

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing inspects new seven-storey medical building at Yangon General Hospital yesterday.

Healthcare facilities under disturbances and hardships unbeneficial for people

No matter what the government provides, healthcare services to the people will not be beneficial if people face disturbances and hardships to enjoy such rights, said Senior General Min Aung Hlaing. A ceremony to commission the new seven-storey

medical ward into service took place at Yangon General Hospital of the Ministry of Health on Anawrahta Road of Latha Township in Yangon Region as a gesture of hailing the 77th Anniversary of Union Day, with an address by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

In his speech, the Senior General underlined that all persons concerned need to consider how to shape a better State for the people.

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BUSINESS

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Myanmar generates over US\$264M from exports of commodities in Jan's second week

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Yangon Zoo's 118th Anniversary Festival: Four days of fun activities

Yangon's gold embroidery sales revive, attracting foreign buyers



Women creating gold embroidery artworks and Myanmar traditional gold embroidery paintings.

THE sale of gold embroideries has regained momentum in Yangon, a key market for such items, according to Daw Yamin Thu, Managing Director of Shwe Gon Thu Souvenir Shop in Bahan Township, Yan-

gon. Gold embroideries from Myanmar primarily attract foreign buyers, and since early 2023, demand has been resurging.

"The 14 square inches gold embroidery paintings are popular, especially as

gifts. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, there were 40 different designs available for this size. However, during the Covid-19 period in 2021, sales completely stopped. Only in late 2022, on arrival of some foreign travellers, did the market for gold embroidery items begin to show slight activity. In 2024, the industry is operating, although sales volumes have not yet reached pre-pandemic levels. Currently, we offer only 200 paintings with seven designs. Since most travellers are Thai, gold embroideries featuring the Shwedagon Pagoda and the Kyaiktiyo Pagoda are popular," explained Daw Yamin Thu. The designs predominantly showcase Myanmar traditions, including the Shwedagon Pagoda, Myanmar traditional music orchestras, peacocks, Myanmar bullock carts, Karaweik, pairs of Myanmar mythical birds, Buddhist monks on alms rounds, traditional drums, and related musical instruments, a flock of deer, and puppets. — ASH/ TMT

NATIONAL

Healthcare facilities under disturbances and hardships unbeneficial for people



SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing delivers a speech at the ceremony to commission the new seven-storey medical ward into service at Yangon General Hospital yesterday.

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He recounted that General Hospital is the largest one not only in Yangon an economic hub but across the nation and is reliable for all people, playing a pivotal role in teaching medical education to students in successive eras.

In retrospect, he continued that YGH was established with 483 beds in 1873 and then gradually upgraded to a 2,000-bed hospital in 2016.

The Senior General noted that the newly-opened medical ward built with a large sum of funds has been facilitated with modern medical and hospital equipment and experienced professionals to provide hi-tech medical treatment to the patients' people.

He urged all to develop a qualified healthcare service system with cheap patient costs and to ensure longevity for the people.

At the ceremony, the Senior General pressed the button to commission the seven-storey



An opening ceremony to commission the new seven-storey medical ward into service in progress at Yangon General Hospital in Yangon Region yesterday.

medical ward of YGH into service.

On occasion, the Senior General sprinkled scented water on the plaque of the building and heard reports on functions of x-ray and radiography, laboratories, haematological wards and other medical wards from

the newly-opened seven-storey building presented by officials.

The Union Minister for Construction handed over the documents related to the building to the Union Minister for Health.

After the ceremonies, the Senior General joined a tea party with attendees to com-

memorate the opening of the seven-storey medical ward.

Also present at the ceremony were Joint Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo, Council members and Union ministers, the Yangon Region chief minister and senior military officers.

Since its establishment, the

Salient points in the speech of the Senior General in opening the seven-storey medical ward

- Health care facilities under disturbances cannot be beneficial for patients.
- Yangon General Hospital plays a pivotal role in teaching medical education to students in successive eras.
- All were urged to create a qualified healthcare service system with cheap patient costs and to ensure longevity for the people.
- SAC built rural health centres and staff housings starting in February 2021 and established new medical wards at general hospitals in Magway, Monywa, Pyay, Hpa-an, Patheingyi and Sao San Tun Hospital, as well as public hospitals in regions and states.

State Administration Council has built rural health centres and staff housings starting from February 2021 and established new medical wards at general hospitals in Magway, Monywa, Pyay, Hpa-an and Patheingyi and Sao San Tun Hospital, as well as public hospitals in regions and states. Moreover, annexes were built at Waibagyi Specialty Hospital and Orthopaedic Hospital (Yangon), two-storey medical wards at 50-bed township hospitals, teaching buildings at Medical University and Nursing University, and opened branches for raising awareness of foods and drugs for the people. — MNA/TTA

National Objectives of 77th Union Day 2024

- To protect the perpetuity of the Union by the entire ethnic people through the Union spirit
- To join hands in harmony with the government, Tatmadaw, and the entire people to ensure the State stability and rule of law
- To promote all-inclusive livestock breeding-based manufacturing industries and MSMEs, ensuring the socioeconomic development of the entire ethnic people
- To make collaborative efforts of all ethnic nationals to ensure the prosperity of the nation and food security which are the two national visions
- To strive to emerge a modern and developing country, as well as a Union based on democratic and federal systems, by all ethnic nationals

NATIONAL

Vice-Senior General Soe Win said that engineering and information technology play a key role in the country's nation-building tasks and development undertakings.

Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win delivered an address at the launching of the Inter-Technological and Computer University Sports Competitions for the 2023-24 academic year under the Ministry of Science and Technology, which took place at Wunna Theikdhi Gymnasium-B in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

Speaking on the occasion, the Vice-Senior General said that the government arranges technological universities and universities of computer studies to teach engineering and IT subjects to students, and these extend more subjects suitable for the demand of relevant areas.

He disclosed that Nay Pyi Taw Technological University extends agricultural engineering subject to students for the improvement of modern techniques in agriculture and livestock farms.

Moreover, he continued that the Polytechnic University, combined with technological universities and universities of computer studies, will be established to turn out qualified hu-



Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win warmly greets athletes from relevant sports contingents bound for the competitions yesterday.

Polytechnic University to emerge for turning out qualified human resources for workplaces

Salient points in speech of Vice-Senior General Soe Win in launching the Inter-University Sports Competitions for 2023-24 AY

- Polytechnic University will be established to turn out qualified human resources.
- Engineering student-athletes had become university- and national-selected players as their fine traditions.
- Senior General has given guidance that sports activities must be done not only in sports season but in all seasons.

man resources for workplaces.

The Vice-Senior General explained that the inter-technological and computer university sports competitions aim to implement a comprehensive education system, uplift youths' physical and mental health and fitness and nurture youths to have five capacity strengths.

He recounted that the history of the sports sector mentioned that engineering student-athletes became university-selected and nationally selected-players as their fine traditions.

As such, he quoted the guidance of the Senior General as saying that sports activities must be done not only in sports season but in all seasons.

The Vice-Senior General expressed his pleasure that the Ministry of Science and Technology held just a football tournament last academic year but football, Sepak Takraw, badminton and table tennis events this academic year.

The Vice-Senior General cordially greeted those from relevant sports contingents bound for the competitions.

The competition will take place at Wunna Theikdhi Stadium and gymnasiums as well as football training grounds in Nay Pyi Taw from 21 January to 2 February with the participation of 14 sports contingents. — MNA/TTA

MoI UM pays tours to steel, pharmaceutical, textile factories in India



Union Minister Dr Charlie Than (2R) seen during his observation tours in India.

On 17 January, the Myanmar delegation led by Union Minister for Industry Dr Charlie Than visited the Durgapur Steel Plant by car from Kolkata.

Director Mr BP Singh explained the information about the Durgapur steel plant, the construction of the Durgapur plant and its annual growth, the fact that as the plant produces more than two million tonnes of steel per year, India produces more than

100 million tonnes of steel per year and is the second largest producer of steel in the world. When the Union minister enquired about the availability of raw materials (scrap) needed for the factory and the training and development of human resources, Mr BP Singh answered in detail.

Then, the Union minister exchanged souvenirs after touring the interior of Blast Furnaces that produce Liquid Steel, the

production of Square Steel Billet and Rectangular Bloom through Liquid Steel Converter; the output of train iron wheels and other wheels, the production of Structural Steel for construction at the Section Mill. In the evening, the Union minister attended a dinner hosted by West Bengal business people in Kolkata and explained in detail the information that the businessmen asked.

On the morning of 18 January, the Union minister met officials from the Bengal State Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Kolkata and exchanged views on issues such as joint ventures in medical treatment, solar installation, sending scholars, maintenance services for automatic control systems, transport, and assistance in steel production. In the afternoon, the Myanmar delegation led by the Union minister arrived on a flight from Kolkata to Ahmedabad and was greeted by the state security chief.


On the morning of 19 January, the Union minister, with his Myanmar del-

egation, visited Intas Pharmaceuticals Ltd in Ahmedabad City. Upon arrival, the officials explained the implementation of the work. When the Union minister and the delegation members asked what they wanted to know, the officials answered in detail. In the evening, the Union minister met Gujarat's Chambers of Commerce and Industry officials and exchanged views, including negotiation for bilateral trade with Indian industrialists investing in Myanmar.

On the morning of 20 January, the Myanmar delegation led by Union Minister Dr Charlie Than arrived at the Arvind textile factory in Gujarat State, where the person in charge of the factory explained the implementation of the business. Then, the Union minister and the delegation toured and observed the stages of the textile manufacturing process, followed by an explanation from the officials.

In the afternoon, the delegation left Ahmedabad, Gujarat State, Republic of India, and arrived back in Yangon yesterday morning. — MNA/TKO

NATIONAL



News Release

Publication of Year II Action Plan (2024) of the Judicial Strategic Plan 2023-2027

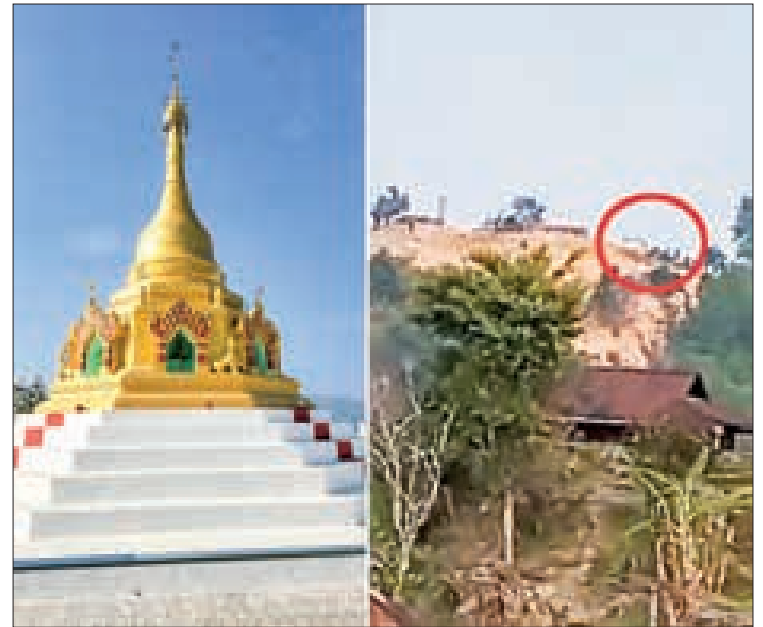
Nay Pyi Taw 22 January 2024

THE Supreme Court of the Union has been implementing the Third Judicial Strategic Plan (2023-2027) with the motto “Providing Justice by All”. The yearly Action Plans have been drawn and implemented in order to achieve the objectives of the Strategic Plan. The Year II Action Plan (2024) of the Judicial Strategic Plan (2023-2027) is published today in Myanmar-English versions.

The Judicial Strategic Plan for five years (2023-2027) has been set up to implement the Action Plans yearly as the strategic initiatives as per priorities in order to achieve the vision, mission and values of the judiciary with the five Strategic Action Areas; Facilitate and Expand Public Access to Court Services; Promote Public Awareness; Enhance Judicial Independence and Administrative Capacity; Promote and Ensure the Professionalism, Accountability and Integrity of the Judiciary; Promote Efficient Case Management and Court Specializations.

Therefore, Priority One initiatives of the Action Plan have been implemented in 2023, and incomplete actions from the previous year will be carried out this year. And then, the new initiatives will be targeted in the 2024 Action Plan.

The Year II Action Plan 2024 of the Judicial Strategic Plan is available on the Supreme Court of the Union website: www.unionsupremecourt.gov.mm.



Photos show the pagoda before and after destruction.

TNLA terrorists demolish pagoda using backhoe in northern Shan State

THE TNLA terrorists reportedly dismantled a pagoda, which was meticulously built by Buddhists, using a backhoe. The destruction began on 10 January and was completed by 20 January, during which terrorists also plundered treasure housed inside the pagoda.



A map shows the location of the pagoda.

The pagoda itself was initially constructed a long time ago by Palaung Sawbwagyi Maha Thray Sithu Sao Khun Pan Sein.

The intentional and disrespectful act of destroying the Buddhist pagoda by TNLA terrorists is considered a grave insult to Buddhism. Consequently, reports indicate that Buddhist

monks and citizens find these disrespectful actions unacceptable and strongly condemn them. — MNA/TRKM

Counter-argument to false information

False claims of conscription for military in Ayeyawady Region

IN certain townships within the Ayeyawady Region, misinformation is being spread by malicious news media, alleging that specific heads of a hundred households have resigned as they are forced to undergo military training. This false news is being circulated on social media platforms.

In response to these claims, a relevant administrative official has clarified that the reports stating that heads of a hundred households must attend military training are unfounded. The assertion that some heads of a hundred households have tendered their resignations is also untrue.

The spread of fake news by malicious news media on social networking sites aims to disrupt the peace and stability of towns and villages. It seeks to undermine the socio-economic well-being of the public and instil fear within the community. — MNA/KZW



Screenshot of misinformation.

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



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Printed and published at the **Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory** at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the **Global New Light of Myanmar Daily** under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.
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NATIONAL

DPM MoFA Union Minister attends 19th Summit of Non-Aligned Movement in Kampala, Uganda

AT the official invitation of the Republic of Uganda, the host of the 19th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe participated in the 19th Summit of the NAM, which was held on 19-20 January 2024, in Kampala, Uganda.

The Opening Ceremony of the 19th Summit of the NAM was held at the Rwenzori Convention Centre on 19 January 2024, and a Welcome Remark was delivered by Mr Jeyhun Bayramov, Minister of Foreign Affairs and head of delegation of Azerbaijan and current Chair of the NAM.

Then, Mr Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of Uganda, was elected by acclamation by all NAM Member Countries as the Chair of the 19th Summit of the NAM, and Azerbaijan handed over the Chairmanship of NAM to Uganda.

The Vice-President of Cuba and the Current Chair of the G-77 and China, the President of the 78th Session of the UN General Assembly and the Chair of the African Union Commission also delivered their Remarks, respectively.



Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe delivers his statement at the 19th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The heads of delegation of more than 80 countries attended the 19th Summit of the NAM, which was held on 19-20 January 2024, and delivered their country statements.

On the afternoon of 20 January, Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe delivered a statement at the Plenary Session of the 19th Summit of the NAM. In his statement, the Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs expressed his

sincere thanks to the Government and the people of Uganda for hosting this important Summit, and he congratulated Azerbaijan for the successful Chairmanship for the past four years. The Deputy Prime Minister added that the theme of this Summit, "Deepening Cooperation for Shared Global Affluence", is timely and most relevant to current global situations. He mentioned Myanmar's conviction that cooperation, engagement and solidarity among the

NAM members can overcome today's challenges and complexities. Having witnessed that our world is facing unprecedented challenges, he stressed the need for NAM to be more united to practically address the global issues of concern, conflicts and competition between great powers. The Deputy Prime Minister also highlighted that as a founding member of NAM, Myanmar wishes NAM to remain the most relevant platform for developing countries to address numerous

global issues and challenges. In his statement, the Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs also apprised the meeting of the Myanmar Government's efforts to ensure peace, development and democracy in the country and the latest developments in Myanmar.

On the evening of 19 January 2024, the President and the First Lady of Uganda hosted a State Dinner in honour of the heads of delegation of NAM Member Countries. The Third South Summit of the Group of 77 and China is being held in Kampala from 21 January 2024, and the Myanmar delegation led by U Myint Lwin, Myanmar Ambassador to Egypt, is attending the said Summit.

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is a forum that was founded in 1961 with the view to advancing the interests of developing countries.

At the 19th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), South Sudan was admitted as the newest member of the NAM. Therefore, 121 countries are now members of the NAM. Myanmar is a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement. — MNA

DPM MoFA Union Minister meets ministers of UAE, Bangladesh and Uganda at NAM's 19th Summit

ON the sidelines of the 19th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) held in Kampala, Uganda, U Than Swe, Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs, met Mr Khalifa Shaheen Almarar, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and head of delegation of the United Arab Emirates on 19 January 2024, Dr Hasan Mahmud, MP, Foreign Minister of Bangladesh and Hon John Mulimba, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Uganda on 20 January 2024 respectively at

the Rwenzori Convention Centre.

During the separate meetings with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bangladesh and Uganda, Myanmar's Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs apprised them of the Myanmar Government's efforts to ensure peace, development and democracy in the country and the latest devel-

opments of Myanmar. Furthermore, they cordially exchanged views and discussed matters pertaining to further strengthening of friendly relations between Myanmar-UAE, Myanmar-Bangladesh and Myanmar-Uganda, as well as closer collaboration in the regional and international fora, including cooperation in the NAM. — MNA

Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe shakes hands with the State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uganda.



NATIONAL

MoE UM inspects Aphyauk Natural Gas Field to boost natural gas production



Union Minister for Energy U Ko Ko Lwin hears the report by an official of the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) at Aphyauk Natural Gas Field on 20 January 2024.

UNION Minister for Energy U Ko Ko Lwin visited the Aphyauk Natural Gas Field under the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) on 20 January 2024 and observed oil fields Nos 50 and 54, where thin layers of sand were studied and researched to enhance natu-

ral gas production, ultimately leading to a genuine increase in production.

The Union minister-led team initially visited oil field No 60 of the Aphyauk Natural Gas Field, where oil exploration is ongoing. Officials explained the working processes of the

Aphyauk Natural Gas Field.

The Union minister remarked that reviving the operations of old natural gas fields after conducting proper research and development is considered a positive achievement for the country's oil and gas exploration efforts. He also encouraged

exploration in other oil fields to achieve results similar to those of the Aphyauk Natural Gas Field. The Union minister, mentioned that oil field No 60, currently undergoing exploration, is also expected to yield positive results. Relevant departments are making necessary arrangements to increase productivity in oil and gas fields with reduced output.

There is a need to study the required skills to leverage advanced technologies, and efforts are underway to integrate recent research and AI technologies for effective utilization in oil and natural gas exploration and production. This approach aims to calculate the trapped amounts of oil and natural gas in sedimentary rocks and thin layers of sand, leading to increased productivity.

Subsequently, the managing director of the MOGE cordially presented record photos honouring the renewal and increased productivity of oil fields Nos 50 and 54 of the Aphyauk

Natural Gas Field to the Union minister.

Discovered in 1991, the Aphyauk Natural Gas Field saw a decline in production, almost ceasing since 2019. Efforts are now underway to revitalize production. The natural gas produced by the Aphyauk Natural Gas Field is supplied to urea fertilizer factories, liquefied petroleum gas plants, and vehicles using Compressed Natural Gas (CNG).

While the required natural gas for CNG vehicles was previously combined with high-valued natural gases from Yadana, Zawtika, and Shwe offshore sites due to decreasing production from onshore sites, the increased productivity from the Aphyauk Natural Gas Field allows for a reduction in mixing with offshore gases.

Increasing natural gas production from the thin layers of sand in the Aphyauk Natural Gas Field is considered a significant milestone for the MOGE. — MNA/TMT

Mon Empress Shin Saw Pu's Buddha statues temporarily housed at Yangon City Hall

ACCORDING to the Yangon City Development Committee, the Buddha statues donated by Mon Empress Shin Saw Pu will be kept at the Yangon City Hall for two days. Buddha images named Aung Theikdi Thitsar Shin, Aung Theikdi Sekkyashin, Aung Theikdi Myittashin, and Aung Sekkya Muni, donated by the Mon Empress at Sutaungpyae Pagoda, Kyaikmaraw Township, Mon State, will be placed in the City Hall on 21 and 22 January.

Officials from YCDC consulted about issues related to the offering of food, the offering of flowers, the offerings of the Buddha statues, and the preservation of the Buddha statues. — TWA/KZL

Enhancing agri & livestock activities in Yangon Region through fieldwork

DEPUTY Minister for Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation Dr Aung Gyi inspected goods storage facilities at the central depot in Nwekhwe, Mingaladon Township. Kaugkin Company, Gon Hein Thit Company, Hexagon Company, Farm Power Company Ltd, and Golden Key Company Ltd lease the depots. These companies hold leases for the Nwekhwe central storage station in Mingaladon Township.

The deputy minister proceeded to Hlawga and assessed the experimental hatching of new domestic and foreign fish varieties at the fish farm. He also evaluated research on rare regional fish species, conditions of fish hatcheries, and methods of fish farming. Discussions focused on surpassing annual

fish hatchery production targets, conducting continuous fish injection clinical courses, ensuring surplus fish food, and conserving rare local fish species. Emphasis was placed on government management strategies for the sustainable exploitation of fish resources, including releasing fingerling into natural waters and commercial breeding.

Subsequently, the deputy minister visited First Golden Dragon Construction Company Limited, which operates on land owned by the Department of Fisheries in Insein Township. He examined the ongoing project, assessed plans, and inspected the areas designated for constructing a fishing trawler port and the road.

In the evening, a meeting



Deputy Minister Dr Aung Gyi looks into conditions of fish hatcheries, and methods of fish farming in Yangon Region.

was held with regional agriculture authorities at the meeting hall of the Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department. Discussions centred around local surplus food security, expanding the cultivation of monsoon and

summer paddy, diversifying the cultivation of various peas to achieve target yields, ensuring an adequate supply of oils for local consumption, and expanding the cultivation of sesame and winter peanuts. — MNA/TRKM

Hinthada chillies arrive in market at high price

ACCORDING to chilli traders, Moehtaung new chilli and red long new chilli from Hinthada have arrived in the Yangon market since 18 January.

Prices of Moehtaung new chilli and Hinthada red long chilli are K13,000 per viss and K13,500 per viss, respectively. However, demand is relatively low due to the high prices.

The report states that prices of other chillies within these days are Thazi long new chilli at K13,000 per viss and pinky red long fresh chilli from Salin at K13,000 per viss. Turning to the detailed features of the chillies, the Thazi long chilli is observed to have a dulled colour with a thin exocarp (pepper wall), while the Hinthada long chilli is curved in shape. Only pinky red long chilli has high demand.

Moehtaung chilli with a cold storage process is priced at K10,800 per viss, Moehtaung from Pyawbwe, Yamethin, and Thedaw townships is priced at K10,500 per viss, Moehtaung from Shan State is priced at K10,000 per viss, whereas Moehtaung from Hinthada is priced



Moehtaung chillies and some chillies thriving in the farm bearing fruits.

at K13,000 per viss. Chillies whose pedicels are removed and monsoon chilli are mostly transported to border cities.

The report further states that chillies from the Wakema, Einme, Shwelaung, and Pantanaw regions are expected to arrive in the Yangon market during the Thingyan period. Left-over long chillies produced by

those regions last year remain in some warehouses. Although the prices range between K6,000 and K7,000 per viss, only the chillies should be used for roasting since the colour changes brown.

Chilli prices are declining these days, and therefore, prices of the new bell pepper from Sinphyukyun have reduced from K18,000 to K14,500/K15,000 per

viss within these days. Pinky red long chilli from Salin has dropped from K13,500 per viss to K13,000 per viss.

Prices on 19 January 2023 were red long new chilli from Hinthada at K13,000 per viss; pinky red new chilli was K12,000; Moehtaung at K12,000; and fresh bell pepper from Sinphyukyun K16,000, according to the statis-

tics of old information.

Chilli prices are expected to decline since the production of chillies from Delta regions is getting high, a trader of chilli and turmeric from Seinpan Street of Bayintnaung Depot told the Global New Light of Myanmar.

On 24 November 2022, Sinphyukyun new bell pepper arrived in the Yangon market with K29,000 per viss, and one month later, on 24 December, the prices declined to K12,000/13,000 per viss. On 19 December 2023, it arrived in the Yangon market with K19,000 per viss. On 20 January 2024, the price was K15,000 per viss.

Fresh chillies from Hinthada have reportedly arrived in the Yangon market a few months earlier than chillies from other regions of the Delta area. Therefore, the prices of Hinthada chillies are pretty high.

However, sale turnovers in Yangon's Bayintnaung market are relatively low, with few transactions and few trucks entering, the traders told The Global New Light of Myanmar. — TWA/TMT

Myanmar generates over US\$264M from exports of commodities in Jan's second week

ACCORDING to statistics released by the Ministry of Commerce (MoC), exports exceeded US\$264 million from 6 to 12 January. The major exported items included rice, broken rice, beans and pulses, fruits, rubber, and sesame.

The Myanmar Rice Online — MyRo system, an online registration system for warehousing rice, has been implemented by the MoC and the Myanmar Rice Federation to supervise rice exports, prioritizing sufficient domestic stock and price stability. Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Belgium, Cameroon, Slovenia, Italy, Croatia, Bulgaria, and the Ivory Coast were the primary purchasers of rice from Myanmar during the week.

A total of 326 tonnes of



Bags of rice being loaded onto the vessel for export.

rubber were exported during the week, generating approximately US\$10 million. Ribbed

Smoked Sheet Rubber (RSS Rubber) and mixture rubbers were mainly shipped to China,

Malaysia, Japan, Viet Nam, Indonesia, and South Korea, while rubbers were delivered to China and Thailand via the border trade route.

The ministry urges the extension of cultivation and productivity of seasonal agricultural produce and tree crops such as rubber to increase agriculture and livestock item exports. Latex can be collected from seven or eight-year-old trees, and the country has already secured a reasonable global market share. The Myanmar Rubber Planters and Producers Association and relevant departments continuously collaborate on arrangements to produce rubber.

Rubber production is directly linked to Goal 8 of the Sustainable Development

Goals — 'promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment, and decent work for all.' According to the Agriculture Department's statistics, Myanmar produces 300,000-400,000 tonnes of rubber annually.

The ministry also states that promoting rubber exports and producing import-substitute goods are expected to be fundamental factors for the country's economic growth. The ministry urges relevant departments, technicians, experts, and stakeholders to collaborate on producing creative, innovative, and quality products and raw materials, increasing manufacturing items, and boosting investments in manufacturing, production, agriculture, and export sectors. — MNA/TMT

OPINION

Set plans for the storage of water for consumption and cultivation

Myanmar predominantly relies on rainwater in many regions, accumulating over 200 inches of rainfall annually, particularly during the monsoon season. The delta region receives around 100 inches, while coastal areas experience approximately 200 inches annually.

The collected rainwater is stored in various natural reservoirs, including lakes, rivers, creeks, and hilly areas. Additionally, man-made structures such as lakes, reservoirs, and dams contribute to routine water supply. Earthen lakes, meticulously dredged by residents, are vital drinking water sources. However, water from other natural sources undergoes treatment in dedicated plants to meet the required standards for public consumption.

Authorities in different regions and states emphasize the importance of water supply for both public use and agriculture. Irrigation

facilities, crucial for crop cultivation, are as significant as meeting the water needs of the general population. Exploring water sources and utilizing treated water for the people are key components of these efforts.

That is why not only the governments at different levels but also residents have to widen their scopes of knowledge to sustain the climatic conditions with extraction and reforestation measures in equal balance and emphasize storage of water by all means for local consumption and agricultural purposes so as to change socioeconomic life of residents from arid zones of Myanmar in the future.

While rain-fed areas in the country generally do not face severe water shortages throughout the year, certain dry regions, particularly in the central part of Myanmar, encounter water scarcity, especially during the open season and summer. Residents in these arid zones not only grapple with water shortages but also contend with higher temperatures compared to other areas.

Addressing these challenges is imperative to alleviate the suffering of the affected population. Relevant government departments are

actively sinking tube wells and dredging earthen lakes to store and supply water in these regions. Ongoing efforts aim to provide essential water supply facilities to mitigate the hardships the local communities face.

Furthermore, improving the climatic conditions in arid zones hinges on strategic reforestation and forest conservation efforts. A systematic approach to timber extraction, coupled with regrowth initiatives, ensures a balance that does not harm the climate of the relevant regions. Moreover, such actions contribute positively to water storage in these areas.

Concerted efforts at various levels are crucial to solving water shortage problems and mitigating the impacts of dry zones in Myanmar. The government's initiatives in sinking tube wells and dredging earthen lakes, coupled with reforestation measures, collectively aim to transform the water supply scenario and enhance the overall climatic conditions in arid regions.

That is why not only the governments at different levels but also residents have to widen their scopes of knowledge to sustain the climatic conditions with extraction and reforestation measures in equal balance and emphasize storage of water by all means for local consumption and agricultural purposes so as to change socioeconomic life of residents from arid zones of Myanmar in the future.

China is building a deep underground laboratory in a hard and integrity granite in northwestern China's Gobi Desert to facilitate experiments for the final disposal of high-level radioactive waste (HLW).

The Beishan Underground Research Laboratory, with a total investment of over 2.7 billion yuan (about 379 million US dollars) and a depth of 560 metres, is being constructed in the northwestern part of China's Gansu Province, according to the China Atomic Energy Authority (CAEA).

About 99 per cent of the radioactive waste produced by the nuclear industry is classified as low- and intermediate-level radioactive waste, whose radioactivity decays to a harmless level after a few decades or a few hundred years, according to Wang Ju, the chief scientist in radioactive waste disposal of China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC).

Potential threat to the environment

Only about one per cent of the remaining waste is HLW, which poses greater potential threat to the environment and should be disposed of safely for tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands of years.

"After more than half a century of development of atomic energy technology, the safe disposal of HLW is becoming a common challenge to all countries in the nuclear industry," Wang said.

At present, the method to dispose of HLW that has been widely accepted by the international community is to bury HLW in a stable geological formation about 500 to 1,000 metres deep underground to achieve isolation of it for more than 10,000 years.

When Wang started to look for the site for China's HLW repository in the 1990s, he had no idea the search would last for nearly three decades.

The site selection has very strict requirements. Wang and his team have travelled all over the potential sites in northwest China. They drilled about 100 deep boreholes in more than 20 years, with the drill cores they obtained adding up to 60 kilometres long.

The team found Beishan as the ideal site. Located in northwestern China's Gobi Desert, Beishan covers an area as large as south China's Hainan Province, with a dry climate and scarce groundwater. It sits on granites aged about 260 million years, which forms an area with low chance of crustal movement.

In Beishan, Wang led the team to find a granite mass with integrity with an area equivalent to half of Beijing city.

"I've never seen a rock mass with such excellent integrity. The more integrity the rock mass is, the better natural barrier can be formed for HLW."

Experts at home and abroad who had visited Beishan believed that it is one of the candidates

Potential site search for high-level radioactive waste disposal

Underground Research Laboratory, in the Gobi Desert's northwestern region to conduct experiments on the final disposal of high-level radioactive waste. The project, overseen by the China Atomic Energy Authority, involves an investment exceeding 2.7 billion yuan and reaches a depth of 560 metres in Gansu Province.



This file photo taken on 5 December 2021 shows a part of the Beishan Underground Research Laboratory in northwest China's Gansu Province. PHOTO: WANG JU/XINHUA

for HLW repository with the best comprehensive conditions in the world.

In 2011, Beishan was identified as the preferred candidate site for China's HLW repository.

Wang proposed to build an underground laboratory in Beishan's granites to evaluate

the feasibility for HLW disposal, which was also approved by the authorities later.

New study on water molecules contradicts textbook models

Researchers have found that the organization of water molecules on the surface of saltwater differs from previous assumptions. Various crucial reactions related to climate and environmental processes, such as ocean water evaporation, are influenced by the interaction of water molecules with the air.

A team of researchers discovered that water molecules on the top of saltwater are organized differently than previously assumed.

Many key reactions linked to climatic and environmental processes occur when water molecules interact with air. For example, the evaporation of ocean water is significant in atmospheric chemistry and climate

research. Understanding these responses is critical to attempts to reduce human impact on our world.

Distribution of ions

The distribution of ions at the air-water interface can influence atmospheric processes. However, a clear understanding of the microscopic events at these critical surfaces has thus far been hotly

contested.

In a paper published in the journal Nature Chemistry, researchers from the University of Cambridge and the Max Planck Institute for Polymer Research in Germany show that ions and water molecules at the surface of most saltwater solutions, known as electrolyte solutions, are organized in a completely different way than traditionally

understood.

This could lead to better atmospheric chemistry models and other applications.

The researchers set out to study how water molecules are affected by the distribution of ions at the exact point where air and water meet. Traditionally, this has been done with a technique called vibrational sum-frequency generation (VSFG).

Laser radiation technique

With this laser radiation technique, it is possible to measure molecular vibrations directly at these key interfaces.

However, although the strength of the signals can be measured, the technique does not measure whether the signals are positive or negative, which has made it difficult to interpret findings in the past.

Additionally, using experimental data alone can give ambiguous results.

The team overcame these challenges by utilizing a more sophisticated form of VSFG, called heterodyne-detected (HD)-VSFG, to study different electrolyte solutions. They then developed advanced computer models to simulate the interfaces in different scenarios

The combined results



An artist's depiction of the liquid-like layer of molecules repelling water droplets. CREDIT: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ EKATERINA OSMEKHINA/AALTO UNIVERSITY

showed that both positively charged ions, called cations, and negatively charged ions, called

anions, are depleted from the water/air interface. The cations and anions of simple electrolytes

orient water molecules in both up- and down-orientation.

Green energy solution

Ji who is a father of a son and a daughter said: "We need to provide a complete green energy solution without radioactive risk for our next generation".

The depth of the Beishan lab will exceed the height of Beijing's tallest building. It is the first project in the world to excavate a spiral tunnel in the deep, extremely hard rock by using a tunnel boring machine.

"The traditional method of drilling and blasting will cause greater damage to the surrounding rock. To minimize the damage to the rock and ensure the stability and safety of the underground tunnels, we plan to grind down the rock by mechanical excavation," said Chen Liang, now in charge of a geological research institute under the CNNC and deputy chief designer of the laboratory.

The laboratory, expected to be completed in 2028, will become the largest underground lab with the most functions in the field of HLW disposal in the world, providing an experimental platform and support for the final safe disposal of HLW in China, and contributing Chinese wisdom to solving this challenge facing the world.

SOURCE: Xinhua

ARTICLE

A "three-step" strategy

China has formulated a "three-step" strategy for the disposal of HLW, from site selection to building an underground laboratory, and then to the construction of a final repository. The ultimate goal is to build a repository around 2050. The construction of the Beishan Underground Research Laboratory was started in June 2021.

In order to construct this grand project, Wang's team brought together talent from different professional backgrounds, such as geology, rock mechanics, underground engineering, hydrogeology and geochemistry.

Chen Liang, an underground engineering expert, gave up his tenured position at the Centrale Nantes in France, and joined Wang's team in the Gobi Desert.

"The project for the disposal of HLW could give full play to what I have learned. Solving this problem is of great importance to the country, and my life will become more meaningful in contributing to this cause," Chen said.

Working in the uninhabited areas with the biting wind in winter, scorching heat in summer, as well as frequent sandstorms, Chen and his teammates conducted a large number of experiments on the characteristics of the rocks to verify the safety of the underground engineering construction.

Ji Ruili, who has worked in Beishan for more than 20 years, conducted borehole hydrological

SOURCE: ANI

NATIONAL

YPS QR code introduced on five YBS lines

YANGON Payment Service (YPS) has announced the applicability of the YPS QR code on five YBS bus lines. As of 19 January, YBS-43 and YBS-65 have been operational, and YBS bus line YBS-131 started accepting the YPS QR code on 11 January. Additionally, YBS-55 and YBS-57 now support the YPS QR Code.

To use the YPS QR code, users must download the MPyys+ Application (Android

Version), which is available for download on Google Play Store. QR code stickers have also been placed on the two lines for easy access, enabling users to download and use the MPyys+ application conveniently.

YPS QR code top-up services are accessible at YPS card sales counters, YPS sales staff, G & G convenience stores, Mingala movie theatres, Capital department stores, and Wellington pharmacy. — TWA/KZW



Smooth rides made easy: Use the YPS QR code when approaching YBS 57 vehicles.

Yangon Zoo's 118th Anniversary Festival: Four days of fun activities

THE 118th Anniversary Festival of Yangon Zoo, the longest-running establishment in Southeast Asia, is scheduled to take place over four days, starting on 25 January. The festivities from 25 to 28 January will feature various enjoyable activities.

The event promises a diverse lineup, including music and dance shows, magic performances, opportunities for taking photos with tame animals, game programmes for children, quiz shows, and market fairs. The Yangon Zoo invites people to join fun festivities while remembering joyful past events in the Yangon Zoological Gardens.

Yangon Zoo currently houses a collection of 1,065 animals across 135 species, comprising 49 species of 465 mammals, 68 species of 427 birds, and 18 species of 183 reptiles.

Situated in Mingala Taungnyunt Township, Yangon Zoo spans 58.16 acres, bordered by



The poster bears images of the 118th anniversary of the Yangon Zoo Festival. PHOTO: YANGON ZOO

Upper Pansodan Road to the east, Kaba Aye Pagoda Road to the west, Bo Min Khaung Road to the south, and Kanyeiktha Road to the north. Notable landmarks near Yangon Zoo include the Shwedagon Pago-

da, Kandawgyi Hotel, Aung San Stadium, and Yangon Railway Station.

Officials expect a more significant number of visitors to join the festival this year. — MT/TWA/TRKM

Sustaining biodiversity, glacial ecosystems in Phonkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary: Conservation efforts

IN the ongoing efforts to ensure biodiversity sustainability, crucial to the global ecosystem, wildlife conservation initiatives are actively taking place in the Phonkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary, as reported by the Nature and Wildlife Conservation Division of the Forest Department.

Situated within the ASEAN region, this sanctuary holds significance as a vital glacial area. It is a habitat for diverse wildlife, including glacial animals, indigenous birds, ice fishes, medicinal herbs and tubers, orchids, and wintering birds.

An official from the division stated, "The Phonkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary is connected to the Phonkanrazi National Park. Black-necked cranes, a rare wintering bird species, used to inhabit this sanctuary for over



Some natural sceneries at the Phonkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary.

a month around October before migrating to Hukawng Valley, Indawgyi Lake, Inlay Lake, and

Moeyungyi Wetland. The Forest Department is committed to preserving this natural land-

scape and its biodiversity."

These migratory birds typically return around March and

April before heading towards the North Pole. The sanctuary, known for attracting birdwatchers and alpinists, is covered by pines, deciduous forests, alpine shrubs, and mountainous temperate forests, creating a haven for 370 bird species, 360 varieties of butterflies, and 82 reptiles and amphibians. Notable inhabitants include muntjac, eastern hoolock gibbon, red goral, small Asian mongoose, and jackal.

Visitors to the sanctuary engage in various activities such as sightseeing in the snowy terrain, trekking, rafting, research, and flower observation. Established in 2003, the sanctuary spans the townships of Machanbaw, PutaO, and Nagmon, covering an area of 2,703.9 square kilometres. — ASH/NT

Tokyo bus operator banks on foreign drivers as shortage looms

A Tokyo bus operator has declared its desire to hire foreign drivers, hoping the move will prompt Japan to open up the job to people from abroad as the country grapples with a growing labour shortage in the public transport sector.

Tokyu Bus Corp. President Takashi Furukawa wants to set a precedent for fellow bus operators that are in desperate need of drivers, drawing on his experience working in Viet Nam where he once helped introduce Japanese know-how in running transport services.

Furukawa acknowledges a host of challenges may lie ahead before the day finally comes when a foreign national can drive a bus for his roughly 2,000-employee company. It may not be an easy road but it's worth paving, he said.

"We want to do everything at our disposal. Hiring foreign drivers is one of them," Furukawa said in a recent interview. "It's obvious that the shortage of drivers will become even more severe. The plan is to start off with a few drivers from overseas."

"Safe driving comes before anything else. But bus drivers should be able to respond to emergency situations, and hospitality or the ability to communicate with customers, with smiles, is also required of them," Furukawa said.

Long known for its strict immigration policy, Japan has been gradually opening its doors to foreign workers in recent years. In 2019, it began to accept workers with specialized skills in such sectors as nursing care. Those workers can stay in Japan for up



Tokyu Bus Corp President Takashi Furukawa speaks during an interview in Tokyo on 21 December 2023. PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ TOKYUBUS

to five years, and for an unlimited period if their status is upgraded.

The number of sectors cov-

ered by the specialized skilled worker status has since in-

creased to 12 and the govern-

ment is considering adding bus, taxi and truck drivers to the list.

— Kyodo

Blue pullover with grey trousers to become France's school fashion

President Emmanuel Macron has expressed his support for the implementation of school uniforms in 2026. About 100 schools will experiment with the new dress code.

IF the French government has its way, children could soon be going to school in uniform blue pullovers and grey trousers as part of President Emmanuel Macron's campaign to make education more equal and orderly.

A government source on Friday confirmed to AFP the typical uniform that authorities want to see used in a new experiment that Macron announced this week as part of his effort to instill national pride and counter the growing popularity of the



The French government is proposing a standard school uniform for children. PHOTO: FREDERICK FLORIN / AFP

far-right.

Uniforms have long been a par of daily life for children in Britain, Japan, much of the

United States and other countries. But they have long been resisted in France and other European countries. — AFP

94-year-old star channels Tom Cruise in 'Thelma'

PACKED full of nail-biting chases, hi-tech gadgets and an armed standoff, "Thelma" could be the next "Mission: Impossible" movie — except its star, June Squibb, is 94.

In the film, Squibb's hero

takes matters into her own hands after she is swindled into sending \$10,000 to a scammer, racing across Los Angeles on a souped-up mobility scooter with a dusty old gun, determined to confront the villain. Remarkably,

the action-comedy, which premiered at the Sundance festival on Thursday, is the first leading film role for the veteran stage actor, who earned an Oscar nomination for "Nebraska" a decade ago. — AFP

Social media firms bolster monitoring of Japan quake misinformation

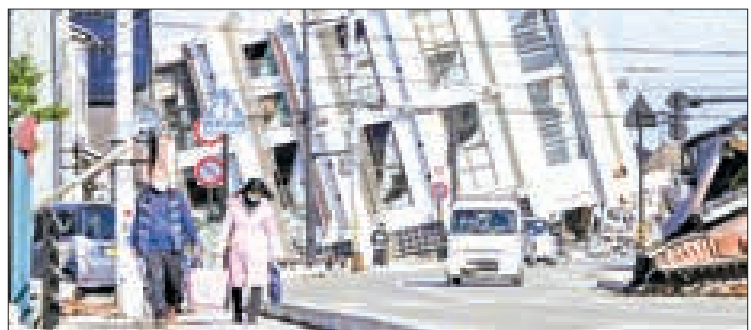
Social media platforms, including Line and Twitter (now X), are intensifying their efforts to monitor and prevent the spread of misinformation regarding the recent powerful earthquake in central Japan.

SOCIAL media platforms are strengthening their monitoring of misinformation on their platforms concerning a recent powerful earthquake that hit central Japan, as the government asks them to take specific measures to prevent such posts from hampering rescue efforts, the communications ministry said Friday.

LY Corp, the operator of

the Line messaging app and the portal site Yahoo Japan, and X, formerly known as Twitter, have implemented steps to keep misinformation about the quake that struck the Noto Peninsula in Ishikawa Prefecture on New Year's Day from spreading, according to a panel at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

— Kyodo



A collapsed building caused by the New Year's Day earthquake is seen in Wajima, Ishikawa prefecture, in Japan on 2 January 2024. PHOTO: KYODO

ECONOMY WORLD

China's industrial economy makes solid progress in 2023

China's industrial economy showed significant advancement in 2023, particularly in areas like the automotive sector and 5G technology

CHINA'S industrial economy made sound progress last year, with multiple areas including the automotive sector and 5G technology recording notable development.

In 2023, China remained the world's top manufacturing hub, achieving this feat for a 14th consecutive year, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) said Friday.

The country's large manufacturing enterprises, each of which has an annual main



A worker is seen at a workshop of a new energy cell material company in Qinzhou port area of the China (Guangxi) Pilot Free Trade Zone in south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region 29 November 2023. **PHOTO: ZHANG AILIN/XINHUA**

business turnover of at least 20 million yuan (about 2.8 million US dollars), saw their combined value-added output increasing

five per cent year on year in 2023, said Xin Guobin, vice-minister of the MIIT, at a press conference.

The total value-added industrial output of large enterprises went up 4.6 per cent year on year in 2023, an increase of

one percentage point compared with 2022, Xin said.

By the end of November last year, the number of large industrial enterprises in the country had reached 483,000, up by 32,000 from the number recorded at the end of 2022, he added.

Specifically, the electrical machinery and equipment and automotive industries managed double-digit growth last year, while sectors such as iron and steel, non-ferrous metal ores mining and petrochemicals saw accelerated recovery.

China's booming automotive sector, one of the country's important pillar industries, logged massive growth, set multiple historic records and made great contributions to the steady development momentum of China's economy last year. — Xinhua

Africa in debt spiral as restructuring efforts drag on

WHILE the explosion of debt is throwing a shadow over global economic growth, experts warn that sub-Saharan Africa, where several countries are already in default, is experiencing its worst-ever crisis.

The rise in interest rates and over-indebtedness is already crimping the ability of countries to finance their development, as a number of African leaders emphasized at appearances at the World Economic Forum in Davos.

The origins of the crisis

Following the 2007-2009 global economic crisis central

banks in industrialized countries have generally kept interest rates low and countries from the Global South, which had mostly been borrowing bilaterally or from international financial institutions, gained unprecedented access to financial markets.

"Many developing countries in a desperate need for cash injection in their economies rushed to these low-cost loans, in markets with no rules or regulation," said Kenyan economist Attiya Waris, who also serves as an independent expert for the United Nations. — AFP



A number of African leaders appearing at the World Economic Forum in Davos have emphasized that the rise in interest rates and over-indebtedness is already crimping the ability of countries on the continent to finance their development. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Australian nickel giants struggle against Indonesia's supply dominance

Australia's high-priced nickel mining sector, dominated by the firm BHP, faces constraints due to Indonesia's dominance in the supply arena. Additionally, transformative developments moving away from nickel use in batteries have triggered a substantial 40 per cent price decrease over the past year, stabilizing around \$16,000 per tonne.



Indonesia's growing dominance and reduced demand for nickel in batteries contributed to a 40 per cent price decline over the past year, reaching around \$16,000 per tonne. **PHOTO: AFP**

AN uptick in nickel supply from Indonesian producers has triggered their Australian counterparts to succumb to low prices that analysts anticipate will influence the market strategy of the world's leading nickel miner,

BHP Group, according to a Reuters report.

BHP brokered a supply deal with Tesla in 2021, pitching Australia's endowed geological resources alongside its robust financial and environmental reg-

ulatory policies.

Indonesia's emergence as a supply heavyweight has put a chokehold on Australian miners, coupled with innovations shifting from nickel usage in batteries, which has caused a 40 per cent price fall over the last year, settling at approximately \$16,000 per tonne.

"The challenges facing many nickel producers are unlikely to ease near term. We are bearish on the commodity and quite cautious on assets and producers," UBS analyst Lachlan Shaw told reporters.

BHP has invested significantly in nickel sulfide deposits in countries with minimal risk, anticipating a premium for the extraction process compared to laterite deposits in Indonesia. — SPUTNIK

Ford to cut production of electric pickup on lower demand

US auto giant Ford said Friday that it is reducing production of its F-150 Lightning electric pickup, as it anticipates weaker demand for electric vehicles this year.

The automaker plans to cut production at the Rouge Electric Vehicle Centre to one shift from 1 April, impacting about 1,400 workers, with some to transfer to other roles and others expected to take retirement packages.

“Ford expects continued growth in global EV sales in 2024, though less than anticipated,” the company said in a statement. It is lowering production as it aims “to achieve the optimal balance of production, sales growth and profitability”.

Sales of the F-150 Lightning jumped 55 per cent in 2023, with further growth forecast this year, according to Ford. But the company earlier lowered the listed price by almost \$10,000 for entry-level models.

With expectations for slower EV growth in the coming years, the auto industry has been pulling back from earlier targets. US consumers remain cautious about the vehicles, partly due to costs, as well as concerns about recharging on longer trips, with the slow pace of programmes to expand national recharging facilities. On Friday, the White house announced \$325 million in new investments this week, in part to help repair and replace EV chargers across the United States. — AFP



Ford is scaling back production of its F-150 Lightning electric pickup due to anticipated weaker demand for electric vehicles this year. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Japan’s 2023 core inflation hits 41-year high

JAPAN’S core consumer prices rose 3.1 per cent in 2023 from the previous year, marking the fastest growth in 41 years, the government has said in a report.

The core consumer price index (CPI) for the year, excluding fresh food prices because of their volatility, came in at 105.2 against the 2020 base of 100, with its pace of increase fastening from 2.3 per cent in 2022, according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications on Friday.

The yearly increase, which remained above the Bank of Japan’s two per



The core consumer price index (CPI) for the year, excluding fresh food prices, reached 105.2 against the 2020 base of 100. PHOTO: KYODO

cent inflation target for the second consecutive year, marked the highest level since 1983.

It came despite government subsidies to lower

national news agency Kyodo reported on Friday.

Food prices saw the sharpest hike in 48 years by rising 8.2 per cent in 2023. In December alone, the core CPI saw a 2.3 per cent increase from the previous month, slowed from 2.5 per cent in November but remained above the Bank of Japan’s two per cent inflation target for the 21st consecutive month.

The core-core CPI, which strips away both energy and food prices, rose 3.7 per cent, underscoring persistent inflationary pressures, the data showed. — Xinhua

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V LUDWIG SCHULTE VOY.NO. (352W)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V LUDWIG SCHULTE VOY.NO. (352W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22-1-2024 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 AISA PTE LTD.

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Transport and Communications

INVITATION TO SUBMIT THE PRE-QUALIFICATION APPLICATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT, CONSTRUCTION, OPERATION, AND MANAGEMENT OF A VEHICLE REGISTRATION SYSTEM USING RADIO FREQUENCY IDENTIFICATION (RFID)

1. Road Transport Administration Department (RTAD) of the Ministry of Transport and Communications (MOTC) is planning to implement the Development, Construction, Operation, and Management of a Vehicle Registration System using Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) by inviting Local/International Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Developers.
2. The Interested PPP Developers (Myanmar-owned Companies and/or Joint Ventures of Myanmar and Foreign Companies) are invited to submit the Pre-Qualification Application for the RFID Project.
3. The complete set of Pre-Qualification Documents can be purchased at the following address during the working hours from 22 January 2024 to 5 February 2024:
Director, Computer Division
Office Building No. 29
Road Transport Administration Department
Ministry of Transport and Communications
Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar
4. Further information may be obtained at Tel. +95(67)3405359 and +95(67) 3405099 during working hours or visit the websites of www.motc.gov.mm, www.rtda.gov.mm and www.myanmarrtad.com.

TENDER COMMITTEE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RFID SYSTEM
Ministry of Transport and Communications

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V BLPL FAITH VOY.NO. (3402S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V BLPL FAITH VOY.NO. (3402S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22-1-2024 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 BLPL SHIPPING LINE

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BAJO VOY.NO. (015N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SINAR BAJO VOY.NO. (015N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22-1-2024 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

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ROLLING UPDATES WORLD

EU ports urged to team up to fight 'very creative' drug smugglers

Verlinden, in partnership with the European Commission, plans to launch the European Ports Alliance, bringing together around 20 EU ports, Europol officials, interior ministers, and sea transport executives.

DRUG smugglers in the EU have become so "very creative" that the bloc's seaports should join forces to combat their ever-changing tactics, Belgian Interior Minister Annelies Verlinden told AFP.

That idea is to be promoted Wednesday when Verlinden, along with the European Commission, meets top representatives from around 20 EU ports, Europol officials, other interior ministers and sea transport executives to launch the European Ports Alliance. The inauguration will take place in Antwerp, the Belgian port city that is the main gateway for cocaine trafficked into Europe.

Despite stepped-up screening, cocaine seizures at the vast Antwerp port each year breaks records. Last year, 116 tonnes of the drug were intercepted there. And Antwerp is frequently rocked by violence



The Belgian port city of Antwerp is the main gateway for cocaine trafficked into Europe. **PHOTO: AFP**

linked to gangs fighting over the hugely lucrative smuggling.

The traffickers "are always very creative and that is our challenge — they pay no heed to laws on working time, right to privacy, borders," Verlinden said.

"So we need to cooperate to be effective," she said. "We need to create this network to

combat organized crime."

The port alliance aims to crack down on both the smuggling and the infiltration of the ports by criminal networks.

Private sector buy-in is needed because the steps to be taken could impact legal trading, so a good "balance" needs to be found, the Belgian minister said. — AFP

TOP NEWS

Air ambulance en route from Thailand to Moscow crashes in Afghanistan

CONFIRMING the plane crash in Afghanistan's Badakhshan province in the early morning hours on Sunday, the Ministry of Civil Aviation said the aircraft was an air ambulance flying from Thailand to Moscow.

The Civil Aviation Ministry stated further that the crashed aircraft was a DF-10 (Dassault Falcon). It was a small aircraft registered in Morocco.

"The crashed aircraft is a DF-10 (Dassault Falcon) small aircraft registered in Morocco. It is not an aircraft of Indian carriers," the Ministry of Civil Aviation noted in a report of aircraft crashed in Afghanistan. The Morocco-registered plane refuelled at Gaya airport in Bihar, the Union ministry stated.

"The aircraft was an air ambulance, was flying from Thailand to Moscow, and did refuelling at Gaya Airport," the Ministry of Civil Aviation added. — ANI

US records about 11,000 deaths from flu this season: CDC

THERE have been at least 16 million flu illnesses, 180,000 hospitalizations, and 11,000 deaths from flu so far this season in the United States, according to the latest data released Friday by the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Seasonal influenza activity remains elevated in most parts of the country.

A total of 47 flu-associated pediatric deaths have been reported in the United States this season, according to CDC.

After several weeks of increases in key flu indicators through the end of 2023, two weeks of decreasing or stable trends nationally have been noted, said CDC.

The agency will continue to monitor for a second period of increased influenza activity that often occurs after the winter holidays. — Xinhua

NASA regains contact with mini-helicopter on Mars

NASA has re-established contact with its tiny helicopter on Mars, the US space agency said Saturday, after an unexpected outage prompted fears that the hard-working craft had finally met its end.

Ingenuity, a drone about 1.6 feet (0.5 metres) tall, arrived on Mars in 2021 aboard the rover Perseverance and became the first motorized craft to fly autonomously on another planet.

Data from the helicopter are transmitted via Perseverance back to Earth, but communications were sud-

denly lost during a test flight on Thursday, Ingenuity's 72nd lift-off on Mars.

"Good news today," NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) wrote on X, formerly Twitter, late Saturday.

The agency said that contact had finally been made with the helicopter by commanding Perseverance to "perform long-duration listening sessions for Ingenuity's signal".

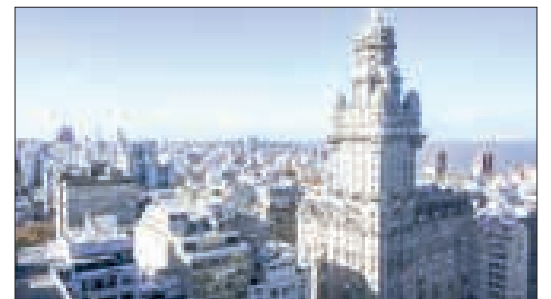
"The team is reviewing the new data to better understand the unexpected comms dropout during Flight 72," it added. — AFP

Uruguayan capital celebrates disputed 300-year anniversary

URUGUAY'S capital Montevideo celebrates its 300th birthday starting with a music concert this weekend, even as the actual date of the city's founding has become the subject of political disagreement.

For the leftist government of the city that is home to half of Uruguay's 3.4 million people, there is no doubt Montevideo was officially founded on 20 January, 1724. On that date, an expedition of Spanish settlers crossed by boat from Buenos Aires to defend the eastern bank — under threat of Portuguese incursions — of what was then the Spanish Governorate of the Rio de la Plata (River Plate).

That group was led by soldier and administrator Bruno Mauricio de Zabala, whose horse-mounted statue today adorns a small square named after him in Montevideo.



Montevideo is home to half of Uruguay's 3.4 million people. **PHOTO: PABLO PORCIUNCULA / AFP**

"The evidence for the start of the process (of settlement) in 1724 is undeniable," the Montevideo city council insists on its website. However, some in the center-right coalition in charge of the national government say the 300th anniversary will only be on 24 December 2026. — AFP

Youth Chess Championship held in Yangon

THE Myanmar National Age-wise Chess Championship, organized by the Myanmar Chess Federation, was held at KBTC Private Smart School in Yangon at 2 pm on 21 January 2024.

An awarding ceremony was held after the championship, and officials presented awards to the youth winners aged between 8 and 20.

"This tournament is held once a year and selects young elite players. The tournament is the highest. The first-placed players will be sent to compete

in international tournaments. The second and third-placed will be kept as a reserve," said IM Win Zaw Tun from Master Brain Chess Academy, who is in charge of organizing the tournament.

The tourney was run from 18 to 21 January, and youth chess players from Yangon Region and students from KBTC Private Smart School, totalling 100, participated in it. According to this term, the Youth Chess Age-wise Championship will be held in Mandalay Region in March. — Bala Soe/KZL



Myanmar youth chess players participate in the Myanmar National Chess Championship held in Yangon on 21 January 2024. PHOTO: BALA SOE

China adds 2 golds in short track speed skating at Gangwon 2024

Following the gold in the women's 1,500 metres on Saturday, Chinese skaters Yang Jingru and Li Jinzi excelled in the women's 1,000metres on Sunday, overcoming challenges, including a collision that led to a rematch.

CHINA continued to shine in short track speed skating at the 2024 Gangwon Winter Youth Olympic Games, registering another two gold medals and one silver here on Sunday.

China got off to a good start at the Gangneung Ice Arena on Saturday, as Yang Jingru claimed the Chinese delegation's first gold medal in the women's 1,500 metres and her teammate Li Jinzi came in second, while Zhang Xinzhe clinched a silver in the men's 1,500m.

Yang and Li rode on the momentum in Sunday's women's 1,000m race in dramatic fashion. Li tumbled following a collision with Dutch athlete Angel Daleman at the start of the final, before the referee sent off Daleman and ruled a rematch.

The Chinese duo were unstoppable after the restart, with Li winning the race with one minute and 40.803



China's Li Jinzi (R) and Yang Jingru compete in the short track speed skating women's 1,000m final at the 2024 Gangwon Winter Youth Olympic Games in Gangneung, South Korea, 21 January 2024. PHOTO: YAO QILIN/XINHUA

seconds, followed by Yang at 1:40.996.

Li noted that she was not affected by the incident at the beginning. "I was not injured and recovered quickly to adjust well. Tomorrow I have the 500m race to compete. As my ability at the start is not good, I want to make a break-

through," she said.

Zhang Bohao and Zhang Xinzhe had initially completed a one-two finish in the men's 1,000m event, but Zhang Bohao was later penalized, thus moving Zhang Xinzhe up to the highest podium with one minute and 26.257 seconds. — Xinhua



Tomas Machac and Zhang Zhizhen in action on Sunday in Melbourne. PHOTO: ATP

Zhang-Machac reach men's doubles quarterfinals at Australian Open after shock win

CHINA'S Zhang Zhizhen and Tomas Machac of the Czech Republic stunned third seeds and former champions Rajeev Ram and Joe Salisbury in a men's doubles thriller on Sunday to reach the quarterfinals at the Australian Open.

The unseeded pairing of Zhang and Machac came from behind to win 3-6, 6-3, 6-2 in one hour and 36 minutes.

Zhang, who is ranked world No 625 in doubles, combined with Machac to produce a considerable third-round upset.

Doubles specialists Ram of the US and Britain's Salisbury had won the last three US Open men's doubles titles and were eyeing their first triumph at Mel-

bourne Park since 2020.

Zhang and Machac appeared to have a mountain to climb after losing the opening set, but raised their level to force a decider. The momentum continued when they broke Salisbury's serve in the third game as Zhang and Machac held their nerve to claim the best doubles win of their careers.

It's a boost for Zhang, China's highest-ranked men's singles player, who fell in the men's singles second round to 21st seed Ugo Humbert in four sets.

Zhang also became the first player from the Chinese mainland to reach the quarterfinals of the men's doubles at any Grand Slam in the Open Era. — Xinhua



PM Modi congratulates Japan on soft landing on Moon

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Japan for achieving its first soft moon landing, making Japan the fifth nation to accomplish this feat.

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday congratulated Japan for achieving its first soft landing on the moon and said that India is looking forward to the cooperation between the space organizations of the two countries.

Japan became only the fifth nation to successfully complete the soft landing on the moon in the late hours of Saturday.

Talking to social media platform X, PM Modi said, "Congratulations Prime Minister Kishida and everyone at JAXA on achieving Japan's first soft Moon landing. India looks forward to our cooperation in space exploration between ISRO and JAXA."

PM Modi shared the post of his Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida who had congratulated everyone involved in the mission for the successful landing of the 'SLIM' on the moon.

"It is very welcome news that the small lunar landing demonstration ve-



An image of Japan's lunar lander SLIM. **PHOTO: JAXA**

hicle "Slim" has successfully landed on the moon, although detailed analysis is required as the solar cells are not

generating electricity.

We would like to express our respect to everyone involved for their efforts

thus far, and we will continue to support them as they take on further challenges," PM Kishida posted on X. — ANI

Slower solar industry growth may dampen US renewable power expansion

The US Energy Information Administration anticipates the addition of 36 gigawatts (GW) of new solar capacity in 2024 and 43 GW in 2025, but foresees a slowdown in solar growth in 2023 due to economic and policy challenges impacting both residential and utility-scale segments.

FACING economic and policy headwinds, the US solar industry is expected to slow down for both residential and utility-scale segments, dimming the industry's prospects for leading the country's power generation charge in the next two years.

In its latest Short-Term Energy Outlook report, the US Energy Information Administration (EIA) forecast early this week that solar will lead the nation's electricity generation growth for the next two years.

The agency made its estimate based on the anticipated addition of 36 gigawatts (GW) of new solar capacity in 2024 and 43 GW in 2025. However, US solar growth is predicted to slow this year amid economic challenges facing both residential solar



People view a solar vehicle during the Cal Day event at the University of California, Berkeley Campus in Berkeley, California. **PHOTO: WUXIAOLING/XINHUA/FILE**

installations and utility-scale projects.

California is the biggest solar market in the United States. In the first

three quarters of 2023, California led the country with 3,216 megawatts (MW) of new solar power installed. — Xinhua

INJURY AND MATERIAL DAMAGE

US airbase in Iraq hit by massive missile attack

US airbase Ain al-Asad in Iraq's western Anbar Province has been targeted by at least 15 missiles, Iraqi news agency Shafaq reported on Saturday, citing a security source.

The missiles were launched from the Iraqi city of Albaghdadi, the source said, without giving further information.

Yahya Rasool, a spokesman for the commander-in-chief of the Iraqi armed forces, told the Iraq News Agency that the bombing injured an Iraqi soldier and caused material damage.

"A number of missiles fell near the headquarters of the 29th Brigade, 7th Division, affiliated with the Al-Jazeera Operations Command, within the Iraqi Ain Al-Assad base, wounding a soldier and causing damage to the headquarters," he said. — SPUTNIK