

# The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

## Myanmar grateful to PRC and Chinese people for standing with it in int'l landscape

**S**ENIOR General Min Aung Hlaing expressed special gratitude to the People's Republic of China and Chinese people for good fraternal relations with standing for Myanmar's internal issues in the international landscape.

Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and his wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla joined the ceremony to mark the 2024 Gold Dragon Chinese New Year festival at the National Indoor Stadium-1 in Thuwunna of Yangon yesterday evening.

On the occasion, the Senior General requested China and Chinese people to continuously assist in peace and stability measures and development undertakings of Myanmar, as China and Myanmar has been cementing the society in peaceful co-existence for years through thick and thin.

He highlighted the year 2024 is set as Year of the Dragon in accord with the Chinese tradition, conveying good luck, wealth, great power and boosting business. Hence, grand ceremonies and important decisions mostly take place in the year of the Dragon.

Since China has established, he recounted Myanmar has been holding the



Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing attends the dinner to mark 2024 Gold Dragon Chinese New Year festival at National Indoor Stadium-1 in Thuwunna of Yangon on 18 February 2024.

### Salient points in speech of the Senior General in the ceremony to mark 2024 Gold Dragon Chinese New Year festival

- China and Chinese people are requested to continuously assist in peace and stability measures and development undertakings of Myanmar.
- Since China has established, Myanmar has been holding the One-China policy, showing a strong support of neighbouring country for China.
- Myanmar earliest supported the implementation of Global Security Initiative-GSI of Chinese President Xi Jinping.
- The Senior General called for establishment of a peaceful and prosperous society through friendly Paukphaw relations and compassion with China.

One-China policy, showing a strong support of neighbouring country for China. Myanmar earliest supported the implementation of Global Security Initiative-GSI of Chinese President Xi Jinping.

He continued Myanmar and China have been cementing the bilateral understanding as good neighbouring countries in accord with Five Peaceful Co-existence Principles built by State leaders of both countries in successive eras and both countries peacefully solved some conflicts in order to sustain firm relations.

Within more than seven years peri-

od, he said Mekong-Lancang cooperation fund has covered projects in all sectors for contributing much to its member countries to have socioeconomic development. Myanmar is actively taking part in eradication of transnational crimes, illegal drug production and trafficking, human trafficking, online gambling and online scams, and forging rule of law. He said he believes greater progress will emerge in bilateral cooperation, peace and stability as well as development undertakings in border regions through collaborative efforts of China and Myanmar.

**SEE PAGE-3**

#### NATIONAL

PAGE-4



MoC Deputy Minister inspects oil storage, distribution, maize, rice exports

#### NATIONAL

PAGE-5



Private firm offers free training to revive woodturning art

#### BUSINESS

PAGE-7



Taninthayi welcomes private investment in floating solar power plant, palm oil refinery

# NATIONAL

## Objectives of 79<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Armed Forces Day 2024

(A) To safeguard the State with the sacrifice of life by upholding Our Three Main National Causes: Non-disintegration of the Union, Non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty as the national policy of Tatmadaw;

(B) To actively participate in implementing the processes of two national visions of the State: the

prosperity of the country and food security by Tatmadaw members together with the government and ethnic people in their respective sectors;

(C) To steadfastly implement enhancement of three capabilities in accord with the work process of Tatmadaw, such as study, practise and obey in building a modern patriotic Tatmadaw with pow-

erful strength and sharpening prowess;

(D) To provide necessary assistance to hold a free and fair multiparty democratic general election by Tatmadaw to ensure peace and stability, solidarity and development, which are actual needs of the State and to emerge a Union based on democratic and federal systems.

## Notice for vessels in Ayeyawady River for maritime congestion



THE Department of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems Region (5) stated that the ships in the Ayeyawady River are warned of maritime congestion in the river in Mandalay Region.

It is also stated that the vessels need to be careful in the river near the Seinpangon village of Madaya Township in Mandalay Region as there are changes in the waterway and the formation of sandbanks that cause maritime congestion.

Therefore, the vessels which will travel along the water track of Seinpangon of Madaya township should take special care not to be stranded.

Moreover, the cargo and passenger ships should consult with navigation signals in the water or on the land. — TWA/TRKM

A waterway in Ayeyawady River at low water level.

## Thai Embassy to announce new visa processing scheme starting 21 Feb

THE Thai embassy in Yangon, which serves 400 visa applicants daily, announced on 16 February that the current scheme of the service will continue until 21 February, with a new scheme to be released.

The embassy formerly announced on 14 February that it would process only 400 applicants per day by providing the advanced token system since it has been flooded with visa applicants. The announcement stated that the system will start on 16 February, and tokens will be available on 16, 19, 20, and 21 February. The embassy will issue token

numbers for the visa applicants starting at 8:30 am. The responsible persons will issue the tokens only after thoroughly scrutinizing the applicant's passport and confirming its validity. Those tokens cannot be transferred to other persons, and each token number is valid for one person only. Any attempt to forge or misuse a token number will result in the visa application being rejected, and the applicant will be delisted.

The persons who hold Myanmar citizen passports are allowed to visit Thailand for 14 days without a visa application, according to the embassy. — TWA/ TMT



The photo shows people waiting to apply for visas outside the Thai Embassy in Yangon on 15 February 2024.

## Myathabeik Pagoda plans Buddha Pujaniya, township-wide alms-offering events

THE annual Buddha Pujaniya festival and township-wide alms-offering ceremony will be held at the Myathabeik Pagoda in Thaton Township of Mon State, according to U Soe Myint, Chairman of the Myathabeik Pagoda's Board of Trustees.

The annual Myathabeik Pagoda Buddha Pujaniya festival is held on the full moon day of Tabodwe and includes Myanmar traditional Htamane-making competition, township-wide alms and oil lights offering ceremonies as well as launching the market festival with many stalls in the Pagoda's compound.

"From the full moon day of Tabodwe to the 3<sup>rd</sup> waning day, the Buddha Pujaniya festival will include a Maha Pathana treaties recitation with rice-offering event to invited Sayadaws, just like the previous years," U Soe Myint explained.

During the Buddha Pujaniya festival, the Buddha's sermons are recited at the Pagoda's platform. Additionally, at 5 am on the full moon day, the Pagoda on the summit of the mountain will be consecrated by Sayadaws with an offering of flowers, candlelights, joss sticks, and 1,000 bowls of alms. After that, the donors will offer the Htamane alms, rice and foodstuffs to more than 680 monks from 174 monasteries and over



The photo shows the Myathabeik Pagoda.

70 nuns from 36 nunneries in Thaton Township at the foot of the mountain starting at 7 am.

The food donations for people from four corners and 9,000 oil lights offering event along the way to climb the Pagoda will be hosted starting at 4 pm. — ASH /MKKS

# NATIONAL

## Myanmar grateful to PRC and Chinese people for standing with it in int'l landscape

### FROM PAGE-1

Significantly, he noted the United Nations celebrated the Chinese New Year day starting this year setting the day as the office holiday, showing the trust of global countries over China for its active and unbiased activities in the international issues. The Senior General called for establishment of a peaceful and prosperous society through friendly Paukphaw relations and compassion with China.

The Senior General and wife exchanged gifts with Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Myanmar Mr Chen Hai.

The Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar also extended a New Year greeting, saying that as China and Myanmar poured out concerted efforts in all sectors in previous years, both countries could cement bilateral trust and friendly ties. He pledged to serve interests of both countries and people with peace, fraternity and mutual respect from the New Year period on, cementing the Swemyo Paukphaw relations between the two countries and striving for development of people from China and Myanmar.

On the occasion, the Senior General and wife and the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Myanmar pressed the button to open the ceremony. Four celestial beings presented a gold dragon statue each to the Senior General, wife and the Chinese Ambassador.



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and his wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla seen at 2024 Chinese New Year Festival.

At the festival, the Senior General, and wife together with attendees enjoyed performance of Chinese traditional dragon dance troupes and presented cash awards to them. They then visited the China Town traditional cultural booths and foodstuff booths.

They watched competitions of selected players from Myanmar Table Tennis Federation and Chinese diplomats in the

goodwill table tennis match. The Union Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs presented flower baskets to table tennis teams.

The Senior General and wife painted the Chinese traditional dragon statue traditionally, and Chinese traditional dragon dance troupe and lion dance troupe performed gold dragon new year dance.

The Senior General and wife had dinner in honour of the

Chinese New Year together with dignitaries. During the dinner, cultural troupes from China and artistes from Myawady cultural troupe under the Directorate of Public Relations and Psychological Warfare performed Chinese traditional dances, songs, performances and China-Myanmar goodwill songs.

The Union Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs awarded first and second prize winners

in the China-Myanmar goodwill men's open table tennis tournament to mark the 2024 Chinese New Year festival and the Chief Minister of Yangon Region, joint third prize winners.

The Senior General, wife and the Chinese Ambassador presented flower baskets to artistes. After the ceremony, the Senior General and wife cordially greeted the attendees. — MNA/TTA

## Centenary celebration of Lacquerware College (Bagan) commemorated

LACQUERWARE College (Bagan) commemorated its centenary with a ceremony yesterday morning, attended by Deputy Minister for Cooperatives and Rural Development U Myint Soe, Transport Minister of Mandalay Region Government U Aung Zaw Oo, departmental personnel, the college principal and instructors, lacquerware technicians, entrepreneurs, and students.

During the event, both the deputy minister and the Mandalay region transport minister delivered opening speeches, inaugurating the 100<sup>th</sup>-anniversary commemoration by cutting the ribbon at the stone pillar.

Following this, the deputy minister met with the college principal and teachers, stressing the importance of preserving Myanmar's traditional lacquerware

art. He urged them to expand the production of lacquerware crafts both domestically and internationally, ensuring systematic instruction for students. Subsequently, he conducted an inspection of the college campus and addressed any needs.

Located in the historic city of Bagan in NyaungU District of Mandalay Region, Lacquerware College aims to preserve and

promote Myanmar's traditional lacquerware, impart modern techniques while maintaining traditional methods, produce more lacquerware technicians, enhance teaching methods, and nurture skilled artisans. The college was founded in 1924.

Additionally, the deputy minister met with trainees of basic and advanced one-stroke engine repair courses in Hsegon village,

Meiktila Township, addressing their needs.

Furthermore, the Deputy Minister conversed with district- and township-level departmental staff, stressing the importance of refraining from corruption and party politics. He encouraged mutual respect, unity within the department, and welfare provision for employees through coordination. — MNA/TRKM

# NATIONAL

## MoC Deputy Minister inspects oil storage, distribution, maize, rice exports



Deputy Minister for Commerce U Min Min looks into the maize loading processes onto Hong Linh-1 and MV Pioneer Fortune at Ahlon Port on 17 February 2024.

DEPUTY Minister for Commerce U Min Min inspected Thilawa Port yesterday, and the official reported on the ongoing arrival of foreign oil tankers and storage and distribution systems.

Then, the deputy minister observed the oil quality checking processes, safety for consumers, and the local distribution system and instructed officials to distribute rice as per the fixed quality

and not to cause a shortage. He also met officials of the Myanmar Rice Federation at Sule Port. He inspected the rice loading processes onto MV Vega Granat, which will be exported under an in-bulk system by 11 companies.

He then headed to Ahlon Port and checked the maize loading processes onto Hong Linh-1 and MV Pioneer Fortune, which will also be exported under an in-bulk system.

In the same evening, the deputy minister went to Hteedan Terminal and inspected the storage of cooking oil, barrel filling process and distribution system, and left proper instructions. — MNA/KTZH

## Authorities crack down on illegal trade, seizing millions of kyat worth of illegal goods across regions

UNDER the direction of the illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee, authorities have pursued nine cases and seized illegal goods valued at K2.22 billion over two days.

Special task forces in Kachin State intercepted K2 billion worth of unregistered machinery and goods on 16 February. This included five Chinese-made Hight Way dump trucks, 105 Htet-branded rice bags on two trucks, and 1,125.6 kilogrammes of ammonium nitrate. Charges have been brought against the suspects under export/import regulations and the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

Furthermore, task forces based in Yangon confiscated

various unregistered items on the same day, including 840 Spy wine bottles and 720 Maximus beer cans valued at K9.6 million, from a warehouse in Dagon Myothit (East) Township. The suspects face charges under Customs procedures.

Similarly, Customs Department task forces seized Mac Garden non-dairy cream valued at K133 million from four containers at the Myanma Industrial Port on the same day. It was reported that the imported goods did not match what was declared in the import declaration form.

On 16 and 17 February, the Sagaing Region Illegal Trade eradication special



Confiscated illegal timbers in Bago Region.

task forces apprehended unlicensed a Toyota Pajero and a Nissan X Trail, collectively valued at approximately K15 million, at the Yadanabon Bridge checkpoint.

On 17 February, task forces in Bago Region confiscated 4.3 tonnes of smuggled teak, worth K2.8 million. Cases have been initiated against the suspects under the Forest Law. — MNA/NT

## Counter-argument to false information

### Misinformation: Baseless claims of Tatmadaw assaults on villages circulate

MALICIOUS media outlets are spreading fake news on social media accusing the Tatmadaw of attacking villages which led to civilian injuries.

One report made unsubstantiated claims that the Tatmadaw launched a heavy weapon attack on Nyaungbin Village in Monywa Township, Sagaing Region, resulting in seven wounded and leaving two villagers in critical condition on 17 February.

An official of the security forces clarified that the Tatmadaw did not attack the village. Instead, he stated that terrorists were invading villages, and utilizing villagers as human shields, resulting in civilian casualties and injuries.

Likewise, another unfounded report alleged that a heavy weapon attack by the Tatmad-



The screenshot validates the fake news about injured person attacked by Tatmadaw.

aw caused two injuries and the destruction of over 10 houses in Yeaye Village, Hpa-an Township, Kayin State, on 15 February.

According to confirmed reports, it was the terrorists who recklessly attacked the security forces, resulting in heavy weapon falling on the villages and causing harm to the villagers.

Malicious media outlets are circulating fake news to mislead the public. — MNA/NT

### Fake news circulates Tatmadaw forcibly arrests youths in Thanlyin by inspecting guest registration check

THE malicious Khit Thit media is deliberately delivering fake news that Tatmadaw conducted inspection of guest registration checks in Thanlyin Township, Yangon Region and arrested the youths who are not registered as guests and those who cannot show their citizenship scrutiny cards.

Those pro-terrorism news media outlets have been circulating fake news on social media to inflame concerns among the public since the People's Military Service Law came into force.

With regard to that misinformation, the reality was that relevant departments and the General Administration Department are taking necessary information for the census. — MNA/TMT



### Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email [aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm](mailto:aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm) with your name and title.

Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

# NATIONAL

## Myat Mawtin Pagoda maintenance works hit 95 per cent completion



The photo shows Myat Mawtin Pagoda under renovation.

THE expansion and construction of the platform of Maha Makutaramthi Myat Mawtin Pagoda in Hainggyikyun, Ayeyawady Region, have completed by 95 per cent and will be 100 per cent completed before the next pagoda festival season, according to U Kyaw Swa Win, a member of the pagoda board of trustees.

The works involve reconstruction of the archways, four

stairways, and extension of the religious halls and shelters.

The maintenance of the pagoda platform, the banner post, the construction of the retaining walls between upper and lower terraces, the placing of concrete, repairing of the northern arch, the passage leading to the beach, and plans to build the walls of lake were underway. All of the work started in November 2022 and

is now 95 per cent complete. It will be completed fully in early March before the next pagoda festival season," U Kyaw Swa Win said.

The Myat Mawtin Pagoda Buddha Pujaniya Festival is held every year from the 1<sup>st</sup> Waxing of Tabaung to the Full Moon of Tabaung. At present, approximately 200 travellers visit the pagoda daily. — ASH/TMT

## Private firm offers free training to revive woodturning art

TO revitalize woodturning, one of Myanmar's 10 traditional arts, a private firm is offering free on-job training classes.

U Min Min Tun, owner of the Mandalamin Woodturning and Myanmar Musical Instruments Production, emphasized: "The craft is on the brink of extinction both in terms of marketability and the number of professionals. This month, we'll be launching a paid internship programme, inviting new recruits to join us. It's crucial to incentivize the preservation of this craft."

Additionally, the proprietor has a plan to modernize the craft while maintaining its cultural characteristics, so it



Skilled workers producing musical instruments applying woodturning techniques.

can be more appealing as a livelihood.

Woodturning finds its primary application in crafting short and long drums, as well as graded drums essential for

traditional orchestral drum circles. Moreover, it is instrumental in fashioning handles for bamboo in the bunch-and-bamboo instrumental combo. — ASH/NT

## Bagan Plastic Campaign leads weekly garbage collection drive along Bagan-NyaungU Road

A weekly programme for collecting plastic garbage was conducted along the Bagan-NyaungU road on 17 February.

The initiative was led by the Bagan Plastic Campaign, with participation from staff of the Department of Archaeology and National Museum (Bagan branch), the township development committee, balloon companies, hotels, motels, and guest houses in NyaungU Township, as well as members of the local tour guides' association, restaurant

owners' association, and hoteliers association (Bagan Zone).

The participants gathered plastic waste at Shweleiktoo Pagoda, Htilominlo Pagoda, Upali ordination hall, Ananda Temple, and along the NyaungU-Bagan road. U Saw Tun Win, Chairman of the NyaungU District Administration Body, and U Nan Tint, Chairman of the Township Administration Body, together with other members, encouraged the participants during the cleanup efforts. — Dipa Linn/KZL



Local people clean up plastics and other debris in Bagan Ancient Cultural Zone during a campaign on 17 February 2024. PHOTO: DIPALINN

## MoNREC designates Kyeikpi Shwethaungkwin protected public mangrove forest

THE Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation has designated the area of 2,275 acres in Kyaikto Township, Kyaikto District in Mon State, as "Kyeikpi Shwethaungkwin protected public mangrove forest" on 15 February 2024, under Notification No 13/2024 by exercising the authority conferred under Sub-section (e) of Section (6) of the Forest Law promulgat-

ed in September 2018.

The Kyeikpi Shwethaungkwin protected public mangrove forest is intended to prevent deforestation mangrove forest, tidal wave, storms and sea wave, aiming to fulfill the needs of the local people and protect the mangrove forests to place habitat of aquacultures and it will be home to hibernated birds and waterbirds. — MoNREC



# NATIONAL

## Higher domestic production to help reduce prices of foodstuffs at domestic market

THE Yangon Region's Chief Minister gave a speech that if domestic production is strong enough, the people in the country will be able to buy safe and nutritious meat, fish, dairy and eggs at low prices.

On 16 February, the Chief Minister made the speech at the meeting with officials and entrepreneurs from companies that will carry out livestock farming at Taikkyi livestock breeding zone.

He also urged the entrepreneurs to actually work on agriculture and livestock activities with eagerness to acquire plots of farmlands, adding as work processes are in progress, the authorities will fulfill the necessary requirements.

Furthermore, it is necessary for livestock farmers to cultivate animal feed plants, and to ensure that the people in the region have enough meat, fish, milk, eggs, and vegetables to consume, and to raise high pedigree and productive animals in the livestock industry under the advice of livestock breeding experts in order to earn more income and improve the socio-economic life of the local people.—TWA/TKO



Some local people from Magway Region carrying drinking water last summer.

## Magway, Mandalay regions store 62 million gallons of drinking water to encounter El Nino impacts

ACCORDING to the Department of Irrigation and Water Utilization Management, the arid regions Magway and Mandalay have stored 62 million gallons of drinking water for consumption of over 12,000 people to mitigate impacts of El Nino.

In Magway Region, 15.56 million gallons of drinking water are stored in 11 lakes, with Mandalay Region storing 46.63 million gallons in seven lakes. Moreover, more lakes for almost 600 people are planned to be built before 2025.

The extreme weather conditions such as the irregular precipitation, extremely high temperature, irregular occurrences of storms and droughts may happen as the consequences of El Nino. — TWA/ TRKM

## Tenders invited for 53 projects of YCDC

ACCORDING to the Yangon City and Development Committee's Tender Committee, tenders have been invited for 53 projects owned by the YCDC for 2024-25 financial year.

The projects involve two market toll gates for collecting vehicle parking fees at markets and wholesale centres under the Department of Markets and Commodities Centre of the YCDC, 46 projects for collect-

ing public restroom entrance fee, and other five projects at wholesale markets and camps. The projects will be leased for one year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

Tender application forms can be purchased for the relevant projects on the second floor of the City Hall, Department of Markets and Commodities Centre of the YCDC. And the application forms for the

projects at wholesale markets and camps will have to be purchased at the office located on 46<sup>th</sup> street, Botahtaung Township.

The interested persons can buy the tender application forms until 28 February and have to submit them by 29 February. For further information, dial 01-8376708, 01-8377890 and 09-420144112 during the office hours. — TWA/ TMT



The photo shows Yangon City Hall where the YCDC is located.



Traffic accidents on the roadside of Thanlwin Road in Pobbathiri Township, Zeyathiri District in Nay Pyi Taw on 14 January 2024.

## 433 traffic accidents occur across the country in January 2024

IN January 2024, a total of 433 traffic accidents occurred across the country, according to the statistics from the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

The mentioned number of traffic accidents left 236 people dead and 564 injured.

Among 433 accidents, 78 traffic accidents happened in Yangon Region as the largest

number, killing 44 people. Similarly, 18 traffic accidents occurred on the Yangon-Mandalay expressway, leaving 15 dead and 37 injured as per the statistics.

In the correspondent period of 2023, there were 425 traffic accidents occurring 230 deaths and 564 injuries, slightly less than that of this years' traffic accidents, according to the statistics. —TWA/TKO

## Mon State salt industry eyes expansion with overseas market potential

THE Mon State Salt Farmers Association reports that the average annual salt production from 5,000 acres of salt farms in Mon State ranges from 60,000 to 70,000 tonnes per year.

In Mon State, the salt-production season commences in December each year and halts temporarily in April due to possibility of raining; if not, production continues until the end of May. Salt is produced through the evaporation of seawater, sourced from Panga Creek, Karoppi Creek, and Ankhe Creek in Thanbyuzayat Township, all of which flow into the sea.

This salt is distributed to Mon State, Kayin State, Taninthayi Region, and Mandalay Region. Approximately 40 tonnes of surplus salt will be exported to South Korea this month, with an expected export volume of up to 5,000 tonnes for

the year.

In Mon State, 92 salt farmers operate on 5,000 acres. To advance the salt industry, ef-



Photo shows a sack of salt exported to South Korea. PHOTO: AUNG MYO THU (IPRD)

orts are underway to install modern machinery for producing fine iodized salt from coarse salt, as stated by U Win Htein, chairman of the Mon State Salt



Photo shows sacks of salt in a warehouse in Mon State and they are ready for distributing across the country. PHOTO: AUNG MYO THU (IPRD)

Farmers Association.

Currently, Myanmar's salt commands a favourable price in South Korea, with a significant

market share. Therefore, penetrating foreign salt markets could create numerous job opportunities for Myanmar's salt

producers and salt farmers, contributing to both domestic and foreign income growth. — Aung Myo Thu (IPRD) /KZL

## Taninthayi welcomes private investment in floating solar power plant, palm oil refinery

PRIVATE firms are implementing floating solar power plant and palm oil refinery projects in Kyunsu Township, Taninthayi Region, according to U Zaw Min Oo, the responsible official for the projects.

A project to install a 3.77-megawatt solar power plant at Pahtaw Dam in Kyunsu Township's Pahtaw Village is being jointly implemented by Pyae Phyo Tun International

Company and Myanmar Solar Power Trading Company.

U Zaw Min Oo, overseeing the projects, stated: "We'll be installing 6,384 solar panels on a seven-acre area of the water surface within the dam. The generated electricity will be supplied to cold storage facilities, workplaces, factories, and residences on Pahtawpahtat Island."

Similarly, another floating

solar power plant in Pahtat Village is projected to feed a palm oil refinery capable of producing 60 tonnes of oil per day.

Presently, the refinery is not ready yet. However, 800 tonnes of crude palm oil produced from 8,000 out of 15,000 acres of palm plants in Mawtaung will be exported to Yangon via the Myeik jetty. — ASH/NT

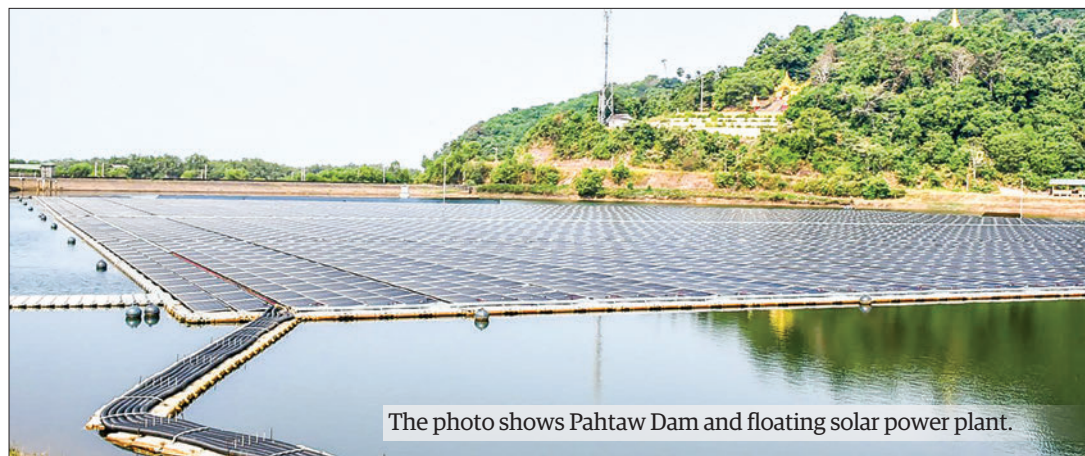


Farmers are seen in an areca nut farm. PHOTO: THEIN NU AUNG

## Areca nut trade runs continuously in domestic market with better sales in previous months

THE areca nut trade in Myanmar's domestic market is continuous and demand increased in the last month, according to the traders interviewed. "Demand and supply of areca nut market is good. Demand increased last month. There is continuous trade in the market. It was better in the previous months," said an areca nut trader. Growing areca nuts on a small scale on one's own land brings more income and the buyers usually come to the owners in person,

climb up the palm plants, count the nuts and settle the payment. They are bought in a mix of small, medium and large sizes, and the average buying and selling prices of one areca nut to Mandalay purchasers are 9-10 kyats and 13 kyats respectively. Areca nuts are an ingredient in making betel quid in Myanmar and there are regular buyers for different types of nuts such as Pyaung Chan, Khwar San, Lone Thay and ripe nuts. — Thit Taw/ZN



The photo shows Pahtaw Dam and floating solar power plant.

# OPINION

## Preserve Myanmar's rich cultural heritage for posterity

Cultural development is synonymous with the enhancement of societal norms and values. It is imperative for individuals to safeguard the rich traditions and customs encompassing both physical behaviours and refined mindsets. This includes fostering empathy, establishing modern societies, advancing civilization, and nurturing an appreciation for developing cultures and fine arts across various eras, all guided by the wisdom of religions and customs.

Myanmar, as a melting pot of diverse ethnicities, has consistently upheld cultural heritages, embracing the multifaceted traditions of its various ethnic groups. These cultural legacies, both tangible and intangible, span across different nations and communities. Intangible culture encompasses languages, ideas, customs, traditions, faiths, costumes, handicrafts, fine arts, and more, while tangible culture involves all the materials created and handled by humans.

The responsibility falls upon the shoulders of all Myanmar citizens to preserve these tangible and intangible cultural properties, driven by national awareness and a sense of duty for their enduring existence. The preservation of these cultural aspects not

only uplifts the prestige and integrity of the nation but also enhances its standing among global countries.

The fading of traditional culture poses a threat to the existence of lineages and races. Therefore, the preservation of Myanmar's cultural heritage must align with international rules and standards. As Myanmar's cultural heritage aligns with that of the world, every individual citizen bears the responsibility to protect and pass on the tangible and intangible cultural properties of Myanmar's ancestors to future generations.

Muni Buddha Image, and other significant religious edifices play crucial roles in preserving the nation's cultural identity.

While three ancient Pyu city-states have already secured recognition as World Heritage Sites, efforts are underway to include the MraukU cultural heritage zone in the prestigious list. Preserving tangible and intangible cultures not only aids in the propagation of religions but also contributes to nurturing the youth with the five strengths of capacity.

The fading of traditional culture poses a threat to the existence of lineages and races. Therefore, the preservation of Myanmar's cultural heritage must align with international rules and standards. As Myanmar's cultural heritage aligns with that of the world, every individual citizen bears the responsibility to protect and pass on the tangible and intangible cultural properties of Myanmar's ancestors to future generations.

# Fast Food and Clean Eating are Both Dead Ends

By Min Zan

Two icons of the Great British Nutrition Tragedy went head-to-head on the front of The Times on Thursday, as 16-year-old darts prodigy Luke Littler grabbed the main photograph while opposite and above, (Deliciously) Ella Mills eyeballed him from the masthead.

In the fat corner, head in hands due to narrow sporting defeat, was poor Luke: 15 stone if he's a pound, thanks to a widely celebrated diet of pizza and kebabs, a young man who only lost a sporting battle that day (to a player, Luke Humphries, who shed four stone prior to the tournament), but will lose everything, everything, in the not-too-distant future if he does not sort his diet out. At this rate, like two-thirds of his generation (by geography and education), he will be dead at 60. He is only 16, but diabetes, heart disease, and cancer are a few short years away.

### Fat Poppy Syndrome

And do not call me cruel. Do not accuse me of raining on his parade with my Fat Poppy Syndrome. The guy is in no way to be blamed or mocked for his condition. His sporting dedication shows him to be a man of tremendous willpower, drive, and ambition. Mentally, Littler is a Messi or Ronaldo, a Stokes, a Bolt or a Coe. Those rolls of blubber heaving at his hips as he leans at the oche are the fault and direct responsibility of timid and ignorant government, failed education (he got no GCSEs at all this summer from Padgate Academy in Warrington), the benighted expectations of his community in the post-industrial northwest and the tyranny and lies of Big Food. But if Littler doesn't get any little, he's toast.

And in the thin corner: Deliciously Ella, once ubiquitous face and (barely there) body of the equally hideous clean eating movement — the bone-stupid narcissism and bogus science of the gluten-free/sugar-free/no-dairy/vegan/raw-food non-diet of the last decade. As much a symbol of the nutritional willfulness of the educated London upper-middle classes as Deliciously Luke is for that of the jobless, hopeless, clueless poor of the working-class

north.

They are both as nutritionally whack as each other. Each is in the thrall of an exploitative and dangerous death cult. Each represents a body choice and lifestyle that has nothing to do with the way humans were built to live. Each, in their own way, a triumph of big business over sanity.

And who can blame them? Nobody.

Nobody got morbidly obese on the food they cooked themselves knows anything about nutrition in this country. Sandwiched between their two photographs was an apparently unrelated news story by our science correspondent about how “the plant-based burgers, wraps and pizzas that have appeared on fast food menus in recent years are no healthier than the traditional meat alternatives, a study has found...”. I'm sorry, but who in the world thought that they were? Please don't tell me you've been filling your fat face with McPlants and Greggs' vegan sausage rolls six times a week instead of the usual mashed mammal options because you thought they would make you lean, muscular, and fit, slow the onset of type 2 diabetes and dementia, and get you a girlfriend? Oh, you silly fat fool. Is that what has got through to you from the brief pro-vegan movement of the past few years?

### A three-times-a-day bonanza

Look, yes, eating too much meat is bad for you. And you probably are. Meat has gone from a once-a-week treat to a three-times-a-day bonanza, not because we're all cooking more delicious daubes but because it has been industrialized, processed, and rendered functionally free at the point of consumption by a handful of bad corporations, using the same tactics to barrack weak governments into silence that Big Tobacco has been using since the 1950s.

But you're fat because of the way the meat is sold to you (in buns or pastry, super cheap, covered in sugar and salt), not because of anything inherently unhealthy in the meat itself. Swapping out the blended poultry patty (bones, bollocks, feathers, and all) for an equally processed



Littler revealed “I don't have any GCSEs” after he reached the PDC World Darts Championship final. PHOTO: THE TIMES

“plant-based” patty full of hydrogenated vegetable fats and sugars (to compensate for the lost yumminess in animal fats) will do nobody any good at all, except the chicken they didn't have to kill.

“On average,” according to the study at Poznan University of Medical Sciences, “the plant-based meals contained about as many calories as the meat alternatives”. Aaarghhh! Why always “calories”? We need calories to live. Calories are good! The calorie-counting approach to weight loss was discredited decades ago! Making food vendors put arbitrary energy totals on food was the deliberately impotent gesture of a government too lazy and bent to address the issue of obesity properly. You didn't seriously think a veggie burger had fewer calories in it than a burger, did you?

The report goes on to say:

“Overall, the results confirm that switching to plant-based junk food will not decrease the risk of diabetes and obesity.” Well, no, obviously not! Quite the opposite, in fact. To be healthy, your body needs about 30 per cent of its food intake to be protein, and it will keep on giving you hunger messages until it has gotten it. By substituting chemical agents for lost proteins, some veggie fast food will make you eat more of it to get them. That is how snacks like crisps and Pringles work: by making (cheap) carbohydrates imitate (expensive) proteins so that your craving is triggered but never satiated. “Once you pop, you can't stop” is no hollow ad-man's claim. The problem is that eventually you pop too.

### Out of respect for animals

The only reason to eschew

junk food lunch is made from, whether it's pigs, weeds, beans or weasels, nothing with 40 different source materials per mouthful that is available hot, in 45 seconds, on the high street, for £4, will ever be “good for you”.

Throughout history, the people who have got so fat they died of it have been the people who, rather than feed themselves, were fed by a third party without knowing or caring how their food was made or how it got there. In the past, that was the very rich. Now, it's people experiencing poverty. And that is the tragedy.

In the closing analysis, the stark juxtaposition of Luke Littler and (Deliciously) Ella Mills on the front page of The Times highlights the dire state of nutrition in contemporary Britain. Both symbols of their respective nutritional extremes, Littler and Mills, represent the disastrous consequences of societal and governmental negligence. Littler, despite his undeniable sporting prowess and personal discipline, faces a perilous future due to the systemic failures of education, community expectations, and the manipulative forces of the food industry. On the other side, Deliciously Ella personifies the misguided clean eating movement, an equally dangerous path driven by pseudoscience and affluent nutritional trends that detach individuals from the innate ways humans were meant to live.

### Fast food alternatives

The article confronts the prevailing illusions around fast food alternatives, dispelling the notion that plant-based options are inherently healthier. The study from Poznan University of Medical Sciences debunks the misguided belief that simply swapping meat for plant-based alternatives is a panacea for health. The revelation that plant-based meals contain comparable calorie counts to their meat counterparts underscores the misguided fixation on calorie content. This outdated metric fails to address the complexities of nutrition and health. The report reinforces the idea that a diet heavy in processed plant-based alternatives does not mitigate the risks of diabetes and obesity, exposing the fallacy of

such dietary choices.

In the final contemplation, the article underscores the profound truth that it is not the source of the food itself but the nature of its processing and delivery that determines its impact on health. The plea for respect for animals becomes a notable reason to opt for vegetarian alternatives in fast food. Yet, the overarching message is that self-prepared, home-cooked meals, irrespective of their composition, remain a cornerstone of healthier living. The historical context accentu-

ates the tragic irony that those who succumb to obesity today, much like their affluent counterparts in the past, are victims of a system that distances them from the origins and preparation of their sustenance. This pervasive tragedy unfolds in contemporary society, where the economically disadvantaged bear the burden of a nutritional crisis perpetuated by ignorance, deception, and the unchecked influence of powerful food corporations.

Reference: The Times 6.1.2024

## Study suggests how parents can help prevent development of ADHD symptoms

*Developmental psychologists highlight the importance of understanding temperament, parenting, and executive functions in ADHD development, emphasizing the need for early intervention strategies.*

A new study suggested that parents of young children with an excitable or exuberant temperament could modify their parenting style to help moderate their child's potential development of Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

The study was co-authored by a University of Waterloo researcher.

Developmental psychologists emphasize the interconnected roles of temperament, parenting, and executive functions in the developmental trajectory of ADHD symptoms in childhood. Through a recent study, specific factors have been uncovered that signify a heightened risk of ADHD symptoms, stressing the crucial need for early and targeted interventions.

Dr Heather Henderson, a developmental psychology professor at Waterloo and co-author of the study, highlights the significance of early traits, termed “exuberance”, in child temperament, which encompass characteristics like heightened

excitement, curiosity, and positive responses to new stimuli, in conjunction with familial influences in predisposing certain children to ADHD symptoms.

The study underscores the pivotal role parents play in shaping pathways leading to ADHD, with Henderson noting that parents can significantly influence ADHD development through directive and engaged parenting behaviors.

While exuberant traits in preschool-aged children are typically viewed positively, research indicates that such children may also encounter challenges in self-regulation and executive functioning, including working memory and flexible thinking.

Tracking the developmental trajectories of 291 children from infancy to adolescence, researchers scrutinized the interplay between child temperament, parent-child interactions, executive functioning, and ADHD symptoms.

SOURCE: ANI



# TECH/ENVIRON: WORLD

## Tech giants sign pact against AI-made political deepfakes



"Deepfakes" refers to digitally manipulated videos or other media created using artificial intelligence (AI) techniques, particularly deep learning algorithms. The 60<sup>th</sup> Munich Security Conference (MSC) opened Friday, with a spotlight on the need to boost cooperation and improve global governance. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

TECH giants including Meta, Microsoft and TikTok signed a pledge Friday to crack down on AI content intended to deceive

voters ahead of crucial elections around the world this year.

The accord commits the companies including Google

and OpenAI to develop ways to identify, label and control AI-generated images, videos and audio that aim to mislead voters.

*The agreement involves developing methods to spot, label, and regulate misleading AI-generated images, videos, and audio.*

"I think you need all the players from the source of the generation to the actual consumption by the user involved and that's why I think having everybody, 20 companies sign up to this is so impactful," Nick Clegg, president of global affairs at Meta, told AFP.

Among the 20 signatories of the deal, presented on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference in Germany, were also X, formerly known as Twitter, as well as Snap, Adobe, LinkedIn, Amazon and IBM.

Under the agreement, AI-generated content could be given a watermark or tagged in the metadata at source, although

the signatories acknowledged that "all such solutions have limitations".

The tech companies also said they would also work together to develop ways to "detect and address" deceptive election material on their platforms.

Such content could, for example, be annotated to make it clear it is AI generated.

Meta, Google and OpenAI have already agreed to use a common watermarking standard that would tag images generated by their AI applications, such as OpenAI's ChatGPT, Microsoft's Copilot or Google's Gemini (formerly Bard). — AFP

## 'Virgin' stingray expecting offspring in small-town US aquarium

A stingray housed in a small-town aquarium in the United States is expecting offspring without ever having shared a tank with a male of her kind, making her not just a local sensation but a scientific curiosity.

Charlotte, who has been at the Aquarium & Shark Lab in Henderson, North Carolina for more than eight years, started showing an unusual growth on her body around late November. Staff were initially worried she might have a tumor.

"Her hump just started growing and growing, and we thought that it could be potentially cancer," Kinsley Boyette, the aquarium's assistant director and Charlotte's longtime caregiver, told AFP. Such cysts are known to sometimes form in the reproductive organs of rays when they don't mate.

The team performed an ultrasound and sent the results to scientists, who confirmed that Charlotte was carrying eggs. Subsequent scans even revealed tiny flapping tails. — AFP



Beyond her unusual pregnancy, Charlotte, who's around the size of a dinner plate and lives alongside five small sharks, charms members of the public with her winsome personality. **PHOTO: AQUARIUM & SHARK LAB BY TEAM ECCO/AFP**

## Singapore engineer pivots from oil rigs to 'fish farm of the future'



Fish tanks at Singapore's Eco Ark simulate ocean conditions that allow fish to swim against a current while shielding them from diseases. **PHOTO: AFP**

A high-tech fish farm floats just off the coast of Singapore, part of a plan by a retired engineer who once built oil rigs to bring diners cleaner, healthier seafood.

The tiny city-state imports 90 percent of its food but hopes to locally source about a third of it by 2030 to guard against supply disruptions such as climate change, disease and conflict.

So officials are backing projects such as Eco Ark, a

giant aquafarm that produces seabass, grouper and threadfin for restaurant tables across the city of nearly six million.

The facility harvests 30,000 kilogrammes (66,000 pounds) a month, which ex-engineer Leow Ban Tat, founder of Eco Ark and the Aquaculture Centre of Excellence, says is 20 times more per hectare than traditional open-net cage farms. The structure, which sits on a purpose-built submersible platform, filters sea-

water through an ozone machine to kill disease-causing pathogens before then transferring it into fish tanks six metres (20 feet) deep.

Leow, 65, said the water is so clean that, unlike other farms, Eco Ark has no need to add antibiotics, which help protect fish from disease but can cause resistance in humans over time and affect the environment.

Adult fish are given frozen squid as well as pelleted feed, with younger ones also given probiotics "which helps with both digestion and physiological function and improves the performance of the animal", he said. **Really delicious**

Leow aims to reduce emissions in his innovative "fish farms of the future" with solar panels and a hatchery to combat diseases.

Eco Ark delivers fresh, healthy fish to over 80 establishments.

Leow plans to export both fish and the Eco Ark technology, benefiting coastal areas. Local farmers' involvement is praised for meeting demand. — AFP

## Japan's humble 'onigiri' rice balls get image upgrade



This photo taken on 7 December 2023 shows Yumiko Ukon, who runs the restaurant Onigiri Bongo, a shop specializing in rice balls known as "onigiri", posing with rice balls she made in the Otsuka area of Tokyo. **PHOTO: AFP**

*"Seaweed-wrapped onigiri rice balls are shedding their image as a simple snack in Japan, gaining popularity worldwide due to mouth-watering social media posts, affordable lunch options, and increased tourism.*

WRAPPED in seaweed and stuffed with delicious fillings, "onigiri" rice balls are shaking off their reputation as a cheap and uninspiring snack in Japan — and enticing hungry converts abroad.

Mouth-watering pictures on social media, rising demand for affordable lunches, and a surge in tourism to Japan are all drawing people to the humble onigiri.

Just ask any of the 50-odd customers lined up in a

quiet corner of Tokyo for the restaurant Onigiri Bongo to open.

In the past, "no one came between lunch and dinner, but now customers queue non-stop", said 71-year-old Yumiko Ukon, who runs the more than half-century-old shop.

Some wait for eight hours, said Ukon, whose team makes some 60 different types of onigiri, bulging with traditional fillings like pickled plum, or more unusual offerings such as bacon

with soy sauce.

Onigiri Bongo only has nine counter seats, but sells around 1,200 rice balls each day.

"When I was young, onigiri was something you would make at home," Ukon told AFP. "Now people buy onigiri, or go out to have onigiri."

Long popular as on-the-go fuel in Japan, onigiri have been eaten for over a millennium in the country, where they were once taken onto the battlefield by samurai. — AFP

## 1,700-year-old roman necropolis in North Central Bulgaria yields valuable finds

*The larger tomb held the remains of a woman aged 45-49 and a man aged 50-60, while the smaller one contained a 1-2-year-old child.*

A pair of ancient Roman stone-lined tombs, accidentally discovered near the village of Nova Varbovka (North Central Bulgaria) in the autumn of 2023, have yielded an array of precious artefacts.

The finds included jewellery, coins and vessels dated between 200 and 250 AD, the Bulgarian News Agency (BTA) quoted the Veliko Tarnovo Regional Museum of History as saying in a press release.

The larger grave was used for the simultaneous burial of a woman aged around 45-49 and a man aged between 50 and 60. The smaller grave contains the skeleton of a 1-2-year-old child.

After analysing the remains, anthropologists of National Institute for Experimental Morphology, Pathology and Anthropology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences concluded that the adults were most likely related

and that the boy died before his parents.

The deceased were presumably wealthy landowners and residents of the Roman city of Nicopolis ad Istrum. They probably had a countryside summer mansion in the area.

According to the BTA, the family necropolis yielded a number of funerary gifts: a pair of exquisite gold earrings, a gilded beaded pendant, a silver-plated fibula of several types of metal, a ceramic lamp, bronze coins, an intact ceramic wine amphora, and two glass lachrymariums (receptacles for the mourners' tears).

A rare and very valuable find from the child's tomb is a bronze medallion featuring Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, also known as Caracalla, who reigned between 198 and 217 AD. — ANI



In 2023, near Nova Varbovka in Bulgaria, ancient Roman tombs were accidentally found, yielding precious artifacts like jewelry and coins dating back to 200-250 AD. **PHOTO: ANI**

## Research shows lasting effects of smoking after quitting

RESEARCHERS are still discovering how smoking continues to harm people's health even years after they quit, with a new study on Wednesday revealing tobacco's lasting effect on the immune system.

Despite the tobacco industry long fighting to conceal the dangers of smoking, tobacco is now known to kill more than eight million people globally a year, according to the World Health Organization.

But the myriad of ways the habit damages bodies are still coming to light.

The new study, published in the journal Nature, found that smoking alters the immune system, which protect bodies from infection, for far longer than previously thought.

It particularly highlighted changes to what is called adaptive immunity, which is built up over time as the body's specialised cells remember how



A recent study in the journal Nature revealed that smoking has long-lasting effects on the immune system, even after quitting. **PHOTO: AFP**

to fight back against foreign pathogens they have encountered before.

The findings were based on analysing blood and other samples taken from 1,000 healthy people in France starting from more than a decade ago.

Smoking was found to have more influence on adaptive immunity than other factors such as amount of sleep or physical activity, the researchers said. — AFP

# ECONOMY WORLD

## World brands upbeat about Chinese market



This aerial photo taken on 8 November 2023 shows robots sorting and conveying parcels at an intelligent logistics center in Deqing County, east China's Zhejiang Province. **PHOTO: NILIFANG/XINHUA**

*Juergen Matthes, a foreign trade expert, notes that multinational corporations are increasingly investing in and focusing on growth in China, with German direct investment consistently reaching new highs since 2021.*

WORLD major brands have expressed optimism about the potential of the Chinese market, as China's economy continues to grow, beating expectations, and their sales in China significantly increase.

Germany's direct investment in China achieved a record high last year, according to a study by the German Economic Institute (IW) based on data from the German Federal Bank. In 2023, Germany's direct investment in China reached 11.9 billion euros (12.7 billion US dollars), marking a 4 per cent rise compared to the previous year, said the study.

Since 2021, German direct investment in China has consistently reached new highs, with the data for 2023 once again breaking historical records, said Juergen Matthes, a foreign trade expert at the IW, noting that multinational corporations, in particular, are increasingly focused on expanding their investments and maintaining growth in China.

The study also indicates that in 2023, German companies' direct investment in China accounted for 10 per cent of Germany's total foreign investment, marking a significant increase. The cumulative

investment in China over the past three years has matched the total investment in the six years from 2015 to 2020.

In 2023, Bosch Group's sales in China reached 139.1 billion yuan (about 19.5 billion US dollars), a 5.2 per cent year-on-year growth, with nearly 58,000 employees in the country.

Despite various challenges and uncertainties in 2023, Bosch China achieved sustained and robust growth in 2023 while the intelligent mobility business was the primary engine of its development in China, said Xu Daquan, president of Bosch China. — Xinhua

## Oil prices rise 1% brushing off bleak global demand outlook for 2024

OIL is commonly regarded as the most volatile of all commodities due to multiple factors that impact its price globally, both implicitly and explicitly.

Crude oil futures surged, brushing off previous shortfalls amidst concerns over the bleak global demand forecasts for 2024.

West Texas Intermediate (WTI) gained \$1.39 for March, ending at \$78.03 per barrel, just as April's Brent contract closed at \$82.86 for each barrel, marking an increase of \$1.26.

The weakening dollar lent support to oil prices as January US retail sales missed projections, Phil Flynn, Price Futures

Group analyst, told CNBC.

At the outset of the trading session, futures slid about 1 per cent after the International Energy Agency (IEA) revised its demand growth estimate to 1.2 million barrels per day (bpd) for 2024, reflecting a significant drop from the 2.3 million bpd growth last year. — SPUTNIK

## Singapore expects 1% to 3% economic growth in 2024

*Asian economies, including China, India, and Southeast Asian countries, will continue to be a key driver of global growth, Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Wong says, noting that 2024 will be a better year for Singapore.*

SINGAPORE is cautiously optimistic about 2024 and expects higher gross domestic product (GDP) growth at 1 per cent to 3 per cent, Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Wong said on Friday.

Amid a troubled international environment and subdued global economy, Singapore's economy grew by 1.1 per cent last year and avoided a recession, Wong said while presenting the 2024 budget bill to the Parliament.

He noted that the global outlook for 2024 is mixed as major economies will be resilient while geopolitical risks continue

to loom larger and may lead to disruptions in energy markets and supply chains.

Meanwhile, global inflation is expected to recede in 2024, and the electronics industry will recover. Asian economies, including China, India, and Southeast Asian countries, will continue to be a key driver of global growth, Wong said, noting that 2024 will be a better year for Singapore.

"Though expecting the situation to improve this year, there are still more uncertainties in the outlook," Wong said, noting that the budget bill will invest more to support households. — Xinhua



Container ships berth at Singapore's Pasir Panjang container terminal on 31 January 2024. **PHOTO: THEN CHIH WEY/XINHUA**

## Philippines struggles to lower rice price despite ample supply

THE Philippines continues to struggle to lower the price of rice despite an ample supply of the national staple, a Philippine agriculture official said Friday.

Agriculture Undersecretary Roger Navarro said the Philippines has enough rice supply due to a bumper harvest last year and additional importation in January.

"But it's difficult to reduce prices since the cost of the grain, even in rice exporting countries

like Vietnam and Thailand — the Philippines' main rice suppliers — is also elevated at 48 pesos (0.87 US dollars) and 52 pesos (0.93 dollars) per kilo, respectively," Navarro explained.

"The challenge is not the price of rice but more of stabilizing supply," Navarro added. He noted that the Philippines consumes around 37,000 metric tons of rice daily and must import around 300,000 tons monthly to supplement local production. — Xinhua

# China dominates global new energy car sales

The penetration rate of new energy vehicles (NEVs) in China rose to almost 30 per cent in 2023, reflecting the country's strong commitment to green development and the rapid growth of its auto market.

THE sales of new energy passenger cars in China accounted for nearly two-thirds of the world's total last year, industrial data showed.

Some 8.87 million units of such vehicles were sold in the Chinese market in 2023, up 37 per cent from a year ago and making up 63.5 per cent of the global sales, Cui Dongshu, secretary general of the China Passenger Car Association, said.

The penetration rate of new energy vehicles (NEVs) in China, or the proportion of NEVs in all car sales, rose to almost 30 per cent in 2023.

The NEV market has witnessed robust expansion in China over the past years thanks to the country's accelerated push for green development and a rapidly growing auto



Visitors watch a new-energy car displayed by FAW Hongqi during the 14<sup>th</sup> China-Northeast Asia Expo in Changchun, northeast China's Jilin Province, 23 August 2023. PHOTO: ZHANG NAN/XINHUA

market. In 2023, electric passenger cars accounted for 69 per cent of the country's sales, while plug-in hybrids gripped 31 percent.

As Chinese NEVs are also popular in the South-east Asian and European markets, strong sales growth was seen in both the domestic market and

exports, Cui said. Earlier data showed that China's NEV exports in 2023 surged 77.6 per cent year on year to 1.2 million units. — Xinhua

# France, Germany block EU deal on scaled-back app worker law

FRANCE and Germany on Friday refused to back a watered-down agreement on controversial EU rules covering app workers in the gig economy, European diplomats said.

The European Union's objective was to bring in bloc-wide rules that supporters hoped would improve conditions for app workers in the gig economy by reclassifying some as employed. But the latest text scaled back those efforts, by scrapping any formal list of criteria and letting states decide how to classify workers.

For any approval, there needed to be a qualified majority of 15 out of 27 EU nations, representing at least 65 per cent of the bloc's population. During a meeting of member states' ambassadors in Brussels, the EU's two most populous countries, France and

Germany, blocked the text with the support of Estonia and Greece, the diplomats told AFP.

They said they could not support the text, therefore denying the qualified majority, the diplomats added.

"Unfortunately, the necessary qualified majority voting wasn't found," Belgium, which holds the rotating EU presidency, said on social media.

"We'll now consider the next steps," it added.

EU diplomats said the presidency would not give up. "Why would they? There are 23 countries supporting this deal," one said.

Others were sceptical, arguing that this would not be possible and the issue would be kicked into the long grass until after June elections across Europe. — AFP

# Laos to empower coffee farmers in northern region

LAOS and Japan jointly launched a project

aimed at empowering coffee farmers in north-

ern Laos' Luang Prabang province.

The initiative targets eight villages in Luang Prabang's Phonxai and Vieng Kham districts and

will bolster production and marketing efforts, Lao News Agency (KPL) reported on Saturday.

The coffee produced will be exported to the

Japanese market, said the report, adding that the project's activities will support people in target communities, help them to create income

from coffee production, and access sustainable food security and nutrition, with a focus on women and children under the age of 5. — Xinhua

**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE**  
M.V UNI-ACTIVE VOY.NO. (0315-764N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V UNI-ACTIVE VOY.NO. (0315-764N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **19-2-2024** 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 EVERGREEN MARINE (ASIA) PTE., LTD.**

**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE**  
M.V CONTRIVIA VOY.NO. (066N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V CONTRIVIA VOY.NO. (066N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **19-2-2024** 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:  
**(ONE) OCEAN NETWORK EXPRESS LINE**

# Turkish gold mine stripped of licence after landslide

THE Turkish government on Saturday shut down a gold mine where nine workers are still missing after a landslide.

Environmental groups and even industry associations have been calling for the controversial mine to be stripped of its operating permit ever since a massive landslide rolled over the open pit Tuesday.

The environment ministry Saturday said in a statement it was withdrawing the mine's "environmental permit", without which it cannot operate.

According to a preliminary experts' report, the mine's managers didn't take the necessary precautions even though they were aware of cracks in the mine's slag heap. — AFP

# ROLLING UPDATES

## WORLD

## 37<sup>th</sup> AU summit begins in Addis Ababa with focus on education, development

*Discussions focus on improving education systems to meet market demands and propel Africa's overall development.*

THE 37<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the African Union (AU) Assembly of the Heads of State and Government opened on Saturday, with a call to increase efforts to improve the state of education in Africa and fast-track the realization of Africa's development endeavors.

The two-day meeting, comprising African leaders from AU member states, is held under the AU's theme of the year for 2024, "Educate an African fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality and relevant learning in Africa" at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. As Africa puts a spotlight on education in 2024, the summit convened on how to enhance education and skills to meet the continental vision and market needs, and further deliberated on the progress, challenges and prospects of Africa's overall development.

Addressing the opening session, Azali Assoumani, president of the Comoros and chairperson of the AU, high-



This photo taken on 17 February 2024 shows an exterior view of the African Union (AU) headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The 37<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of the Heads of State and Government opened on Saturday at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. **PHOTO: LI YAHUI/XINHUA**

lighted the crucial need for increased efforts to promote continental stability and development.

"With particular interest in the promotion and preservation of peace and security on our dear continent, this

shared security concern has guided all our activities during our term. The peacefulness of our continent remains the very basis of realizing our vision by 2063 for a united and prosperous Africa," Assoumani said. — Xinhua

Mongolia's capital, provinces impose traffic restrictions due to blizzards

TRAFFIC restrictions were enforced in Mongolia's capital until noon on Sunday in response to heavy snow and blizzards, announced the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) on Saturday night.

Roads connecting the capital Ulan Bator to provinces such as Sukhbaatar, Khentii, Dornod, Dundgovi, Umnugovi, and Uvurkhangai have been closed during the specified period due to adverse weather conditions, the NEMA said in a statement.

Heavy snow, strong winds, and blizzards have affected the country from west to east since Thursday night, causing icy roads and poor visibility.

The agency urged citizens, especially nomadic herders and drivers, to take extra precautions against possible disasters.

Almost all provinces of Mongolia have experienced extreme weather known as "dzud" this winter, and over 80 percent of the country has been blanketed by snow, according to the country's weather monitoring agency. — Xinhua

## Afghanistan special envoys to meet in Doha

NATIONAL and regional special envoys to Afghanistan are to convene in Doha Sunday in the second UN meeting of its kind in less than a year, with uncertainty hanging over whether Taliban authorities would join.

The two-day meeting, hosted by the UN secretary-general, will discuss increasing engagement with Afghanistan and a more coordinated response to the Central Asian nation, Antonio Guterres' spokesman told reporters Thursday. In the aftermath of the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan in 2021, the international community has wrestled with its approach to the country's new rulers.

On the eve of the convention in gas-rich Qatar, which hosted the Taliban during years of peace talks with the United

States, the administration's participation remains unclear.

The UN has extended an invitation to the Taliban authorities to participate in the Doha convention, following their exclusion from the first meeting in May.

A senior diplomatic source told AFP the Taliban government had said it will only if they are the sole representative of Afghanistan at the convention — excluding civil society representatives.

A second demand was that the Taliban government delegation meet with the UN secretary-general and be given an opportunity to present its position, the source said, on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of discussions. — AFP

## Chinese C919 attends Singapore Airshow rehearsal

*C919 will demonstrate flight maneuvers at Singapore Airshow 2024 from 20 February to 25, joined by aerobatic teams from India, Australia, Indonesia, and South Korea.*



China's first self-developed narrow-body aircraft C919 arrives at Singapore's Changi Airport on 17 February 2024, ready to debut in the Singapore Airshow that runs through 20 February until 25 February. **PHOTO: CHINA DAILY**

CHINESE passenger jet C919 made a rehearsal flight Sunday in Singapore to prepare for the upcoming airshow.

Five aircraft developed by

the Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China, Ltd., including C919, will meet the public at the airshow.

C919 will perform flight

demonstrations at the Singapore Airshow 2024, which lasts from 20 February to 25 February. The aerial show attracts aerobatic teams from India, Australia, Indonesia and South Korea. Singapore Air Force will send its F-15 fighter jet and Apache attack helicopter to the aerial performances.

The event, attended by over 1,000 participating companies, is expected to attract 50,000 trade attendees from over 50 countries and regions.

Singapore Airshow will set up the country pavilion for Chinese aerospace enterprises for the first time, according to the organizer. — Xinhua

# SPORTS

## Mbappe scores as sub to help PSG see off Nantes

Mbappe, who plans to leave PSG at the end of the season, came off the bench and secured the victory after Lucas Hernandez's deflected strike.



Kylian Mbappe scored his 21<sup>st</sup> Ligue 1 goal of the season. PHOTO: AFP

KYLIAN Mbappe came off the bench and scored a penalty as Paris Saint-Germain beat Nantes 2-0 on Saturday after the France captain informed the club this week he plans to leave at the end of the season.

Lucas Hernandez's deflected strike broke the deadlock on the hour at the Stade de la Beaujoire before Mbappe made sure of the points after he was fouled inside the area.

PSG stretched their lead at the top

of Ligue 1 to 14 points with a record-extending 12th title surely now a formality after Nice suffered a fifth loss in nine games Friday.

The main talking point in Paris though will be the future of Mbappe, who is seemingly entering the final months of a seven-year stint with the French champions.

The 25-year-old has told club officials he intends to depart on a free transfer when his contract expires, and has been widely tipped to move to Real Madrid.

It is understood that Mbappe's exit will be formally announced in a few months' time.

"It's all going very well with Mbappe, there's no problem," PSG coach Luis Enrique told Canal Plus after the game.

PSG toiled for an hour without the league's top scorer as Mbappe, who struck in the 2-0 win over Real Sociedad in the Champions League in midweek, started on the bench in Nantes. — AFP

## Juve hand Inter nine-point lead as Napoli crisis deepens

Adrien Rabiot's goal saved Juventus from a third consecutive loss, leveling the score after Tijjani Noslin put Verona ahead again.

JUVENTUS trail Serie A leaders Inter Milan by nine points after a 2-2 at relegation-threatened Verona, while a 1-1 draw with Genoa left champions Napoli deep in crisis.

Massimiliano Allegri's side had their league title hopes further damaged following an entertaining encounter in which Adrien Rabiot saved Juve from losing a third consecutive match.

France midfielder Rabiot rifled home second-placed Juve's leveller nine minutes after the break, moments after Tijjani Noslin had put hosts Verona ahead for the second time in the match.

Michael Folorunsho, whose touch

led to Noslin's goal, had smashed Marco Baroni's team into the lead early on with a stunning volley only for Dusan Vlahovic to equalise from the penalty spot in the 28<sup>th</sup> minute.

"We should have done more, we've dropped points along the way recently. But we started playing too late and it's those details which make the difference," said Rabiot. "We need to get back on track, regain trust in ourselves and starting winning again."

The draw didn't do a huge amount for Verona as they stay just inside the relegation zone, level on points with 17<sup>th</sup>-placed Sassuolo who were beaten

3-0 by Atalanta but have a game in hand.

However it was a strong performance for a club that let a raft of players go in January, and it also extended Juve's winless run to four matches.

That poor form means that Juve are not only watching Inter charge off into the distance, they are now also looking over their shoulders at AC Milan. A win at Monza on Sunday night would allow Milan, two points behind Juve in third, to snatch second spot from their rivals.

"We need to be realistic," added Rabiot. "Inter are going their own way and we need to fight to keep hold of second place." — AFP



Michael Folorunsho (C) opened the scoring for Verona with a stunning volley. PHOTO: AFP

## Yangon United recruits two expatriate players



Defender Guiro Yaya is seen after signing contract with Yangon United. PHOTO:YUFC

YANGON United, one of the best Myanmar National League football teams, recruited two expatriate players, as stated by the football team.

Yangon United signed with defender Guiro Yaya from Burkina Faso FC and Ghana striker Gideon Tetteh on one-year contracts. Ghana striker Gideon Tetteh moved to Yangon United after playing in Lebanon and Bahrain, while defender Guiro Yaya played in Spanish clubs. Yangon United team will recruit more foreign players. So far, four local players and two foreign players have been recruited.

The Yangon United team is recruiting foreign players after recruiting Frank Bernhardt from Germany as the head coach. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

## Alcaraz admits far from best in Buenos Aires exit

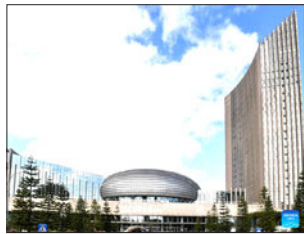
CARLOS Alcaraz admitted to being "far from my true level" in a defeat to Nicolas Jarry at the semi-finals of the ATP Buenos Aires tournament on Saturday.

The defending champion's surprise straight-sets loss to the Chilean came in the Spaniard's first tournament since he lost in the quarter-finals of the Australian Open.

Two-time Grand Slam champion Alcaraz had been hoping to reach his first final since falling to Novak Djokovic at the Cincinnati Masters in August, and to clinch a first title since Wimbledon last July.

"It's a difficult defeat for me," Alcaraz said after the 7-6 (7/2), 6-3 loss.

"It really hurts. There are lots of things to improve. I played good tennis but I am far from my true level." — AFP



GLOBAL MULTIPOLAR SYSTEM

China ready to promote equal, orderly multipolar world with EU: FM

CHINA is ready to work with the European Union (EU) to promote an equal and orderly multipolar world, so that each country has its own place in the global multipolar system, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said here on Friday.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made the remarks at a meeting with Josep Borrell, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, on the sidelines of the ongoing Munich Security Conference.

Both China and the EU advocate multilateralism, Wang said, adding that China is willing to work with the EU to promote an inclusive economic globalization that delivers benefits for all, and make bigger the pie of cooperation so as to achieve common development and prosperity.

Noting that the international situation is undergoing changes with uncertainties and instability on the rise, Wang said China and the EU, as stabilizing forces in the world, should work together to tackle the challenges. He said the two sides have recently resumed exchanges at all levels and achieved positive results.

The two sides should respect each other's core concerns, adhere to partnership and win-win cooperation as the keynote of their relations, and make good preparations for the next China-EU Summit, Wang said. — Xinhua

Russia will expand its industrial alliances — Putin



The 2023 BRICS New Industrial Revolution Exhibition focuses on the theme of "Deepening Partnership Cooperation, Promoting the New Industrialization of BRICS Countries", based on the high-end, intelligent, and green development of the manufacturing industry in BRICS countries. PHOTO: XINHUA/FILE

*President Putin emphasized Russia's aim to enhance multilateral industrial cooperation with foreign partners, intending to expand alliances with the Eurasian Economic Community, BRICS countries, and other willing associations.*

PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin On Friday held a comprehensive meeting on ways the government can support investment in Russian industrial sectors.

President Putin opened the meeting by saying that Russia is seeking to further strengthen multilateral industrial cooperation with foreign partners.

"We intend to expand international industrial and technological alliances and to build chains of cooperation with those colleagues from the Eurasian Economic Community and BRICS countries, from anywhere else really, with other

countries and associations that are up for cooperation," he said. He emphasized that such alliances were essential, as it neither possible nor necessary to produce everything domestically.

Russian authorities will carry on working on expanding and reinforcing government support for industry.

"We will tackle specific steps to strengthen the country's [Russia's] technological sovereignty, to increase domestic production and manufacturing together with the business and scientific communities, our enterprises, and work

teams," Putin noted.

At the same time, Russia ought to have its own "technological keys" in critical sectors. It is vital that the scientific potential and human resources are focused there, the president stressed.

He noted that in general, the Russian industry is progressing and developing at a solid pace. Moreover, there are new channels for supplying raw materials and components, despite external pressure. Russia is now also working with reliable interested partners. — SPUTNIK

Two-state solution for lasting peace highlighted in Munich



Munich Security Conference (MSC) Chairman Christoph Heusgen speaks during the opening of the 60<sup>th</sup> MSC in Munich, Germany, 16 February 2024. The 60<sup>th</sup> MSC opened here on Friday, with a spotlight on the need to boost cooperation and improve global governance. PHOTO: ZHANG FAN/XINHUA

*At the 60<sup>th</sup> Munich Security Conference, top officials emphasized the necessity of a permanent resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, advocating for the two-state solution for lasting security in*

TOP international organizations and government officials called for a permanent settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at the ongoing 60<sup>th</sup> Munich Security Conference (MSC), saying that only the two-state solution can make the region achieve lasting security.

Addressing the conference at its opening ceremony on Friday, United Nations Secretary-Gen-

eral Antonio Guterres reiterated his call for peace and better global order, highlighting the two-state solution to the crisis. He said that the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages and a humanitarian ceasefire are the only way to massively scale up aid delivery in Gaza, and thus will lay the foundation for concrete and irreversible steps towards a two-state solution. — Xinhua