

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR



State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing views the Su-30SME aircraft while attending the 76th birthday of Tatmadaw (Air) yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

Enhanced Air Force Capability: Post-4th Gen Su-30SME fighters bolster Tatmadaw (Air)

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing highlighted that fourth-generation supermanoeuvrable Su-30 SME fighter aircraft could be commissioned into service to contribute to improving the air force power of Tatmadaw (Air).

A ceremony to commission new aircraft into service in commemoration of the 76th birthday of Tatmadaw (Air) took place at Nay Pyi Taw Airbase yesterday morning, attended by Chairman of

the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

In his speech, the Senior General said it is a new step to upgrade the Tatmadaw (Air) to a tactical air force possessing some strategic capabilities to be effectively applied in serving the majority of functions of air force power as a future aspiration of Tatmadaw (Air).

With regard to the firm belief of the Tatmadaw (Air), he continued that the

role of technology and human resources can make decisions over the conflicts in the new era of wars, and he stressed the need to seek good ways to apply experiences from the past events in the future.

He noted that while reviewing the building of air force power of relevant countries on time, Tatmadaw (Air) has to shape itself to be a compact and capable air force possessing prowess air force power and aerospace capability.

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Optimizing State Funds: Ministries emphasize efficient, prudent expenditure

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing urged relevant ministries and organizations to efficiently spend additional funds and budgets allocated by the State without waste and strive to earn targeted incomes.

At the meeting 2/2023 of the Financial Commission at the SAC Chairman Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon, Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing stressed the need to strive to manage the allocated funds in line with the earmarked budget at the end of 2023-24 financial year and implement the projects on time.

The Senior General warned that the supplementary budget could be spent only when the State Administration Council has enacted the Union Supplementary Budget Allocation Law, and it is necessary to notice just four months for spending the allocated funds.

He stressed the need to spend the surplus funds that had emerged for various causes on the development projects in rural development, education, health, and transport sectors, which can be implemented in local currency kyats.

He underlined that as foreign currencies are spent on the import of cooking oil, it is necessary to increase the production of cooking oil at home to ensure oil sufficiency with the purpose of reducing spending FE on implementing the social objective: To spur the cultivation of oil crops to meet targeted production levels, thereby achieving domestic self-sufficiency in edible oil while striving towards the export of surplus oil.

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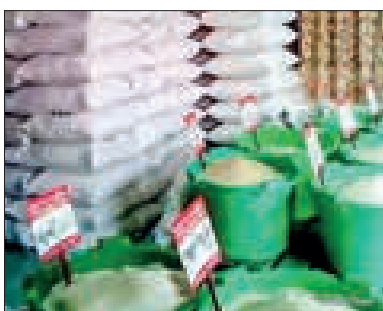
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The Senior General urged Tatmadaw (Air) to join hands with Tatmadaw (Army) and Tatmadaw (Navy) in serving conventional warfare, non-conventional warfare and public welfare warfare with utmost efforts for the sake of the people.

He instructed all officers and other ranks serving in various arenas of aviation services to study, practise and follow advancements in military strategies

and tactics and develop technologies to handle their machinery and machines skilfully.

Chief of Staff (Air) Lt-Gen Zaw Win Myint declared the commissioning of the aircraft.

Commander-in-Chief (Air) General Tun Aung presented a scale model of commissioned aircraft to the Senior General.

Next, an already-commissioned

Su-30SME fighter aircraft saluted the Senior General and demonstrated flying skills.

The Senior General sprinkled scented water on the commissioned aircraft.

Tatmadaw (Air) has organized the ceremonies of commissioning aircraft/helicopters 13 times. At the 14th commissioning ceremony, two fourth-generation supermanoeuvrable Su-30SME fighter aircraft were handed over to Tatmadaw

(Air).

Also, present at the ceremony were Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, wife of the Senior General, SAC Vice-Chairman Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win and his wife Daw Than Than Nwe, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Moe Aung and wife, Commander-in-Chief (Air) General Tun Aung and wife and officials. — MNA/TTA

Myanmar hosts 26th GMS Ministerial Conference

The 26th Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Ministerial Conference (MC-26), held on 15 December 2023 at the Grand Amara Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, was chaired by Dr Kan Zaw, GMS Minister and Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations.

The MC-26 has two key events: Retreat and Plenary. At the Ministerial Retreat, two topics — the proposal for the Preparation of a GMS Innovation Strategy for Development and Strengthening the Engagement of Local Governments in the GMS Programme — were frankly exchanged by the GMS Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and Heads of delegation from GMS member countries.

The Chair of the Conference, Dr Kan Zaw, Union Minister, introduced the development of the GMS Innovation Strategy. The Heads of delegation share their thoughts and provide some recommendations and suggestions on the content of such a strategy (objectives, scope, and priority areas for the GMS programme) and how this can add value to national innovation strategies.

Regarding the second topic, Strengthening the Engagement of Local Governments, Dr Kan Zaw, Union Minister and Chair, introduced the background information on the study's initial results. Then, the Heads of delegation highlighted that it is necessary to identify the possible ways to strengthen local governments' engagement by assessing the existing mecha-



The 26th Greater Mekong Subregion Ministerial Conference in progress on 15 December in Nay Pyi Taw.

nism and institutions in GMS countries to be an inclusive and open platform which includes diverse stakeholders, including local governments and be more active involvement.

The Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation Programme includes six countries along the Mekong River: the Kingdom of Cambodia, the People's Republic of China, Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Kingdom of Thailand, and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, which was established in 1992 and the member countries have been joining hands-in-hands by formulating the sectoral strategies; such as Agriculture, Health, Transport, Energy, Environment and Tourism, Urban Development among others.

Under the GMS Programme, the member countries used to host the summit, ministerial conference, economic corridors forums (ECFs) and senior of-

icials' meetings (SOMs) in alphabetical order on a rotation basis. Accordingly, Myanmar has been taking responsibility for the 26th GMS Ministerial Conference Chairmanship this year, 2023, as an alternate host.

The theme of MC-26: "Building a strong and cohesive GMS community with a shared future towards resilient economic development", was determined since it reflects GMS countries' strong and collective strength over three decades of cooperation and integration to achieve a resilient economy for the subregion. In the opening session, Chair Dr Kan Zaw delivered his opening remarks, and other heads of delegations made their brief statements.

At the meeting, the report of the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) Chair, which contains brief information on the recent achievements of the GMS Programme and the various 26th GMS MC deliverables for endorsement and notation by the

Ministers and Heads of delegations, was presented by Dr Marlar Myo Nyunt, Director-General of Foreign Economic Relations Department and GMS National Coordinator of Myanmar on behalf of the GMS senior officials. Then, the GMS Business Council (BC) chairman also briefly reported on GMS BC's recent activities and achievements.

In addition, the Concept for the Preparation of a GMS Innovation Strategy for Development proposed by China was endorsed. Three other initiatives, namely a Scoping Study on Enhancing Digitalization in the GMS, an ongoing Study to Enhance the Role of the Private Sector in the GMS Programme, and an ongoing Study to Strengthen Local Governments' Engagement in the GMS Programme, were also noted by the conference participants during the conference.

Furthermore, the GMS countries formally endorsed the Joint Ministerial Statement of the 26th GMS Ministerial Conference.

After the meeting, the delegates were treated to a Gala Lunch and were entertained by Myanmar's traditional culture and dance programmes.

The delegation from the GMS member countries visited the Maravijaya Pagoda, the gem museum in Nay Pyi Taw, the Shwedagon Pagoda, and the Botataung Pagoda in Yangon.

A total of nearly 80 participants, including three members of the Kingdom of Cambodia delegation led by Mr Nut Unvoanra, Deputy Secretary General of Cambodian Investment Board,

seven members of the People's Republic of China delegation led by Mr Lu Jin, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Finance, four members of Lao People's Democratic Republic delegation led by Madame Phonevanh Outhavong, Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment, 11 members of the Kingdom of Thailand delegation led by Mr Wanchat Suwankitti, Deputy Secretary General, Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, five members of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam delegation led by Mr Tran Quoc Phuong, Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment, representatives of Mekong Institute led by Executive Director, representatives from the ministries concerned in Myanmar and GMS Business Council present at the 26th GMS Ministerial Conference.

Regarding this Ministerial Conference, the senior officials' meetings hosted by Myanmar were held virtually in April, October and November.

Furthermore, it is known that Myanmar has been taking her turns as an alternate host for the key events of the GMS Programme; the 4th GMS Summit in 2011, the 4th Economic Corridors Forum in 2012, the 20th GMS Ministerial Conference in 2015, and the 10th Economic Corridors Forum in 2018 respectively.

Additionally, Myanmar has just organized the 6th GMS Urban Development Working Group Meeting in June and the 52nd GMS Tourism Working Group Meeting in November this year. — MIFER

NATIONAL

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Likewise, the Senior General continued that the Foreign Exchange Supervisory Committee scrutinizes fuel imports from abroad.

Moreover, the Senior General urged Union ministries and regional and state governments to effectively spend the allocated supplementary funds on regional development tasks and other measures contributing to booming the State economy in conformity with the needs of the people, adding that they have to manage the implementation of projects, timely completion and no waste of the funds.

The Senior General pointed out that regional and state governments have to emphasize increased manufacturing in their regions to increase incomes, encourage the boost of production in agriculture and livestock sectors in implementing the state policies, contribute to employment opportunities for rural people and increase their revenues.

The Vice-Chairman of the Commission Deputy Prime Minister presented his reports that despite no involvement in the allocated initial funds, the commission approved the extra cash assistance for the welfare of service personnel starting from October 2023, costs for rehabilitation of damaged buildings in the cyclonic storm Mocha, and expense for the construction of 34 one-storey RCC buildings at 34 industrial, agriculture and livestock high schools in 2024-25 academic year. The Union government allowed cash assistance and allocated income revenues to regions and states. He sought approval from the commission for the supplementary budget law and the Union Supplementary Budget Allocation Law for



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing presides over the Financial Commission Meeting 2/2023 yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

Optimizing State Funds: Ministries emphasize efficient, prudent expenditure

Salient points from the speech made by the Senior General at Financial Commission Meeting 2/2023

- Relevant ministries and organizations to efficiently spend additional funds and budgets allocated by the State without waste.
- Surplus funds that have emerged for various causes must be spent on development projects in rural development, education, health, and transport sectors, which can be implemented in local currency kyats.
- Regional and state governments have to emphasize increased manufacturing in their regions to increase incomes and encourage boosting production in agriculture and livestock sectors in implementing the State policies.

the 2023-24 financial year.

Secretary of the Commission Union Minister U Win Shein, Union Minister for Legal

Affairs Dr Thida Oo and Union Auditor-General Dr Khin Nang Oo, Union ministers and officials discussed the Union

Supplementary Allocated Budget, the Approved Budget and the Union Supplementary Budget Allocation Law for

the 2023-24 financial year, and audit findings on the budgets of Union level organizations, ministries, region and state governments and future tasks.

The Financial Commission Meeting 2/2023 aimed to approve supplementary budgets for Union-level organizations and regions and states for the 2023-24 financial year. Upon completion of approvals, the Union government will submit the Union Supplementary Budget Allocation Law for the 2023-24 financial year to the State Administration Council for approval. — MNA/TTA



SAC Member inspects Pantanaw Community Centre

STATE Administration Council Member Mahn Nyein Maung viewed the booths exhibited at the Community Centre in Pantanaw, Ayeyawady Region, yesterday.

SAC Member Mahn Nyein Maung meets students at the Community Centre in Pantanaw.

He also met the Information and Public Relations Department staff, gave them instructions, and encouraged students who came to study at the Community Centre.

The State Administration Council member inspected the construction of the U Thant Library building in Pantanaw and donated K10 million. — MNA/TS

NATIONAL

Vice-Senior General Soe Win comforts internally displaced persons in Lashio

STATE Administration Council Vice-Chairman Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win and wife Daw Than Than Nwe met the internally displaced persons at Thiri Mingala Mansu Shan Monastery in Lashio yesterday.

On arrival at the Thiri Mingala Mansu Shan Monastery, the Vice-Senior General and the party paid homage to the abbot of the monastery Agga Maha Ganthavacaka Pandita

Agga Maha Kammathanacariya Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Dr Bhaddanta Puñña Nanda.

Then, they donated the offertories to Sayadaw and received Dhamma presents from Sayadaw in return.

They also presented clothes, rice, cooking oil and foodstuffs provided by the Prime Minister to temporary IDPs in Lashio.

They then cordially met with the temporary IPDs at the monastery. — MNA/KTZH



State Administration Council Vice-Chair Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Vice-Senior General Soe Win and his wife Daw Than Than Nwe meet internally displaced persons in Lashio yesterday.



Deputy Minister for Energy U Thant Sin inspects the discharging of fuel from the tanker vessel at Thilawa Port yesterday.

Fuel storage at Thilawa port, fuel stores in Yangon inspected

CHAIRMAN of the fuel import, storage and distribution supervisory committee of the Ministry of Energy Deputy Minister U Thant Sin visited fuel storage stations at Thilawa Port of Thanlyin Township in Yangon Region yesterday. He also viewed round the system's operating conditions of importing fuel by foreign tankers, the conditions of receiving fuel at the fuel storage tanks, and the fuel distribution by bowsers to states and regions.

Continuously, the deputy minister instructed the companies engaged in the import, storage and distribution of fuel to conduct security activities at storage stations, ports and jetties to follow

standard operating procedure (SOP) to ensure that there is no spillage of oil during loading and unloading measures and that the quality of fuel can be maintained and distributed from all levels of officials, to move from the manual float extraction system for bowsers to the level of online float extraction and to install and use the software system to supervise and monitor the state of fuel purchase and consumption as soon as possible and as fuel stores, they should pay attention to be able to distribute and sell products as per quality and demand with good service to the public. — MNA/TKO

Counter-argument to false information



Screenshot validates misinformation.

False Narrative: Allegations of daily wages for Tatmadaw supporters in Kawthoung as security force

MISINFORMATION is spreading that daily wages are being paid to Tatmadaw supporters in Kouthoung, Taninthayi Region, to act as security forces.

There is fake news on social media that at least five people are hired in each ward, and they pay K30,000 per day, giving out arms and sticks.

It was found that wrong information was being written

and distributed.

According to the statements of the locals and military news sources, this is untrue.

The media is using social networks to spread false information repeatedly to mislead the Union government, Tatmadaw, administrative organizations, and the people and to scare the people. — MNA/KZL

Tatmadaw falsely alleged of bombing IDP shelter



Screenshot validates false claims.

A malicious media outlet, Khit Thit Media, is spreading false news on social media accusing

Tatmadaw of bombing the Zayyathukha Monastery that shelters over 200 internally displaced people in Namhkam, Shan State.

IDPs at the monastery clarified that it was only false news and that Tatmadaw did not conduct any air raid on 13 December.

Reports indicate that several malicious sites on social media are circulating misinformation to incite misunderstanding against Tatmadaw. — MNA/NT

NATIONAL

SAC member attends 49th Anniversary Rakhine State Day

DR Ba Shwe, a member of the State Administration Council, attended the 49th anniversary of Rakhine State Day, which was convened at the Khine Thazin Hall in Sittway yesterday.

Rakhine State Chief Minister U Htein Lin, Western Command Commander Maj-Gen Htin Latt Oo, Deputy Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Daw Nu Mra Zan and other government officials were among the attendees.

After the opening dance, Dr Ba Shwe read the message from SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing. A speech by the Chief Minister followed this.

Then, the SAC member presented the first awards for excellence in management to three recipients, the Chief Minister the first awards for excellence in agricultural business and social affairs to respective winners, the Western Command Commander the first awards for excellence in social affairs to two winners, and the wife of the Chief Minister and patron of the Rakhine State Women's Affairs Committee the first awards for excellence in social



SAC Member Dr Ba Shwe and party view the display at the 49th Anniversary Rakhine State Day yesterday in Sittway.

affairs to two winners.

The other excellence awards of second and third degrees were presented to respective winners, too.

This year's ceremony rec-

ognized three first-grade awardees, 15 second-grade awardees, and 30 third-grade awardees for excellence in management. Additionally, one first-grade, six second-grade, and four third-grade

awardees were honoured for excellence in agricultural business. Moreover, among other honourable titles, eight first-grade awardees, ten second-grade awardees, and nine third-grade

awardees were acknowledged for excellence in social affairs.

The Rakhine Ethnic Dance Troupe and the Rakhine State General Administration Department staff entertained the guests with ethnic songs and dances.

The SAC member and other distinguished guests observed the exhibition at the Khine Thazin Hall after the photo session. They later enjoyed the gala lunch with award winners.

Subsequently, the SAC member convened with state executive body members and officials. He explained to them the five-point roadmap and nine objectives of the SAC and called for a collective effort towards a peaceful and prosperous Rakhine State.

The deputy minister for Religious Affairs and Culture briefed all on the matters to be done for the state's peace and development, and other officials discussed them.

In the evening, they paid homage to the presiding monk of the Adatehtan Monastery and donated necessary items. — MNA/NT

Myanmar delegation participates in US-ASEAN Centre launch in Washington DC

THE Ministry of Foreign Affairs reports that a Myanmar delegation attended the launch of the US-ASEAN Centre in Washington, DC, held at the Washington School branch of American Arizona University on 14 December. Ambassadors from ASEAN embassies, charge d'affaires, and Myanmar Embassy minister in Washington U Thet Win, along with other officials, were present.

The ceremony featured speeches by Ms Holly Lindquist Thomas, Director of the Office of Multilateral Affairs at the East Asia and Pacific Department of the Department of State, Mr Ida Bagus Made Bimantara, Country Coordinator of the American-ASEAN dialogue relationship, Dr Christopher B Howard, Vice-President of Arizona University, Senator Tammy Duckworth, Texas Democrat Joaquin Castro, and Under Secretary of the US Department of State, Ms Elizabeth M Allen.



The launch of the US-ASEAN Centre in action on 14 December.

Vice-President Kamala Harris highlighted the focus on fostering friendships between Southeast Asian countries and the United States in Washington, DC.

The US-ASEAN Centre aims to enhance economic and cultural ties between Southeast Asian countries and the United States, fostering connections among private

organizations. Hosting the centre, Arizona University has a history of collaboration with ASEAN countries in public-private partnership projects with the US Department of State. The university is also engaged with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and American industries. — ASH/TRKM

Shan Ethnic Traditional Food Exhibition and Sale Festival to be held in Kengtung

ACCORDING to the Hotels and Tourism Directorate (Shan State), the Shan ethnic traditional food display and sale festival will be held in Kengtung on 26 and 27 December. "The festival will be held at the Amyae Yinkwin School in Ward 1, Kengtung, to promote the success of hotels and tourism businesses in Shan State (East) and to promote the success of the traditional cultural traits and traditional food production and sales of the Shan ethnic people," said U Htin Aung Naing, Director of Hotels and Tourism Directorate (Shan State).

"Kengtung is the capital of eastern Shan State. We have two events in Kengtung. In the Cherry Blossom Festival, Shan ethnic traditional food is on sale. The sale of ethnic traditional food will be held for two days, on 26 and 27 December. A total of 88 types of traditional food from 13 ethnic groups living in the area will be sold.

At the ethnic traditional food display and sale festival, ethnic traditional food of Shangyi, Taingli, Gonshan, Taingnei, Bamar, Palaung, Taingloi, Akha, Arkhay, Lisu, Lahu, Wa and Arn will be displayed and sold, and visitors will be entertained with ethnic cultural dances and songs. — ASH/KZL



NATIONAL



The opening ceremony of the Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda festival in Progress in Minbu in 2023.

Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda festival to commence on 14 Feb

THE Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda festival in Minbu (Sagu) Township of Minbu District in Magway Region will kick off on 14 February 2024, according to the Pagoda Board of Trustees.

The Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda festival is held from the fifth waxing day of Tabodwe (14 February) to

the first day of the Myanmar New Year (17 April).

Almost 15 per cent of the preparations for the festival have been completed, such as the repair work of Mann Creek sandbank and growing various flowery plants along the middle of the road from the three-mile entrance to Mann

Shwesettaw Pagoda and around the elevators and upstairs.

The Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda festival was temporarily suspended in 2020 and 2021 during the Covid-19 pandemic and reopened in 2022. During the 2023 festival, around 100,000 pilgrims entered daily. — TWA/MKKS

China accounts for over 90% of Myanmar's garment raw material imports

IMPORTING raw materials by the garment enterprises working on the Cut-Make-Pack basis hit over US\$1 billion, and China constitutes 90 per cent of the import.

Those countries that outsource from Myanmar are found to place

orders for raw garment materials from China.

Products from the Myanmar garment sector are sent to over 80 countries in the current financial year 2023-2024, mainly to Japan, Poland, Spain, Germany, the Republic of Ko-

rea, the UK, the Netherlands, France, Italy, the US, Denmark and Belgium. The Ministry of Commerce's statistics showed that Myanmar exported finished garment products worth \$5.3 billion to 100 countries last FY 2022-2023. — TWA/KK

Estimated value of K127.447 bln confiscated from illegal trade in 11 months

FROM January to November 2023, 5,753 cases of illegal trade were seized, worth an estimated value of K127.447 billion, according to the coordination meeting of the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee held on 14 December.

Illegal trade can lead to the loss of taxes for the country and affect the country's banking system and financial flow systems. Therefore, it is necessary to combat as a national duty. Since the State Administration Council took the State responsibility, 9,985 cases have been confiscated with an estimated value of K192.503 billion, according to SAC Vice-Chairman Vice-Senior General Soe Win.

In September 2023, 123.904 tonnes of lead were seized, estimated at K3.717 billion. According to the information, the Customs Department monitored and searched three passengers on a flight from Singapore and found 16 kilogrammes of gold, US\$120,000, and 259 iPhones, totalling K3.946 billion, seized on 4 November 2023.

In addition, two seizures of drugs were recorded at Yangon Airport as a result of reports from the Indian Customs to the Myanmar Customs Department. — TWA/TKO



An anti-illegal trade special task force inspects cargo vehicles at a city checkpoint.

Domestic rice prices surge beyond set limits



The photo shows a pile of rice sacks at a retail and wholesale shop.

THE prices of both premium and non-premium rice are escalating in the second week of December 2023 in Yangon's market, which is higher than the reasonable market price set by the Myanmar Rice Federation and commodity wholesale centre prices, rice traders told The Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM).

On 11 December, the prices were up by K5,000-K10,000 per sack, said Ko Kyaw, a trader.

The ordinary grade rice moved between K68,000 and K95,000 per sack depending on

varieties (Manaw Thuka, rice grown under the intercropping system, 90-day short matured rice). High-grade Pawsan prices are K120,000-K170,000 per sack depending on producing areas (Myaungmya, Pyapon and Shwebo), said rice buyers from Lanmadaw and South Okkalapa townships.

There is a price difference of K30,000 per sack between the set reasonable market price and the market values.

The rice prices stood at K47,000 per sack for the rice grown under the intercropping

system, K51,000 for 90-day short mature rice, K65,000 for Ayeyawady Pawsan, K72,000 for new Shwebo Pawsan and K95,000 for Shwebo Pawsan in mid-December 2022.

However, some buyers pointed out that the sellers do not give valid receipts when the rice prices are surging.

Consumers are concerned about possible price rises in mid-2024 as the rice prices have stayed above K100,000 per sack at the new rice harvest time. — TWA/KK

MRF to disburse agri loan for summer paddy season

MYANMAR Rice Federation (MRF) will provide short-term agricultural loans for the summer paddy season to improve yield.

The federation has been preparing to finance K400,000 per acre for the summer paddy season by taking land permit Form 7 as a pledge.

The MRF, Myanma Agricultural Development Bank and Myanma Economic Bank under the Ministry of Planning and Finance and authorized dealers (private banks) virtually held the coordination meeting for short-term loans on 14 December.

Officials from MEC, MADB, MRF and representatives from KBZ Bank, A Bank, AYA Bank, Yoma Bank and UAB Bank attended the meeting.

The meeting highlighted that only those farmers who own more than 10 acres in Ayeyawady, Bago, Yangon, Mandalay regions and Nay Pyi Taw are entitled to this loan programme through authorized dealers, and the loan scheme would cover 100,000 acres under the pilot project. — NN/EM

Diligent farm workers seen during the harvest season.



Myanmar-Thailand border trade values cross US\$3.3 bln in 8 months

MYANMAR'S border trade with neighbouring Thailand amounted to US\$3.33 billion in the past eight months of the current financial year 2023-2024, beginning 1 April.

The figures declined from \$3.57 billion recorded in the year-ago period, showing a drop of \$239 million.

Myanmar conducts cross-border trade with Thailand via the Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthoung, Myeik, Hteekhee and Mawtaung borders. The Hteekhee border per-

formed the most significant trade worth \$2.05 billion in the past eight months.

The trade values stood at \$977.247 million at Myawady border post, \$101.95 million at Tachilek, \$77.137 million at Myeik, \$111.737 million at Kawthoung and \$12.44 million at Mawtaung.

The trade values stood at \$603.67 million at the Myawady border post, \$63.295 million at Tachilek, \$34.715 million at Myeik, \$32.979 million at

Kawthoung and \$3.937 million at Mawtaung.

Myanmar conducts border trade with the neighbouring countries China, Thailand, Bangladesh and India. It exports agricultural produce, livestock products, fisheries, minerals, forest products, finished industrial goods and other goods. At the same time, it brings in capital goods, intermediate goods, consumer goods and raw materials by the CMP enterprises. — NN/KK



Lorries laden with export and import cargoes seen on the Myanmar-Thai border.

LMC enhances dairy industry productivity

ACCORDING to the Myanmar Livestock Federation, Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) member countries will enhance cattle breeding and dairy products manufacturing.

Thailand's Khon Kaen University will conduct the LMC Strengthening Dairy Innovation (SDI) Programme under the LMC Special Fund from January to December 2024. The LMC member countries — China, Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, Viet Nam and Cambodia — will join hands to boost dairy cattle breeding and manufacturing of dairy products businesses.

The objectives of this programme consist of providing technical training for dairy processors, dairy cattle farmers and livestock professionals from the relevant countries, holding technical workshops and building networks for dairy cattle breeding and dairy processing among the LMC member countries. The training and workshops are slated to commence in May 2024. The MLF and Myanmar Dairy Association are negotiating with the institutions concerned to send the trainees to attend those trainings and workshops.

The MLF notified those enthusiastic processors and farmers to prepare the necessary documents, including passports. It will release immediate notification upon trainee invitation of this programme. The officials of the programme will select suitable trainees after screening the applications. — NN/KK

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OPINION

Rakhine State: The western gateway must be developed with peace and stability

RAKHINE State, situated at the western gateway of the nation, holds paramount significance for the security and sovereignty of the state itself and the entire nation. The diverse communities residing in Rakhine State, including the Rakhine, Kaman, Khami, Daingnet, Maramagi, Mro, and Thet, take great pride in their natural positions as guardians of the motherland and its people.

The collective responsibility of all national brethren in Rakhine State lies in fostering solidarity and a spirit of unity to restore peace and stability while emphasizing developmental initiatives. Residents of the state and the Union government share a common vision, striving to harmoniously enhance the well-being of Rakhine State, free from conflicts.

In commemorating the 49th Anniversary of Rakhine State Day on 15 December 2023, the Head of State conveyed felicitations to the people, emphasizing the crucial implementation of political and national visions. The message underscored the need for mutual respect, understanding, and trust among all citizens throughout the Union, fostering a shared future towards the realization of a peaceful, prosperous, modern, and developed democratic nation.

Expectations for affordable commodities and improved development facilities permeate every sector, with a shared commitment to realizing these aspirations. Efforts must be directed towards tasting the fruits of development through dedicated workforces. Residents are encouraged to intensify their contributions to manufacturing, agriculture, and livestock sectors, ensuring a tangible impact on the region's rapid development.

Despite facing the aftermath of cyclonic storm Mocha, the people of Rakhine State

exhibited resilience and determination. The government provided over 73,000 baskets of quality paddy seeds to eight townships, enabling local farmers to surpass cultivation targets, exceeding 3,000 acres of monsoon paddy. It was an excellent example of translating the utmost effort into a satisfactory result. Their unwavering efforts in the face of adversity showcase the resilience of the agricultural sector in overcoming challenges.

The diligence exhibited by the dwellers of Rakhine State, coupled with their ability to translate challenges into developmental opportunities, serves as an inspiring example. By persistently working hard, they can envisage a promising future marked by developmental facilities and the establishment of enduring peace for generations to come. As the guardians of the western border, the people of Rakhine State must continue their relentless efforts to forge peace and stability within their communities, ensuring a secure and prosperous future.

The diligence exhibited by the dwellers of Rakhine State, coupled with their ability to translate challenges into developmental opportunities, serves as an inspiring example. By persistently working hard, they can envisage a promising future marked by developmental facilities and the establishment of enduring peace for generations to come. As the guardians of the western border, the people of Rakhine State must continue their relentless efforts to forge peace and stability within their communities, ensuring a secure and prosperous future.

PSYCHOLOGISTS have several different points of view on the term 'adolescent'. Roughly speaking, adolescents are those aged between 13 and 19. Boys and girls of these ages tend to smile even when they see a leaf flutter on the tree due to the wind, as the Myanmar saying goes. This means that adolescents betwixt and between in their lifetime like to get lost in a daydream as their body changes become apparent, especially growth hormones. Meanwhile, adolescents can meet many physiological and psychological development, namely, physical development, cognitive development, moral development, social development, and emotional development. Out of these developments, emotional development is the most difficult to control and resolve well for adolescents, so far as I am concerned.

Before the emotional development of adolescents, all about emotion wants to be described at first. Emotion suggests a mental state of being stirred up one way or another. It involves three major components: 1) physiological changes within the body, such as shifts in heart rate or blood pressure, 2) subjective cognitive states, i.e. the personal experiences labelled as emotions, and 3) expressive behaviours, i.e. outward signs of internal reactions. The major types of emotion are love, anger, and fear, whereas its minor types are joy, jealousy, disgust, hate, grief, and affection. Robert Plutchik once proposed that animals and human beings experience eight basic categories of emotion that motivate various kinds of adaptive behaviour – fear, surprise, sadness, disgust, anger, anticipation, joy, and acceptance,

Adolescents and Their Emotional Development

each of which helps adjust to the demands of the environment, but not in the same way. Within any of Plutchik's eight categories, emotion varies in intensity, and that intensity does differ considerably among individuals, too. Generally, the more intense the emotion, the more it motivates behaviour.

Today, it is essential to live with emotions and feelings simply because we cannot survive without them like a non-living statue. The nature of emotional development makes life enjoyable, satisfactory, and worth living if one is healthy and emotionally mature. Hereditary as emotion is, health and environment can influence it. The ability to respond emotionally is innately present as well as cannot be learned, although if the child matures and learns more, then his emotions develop, which are also responses to events, people, and circumstances. Despite the fact that people face many different types of emotions in daily life for their personal existence, these emotions are broadly grouped into two types. Some are positive, for example, interest, excitement, joy, or happiness, while some are negative, for instance, distress, fear, anger, or shyness.

In terms of the relations between effect – subsequent cognition, learning, and performance, there are four general routes by which emotions may dominate a mixture of outcomes. The first route is through memory processes like retrieval and storage of information. Retrieval

of information is enhanced if the person's mood at the retrieval task matches that at the encoding phase. A mood or affective state facilitates the recall of affectively congruent material such that people in a good mood are more likely to recall positive information and those in a bad mood negative information. A negative effect might even influence working memory by mediating the effects of goal orientations, but a positive effect might not. The second route influences the use of different cognitive, regulatory and thinking strategies, which could then offer numerous types of achievement and performance outcomes. Positive effects as a general approach orientation ease more assimilation processes such as generative, top-down, and creative processes, including seeking out novelty.

In contrast, negative effects reflect more of an aversive or avoidance orientation and can result in more accommodation, including a focus on external information and details as well as being more stimulus-bound and less willing to make mistakes. The third route increases or decreases the attentional resources that are available to students. Emotions can take up space in working memory and increase the cognitive load for individuals. Under this cognitive load, any emotion, positive or negative, would allocate attentional resources and lead to reduced cognitive processing or performance. The fourth route is that

emotions can work through their effect on intrinsic and extrinsic motivational processes. Motivational and affective processes will interact to influence cognitive and behavioural outcomes. From the perspective of intrinsic motivation, that is, the experience of enjoyment and deep engagement in a task, negative emotions such as boredom should decrease the intrinsic motivation for undertaking the task, albeit some, like fear, also ought to increase the extrinsic motivation for the task.

Adolescence may be a time of great risk for most, at which they engage in behaviours or make decisions that usually have long-term consequences. They encounter emotional conflicts at some point since they are going through rapid and dramatic changes in body image, expected roles, and peer relationships. Essentially, the transition from elementary to middle school and then on to high school is quite stressful. Temporary though emotional distress that most adolescents will have handled successfully, some stresses can even lead to suicide attempts. Other emotions of this age group include anger, guilt, frustration, and jealousy. Preadolescents need help in realizing that these emotions are a natural part of growing up. Feelings of guilt often arise when there is a conflict between children's actions, mainly based on the values of the peer group and their parents. Anger is, however, a common emotion at this age and is displayed with

more intensity than others. Such emotional problems related to the physical, cognitive, and social development of middle or high school children are common as well. Some of the problems are emotional disorders, bullying, dropping out, drug and alcohol abuse, delinquency, risk of preg-



nancy or sexually transmitted diseases, and sexual identity.

Instead of trying to deal with problems after they are already serious, embedding preventive strategies into the regular curriculum should be carried out by such programs as introducing life skills training, focusing on making good decisions or resisting peer pressure, building norms

By Hu Wo (Cuckoo's Song)

of cooperation, altruism, or social responsibility, and involving community agencies to engage children in prosocial behaviours. Comprehensive whole-school reform models can have an impact

tant teachers will have to adapt their instruction to afford more individual choice of research projects and reporting the format, encouraging collaborative investigations by groups of stu-

on such high-risk behaviours as truancy and dropping out in middle and high schools. Maturing adolescents are beginning to take a more active part in the learning process, accept responsibility for their own learning, seek real-life applications of what is being learned, and bring their own experiences into consideration. Hence, senior assis-

ments. Also, classroom environments are most likely to allow improvement if they include a wide variety of learning materials that can foster emotional, social, linguistic, physical and academic development.

In fact, it is not hard to solve those common emotional problems. But sometimes, the problems are so complex that they

cannot be solved easily or practically. If the adolescent's disturbed state is to be alleviated, the adult needs to understand the background of an emotion-arousing situation and the habit patterns of the young person involved. Parents and teachers make good use of commendations to assist an adolescent in overcoming his real or fancied hurt, which may divert the wrath and reduce the tension. The practice of self-control is a matter of importance to the adolescent in all emotional states. There are many ways to solve emotional problems, some of which are removing the causes of the problem, making the child face the problem, and giving the child emotional outlets in accordance with traditional culture and customs. For parents, they must not be biased concerning their children. They are to guide the adolescent towards building high behaviour for himself. They should not criticize the behaviour of adolescents in the presence of others. If an adolescent shows undesirable behaviour in front of people outside the family group, the wise parent ignores such behaviour until he is alone with the adolescent. Penalties should never be administered when the parent is in an emotional state as well as parental attitude must be objective and consistent. Noticeably enough, a divided parental attitude gives rise to bewilderment in the adolescent. Either too much rigidity or too much laxity on the part of parents tends towards the weakening of adolescent confidence in parental judgement. And finally, parents should not set behavioural standards for their teenage children which they themselves do not even follow.

Study shows eye scans offer important information regarding kidney health

Scientists at the University of Edinburgh explored if 3D pictures of the eye's retina, captured with a method called optical coherence tomography (OCT), could help spot and predict the development of kidney disease.



The team looked at OCT images from 204 patients at different stages of kidney disease, including transplant patients, alongside 86 healthy volunteers. PHOTO: UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

ACCORDING to research, 3D eye scans can provide vital information about kidney health and help track disease progression.

The advance could revolutionize the monitoring of kidney disease, which often progresses without symptoms in the early stages.

Experts say the technology has potential to support early diagnosis as current screening tests cannot detect the condition until half of the kidney function has been lost.

Researchers used highly-magnified images to detect changes to the retina – the layer of tissue at the back of the

eye that senses light and sends signals to the brain. They found that the images offer a quick, non-invasive way to monitor kidney health.

The eye is the only part of the body where it is possible to view a key process called microvascular circulation – and this flow of blood through the body's

tinest vessels is often affected in kidney disease.

Researchers at the University of Edinburgh investigated whether 3D images of the retina, taken using a technology called optical coherence tomography (OCT), could be used to identify and accurately predict the progression of kidney disease.

OCT scanners

OCT scanners – used in most high street opticians – use light waves to create a cross-sectional picture of the retina, displaying each individual layer, within a few minutes.

The team looked at OCT images from 204 patients at different stages of kidney disease,

including transplant patients, alongside 86 healthy volunteers.

They found that patients with chronic kidney disease had thinner retinas compared with healthy volunteers. The study also showed that thinning of the retina progressed as kidney function declined.

SOURCE: ANI

NATIONAL



Deputy Minister for information U Ye Tint and Myanmar Arts and Culture Association officials participate in the 10th BRI Anniversary event at Shwedagon Pagoda yesterday.

Shwedagon Illuminated: 10,000 candles mark 10th BRI Anniversary

THE ceremony of lighting 10,000 candles at Shwedagon Pagoda was held at the building of the Yaykyitaw ritual team in front of the Pagoda platform at 5 pm yesterday to mark the 10th anniversary of the International Day of the Belt and Road, organized by the Myanmar Arts and Culture Association (Yangon).

Officials said prayers at the ceremony. Afterwards, Deputy Information Minister U Ye Tint and attendees offered ten thousand candles to the Shwed-

agon Pagoda, lit them in candle stands around the pagoda platform, and offered prayers.

The International Day of the Belt and Road is celebrated annually in countries related to the Belt and Road Initiative.

Yesterday's event was to mark not only the 10th anniversary of the International Day of the Belt and Road but also for the sake of the peaceful development of Myanmar and the peace of the world. — MNA/KZL



22th Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners Conference and Myanmar Traditional Medicine Seminar

20-22 December 2023

Nay Pyi Taw

MoTC delegation attends 8th GMS-CBTA Meeting

DEPUTY Minister of Transport and Communications U Aung Myaing led a delegation to the Eighth Meeting of the Joint Committee on the Agreement to Facilitate Cross-Border Transport in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region in Haikou, Hainan Province. The meetings focused on enhancing trade among member countries and addressing key transport facilitation issues crucial for promoting tourism

and investment.

During the pre-coordination meeting, the National Transportation Facilitation Committee discussed the Early Harvest MoU, emphasizing Myanmar's participation. The deputy minister highlighted plans for a memorandum of understanding with Thailand for cross-border transport and stressed the importance of collaborative efforts in implementing such activities in the

Greater Mekong Sub-Region.

The meeting concluded with significant outcomes, including signing the basic sub-contract for route expansion by the People's Republic of China, approving the CBTA Work Plan for 2024-2028, and releasing a joint statement. The event, hosted by member countries, sets the stage for future collaborations, with Laos hosting in 2024 and Myanmar in 2025. — MNA/KZW

Confiscated illegal items: Fuel oil, consumer goods, foodstuffs, industrial materials and vehicles



Seized illegal items.

DURING inspections on 13 December, the combined teams managed by the Mandalay Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force nabbed three vehicles, travelling from Hpa-an to Mandalay and Yangon to Mandalay, carrying 18 kinds of goods valued at K49.879 million, including 21 wooden wardrobes and 360 bags of Super Star wafer without official documents at the Myitnge Bridge on the outskirts of Mandalay,

700 bags of Ming Lan monosodium glutamate (25 kilogrammes each) worth K35 million without official documents at a warehouse in Pyigyidagun township and two Dongfeng tractor heads with a CMIC tank trailer and a Sengrun tank trailer (approximately K240 million), heading to Myitkyina from TadaU and Hopin from Yangon (Thilawa Port), carrying 8,500 gallons of locally refined diesel and 8,800 gallons of premium diesel worth K153.8 million without official documents near the Suhtupan Tollgate at the Milepost 45/3 on Mandalay-Singu Road. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

On the same day, the combined teams captured two kinds of goods worth K27,434,626, including 280 sets of meat grinders different from the Import Declaration (ID) in a container at the Asia World Port Terminal container check-

point. The action was conducted under Customs procedures.

On 14 December, the combined teams supervised by the Yangon Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force seized four gallons of illegal fuel oil and 12 gallons of illegal diesel valued at K138,865 in Hlinethaya (West) township, 30 gallons of fuel oil and eight gallons of diesel worth K366,680 in Insein township, 1,550 gallons of illegal diesel worth K13.733 million in Mingaladon township and 1,500 gallons of illegal diesel valued at K13.29 million in Hlinethaya (West) township. These actions were conducted under the Petroleum and Petroleum Products Law.

Seventeen arrests were made on 13 and 14 December, with an estimated value of K636,642,171, as reported by the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS

K4.51 mln worth of Happy Water captured in Tachilek

THE Myanmar Police Force seized K4.51 million worth of Happy Water in Tachilek township, according to Myanmar Police Force.

A combined team consisting of members of the Anti-Drug Police Force stopped and searched a motorbike driven by Ma Eilar near the Waylaylan village in Tachilek township at 5:30 pm on 14 December and seized 4.1 kilogrammes of Happy Water from a plastic bag.

The offender is prosecuted under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. — MNA/MKKS

Pope says has chosen his tomb — in Rome, not Vatican

This decision, marking the first time in over a century, diverges from the tradition of popes being interred within the Vatican, with the last exception being Pope Leo XIII, who died in 1903 and was laid to rest in the basilica of St John the Lateran in Rome.



Pope Francis engages in a wide range of responsibilities and duties related to his role as the spiritual leader of the Catholic Church. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ VATICAN MEDIA**

POPE Francis has chosen to be buried not in St Peter's Basilica alongside his immediate predecessors but in a basilica in

Rome, he revealed in an interview broadcast on Wednesday. "The place is already prepared. I want to be buried in

Santa Maria Maggiore," the Pope Francis, in the context of his Vatican activities, engages in a wide range of responsibilities and duties related to his role as the spiritual leader of the Catholic Church told Mexican broadcaster Televisa's N+ streaming service. In the same interview, he revealed he planned to visit Belgium in 2024, and also hoped to visit his native Argentina and Polynesia.

Francis's decision means he would become the first pope to be buried outside the Vatican for more than 100 years.

The last to eschew a tomb in St Peter's was Leo XIII, who died in 1903. His remains lie in the basilica of St John the Lateran in Rome. — AFP

5 minutes of physical activity valuable in late-stage lung cancer: Study

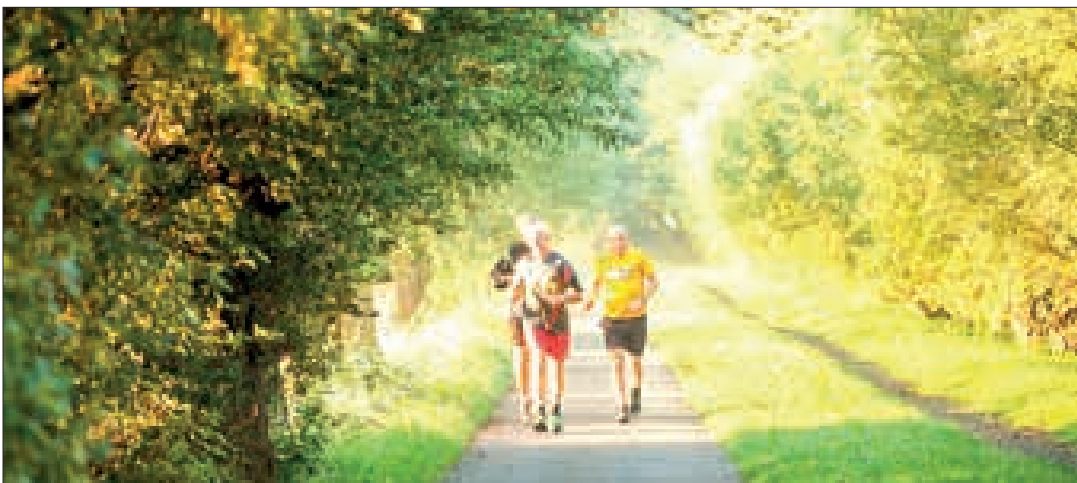
Despite being the most prevalent cancer, a Curtin University study found that individuals with incurable lung cancer might live longer with less than five minutes of daily physical activity.

LUNG cancer affects more individuals each year than any other malignancy. Nonetheless, a new study led by Curtin University revealed that people with incurable forms of the condition may survive longer if they engage in less than five minutes of

physical activity per day.

From the time of their diagnosis, 89 patients with incurable lung cancer had their daily activities monitored by a team from Curtin School of Allied Health, Curtin enAble Institute, and other research institutions.

They then compared the mortality rates after 12 months between those who engaged in more moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (such as walking) and those who were largely inactive — and saw significant results. — AFP



People with incurable forms of the condition may survive longer if they engage in less than five minutes of physical activity per day. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ PIXABAY**

French actor Isabelle Adjani gets massive tax fine

FRENCH actor Isabelle Adjani received a two-year suspended sentence and a 250,000-euro (\$264,000) fine for tax fraud from a Paris court on Thursday.

The star, a five-time winner at the Cesars — France's version of the Oscars — falsely claimed to be resident in Portugal in 2016 and 2017, judges found.

She also falsely declared a two-million-euro gift as a loan and moved 120,000 euros through an undeclared American account.

They highlighted the "seriousness of the crimes", which allowed Adjani to dodge 236,000 euros in income tax and 1.2 million in property sales tax.

"These facts show Isabelle Adjani's will to conceal things from the tax authorities (and) seriously harm citizens' equality under the tax system," the lead judge said.

"While (Adjani) may be an undeniably talented actress, she nevertheless remains subject to taxes," she added. — AFP



French actress Isabelle Adjani at the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France, on 22 May 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

TRENDING NEWS

France to tax turnover of music streaming platforms

THE French government on Wednesday said it would tax the turnover of online music streaming platforms from 2024, going against the proposals of industry titans including Apple, Spotify and YouTube.

The tax will finance the French music sector and will be based on a "very low rate" on the streaming platforms' turnover, the culture ministry told AFP.

France's Senate in November voted in favour of such a move, welcomed by some industry bodies but opposed by titans including Spotify as a "new production tax".

Critics of the tax have instead proposed voluntary contributions. In a joint statement on Wednesday, organizations including Apple, Deezer, Meta, Spotify, YouTube and TikTok said they had reached a deal to raise more than 14 million euros (\$15.2 million) in 2025. — AFP

Facebook parent Meta launches Threads app in the EU

FACEBOOK owner Meta's text-based app Threads finally arrived in the European Union on Thursday, months after its global launch in July, Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg said.

Threads is a spin-off of the Instagram photo app and is intended to be a rival to X, formerly known as Twitter. "Today we're opening Threads to more countries in Europe. Welcome everyone," Zuckerberg said on Threads. — AFP

ECONOMY WORLD

‘We have to endure’ - Argentines stoic as prices skyrocket

Argentina's government reduced the peso's value in a shock therapy for the economy, leading to increased prices and annual inflation reaching 160 per cent, with many items potentially skyrocketing for six to 12 months.

MARIA Mamani carries a fistful of new price stickers around a supermarket after Argentina's government slashed the value of the peso in half as part of “shock” therapy to the ailing economy.

“After the measures put in place by the government, we are increasing prices,” she told AFP, as annual inflation hit 160 per cent Wednesday. “Many things are starting to skyrocket and unfortunately that can last six to 12 months,” she said.

Miguel, the manager of another shop who did not want to give his surname, said price increases ranged from 20 to 60 percent, with some goods even doubling in value. “We have to pass it on to the client. There is no other choice. Next week it will go up again,” he said.

President Javier Milei, with three days on the job, has warned the country's economic crisis is likely to get worse before it gets better.

His government on Tuesday unveiled a raft of measures to revive an economy that spokesman Manual Adorni said was “in intensive therapy on the point of death.”

These range from the devaluation of the strictly controlled peso to a cut in generous transport and fuel subsidies. New public construction projects have been halted and all government advertising pulled.

The goal is to slash 25 billion dollars in spending, five percent of the country's GDP, in a bid to turn around a chronic fiscal deficit in Latin America's third-biggest economy.

Argentines, though concerned, seem resigned to the fate warned by Milei during his campaign with a symbolic chainsaw. Student Camila Heig, 18, with three jobs, acknowledges the challenges ahead and hopes for a better country amid tough months. — AFP



President Javier Milei has warned the country's economic crisis is likely to get a lot worse before it gets better. **PHOTO: AFP**

Eurozone business activity downturn deepens in December

BUSINESS activity in the eurozone slumped at a faster rate in December, weighed down by a deeper downturn in France, a key survey said on Friday.

The HCOB Flash Eurozone purchasing managers' index

(PMI) published by S&P Global fell to 47 in December from 47.6 in November. A figure below 50 indicates contraction.

The risk of recession in the 20-nation single currency area remains, analysts warned. — AFP

Japan ruling bloc OKs inflation-offsetting FY 2024 tax reforms

Japan's ruling parties approved tax reform plans for fiscal 2024, including a combined 40,000 yen (\$283) income and residence tax cut, to support inflation-hit households and child-rearing families, and spur wage growth.



Public support for the Japanese leader has faltered badly, and not even his focus on supporting households and bolstering the economy during a time of high and persistent cost-push inflation has helped his fortunes. **PHOTO: KYODO**

JAPAN'S ruling parties on Thursday approved tax reform plans for fiscal 2024 to support inflation-hit households and child-rearing families, while extending tax incentives to spur wage growth as part of Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's wealth redistribution push.

The open-ended plans call for a combined 40,000 yen (\$283)

income and residence tax cut to begin in June 2024, with any possible extension to be considered dependent on the economic conditions at the time.

An income cap will be imposed, excluding people earning 20 million yen or more annually from the key feature of Kishida's inflation-relief package.

While planning tax cuts, the ruling coalition of the Liberal Democratic Party and Komeito party deferred a separate decision on the timing of tax hikes to fund a pledge to substantially increase defence spending, with LDP tax policy chief Yoichi Miyazawa expressing hope that the increase will begin in fiscal 2026. — Kyodo

Rate pauses in view on busy central banking day in Europe

THE European Central Bank and the Bank of England were on Thursday expected to pause rates again as inflation retreats, while markets cheered the US Federal Reserve's clear signal that it would start slashing borrowing costs in 2024.

On a bumper day for central banks in Europe, policymakers were holding their final meetings of 2023 — a year marked by steep interest rate hikes to tame runaway consumer prices.

The Swiss National Bank kicked off Thursday's action by keeping its key interest rate at 1.75 per cent. SNB policymakers acknowledged that inflation-



The Swiss National Bank kicked off Thursday's action by keeping its key interest rate at 1.75 per cent. **PHOTO: WIKI MEDIA COMMONS**

ary pressures had eased but warned that rising electricity prices and rents could yet trigger a renewed inflation jump.

Norway's Norges Bank

bucked the trend by raising its main interest rate by a quarter percentage point to 4.5 per cent, warning that inflation remained too high. — AFP

Autonomous auto venture Cruise cuts 24% of staff

Cruise, the US autonomous driving venture owned by General Motors, is cutting approximately 900 jobs, or 24 per cent of its workforce, as it scales back commercialization efforts to address safety concerns following a widely publicized incident in California.

US autonomous driving venture Cruise announced Thursday it will eliminate roughly a quarter of its workforce as it slows commercialization to address safety issues.

The company, a subsidiary of General Motors, notified 24 per cent of its workers — or about 900 people — that they would lose their positions following a recent pause after a highly publicized incident in California.

President Mo Elshenawy said Cruise aims to resume operations in one market “and enhance our safety stand-



Activists from SafeStreetRebel shown in July placing a cone on a self-driving Cruise robotaxi to disable it in San Francisco. **PHOTO: AFP/ FILE**

ards and processes before we scale,” according to a message to employees.

“This is very different from our prior plans to expand into more than a

dozen new cities in 2024,” said Elshenawy, who has moved up in the company following the November departure of co-founder Kyle Vogt.

GM’s Cruise operation has been on hold since 27 October when it suspended operations after California halted testing of the robotaxis.

The venture has been under scrutiny after a self-driving car operated by Cruise ran over a woman who had first been knocked in front of it by a hit-and-run driver in San Francisco. The company has ordered independent reviews of the incident and the safety and technology, GM Chief Executive Mary Barra told Wall Street analysts on November 29. — AFP

Credit Agricole to stop financing fossil fuel projects

CREDIT Agricole, one of France’s biggest banks, announced Thursday it would no longer finance any new fossil fuel extraction projects, a day after delegates agreed the COP28 climate deal. Nearly 200 nations meeting in Dubai on Wednesday approved a first-ever call for the world to transition away from fossil fuels, tackling the top culprit of climate change after years of avoidance.

“In a context of climate emergency, we need to amplify our commitment towards measures supporting the transformation of society,” chief executive Philippe Brassac said in a statement.

In addition to not financing any new fossil fuel extraction projects, Credit Agricole said it

would adopt a selective approach to supporting energy players engaged in this transition.

This would “reduce green-house gas emissions of this sector twice as fast as the Net Zero 2050 scenario defined by the International Energy Agency”, it said. The Paris-based IEA has for several years designed a scenario that would see the world hit carbon neutrality in 2050 and keep alive hopes of limiting global warming to 1.5C. That scenario sees no need for the development of new fossil fuel resources. Banks have regularly come under criticism from climate activist groups for continuing to fund new fossil fuel projects as well as supporting the current activities of energy firms. — AFP



Credit Agricole, one of France’s biggest banks, announced Thursday it would no longer finance any new fossil fuel extraction projects, a day after delegates agreed the COP28 climate deal. **PHOTO: JEAN-YVESKORENIAN/AFP**

Airbnb agrees 576-mln-euro deal in Italy tax dispute

SHORTTERM rental platform Airbnb said Wednesday it has agreed to pay Italy’s tax agency 576 million euros (\$621 million) following allegations of tax evasion.

Italy’s financial police seized over 779 million euros from the online

accommodation service last month on the order of Milan prosecutors, who accused the site of having failed to collect a rental income tax from landlords in the period from 2017 to 2021. “Airbnb Ireland has finalised a settlement” which “covers host with-

holdings during the 2017 to 2021 period, for an aggregate payment of 576 million euros. We are not seeking to recover any of this sum from our hosts,” the company said.

“We are continuing our constructive engagement with the Italian

authorities for 2022 and 2023,” it added.

Airbnb use has grown dramatically in recent years across the world, with the US-based platform allowing users to find accommodation in a private home rather than a hotel. — AFP

The Global New Light of Myanmar

www.gnlm.com.mm

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ISEACO WISDOM VOY.NO. (104N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ISEACO WISDOM VOY.NO. (104N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **16-12-2023** 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 NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V PRINCESS MARIA VOY.NO. (306)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V PRINCESS MARIA VOY.NO. (306)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **17-12-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **YIGTL** where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S BEN LINE AGENCIES (S’PORE) PTE LTD

ROLLING UPDATES: WORLD



Pupils of the No 1 primary school in Fengtai District take a school bus tailor-made for their school in Beijing, capital of China, 1 September 2023. **PHOTO: JU HUANZONG/XINHUA**

Beijing pilots electric school bus service, minimizing carbon footprint

Beijing initiated a pilot school bus service in September for students in compulsory education, initially in four districts. The programme expanded to over 20 schools from the initial 13, with the daily passenger volume rising significantly from 811 to over 4,000.

GREETING the morning light, 10-year-old Chen Jiaqi from Haidian District in Beijing walked on her own to a bus station close to her home. Upon the arrival of a green electric school bus, a volunteer took off to take attendance while Chen hopped on and swiped to pay.

"My parent used to drive me to school, but it was frustrating to be stuck in the congestion leading to the school and particularly around the school gate," said the

pupil, adding that the school bus connects her home and campus seamlessly as it runs on the bus lane.

Catering for students receiving compulsory education, Beijing started to pilot the school bus service in four districts this September. The number of schools under the programme has risen to over 20 from 13 initially, with the average daily passenger volume increasing from 811 to more than 4,000. — Xinhua

Israel parliament passes new wartime budget

The Israeli parliament passed an amended 2023 budget on Thursday, allocating around 30 billion shekels (\$8 billion) with 17 billion shekels designated for supporting the war effort against Hamas.

THE Israeli parliament passed an amended 2023 budget on Thursday with new funds for the war against Hamas, following a bitter debate over money for settlements and ultra-Orthodox communities.

The additional fiscal measures, which total around 30 billion shekels (\$8 billion), passed with 59 votes in favour and 44

against in the 120-seat parliament.

Of the additional funds, 17 billion shekels are earmarked for supporting Israel's war effort.

The remaining 13.5 billion shekels will support civilians impacted by the conflict.

It comes three months into Israel's war against Hamas in

the Gaza Strip, aimed at destroying the militant group after its shock 7 October attacks which Israeli officials say killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians. The Hamas-run health ministry in the Palestinian territory says more than 18,700 people, mostly women and children, have been killed in the conflict. — AFP



An Israeli army self-propelled howitzer fires rounds near the border with Gaza in southern Israel on 11 October 2023. **PHOTO: MENAHEM KAHANA / AFP**

Israel tells top US official war will last 'months'

ISRAEL'S defence minister warned Thursday the war with Hamas would last "more than several months" as he met a top US official amid a rift between the allies over the timeline and conduct of the campaign.

The war, now in its third month, began after the Palestinian group's unprecedented 7 October attacks on Israel that Israeli officials say killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians. In response, Israel vowed to de-

stroy Hamas and launched an unrelenting military offensive that has left swathes of Gaza in ruins. The health ministry in the Hamas-run territory said 18,787 people have been killed, mostly women and children. — AFP



A Yemeni coastguard member loyal to the internationally-recognized government rides in a patrol boat in the Red Sea off of the government-held town of Mokha in the western Taiz province, close to the strategic Bab al-Mandab Strait, on 12 December 2023.

PHOTO: KHALED ZIAD / AFP

Yemen rebels hit cargo ship in latest Red Sea attack

YEMEN'S Huthi rebels struck a cargo ship in the Red Sea on Friday, causing a fire on deck in the latest of a near-daily series of attacks in the commercially vital waterway.

The Iran-backed Huthis, who control much of Yemen but are not recognized internationally, say they're targeting shipping to pressure Israel during its two-month-old war with Palestinian Hamas militants in

the Gaza Strip.

"We are aware that something launched from a Huthi-controlled region of Yemen struck this vessel which was damaged, and there was a report of a fire," the US defence official told AFP.

Speaking in Tel Aviv, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said: "While the Huthis are pulling the trigger, so to speak, they're being handed the gun by Iran."

The US defence official identified the ship as the Liberia-flagged Al-Jasrah, a 370-metre (1,200-foot) container ship built in 2016.

Private intelligence firm Ambrey said the vessel, owned by German transport company Hapag-Lloyd, "sustained physical damage from an aerial attack" north of the Yemeni coastal city of Mokha. — AFP

SPORTS

Mr Myanmar wins 4 title awards at Mr Friendship International 2023

MISTER Myanmar Maung Kaung Sitt said he got four title awards at Mister Friendship International 2023, held in Khon Kaen, Thailand.

The competition was held from 5 to 14 December, and Mr Myanmar was among the top 10 finalists. He grabbed Mister Phu Pha Man Winner, Mister Chart Influencer Award, Mis-

ter Popular by The Wellz Fitness Award and Best In Talent Award Title.

“I was in the Top 10 finalist and was sorry I couldn’t be in the Top 5. But I tried to get the title awards and was satisfied with that. I also feel thankful to each of my fans who support and cheer me up starting from the time I prepare for the

competition.”

Mister Myanmar Maung Kaung Sitt competed with the other international representative Misters from Korea, Thailand, Viet Nam, Laos, Cambodia and Japan in Mister Friendship International 2023, and he also performed with Myanmar’s traditional puppet dance at the show. — ASH/TRKM



Mr Myanmar Maung Kaung Sitt seen competing and receiving awards in the Mister Friendship International 2023.



The final match of the BEHS Football Tournery 2023-2024 for Boys in action yesterday.

BEHS Football Tournament 2023-2024 for Boys concludes

THE final match plus awarding event for the BEHS Football Tournament 2023-2024 for Boys was conducted at Wunna Theikdhi Stadium in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon, joined by the State Administration Council members.

In the final match, the Yangon Region team beat the Kayin State team 2-1 to claim the championship title. After the game, an

awarding ceremony was held, presenting memorable medals plus cash prizes to the Champion team, Yangon, second placed team Kayin State, the best players and the goalie.

The tourney was run from 4 to 15 December at the Wunna Theikdhi Stadium in Nay Pyi Taw, participated by 1,850 athletes plus coaches from various states and regions. — MNA/KZL

Man Utd face daunting test at Premier League leaders Liverpool

MANCHESTER United travel to the home of bitter rivals Liverpool this weekend desperate to avoid another humiliation but with all the signs pointing to a tough afternoon at Anfield.

Tottenham kick off the action at struggling Nottingham Forest on Friday, while in-form Aston Villa, fresh from impressive wins against Manchester City and Arsenal, travel to Brentford.

Manchester United enter li-

on's den

Struggling Manchester United, who left Anfield last season with their tails between their legs after a 7-0 drubbing, are facing a Liverpool team top of the Premier League and brimful of confidence.

Erik ten Hag’s team, dumped out of Europe this week by Bayern Munich, have lost 12 of their 24 games in all competitions this season. — AFP



Liverpool are top of the Premier League, with 11 wins in 16 matches. PHOTO: AFP

Messi tickets in Hong Kong snapped up in under an hour

TICKETS to see Lionel Messi in a Hong Kong friendly were snapped up in under an hour on Friday after nearly two million people queued online, organizers said.

The Argentine great and his Inter Miami side will face a Hong Kong XI at the 40,000-capacity Hong Kong Stadium on 4 February.

Football fans in the finance hub of 7.5 million logging in to the ticketing app on Friday morning faced a mammoth queue for tickets, which cost from HK\$880 to HK\$4,880 (\$110-\$625). “We are absolutely thrilled with the response from the fans,” said Michel Lamuniere, chairman and CEO of Tatler Asia, which is helping to stage the game.

Some social media users posted screenshots of the app showing an error message

which cited “traffic overload”.

Messi last played in Hong Kong in 2014, also for a friendly game.

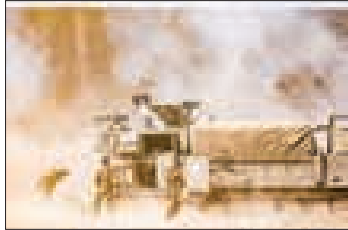
Miami co-owner David Beckham, who played in Hong Kong in 2003 soon after joining Real Madrid, previously

said the MLS club was looking forward to playing in a “beautiful city with a great sports scene”.

Miami’s line-up in Hong Kong will also include Jordi Alba and Sergio Busquets, according to organizers. The Hong Kong XI will be made up of players from the Chinese territory’s top division. — AFP



The Argentine great and his Inter Miami side will face a Hong Kong XI at the 40,000-capacity Hong Kong Stadium on 4 February. PHOTO: AFP



Russia to further increase energy supplies to China, attract investments to Russia – Novak



On Thursday Russian gas giant Gazprom said that it had discussed the upcoming 2024 cooperation plans with the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), including potential gas supplies from Russia through Mongolia. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/GAZPROM**

Novak strongly committed to close collaboration with China in the energy sector, outlining intentions to boost the supply of Russian energy to China and attract Chinese investments and advanced technologies for Russia's fuel and energy industry during the 20th meeting of the Russian-Chinese intergovernmental commission on energy cooperation in Beijing.

RUSSIA plans to further increase energy supplies to China and attract Chinese investments and technological innovations to the Russian energy complex, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak said on Friday.

“We are committed to the closest partnership with the Chinese side in the energy sector in all areas of cooperation. We are talking about further increasing the supply of Russian energy resources to the Chinese market, as well as attract-

ing Chinese investments and advanced technological solutions to the fuel and energy complex of the Russian Federation,” Novak said at the 20th meeting of the Russian-Chinese intergovernmental commission on energy cooperation in Beijing.

Trade turnover between Russia and China for 2023 has already exceeded 200 billion dollars, a third of these volumes came from energy resources, said Alexander Novak. — SPUTNIK

JOINING SPACE MISSION

Türkiye's 1st space traveller set to take off in January

TÜRKIYE'S first space traveller is set to blast off into orbit on 9 January of the next year, a Turkish official announced on Thursday.

“Starting on 9 January, Col Alper Gezeravci will take part in a space mission with Spanish, Italian, and Swedish astronauts,” Turkish Industry and Technology Minister Mehmet Fatih Kacir said on X, formerly known as Twitter.

As part of Türkiye's first manned space mission, Gezeravci will stay at the international space station for 14 days and carry out 13 different scientific experiments.

This mission, organized by Axiom Space, an American privately funded space infrastructure developer, will take a Turkish citizen to the international space station for the first time, the semi-official Anadolu Agency reported earlier.

In addition to Gezeravci, former NASA astronaut Michael Lopez-Alegria, a Spanish and US citizen, Italian officer Walter Villadei and Swedish ESA (European Space Agency) project astronaut Marcus Wandt will also be part of the mission Ax-3 crew, the agency reported. — Xinhua

Los Angeles buries its unclaimed Covid-year dead

Nearly 2,000 individuals who died in the first year of the Covid pandemic, unclaimed by family, were laid to rest in a communal grave in Los Angeles, honoured in a ceremony attended by religious, political leaders, and the public.

ALMOST 2,000 people who died during the first year of the Covid pandemic and whose bodies were never claimed were laid to rest in Los Angeles on Thursday.

The cremated remains were put in a communal grave in a ceremony attended by religious and political leaders, as well as several dozen members of the public.

“In 2020 sadly 1,937 residents passed away without a next of kin coming forward to claim their remains. And it is those lives that we honour... today,” said LA County Supervisor Hilda Solis.

“We know the desperate impact that Covid-19 had on our most vulnerable communities.

“In the county, the life of every resident... is very important to us, regardless of who (they) were, where they came from, where they lived, who they loved and how they passed.”

Los Angeles was among the worst affected counties in the United States



The nondenominational service is held in Los Angeles County every year to honour those who died three years earlier and whose bodies were never claimed.

PHOTO: DAVID SWANSON/AFP

when the Covid-19 pandemic struck, with around 3.7 million cases in the three years to March 2023, according to Johns Hopkins University.

The county recorded more than

35,000 deaths in that period, the university's data shows.

Thursday's ceremony is an annual tradition in the county that has happened since 1896. — AFP