

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

Inwa Ancient Cultural Zone draws domestic, international visitors

ACCORDING to Deputy Director U Nay Tun Naing of the Department of Archaeology and National Museum (Mandalay branch), the Inwa Ancient Cultural Area in TadaU, Mandalay Region, attracts daily visits both from homegrown and from foreign travellers.

Among the numerous ancient cultural structures in Inwa,

major tour destinations for day trips include the Bargaya monastery, the Mei Nu brick monastery, the palace wall, the palace tower, and the Sinkyon fortress. Other notable sites worth visiting are the pagodas and stupas built during the Inwa, Nyaungyan, and Amarapura periods, such as the Chauksutan pagodas, the Koe-

sutan pagodas, the Daw Gyan pagodas, the Myinmotaung Pagoda, and the Wingaba Pagoda.

The report also mentions that both domestic and overseas travellers visit and explore the heritage buildings along the bank of the Ayeyawady River.

U Nay Tun Naing remarked,

“Since March 2023, significant numbers of local and foreign tourists have visited the Inwa area consistently. On average, over a thousand travellers usually visit Inwa monthly. In December 2023 and January this year, approximately 1,300 visitors came each month. The Mei Nu brick monastery, Bargaya monastery, and fortresses are popular destinations.

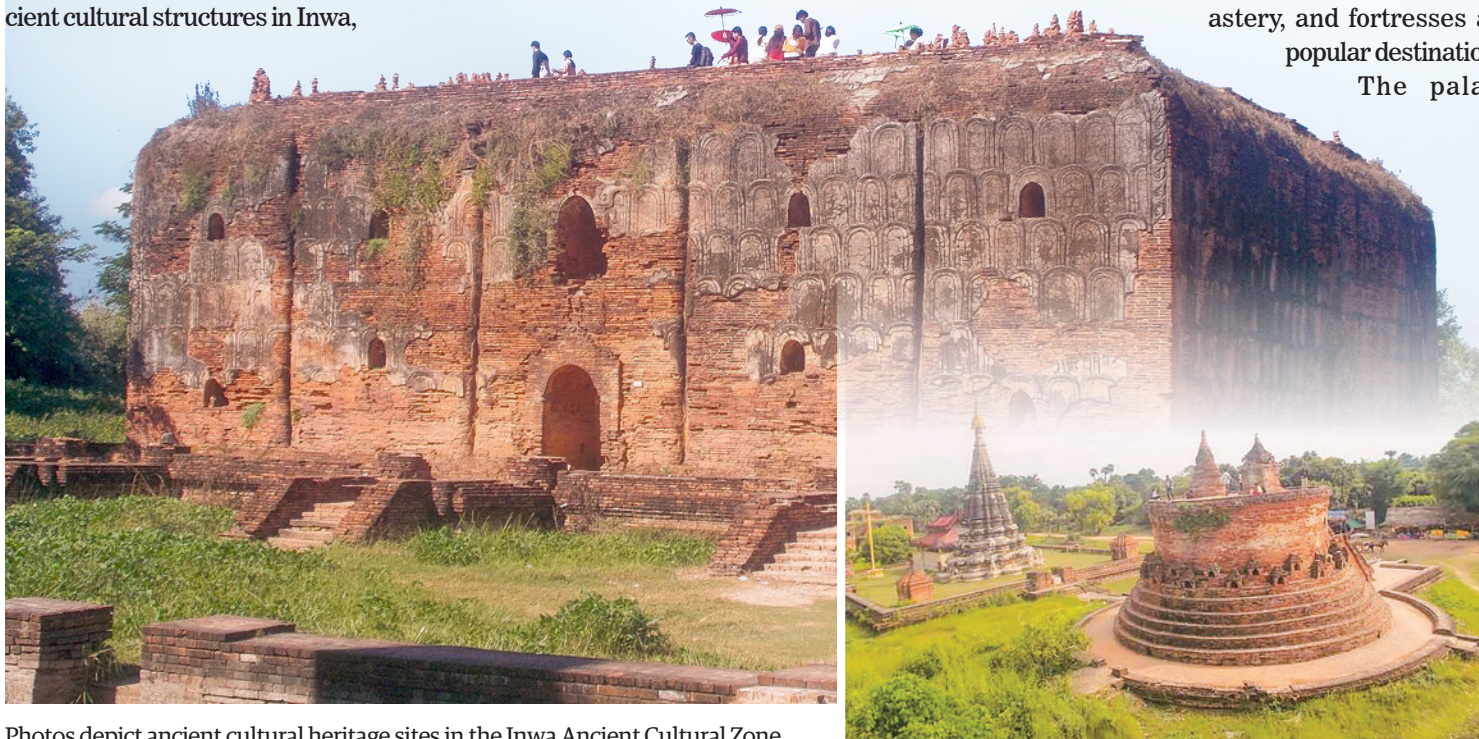
The palace

sites are enchanting to foreign travellers. Additionally, destinations along the Ayeyawady River are famous among locals and foreigners, with most international visitors coming from Asian countries, especially Thailand and China. There are also visitors from European countries, although they are fewer in number.”

The report further highlights travel destinations in the Inwa area, including three Pinya caves south of TadaU, the Pinya Shwezigon Pagoda, the Yadana Myazigon Pagoda, the Mingala Pagoda, the Yanaungmyin Pagoda, the Pinya Aungzigon Pagoda, the Pinsamarlinda Yadana Myazigon Pagoda, and other stupas.

Established in 1364 AD by Thadoe Minpya, the ancient city of Inwa served as the capital for 400 years until the reign of King Bagyidaw (AD 1821). During this period, 624 pagodas, temples, stupas, and edifices were donated and constructed by kings, queens, princes, and princesses.

— ASH/TMT



Photos depict ancient cultural heritage sites in the Inwa Ancient Cultural Zone.

Myanmar’s seaborne exports surpass US\$7 billion by 19 January

The maritime trade value reflected a drop of \$2.376 billion compared to the corresponding period of last FY.

MYANMAR’S seaborne exports with international trade partners amounted to US\$7.136 billion as of 19 January of the current financial year 2023-2024, while its imports surpassed exports with \$10.66 billion, totalling \$17.8 billion, the Ministry of Commerce’s statistics indicated.

The maritime trade value reflected a drop of \$2.376 billion compared to the corresponding period last FY.

Myanmar’s foreign trade target for the current FY 2023-2024 is \$32.5 billion, comprising exports worth \$16.5 billion and imports worth \$16 billion.

Meanwhile, Myanmar’s border trade with the neighbouring countries (China, India, Bangladesh and Thailand) was estimated at \$6.53 billion this FY, which declined from \$6.6 billion registered in the year-ago period.

Myanmar’s external trade amount- ed to US\$24.337 billion as of 17 January

this FY, which dropped from \$27.145 billion recorded in the same period last FY, the Ministry of Commerce’s statistics showed.

Myanmar exports agricultural produce, livestock, fishery, mineral, forest products, manufacturing goods and other goods to the external market. At the same time, it imports capital goods, intermediate goods, consumer goods and raw materials goods imported by the CMP enterprises. — TWA/KK

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ME, donors support Myanmar nationals affected by Japan quake

BUSINESS PAGE-7



Green gram prices remain elevated on foreign demand

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 the 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



An aerial view of Mawtinsun Pagoda in Hainggyikyun, Ayeyawady Region. **PHOTO BY MOHT**

Ayeyawady Region's domestic tourism revives as locals flock to Mawtinsun Pagoda

MANY travellers flock to Mawtinsun pagoda in Ayeyawady Region, says the Yangon-Hainggyikyun-Yangon bus line.

"The major destination in Hainggyikyun is Mawtinsun pagoda. Kyauk Klup (rock club) is the only one in Myanmar. Other recreational activities include swimming, exploring local knowledge, and visiting Kyauk Klup. Besides Mawtinsun, many people also go to Ngwehsaung and Chaungtha beaches. The Ayeyawady Region is the best place to visit in Myanmar because of its good security.

Whether it is day or night, travellers never stop coming," said an official from the

Shanmalay Yangon-Hainggyikyun-Yangon bus line. Some travel to Hainggyikyun by boat, but more people go by road to save time. "Thinking it might be cheaper, some travel by boat. It takes more time. So, more people go by road," said the Yangon-Hainggyikyun bus terminal. As it is the dry season, with no rain or wind, this is when local travellers visit many destinations across Myanmar. According to the Department of Hotels and Tourism, Chaungtha Beach in Ayeyawady Region has received 440,000 visitors during this year's travel season. — Thit Taw/ZN

ACMECS Logo Design Competition Seeks Creative Citizens

1. Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs will lead the Logo Design competition for the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS). The awards will be 1,000 US dollars for the first prize, 500 US dollars for the second prize and 300 US dollars for the third prize.
2. Myanmar citizens aged 15 and above can participate in the competition individually or in groups. The Theme of Logo Design is "ACMECS as an adaptive and forward-looking sub-regional cooperation framework and connector with other sub-regional and regional frameworks towards a prosperous and sustainable Mekong Sub-Region". The application forms can be submitted to acmeecs.sec@gmail.com of ACMECS Interim Secretariat from 1 February to 31 March.
3. The terms and conditions and technological information for those competing in the ACMECS Logo Design competition are as follows: -
 - (a) The contestant must be the designer of Logo Design. The Logo Design must be original. It must not include any dispute/objection. It must not infringe the intellectual property rights of the third party.
 - (b) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and ACMECS Interim Secretariat are not responsible for any disputes that occur with other external organizations regarding the breaching of copyrights and intellectual property rights of Logo Design.
 - (c) The award-winning Logo Design is the intellectual property of the ACMECS Interim Secretariat, and the winner will not get further benefits for the Logo Design after receiving the prize.
 - (d) Contestants must submit logo designs in JPEG, PNG, or PDF formats. The logo must be high resolution and at least 300 DPI.
 - (e) The selected contestants must submit the logo design with a specification sheet, final design, theme synopsis and concept, and open file format that can remodify the logo design.
4. The contestants will be reviewed as follows: -
 - (a) ACMECS Interim Secretariat will accept the applications, and the award-selecting team of ACMECS countries representatives will analyze and select.
 - (b) The applications will be judged based on innovation, design, structure, technology quality, simplicity, arts, visuals and appropriateness with the Theme of Logo Design.
 - (c) ACMECS Interim Secretariat will not use applications that do not conform to the requirements. If some legal cases occur regarding the competition, application and winners, the processes will go under the judiciary of Thailand.
5. The application form, terms and conditions and detailed information are available at <https://shorturl.at/zAJOW> and attached QR Code starting from 1 February 2024.



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09 454 237 515

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Law Amending the Political Parties Registration Law (State Administration Council Law No 15/2024)

5th Waning of Pyatho 1385 ME
30 January 2024

THE State Administration Council has enacted this Law under Section 419 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

1. This Law shall be called the Law Amending the Political Parties Registration Law.
2. Sub-Section (g) of Section 2 of the Political Parties Registration Law shall be substituted as follows: -
“(g) the By-election is an election occasionally held by the commission for the vacant constituencies when a Hluttaw representative resigns or passes away or is terminated from the post of Hluttaw representative under the law or is revoked from the duties.”
3. Section 5 of the Political Parties Registration Law states :
 - (a) The wording “A total of 90 days” mentioned in the Sub-Section (f) shall be substituted with the wording “the day when the Commission issues a notification at least 90 days ahead of the election day”, and the wording “at least 100,000 party members” with the wording “at least 50,000 party members”.
 - (b) The wording “A total of 180 days” mentioned in the Sub-Section (h) shall be substituted with the wording “the day when the Commission issues a notification at least 90 days ahead of the election day” and the wording “at least half of all townships” with the wording “at least one-third of all townships”.
4. Section 17 of the Political Parties Registration Law shall be substituted as follows: -
“Section 17. A party shall carry out
 - (a) drawing the annual balance sheet in financial years, compile a yearly statement of accounts on assets of the party and seek approvals for them under the party rules.

- (b) The party’s fund, which has been opened as an account under Sub-Section (g) of Section 5, shall be spent under the order or directive issued by the commission.
5. Section 19 of the Political Parties Registration Law shall be substituted as follows: -
 - (a) if registration of a party is annulled due to infringing upon clauses 4, 5, 6 or 7 of Sub-Section (a) of Section 12, assets and property of the party shall be handed over to the department or organization designated by the government in the prescribed ways.
 - (b) if the verification shows that a political party identified as automatically annulled from the political party due to lack of reapplying for the party registration or a person not lower than the position of Party Central Executive member violates any points of clauses 4, 5, 6 or 7 of Sub-Section (a) of Section 12, assets and property of the party shall be handed over to the department or organization designated by the government in the prescribed ways.
 - (c) With regard to the property handed over under Sub-Sections (a) and (b), the relevant department or organization shall follow the directive of the government.

I hereby signed this Law under Section 419 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Sd/Min Aung Hlaing
Senior General
Chairman
State Administration Council

Union Information Minister reviews preparations for Academy Awards event

UNION Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn, accompanied by Deputy Minister U Ye Tint and relevant officials of working committees and subcommittees, yesterday inspected preparatory work for the 2023 Myanmar Film Academy Awards event at the Myanmar International Convention Centre I (MICC I) in Nay Pyi Taw.

The Union minister and party first observed the archway, red carpet, reception plans and interview programmes, entertainment, awarding procedures and installation of lighting and sound systems.

They also warmly met receptionists who will bring academy statues to the stage for recipient artistes.



Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn and party inspect preparatory work for the 2023 Myanmar Film Academy Awards event in Nay Pyi Taw.

The 2023 Myanmar Film Academy Awards event is set to be celebrated on a grand scale on 3 February at MICC I in Nay Pyi Taw. Over 1,000 artistes and moviemakers will

reportedly attend the event, and the best artistes, cinematographers and technicians will be selected from the movies screened in 2023. — MNA/KTZH

Media invited to attend Myanmar Film Academy Awards ceremony

THE 2023 Myanmar Motion Pictures Academy Awards ceremony will be held on 3 February 2024 at Myanmar International Convention Centre I (MICC I) in Nay Pyi Taw.

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 designated 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

NATIONAL

ME, donors support Myanmar nationals affected by Japan quake



The Myanmar ambassador to Japan provides assistance to quake-affected Myanmar nationals in Japan.

ACCORDING to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Myanmar Embassy in Japan and generous donors provided food and medicines to Myanmar nationals living in the quake-affected area in Ishikawa Prefecture in Japan on 27 January.

Myanmar Ambassador to Japan U Soe Han and embassy staff visited Ishikawa Prefecture, Japan, affected by the 7.6 magnitude earthquake that struck on 1 January and met Myanmar nationals to offer words of encouragement.

Following this, the Myanmar Ambassador and his team provided rice, cooking oil, foodstuffs, purified water, and medicines to 12 Myanmar women work-

ing at an electrical equipment manufacturing plant in Shika, Ishikawa Prefecture, and 16 Myanmar women working at a food processing factory in Nanao, Ishikawa Prefecture.

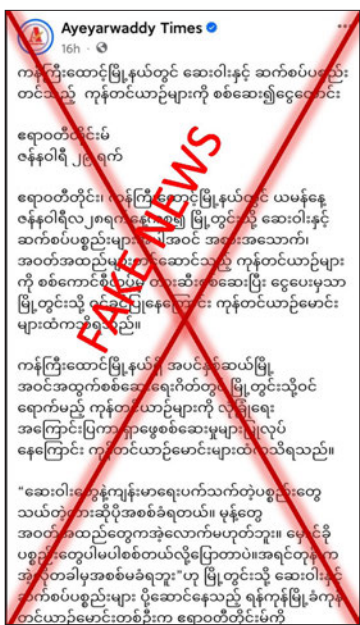
The Myanmar Ambassador expressed happiness that no one had been injured and that Myanmar nationals had supported each other to overcome the challenges posed by the earthquake. He also expressed gratitude to the Japanese locals who offered necessary assistance.

The Myanmar Embassy will investigate whether Myanmar nationals are in other quake-affected areas in Ishikawa Prefecture so that necessary assistance can be reached. — ASH/MKKS

Counter-argument to false information

Malicious media spread fake news to discredit security forces

THE malicious media outlets are spreading the false information



Screenshot validates false news.

on social media, claiming that the members of security forces checked the trucks carrying medicine and medical supplies, food and garments and allowed the trucks to enter the city after asking for money between K50,000 and K80,000 per truck in Kangyidaunt Township of Ayeyawady Region starting from 28 January.

According to the locals and an official of Ayeyawady Region, there is no inspection point in that township, and the relevant officials conduct regular inspections.

They do not collect extra charges. Therefore, malicious media outlets intentionally spread such fake news to discredit the security forces. — MNA/KTZH

Khit Thit Media fabricates news stories regarding security forces

KHIT Thit Media is spreading fake news on social media platforms, claiming that Tatmadaw destroyed Htanpinhla village in Monywa Township on 30 January by setting it on fire.

In reality, PDF terrorists entered Htanpinhla village around 4:40 am and set it ablaze after looting property from the villagers' houses. An official responsible for area security confirmed that there were no members of security forces present in or around the village at the time of the incident.

The malicious media circulated fake news again, alleging that Tatmadaw set fire to some houses in Natyaytwin village in Paungde Township, Bago Region, for the second time on 27 January.

The true situation was that PDF terrorists set some



Screenshots validate misinformation.

houses in the village on fire on 24 January and returned on 27 January to loot valuable items and foodstuffs from some more houses before setting them ablaze. An official responsible for area security also confirmed the absence of security forces in or around the village at the time of the incident.

PDF terrorists are com-

mitting attacks by using residential houses as cover and disrupting the socioeconomic life of local people by setting their houses on fire. Subversive media outlets are fabricating and circulating false information to conceal PDF terrorists' heinous acts and misrepresent members of the security forces.

— MNA/TKO



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NATIONAL

Near opening of No 3 Thanlyin Bridge sparks surge in Thanlyin property sales

THE property market in Thanlyin township is likely to be better as the No 3 Thanlyin Bridge is going to be opened, and the current sale has been lively, according to the real estate community in the township.

“Thanlyin Bridge is nearing completion. When it is completed, the real estate price in Thanlyin will be good. The problem in our Thanlyin township is traffic congestion on the bridge. Thanlyin is close to downtown Yangon. There is convenient

transportation. When the bridge is open, the town will be vibrant, and property prices will get higher. So, it is better buying now,” said an official from the Myo Thet Thanlyin real estate agency.

Despite the perspective of rising prices when the bridge is completed, the current real estate prices are still moderate.

“The real estate sale has been active as the bridge is nearing completion. Since property prices are not yet much high

compared to other townships such as Dagon Myothit (Seikkan), Dagon Myothit (South), and Dagon Myothit (East) townships, a 40-foot by 60-foot plot is still available at K100-K110 million,” he said.

The Thilawa Special Economic Zone has resulted in a growing number of local and foreign businesses, and property prices in South Yangon District townships – Thanlyin, Kyauktan, Kayan and Thongwa – will likely increase. — Thit Taw/ZS



The computer-generated model for the No 3 Thanlyin Bridge.



Yangon Payment Service (YPS) card.

Free YPS cards for non-user damaged valid cards replacements

ANY YPS card can be checked to see if it is functioning, and a replacement card will be issued if it is not destroyed due to the user's fault and still has a valid warranty period, according to Yangon Payment Service.

Non-functioning cards can be brought to the Sule sales counter for inspection and if the one-year warranty has expired or it is unusable for some reason, users will have to buy a new card and it will take seven days to transfer the balance from the damaged card.

“If a YPS card is destroyed or does not work automatically, it can be brought to the Sule sales counter to be checked. If it is not damaged due to user's

error and it is still valid, a new card will be issued free of charge. If the one-year warranty has expired or it has been destroyed for any reason, users must buy new cards. It will take seven calendar days to transfer the old balance to the new card,” Yangon Payment Services replied on its Facebook page. At present, YPS takers can either use YPS card or scan QR code via application to avoid the hassle of finding small changes. If the card readers on buses are not opened, immediate maintenance or actions will be taken in cooperation with the relevant bus line if the bus line number and vehicle registration number are provided, according to Yangon Payment Services. — MT/ZN

Ayeyawady salt production reaches over 140,000 tonnes last year

SALT production in the Ayeyawady Region reached 142,000 tonnes in the 2022-23 salt season, and it is expected to yield more this year due to El Niño, according to an official from the Salt Industry Division, Ayeyawady Region.

Salt fields in Ayeyawady start preparing to produce sun-dried salt around October, and production begins in January.

“The salt season starts by preparing salt fields in October, and the harvesting period is from January to the end of May. It produced 142,000 tonnes of salt in the

2022-23 season. This year, it is expected to produce more because El Niño goes well with salt. But, if there is intermittent rain, it is not good,” he said.

Despite the rains, over 101,000 tonnes of salt were produced in Ayeyawady Region in the 2021-22 season, and the production increased to 142,000 tonnes in the 2022-23 season thanks to good weather. Although it rained in Ayeyawady Region a few days ago, salt farmers prepared quickly and avoided severe losses by following the weath-

er forecast.

“Despite the rain, there was not much damage. Some salt fields are just under preparation. And the farmers are always watching the weather forecast. As those who have already laid salt for sun drying have taken preventive measures, they didn't suffer major losses,” he added.

Ayeyawady salt is mainly exported to Yangon and Mandalay regions, and the price of fine salt per viss rose slightly from K230 to K280 last week due to bouts of rain. — MT/ZN



Salt farmers seen working at salt fields in Ayeyawady Region.

NATIONAL

Weekly market update of dry groceries at Bayintnaung Commodity Wholesale Centre

FOR a week from 24 to 30 January 2024, the prices of black gram, pigeon pea and green gram rose at the Bayintnaung Commodity Wholesale Centre, while the onion and chilli pepper saw price drops.

Onion

Bayint Naung Wholesale market saw a high influx of 450,000 visses of onions on 29 and 30 January 2024. The wholesale prices moved in the range of K1,100 and K2,900 per viss depending on the quality, size and producing areas (Seikphyu, Myittha and Myingyan) on 30 January.

The highest price in the Seikphyu market was K1,700 with an entry of K85,000 viss. At the same time, the onion fetched only K1,500 per viss in maximum in the Pakokku market that day, with the supply of 66,000 visses of monsoon onion on 30 January.



A vendor is organizing kitchen foodstuffs at her retail dry grocery shop.

Garlic

The garlic prices from Aungban, Shan State, stood at K15,000-K16,000 per viss depending on varieties and qualities, whereas Kyugoat garlic price dipped to K9,000-K9,300 per viss on 30 January.

Potato

Chinese potato price

fetched K2,400-K2,800 per viss on 30 January, with 78,000 visses being supplied to the market.

Chilli pepper

The wholesale prices of chilli peppers declined a bit to K99,000-K12,500 per viss for long chilli pepper and Moehtaung variety on 30 January. Those Moehtaung chillies pro-

cessed in cold storage fetched K10,500-K10,800 per viss. The price of bell peppers from Sinyukyung was K15,500 per viss.

Rice

The rice prices hit K85,000-K87,000 per sack of ordinary monsoon rice and K97,000 per sack of Pawkywe variety. The new Pawsan pre-

mium quality rice was worth K130,000-K155,000 per sack, depending on the producing areas (Pyapon, Myaungmya, Shwabo). The sticky rice fetched K100,000-K110,000 per sack on 30 January.

Palm oil

For a week from 29 January to 4 February 2023, the wholesale reference price of Yangon Region was set higher at K5,380 per viss.

Pulses

The prices of various pulses soared to K3,170,000 per tonne of black gram (Fair Average Quality/RC), K3,450,000 per tonne of black gram (Special Quality/RC), K3,82,200 per tonne of pigeon pea (red gram) RC, K4,250 per viss of green gram (Shwewah) and K6,350-K6,600 per viss of chickpea in Yangon's wholesale markets. — TWA/KK

Myanmar cities win ASEAN Clean Tourist City Award at ATF 2024

ACCORDING to the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF), Keng Tung and Pathein have been awarded the ASEAN Clean Tourist City Award.

The ATF 2024 was held from January 22 to 27 in Vientiane, Laos, and the related ASEAN Tourism Ministers' Meeting was attended by Myanmar's Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism, Dr Thet Thet Khine.

At the forum, two cities of Myanmar, Keng Tung in Eastern Shan State and Pathein in Ayeyawady Region, won the ASEAN Clean Tourist City Award.

In addition, Myanmar also received five ASEAN Green Hotel Awards, three ASEAN MICE Venue Standard Awards (Category: Meeting Room), two ASEAN MICE Venue Standard Awards (Category: Exhibition

Award), three ASEAN MICE Venue Standard Awards (Category: Event Venue), and the ASEAN Sustainable Tourism Award.

The Myanmar delegation, led by the Union minister, also visited the Myanmar Tourism Federation exhibition booth at the ASEAN Tourism Exhibition in conjunction with the ASEAN Tourism Forum 2024. — TWA/NN/TKO



An aerial view of Kengtung that won the ASEAN Clean Tourist City Award.

Weather forecast for February's second week in Myanmar

THE Department of Meteorology and Hydrology has forecasted rain and fog in some states and regions during the second week of February. It is anticipated that there will be foggy conditions in the lower Sagaing Region, Yangon Region, Ayeyawady Region, Taninthayi Region, Shan State (South and East), Chin State, Kayah State, and Kayin State from 10 to 17 February 2024. The weather forecasting statement also predicts partly cloudy conditions over the southern parts of the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal, with a few clouds expected over the northern part of the Andaman Sea and the rest of the Bay of Bengal.

In terms of precipitation, rainfall may be below average in Nay Pyi Taw, the upper part of Sagaing Region, Mandalay

Region, Magway Region, Bago Region, Yangon Region, Ayeyawady Region, Chin State, Rakhine State, Kayah State, Kayin State, and Mon State. Rain or thundershowers are expected to be widespread as usual in the upper Sagaing Region, Taninthayi Region, Kachin State, and Shan State.

Foggy conditions are likely in the upper Sagaing Region, Kachin State, Shan State (North), Rakhine State, and Mon State for about 18 to 25 days, in the lower Sagaing Region, Yangon Region, Ayeyawady Region, Taninthayi Region, Shan State (South and East), Chin State, Kayah State, and Kayin State for about 10 to 17 days, and in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay Region, Magway Region, and Bago Region for approximately three to nine days. — TWA/ TRKM

Rice prices indicate one-month increase of K15,000 per sack

THE prices of rice that are primarily consumed showed a rise of K2,000-K15,000 per sack within one month, according to the Myanmar Rice Traders Association (Wahdan rice depot).

The non-premium rice moved between K68,000 and K80,000 per sack depending on varieties (Aemahta, rice grown under the intercropping system). Pawsan premium quality prices are K100,000-K125,000 per sack depending on producing areas (Myaungmya, Pyapon and Shwebo) on 1 January in Yangon's wholesale market.

The prices hit K70,000-K92,000 per sack of ordinary rice and K110,000-K135,000 per sack

(broken) and K125,000-K135,000 for Shwebo Pawsan (5-10 per cent broken).

The federation determined reasonable market prices by considering the following factors: fair profit for the farmers, millers and distributors, reasonable prices for consumers, last year's market price, global market prices and other commodities prices. Yet, the market price was found to be way higher than the reasonable prices in November and December 2023. Therefore, the federation rigorously reflected on high market rates.

Consequently, MRF encouraged the affiliated associations, members of commodity



The market price was found to be way higher than the reasonable prices in November and December 2023.

of Pawsan rice varieties on 30 January.

Additionally, the reasonable market prices for January were set at K70,000-K72,000 per 108-pound sack of Aemahta rice (25 per cent broken), K72,000-K75,000 for Aemahta rice (15 per cent broken), K75,000-K78,000 for Aemahta (10-5 per cent broken), K80,000-K85,000 for 90-day short matured rice, Pakan, Anyatha, special Aemahta rice varieties (10-5 per cent broken), K95,000-K100,000 for Ayamin, Ayeya Padaytha, Ayamin (5-10 per cent broken), K100,000-K110,000 for Ayeyawady Pawsan rice and K90,000-K100,000 for non-premium Shwebo Pawsan, K110,000-K115,000 for Ayeyawady Kyapyan (5-10 per cent

depots, exporters and rice companies to follow the price.

Nonetheless, according to the MRF, the price difference is five to ten per cent between the retail and wholesale markets and 10-20 per cent for modern trade with consumer packaging at mini-marts. MRF stated that those reasonable market prices only influence the new monsoon paddy produced in 2023.

MRF urged the buyers to contact the MRF and the relevant wholesale centres to have a smooth trade.

The federation notified on 21 September paddy reference price for 2023 monsoon paddy and called for its affiliated companies, millers and traders to buy it reasonably during the monsoon paddy harvest season. — NN/EM

Green gram prices remain elevated on foreign demand



Pulse plantation workers in action for the green gram harvest.

NEWLY harvested green gram is flowing into the market, and the prices continue to surge in Mandalay's market due to the robust demand by Chinese buyers.

The price of new green gram from central Myanmar regions stood at only K1.837 million per tonne in the Mandalay market on 1 January 2024 and jumped to K2.04 million per tonne on 30 January.

The figures showed a sharp rise of over K200,000 per tonne

within one month.

Myanmar exports green gram to China, India, the Netherlands, the UK and Germany through maritime and border channels. Over 320,000 tonnes of green gram worth US\$218.26 million were shipped worldwide as of 19 January of the current financial year 2023-2024 beginning 1 April. The Ministry of Commerce stated that Myanmar will export 600,000 tonnes of green gram to external markets this FY, with 150,000 tonnes in

each batch.

There is a wide range of foreign markets for Myanmar's green gram. More than 8,000 tonnes of green gram are sent to the European Union member countries. This season, ten companies have proposed green gram export. The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation and the Ministry of Commerce have agreed to export the green grams to European countries for bean sprouts starting in 2015. — NN/EM

Sesame price rebounds during Chinese New Year

THE prices of sesame bounced back in the Mandalay market amid the celebrations of Chinese New Year.

The sesame prices stood at K360,000 per 45-viss sack for black sesame (Samone variety), K350,000 for white sesame, K280,000 for brown sesame, K295,000 for red sesame, K290,000 for yellow sesame and K295,000 for winter sesame on 1 January.

The prices surged to K430,000 per 45-viss sack for black sesame (Samone variety), K395,000-K420,000 for white sesame, K320,000 for brown sesame, K330,000 for red sesame, K330,000 for yellow sesame, K235,000 for Niger seed and K365,000 for winter sesame on 29 January.

The figures indicated a significant increase of

K35,000-K70,000 per sack.

Due to solid demand, the market currently sees a roaring trade of various sesame seeds. They are primarily exported to China. Also, demand from Japan, Thailand, Singapore and Chinese Taipei is significantly rising. Furthermore, there is a steady demand from domestic food industries such as sesame jam and roasted sesame businesses.



Due to solid demand, the market currently sees a roaring trade of various sesame seeds.

Myanmar exports one of the oil crops, sesame, to the external market through maritime channels and border posts.

In April last year, the world's top palm oil exporter, Indonesia, one of Myanmar's leading oil suppliers, declared an export ban on cooking oil export to reduce domestic shortage. Consequently, Myanmar's Trade Department under the Ministry of Commerce temporarily suspended exports of oil crops (peanut and sesame) from 9 May to have oil self-sufficiency.

Exports of Myanmar's edible oil crops resumed as the world's top palm oil exporters returned to normality, according to a notification dated 5 July 2022 released by the Trade Department. — NN/EM

OPINION

Foster digital advancements for Myanmar's societal development

IN the contemporary landscape, the omnipresence of digital technology has become a defining characteristic of our world. As science and technology continue their relentless progress, individuals across various arenas can reap the benefits of digital technology.

Recognizing the transformative impact of countries effectively integrating digital technology into their political, economic, and social sectors, it is imperative for Myanmar to proactively initiate a digital economic and social transformation to keep pace with global development. To achieve this, the government has instituted key committees, including the e-Government Steering Committee, the e-DI System Work Committee, and the e-Government Implementation Work Committee, dedicated to successfully implementing the e-Government system.

Proficiency in digital technology applications requires individuals to possess adequate knowledge for analyzing events and information, coupled with adherence to relevant laws and rules. Aligned with the vision of "Towards Digital Myanmar", there is a pressing need to enhance human resources to develop and apply digital technology effectively. The Myanmar Computer Federation and its affiliates must actively contribute to a swift digital transformation process, striving to mould Myanmar into a modern and developed nation.

gram. However, it is vital to exercise prudence in using social media to avoid harming individuals and safeguard national characteristics, security, and interests.

Proficiency in digital technology applications requires individuals to possess adequate knowledge for analyzing events and information, coupled with adherence to relevant laws and rules. Aligned with the vision of "Towards Digital Myanmar", there is a pressing need to enhance human resources to develop and apply digital technology effectively. The Myanmar Computer Federation and its affiliates must actively contribute to a swift digital transformation process, striving to mould Myanmar into a modern and developed nation.

In this pursuit, the watchword is to foster a digital Myanmar that not only keeps up with global advancements but also upholds ethical standards and national values. By leveraging digital technology responsibly, Myanmar can carve a path towards a future marked by progress, innovation, and prosperity. As such, a master plan must be adopted to improve the digital technology to be handed to new generations who must develop such a technology to keep abreast of other countries. People have to believe that the heaven can be built with the digital technology.

The establishment of the National Database System Building Steering Committee underscores Myanmar's commitment to applying digital technology to register citizens through a Unique ID (UID), a crucial step towards national progress. Additionally, plans are in motion to conduct the 2024 census utilizing the Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPD) system.

The formation of the Digital Economy Development Committee (DEDC) signifies the government's dedication to enhancing both the digital economic system and the socioeconomic well-being of the people. Extending communication networks nationwide, even in rural areas, is a noteworthy effort to apply digital technology comprehensively. The widespread availability of communication networks enables people to engage with social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Telegram.

THE sun gently crept over the horizon, casting a warm golden hue on the world below. It was a morning like any other, yet there lay an unspoken magic in its simplicity. This was the time my mum cherished, and as I look back on those mornings, I realize they were the tapestry of my upbringing.

The memories of those mornings flood my mind like a gentle stream, bringing with them a mix of nostalgia and warmth. My mum, a beacon of love and strength, found solace in the quietude of the early hours. She believed that the essence of the day was captured in its beginning, so our mornings became sacred rituals.

In the stillness of dawn, the house echoed with the rhythmic melody of her movements. The aroma of freshly brewed coffee wafted through the air, intertwining with the subtle scent of her favourite jasmine-scented candles. It was a symphony of comfort, a prelude to a day she approached with unwavering optimism.

The kitchen, a place of alchemy for my mum, transformed into a haven of flavours and aromas. She moved with a grace only a mother possesses, each gesture an unspoken expression of love. The sizzle of bacon, the crackling sound of eggs in the pan, and the gentle hum of the coffee machine were the notes that composed the overture of our mornings.

Seated at the worn-out kitch-

en table, I watched her with a sense of admiration. Her hands, weathered by the passage of time, moved effortlessly, a testament to the countless mornings she had orchestrated. There was a tranquillity in those moments, a shared silence that spoke volumes. It was in these simple acts of preparing breakfast that our bond was strengthened, a connection that transcended the mundane.

As the sunlight filtered through the curtains, it painted a mosaic of memories on the kitchen floor. The morning chatter of birds outside and the distant rustling of leaves became the background symphony to our intimate breakfast ritual. My mum believed that nature had a way of weaving itself into the fabric of our lives, and those mornings were a testament to that belief.

The breakfast table was not just a place to nourish our bodies but also a space for nourishing our souls. Amidst the clinking of cutlery and the occasional laughter, my mum shared stories of her youth, of dreams pursued and challenges overcome. It was during these moments that I saw her not just as a mother but as a woman with a rich tapestry of experiences, a life shaped by the ebb and flow of time.

Her eyes, pools of wisdom and kindness, sparkled as she recounted tales of her own mother – my grandmother. It was in these stories that I found a deeper un-

A Timeless Remembrance

By Min Zan



With profound sorrow and longing, I once more hear my mother's lament. I persistently lift my cell phone and dial my mum's number that was recorded in it.

Understanding of my roots, a connection to a lineage of strong, resilient women. Through her words, my grandmother, though long gone, became a living presence in our mornings, a silent participant in our shared history.

Now dancing on the walls, the morning sunlight cast a gentle glow on the family photographs adorning the kitchen. Each frame

encapsulated a moment frozen in time, a memory etched in the annals of our family history. There, in black and white, were images of my mum as a young woman, a bride, a mother – a journey encapsulated in the frames that bore witness to the passage of time.

The ticking of the old grandfather clock in the hallway seemed to synchronize with the rhythm

of our mornings. My mum often remarked that time was both a constant companion and a silent witness to our lives. As I grew older, I began to understand the profound truth in her words. Those mornings, once a timeless continuum, took on a fleeting quality, a reminder of the transience of life.

Despite the routine, each morning was unique, a canvas

painted with the brushstrokes of shared moments. My mum, in her infinite wisdom, recognized the importance of embracing the present, of finding joy in the ordinary. It was a lesson she imparted with grace and one that I carry with me as a precious inheritance.

The afternoons would unfold, and the demands of the day would beckon, but the mornings remained an anchor, a sanctuary of love and connection. The mundane act of breakfast, once taken for granted, became a ritual imbued with significance. It was a communion of hearts, a sharing of lives entwined in the delicate dance of everyday moments.

As the years passed, the kitchen table witnessed the evolution of our lives. Birthdays celebrated, milestones marked, and tears shed – each moment etched into the very essence of that sacred space. The morning rituals, once a constant in the ever-changing landscape of life, became a source of solace during turbulent times.

Then came a morning that altered the course of our rituals. A morning when the kitchen felt emptier, the sunlight less vibrant. My mum, the orchestrator of our

mornings, had bid farewell to the world, leaving behind a void that echoed with the silence of loss. Once a haven of shared moments, the kitchen became a repository of memories, a sacred space untouched by the hands of time.

In the stillness of that kitchen, I found myself grappling with the paradox of grief – a heaviness that coexisted with the lightness of cherished memories. The breakfast table, now adorned with a sense of absence, became both a shrine and a refuge. The photographs on the walls, once a celebration of life, now served as portals to a time when her laughter filled the room.

The morning sun, though unchanged in its brilliance, now cast shadows that mirrored the complexities of loss. The familiar sounds of breakfast preparation were replaced by the echo of solitude. Yet, even in the absence, my mum's spirit lingered, a gentle whisper in the rustling leaves and the soft hum of the coffee machine.

The kitchen, once a stage for our shared symphony, became a canvas where I painted my own memories, a continuation of the legacy she had left behind. In the act of preparing breakfast, I found a bridge connecting the past to the present, a tangible thread that wove our stories into the fabric of time.

As I sat at the now solitary kitchen table, I realized that the essence of those mornings had

transcended the physical space. It lived on in the recipes passed down through generations, in the laughter that echoed in the walls, and in the resilience that defined our family. My mum's teachings, once imparted over breakfast conversations, now echoed in the silent conversations I held with her memory.

The kitchen, once a backdrop to our shared moments, became a sacred space where I communed with the echoes of the past. The morning sunlight, a gentle reminder of the continuity of life, illuminated the path forward. In the remembrance of my mum, I found not only a source of solace but also a reservoir of strength to navigate the uncertainties of life.

As I move through the days, the mornings remain a constant touchstone, a bridge that spans the realms of memory and reality. The rituals may have changed, but the spirit of those mornings endures an eternal flame that flickers.

With profound sorrow and longing, I once more hear my mother's lament. I persistently lift my cell phone and dial my mum's number that was recorded in it. Some might argue that it is melancholic to persist if one desires to. However, until there is no response, I will be dialling that number whenever the memory of my mum overwhelms me.

(To my late aunt, who adopted me as her son)

Hospital coffee machines: Harmful or not?

In a study published in The BMJ, concerns about hospital coffee machines contributing to the spread of disease are alleviated. Contrary to worries, the investigation concludes that a general ban on these machines is unnecessary.

A STUDY featured in the December 2023 issue of The BMJ, reveals reassuring news for healthcare workers.

Contrary to concerns, the investigation concludes that hospital coffee machines do not contribute to the spread of disease. The study suggests that implementing a general ban on these machines is unnecessary.

In the ongoing efforts to combat hospital-acquired infections, various items, such as doctors' ties, have been scrutinised as potential breeding grounds for bacteria.

Interestingly, despite the frequent contact with numerous bare hands, the study is the first to explore the previously overlooked possibility of hospital coffee machines as sources of infection.

To address this, researchers in Germany assessed the microbial population in healthcare-associated coffee machines, with a focus on the World Health Organization's (WHO's) high priority "ESKAPE" pathogens: Enterococcus faecium, Staphylococcus aureus, Klebsiella pneumoniae, Acinetobacter baumannii, Pseudomonas aeruginosa and Enterobacter species.

These bacteria pose an increasing threat because they are resistant to many antibiotics and can lead to fatal bloodstream or catheter-associated infections.

Seventeen were from break rooms and offices at a university hospital's Department of Anaesthesiology and Intensive Care Medicine, and at the Institute for Medical Microbiology, Immunology and Hygiene – both in Cologne, Germany.

A further eight were in staff members' homes.

All coffeemakers had been in use for at least a year, and none were specially cleaned before

sampling.

There was no current disease outbreak at any of the locations at the time of sampling.

Each of the coffeemakers was swabbed at five specified sites on the machine: the drip tray, the outlet, the buttons, the handle of the water tank, and the inside of the water tank.

Species were identified from cultures using spectrometry.

Typical pathogens were grouped into "medically relevant" and commensals into "atypical pathogens" and differentiated by Gram type: positive or negative (the latter have an outer

membrane that aids antibiotic resistance).

Unsurprisingly, microbial growth was detected on every coffee machine.

Hospital machines were about three times as heavily colonized (360 strains isolated from 72 positive swabs) as home machines (135 strains isolated from 34 positive swabs). Most detected species were commensals (bacteria that live on the skin or in the gut, and pose no threat to health).

Only a few medically-relevant pathogens were identified, and none were antibiotic resistant.

SOURCE: AFP



From 31 October to 31 December 2022, the researchers swabbed a total of 25 coffeemakers spanning the range of fully automatic, capsule and espresso machines. ILLUSTRATION: ENVATO/AFP

NATIONAL

Sea turtle conservation department holds turtle releasing event



The sea turtle release ceremony in action in Haiggyikyun Township.

SEA turtle conservation departments from Hainggyi Island and Tameehla Island of Hainggyikyun Township, Patheingyi District, Ayeyawady Region, and township level departments held a turtle release event at Kyakan Village yesterday.

First, the staff led by U Phone Maw, the head of the Thameehla Island Sea Turtle

conservation department, and residents caught the turtle (CCL 38cm CCW 32cm) in a fishing net near Mawtinsun reef, fitted tags MM 3301 and 3302, and released it back into the sea.

Afterwards, U Maung Maung Tun, head of the Thameehla Island sea turtle conservation department, gave a reward and souvenirs to U Maung

Maung Tun, who reported to the authorities that the sea turtle was caught in a fishing net but was not killed and eaten.

Next, officials educated local people about how sea turtles reproduce and survive and the importance of the environment and climate for sea turtles to thrive. — Hlaing Myo Aung (Hainggyikyun IPRD/KZL)

Conservation efforts safeguard crane population in Myanmar's Ayeyawady Region



The snapshots of sarus cranes being spotted in Ayeyawady Region.

Wetland, and specific areas of Kayah, Rakhine, and Yangon. Researchers have also identified crane populations across most of the Ayeyawady Region except in the Labutta, Bogale, and Pyapon areas.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature has classified the sarus crane, scientifically known as *Grus Antigone*, as a vulnerable species. Additionally, the Myanmar government has designated the crane as a protected species.

WCS-Myanmar works with the Nature and Wildlife Conservation Division of the Forest Department, Mainmahla Island Wildlife Sanctuary, and local organizations to protect the birds. — ASH/NT

THE Wildlife Conservation Society Myanmar (WCS-Myanmar) has been actively engaged in conservation efforts in the Ayeyawady Region to safeguard the crane population in Myanmar.

The country is home to the black-necked crane, sarus crane, and the demoiselle crane. Since 2016, WCS-Myanmar, in collaboration with relevant bodies, has been researching to conserve the sarus crane population in the Ayeyawady Delta.

Ornithologist U Thet Zaw Naing of WCS-Myanmar said:

“At the outset of our conservation endeavours, we identified merely 33 nests. By 2017, this figure had risen to 138, and in the reproductive season of 2018, we documented 182 nests.”

He credited this positive trend in bird population to the cooperation of local communities with researchers.

“We estimate the current sarus crane population in the Ayeyawady Region to be around 600 individuals.”

The cranes' habitats include the Indawgyi Wildlife Sanctuary, Inlay, Moeyungyi

Confiscated illegal items: Foodstuffs, industrial materials, consumer goods, motorbike parts and vehicles

THE combined team from the Yangon Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force conducted inspections on 25 January and confiscated a Mitsubishi Fuso truck (valued at approximately K32 million), travelling from Hpa-an to Yangon, carrying 1,000 motorbike tyres worth about K7.672 million, which were not declared in the Import Declaration (ID), at the Ywathagyi Dry Port. This action was taken in accordance with Customs procedures.

On 26 January, the combined team, overseen by the Bago Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force, seized two Toyota Hilux vehicles (estimated value of K20 million) - one travelling from Hpa-an to Bago and the other from Thaton to Bago. These vehicles were transporting three types of goods valued at K3 million, including 400 bags of Doll diamond syrup and 750 kilograms of chicken sticks without official documents, at the Nyaungkhash-

ay x-ray station. This action was conducted as per Customs procedures.

During inspections on 27 and 28 January, an on-duty team from the Customs Department intercepted a Mitsubishi Fuso truck and a Faw tractor head with a trailer (estimated value of K70 million), travelling from Myawady to Yangon. These vehicles were carrying three types of goods worth K9.75 million, including 700 kilograms of Berman toothbrushes and 2,000 kilograms of Innoplus high-density polyethylene without official documents, at the Mayanchaung permanent checkpoint. This action was conducted under Customs procedures.

According to the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee, ten arrests were made over four consecutive days from 25 to 28 January, with an estimated value of K142.42 million. — MNA/MKKS



Seized illegal commodities.

LIFESTYLE

Over 2,000-year-old trench-enclosed tombs discovered in Inner Mongolia

CHINESE archaeologists have discovered a large group of ancient trench-enclosed tombs dating back to the Warring States Period (475-221 BC) in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, local authorities said.

During the excavation work at the ruins of the tomb cluster in Helinger County of Inner Mongolia, a total of 64 tombs and one ash pit were unearthed. Additionally, over 100 pieces of cultural relics including pottery, bronze, iron, jade, stone, agate and pendants

were discovered, according to the Inner Mongolia Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology.

Archaeologists found 20 tombs that had trenches dug around them, as well as 13 trenches with depths ranging from 25 centimetres to 40 centimetres.

According to the shape of the tombs and the excavated funerary objects, the tombs date back 2300 to 2200 years, which was the late Warring States Period, said Wang Zepeng, an archaeologist at the institute. — Xinhua



An aerial drone photo taken on 27 May 2023 shows the excavation work area of the ancient trench-enclosed tombs in Helinger County of north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. **PHOTO: INNER MONGOLIA INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL RELICS AND ARCHAEOLOGY/HANDOUT VIA XINHUA**

British graphic novelist delighted to 'infiltrate' cartoon boys' club



British cartoonist Posy Simmonds works on a drawing as she poses for a portrait at her home in London on 29 January 2024. **PHOTO: AFP**

POSY Simmonds is only the fifth woman and the first Briton to win the grand prix at France's

prestigious Angouleme comics festival, an honour she is thrilled with — even if toothache pre-

vented her from collecting it in person. Cartoons and comics have been "a boys' club for a long time and certainly over the last decades women have infiltrated it. Of course, I am really pleased to be one of them," she told AFP this week. Simmonds, 78, is best known in Britain for her work in The Guardian newspaper and her gentle satirisation of the English middle classes.

In France, however, she became famous for "Gemma Boverly" (1999), considered an iconoclastic masterpiece, with a complex plot delivered in very dense text, reimagining the bored heroine of Gustave Flaubert's "Madame Bovary". — AFP

'Wizard of Oz' shoe thief avoids prison

AN elderly US man who stole a pair of ruby slippers worn by Judy Garland in the classic film "The Wizard of Oz" avoided prison time at his sentencing hearing on Monday.

Terry Martin, now 76, was sentenced to time served and a year of probation for the 2005 theft as he is in hospice

care with six months to live, according to the New York Times.

The sequined shoes — indelibly associated with the character Dorothy clicking them together and saying repeatedly, "there's no place like home" — were stolen from the Judy Garland Muse-

um in the actress's hometown of Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

Martin, who had tried to turn his life around after serving prison time for a previous theft, gave into pressure from an "old mob associate" to steal the shoes in what his lawyers described as "one last score." — AFP

China boosts cultivation of talent for elderly care services

A guideline on boosting the cultivation of talent for elderly care services has been issued by the Ministry of Civil Affairs and 11 other departments, the ministry said at press conference on Tuesday.

The guideline, the first comprehensive document of its kind, stipulates all-round measures to expand the sources of talent, improve the quality and ability of talent, and enhance guarantee and incentive mechanism, among others.

Addressing the shortage of talent engaging in the elderly care industry, the document proposes to end the restrictions on education, age, status and region when recruiting talent in the industry; strengthen support for employment and entrepreneurship; and attract talent through multiple channels.

It also makes provisions regarding the management, grading and evaluation system of personnel working in the elderly care industry. — Xinhua

IN PICTURE



A visitor views exhibits of the "Tropical: Stories from Southeast Asia and Latin America" art exhibition held at the National Gallery Singapore in Singapore on 29 January 2024. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

ECONOMY WORLD

Fixing food could produce trillions in annual benefits: report

THE ways food is produced and consumed across the world is racking up hidden costs in health impacts and environmental damage amounting to some 12 per cent of world GDP a year, according to a new report Monday.

In the research, a consortium of scientists and economists found that transforming food systems across the world could prevent 174 million premature deaths, help the world meet its climate goals, and provide economic benefits of \$5 trillion to \$10 trillion. While intensive food production has helped to feed a global population that has doubled since the 1970s, the report found that this has come with a growing burden on people and the planet.

Poor diets lead to obesity or undernutrition and associated chronic illness, while polluting farming practices drive global



A farmer walks through netting set up by farmers to protect their crops from pest birds in a paddy field in Lhoknga, Indonesia's Aceh province, on 10 January 2024. **PHOTO: AFP**

warming and biodiversity loss, threatening potentially catastrophic climate impacts that would whiplash back on the world's ability to produce food.

"We have an amazing food system," said Vera Songwe, an economist with the Africa Growth Initiative at the Brook-

ings Institution, and part of the Food System Economics Commission (FSEC), which produced the report.

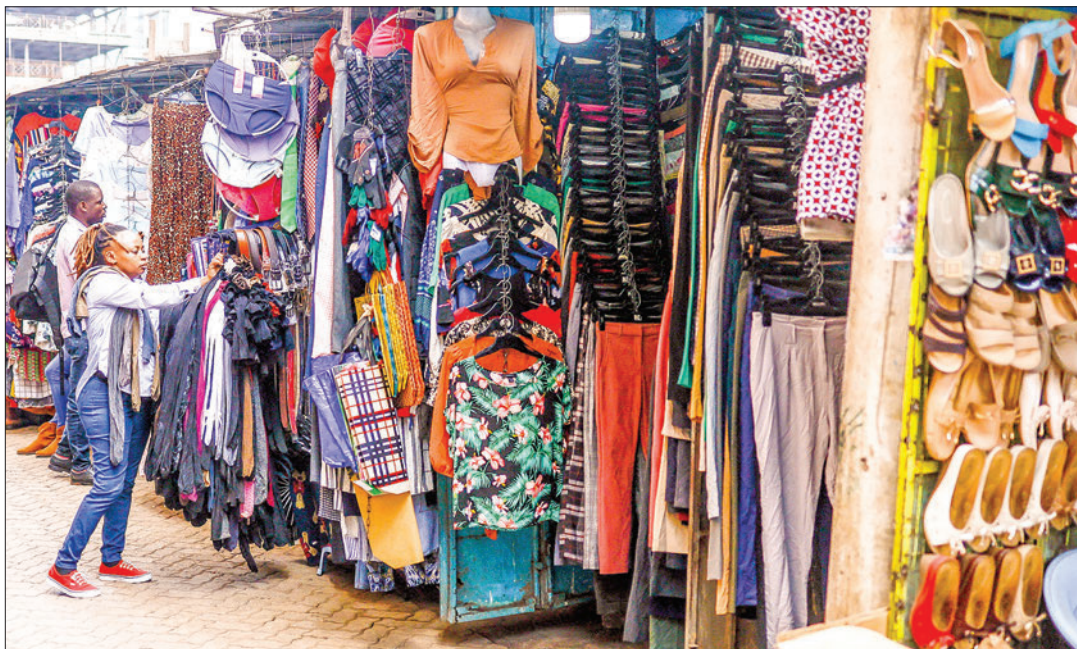
"But it has done that with a lot of cost to the environment, to people's health, and to the future and to our economics," she said. — AFP

Kenya's economy remains resilient amid multiple shocks: report

KENYA'S economy has been resilient in the face of multiple shocks over recent years, with growth and investment recovering quickly from pandemic lows and inflation being kept under control, experts said in a new report released on Monday.

According to the Macro Fiscal Analytical Snapshot Report published by the Institute of Public Finance (IPF), a think tank, the country's economy registered positive growth despite the tightening of domestic and global monetary policies and drought.

"Growth is projected to remain at around five per cent per annum for the foreseeable future, which should allow for steady rises in real per capita income and reductions in poverty, after the significant disruption caused by the pandemic," the report says. — Xinhua



A hawker selling clothes along the business district in Nairobi, on 16 January 2024. **PHOTO: AFP**

Italy unveils plan to boost African economies, curb migrant arrivals

ITALY on Monday pledged around 5.5 billion euros (5.96 billion US dollars) to support its initiatives to help economic development in Africa, as part of a wider strategy to reduce the flow of migrants from Africa to Europe.

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni called the Mattei Plan — named after Italian industrialist Enrico Mattei, who played a key role in Italy's economic development following World War II — "a new strategic partnership with African nations".

The plan aims to transform Italy into a kind of regional energy hub while speeding up the development of African econo-

mies and slowing the arrival of migrants in Europe.

Meloni made the remarks during the first Italy-Africa summit held on Monday at Italy's Senate in Rome with around two dozen African leaders, alongside top figures from the European Union and the United Nations.

According to data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, more than 270,000 migrant arrivals on Europe's Mediterranean shores were recorded in 2023, the highest one-year total since 2016. The vast majority of those migrants departed from Africa and more than half came to Europe via Italy. — Xinhua

Gold rises on falling US Treasury yields

GOLD futures on the COMEX division of the New York Mercantile Exchange rose on Monday as the US Treasury's bond yields fell.

The most active gold contract for April delivery rose 8.50 US dollars, or 0.42 per cent, to close at 2,044.60 dollars per ounce.

Escalating tensions in the Middle East further boosted gold's safe-haven appeal.

Investors are waiting for cues on interest rate trajectory

as the Federal Reserve's monetary meeting will convene this week, and Fed Chair Jerome Powell will deliver a speech as the meeting closes on Wednesday.

US monthly job report is due out on Friday.

Silver for March delivery rose 37.90 cents, or 1.66 per cent, to close at 23.251 dollars per ounce. Platinum for April delivery rose 17.00 dollars, or 1.85 per cent, to close at 938.30 dollars per ounce. — Xinhua

Zimbabwe's annual inflation rises to 34.8% in January

THE annual inflation rate in Zimbabwe accelerated to 34.8 per cent in January from 26.5 per cent in December 2023, the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency said Monday.

Month-on-month inflation for January also increased to 6.6 per cent, gaining 1.9 percentage points on the December 2023 rate of 4.7 per cent, the agency said in a statement.

The major drivers of infla-

tion during the month were food, housing, water and electricity, it said.

The rise in inflation comes against the backdrop of the depreciation of the local currency against the US dollar, as foreign currency continues to be in short supply in the country.

The currency volatility has resulted in increasing prices to keep up with the rising inflation.

— Xinhua

Thailand's auto production shrinks as local sales drop in December 2023

THAILAND'S auto production continued to shrink for the fifth consecutive month in December 2023 as local sales dropped amid high household debt, data from the Federation of Thai Industries (FTI) showed on Monday.

Thai auto manufacturers produced 133,621 vehicles last month, down 15.75 per cent from a year

earlier, due to a major decline in pickup truck output and a bigger share of imported battery electric vehicles (BEVs) in the market, according to the FTI.

For the whole of 2023, auto manufacturing contracted 2.22 per cent year on year, weighed down by lower production of internal combustion engine (ICE) passenger cars,

despite a significant jump in hybrid electric vehicles (HEVs), the FTI said in a statement.

The Southeast Asian country's finished car exports plummeted 19.09 per cent year on year last month to 90,305 units, said Surapong Paisitpatanapong, vice-president and spokesperson of the FTI's automotive industry club. — Xinhua

Fuelled by new energy, east China city makes headway in economic growth



This photo taken on 15 February 2023 shows a workshop of Chinese electric vehicle (EV) maker Li Auto Inc in Changzhou, east China's Jiangsu Province. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

New post-Brexit customs checks spark UK border worries



(FILES) Trucks leave to Britain from the harbour of Calais, northern France on 1 January 2021, on the day that the Brexit transition period ends and Britain leaves the EU single market and customs union four-and-a-half years after voting to leave the bloc. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE UK will finally roll out post-Brexit border checks Wednesday on food, plant and animal

products imported from the European Union, fanning fears of more price hikes, empty shelves and

even Valentine's Day flower shortages.

The long-awaited move will affect dinner-table staples from across the Channel, such as ham, sausages and cured meat, as well as butter, cheese and cream. It will also affect cut flowers.

The changes have been delayed five times because of fears about the knock-on effect on the sluggish UK economy and inflation, which remains elevated amid a broader cost-of-living crisis. — AFP

DUBBED as a capital of new energy, Changzhou City, east China's Jiangsu Province, reported a regional gross domestic product (GDP) of 1.01 trillion yuan (about 140.8 billion US dollars) in 2023, up 6.8 per cent year on year, the local statistics department said Tuesday.

With a population of around five million, Changzhou has become the least populated Chinese city with a regional GDP of over one trillion yuan, joining Suzhou, Nanjing, Wuxi, and Nantong as the fifth city in Jiangsu

Province to achieve this milestone.

As a manufacturing hub in the Yangtze River Delta, the city has magnetized a thriving cluster of top-notch battery and new energy vehicle (NEV) makers, infusing robust momentum into its economic growth.

The output value of the new energy industry in the city reached about 768 billion yuan last year, and the city aims to expand the output value to over one trillion yuan by 2025, according to Chen Jinhu, Party chief of Changzhou.

“The new energy industry is a winning formula for Changzhou's development.” Data show that the industrial chain integrity of power batteries in Changzhou has reached 97 per cent, ranking first in China, and the output accounts for 20 per cent of the country's production capacity. The city also contributes to 10 per cent of Chinese-made photovoltaic cells and modules. In 2023, it produced more than 700,000 NEVs, accounting for 70 per cent of those made in Jiangsu. — Xinhua

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ISEACO GENESIS VOY.NO. (214N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ISEACO GENESIS VOY.NO. (214N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **31-1-2024** 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 NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V BLPL BLESSING VOY.NO. (2403S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V BLPL BLESSING VOY.NO. (2403S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **31-1-2024** 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.

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Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S BLPL SHIPPING LINE

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

Russia discusses integration of payment infrastructures with BRICS

RUSSIA is discussing with other BRICS countries the interaction of national systems for transmitting financial messages, the country's central bank governor, Elvira Nabiullina, said on Tuesday.

"Russia has a System for Transmitting Financial Messages (SPFS), which is an alternative to SWIFT. Similar infrastructure

exists in some other countries. We are holding discussions on the interaction of such platforms, but here the interest and technical readiness of our partners are important," said Nabiullina.

She added that 159 foreign participants from 20 countries have already joined the Russian system.

The SPFS was created by the Bank of Russia to mitigate the risks of potential disconnection of Russian banks from SWIFT – an international interbank system for transmitting information and making payments, which connects more than 11,000 organizations in almost every country in the world. — Xinhua



Head of Russian Central Bank Elvira Nabiullina. PHOTO: SPUTNIK

French farmers' protests block highways around Paris

FRENCH farmers blocked motorways around Paris on Monday afternoon as they continued protesting against rising prices, red tape and "unfair competition" from other countries.

Eight "blocking points" have been set up on major highways around the French capital. Almost 800 tractors have surrounded the city, with farmers vowing to "starve Paris." According to the gendarmerie, 30 departments and 16 highways have been affected by the farmers' movement across the country.

The French farmers

started their movement nearly two weeks ago to protest against decreasing income and increasing rules, regulations and paperwork. Some complained that unfair trade policies had put them in unfair competition with farmers from other countries not subject to the same rules.

French Minister of Agriculture Marc Fesneau has announced that "new measures will be taken tomorrow." Meanwhile, President Emmanuel Macron called a meeting with several ministers on Monday afternoon to discuss the situation, his office said.

Prime Minister Gabriel Attal had announced an initial series of measures in response to farmers' anger, including putting brakes on the rising cost of diesel for farm machinery use.

He also promised to seek to simplify administrative tasks for farmers and inject subsidies into organic farming. However, these measures did not extinguish farmers' fury.

Attal said on Sunday that the initial measures were "just the beginning," and pledged to "continue day after day, week after week, to make progress". — Xinhua



French farmers block a highway with their tractors during a protest in Longvilliers, near Paris, France, on 29 January 2024. PHOTO: XINHUA

Venezuela warns of strong response if US resumes sanctions

VENEZUELA on Monday warned it will respond in a "severe, reciprocal and strong" way if the United States resumes sanctions or applies sanctions against the South American country.

"We are very attentive to the actions they (the United States) take in the coming days that may be considered aggressive towards the right that this country has to live in peace, to progress and to have all unilateral coercive measures lifted," said President of the National Assembly, Jorge Rodriguez, who also heads the government delegation in conciliation talks with the opposition.

Rodriguez warned Washington against interfering in the country's internal affairs.

"By now, they (the United States) should know that we are not going to accept any type of pressure, any type of interference," said Rodriguez.

The US government announced on Saturday the decision to review its sanction policy against the South American country, following what it called the "worrying" ruling by Venezuela's Supreme Court of Justice to ratify the disqualification of the opposition candidate for the 2024 presidential elections, Maria Corina Machado. — Xinhua

New Zealand bans "forever chemicals" in cosmetic products

NEW Zealand has banned the use of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), or "forever chemicals" that are hard to break down, in cosmetic products from the end of 2026, one of the first countries to do so. Banning these chemicals in cosmetics is part of the ongoing response, including phasing out all PFAS-firefighting foams and testing for background levels of PFAS in the New Zealand environment, according to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) on Tuesday.

PFAS are sometimes used in products such as nail polish, shav-

ing cream, foundation, lipstick, and mascara. They are added to smooth the skin, or to make cosmetic products more durable, spreadable and water-resistant, EPA said. "These chemicals don't easily break down, they can build up in our bodies, and some can be toxic at high levels," said Shaun Presow, EPA's hazardous substances reassessments manager. International research suggests PFAS are only found in a small number of products, but New Zealand takes a precautionary approach to potential risks from PFAS, Presow said. — Xinhua

SPORTS

19 Myanmar futsal players selected to compete in Indonesia

THE preliminary list of 19 players of the Myanmar futsal team that will compete in the friendly match to be held in Surabaya, Indonesia, was released on 29 January.

The Myanmar National Futsal Team will compete in Group A of the AFC Futsal Asian Cup 2024 with hosts Thailand, Viet Nam, and China, starting from 20 January.

Team Myanmar prepared for training at the Thuwunna Stadium with nine coaching

members and 24 preliminary players. Head coach Mr Bunlert Charongwong preliminarily selected 19 players who will attend the friendly match after a week of training.

The Myanmar squad left for Surabaya, Indonesia, on 5 February and will take on the Indonesian Futsal League champion Bintang Timur Futsal Club team on 7 and 9 February and the Regional East Java Team on 10 February. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL



Myanmar futsal players are seen conducting training ahead of the international friendly match in Indonesia. **PHOTO: MFF**

Ivory Coast stun AFCON holders Senegal, Cape Verde into quarter-finals

HOSTS Ivory Coast stunned Senegal at the Africa Cup of Nations on Monday, knocking out the reigning champions on penalties in the last 16 to keep their hopes of winning the title on home soil alive.

A week ago it looked as if the Ivorians were set for a humiliating group-stage exit from their own AFCON, but now they are into the quarter-finals after beating Senegal 5-4 on penalties following a tie that finished 1-1 at the end of extra time.

The Elephants scraped into the knockout phase with the worst record of the four best

third-placed sides to advance, after finishing the first round with a humiliating 4-0 loss to Equatorial Guinea, their heaviest ever home defeat.

They followed that by sacking veteran French coach Jean-Louis Gasset and trying unsuccessfully to bring in former boss Herve Renard on a short-term deal.

But instead former player Emerse Fae was appointed on an interim basis, hoping to rouse a shell-shocked team for a daunting tie against the holders.

It looked like being a trying evening for Ivory Coast in

Yamoussoukro as Senegal went ahead in the fourth minute when Habib Diallo brought down Sadio Mane's cross from the left and finished emphatically.

Mane then escaped with a yellow card for a dangerous challenge on Ibrahim Sangare soon after, although Senegal also felt hard done by early in the second half.

Ismaila Sarr went down in the box in a tangle of legs with Odilon Kossounou, but no penalty was given and the referee did not come across to review the incident on the pitchside monitor. — AFP

Uzbekistan break down Thailand to reach Asian Cup last eight

UZBEKISTAN will face hosts and holders Qatar in the Asian Cup quarter-finals after highly rated Abbosbek Fayzullaev hit the winner in a 2-1 victory over Thailand on Tuesday.

The Uzbeks have been touted as dark horses for the title and took the lead in the first half with a cool Azizbek Turgunboev finish through the legs of the goalkeeper.

Thailand were the lowest-ranked team left at the tournament but they struck back just before the hour with an even better goal, from distance, by substitute Supachok Sarachat.

Uzbekistan were the more accomplished team and went ahead again midway through the second half when 20-year-old CSKA Moscow winger Fayzullaev rolled the ball in from outside the box.

This time Thailand had no reply, despite some late pressure.

Qatar booked their spot in the last eight on Monday with a 2-1 victory over Palestine.

Thailand were underdogs but did not concede a goal in three matches as they finished second to Saudi Arabia in their group. — AFP



Thailand's midfielder (7) Supachok Sarachat is marked by Uzbekistan's midfielder (14) Jamshid Boltaboev during the Qatar 2023 AFC Asian Cup football match between Uzbekistan and Thailand at Al-Janoub Stadium in al-Wakrah, south of Doha, on 30 January 2024. **PHOTO: AFP**

Thai police warn Liverpool fans not to fall for Alonso scam

THAI police have warned Liverpool fans not to fall for online scammers impersonating Bayer Leverkusen coach Xabi Alonso, hotly tipped to replace Jurgen Klopp at Anfield in the summer.

The Central Investigation Bureau told supporters to watch out for a viral message purporting to show the Spaniard's Instagram account asking for donations of 300 baht

(\$8.50) to help pay his air fare.

"I am Xabi Alonso, I will be in charge of Liverpool next season, but I am short of money for my flights to Liverpool," said the message, written in Thai.

The former Liverpool and Real Madrid midfielder is among the favourites to take over from Klopp, who shocked fans on Friday by announcing he would step down at the end

of the season.

"Liverpool fans, calm down. Xabi is not yet the manager, but there is already a scammer," the police statement posted on Facebook Sunday said.

The police said the message — doctored to look like it came from Alonso's official Instagram account — was "a scammer pretending to be Xabi". — AFP



Israel to shift some troops north as negotiators push for Gaza ceasefire



People leave their home after receiving evacuation orders from Israel in the southern Gaza Strip city of Khan Younis, on 29 January 2024. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

THE Israeli army was preparing to shift some of its forces from the Gaza Strip to the restive Lebanese border, as international mediators pushed for a new deal to halt its war with Hamas.

With Gazans already facing dire humanitarian conditions, the United Nations chief was set to meet on Tuesday with key donors who paused funding after members of the UN's Palestinian refugee agency were accused of taking part in the 7 October attack that sparked the war.

Fears of a widening regional conflict were compounded after Israel's top ally Washington vowed to respond

to an attack that killed three US troops in Jordan.

Israeli ground forces backed by tanks have been focused on Khan Yunis, the hometown of Hamas's Gaza leader Yahya Sinwar, where the Palestine Red Crescent Society reported artillery fire around the Al-Amal hospital overnight.

Sinwar's office, military sites and "a significant rocket manufacturing fa-

cility" were raided by troops, the Israeli military said. Chief spokesman Daniel Hagari said Monday that the Israeli military had "eliminated over 2,000 terrorists above and below ground" in the Khan Yunis area, without offering evidence.

Israeli strikes across the besieged Gaza Strip killed 128 people overnight, the health ministry in the Hamas-run Palestinian territory said early

on Tuesday.

Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said late Monday that some units in Gaza were "moving up to the north and preparing for what's to come" -- a reference to the Israeli-Lebanese border, where there have been almost daily exchanges of fire with Iran-backed Hezbollah militants aligned with Hamas. — AFP

Indonesia's new capital attracts more investment: official



This undated handout showing computer-generated imagery released by Nyoman Nuarta on 18 January 2022 shows a design illustration of Indonesia's future presidential palace in East Kalimantan, as part of the country's relocation of its capital from slowly sinking Jakarta to a site 2,000 kilometres (1,200 miles) away on jungle-clad Borneo island that will be named "Nusantara". **PHOTO: HANDOUT / NYOMAN NUARTA / AFP**

THE investment realization in Indonesia's new capital, Nusantara, on Kalimantan Island has reached 47.5 trillion rupiah (around three billion

US dollars).

"Investment realization has reached 41.4 trillion rupiah (around 2.6 billion dollars) in 2023 and added by

6.1 trillion (around 0.4 billion dollars) to date," said head of the Nusantara Capital City Authority (OIKN) Bambang Susantono on Tuesday.

As much as 39.5 trillion rupiah (around 2.5 billion dollars) of the total investment comes from the private sector, while state-owned businesses account for the remaining eight trillion rupiah (around 0.5 billion dollars).

Additionally, the authority has received 350 letters of intent from other countries.

With the institution aiming to realize over 100 trillion rupiah (around 6.3 billion dollars) in investments by the end of this year, Susantono is optimistic that more funding will be forthcoming.

The capital city is still under development, with completion scheduled for 2045, and aims to build a smart, sustainable metropolis.

The first Independence Day celebrations will take place there in August. — Xinhua

First human receives brain implant from Musk's Neuralink

Elon Musk said on Monday that his neurotech startup Neuralink implanted its device in a human for the first time on Sunday.

The patient is "recovering well," Musk said on X, formerly Twitter. "Initial results show promising neuron spike detection."

Neuralink's first product is called Telepathy, he said.

The company is developing a brain implant that aims to help patients with severe paralysis control external technologies using only neural signals.

"Imagine if Stephen Hawking could communicate faster than a speed typist or auctioneer. That is the goal," Musk wrote in a separate post.

Neuralink began recruiting patients for its first-in-human clinical trial in the autumn of last year after the US Food and Drug Administration approved the company to conduct the study in May. — Xinhua