

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

Myanmar's current FY export highlights: Key sectors, earnings, and top partners



Workers seen working in a workplace of a garment factory. The garment sector – one of the highest export earnings.

STATISTICS released by the Trade Policy Division of the Department of Trade under the Ministry of Commerce revealed that the garment and natural gas sectors generated the highest export earnings between 1 April 2023 and 5 January 2024 of the 2023-24 financial year.

As of 5 January 2024, Myanmar has earned US\$10.918 billion from exports during this financial year. Breaking down the details, garment exports stand as the highest earner with \$3.308 billion, followed by natural gas exports with \$2.543 billion.

Daw Cho Thet Mu, Deputy Director of the Trade Policy Division of the De-

partment of Trade, stated, "Garments and natural gas exports are the primary contributors to Myanmar's export sectors. In the first nine months of this financial year, \$5.851 billion was generated from garments and natural gas exports, representing over half of the total earnings from all exports. Other significant contributors include black gram exports at \$540 million, rice and broken rice exports at \$490 million, corn exports at \$380 million, fish exports at \$260 million, green gram at \$210 million, raw rubber exports at \$150 million, pigeon pea at \$110 million, and tissue-cultured banana exports at

\$90 million".

The top ten export items that have generated the most income within the first nine months include garments (finished products), natural gas, black gram, rice and broken rice, corn, fish, green gram, raw rubber, pigeon pea, and tissue-cultured banana.

The report further indicates that, during this financial year's mentioned period, Myanmar's top ten countries primarily exported were Thailand, China, Japan, India, the United States, Germany, Poland, Spain, South Korea, and Italy. — ASH/TMT

UMFCCI meets Indian business delegation to boost trade, modernize Sittway Port



THE Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) President U Aye Win hosted a meeting with a high-level business delegation from India on 23 January with a view to boosting trade between India and Myanmar by modernizing Sittway Port's development and transport facilities.

UMFCCI President U Aye Win discussed the promotion of bilateral trade between India and Myanmar with Mr Ashish Sharma, Deputy Chief of Mission of the Indian Embassy in Myanmar, and a high-level business delegation led by Mr Rathendra Raman, chairman of the Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata (SMP, Kolkata). The topics covered promotion of India-Myanmar bilateral trade, including the upgrading of current operations of Sittway Port, maintenance work, the enhancement of the transport sector and waterways and status of container ships docking at the port.

Additionally, both sides discussed how to improve access to business and employment opportunities, expand bilateral trade through Sittway Port, export to regional countries, create conditions that will facilitate the movement of goods and services, and explore the possibility of establishing a coastal shipping line. — TWA/MKKS

NATIONAL

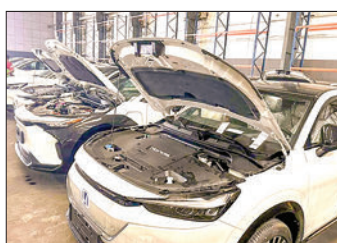
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YGEA urges caution in gold trading amid market fluctuations, forex dynamics

NATIONAL

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

Mottos of 77th Union Day 2024

1. Unity is strength,
Power of Union
2. Drifting in one boat, on the same voyage we float
Ethnic brethren of the land joining hand in hand
3. Marching towards with unity
Ensuring the destination of the Union
4. Let's firmly join hands among ethnic national brethren
of the Union
5. Let's go forward with unity of the ethnic nationals



The welcoming ceremony of the Boeing 737-800 Freighter aircraft of Myanmar National Airlines in progress at Yangon International Airport yesterday.

Myanmar National Airlines welcome cargo plane with ceremony

THE ceremony to welcome the Boeing 737-800 Freighter aircraft of Myanmar National Airlines was held at Yangon International Airport yesterday afternoon.

The cargo plane, (9M-WCA), Flight No 3G005, departed from Kuala Lumpur,

Malaysia, and arrived at Yangon International Airport at 3:25 pm, where officials from Myanmar National Airlines conducted a welcome ceremony.

The aircraft will be used for cargo transport flights of Myanmar National Airlines and will be able to carry about

22 tonnes of cargo, as well as dangerous goods that cannot be transported on regular flights.

Boeing 737-800 Freighter aircraft No 9M-WCA is planned to expand cargo transport flights from Yangon to South-east Asian countries. — MNA/KZL

Myanmar film 'Kankaung' set to premiere in Thai theatres in April

THE Myanmar film "Kankaung" (Lucky in English), produced by Khitara Film Production, is set to be screened in Thai theatres in April, according to Win Lwin Htet, the film's director.

"Kankaung will be shown in Thailand. Fans will soon receive information about the theatres screening the film. I am unable to provide a precise schedule at this time. I would like to invite fans of Myanmar films in Thailand to join us. This movie is anticipated to participate in international film festivals and contests. We are authorized to screen in three nations, Viet Nam, Cambodia, and Thailand,"

stated director Win Lwin Htet.

The novel "Kankaung" was written by Kyalsuthit, Moe Ni Lwin penned the script, and Win Lwin Htet directed the film. The movie features performances by renowned film stars, including Paing Takhon, clever canine co-star Kankaung, Academy Thu Htoo San, Academy Khinzachi Kyaw, Nay Htut, and many more.

In November 2023, "Kankaung" premiered in theatres across Myanmar, garnering significant interest from the audience during screenings. Theatres were permitted to screen it until the fourth week. — ASH/MKKS



Capturing the essence : Actor Paing Takhon and canine co-star.

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.

NATIONAL



State Administration Council Member Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Defence Admiral Tin Aung San holds talks with Mr Marcoluigi Corsi, UN Interim Resident Coordinator for Myanmar and Interim Humanitarian Coordinator for Myanmar, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

DPM UM meets UN Interim Resident Coordinator, Interim Humanitarian Coordinator

THE State Administration Council Member, Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Defence Admiral Tin Aung San met Mr Marcoluigi Corsi, UN Interim Resident Coordinator for Myanmar and Interim Humanitarian Coordinator for Myanmar, at the Union Minister's office yesterday.

They warmly and frankly exchanged views on cooperation with the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CT-FMR) to prevent minors from serving in the military.

Deputy Minister Maj-Gen Aung Lin Tun and officials also attended the meeting. — MNA/TS

Political parties allowed to be established continue applying for registration

THOSE who want to establish a political party are applying to the Union Election Commission by stating the name of the party they wish to establish.

To date, 15 parties have applied for the right to establish a party. Out of the groups that have applied for registration, Mon Development Party has been allowed to establish.

Mon Development Party with the right to establish a

party must apply for registration as a political party to the Commission under Rule 7 of the Registration of Political Parties Law within 30 days from the approval date. To date, 11 political parties have been approved for the establishment, and the rest of the groups have applied for registration are also under scrutiny. — MNA/KZL

MRF invites proposals for Warehouse Receipt Financing System



The first coordinating meeting of the task force to implement the Warehouse Receipt Financing System was held on 9 September 2023.

MYANMAR Rice Federation has invited proposals from warehouse operators who want to participate in the "Warehouse Receipt Financing System-WRFS", according to a release by the organization on 23 January 2024.

As directed by the Ministry of Commerce, Myanmar Rice Federation is operating the Warehouse Receipt Financing System to be able to solve the financial problems of farmers at the time of harvest, drying and storing, as well as the hardships of seed producers who are often unaffordable to keep the seeds until the required season due to the same conditions. To translate the system into action, the Ministry

of Commerce has established a task force led by its deputy minister, and the working group under the task force is drafting the regulations and Standard Operation Procedure (SOP) to be able to implement the WRFS.

Therefore, warehouse operators who want to participate in the system can submit their expressions of interest to the MRF, including required details, in accordance with the requirements of the organization.

Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF) has issued its notification to register the storage of 50 tonnes of rice or 5,000 baskets of paddy and above on Myanmar Rice Online (MyRO) www.myro.com.mm on 3 November

2023. A total of 193 warehouse facilities for rice storage located in Yangon, Ayeyawady, Bago, Mandalay and Sagaing Regions, Rakhine State and Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory have been registered on the online registration platform – Myanmar Rice Online (MyRO) as of 13 January, according to MRF.

For additional information about MyRO registration, businesses can reach the Department of Consumer Affairs via phone numbers 067 3430563 and 067 3430131 and the Myanmar International Trade Centre located at No 622/626 on Merchant Street, Pabedan Township, Yangon, via phone number 01 385323. — NN/TH

MCF to celebrate its silver jubilee in Nay Pyi Taw

MYANMAR Computer Federation (MCF) is set to celebrate its 25th Anniversary (Silver Jubilee) with the theme 'Towards Digital Myanmar' on 26 and 27 January at the Myanmar International Convention Centre II in Nay Pyi Taw, as announced by the Myanmar Computer Federation.

The Silver Jubilee of the federation's sister organizations — Myanmar Computer Professionals Association (MCPA), the Myanmar Computer Industry Association

(MCIA), and the Myanmar Computer Enthusiasts Association (MCEA) — will also be jointly commemorated.

The ceremony will feature ICT service booths from the Union Ministries, product galleries of private ICT companies, technology exhibitions by young students, and a panel discussion on the national-level transition to Digital Myanmar. Additionally, lectures will be delivered by international and local ICT experts. — ASH/KZW

NATIONAL

Myanmar hosts 7th Myanmar-India bilateral meeting on drug control online



The 7th DG-Level Virtual Talks on Drug Control Cooperation between CCDAC (Central Committee on Drug Abuse Control) and NCB (Narcotics Control Bureau), India, in progress online yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

THE 7th DG-Level Virtual Talks on Drug Control Cooperation between CCDAC (Central Committee on Drug Abuse Control) and NCB (Narcotics Control Bureau), India, was organized in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday with the attendance of Police Brig-Gen Win Naing, Joint Secretary of the Central Committee on Drug

Abuse Control and Commander of the Drug Enforcement Division. At the meeting, the Police Brig-Gen, who led the Myanmar delegation, said the drug cases become more complicated with the booming technologies and immense challenges that all countries face.

The drug gangs constantly change their transportation system and routes, and so all the countries should work together in eradicating such doings as long-term tasks. Currently, transnational gangs accelerate the drug trade as their principal business, so the drug problem has not declined and is growing larger than

before. They also expand their market. The man-made synthetic drug now threatens the world countries. Moreover, the number of drug users is increasing as more cost-effective and high-quality man-made drugs are available in the market in an easy way. He also highlighted the an-

ti-drug activities of Myanmar and control of illegal entry of precursor chemicals used in drug production. He then stressed the need to promote bilateral cooperation in preventing illegal entry of precursor chemicals via border areas of two countries and conduct information exchange in a timely manner regarding the defectors, suspects, precursor chemical smuggling and movements of drug smugglers. The meeting also discussed the current drug control activities, anti-drug measures, information exchange regarding illegal poppy plantations in border areas and the holding of the 8th meeting in India. The meeting was also attended by Indian officials led by Director-General of NCB Mr Satya Narayan Pradhan. — MNA/KTZH

Counter-argument to false information

False News: Malicious media defames Tatmadaw on social media

MALICIOUS media outlets are intentionally spreading misinformation, claiming that Tatmadaw launched artillery attacks near Paletaung Village in Buthidaung township of Rakhine State, resulting in the death of three civilians and eight injured on 23 January. According to the ground information and a security official, the security forces did not shell heavy weapons. Still, AA terrorists fired on villages of Buthidaung township on 23 January, and the shells exploded in Paletaung village. Similarly, false information saying two civilians from Phoe Ingone of Lainpinwae village and

one civilian from Warchae village in Kyaukgyi Township of Bago Region were injured, and four houses demolished in the attacks of Tatmadaw on 21 January was spreading on social media. According to the investigation, terrorists launched attacks on Tatmadaw convoy and security outposts near villages in that township, and they also committed drop bomb attacks. Malicious media outlets are circulating false news to attack Tatmadaw in a political way, defame Tatmadaw and cause misunderstanding between Tatmadaw and the people. — MNA/KTZH



Screenshot validates misinformation.

Media invited to attend Myanmar Film Academy Awards ceremony

THE Myanmar Motion Pictures Academy Awards 2023 ceremony will be held on 3 February 2024 at Myanmar International Convention Centre MICC-1. Depending on the number of media persons attending the ceremony and the limited space where the ceremony will be held, A Zone and B Zone will be identified for the news media. In addition, the certified media who wish to attend the ceremony and receive information must fill in the information in the application

form, such as the name, Citizenship Scrutiny Card number, position, and news agency, at the rate of two media personnel per news media. Interested media can contact 067 3412143, iprd.crd.npt@gmail.com; (Yangon) 01 544582, 01 544583, iprd.crd.ygn@gmail.com of the Copyright and Registration Division (Nay Pyi Taw) of the Information and Public Relations Department, Ministry of Information by 27 January 2024. Ministry of Information

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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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Myanmar experiences rise in tourist arrivals in 2023, anticipates continued growth

U Hla Myint, deputy permanent secretary of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, said that the number of local and foreign tourists had increased in 2023 and was expected to rise further. As of November 2023, there were 8.85 million domestic travellers and over one million foreign tourists. "Foreign tourist arrivals in 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 are 0.9 million, over 0.1 million, over 0.2 million and over one million, respectively. Most tourists come from China and Thailand. Many Thais visited Myanmar for pilgrimage.

We can say that the prospect looks better. The number of domestic tourists reached 8.85 million by November 2023. That number is larger now. We expect more to travel in 2024," he said. For tourism sector development, Union-level responsible persons visited the destination areas and met operators and respective regional governments to promote tourism while communicating with private organizations to develop the foreign tourism industry, said U Hla Myint. "The ministry alone cannot do for tourism development. We



Travellers are seen at the pagoda in the Bagan Ancient Cultural Zone.

need the cooperation from various departments. Myanmar Travel Association and Myanmar Hoteliers Association, including the Myanmar Tourism Federa-

tion, must also participate in the cooperation. The private sector especially needs to make more effort. From the government's side, we are making efforts for

coordination, relaxation, and measures for easy visa. We need to continue our efforts to maintain the momentum," he said. — MT/ZN

Myanmar auto market sees improved sales of cars priced K30 to K200 mln



The file photo shows newly arrivals of battery electric vehicles (BEVs) at Yangon Port.

VEHICLES priced between K30 million and K200 million are selling better in the current market, according to U Kyawswa Tun Myint, secretary of the Myanmar Automobile Manufacturers and Distributors Association. With sales stagnating in early December, the mar-

ket started to pick up from the second week of December, and it has now increased, he explained. "The current automobile market is quiet with regular sales and purchases – no price rise or fall. However, the price of some small cars with higher demand increased by a few per cent. Sales have increased when compared to the early December last year," he said. Vehicles priced from K30-K35 million to K100-K150-K200 million are selling better, and sales of more expensive cars are present but not frequent, said U Kyawswa Tun Myint. "It has increased by a certain percentage. Sales didn't stop in December. There were some sales. Now, the number of sales is increasing more than before. The price of some small cars rose by a few per cent. If compared to early December, there were more frequent sales," he said. — MT/ZN

Solar panels outsell generators in recent sales surge

SOLAR panels are currently sold more than generators, according to electronic stores.

The market has been low at present, but there are more solar panel buyers, said an electronics store owner.

"It has been a couple of months that the market has been low. We normally sell about K30-K40 million a day, sometimes about K20 million. Now the sale has just K8-K10million recently. There is no sale of generators but solar panels," he said.

People who can afford more buy solar panels that can run air-conditioners. Includ-

ing batteries that are used with solar panels, other devices have been in high demand in the market, said another electronic store owner.

"At our shop, the battery has also been in high demand. Buyers are from Yangon as well as from other regions and states. The sale of solar panels is larger than the generator sale. Buyers bought small-sized panels previously, but now there are customers for big-sized panels. Our shop is oriented towards the non-Yangon market. Because most of the buyers are from other regions and states," he said. — Thit Taw/ZS

Market experiences high demand for used Japanese toys



Used Japanese toys have been in high demand in the market.

ACCORDING to the used toys trading community, used Japanese toys have been in high demand in the market.

In the imported Japan-made toys market, there are two categories: new and used, and used toys in high demand.

"There are two categories – new and used toys in the toy market. Used toys are a little expensive, but they have high quality. Toys made of textiles that would not harm children, especially cartoon characters, have been in high demand.

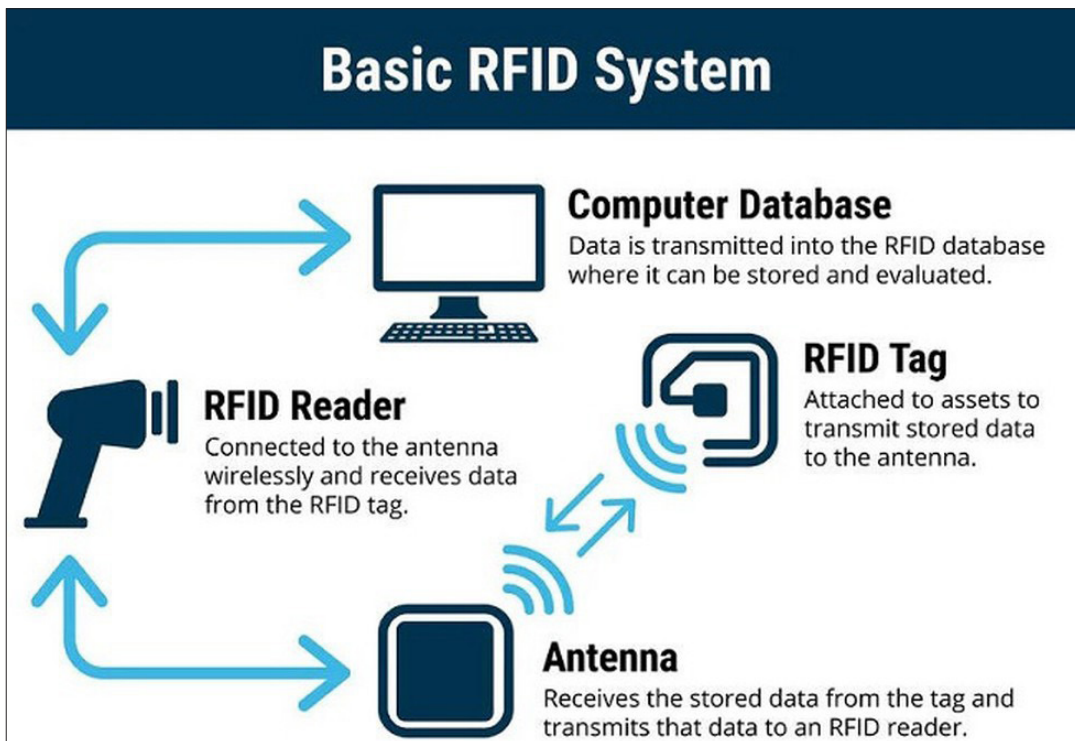
Some cartoon characters are a little expensive, but their quality is premium, and the material used in Japanese toys looks almost real. Children like them.

There are also Chinese-made cartoon characters, but Japan's quality is better," said an official from May Thamee Toy World, a Japan-used toy shop. Prices range from K2,000 to about K20,000 to the maximum.

"Prices vary. Sometimes, even big-sized toys can be available at K4,000-K5,000, so they are considered very cheap. Some are priced at K15,000-K20,000 to the maximum," he said. Some parents who can afford to a certain extent buy their children used Japanese toys.

"Parents buy Japan-used toys because their prices are lower and they are also durable," said a Japan-used toys seller. — Thit Taw/ZS

NATIONAL



A basic diagram of how Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) works.

Domestic, foreign investors to implement Radio Frequency Identification system

THE Ministry of Transport and Communications has invited domestic and foreign investors to implement the Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) system, according to the Road Transport Administration Department.

In order to implement the system, companies that

want to invest are called for pre-qualification applications. Those who want to invest in the implementation of the RFID system, whether they are citizens or companies formed as a joint venture between citizens and foreigners, can enter and compete.

In addition, interested

companies can purchase and submit pre-qualification applications at the Director (Computer) Department, Directorate of Road Transport and Communications, from 22 January to 5 February. — TWA/KZL

77th Union Day celebrations: Announcement of 3rd Cow & Goat Show in Yangon Region



Myanmar's cows, dairy female cows, male and female goats wearing traditional decorations ceremony held in Mingaladon Township on 31 December 2022.

TO mark the 77th Union Day, the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department in Yangon Region has announced the upcoming third Cow and Goat Show.

The competition is scheduled from 2 to 4 February within the compound of the Pyinmabin Office, Mingaladon Township, Yangon Region. The event will feature categories such as oxen, dairy cows, meat cattle, and goats.

Forms for participation in the competition are available from the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department in Yangon Region and its township offices. It is important to note that livestock intended for the competition must be delivered to the venue between 9 am and 6 pm on the day preceding the event. Additionally, cows participating in the dairy cattle competition must arrive at the venue before 2 pm. — TWA/TKO

Weekly updated prices of Bayintnaung wholesale centre

FROM 17 to 23 January, prices of pigeon peas and onions at the Bayintnaung Warehouses and Wholesale Centre increased, while black grams and chilies remained affordable.

Onion

On 23 January 2024, when 210,000 visses of onions were imported to the Yangon market, prices per viss ranging K1,400-K1,900-K2,200-K2,300, and in Myittha, they were K2,200-K2,600-K2,800-K3,000. On 22 and 23 January, Seikphyu's prices rose again. On 23 January 2024, 38,000 visses of monsoon onions entered the Pakokku market, priced at K2,000 per viss. In Seikphyu, 126,000 visses entered the market, with the highest price set at only K1,875 per viss. Similarly, 120,000 visses were imported to the Myingyan market, with the highest price set at K2,200 per viss.

Garlic

On 23 December, the price of one viss of garlic dropped to K9,000-K9,300. Shan Aungban garlic was priced at K14,500-K15,300-K15,500-K15,700 per viss.

Potato

On 23 January 2024, the price of Chinese potatoes (white) was K2,800, red potatoes were at K2,350, and potatoes plated in sand were at K2,750 per viss.

Chilli

On 23 January, the price of one viss of Panye long pepper from Salin was K12,300, one viss of Shan long pepper was K10,500, and one viss of new Moehaung pepper was K10,700.

Rice

On 23 January 2024, in the Yangon rice market, the price of Moe raw rice was K78,000-K80,000, Manawthukha rice was K82,000, and Pakhan was K90,000. Pawkywe rice was priced at K105,000 per bag, Ayeyawady Pawsan rice at K120,000 per bag, Shwebo Pawsan rice at K150,000 per bag, old Ayeyawady Pawsan rice at K155,000 per bag, and Shwebo rice at around K170,000-K180,000.

Edible oil

From 22 to 28 January, the price of one viss of wholesale reference palm oil increased by K5,275. This week, the reference wholesale price increased by K25 per viss. On January 23, the rate of foreign palm oil rose to US\$877.5 per tonne.

Beans and pulses

On 23 January, the price of black grams RC was K2,995,000 per tonne, SQ/RC was K3,275,000 per tonne, one tonne of pigeon peas was K3,701,000 per viss of green beans was K3,915, and pigeon peas were K6,450-K6,700 per viss. — TWA/TKO



The photo depicts a kitchen goods outlet.

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Yangon onion market trends: January price fluctuations, quantity arrivals

ONION prices in the Yangon market decreased in the third week of January, but they increased again on 22 and 23 January.

Seikphyu and Myingyan onion prices dropped to K1,100-K1,500-K2,000-K2,100 per viss, but they rose to K1,400-K1,900-K2,300 per viss on 22 and 23 January.

Myittha onion prices have remained relatively stable, priced at K2,200-K2,500-K2,800-K3,000 earlier. They ranged within K2,220-K2,600-K2,800-K3,000 per viss on 22 and 23 January.

Some onion sellers are seen moving around Yangon in small pickup trucks or motorized tricycles, selling new monsoon onions at the retail rate of K2,000 per viss, as mentioned by Ma Than Win,



Myittha onions arriving in the market on 24 January 2024.

a housewife residing in Thiri Yangon Region, to The Global New Light of Myanmar.

Onion prices skyrocketed in 2022 and 2023. Since then, the retail selling trend has shifted to mobile shops in the Yangon market. In the middle of 2021, sellers used vehicles to sell onions, pricing them at K1,000 per viss for retail purchases within Yangon.

In December 2022 and 2023, the wholesale price for large-sized onions was K5,100 per viss, whereas the retail price was K5,000 per viss and above.

More than 3,200,000 visses of onions from various towns and cities arrived in the Yangon market in November 2023 on 25 working days of the wholesale market. Approximately 3,200,000 visses of onions arrived in December 2023 on 24 working days of the wholesale market. In January 2024, al-

though it has only been 16 working days at the wholesale market, more than 3,300,000 visses of onions have already arrived in the Yangon market, according to preliminary statistics from daily commodity reference prices.

On 22 and 23 January 2024, 350,000 visses of onions arrived in the Yangon market. On 23 January 2023, Myingyan onion was priced at K1,650-K1,800-K1,900 per viss, and Myittha onion was priced at K2,000-K2,200-K2,300 per viss, according to the old prices. On 23 January, a total of 284,000 visses of onions arrived in the markets from three towns and cities, where the highest price was K2,000-K2,200 per viss in Pakokku and Myingyan markets, whereas K1,875 per viss in Seikphyu market. — TWA/TMT

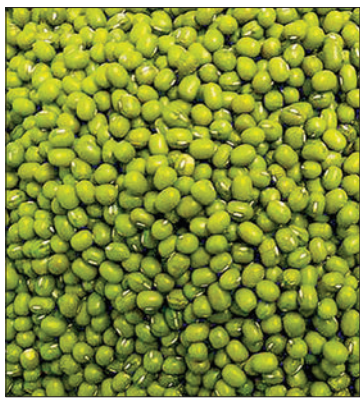
High green gram prices persist due to strong foreign demand, consistent supply

DESPITE the continuous influx of new green gram into the market, the price remains high due to ongoing foreign exports, according to Mandalay's bean and pulses market.

At the Mandalay beans and pulses market, the cost of a tonne of green gram from upper Myanmar (new harvest) was K1.83 million on 1 January. However, the price has surged to K1.99 million – a K150,000 rise in three weeks.

China continues to be the primary foreign buyer of green gram, which is also exported to India, the Netherlands, Ireland, the UK, and Germany through shipping and border posts.

From 1 April 2023 to 12 January 2024, more than 310,000 tonnes of green gram exports generated US\$213.6 million. The Ministry of Commerce expects to export 600,000 tonnes of green gram in four separate batches in the financial year 2023-24.



Green gram earns high prices.

Myanmar's green gram is in demand in Europe, with an annual export volume exceeding 8,000 tonnes. Given the broad market appeal of the product, ten companies have received orders this year.

In 2015, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation and the Ministry of Commerce reached an agreement to export green grams used in the production of bean sprouts to Europe. — NN/NT

YGEA urges caution in gold trading amid market fluctuations, forex dynamics

THE Yangon Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA) has urged its member gold traders to exercise restraint when buying and selling gold using a cash-down system. This request was issued on 24 January.

Additionally, the association has asked its members to refrain from engaging in transactions involving high prices or large quantities of gold.

Presently, the prices of pure gold in the gold market are experiencing an upward trend, reaching K3,845,000 per tical. Despite this significant increase, YGEA's reference rate for pure gold remains at K3,643,900 per tical. Consequently, there is a K200,000 difference between the YGEA reference price and the prevailing market price.

The latest exchange rate in the market stands at K3,500 for one dollar. Market records

indicate that the price of pure gold peaked in the domestic market in late August 2023, coinciding with a soaring forex rate of K4,000 for one dollar. During that period, the price of gold even approached K4 million in the gold market.

On 5 December, the Central

Bank of Myanmar authorized online forex trading in a floating market, allowing Authorized Dealers to engage in trading based on demand and supply without direct involvement from the Central Bank of Myanmar in setting the forex rate. — NN/TMT



Gold items are displayed at a gold jewellery outlet in Yangon. PHOTO - XINHUA

OPINION

Honour blood donors for wonderfully generous sacrifices

IN Myanmar society, particularly among the Buddhist population, the act of donating blood is highly revered as a noble and honourable undertaking. Buddhism classifies donations into three categories: those based on property, those involving the sacrifice of limbs and blood, and the ultimate act of giving, which entails sacrificing one's own life.

Choosing to donate is a formidable decision, requiring individuals to contribute from their hard-earned property and the essence of their lives. Donations involving the sacrifice of limbs and blood are particularly challenging due to the inherent danger posed to the donors' lives. Lastly, donations based on the sacrifice of life represent the pinnacle of difficulty, as they involve the complete sacrifice of the donor's life.

Within this framework, blood donors emerge as truly honourable individuals. Whether compelled or not, those willingly donate blood to others demonstrate exceptional moral character. The generosity exhibited by these blood donors deserves commendation, as their contributions play a crucial role in saving numerous lives and facilitating seamless medical treatments.

Therefore, recognizing the significance of this noble act, the identification and acknowledgement of 10,000 new blood donors and 30,000 permanent blood donors this year is crucial. These individuals stand as benefactors and honourable contributors to Myanmar society, deserving the highest praise and gratitude.

The significant impact of blood donors. These selfless individuals rightfully deserve recognition and honour for their invaluable contributions.

The nation boasts one national blood bank and seven blood banks affiliated with general hospitals in strategic locations in Mandalay, Magway, Mawlamyine, Myitkyina, Taunggyi, Patheingyi, and Nay Pyi Taw. To streamline processes, the Blood Management System (BMS) software is being implemented, ensuring a more efficient workflow.

A paramount focus is placed on the safety of the blood supply, acknowledging the crucial role it plays in the health and well-being of patients requiring transfusions. The act of donating blood, effectively viewed as contributing a part of one's own body, proves to be a timely intervention that can save both lives and limbs.

Therefore, recognizing the significance of this noble act, the identification and acknowledgement of 10,000 new blood donors and 30,000 permanent blood donors this year is crucial. These individuals stand as benefactors and honourable contributors to Myanmar society, deserving the highest praise and gratitude.

In situations demanding emergency blood transfusions for patients, no amount of medicine or machinery can substitute for the vital role blood donors play. Their contributions become the linchpin in the life-saving process, allowing for efficient medical intervention in critical situations.

In the year 2023 alone, the National Blood Centre distributed a remarkable 93,385 units of blood to hospitals. The ability of patients to receive the necessary blood types and equipment for their treatments is a testament to

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

By THAN HTUN (GEOSCIENCE MYANMAR)

EPISODE: 27

H S Bion joined the Geological Survey of India on 28 February 1911 and assumed the role of Curator on 14 November 1911. He served as Curator at the Geological Museum until 31 May 1912. On 1 June 1912, he participated in fieldwork in Kashmir alongside Mr Middlemiss, returning to headquarters on 20 October 1912. Transferred to the Burma party, departed for the field on 5 November 1912. He returned from the field on 2 May, joined Mr Middlemiss for fieldwork in Kashmir on 16 June 1913, and returned to headquarters on 9 November 1913. Assigned to the Burma party for a geological survey of Minbu and Pakokku districts, leaving for the field on 16 December 1913. Bion reported the gold-bearing alluvium of the Chindwin River and Tributaries in 1913 in the Record of Geological Survey of India Vol XLIII, Part 4, and the only significant accounts could be extracted as follows: -

The gold-bearing Alluvium of the Chindwin River and Tributaries

I am glad of this opportunity to express my appreciation of the great courtesy with which I was received by all residents in the Upper Chindwin, whether official or non-official. I am especially indebted to Mr J M Wright, I C S, whose generous advice and assistance made my stay an exceptionally pleasant one.

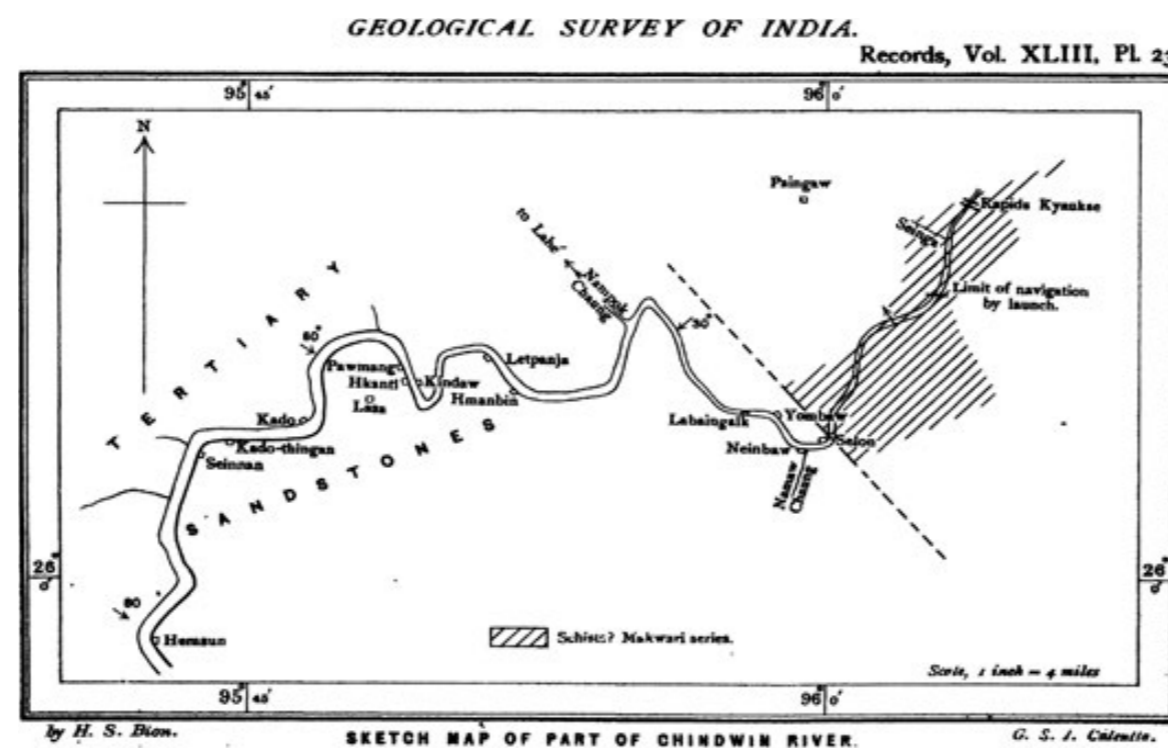
Physical Geography and Geology

The rocks met within the Upper Chindwin sub-division and in Singkaling Kanti State may be roughly classified as follows: -

- Recent gravel and sand banks.
- Older gravels. Pleistocene?
- Tertiaries.
- Schists. Makwari Series?
- Serpentine. Cretaceous.

The older gravels

The older gravels, probably



Sketch Map of Part of Chindwin River by H S Bion

Pleistocene age, are well exposed along the course of the Chindwin at numerous points between Kindat and the northernmost limit of Singkaling Kanti State. They are especially well seen near Naung-san-kyin, Maungkhan, Tazon, Tamahte and Maubin and rest unconformably upon the Chindwin Tertiaries.

Along the whole of this stretch of the river, the deposit is constant in character, being a coarse conglomerate of well-rounded pebbles from two to four inches long set in a ferruginous sandy matrix that forms but a small proportion of the bulk. The pebbles are mostly quartzites, quartz-schists and phyllites, but above Homalin, pebbles of serpentine are sometimes found. At Maungkhan, one pebble of an augite-bearing lava of an andesitic nature was obtained. The matrix of the Pleistocene gravels may be regarded as mainly derived from the breaking up of the soft Tertiary sandstones. Most of the pebbles have certainly come from the river's upper reaches, where ancient schist and gneisses occur together with serpentine.

The pebbles in the older gravels along the Uyu River near Kyobin seem to have come from

the Katha district in the region drained by the Chaungyi Chaung and include much decomposed igneous rocks probably derived from a northward extension of the Tertiary complex of Wuntho district.

The Uyu gravels at Teingon and Kyobin are over 150 feet thick and mask the older rocks entirely. They are much finer in texture than those along the main river and consist of lenticels of gravel and sand in about equal proportions. These older gravels everywhere contain gold and platinum, but only along the Uyu River is the occurrence worthy of any consideration.

The Tertiary system

Tertiary age rocks occupy the entire Upper Chindwin sub-division and extend from the Kabaw Valley on the west to the Mu Valley on the east.

The beds lie in a broad syncline with a north and south axis along the Chindwin River's western limb. Along the whole course of the river, the prevailing dip is to the east, giving rise to steep escarpments on the left bank, with corresponding dip slopes on the right. Numerous whirlpools

these altered sediments lie exactly on the strike of the Makwari series as mapped by E H Pascoe around Sarameti. The boulders found in the gorge itself and on the sand bank at Maubin are of far more importance. Many large serpentine boulders occur, similar to the intrusions described by E H Pascoe near Sarameti (GSI, Vol XLII 1912).

Mode of Occurrence and Origin of the Gold

In both the Pleistocene terrace gravels and in the recent river deposits, the gold occurs in thin laminae and scales roughly square or oval in outline. The largest pieces met with being only about one-tenth of an inch in length, but the flakes were only half this size in the majority of cases. A considerable proportion of the gold occurs in fine specks, and "float" gold is present. Under the microscope, the flakes are strongly pitted and frequently quite ragged in outline. In no case was anything approaching a nugget found, and no quartz or other vein matter was ever seen attached to the gold. It may, therefore, be assumed that the source of the gold is nowhere near the present site of gravels.

Platinum has been detected in almost every locality but in minimal amounts; its mode of occurrence is the same as that of gold.

The Schists and Serpentine

The Upper Tertiaries extend northward through Singkaling Kanti to the village of Selon, beyond which they come to an abrupt end against a deeply dissected mountain area occupied by highly metamorphosed and cleaved sediments. This junction crossed along the course of the Chindwin River, trending northwest and southeast, as indicated on the sketch map. The river runs through a rocky gorge, which was followed for about ten miles to Kyauk-se, where rapids prevent further progress. Along this stretch, the schists strike northeast and southwest and dip northwest at angles between 45° and 60°.

It is important to note that

from the Uyu River. The Chaungyi gold, again, is itself probably derived from veins in Tertiary igneous rocks towards the head of the stream."

With the above statements, I am in general agreement. Such gold as is present in the recent river gravels is amply accounted for by the gold occurring in the older gravels now being cut into by the Chindwin River. The origin of the gold in the older gravels themselves is a more difficult question upon which it is useless to speculate, while the geology of the northern frontier of Burma remains unknown.

The question of the origin of the platinum, which is closely bound up with that of the gold, is one that presents serious difficulties. In almost every case in which platinum has been traced to its parent rock, it has been found to occur in chromite segregations associated with serpentines. As we have seen, a serpentine belt extends from the Andamans, more or less continuously, through the Arakan Yoma, Manipur, the Naga Hills, and the upper part of the Chindwin drainage. In the Andamans, chromite is associated with this serpentine, and I found small pockets of chromite in the serpentines near the village of Sibong in Manipur. It is not impossible, therefore, that somewhere to the north, there may be workable deposits of chromite associated with serpentine intrusions and that such chromite deposits may prove to be the source of the platinum and platinumoid metals occurring in the older gravels of the Upper Chindwin.

Results of the Assays

The assays were all carried out by Mr A K Banerji, Assistant Curator, under the supervision of Mr J Coggin Brown, Curator of the Geological Museum and Laboratory. The average amount of gold in the Helaw gravels, which may be taken as a type of the recent river gravels, is only half a grain to the cubic yard. Under any conditions, this may be regarded as

extremely disappointing, and in view of the natural disadvantages of dredging in such a river as the Chindwin, coupled with the fact that the gold is limited to the upper two feet or so for the banks, no hope whatever of successful exploitation can be entertained.

The Kyobin deposit, which seems to be the best of the older gravels, gave decidedly better results than any of the recent alluvium. In this case, however, the payable gravel is so intimately mixed with barren sand and so inconstant in character that both would have to be taken together. The mass average of the deposit is far too low to enable work to be carried on at a profit. In my opinion, the gold-bearing alluvium of the Chindwin can only be worked on the small scale at present adopted by the local inhabitants, who, by years of experience, are aware of the position of the richer pockets.

Shan Gold-Washing Methods

There are only two places where gold washing is being seriously carried out at present. One of these, namely Helaw, is on the main river; the other being on the Uyu River in the neighbourhood of Kyobin. J M Maclaren described the method practised in recent river gravels. Due to limited space, detailed descriptions of gold-washing in Kyobin, Taung-ni, Hwe-zadaik, Lingyi, Haung-hin or Kyauk-myaung and Hwe-ma-mon etc., could not be mentioned.

Detailed Description of Gold Deposits

For convenience of description, the area under review will be sub-divided as follows: -

- A. The main Chindwin River.
 - B. The Uyu River.
- The gold deposits themselves are found in 1) the recent river gravels and 2) the older gravels, probably of Pleistocene age.

- A. The main Chindwin River
 1. The recent river gravels.
- B. The gold-washing are-

as are Alon, Thazi, Kani, Kalewa, Maulaigyi, Helaw and Gyogon, Helaw Island, Ywatha Beach and various minor localities.

2. The older gravels
Pan tests at several points along the outcrop of the older gravels show that gold is always present but invariably in such small quantity as to be far too poor to be worked even by native washers. One cubic yard at Maungkhan gave 28 grains of gold. One cubic yard at Kabani, near Naung-san-kyin, gave 145 grains. These older gravels along the course of the main river are only of interest as showing the source of most, if not all, of the gold in the recent gravel banks.

B. The Uyu River
1. The recent river deposits.
Khaung-ngo: This is the only locality on the Uyu where the recent river deposits are worked for gold, the washing being conducted on sand banks.

2. The older gravels.
Kyobin: The deposit consists of gravel and sand in about equal proportion, and both occur in lenticels, with no constant horizon being present. When the concentrates were cleaned out and panned, the gold was sold to traders in Maingkaing for Rs 7 as 12, which works out at about one anna a day per man over the whole 1 ½ months and from 3 to 4 annas a day, taking only the actual working days. The gold is separated by amalgamation, and the slight residue of platinum, etc., is thrown away as valueless.

References: Bion, H.S. 1913: *The Gold-bearing Alluvium of the Chindwin River and Tributaries; Record of Geological Survey of India, Vol XLIII, Part 4.*

NATIONAL CRIME

Illegal timbers, industrial materials, medications, consumer goods, motorbikes and vehicles confiscated

DURING inspections on 22 and 23 January, teams on duty managed by the Magway Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force confiscated various items. These included an unregistered Toyota Succeed car (estimated value of K7 million) at the Ayeyawady bridge checkpoint, an unregistered Toyota Succeed car and an unregistered Honda Insight car (estimated value of K7.5 million) at the checkpoint on the outskirts of Magway township, a total of 0.736 tonnes of illegal teak and 0.335 tonnes of illegal other timbers worth K63,492 in Minbu district, a Sojen truck (estimated value of K25 million) carrying 5.425 tonnes of illegal timbers worth K379,750 in Magway district, an unregistered Yinzingg 110 vehicle and an unregistered Shanyan 110 vehicle (estimated value of K300,000) at the Ayeyawady bridge checkpoint in Minbu township. These actions were taken under the Export and Import Law and the Forest Law.

On 23 January, the combined teams captured a total of 6.106 tonnes of illegal other timbers worth K427,462 in Thaboung township of Patheingyi district.



Photos show confiscated illegal timbers, vehicles, motor cycles, solar floodlights in Magway Region and at Myanmar Industrial port.

They also seized nine kinds of goods worth K102.613 million, including 90 sets of Junsha stainless steel sinks and 152 sets of fresh solar floodlights not declared in the Import Declaration (ID) from two containers at the Myanmar Industrial Port. Additionally, two kinds of goods valued at K27.328 million, including 3,300 bottles of Hemorie and 5,954 kilogrammes of buttons not declared in the ID, were found in

two containers at the Asia World Port Terminal checkpoint. Five goods valued at K2.91 million, including one set of DJI Mavic Air 2 Drone and 251 bottles of Abhayrab Rabies Vaccino without official documents, were discovered in the Yangon International Airport (Import) luggage. These actions were conducted under the Forest Law and the Customs procedures.

On the same day, the com-

bined teams impounded two vehicles (estimated value of K70 million) travelling from Mongla to Yangon and from Myawady to Yangon. The cars carried 360 sets of Kennede air coolers and 2,100 kilogrammes of 100-percent cotton yarn not declared in the ID at the Ywathagyi Dry Port. These actions were conducted under the Customs procedures.

On 23 and 24 January, the



joint teams nabbed 2.096 tonnes of illegal teak worth K691,680 in Toungoo district, an unregistered Nissan Diesel truck (estimated value of K5 million) in Bago township, and a total of 0.089 tonne of illegal teak and 0.597 tonne of illegal hardwoods worth K357,836 in Bago district. The action was taken under the Forest Law and the Export and Import Law.

As reported by the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee, 21 arrests were made on 22, 23, and 24 January, with an estimated value of K269 million. — MNA/MKKS

K12.5 bln worth of stimulant tablets seized in Shan State (South)

A total of 25 million stimulant tablets, valued at K12.5 billion, were seized in Yatsauk Township of Shan State (South), as reported by the Myanmar Police Force.

Following a tip-off, a combined team, including members of the Anti-Drug Police Force, conducted a search on a Hilux car driven by Zaw Win Thein, accompanied by Htoo Wint Maung, and a Canter six-wheel truck driven by Aung Pyaesone Oo (aka) Pyaesone, accompanied by Ma Htoo Htoo Aung, near Htatkwin village on Yatsauk-Intaw road in Yatsauk Township at 7:30 pm on 17 January. The police captured 25 million stimulant tablets worth K12.5 billion hidden under char-



Offenders are seen together with seized drugs and vehicles.

coal bags from the Canter six-wheel truck.

As per the investigation, the police arrested Aung Kyaw Myo (aka) Ye Htut (aka) Shan Lay, who was in charge of transporting the drugs, at his house in Shwenyaung at 11:30 pm.

The investigation revealed

that the confiscated drugs were intended to be transported from Kyaukgu village in Yatsauk Township to Shwenyaung in Taunggyi Township.

Legal action has been taken against the offenders, and an investigation is underway to identify others involved in the criminal chain. — MNA/MKKS

Stimulant tablets confiscated in Nawngkhio, Panglong townships

ACCORDING to the Myanmar Police Force, stimulant tablets were seized in Nawngkhio and Panglong townships.

A joint team comprising members of the Anti-Drug Police Force stopped and searched a Hyundai Porter II vehicle near Mageeyay village in Nawngkhio township on the afternoon of 21 January. The search resulted in the discovery of 400,000 stimulant tablets.

Similarly, on 22 January, a joint team comprising members of the Anti-Drug Police Force stopped and searched the motorcycle driven by Tin Aung, accompanied by Ma Nang Than Tin, near Leinli Village and seized 3,900 stimulant pills from them.

They have been prosecuted under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. — MNA/KZW

An offender is seen along with seized drugs and a vehicle.



Passengers snub 'expensive' London-Paris Eurostar train for plane

Passengers express willingness to pay a bit more for the train for environmental reasons but find the price difference too substantial when flights are available for as little as 40 euros.



The 305-mile (492-kilometre) rail link between London and Paris opened in 1994. PHOTO: AFP

MANY travellers are opting to take a plane rather than train between London and Paris despite climate concerns and the Eurostar rail service connecting the two capitals in just over two hours. "It's ridiculous to take the plane for such a distance," said Sabia Mokeddem, a French national who has lived in London for more than five years. Mokeddem says she is forced to fly, however, because of Eurostar's "prohibitive" ticket prices for the 305-mile (492-kilometre) high-speed link through the Channel Tunnel.

"I think of all the carbon that I'm emitting for such a

short flight... But I can't afford the train," the 27-year-old bank worker told AFP.

She says she would happily pay a little more to let the train take the strain "because it's better for the planet" and because she prefers going by rail.

But the difference in price is too great when she can find flights that go over rather than under the Channel for as little as 40 euros (\$43). Lucy Kelly, a 30-year-old from Ireland who lives in Paris and works in brand management, takes the train to London only when she can reserve a seat well in advance. — AFP

Do you know obesity is linked to detection of blood cancer precursor? Study finds

A new study found that obese people are more likely to develop monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS), a benign blood condition that usually arises before multiple myeloma.

The results of the study were published in *Blood Advances*. Multiple myeloma is a blood cancer that affects plasma cells, which are white blood cells that create antibodies to combat infection. MGUS, caused by an aberrant protein generated by plasma cells, is a known precursor to multiple myeloma.

Most patients with MGUS have no noticeable symptoms and are not immediately unwell. Rather, the existence of MGUS acts as a warning to watch for the possible development of more serious disorders, such as multiple myeloma, which MGUS can progress to.

The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention reported in 2020 that nearly 42 per cent of the US population is classified as obese, defined by a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or higher. Yet, little research exists to suggest how obesity may impact cancer outcomes. — ANI



MGUS, characterized by an abnormal protein produced by plasma cells, serves as a precursor to multiple myeloma, a type of blood cancer affecting plasma cells responsible for antibody production. PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/PEXELS

Scandal-hit Olympic surf tower in Tahiti wins local backing

THE head of French Polynesia said Tuesday that construction on a beach tower to be used by judges during this year's Olympics surfing contest was "going well" after a scandal-hit start.

Work on the tower at Teahupo'o beach on the French Pacific island of Tahiti was suspended in December after a barge used by workers damaged coral at the site.

Polynesian government leader Moetai Brotherson had long questioned whether the surfing heats as part of the 2024 Paris Olympics should take place at Teahupo'o. But after changes to the plans and schedule, he told AFP that he now wanted the chance to showcase his region of more than 100 is-



An old wooden judges' tower is being upgraded for the Olympics heats this July. PHOTO: AFP

lands during the Games from 26 July to 11 August.

"I'm totally happy with how the work is going after the controversy over the judges' tower," he said. "Polynesians have

accepted the solution that was proposed. "So far, around two thirds of the drilling has been done and they are going to start laying the foundation blocks," he added. — AFP

Netflix subscribers jump despite price hikes

NETFLIX added 13 million subscribers in the final three months of last year, the company said on Tuesday, despite price hikes at the leading streaming service.

Netflix finished 2023 with slightly more than 260 million subscribers worldwide, with

a profit of \$938 million in the final quarter versus just \$55 million in the same period a year earlier.

"We believe there is plenty of room for growth ahead as streaming expands," the US company said in an earnings letter.

Netflix shares were up more than eight per cent to \$532.75 in after-market trades that followed the release of the earnings figures. "Netflix sticks out as the clear front runner in the streaming wars," said Insider Intelligence principal analyst Ross Benes. — AFP

ECONOMY WORLD

China, Cambodia enjoy fruitful economic, trade cooperation in 2023: Chinese diplomat

In September, Cambodia's PM and China pledged deeper strategic synergy, aligning China's Belt and Road Initiative with Cambodia's Pentagonal Strategy using the "Diamond Hexagon" cooperation framework.



This aerial photo taken on 28 October 2022 shows the Phnom Penh-Sihanoukville (PPSHV) Expressway in Kampong Speu Province, Cambodia. **PHOTO: PPSHV EXPRESSWAY/HANDOUT VIA XINHUA**

CHINA-CAMBODIA economic and trade cooperation achieved fruitful results in 2023, thanks to the strategic guidance set out by the leaders of the two countries, a Chinese diplomat said on Monday.

Zhong Jie, counselor of the Chinese Embassy in Cambodia, said China and Cambodia, close

neighbours with an iron-clad friendship, has stood the test of time and is brimming with vitality. "During the year (2023), the two countries had frequent high-level exchanges, charting the course for the future development of the bilateral relations," Zhong wrote in an article sent to Xinhua.

She recalled that when Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet visited China last September, the two sides agreed to deepen strategic synergy between China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Cambodia's Pentagonal Strategy and focus on the "Diamond Hexagon" cooperation framework. — Xinhua

Europe's bike industry hits bumps as cycling craze cools

THE bicycle industry is facing a downturn as the pandemic-induced cycling craze wanes, resulting in declining sales and steep discounts.

At a bicycle trade fair in Stuttgart, steep discounts on brand-new models hint at the turmoil roiling the industry now that a pandemic-fuelled cycling craze has faded.

Price cuts of 20 to 30 per cent were not unheard of at this month's event in the southwestern German city, where sellers sought to offload surplus stock in the face of falling demand.

Long gone are the days when Covid-related shutdowns inspired a surge in bicycle sales in 2020-2022, as people looked



Axel Reinhard of Swiss producer Flyer, which says it has cut prices 10 to 15 per cent over the past six months. **PHOTO: AFP**

for more outdoor recreation or tried to avoid using public transport.

At Electrolyte, a company that makes customised electric bikes in southern Germany, or-

ders jumped 50 per cent during the pandemic and customers faced months-long wait times because of disruptions to global supply chains. But the mood today is very different. — AFP

Indian apparel industry seeks uniformity in GST across value chain

The Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) is urging the central government for uniformity in Goods and Services Tax (GST) across the entire man-made fibres (MMF) value chain in anticipation of the interim budget.

AHEAD of the central government's interim budget, the Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) has sought uniformity in Goods and Services Tax for the entire value chain.

In its submission to the central government, it requested a uniform GST of five per cent across the entire man-made fibres (MMF) value chain, which largely comprises fibre, yarn and fabric.

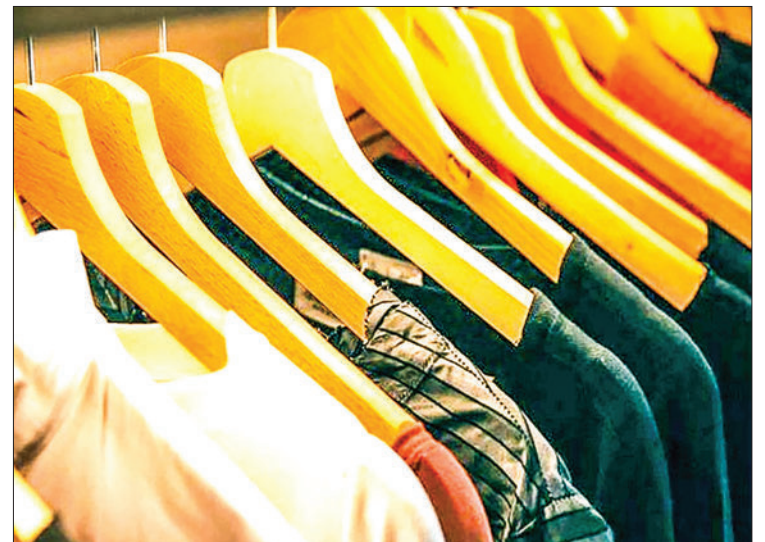
Currently, the MMF GST rate on fibre is 18 per cent, yarn 12 per cent, and fabric five per cent. The export promotion council believes that it results in unutilized input credit and consequent

liquidity issues for MSME units.

Further, it has requested the government to increase the interest equalization rates under the scheme to five per cent for all the apparel exporters.

"This will increase the apparel industry's competitiveness in the international market and enable them to avail necessary working capital," the council said.

The interest equalization was brought in to help exporters from identified sectors and all MSME manufacturer exporters to avail pre and post-shipping Rupee export credit at competitive rates. — ANI



The council argues that the current disparate rates lead to unutilized input credit and liquidity challenges for MSME units, and additionally requests an increase in interest equalization rates to 5 per cent for all apparel exporters. **PHOTO: ANI**

Japan annual wage negotiations begin as impetus for hikes grows

JAPAN'S annual wage negotiations kicked off on Wednesday, with a focus on whether the growing impetus for pay raises among the country's large companies will spread to smaller firms amid historic price rises.

This year's negotiations are attracting heightened attention as the Bank of Japan, which has pushed forward with unprece-

dent large-scale monetary easing, is believed to be closely watching the outcome as part of its assessment of when to possibly end its negative interest rate policy.

Wage negotiations at most large companies are expected to conclude by mid-March, with smaller firms completing theirs later. — Kyodo

China's soybean output hits record high in 2023

China reports a record soybean output of 20.84 million tonnes in 2023, with a planting area of 157 million mu (about 10.47 million hectares) for soybeans and over 200 million mu for oilseed crops.

CHINA has registered a record-high soybean output of 20.84 million tonnes in 2023, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs on Tuesday.

The country's soybean planting area reached 157 million mu (about 10.47 million hectares) last year, while that of oilseed crops exceeded 200 million mu,

said Deng Xiaogang, vice-minister of agricultural and rural affairs, at a press conference. A total of 33.969 million people who had been lifted out of poverty were employed in 2023, exceeding the annual target by 3.777 million, Deng said.

The revitalization of the seed industry has achieved initial results,

Deng said, adding that more than 530,000 new germplasm resources have been collected.

China maintained the momentum of steady progress in agricultural and rural development in 2023, providing solid support for economic recovery and high-quality development, said the vice minister.



A farmer pours green soybeans into a basket in Guancang of Jintang County, Chengdu of southwest China's Sichuan Province, 19 June 2023. PHOTO:XINHUA/SHEN BOHAN

Earlier data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed that China's grain output rose 1.3 per

cent year on year to a record high of 695.41 million tonnes in 2023.

This is the ninth con-

secutive year that China has registered a grain harvest of over 650 million tonnes. — Xinhua

Dubai to benefit from record 349 business event wins in 2023

In 2023, Dubai solidifies its position as a global business events hub by winning a record 349 bids to host international conferences, congresses, meetings, and incentive travel programmes.



Driven by Dubai Business Events (DBE), the city's official convention bureau, the wins reflected a robust 49 per cent increase in successful bids compared to 2022.

PHOTO: ANI

DUBAI further consolidated its status as a central hub for international business events in 2023, with the city winning a record 349 bids to host international conferences, congresses, meetings, and incentive travel programmes.

Driven by Dubai Business Events (DBE), the city's official convention bureau, the wins reflected a robust 49 per

cent increase in successful bids compared to 2022.

These events captured in 2023 are set to attract over 191,000 international delegates.

Under its business events and delegate boosting strategy, DBE brought an impressive citywide offering to the global market that resonated with the core needs of the business

events industry.

Positioning Dubai as the foremost destination for international business events and increasing appetite among associations and corporations to conduct meetings in the city, DBE worked closely with stakeholders across the public and private sectors to covert interest in confirmed events. While some of these already took place within 2023, others are confirmed for coming years, joining wins from previous years, with Dubai's strong appeal driving a pipeline of impactful events as far as 2029.

Bidding activity and success have continued to accelerate since the global COVID-19 pandemic, with the number of bid wins in 2023 exceeding the previous record of 295 bids registered in 2019. — ANI

French waste group Veolia hungry for lost UK energy

A giant crane-operated claw plunges into a mountain of rubbish before dumping its load into a huge furnace, where the waste is engulfed in flames to generate electricity.

French waste company Veolia's incineration plant in south London handles some 1,000 tonnes of non-recyclable waste per day, heating water to produce steam that creates power and heats thousands of nearby homes.

Incineration is one part of Veolia's strategy to transform its operations — and those of client companies — to preserve valuable energy supplies and boost efficiency.

Veolia, one of Europe's main players in waste treat-

ment, views recycling lost energy as a key growth engine that will help it reach net-zero targets — and make money.

The global energy recovery market will be worth 500 billion euros (\$543 billion) per year by 2030, according to the group.

'Untapped resource'

"It's a really untapped resource and reservoir, which corresponds in Europe alone to 400 gigawatts... it's the equivalent of energy demand of a country like Italy," Veolia chief executive Estelle Brachlianoff told journalists on a visit to the London facility. — AFP



French waste company Veolia's incineration plant in south London handles some 1,000 tonnes of non-recyclable waste per day. PHOTO: DANIEL LEAL / AFP

PESTICIDE TRADE NAME CHANGE ADVERTISING

The following pesticide distributed by Y Agro Solution Co.,Ltd and here we would like to pesticide trade name change advertising. Anyone who would like to object or inquiry about new trade name contact within 14 days to Joint-Secretary, Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Bayint Naung Road, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon. Y Agro Solution Co.,Ltd Tel:09-401573814

Sr.	Old Trade Name	New Trade Name	Active Ingredients	Registration No.
1.	Daung Mee Star	Ta Tar	Cyhalofop-butyl 30% + Fenoxaprop-P-ethyl 6.9 % EC	E2022-5888

ROLLING UPDATES: WORLD

Russia sees no US' intentions to withdraw military contingent from Syria

Russia's special presidential envoy for Syria, Alexander Lavrentyev, stated that the United States shows no intentions of withdrawing its military from Syria, despite the worsening situation and significant losses.



US troops patrol near an oil field in al-Qahtaniyah in Syria's northeastern Hasakah province on 14 June 2023. **PHOTO:DELIL SOULEIMAN / AFP**

RUSSIA sees no intentions and aspirations on the part of the United States to withdraw its military contingent from Syria, Russian special presidential envoy for Syria Alexander Lavrentyev said Wednesday.

"We do not see any aspira-

tions or intentions on the part of the American side to withdraw its military contingent yet, although the situation there has quite worsened. The Americans are also suffering quite significant losses, but they continue to remain there," Lavrentyev told

a briefing. Iranian news agency Tasnim reported last week, citing sources, that the US was evacuating its Hemo military base located near the airport of the city of Qamishli in northeastern Syria after repeated attacks by "Iraqi resistance" forces. — SPUTNIK

Delta Boeing plane loses wheel before takeoff at Atlanta Airport

A Delta Air Lines Boeing plane lost a nose wheel before it took off Saturday from the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport in Atlanta, United States, as reported by The Hill.

A spokesperson for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) said in a statement that the Boeing 757 plane lost its nose wheel as it was preparing for takeoff just after 11 am to head to Bogota, Colombia.

Following the incident, all passengers were deplaned and bused back to the terminal, the spokesperson added.

Moreover, according to the spokesperson, the FAA will be investigating the incident, The Hill reported.



The incident occurred while the plane was preparing for a flight to Bogota, Colombia. **PHOTO:ANI**

A Delta spokesperson highlighted that the nose gear tyre "came loose from the landing gear," adding that the company apologizes "to our customers for the inconvenience".

This comes as Boeing is also facing questions over a door plug that blew off an Alaska Airlines Boeing 737 Max 9, promoting the plane to conduct an emergency landing. — ANI

Turkish parliament approves Sweden's NATO bid

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is anticipated to sign the bill into law soon.

TURKISH lawmakers on Tuesday approved a long-delayed bill on Sweden's bid to become the 32nd member of NATO.

The Turkish parliament voted on the bill after a debate in the Grand National Assembly. A total of 346 lawmakers participated in the voting, with 287 votes in favor, 55 against, and four abstentions. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is expected to sign the bill into law within a few days.

Turkish parliament's ratification was welcomed by Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson. "Today we are one step closer to becoming a full member of NATO," he

wrote on social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter. With Türkiye's ratification, Hungary remains the only NATO member country that hasn't approved Sweden's application to join the military alliance. Sweden and Finland applied to join NATO after Russia launched its military campaign in Ukraine in 2022. Their accession requires the unanimous approval of all members of NATO.

Türkiye approved Finland's NATO bid in March last year but has slow-walked Sweden's accession, demanding the Nordic country further address Ankara's security concerns. — Xinhua



Turkish lawmakers attend a vote on Sweden's NATO bid at the Grand National Assembly in Ankara, Türkiye, on 23 January 2024. **PHOTO:MUSTAFA KAYA/XINHUA**

TOP NEWS

Two-state solution only way out of Israeli-Palestinian conflict: UN chief

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stressed Tuesday that a lasting end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can only come through a two-state solution.

"Last week's clear and repeated rejection of the two-state solution at the highest levels of the Israeli government is unacceptable," he told a high-level open debate of the Security Council on the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

The Israeli leadership's rejection of the two-state solution was despite the strongest appeals from even the friends of Israel, including those sitting around the table for the Security Council meeting, he noted. "This refusal, and the denial of the right to statehood to the Palestinian people, would indefinitely prolong a conflict that has become a major threat to global peace and security. It would exacerbate polarization and embolden extremists everywhere," he warned. — Xinhua

SPORTS

Manchester United's Martial out for 10 weeks

MANCHESTER United forward Anthony Martial has been ruled out until April following surgery on a groin injury, the Premier League giants announced Wednesday.

The 28-year-old, out of contract at the end of the season, has managed just two goals in 19 appearances during another frustrating campaign at Old Trafford.

Martial has been absent from United manager Erik ten Hag's first team since United fans cheered his substitution in the 3-0 home defeat by Bournemouth on 9 December, with the club now announcing he faces a lengthy lay-off.

"Manchester United striker Anthony Martial has completed successful surgery to address a groin complaint and will be out of action for about 10 weeks as he

rehabilitates," said a club statement. "We wish Anthony a speedy recovery and look forward to his return."

Martial made an encouraging start with United after joining from Monaco in 2015 but his career at Old Trafford has tailed off, with the Frenchman scoring 90 goals from 317 appearances in all competitions.

His absence leaves Rasmus Hojlund and Marcus Rashford as the only central striking options in Ten Hag's senior squad.

But if the Dutch boss wants to add to his forward line-up during the January transfer window, he will need the approval of Jim Ratcliffe as the British billionaire prepares to take control of football operations as part of his minority ownership of United. — AFP



Injured - Manchester United striker Anthony Martial. PHOTO: AFP



In the new format, athletes from different countries and regions will compete together in these events. PHOTO: IOC

Mixed-gender events replace mixed-NOC ones at Gangwon 2024

The 2024 Gangwon Winter Youth Olympic Games have replaced mixed-NOC (National Olympic Committee) events with mixed-gender events in various disciplines, including Nordic combined, cross-country skiing, biathlon, short track, ski jumping, Alpine skiing, and freestyle skiing.

THE mixed-gender events have replaced the mixed-NOC ones at the 2024 Gangwon Winter Youth Olympic Games.

In previous Youth Olympics, athletes from different countries and regions teamed up to compete together for the mixed National Olympic Committee (NOC) events, which have been replaced with

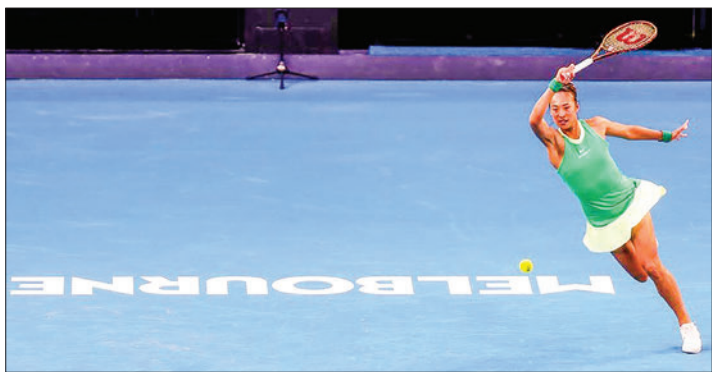
mixed-gender ones in Nordic combined, cross-country skiing, biathlon, short track, ski jumping, Alpine skiing and freestyle skiing at Gangwon 2024.

The decision was made as the International Olympic Committee hoped that mixed-gender disciplines would help place greater focus on young athlete development pathways and

ensure consistency with the Summer Youth Olympic Games program in 2026.

The mixed-NOC events were first introduced at the 2010 Summer Youth Olympics and made their winter debut two years later as non-medal events in curling, figure skating and short track speed skating. — Xinhua

Zheng reaches Australian Open semifinals after fighting win



Zheng Qinwen of China hits a return during the women's singles quarterfinal against Anna Kalinskaya of Russia at Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne, Australia, 24 January 2024. PHOTO: MA PING/XINHUA

CHINA'S top-ranked tennis player Zheng Qinwen reached her maiden Grand Slam semifinal after a comeback victory over unseeded Anna Kalinskaya at the Australian Open

on Wednesday.

Zheng fought back 6-7 (4), 6-3, 6-1 in a tense night session quarterfinal at the Rod Laver Arena.

The 21-year-old Zheng will

start as the favourite against Ukraine qualifier Dayana Yastremska in the semifinals as expectations build for Chinese tennis' biggest star.

Yastremska earlier beat unseeded Linda Noskova of the Czech Republic 6-3, 6-4 in 78 minutes.

"I told myself to stay focused. I'm really happy to be in the semifinals," said Zheng, who emerged victorious after two hours and 20 minutes.

Zheng showed no signs of nerves in her second Grand Slam quarterfinal and broke in the opening game. But she was unable to consolidate her lead in a see-saw of a first set against the Russian. — Xinhua

Yangon United sign Hein Zeyar Lin for two years



ON a two-year contract, the Yangon United team signed winger Hein Zeyar Lin, who played well in the Myawady team last season.

The Yangon United team continuously appoints new players for the new season, and Hein Zeyar Lin is the fourth one. The winger played for the Myawady Youth team in 2018 and 2019, played for the Shan United youth team in 2022 and moved to the Myawady senior team in 2023. The Yangon United team has recruited four new local players for the new season. Before Hein Zeyar Lin, goalkeeper Pyae Phyo Aung, midfielder Wai Lin Aung and winger Nyi Nyi Aung were recruited. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

Russia sees no US' intentions to withdraw military contingent from Syria

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WORLD

HAMAS UNDERGOES A NOTABLE CHANGE

Hamas ready to agree with Israel on release of abducted women, children - Reports

PALESTINIAN movement Hamas has announced its readiness for a potential agreement with Israel on the release of women and children still held as hostages in the Gaza Strip, The Wall Street Journal reported on Wednesday, citing Egyptian officials.

Such an initiative marked a significant shift in the position of Hamas that used to insist during recent weeks on a comprehensive ceasefire agreement as a condition for the hostage release talks, the report said.

However, Israeli officials are still very sceptical about potential progress in the negotiations with Hamas, although the Israeli government remains ready to continue the talks, the newspaper reported, citing Egyptian and Qatari officials.

On 7 October the Gaza Strip-controlling Hamas movement launched a large-scale rocket attack against Israel and breached the border, attacking both civilian neighbourhoods and military bases. As a result, over 1,200 people in Israel were killed and some 240 others abducted. Israel launched retaliatory strikes, ordered a complete blockade of Gaza, and started a ground incursion into the Palestinian enclave with the declared goal of eliminating Hamas fighters and rescuing the hostages.

Nearly 25,500 people have been killed so far in the Gaza Strip as a result of Israeli strikes, local authorities said. — SPUTNIK



This photo taken on 3 November 2023 shows models of C929® and C919®, both of which are China's homegrown jets, displayed at the booth of the Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China, Ltd, during an aviation industry event in Beijing, capital of China. **PHOTO: LI HE/XINHUA**

China achieves mass production of sustainable aviation fuel

The Henan-based petrochemical company converts kitchen waste oils into biodiesel and SAF using its green and low-carbon biofuel technology, marking a significant step for China's SAF mass production.

A CHINESE enterprise has developed a sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), it will be made commercially available soon. This sustainable product marks a pioneering step for the country's SAF mass production, according to Science and Technology Daily.

Junheng Biology is a private petrochemical enterprise located in central China's Henan Province. After a five-year research and development phase, it has successfully converted kitchen waste oils into biodiesel and SAF by using its self-developed green

and low-carbon biofuel technology, said Zhang Zhenhui, executive director of the enterprise.

SAF is a new type of aviation fuel that blends bio-manufactured green jet fuel with traditional fuel in a certain proportion. It has the potential to reduce carbon emissions over the fuel's life cycle by up to 80 per cent, making it a viable alternative to green aviation energy.

"Junheng Biology is China's first private enterprise to obtain SAF airworthiness approval issued by the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC)," a CAAC official said. — Xinhua

Thai court rules former PM candidate Pita can remain in parliament

Pita faced suspension for owning media shares during the 2023 election. The court ruled iTV, the company in question, wasn't a media company at that time, allowing Pita to keep his parliamentary seat.

THAILAND'S Constitutional Court on Wednesday ruled former prime ministerial candidate Pita Limjaroenrat can remain a parliamentarian, dismissing a claim by the election commission that he is disqualified because he ran as a candidate in a 2023 election while holding shares in a media company.

Pita, who led the liberal Move Forward party when it garnered the most votes in the general election in May last year, had been suspended from parliament in July over the shareholding. The Constitution bars those who hold shares in media businesses from running for election.

The court said iTV, whose shares Pita owned, was not a media company at the time of the election as the company had stopped its television broadcasting service, maintaining he could remain a lawmaker.

The ruling comes after Pita failed to become the country's prime minister in July due to



Thailand's Constitutional Court has ruled in favour of former prime ministerial candidate Pita Limjaroenrat, allowing him to remain a parliamentarian despite an election commission claim of disqualification. **PHOTO: AFP**

opposition in parliament to his harsh law against insulting the monarchy. — Kyodo