquid oxygen that fuels the rocket. — AFP

## Musk says he is out to create 'truth-seeking' AI

ELON Musk is out to counter Microsoft and Google artificial intelligence efforts with "truth-seeking AI" that shuns political correctness, he said during an interview aired late Monday.

The billionaire boss of Twitter and Tesla voiced anew his concerns about the danger of AI, saying it has "the potential of civilizational destruction".

He said he was also worried that the ChatGPT bot created by startup OpenAI was being taught to be politically correct.

"I'm going to start something which is called TruthGPT, or an absolute truth-seeking AI that tries to understand the nature of the universe," Musk said.

He reasoned AI would see



This picture taken on 23 January 2023 in Toulouse, southwestern France, shows screens displaying the logos of OpenAI and ChatGPT. **PHOTO: AFP**

people as an interesting part of the universe and decide not to "annihilate humans".

Musk has formed an X.AI

artificial intelligence corporation based in the US state of Nevada, according to business documents. — AFP



The SpaceX Starship stands on the launchpad following a launch delay of the SpaceX Starship flight test from Starbase in Boca Chica, Texas, on 17 April 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

## Australian automotive industry calls for legislated fuel efficiency standards

AUSTRALIA'S automotive industry has called for the government to impose emissions limits on car makers.

Peak industry body the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI) recently said its figures show there is room for the government to legislate an ambitious carbon dioxide emissions standard on car manufacturers.

Australia does not have laws requiring car makers to meet

emissions limits for their entire fleet, which experts have said has made the country a "dumping ground" for high-polluting petrol and diesel vehicles.

The FCAI has created a voluntary standard for the industry and has joined environmental groups in advocating for a mandatory standard.

Chris Bowen, minister for climate change, is set to release the government's electric vehicle

strategy within days.

Consultations on the landmark policy noted that an absence of fuel standards was cited as a key barrier to bringing EVs and fuel-efficient models to the Australian market.

Environmentalists have called for Australia to adopt standards in line with the European Union while the industry wants targets similar to those of the United States. — Xinhua

# HEALTH/WELLNESS: WORLD

## WHO urges vigilance in Europe over mpox

NEARLY a year after the mpox (monkeypox) outbreak in the European region of the World Health Organization (WHO), the agency urged on Monday vigilance in Europe over mpox ahead of the festival season.

A new campaign is launched as Europe heads into the spring and summer months when a number of Pride festivals are set to take place across towns and cities, the WHO Regional Office for Europe has said in a press release.

The aim of the campaign is to reinforce the message that

“monkeypox remains with us and that continued vigilance is still needed.”

The “Ready for It” campaign was launched despite a significant decrease in the number of mpox cases in recent months, due to WHO Europe concerns that “the possibility of further re-introductions from outside the region, either from endemic areas or newly affected countries, is likely.”

The campaign urges the most vulnerable groups and the sexually active who will attend the events and festivals



This photograph taken on 7 December 2021 shows a sign of the World Health Organization (WHO) at their headquarters in Geneva. PHOTO: AFP

across Europe this spring and summer “to be aware of the symptoms of mpox, to get tested, and to abstain from sexual activity if they develop symptoms”.

To support the campaign’s message, WHO Europe is planning to release a catalogue of resources on mpox mass gathering and large event preparedness, including updated guidance and information for authorities and event organizers in preparation for this year’s festival season. — Xinhua

## Hope special glasses can slow surging myopia in children

TWO years ago, Paul’s teacher noticed that the 10-year-old boy could no longer see anything on the board at the front of the class.

An ophthalmologist confirmed that Paul was one of the soaring number of children worldwide with myopia, also known as nearsightedness, an eye condition projected to affect half of the world’s population by 2050.

But the ophthalmologist in the western French city of Nantes had some good news: specially designed glasses had just become available that could slow down the progression of Paul’s myopia.

“After a year, the results were quite positive because his eyesight seemed to have stabilized,” Paul’s mother Caroline Boudet told AFP.

Previous research has suggested that myopia progresses 60 per cent slower in children wearing the “Miyosmart” glasses compared to normal prescription glasses.

A six-year clinical study also found that the disorder did not start speeding up again if the children stopped using the glasses.

Developed by Japan’s Hoya Corporation, the Miyosmart lenses, which also function as normal glasses to help the children see clearly, have been available in numerous European countries including France and the UK for around two years.

Eyewear firm EssilorLuxottica claims its own Stellest lenses reduce myopia’s progression by 67 per cent when worn at least 12 hours a day.

The Italian-French firm said the glasses could save more than one dioptre — the unit of measurement for optical power — over three years.

Myopia occurs when there is too much distance between the cornea and retina, making far-off objects appear blurry.

Both Miyosmart and Stellest glasses deploy hundreds of tiny lenses to counteract peripheral hyperopic defocus in which light falls behind the retina, causing the eyeball to get longer and making myopia worse.

The Miyosmart glasses are not available in the United States, however contact lenses that work on a similar principal from the California firm CooperVision have been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration. — AFP

## Viet Nam to boost COVID-19 vaccination rate

VIET Nam has called for an intensified effort in COVID-19 vaccinations by provincial and municipal health sectors, local media reported on Tuesday.

The country’s National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology (NIHE) has allocated 832,900 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine to all 63 provinces and cities nationwide, local newspaper Vietnam News reported.

The vaccination rate does not equal across the country, and many localities have lower rates, below 80 per cent, the newspaper said.

Phan Trong Lan, director of the General Department of Preventive Medicine, said that the number of COVID-19 cas-

es might continue to increase, while the country is still at pandemic level one, which is low risk.

More than 266 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine have been administered so far in Viet Nam, with 51.6 million people aged 18 years and older having received their third dose, the newspaper said, citing reports from localities.

In the past week, the Southeast Asian country recorded more than 2,600 new COVID-19 cases, an average of nearly 400 new cases per day. For more than three and a half months, it has not recorded any fatalities related to COVID-19, according to the newspaper. — Xinhua



Medical workers carry a patient into a hospital in New York, the United States, 13 December 2021. PHOTO: XINHUA

## US needs to address cancer health equity to reduce mortality by 50% in 25 years: study

THE United States needs to address cancer health equity and increase access to interventions preventing common causes of cancer death, in order to reach the national goal of reducing cancer death rate by at least 50 per cent over the next 25 years, according to a study published on Monday.

In February 2022, US President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden set a new goal to re-

duce age-standardized cancer mortality rates by at least 50 per cent over the next 25 years in the United States.

The study, published Monday in Cancer Discovery, estimated trends in US cancer mortality during 2000 to 2019 for all cancers and the six leading types -- lung, colorectum, pancreas, breast, prostate, and liver.

The study by researchers

at the US National Cancer Institute (NCI) found cancer death rates overall declined by 1.4 per cent per year from 2000 to 2015, accelerating to 2.3 per cent per year during 2016 to 2019, driven by strong declines in lung cancer mortality.

Recent declines in colorectal and breast cancer death rates also contributed, the study suggested. — Xinhua

# ECONOMY WORLD

## China's economy rebounds after zero-Covid scrapped

CHINA'S economy grew much better than expected in the first three months of the year as the country reopened after the end of zero-Covid measures, official data showed Tuesday.

The figures were the first snapshot since 2019 of the world's second-largest economy unencumbered by the strict health controls that helped keep the coronavirus in check but battered businesses and supply chains.

After years of travel restrictions and quarantines, Chinese people in recent months have finally returned to restaurants



A man walks past a bronze bull statue by Chinese artist Zhu Bingren along a business street in Beijing on 18 April 2023. PHOTO: WANG ZHAO / AFP

and started to move around more freely, giving much-needed stimulus to services.

According to data published by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the official growth figure for January to March was 4.5 per cent — significantly higher than the 3.8 per cent predicted by analysts in an AFP poll.

A key driver of the stand-out reading was a bounce in retail sales, the main indicator of household consumption, as shoppers and diners once again hit high streets and malls.

Tuesday's NBS report said

in the first three months of the year China had faced a "grave and complex international environment as well as arduous tasks to advance reform, development and ensure stability at home", but that economic stability was Beijing's "top priority".

"As a result, a smooth transition in Covid-19 prevention and control to the new phase was secured in a relatively short time," the report said, adding "the production and demand registered a stable recovery, employment and prices". — AFP

## Green industries could be worth \$300 bln of Viet Nam's economy by 2050: media

INDUSTRIES helping Viet Nam achieve net-zero emissions could be worth 300 billion US dollars of Viet Nam's gross domestic product by 2050, skyrocketing from only 6.7 billion in 2020, Vietnam News Agency reported on Tuesday.

The clean economy is forecast to fuel environmentally-focused products and services in the Southeast Asian country, including renewable power generation such as rooftop solar panel production and offshore wind development, renewable energy transmission and storage, green finance and carbon-neutral manufacturing, said experts at a conference on

Viet Nam's transition towards clean growth.

"The push for green development is going to present unprecedented opportunities for local companies to make deals with multinational groups and companies in key sectors for low-carbon economic pathway," said Nguyen Chi Dung, the country's minister of planning and investment.

As countries have increasingly prioritized the shift to clean power to reduce disruptions from global uncertainty and challenges, Viet Nam has massive renewable energy potential, the minister added. — Xinhua

## Oil prices sink on prospect of more oil export from Iraq

US oil prices suffered substantial losses on Monday on possible resumption of oil export from Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan region via Türkiye's Ceyhan oil terminal.

The West Texas Intermediate (WTI) for May delivery dropped 1.69 US dollars, or 2.05 per cent, to settle at 80.83 dollars a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Brent crude for June delivery decreased 1.55 dollars, or 1.8 per cent, to settle at 84.76 dollars a barrel on the London ICE Futures Exchange.

Iraq's federal government and the Kurdistan regional government have resolved technical issues essential to resuming the

region's oil exports via the Turkish port of Ceyhan, said a report by Reuters on Monday.

Türkiye's Ceyhan port halted the shipment of oil from the Kurdistan region and Kirkuk province on 25 March after the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) ruled that export of oil from the Kurdistan region is subject to approval from the Iraqi central government.

Crude oil supply in the international market lost around 450,000 barrels per day due to measures taken following the ruling by the ICC. The Iraqi federal government and the Kurdistan regional government signed an agreement on 4 April to resume

Kurdish oil exports via Türkiye.

Traders also tend to book profits as oil prices struggle to gain additional growth momentum amid economic uncertainties.

"Given enough time we will get a bit of a pullback, simply because a lot of traders are sitting on nice gains that they would like to book sometime soon, especially if the market is not going to pick up more momentum," said Christopher Lewis, analyst with market information platform FX Empire. The substantial rise of the US dollar index on Monday also weighed on commodity prices denominated in the currency. — Xinhua

## Soaring prices pressure Morocco's agriculture model

SOARING inflation in Morocco is driving up living costs and stirring public anger, and as food prices increase the country's export-led agricultural model is coming under fire.

On 8 April, protesters gathered outside parliament in the capital Rabat, with some saying "The rise in prices is a disgrace" and: "We're an agricultural country but vegetables are too expensive."

Official figures from February put year-on-year inflation in the North African country at just over 10 per cent — a figure that also included a 20

per-cent jump in food prices.

The price of fresh produce in Morocco is almost as high as in some Western European supermarkets, but the minimum wage for Moroccans is just \$300 (275 euros) a month.

Faced with growing criticism, Agriculture Minister Mohamed Sadiki attributed high food prices to "external and cyclical factors" such as the rising cost of raw materials and a cold snap that delayed the picking of tomatoes.

Sadiki told a press conference in early April that despite the impact of climate factors

such as drought, agriculture accounts for 13 per cent of Morocco's GDP and 14 per cent of its exports.

### Growing frustration

The Islamic holy month of Ramadan, when demand for agricultural produce traditionally spikes, is drawing to a close, and frustration towards policymakers is building.

In an attempt to stem the price rises, Rabat suspended exports of some products in early February, including tomatoes, to ensure supplies for the local market. — AFP



In this picture taken on 23 February 2023, vendors organize their stalls of fresh produce at the Sidi Moussa market in Morocco's Atlantic coastal city of Sale, north of the capital. PHOTO: AFP

## Electric vehicles are key battleground at Shanghai Auto Show

CHINA was the road to the future for foreign brands at the Shanghai Auto Show on Tuesday who are racing to catch up with Chinese competitors in the crucial electric vehicle market.

EVs now make up one out of four car sales in China, the world's largest car market, and dozens of new models from domestic and Western brands were unveiled at the first auto show since the end of China's Covid restrictions.

Local brands command 81 per cent of the EV market in China, according to analysts at Counterpoint Research, and industry titans such as BMW were at pains to



People visit a Nio booth during the 20<sup>th</sup> Shanghai International Automobile Industry Exhibition in Shanghai on 18 April 2023. PHOTO: AFP

emphasize the importance of doing business in China. "China is the place

to be," BMW executive Frank Weber told a news conference. "Munich is where we come from, but China is where we are at home." — AFP

## Swedish telecom giant Ericsson steps up savings plan

SWEDISH telecommunications giant Ericsson said Tuesday that it is stepping up its cost-cutting programme as it expects a "choppy environment" this year after profits fell in the first quarter.

The telecom equipment maker will now reduce costs by 11 billion Swedish kronor (\$1.1 billion) in 2023, saying it found an additional two billion kronor in savings.

Ericsson announced in February that it would slash 8,500 jobs worldwide, or eight per cent of its workforce.

The Swedish group is locked in a battle with Finnish rival Nokia and China's Huawei for 5G networks, but it noted that its customers -- mobile operators -- have slowed the deployment of such equipment.

"We continue to see a choppy environment during 2023 with poor visibility," Ericsson said in its quarterly earnings

statement.

Ericsson's net profit fell 46 per cent to 1.6 billion kronor in the January-to-March period.

Sales rose 14 per cent but they were flat when adjusting figures to take currency exchanges and other parameters into account. Ericsson said it expects customers "to remain cautious" with investments and continue to adjust their inventories in the second quarter.

"We expect the slower growth we saw in Q1 (the first quarter), caused by the slower global economy, to continue in Q2," Ericsson added.

Shareholder confidence in the company has also been shaken by graft allegations in Iraq.

Ericsson said last month that it would pay a \$207-million fine for breaching a deal with US authorities by not disclosing an investigation relating to suspected bribes to the Islamic State group in Iraq. — AFP

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V TORRES STRAIT VOY.NO. (312W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V TORRES STRAIT VOY.NO. (312W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **13-4-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** 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 SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE., LTD.**

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MCC TOKYO VOY.NO. (312W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MCC TOKYO VOY.NO. (312W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **13-4-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** 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 SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE., LTD.**

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V IAL 001 VOY.NO. (W146)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V IAL 001 VOY. NO. (W146)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **16-4-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department  
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

**M/S INTER ASIA LINES**

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V CONTRIVIA VOY.NO. (037N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V CONTRIVIA VOY.NO. (037N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **18-4-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** 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 OCEAN NETWORK EXPRESS LINE**

### INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER NO. 1/2023-2024

(1) Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, No.(1) Mining Enterprise Invites to submit the tender quotation sale open tender in the United State Dollars.

**(a) Cathode Copper (1500) M/T**

(1) Lot 100 M/Tonnes each, 15 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) Petrified Wood Fossil 1.695 M/Tons Lashio Branch

(c) Lead Ore and other mixed 69 M/Tons Loilem (Pb - 44.985 %)

(d) Antimony Ore and other mixed 20 M/Tons Heho (Sb - 17.685 %)

(2) Tender Closing Date and Time is 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2023 (13:00)hrs 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

# GLOBAL AFFAIRS



This screen grab taken from a footage released by the Russian presidential press office on 18 April 2023 shows Russian President Vladimir Putin visiting the headquarters of the Dniepr military grouping in the Kherson region of Ukraine, which is partly controlled by Russian troops. **PHOTO: HANDOUT / RUSSIAN PRESIDENTIAL PRESS OFFICE / AFP**

## Putin has visited Ukraine's Kherson, Lugansk regions: Kremlin

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin has visited Ukraine's Kherson and Lugansk regions to meet with military commanders, the Kremlin said on Tuesday.

"The supreme commander of Russian Federation armed forces has visited the headquarters of the Dniepr military grouping" in the Kherson region in the south, as well as

Russian national guard headquarters in the Lugansk region in the east, the Kremlin said in a statement.

It did not say when the trip took place.

It marked the first time Putin has visited the two regions, which are partly controlled by Russian troops, since Moscow annexed them along with two other Ukrainian regions last

September.

"It's important for me to hear your opinion on the situation, to listen to you and to exchange information," Putin said in a video released by the Kremlin.

The Russian leader wished the troops a happy Easter, which Orthodox Christians marked on Sunday 16 April, the Kremlin said. — AFP

## UN envoy says Yemen at "critical juncture" for peace

ONE year on since the parties in Yemen agreed to a truce, the country is again at a critical juncture with unprecedented chance for peace, a United Nations envoy said on Monday.

On 2 April 2022, the Yemeni government and the Houthi militia agreed upon a two-month truce brokered by the United Nations, which was later renewed twice through 2 October. However, Yemen's warring sides have failed to reach an agreement on further extension.

Briefing a Security Council meeting, UN Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg pointed out that the truce has continued to deliver well be-

yond its expiration six months ago, and the parties are engaging on next steps.

"I believe we have not seen such a serious opportunity for making progress towards ending the conflict in eight years," he said.

Meanwhile, the envoy warned that "the tide could still turn" unless the parties take bolder steps towards peace.

As one of the encouraging signs, Grundberg said many aspects of the truce continue to be implemented beyond its lifespan, noting that "Yemen is experiencing the longest period of relative calm yet in this ruinous war". — Xinhua

## G7 urges reversal of Taliban ban on Afghan women in UN, NGOs

G7 foreign ministers on Tuesday demanded the "immediate reversal" of a Taliban government ban on Afghan women working for non-governmental organizations and the United Nations in Afghanistan.

Under their austere interpretation of Islam, Taliban authorities have imposed a slew of restrictions on Afghan women since seizing power in 2021, including banning them from higher education and many government jobs.

In December, they banned women from working for domestic and foreign non-governmental organizations. On 4 April, the curb was extended to UN offices across the country, triggering international outrage.



Afghan women stage a protest for their rights to mark International Women's Day in Kabul on 8 March 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

"We call for the immediate reversal of unacceptable decisions restricting human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the latest bans prohibit-

ing Afghan women from working for NGOs and the UN," the top G7 diplomats said in a statement after two days of talks in Japan. — AFP

## Venezuela's Maduro launches new TV show, a year ahead of presidential poll

VENEZUELAN President Nicolas Maduro on Monday launched his own television show on a public channel, a year before the next presidential elections are due.

"We are starting a new stage of communications," the Socialist leader said, wearing a jacket and shirt with no tie as he introduced the new show called "With Maduro".

The Venezuelan opposition frequently criticizes the government's use of public media, complaining that it has very little access in the face of an omnipresent Maduro.

Maduro is following in the footsteps of his populist pre-



This handout picture released by Miraflores Presidential Palace shows Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro speaking during the broadcast of the first edition of his new television programme called "Con Maduro" in Caracas on 17 April 2023. **PHOTO: ZURIMAR CAMPOS / MIRAFLORES PRESS OFFICE / AFP**

decessor and mentor, the late Hugo Chavez, who was president from 1999 to 2013. He hosted a Sunday programme called "Alo, presidente," a show with no fixed running time and could sometimes last for hours.

During the first broadcast of the programme, Maduro presented a female artificial intelligence avatar nicknamed "Sira", a nod to "Siri" from Apple. The avatar appeared to be a jab at recent accusations that the government had used artificial intelligence in disinformation campaigns.

During the show, which was live and attended by much of the government, Maduro also

took a call from a female viewer.

Maduro is no stranger to the small screen. In addition to his regular and frequent appearances performing presidential duties, between 2013 and 2017 he hosted a Sunday programme called "Contact with Maduro".

It was renamed "Sundays with Maduro" in 2017 and then dropped the same year. The president also had a famous salsa show — a popular musical entertainment in the Caribbean — between January and December 2017. He would mix politics with music and even dance in front of the camera with his wife, Cilia Flores. — AFP

## China ready to facilitate resumption of peace talks between Israel, Palestine: FM

CHINA encourages both Israel and Palestine to show political courage and take steps to resume peace talks, and China is ready to provide convenience for this, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Qin Gang said Monday.

Qin, in a phone call with Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen, said China is concerned about the current tension between Israel and Palestine, and the

current top priority is to bring the situation under control and prevent the conflict from escalating or even getting out of control.

All parties should maintain calm and restraint, and stop excessive and provocative words and deeds, Qin said, adding that the fundamental way out is to resume peace talks and implement the “two-state solution”.

It is never too late to do the right thing, he said.

Chinese President Xi Jinping put forward the Global Security Initiative, and China believes that the key to solving the Israel-Palestine issue lies in upholding the vision of common security, Qin said.

China has no selfish interests on the Israel-Palestine issue, and only hopes that Israel and Palestine can coexist peacefully and safeguard regional peace and stability. — Xinhua



Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang attends a joint press conference with Germany's Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing on 14 April 2023. PHOTO: SUO TAKEKUMA / POOL / AFP

## G7 foreign ministers vow to address global challenges through collective action

FOREIGN ministers from the Group of Seven (G7) nations on Tuesday vowed to address global challenges, including cli-

mate change, pollution, loss of biodiversity, health, and food and energy security, through collective action.

In a communique released after their three-day meeting in the resort town of Karuizawa in central Japan, the top diplomats called on all partners to join in addressing these pressing global challenges and to work together to build a better, more prosperous, and more secure future.

The ministers are also committed to promoting free and fair trade, stating that it is key to resilient and sustainable development for all, particularly the most vulnerable.

“We recognize that free and equitable public access to scientific knowledge is integral to solving global challenges,” added the statement.

Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi and his G7 counterparts arrived in Karuizawa on Sunday afternoon for the foreign ministerial meeting, in advance of a G7 summit to be held in Hiroshima in May. — Xinhua



Deputy Secretary-General of the European External Action Service Enrique Mora (2nd L), British Foreign Secretary James Cleverly (3rd L), German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock (4th L), US Secretary of State Antony Blinken (5th L), Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi (5th R), Canadian Foreign Minister Melanie Joly (4th R), French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna (3rd R), Italian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Antonio Tajani (2nd R) and two Japanese local officials (1st L, 1st R) pose for a group photo during a welcome ceremony at the Karuizawa station of shinkansen train in Nagano Prefecture, Japan, on 16 April 2023. PHOTO: XINHUA

## ‘No legs, no limits’: Amputee veteran eyes Everest summit

GURKHA veteran Hari Budha Magar grew up in the shadow of the Himalayas, but only after losing his legs did he resolve to make his childhood dream of scaling Everest a reality.

Magar, 43, stepped on an improvised explosive device in 2010 while serving in Afghanistan with the Brigade of Gurkhas — a unit of Nepalis recruited into the British Army.

After years of rehabilitation and training, next month he plans to summit the world's highest mountain, an endeavour promoted on his website under the slogan “no legs, no limits”.

If successful, the expedition will make him the first double above-the-knee amputee to see the world from the 8,849-metre (29,032-foot) peak.

“After losing both of my legs, my aim became to see what I could do physically. It

opened my mind, and I attempted everything I could put my hands on,” Magar told AFP before setting off for the Everest base camp.

Magar grew up in Nepal, in the foothills of the Himalayan mountain range, and was always drawn to adventure sports.

“When I would ski, the sight of the mountains would remind me of Everest. I would always wonder if I could climb,” he said.

Two below-the-knee amputees have reached the peak in the past — New Zealander Mark Inglis in 2006 and China's Xia Boyu in 2018.

Magar began preparing for his own expedition the same year as Xia's ascent. But he was forced to put his training on hold to campaign against a since-revoked Nepal law that banned climbers with disabilities on safety grounds. — AFP

## Netanyahu vows to keep up ‘fight’ against Iran nuclear arms

PRIME Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed Monday that Israel would continue its “fight” to prevent arch-foe Tehran from developing nuclear weapons, during a Holocaust ceremony attended by Iran's exiled crown prince.

Recalling a recent visit to Berlin, Netanyahu noted that since Nazi-era Germany “the world has changed, but the calls for our extermination have not ceased, and today come from

the regime of horror in Tehran”.

“We are fighting resolutely against any nuclear deal with Iran that will pave its way to nuclear arms,” the Israeli premier said in a speech on the eve of Holocaust Remembrance Day.

“And for the same reason, we are fighting resolutely against Iran's terror proxies around us,” he said at the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem, warning of Israel's “crushing response” to any enemy ap-



proaches.

Attending the ceremony was Iranian crown prince Reza Pahlavi, whose father was the shah overthrown in the 1979 Islamic revolution. — AFP

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks during a ceremony marking Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day for the six million Jews killed during World War II, at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem on 17 April 2023. PHOTO: AFP

China ready to facilitate resumption of peace talks between Israel, Palestine: FM

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# SPORT

## The Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council: Twelve Objectives

### 1. Political affairs

- (a) To build a Union based on democracy and federalism, through a disciplined and genuine multiparty democratic system that is fair and just.
- (b) To prioritize the achievement of enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).
- (c) To continue implementing the principle of peaceful co-existence among countries through an independent, active, and non-aligned foreign policy.
- (d) To ensure peace, stability, rule of law, and the safe and smooth functioning of transport networks across the Union.

### 2. Economic affairs

- (a) To enhance development based on agriculture and livestock using modern production techniques and to strengthen all-round development in other sectors of the economy.
- (b) To develop a stable market economy and promote international investment in order to enhance the economic development of the entire National people.
- (c) To assure support for the sustainability of Micro-, Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) that prioritize import substitution, export production, and the use of domestically produced raw materials, in order to increase domestic production and generate employment opportunities.
- (d) To advance the socioeconomic life of the people, in order to ensure the country's prosperity and food security.

### 3. Social affairs

- (a) To ensure a strong and dynamic Union spirit, the genuine spirit of patriotism.
- (b) To respect and promote the customs and traditions of all National people and preserve and safeguard their faiths, beliefs, culture, and characteristics of patriotic nationalism.
- (c) To strengthen basic health care in order to achieve the emergence of a health system that enhances the longevity and health of the entire nation.
- (d) To comprehensively promote the education sector to make it capable of producing the human resources necessary for building a modern, developed, and progressive democratic nation.

## Team Myanmar makes final preparations for AFC U-17 Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers



The Myanmar U-17 women's footballers learn with interest the head coach's strategy presentation ahead of the AFC U-17 Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers. PHOTO: MFF

THE Myanmar national women's U-17 team has released the final 23-player list for the 2024 Asian Women's U-17 Championship first-round qualifiers, according to yesterday's statement with the Myanmar Football Federation.

The Myanmar girls' squad will face hosts Kyrgyzstan and India in Group F of the Asian qualifiers to be held from 24 to 28 April in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Team Myanmar will play against Kyrgyzstan on 24 April

at 7:30 pm Myanmar time, and the Indian team on 28 April at 7:30 pm Myanmar time.

The Myanmar national women's U-17 team was formed in early February this year with 35 preliminary players, with U Than Wai as the head coach, Daw Marlar Win and Daw Than Than Htwe as assistant coaches, and U Sein Aye as the goal coach.

The U-17 squad players were selected by a combination of players from Institute of Sports and Physical Education

as well as players who showed their skills from regional and state competitions.

The eight teams that won first place in the first-round qualifiers will be divided into two groups and continue to compete in the second-round qualifiers in September 2023.

Indonesia will host the 2024 Asian Women's U-17 Championship. The first, second and third-place teams of the tourney will qualify for the 2024 FIFA Women's Under-17 World Cup. —KZL

## Djokovic has elbow concerns before Banja Luka opener

NOVAK Djokovic said Monday he has not fully recovered from an elbow issue which hindered him in his Monte Carlo Masters

last-16 exit last week. The world number one struggled with his serve before falling to Italian Lorenzo Musetti in Monaco.

"The elbow is not in ideal condition, but let's say it's good enough. Hopefully it will be fully ready for the first match," said Djokovic, who had elbow surgery in 2018, ahead of this week's event in Banja Luka.

The Serb won the Australian Open earlier this year to draw level with Rafael Nadal's men's re-

cord tally of 22 Grand Slam titles. He will be among the favourites for next month's French Open.

The 35-year-old will face 87th-ranked French teenager Luca Van Assche, who ousted Swiss veteran Stan Wawrinka 1-6, 7-6 (7/4), 6-4 on Monday, in the Banja Luka second round.

"I've never met this boy before, I don't know much about him. I know he's young, he's just joined the top 100," said Djokovic before the tournament which has been relocated from his hometown of Belgrade because of work on the venue. — AFP

Serbia's Novak Djokovic reacts during his match against Italy's Lorenzo Musetti at the Monte-Carlo ATP Masters Series tournament round of 16 tennis match in Monte Carlo on 13 April 2023. PHOTO: AFP

## Argentina to replace Indonesia as U-20 World Cup hosts: FIFA

ARGENTINA will host the Under-20 World Cup from 20 May to 11 June, FIFA said Monday, after taking the tournament from Indonesia just weeks before kick-off.

Having been awarded hosting rights, Argentina will also participate in Indonesia's place. The team had failed to qualify on merit.

"FIFA is delighted to announce that this year's edition of the FIFA U-20 World Cup will take place in Argentina, as the home of the world champions opens its doors to tomorrow's superstars of world football," FIFA president Gianni Infantino said in a statement.

FIFA withdrew hosting

rights from Indonesia last month after protests against Israel's participation the tournament. Indonesia and Israel do not have formal diplomatic relations, and support for the Palestinian cause in the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation runs high.

Argentina put itself forward as an alternative host, and FIFA conducted an on-site inspection of facilities last week.

The draw will take place on 21 April in Zurich.

Hours before Monday's FIFA announcement, the Argentine government expressed its full backing for the hosting bid by the Argentine Football Association (AFA). — AFP

