

# The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR



Irrigated water which drained out from Moeyungyi Reservoir through sluice gate flows to summer paddy fields. **PHOTOS: KANU**

## Moeyungyi Reservoir distributes water to over 53,000 acres of summer paddy in Yangon, Bago regions

**M**oeyungyi Reservoir, the main water resource of Bago-Sittoung canal and a Ramsar Site, supplies water to over 53,000 acres of summer paddy in Bago Region and about 100 acres in Yangon Region.

The sluice gate of Moeyungyi Reservoir was built in the third week of December 2021 and completed in March 2022. It is about 40 square miles area, and the water from seven creeks is stored in the reservoir at an altitude of about 20 feet-26 feet, and the water is distributed to summer paddy field via the sluice gate. The sluice gate is 6x7 feet wide with 11 steel valves, and it mainly supplies wa-



Photo shows thriving paddy field.

ter to over 53,000 acres of summer paddy in Bago, Waw, Thanatpin and Kawa townships of Bago Region, and about 100 acres of summer paddy in Kayan Township of Yangon Region.

In 2020-2021, the Moeyungyi Reservoir stored water up to RL25.9 feet, and up to RL 26 feet after the construction of sluice gate, contributing to the summer paddy fields and agriculture and livestock breeding sectors.

“Moeyungyi Reservoir was constructed in colonial era in 1878. It was constructed by filling water into Bago-Sittoung canal for bamboo raft transportation. Now, the transportation becomes better and so we mainly use it to distribute water to summer paddy fields. Summer paddy is a proper seasonal crop on which the farmers rely. Before we distribute irrigation water, we had to meet with the officials of relevant departments and water users to supply the adequate water. Now, we have already distributed

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## 2.1 mln+ citizens to receive CSCs in 9 months

THE Ministry of Immigration and Population will issue citizenship scrutiny cards (CSC) to over 2.1 million citizens within nine months in the third phase of the Pann Khin project.

Efforts have been already underway since January 2024 to document over 390,000 youths who will turn 18 in the following nine months and 1.77 million migrants without CSCs.

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Shweyaungdaw Pagoda to host Buddha Pujaniya festival in Beikthano Ancient Cultural Zone



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People excited to use EV three-wheeled motorcycles in Mandalay



# 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 powerful 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.

## 2.1 mln+ citizens to receive CSCs in 9 months

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In an attempt to establish an electronic identification system, or e-ID, the authorities will collect biographic data as well as biometric data. The respective township-level committees formed with five members verify squatters for issuance of household lists and citizenship scrutiny cards under the law.

Additionally, officials are going door-to-door to collect household lists to ensure the accuracy of voter lists for the upcoming election. They cross-check these lists with the data stored in e-ID servers for verification.

The third phase covers both new CSC applicants and



Residents waiting to apply for a Smart Card at the ward administration office in Sangyoung Township, Yangon, on 21 February.

those who already possess CSCs. Each citizen will be assigned to a 10-digit serial number after their biographic and biometric data have been collected.

The first phase of the project, which commenced in 2021, aimed

to reach 3.4 million people without citizenship scrutiny cards and household lists, while the second phase, starting in August 2022, targeted 1.7 million individuals, reportedly achieving 100 per cent of the projected goal. — TWA/NT

## Shweyaungdaw Pagoda to host Buddha Pujaniya festival in Beikthano Ancient Cultural Zone



Shweyaungdaw Pagoda in Beikthano Ancient Cultural Zone of Magway Region.

U Thar Oo, a member of Shweyaungdaw Pagoda Board of Trustees, said that the preparations are being made for the Buddha Pujaniya festival which will take place at Shweyaungdaw Pagoda in Beikthano Ancient Culture Zone of Magway Region.

“In previous years, the festival started from the waxing day of Tabodwe to the full moon of Tabaung. Some years, vendors still haven't returned even in waning days. This year, the novitiation ceremony for 5,000 boys will be held on 5, 6 and 7 April. The pagoda

festival may be hosted until that day. Can't say exactly yet. The market fest will start on 23 February,” said U Thar Oo.

It is reported that the novitiation ceremony for 5,000 boys will be held at the pagoda in Beikthano Ancient Culture Zone under the supervision of Mahamyang Thae Phyu Sayadaw in cooperation with the Magway Region Government. At the moment, priority will be given to children who have not yet been initiated into novice hood in Magway Region. — ASH/MKKS

## Naga nationality traditional dance course offers for new generations

CHAIRPERSON of Naga nationality literature and culture association U Khoung Shai stated that the Naga nationality traditional dance course aims to hand over dancing techniques to the new generations at Naga field in Htanpakhwe of Lahe in Naga Self-Administered Zone.

Naga ethnic men, women and youths attended the opening ceremony of the dance course. Chieftain of Htanpakhwe U Haw Hmo and Chairperson of the association U Khoung Shai gave opening speeches.

U Khoung Shai said, “We aim for the new generation to be able to adore and preserve the Naga traditions and traditional dances.”

Naga nationality dance troupes gave training to the choreography of the traditional songs to some 30 Naga youths. — ASH/TRKM



The opening ceremony of Naga nationality traditional dance course.



# NATIONAL

## DPM UM of MoTC attends 13<sup>th</sup> collective blood donation ceremony of MPT

DEPUTY Prime Minister Union Minister for Transport and Communications General Mya Tun Oo attended the 13<sup>th</sup> collective blood donation event of the Ministry of Transport and Communications at the Nay Pyi Taw General Hospital (1000-bed) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

At the ceremony, a total of 60 blood donor employees of Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications in Nay Pyi Taw donated blood. Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister General Mya Tun Oo, Union Minister for Health Dr Thet Khaing Win, deputy minis-

ters and officials comforted the blood donors and provided nutritious foods and medicines.

Union Minister Dr Thet Khaing Win presented certificates of honor for blood donors through the General returned gifts.

Similar blood donation ceremonies of the MPT were held at the respective hospitals and blood centres in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon, Mandalay, Taninthayi, Shan State (East) and Shan State (North), joined by 406 blood donors. MPT has been arranging blood donation events since 2016.— MNA/TS



Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister General Mya Tun Oo presents a certificate of honour to a blood donor of MPT at Nay Pyi Taw General Hospital (1000-bed) yesterday.

## MoBA holds 5<sup>th</sup> Myanmar traditional Htamane-making competition



Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung presents prize to a winning team of Htamane-making competition yesterday.

THE Ministry of Border Affairs held the 5<sup>th</sup> Myanmar traditional Htamane-making competition yesterday evening in the courtyard of the Ministry of Border Affairs, attended by Union Minister Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung, Deputy Minister Maj-Gen Phyo Thant, departmental heads and employees and contending teams.

First of all, in his opening remarks, the Union Minister said that the Myanmar traditional Htamane-making competition held today was a unique traditional event that takes place with collective strength in the 12-month seasonal festivals. It is necessary to overcome challenges through unity and personal responsibilities. He

urged the employees to strive for undertaking development of the nation in their respective sectors.

Then, the Union Minister, the Deputy Minister and officials enjoyed participation of the contending teams in the competition. They also presented awards to the winning teams in the competition.— MNA/TS

## Moeyungyi Reservoir distributes water to ...

### FROM PAGE-1

water there three times. We are very happy as we can supply adequate water to summer paddy fields. We also urge the farmers to use the water efficiently," said U Thiha Aung, assistant director (civil) of Bago Region Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department.

Moeyungyi Reservoir distributes water through the sluice gate four times a year to 53,313 acres of summer paddy comprising 30,518 acres in Thanatpin, 6,716 acres in Kawa and 16,079 acres in Waw townships. The first water distribution was on 18 December 2023, while the second on 17 January 2024 and the third on 9 February, and the final distribution will be from 9 to 24 March. It also distributes water to 100 acres of summer paddy in Kayan Township of Yangon Region.— Nyein Thu (MNA)/KTZH

## Research papers invited by Livestock and Aquacultural Research Department of MoALI

THE Livestock and Aquacultural Research Department (Nay Pyi Taw) under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation will hold the second Livestock Research Symposium on 1 April 2024 with the title "From Innovative Research to Nutrient and Sustainable Food Security".

Research papers in the fields of farming products that add value to the market and breeding production methods

that will be sustainable, animal feed and nutrition, disease prevention and control, and livestock-based socio-economic fields are invited to be submitted by 1 March 2024.

Details can be found on the Department's website address <https://www.dlar.moali.gov.mm> and can also contact Deputy Director-General Dr Saw Bawm by phone at 09 250205990 or by email at [sawvetdlar@gmail.com](mailto:sawvetdlar@gmail.com). — MNA/KZL

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# NATIONAL

## Ministry of Information holds Myanmar traditional Htamane-making competition



Competing teams of relevant departments are ready to start Htamane-making competition of Ministry of Information yesterday.

THE Ministry of Information held Myanmar traditional Htamane-making competition in Nay Pyi Taw to preserve Myanmar traditions, to foster the team spirit of the staff for better cooperation among the departments and to have mutual close friendship and happiness.

Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn and wife, Deputy Minister U Ye Tint and wife, the Permanent Secretary and wife, departmental heads and all the staffs participated in the Htamane-making competition

happily.

The Union minister delivered an opening speech and enjoyed Htamane-making event.

The Deputy minister and wife awarded consolation prize-winning teams. The Union Minister and wife awarded the first, second and third prizes to the Department of Information and Public Relations, News and Periodicals Enterprise and the Department of Printing and Publishing respectively. After that, the Union Minister gave a bicycle to the Myanmar Radio and Television. — MNA/TRKM

## Myanmar joins 45<sup>th</sup> Meeting of High-level Task Force on ASEAN Economic Integration (HLTF-EI)

A Myanmar delegation led by Dr Wah Wah Maung, HLTF-EI Lead and Eminent Person (EP) of Myanmar and Deputy Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations, attended the 45<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the High-level Task Force on ASEAN Economic Integration (HLTF-EI), which was held in Vang Vieng, Lao PDR, on 20-21 February 2024.

The meeting was chaired by Dr Manothong Vongsay, Vice Minister for Ministry of Industry and Commerce of Lao PDR and approximately 70 representatives of Eminent Persons, High-Level Representatives and the senior

officials from ASEAN Member States and Timor-Leste as an observer, as well as the Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN and officials from the ASEAN Secretariat were attended.

During the meeting, the three Strategic Thrusts: Integrating and Connecting Economies, Forging an Inclusive and Sustainable Future and Transforming for the Digital Future and 14 Priority Economic Deliverables for Laos PDR's ASEAN Chairmanship were discussed to set and implement during Lao PDR's chairmanship. Moreover, the updated End-Term Review (ETR) of

the AEC Blueprint 2025 and the ongoing project to complete the AEC Blueprint 2025 were updated and discussed at the meeting. Also, the recommendations for the 30<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Economic Ministers' Retreat which will be held on 8-9 March 2024 were also discussed and prepared.

During the meeting, an interface session was held with the HLTF-EI Chair, the HLTF-EI Leads, AEC Eminent Persons and representatives of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) to take the developing of ASEAN Community Vision-2045. — MNA



Delegates pose for documentary photo at 45<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the High-level Task Force on ASEAN Economic Integration (HLTF-EI) in Lao PDR on 21 February.

### Daily newspapers available online

FOR those who would like to read the Myanmar Alinn, the Kyemon and the Global New Light of Myanmar, published daily by the Ministry of Information, please visit [www.moi.gov.mm/mal](http://www.moi.gov.mm/mal), [www.moi.gov.mm/km](http://www.moi.gov.mm/km), [www.moi.gov.mm/nlm](http://www.moi.gov.mm/nlm) and [www.gnlm.com.mm/e-paper](http://www.gnlm.com.mm/e-paper).

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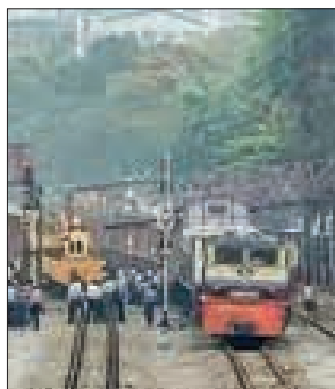
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# NATIONAL

## Two trains collide near Puzundaung station breaking railway overpass



The incident of two train collide.

TWO trains collided near Puzundaung station and the railway overpass was broken, according to the Myanmar Railways.

At about 4 am on 23 Feb-

ruary, the Yangon-Mandalay express train, which was departing from Yangon Railway Station, hit a cargo train waiting for a red traffic light near Puzundaung Station in Puzundaung Township.

There were no injuries in the incident, the engines were slightly damaged, and a railway overpass that crossed the railway tracks between Yekyaw Wutkyau Street and Bengalisu was broken.

Regarding to the incidents, the relevant officials are still investigating for detail. — TWA/TKO

## Leaf Deer or Leaf Muntjac believed to be living in Nagmon



PHOTO: KHAKABORAZI NATIONAL PARK

THE Leaf Deer or Leaf Muntjac only found in Myanmar live in Nagmon Township that is located 1,800 feet above the sea level in PutaO District of Kachin State in northern part of Myanmar, ac-

ording to Khakaborazi Wildlife Sanctuary Office.

The Khakaborazi National Park and Phonkanrazi National Park are well-known areas of ecosystem among ASEAN coun-

tries for having varieties of wild animals, resident birds, icefish, flora and fauna and migratory birds.

The Leaf Deer or Leaf Muntjac (*Muntiacus putaoensis*) is also called as PutaO barking deer. The black musk deer or dusky musk deer are also found in Phonkanrazi National Park, India, China, Bhutan and on ice.

The Leaf Deer or Leaf Muntjac was documented in Nagmon Township by a zoologist in 1997.

Myanmar has 59 protected areas, wildlife sanctuaries, national parks and botanical gardens and eight ASEAN heritage parks. — Nyein Thu (MNA)/KTZH

## Counter-argument to false information

### 689 suspects including Thai, Chinese, Myanmar involved in online gambling games, financial scams arrested

A total of 689 suspects — 148 Thai nationals, one Chinese and 540 Myanmar nationals — were arrested for running online gambling games and financial scams in Tachilek yesterday.

Following a tip-off, the security forces and Myanmar Police Force raided a compound owned by Kyaw Thein (aka) Khun Maung Nyo in Tonaya street of



The photo shows computerized online gambling games and financial scams in Tachilek.

Samseng (A) Ward of Tachilek in Shan State (East) at 5:15 am yesterday and arrested 689 suspects together with eight vehicles, 120 motorcycles and desktop computers. The foreigners will be transferred to their respective countries after the procedures, and Myanmar nationals will face legal action under the law. — MNA/KTZH

### Misinformation alert: DVB alleges arrests in Pyay guest houses

THE malicious media DVB has been circulating unsubstantiated information on social media, accusing security troops and police of arresting over 20 individuals holding citizenship scrutiny cards issued in Rakhine State, staying at guest houses in Pyay, Bago Region, during a surprise midnight check on 22 February.

A responsible official dismissed the false news, assert-

ing that there were no arrests and that the report was fabricated to create misunderstandings regarding the security troops. Security forces and local police are patrolling and conducting midnight checks in the region to prevent terrorist activities and maintain law and order. Malicious media are intentionally spreading false reports to mislead the public. — MNA/NT

### Malicious media spreads fake news that 14 civilians detained in Bhamo

SOME malicious media outlets disseminated false information, saying that 14 civilians were detained by the security forces at 5<sup>th</sup>-mile gate of the entrance to Bhamo in Kachin State while fleeing to Bhamo amid the fighting between security forces and KIA and PDF terrorists that occurred in Mansi township on 18 February. These media outlets also spread fabricated news that those civilians were detained at that gate on 17 February after the approval of People's



Screen-shot fake news on arresting civilians in Bhamo.

Military Service Law.

Responding to such fake news, a security forces officer of Bhamo clarified that the

normal inspection was being conducted as usual at the entry/exist of the township for the security measures and 14 civilians were not arrested.

The KIA and PDF terrorists forcibly recruit the local ethnic people in Bhamo township as they face huge losses in clashes, and the local youths had to flee from the villages. The malicious media outlets intentionally spread false news and misinformation to threaten the people and youths. — MNA/KTZH

### DVB TV News' Facebook Page spreads fabricated news

DVB TV News' page on Facebook social network posted a status on 18 February accusing that the a prisoner who was prisoned by armed criminal case, was shot dead on 16 February.

Investigating the incident regarding the news, at about 9:30 am on 16 February, Pyapon Prison handed over five inmates who were facing other cases to the Myanmar police under the remand of the judge from relevant court,

and those inmates were fully hand over to the prison in the evening of the same day.

The DVB's news is only fabricated with subversive intent to misrepresent and mislead the public about the administrative institutions.

A critic said that as only a group of illiterates and people with the luck of knowledge would believe this kind of fabricated news, DVB has revealed its status. — MNA/TKO

# NATIONAL

## Social Security Board provides compensation for over 10,000 insured female workers from April 2022 to January 2024



Union Minister for Labour U Myint Naung presents medical expenses to an insured female worker who gave birth at the hospital in 2023.

A total of 17,413 insured female workers were provided with K2.186 billion from April 2022 to January 2024, according to the Ministry of Labour.

The maternity service benefits and medical expenses are provided as over 50 per cent of the insured workers are

female.

From April 2022 to January 2024, a total of K2.186 billion was approved for 17,413 insured female workers, said Union Minister for Labour U Myint Naung at the meeting of the Social Security Board on 20 February.

In addition, the benefit cases submitted by legally insured workers to the township social security offices are approved and issued in time. From February 2021 to January 2024, more than K62.594 billion have been issued to insured workers. — TWA/MKKS

## Chilli pepper price heads down as supply exceeds demand

CHILLI pepper prices continue a downward trend in Bayintnaung Wholesale Market while onion prices are steadily rising.

High influx of chilli pepper from various areas brings down the price when the demand slows down.

Long chilli pepper price decreased to K11,000 per viss on 23 February from K13,000 recorded on 16 January. The new long chilli pepper from the Hinthada area also dropped to K8,000 per viss on that day from K12,700 on 23 January 2024. Similarly, long chilli peppers from different regions declined to K7,000-K8,200 per viss.

Moeltaung chilli pepper from the Hinthada area also declined to K10,700-K11,000 per viss on 23 February from K13,000 per viss.

The chilli pepper (Moeltaung) processed in cold storage fetches K8,000-K10,400 per viss. As they are more expensive than the long chilli, the demand for Moeltaung chili is quite low.

Meanwhile, the bell pepper prices stood at K13,000-K15,000

per viss on 23 February 2024, which dropped from K16,000-K16,500 per viss in the previous days.

Those traders who kept the stocks in hands faced losses in 2023 although they made a handsome profit in 2022. They are closely observing the market for now.

Traders eye rice, paddy and chilli pepper for storage as the prices of pulses and rice tremendously rose this year, trader Ko Hla Han shared his opinion to the Global New Light of Myanmar. — TWA/KK



Red chilli pepper from Nyaungdon and Hinthada areas.



A wholesale shop selling pulses and beans.

## Green gram price remains flat in Yangon market unlike other regions

THE price of green gram has stayed the same from 8 February at Yangon's Bayintnaung market unlike other regions.

The downward spiral for black gram and pigeon pea prices continue at present.

The green gram from Pakokku area fetched K2,830-K3,335 per viss on 5 February and green gram of Kayan Shwewah strain was priced at K4,500 on 8 February. The prices remained unchanged after 13 days of market opening. Yet, the green gram prices dip in Kayan area, the figures from that area showed.

The prices stood at K85,000 per 20 viss on 29 January, K91,000 on 1 February, K89,000 on 6 and 13 February, K83,000 on 18 February, K81,000 on 21 February and K79,500 on 22 February, a trader from Kayan area told the Global

New Light of Myanmar.

The prices decreased to K185,000 per 56.5 viss of green gram, K280,000 per 60 viss of black gram, K366,000 per 60 viss of pigeon pea on 23 February, indicating a decline of K130,000-K220,000 compared to those recorded on 13 February.

The prices in Yangon market also showed a drastic plunge of around K400,000 per tonne of black gram and K300,000 per tonne of pigeon pea on 23 February. The figures recorded the highest of K3.5 million per tonne of black gram and K4.197 million per tonne of pigeon pea on 5 February.

The black gram, pigeon pea and green gram have low domestic consumption. They are mostly demanded in India.

India is the top pulses importing

country from Myanmar. As India's requirement on pulses to meet the local demand, Myanmar's pulses prices are expected to stay on high side this year. India extended the free import policy of black gram (urad) and pigeon pea (tur) up to March 2025.

According to a Memorandum of Understanding between Myanmar and India signed on 18 June 2021, India will import 250,000 tonnes of black gram and 100,000 tonnes of pigeon peas (tur) from Myanmar for five consecutive years from 2021-2022 financial year to 2025-2026 FY.

The figures recorded the corresponding period last year showed that the prices were K1.8635 million per tonne of black gram, K2.09 per tonne of pigeon pea, K2,415-K3,915 per viss of green gram. — TWA/KK



## Kyat depreciates beyond K3,600

KYAT against the greenback weakened to some K3,610 on 23 February at the Over-the-Counter market.

The Kyat-Dollar exchange rate was K3,500 in early February. The exchange rate showed an increase of around K110 in the past two weeks.

The Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) intervened in the currency market by selling the dollars into the financial market to curb the dollar gains in the forex market.

The CBM injected over US\$59.38 million and 650 million Thai Baht into the financial market in the past 20 days.

The CBM pumped in \$13 million on 1 February in the financial market, five million dollars and 50 million Thai Baht on an online

trading platform for the exporters/importers on 2 February, \$11 million and 200 million Thai Baht on 5 February, eight million dollars on 8 February, \$5.38 million on 14 February, nine million dollars and 200 million Thai Baht on 15 February, and eight million US Dollar and 200 million Thai Baht on 19 February.

The CBM sold \$68.33 million, 313.5 million Thai Baht and 4.2 million Chinese Yuan in January 2024.

Meanwhile, the reference exchange rate of the Central Bank of Myanmar is K2,100.

Last 5 December, the Central Bank of Myanmar allowed authorized dealers (private banks) to operate forex exchanges freely as per the market rate determined by the market force of the



supply and demand.

Additionally, the CBM notified that outward remittance must comply with the rules and regulations of the Foreign Exchange Management Committee.

The dollar gained to around K4,000 on 19 August 2023.

According to the Section 9 of the Foreign Exchange Management Law, only those entities holding foreign exchange dealer licence are allowed to deal in foreign currency and traveler's cheque. Those holding foreign currencies without valid licence

and permits will face legal actions under the law, according to the CBM's notification released on 21 August 2023.

According to the notification No 7/2014 dated 30 September 2014 issued by the Central Bank of Myanmar, affirming that under the stanza 15 of the Foreign Exchange Management Law, domestic residents are allowed to keep US\$10,000 in maximum or equivalent amount of foreign currencies for six months. If

those foreign currencies that have been unused for more than six months have to be exchanged in local currency at the market price through the authorized dealers or deposited into bank accounts. Those illegally holding foreign currencies are to face legal actions under the Foreign Exchange Management Law, the CBM warned again. — NN/EM

## Diesel prices show slight decline

THE diesel prices decreased slightly to K2,565 per litre of diesel and K2,610 for premium diesel on 23 February 2024.

The prices stood at K2,595 for diesel and K2,640 for premium diesel on 22 February.

The price index set by Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS), pricing basis for many refined products in countries of Southeast Asia, influences the domestic fuel prices, according to the Supervisory Committee on Oil Import, Storage and Distribution of Fuel Oil.

With the MOPS's price index rising, the oil prices hit the highest of K2,605 per litre for

Octane 92, K2,670 for Octane 95, K3,330 for premium diesel and K3,245 for diesel in last August 2022.

The committee is steering the market for price stability and fuel oil security in the domestic market.

Under the supervision of the committee, the Petroleum Products Regulatory Department has been issuing daily reference prices to ensure price stability for energy consumers.

The committee is inspecting the fuel stations whether they are overcharging or not. The authorities are taking actions against those retailers

of fuel stations under the Petroleum and Petroleum Products Law 2017 if they are found overcharging rather than the set reference rate.

As per the statement, 90 per cent of fuel oil in Myanmar is imported, while the remaining 10 per cent is produced locally. The domestic fuel price is highly correlated with international prices. The State is steering the market to mitigate the loss between the importers, sellers and the energy consumers. Consequently, the government is trying to distribute the oil at a reasonable price compared to those of regional countries. — NN/EM



A vehicle being fuelled at a filling station.

## YCC to host three expos from 29 to 31 March

THE Yangon Convention Centre will host the Myanmar 8 Build Expo 2024, Myanmar International Real Estate & Property Expo and Myanmar Electrical Power & Green Energy Expo from 29 to 31 March 2024, according to the Trade Development Division of the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization.

Building materials and

equipment, technologies, developed apartments, condominiums, a variety of renewable energy products, solar panels, batteries, generators and related products will be displayed at the expos with a total of 170 booths. Those who wish to join the expos can contact Silver Sea International Ltd on Ph: 09 43125185 and Email: silverseamedia@gmail.com. — NN/KK

## MGMA to conduct Basic Motorized Sewing Machine Course batch 234

THE Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association (MGMA) will offer a Basic Motorized Sewing Machine Course (Batch 234) from 4 to 22 March 2024 at Myanmar Garment Human Resources Development Training Centre (MGHRDC) in Insein Township.

The course will provide practical and technical approaches of sewing machines,

different sewing methods, labour laws and practices.

This training will also help those hunting jobs from regions outside Yangon connect with the garment factories, with a view to creating job opportunities.

Those who wish to attend the training can enroll through Ph: 09 940858350, 09 450723262, 09 784085794 and 09 969865024. — NN/EM



# OPINION

## Acknowledge the sacrifices of media professionals in news delivery

Media personnel bear a significant obligation to explore, expose, and uncover vital information for the public using various avenues within the media realm. This responsibility is inherent in their roles whenever they are actively engaged in the media landscape.

Their duties extend to conveying realities, disseminating accurate information, sharing positive news, and delivering breaking news to the public in real time. Simultaneously, they grapple with the task of identifying and countering fake news, misinformation, and rumours that permeate daily life, both nationally and globally. Their responsibility involves presenting analyses from diverse perspectives to combat misinformation effectively.

In this context, media personnel often confront challenges in compiling and presenting crucial news items to the public, sometimes requiring them to make sacrifices, even risking life and limbs. The pursuit of a significant news story or scoop drives them to willingly make sacrifices for the sake of imparting essential information. This inherent nature among media personnel reflects their eagerness to seize opportunities for covering stories that reflect the realities of people and the nation.

Despite facing unprecedented difficulties and problems, media personnel seldom have the chance to showcase their mental and emotional struggles. They inevitably set aside personal concerns when striving to capture scoops and essential information. While their achievements are apparent in various measures, the emotional hardships of media personnel remain concealed. The nature of their valuable presentations rarely allows them to reveal their personal emotional experiences.

The extent to which media personnel sacrifice life and limbs in covering global realities remains unknown. While readers enjoy a compelling story or informative piece, media professionals tirelessly exert efforts to overcome formidable challenges, ensuring the timely dissemination of authentic stories to the public. Unfortunately, their tear-filled lives often go unnoticed.

Hence, it is crucial for readers to cultivate empathy towards media personnel and acknowledge their endeavours in presenting true stories. Their efforts extend beyond sharing accurate information; they also involve countering misinformation, fake news, fabricated stories, distorted information, and false narratives. In crafting genuine stories or providing information, media personnel wholeheartedly invest their souls, eyesight, physical strength, and the wealth of experience accumulated throughout their lifetimes.

Everybody wishes to have recognition for their efforts in implementing something jobs. But media professionals never demand recognition from the reader people. Whoever does not acknowledge their effort in news presentation, those professionals never relent in going forward to their ambition of presenting true information to the people.

# The Mediterranean Diet's Health Secrets

By Yin Nwe Ko



The Mediterranean diet usually contains a high amount of fish. (PHOTO CREDIT: NEW SCIENTISTS)



It is possible to eat a Mediterranean diet without Mediterranean vegetables (PHOTO CREDIT: NEW SCIENTISTS)

Decades of research suggest that a Mediterranean diet goes back to US physiologist Ancel Keys and his wife, Margaret. In the 1940s, Ancel argued that saturated fats, mostly found in animal products, are a major cause of heart disease. He believed that unsaturated fats, more common in plant products and fish, are a healthier alternative. The Seven Countries Study, which started in 1956, compared diet and health in various regions, confirming the link between eating unsaturated fat and a reduced risk of heart disease.

"We have long-term, large clinical trials with hard clinical events as the outcomes," says Miguel Martinez-Gonzalez at the University of Navarra in Pamplona, Spain. Even UNESCO recognized the value of the Mediterranean diet by adding it to its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity a decade ago.

Despite all the praise, understanding what exactly in the diet leads to such benefits has been challenging. Nutritionists can't agree on the exact form the diet should take, and non-dietary factors like eating as a family and cooking at home also play a role. However, over the past decade, researchers have started to identify which components of the diet offer the most significant

health benefits.

The fame of the Mediterranean diet goes back to US physiologist Ancel Keys and his wife, Margaret. In the 1940s, Ancel argued that saturated fats, mostly found in animal products, are a major cause of heart disease. He believed that unsaturated fats, more common in plant products and fish, are a healthier alternative. The Seven Countries Study, which started in 1956, compared diet and health in various regions, confirming the link between eating unsaturated fat and a reduced risk of heart disease.

During their work, Ancel and Margaret observed a large number of centenarians in southern Italy, where the diet was high in unsaturated fat. This discovery led them to believe that the local diet was the key to longevity. They even relocated to southern Italy and lived long lives themselves, which added further credibility to their message. As a result, the Mediterranean diet became increasingly popular.

In addition, the Mediterranean diet's health benefits have been supported by decades of research. Despite some uncertainties about its exact form, we now have a better understanding of

which components contribute to its positive effects on health.

Over time, confusion has emerged about what exactly constitutes the Mediterranean diet. One thing is clear: it doesn't include large quantities of indulgent foods like lasagne, mous-saka, pizza, and kofta kebabs commonly associated with Italy, Greece, and Turkey. Interestingly, many locals don't even follow the version of the diet linked to health benefits.

Defining the diet has been a challenge, but one widely used measure is the Mediterranean Diet Score (MDS), developed in the 1990s by Antonia Trichopoulou. According to MDS, a true Mediterranean diet includes plenty of vegetables, legumes, fruits, nuts, cereals, and a moderate amount of fish. It limits that the local diet was the key to longevity. They even relocated to southern Italy and lived long lives themselves, which added further credibility to their message. As a result, the Mediterranean diet became increasingly popular.

Another definition, the Mediterranean Diet Adherence Screener, introduced in 2011, considers the use of olive oil in cooking (favourable) and the consumption of sugary drinks (undesirable). Over the years, researchers have made adjustments to the standard definition, considering dairy as neutral and

reducing the recommended alcohol intake. However, there's no formal consensus on the exact profile of the diet due to constant tweaking and redefining.

Despite debates over specific food items, large-scale studies confirm the health benefits of a generalized Mediterranean diet. It is widely recognized as a top dietary intervention to prevent heart attacks and strokes. For example, the CORDIOPREV study in 2022 indicated that following the Mediterranean diet significantly reduces the chances of a second cardiovascular event in those who have already had one.

There is also evidence that the diet lowers the risk of developing cardiovascular disease in the first place. A 2020 Cochrane review of 22 trials found "moderate quality evidence" supporting this, and a Harvard University overview the following year revealed "strong evidence" that the diet protects cardiovascular health.

These protective properties may explain why Italy has a lower mortality rate from cardiovascular disease compared to the global average, as researchers believe that a significant portion of the population follows the Mediterranean diet, influencing

the statistics.

The Mediterranean diet offers more than just heart health benefits. According to a 2020 review, those who follow this diet are 20 per cent less likely to develop type 2 diabetes. There's also a suggestion that it might reduce the risk of certain cancers, such as breast and bladder cancer, although more evidence is needed for confirmation.

Miguel Martinez-Gonzalez, a researcher, is confident in the diet's positive impact, stating that no study has shown harm. However, the Mediterranean diet may not work the same for everyone. The Moli-sani study, a large investigation in southern Italy, revealed in a 2018 update that the diet's cardiovascular benefits were only observed in highly educated and higher-income individuals, leaving others without the same protection.

Marialaura Bonaccio, leading the study, suggests that the quality of the food people eat matters. While studies ask about the quantity of fruits consumed, they often overlook details like the type, how it was grown, or its form. This oversight may affect the benefits observed. Individuals with lower incomes may be limited to cheaper, less nutritious frozen or processed foods,

impacting the effectiveness of their diet.

Researchers are now examining specific components of the Mediterranean diet to understand its health benefits better. Extra-virgin olive oil is emerging as a key ingredient. It is unique, being derived from pressed and ground fresh olives, unlike other oils produced with chemicals and high temperatures. Extra-virgin olive oil, rich in unsaturated fats, shows greater health benefits compared to refined olive oil.

Studies have found that extra-virgin olive oil consumption is linked to lower blood pressure, higher levels of "good" cholesterol, and lower levels of "bad" cholesterol. The health benefits are attributed not only to unsaturated fats but also to additional components like polyphenols. Polyphenols, found in extra-virgin olive oil, are believed to contribute significantly to its positive effects, influencing factors such as gut microbiome and blood pressure.

The health benefits of extra-virgin olive oil might not solely rely on the microbiome; personal genetics could also play a role. Evidence suggests that specific nutrients in olive oil and other Mediterranean

even with access to high-quality foods, the Mediterranean diet's lifestyle component may be crucial. Ancel and Margaret Keys' studies suggest that factors like residing in the countryside, engaging in physical work, and preparing meals leisurely in social groups contribute to overall well-being.

Notably, the Mediterranean villagers' way of living in the 20th century included preparing their own food and enjoying meals together, which linked to increased happiness and life satisfaction. However, implementing the diet may require dedicating time to cooking and socializing. Combining these lifestyle factors with an active routine could allow everyone to experience the health benefits associated with the Mediterranean diet, echoing the experiences of Ancel and Margaret Keys during their visits to southern Italy in the 1950s.

In sum, the Mediterranean diet has gained widespread recognition for its positive impact on health, particularly in reducing the risk of heart attacks and type 2 diabetes. Despite ongoing debates about its exact definition, the emphasis on fresh vegetables, fruits, nuts, cereals, and moderate fish intake remains consistent. The Mediterranean Diet Score guides individuals toward healthier choices, with extra-virgin olive oil emerging as a key component for its rich unsaturated fats and polyphenols.

While some researchers question its universal effectiveness, others advocate for replicating its general features rather than adhering strictly to specific foods. Beyond physical health, the diet's lifestyle component, including cooking at home and socializing during meals, is considered crucial for overall well-being. Despite challenges like the rising cost of olive oil, the potential rewards in terms of health and happiness make adopting the Mediterranean diet a worthwhile consideration for those seeking a balanced and fulfilling lifestyle.

While certain components like extra-virgin olive oil are considered vital, there's flexibility in vegetable choices. Northern European vegetables like cabbages and carrots can be suitable alternatives. Despite its importance, the rising cost of extra-virgin olive oil poses a challenge.

Martinez-Gonzalez advocates for introducing taxes on ultra-processed foods and using the revenue to subsidize healthier options. He believes this would lead to improved public health and reduced medical care costs for governments. However,



# NATIONAL



Three-wheel motorcycles are displayed at a showroom.

## People excited to use EV three-wheeled motorcycles in Mandalay

IN Mandalay, a city where three-wheeled motorcycles have been used the most, people are highly interested in using EV three-wheeled motorbikes, according to Royal La Min Ta Yar Company, based on its initial market research data.

Currently, the company has planned to sell licensed EV Loujia for commercial use.

“We sell autos only here. We sell motorcycles in our town. In Mandalay, many people and hardware shops and auto parts shops in the industrial zone have asked about EV motorcycles so we tried to initiate this plan. EV motorcycles have gained a lot of attention. There are also buyers. These motorcycles are imported from China, it

is for commercial-use and manufactured with electric recharger and battery,” said an official from the company.

Depending on battery, the EV Loujia three-wheeled motorcycle is priced from K3 million-K3.5 million to K4 million. It can be used from morning to evening if it is fully charged.

“At present, three-wheeled motorcycles have been used the most for carrying passengers. Three-wheeled motorcycles have been used widely these years. Now EV motorcycles have entered the market so we don’t know what will happen. I think we need to see how long its battery can last,” said a Mandalay resident, U Hla Wai. — Thit Taw/ZS

## Sales of religious goods in high market demand

THE trading for religious goods locally known as religious goods continues as usual with regular trade, according to the religious goods sellers.

“The sale of religious goods for donations never stops. Religion plays a significant role. Buddha images are religious goods for obeisance of the people. There are many other related items. All of them are being sold well according to their own market demand,” said the owner of Maha Sakkya Theikdi Religious Goods Shop.

Religious goods with regular sales and endless demand include trading of Buddha images, Buddha statues, images of Sayadaws, cups kept in front of the Buddha images and oil lamps.

“We sell Buddha images and strings of beads. Demand is good and normal. This is not a seasonal market. So, it



A tablet of Buddha statue.

is business as usual. Sometimes, we are out of stock, but there are regular buyers,” said a Yangon-based seller of religious goods. — Thit Taw/ZN

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

## Myanmar nationals assist sick and undocumented Myanmar migrant worker in Malaysia

MYANMAR nationals in Malaysia assisted an undocumented Myanmar migrant worker, who had been ill for more than three months at a durian farm in Malaysia, in receiving medical treatment.

The Myanmar migrant worker, who had been ill for more than three months at a durian farm located in Semenyih, Malaysia, requested the Lovely Heart Philanthropic Myanmar Youth blood donor group (Kuala Lumpur- Malaysia) that he wanted to go to hospital though he was undocumented.

As soon as they received for help, the group went to the patient the next day and assisted in making documents and sent him to hospital.

“The patient is in poor health, very skinny and even unable to walk,” said an official from the group.

When he recovers, he would be sent back to his native Lewe township in Myanmar. The Lovely Heart Philanthropic Myanmar Youth blood donor group has helped Myanmar migrant workers in Malaysia in dealing with their difficulties. — MT/ZS

## Growing interest among young people in first-time recruitment of both female and male

THE news that the Republic of Korea will recruit more Myanmar workers in 2024, for both female and male for the first time, has sparked interest among the young population.

“This is the first time Korea has invited Myanmar female workers and it is a real opportunity for us. We can now go overseas to work. Many of my friends are interested and plan to attend the training,” said a young woman learning Korean language.

Amid the growing interest, many have started to prepare.

According to the announcement by the Ministry of Labour on 22 February, EPS-TOPIK (Employment

Permit System) with grading system means that a person who has passed the language test with no colour blindness or disability is entitled to employment in Korea.

Women who have passed the matriculation examination are eligible to apply and must submit the completion certificate when applying online.

At 9,860 won per hour for 8 hours a day, their monthly salary is 2,060,740 (about K 5 million). Applications for examinations to work in manufacturing, agriculture, livestock breeding, construction and service sectors can be submitted from 3 May, followed by skill tests depending on the job and the results will be issued on scheduled dates.

Eligibility requirements include age between 18 and 39, no criminal record, no ban on leaving the mother country for a foreign country, no overstay in the Republic of Korea and no person who has lived in the Republic of Korea more than five years under E-9, E-10 visas.

Information on how to apply for the exam, how to pay the fees, how the result will be announced, EPS-TOPIK question types and grading schemes, skills test grading schemes, what to bring on exam days, points to note and FAQs are described on the media page of the Public Overseas Employment Agency (POES-EPS), it said. —MT/ZN

# CRIME NEWS

## Police make K45 bln bust for meth, weapons, prohibited chemicals

AUTHORITIES seized 1.5 tonnes of ICE, or methamphetamine, pills, firearms, and prohibited chemicals worth over K45 billion after a week-long investigation.

The series of arresting Zaw Min Oo, Ko Ko Zaw, Hlwan Aung, Thura Soe and Tun Oo began when the Tatmadaw (Navy) troops inspected a boat called Aye Myat Aung in the waters near Hainggyikyun in Ayeyawady Region on 22 January. They arrested and investigated the five suspects on the boat who were revealed to be waiting for narcotic drugs from their partners.

The authorities arrested Tin Shein, the alleged owner of the Aye Myat Aung boat, and his partner Soe Yan Naing (aka) Naung Naung in Pathein on 26

January and Htay Aung (aka) Pauk Sa on 28 January. According to the investigation, Naing Oo (aka) Maung Maung Lay (aka) Hla Win was arrested in Kala-chaung Village of Pathein Township. The investigation led to a confiscation of 1.5 tonnes of ICE from a warehouse of Tin Tun in Thanbanchai Village in Pathein Township on 12 February.

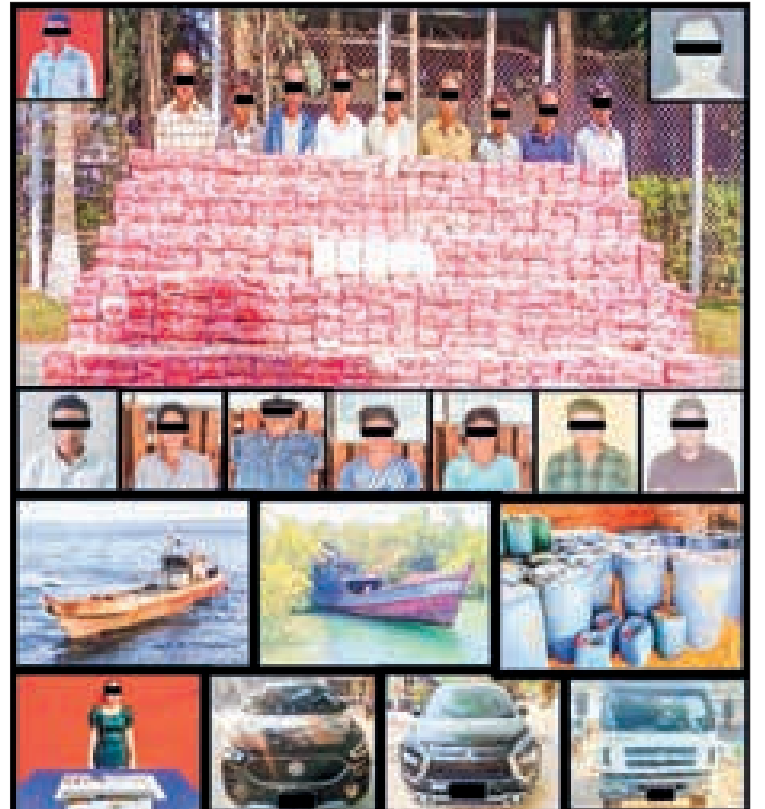
Two days later, the authorities seized a pistol, magazine and 45 bullets as well as 23 bullets used in shotgun, K3 million, and two vehicles from the house apparently belonged to Tin Shein and Ma Zin Mar Htay in Myeik, Taninthayi Region.

Following the bread crumbs, the police arrested two more suspects who apparently carried the pills from Mandalay to

Pathein in Yekyi Township in Ayeyawady Region.

On 16 February, the authorities busted a house allegedly rented by a suspect named Ye Khaung Tun in Pyigyidagun Township, Mandalay Region, and seized restricted chemicals such as 16,400 litres of methylamine, 1,200 litres of sulphuric acid, 560 litres of hydrochloric acid, and 12,400 litres of benzyl cyanide in huge quantities along with more ICE. Their combined value was estimated to be over K45 billion in addition to an ocean-going ship, one coastal ship and three vehicles.

It was later discovered that the gang was attempting to transport the drugs from Shan State to their storage house in Mandalay, from where they



Suspects arrested together with narcotic drugs, related accessories, arms and ammunition and vehicles in January and February 2024.

would be further transported to Ayeyawady Region and then carried to Malaysian waters. Relevant legal actions have been taken against the accused. — MNA/NT

## Customs seize contraband goods valued at over K470.166 million in various operations

THE combined teams supervised by the Kachin State Illegal Trade Eradication Special Task Force seized 140 kilogrammes of Ammonium Nitrate valued at K140,000 without official documents from a Yutong bus worth K200 million heading to Mandalay from Myitkyina township at the Nantsiaung combined checkpoint in Mohnyin township on 21 February. This enforcement was carried out under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

On the same day, the combined teams of the Yangon Region Illegal Trade Eradication Special Task Force impounded 57 kinds of goods worth K51.184 million including 59 bottles of Chivas whiskey and 1,008 cans of LEO beer without official documents in Dagon Myothit (East) township and 4,800 sets of DP mosquito bat valued at K7.056 million from a Nissan condor truck estimated value at K33 million travelling from Myawady to Yangon at the Ywathagyi Dry Port. Action



Cargo truck seized with smuggled goods at checkpoint.

was conducted under Customs procedures.

Additionally, the combined on-duty teams impounded six kinds of goods worth K60.865 million including 213 kilogrammes of Electric Chandelier and 1,700 sets of Ko Moe LED lamps without official documents from a Dongfeng tractor head with a trailer estimated value at K77 million near Htonbo combined checkpoint. Action was taken under Customs procedures.

During inspections on 21 and 22 February, the on-duty

teams captured a total of 2,038 gallons of smuggled diesel and 287 gallons of fuel oil valued at K22,144,240 in Pathein township and a total of 3.331 tonnes of illegal timbers worth K174,287 in Pathein township. Action was taken under the Petroleum and Petroleum Products Law and the Forest Law.

On 22 February, a total of 5.457 tonnes of illegal timbers valued at K2,782,900 in Mindon township and 3.543 tonnes of illegal teak worth K15,599,000 in Aunglan township were seized by Magway Region Ille-

gal Trade Eradication Special Task Force. The action was taken under the Forest Law.

On the same day, a total of 1.158 tonnes of illegal teak, 0.096 tonne of illegal hardwood and 1.366 tonnes of other illegal timbers valued at K274,672 were seized in Pyay district. The action was taken under the Forest Law.

The Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee reported that 15 arrests were made on 21 and 22 February, with an estimated value of K470,166,099. — MNA/MKKS



Officials check seized timber on 19 February.



# ECONOMY WORLD

## Eurasian economic summit kicks off in Istanbul with focus on solutions to global growth

*The 27<sup>th</sup> Eurasian Economic Summit commenced in Istanbul, focusing on global growth challenges. Themed "From Crises to Stability, Building an Inclusive World," the summit aims to tackle issues like peace, climate change, and artificial intelligence.*



THE 27<sup>th</sup> Eurasian Economic Summit kicked off on Wednesday in Türkiye's cultural and financial hub of Istanbul, with a focus on solutions to the challenges in global growth.

Titled "From Crises to

This photo taken on 21 February 2024 shows a scene at the 27<sup>th</sup> Eurasian Economic Summit in Istanbul, Türkiye. The summit, organized by the Istanbul-based Marmara Group Strategic and Social Research Foundation, kicked off here on Wednesday with a focus on solutions to the challenges in global growth. **PHOTO: SAFAR RAJABOV/XINHUA**

Stability, Building an Inclusive World," the summit organized by the Istanbul-based Marmara

Group Strategic and Social Research Foundation aims to address global issues such as

peace, climate change, water supply and artificial intelligence. Turkish President Recep

Tayyip Erdogan sent a message to the event, highlighting its importance at a time of uncertainty caused by crises across the globe, particularly as ongoing conflicts are undermining global economy.

In his message to the summit, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev emphasized the summit's contribution to economic development of regional cooperation.

Speaking at the summit's opening, Akkan Suver, head of the host foundation, called on the international community to enhance dialogue and cooperation to find solutions to the world's crises.

According to Suver, the world is experiencing a storm of conflicts, problems related to climate change and economic stagnation. — Xinhua

## California to see record budget deficit of 73 bln USD in coming year

THE US state of California could face a record budget deficit of 73 billion US dollars for the 2024-25 fiscal year, the state budget advisor's latest projection showed.

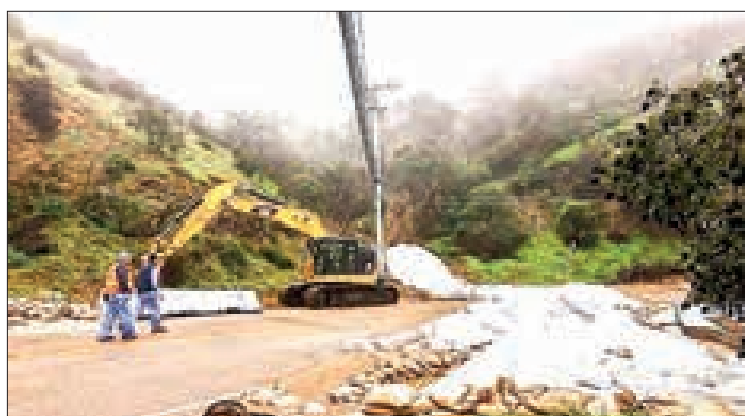
The new projection means an increase of 15 billion dollars, or 26 per cent, from the previous estimate of 58 billion dollars, according to a report released Tuesday by California's Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO).

The office's earlier estimates were based on California Governor Gavin Newsom's revenue forecast when he presented

his initial budget proposal of 292 billion dollars in January.

"However, recent revenue collections data reflect even further weakness relative to those (previous) estimates," wrote the LAO in the report.

The state's traditional corporate tax collections declined by more than one-third in December from the year before, and similarly, both income tax withholding and estimated payments have been "fairly weak" recently, the report explained. — Xinhua



Lanes of Mulholland Drive are damaged by mudslides in Los Angeles, California, the United States, 20 February 2024. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

## Chinese commercial banks see profits up 3.2% in 2023



This panoramic aerial photo taken on 10 January 2023 shows a view of Lujiazui area in the China (Shanghai) Pilot Free Trade Zone in east China's Shanghai. **PHOTO: FANG ZHE/XINHUA**

CHINA'S commercial banks reported a profit growth of 3.2 per cent in 2023, data from the banking regulator showed on Wednesday.

Net profits of commercial lenders hit 2.4 trillion yuan (about 338 billion US dollars), according to the National Financial Regulatory Adminis-

tration.

The capital adequacy ratio of the lenders (excluding foreign bank branches) was 15.06 per cent at the end of December last year, an increase of 0.29 percentage points from the previous quarter ending September of the same year.

The non-performing loan

ratio of commercial banks stood at 1.59 per cent at the end of the fourth quarter of 2023, down 0.02 percentage points from the end of September. The data also showed the total assets of China's banking industry reached 417.3 trillion yuan by the end of last year, up 9.9 per cent year on year. — Xinhua

## Amazon says repays \$1.9 mln to workers in Saudi over unlawful fees

Amazon investigated and found instances of workers being required to pay fees and other violations of company policies, including substandard living conditions and wage irregularities.



Amazon stated it reimbursed over 700 workers in Saudi Arabia with \$1.9 million for unlawful recruitment fees.

ONLINE retailer Amazon said Friday it had paid \$1.9 million to more than 700 contracted workers in Saudi Arabia as reimbursements for unlawful recruitment fees, among other alleged violations. In October, Amnesty International accused Amazon of a range of abuses against workers in the oil-rich Gulf kingdom, prompting the US-based multinational to launch an investigation.

“We found instances where contracted workers were required to pay fees, including recruitment fees and other costs” by Saudi recruitment agents and labour supply companies, Amazon said in a statement posted on its website. The investigation revealed other violations of its company policies including “substandard living accommodations, contract and wage irregularities, and delays in the resolution of worker complaints”, it said. — AFP

## Booking faces \$530m fine in Spanish competition probe

TRAVEL website Booking.com said it faces a record fine in Spain ahead of a landmark EU content law coming into force next month. Spain’s antitrust watchdog CNMC launched a probe in 2022 into whether the online platform committed anti-competitive practices.

The CNMC could hit Booking.com with a \$530 million fine, which the company said on Thursday would be the author-

ity’s largest ever. “We are disappointed by the CNMC Draft Decision, and strongly disagree with its findings,” Booking said in a statement. “We intend to appeal this unprecedented decision, if it becomes final.”

The Netherlands-based company that dominates the world of online hotel reservations is a subsidiary of the US Booking Holdings group. — AFP

## Vietnam Stock Exchange’s revenue down 44% in 2023

The Ho Chi Minh Stock Exchange and the Hanoi Stock Exchange contributed over 1.39 trillion dong (56.5 million dollars) and nearly 462 billion dong (18.8 million dollars) respectively.

THE Vietnam Stock Exchange reported revenue of over 1.92 trillion Vietnamese dong (78.26 million U.S dollars) in 2023, down nearly 44 per cent compared to the previous year, local media reported Thursday.

The Ho Chi Minh Stock Exchange and the Hanoi Stock Exchange contributed over 1.39 trillion dong (56.5 million dollars) and nearly 462 billion dong (18.8 million dollars) respectively.

The Vietnam Stock Exchange’s expenses in 2023 totaled 26.7 billion dong (1.08 million dollars), falling by over 96 per cent compared to the previous



An electronic board shows local stock prices. PHOTO: THANH HOA/SGT

year, helping its after-tax profit last year decrease by only nearly 10 per cent compared to 2022 to over 1.88 trillion dong (76.6 mil-

lion dollars).

According to the Ministry of Finance, the market capitalization of Vietnam’s stock market

approximated 6 quadrillion dong (246.7 billion dollars) in 2023, according to Vietnam News Agency. —Xinhua

## Over 90% of French citizens support farmers’ protests: Poll

THE farmers’ protests that have erupted in France have the support of 91 per cent of the French, and the majority of them believe that President Emmanuel Macron and his government are not handling the crisis well, an Odoxa-Backbone Consulting poll for Le Figaro newspaper

showed on Wednesday.

The overwhelming majority of the French, or 91 per cent, support the protests, 85 per cent of citizens hold the government responsible for the crisis, 90 per cent of respondents believe that the European Union is to blame for the crisis, and 92 per cent

of those polled blame big retailers.

Moreover, 70 per cent of the French believe that the measures proposed by the government are insufficient, and 77 per cent of respondents said Macron and his cabinet are “reacting poorly” to the crisis. —SPUTNIK

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V BLPL BLESSING VOY.NO. (2405S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V BLPL BLESSING VOY.NO. (2405S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **24-2-2024** 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 BLPL SHIPPING LINE

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V BANGKOK VOY.NO. (170N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V BANGKOK VOY.NO. (170N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **24-2-2024** 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 SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE



# ROLLING UPDATES

## WORLD

## Japan emperor mourns quake victims, hopes to visit disaster-hit areas



Emperor Naruhito speaks at a press conference at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo on 21 February 2024.  
**PHOTO: POOL PHOTO / KYODO**

*On 64<sup>th</sup> birthday, Japan's Emperor Naruhito mourns Noto quake victims.*

EMPEROR Naruhito, on the occasion of his 64<sup>th</sup> birthday on Friday, mourned the lives lost in a powerful earthquake that struck central Japan on New Year's Day and extended his sympathy to the people displaced.

The emperor expressed his desire to visit areas affected by the disaster on the Noto Peninsula in Ishikawa Prefecture with his wife Empress Masako.

"My heart truly aches for the many people who have been affected and those who have been forced to evacuate," he said at a press conference at the Imperial Palace ahead of his birthday.

The emperor added that he hopes "recovery and reconstruction will progress smoothly", and expressed his appreciation for the hardworking professionals engaged in relief efforts and medical support.

Reflecting on positive developments over the past year, the emperor touched on the easing of novel coronavirus restrictions as the government in May downgraded the legal status of COVID-19 to the same category as seasonal influenza.

"It was a year in which we could clearly see bright developments in the process of people's daily lives returning to normalcy," he said.

The emperor said he was pleased to resume his duties of attending various ceremonies and events in line with the easing of COVID restrictions. "I had heartwarming moments when I directly listened to a variety of people and saw their smiles at the places I went," he said. — Kyodo

## Yemen's Houthis launch attacks on Israeli city, British cargo ship, US warship

YEMEN'S Houthi group said on Thursday it had launched attacks on an Israeli city, a British cargo ship, and a U.S. warship, in what it called a response to the "American-British aggression" against Yemen and its support of the Palestinians in Gaza.

The Houthi military spokesman Yahya Sarea said in a statement broadcast by the group's al-Masirah TV that the first attack targeted the Israeli city of Eilat with ballistic missiles and drones.

The Israeli army said it had intercepted a missile from the Red Sea heading for Eilat on Thursday morning, while Israeli media cited Israeli officials as saying the missile was "apparently" from the Houthis.

The second attack hit a British-owned cargo ship, MV *Islander*, in the Gulf of Aden with naval missiles, causing a fire on board, Sarea said. He said the third attack targeted a US Navy destroyer in the Red Sea with drones. —Xinhua



A file photo of the MV *Islander*, the cargo ship recently hit by a Houthi missile. **PHOTO: WMJAMES/WIKIPEDIA/FILE**

## Israel's Netanyahu unveils plan for post-war Gaza

*Netanyahu presented a document outlining post-conflict management principles for the Gaza Strip to his security cabinet.*



People walk along a street ravaged by Israeli strikes in Gaza City on 10 February 2024. **PHOTO: AFP**

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has unveiled his post-war strategy for Gaza, the first since the Israel-Hamas conflict broke out in October last year, involving a continuous military

presence in the Palestinian enclave and the replacement of Hamas, his office said in a statement on Friday.

The document, presented by Netanyahu to members of his security cabinet on Thurs-

day, outlines principles regarding the management of the Gaza Strip after the conflict.

The plan aims to install "local officials" unaffiliated with attacks against Israelis to administer services in the Palestinian enclave instead of Hamas. "As far as possible, the civil administration and responsibility for the public order in the Gaza Strip will be based on locals with administrative experience," the document read.

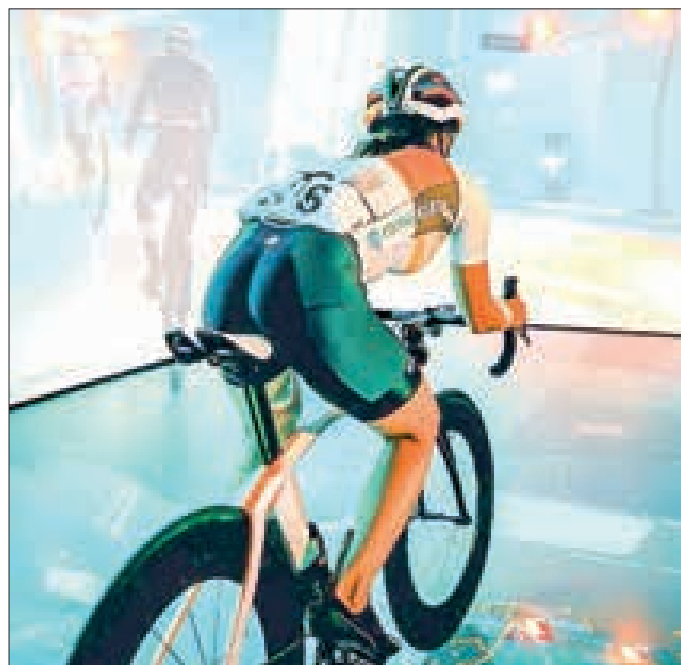
The reconstruction of Gaza, following Israeli bombardments that devastated much of its infrastructure and buildings, would begin only after the demilitarization and "deradicalization" of Gaza, as outlined in the plan. The reconstruction would be financed and carried out by countries deemed "acceptable by Israel". — Xinhua

# SPORTS

## The first champions of the Games of the Future will be determined in indoor cycling

*The first champions of the Games of the Future will be determined in indoor cycling*

ON Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February, medals were awarded at the Games of the Future, marking the first set of awards given out.



Medals were awarded on Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February at the Games of the Future, with indoor cycling covering over 40 km. **PHOTO: GOFUTURE.GAMES**

In pursuit of the prizes, participants in the indoor cycling race will cover over 40 km. The tournament has attracted medalists from the Olympic Games, World Championships, and European Championships, as well as cyclists from CIS and South American countries.

The Russian Mix Team boasts a promising lineup: junior cycling world champion Alina Lysenko, Russian champion Maria Rostovtseva, Olympic triathlon participant Chavie Jobet, and experienced cyclist Oliver Robinson.

Equally impressive is the roster of Marathon-Tula: Olympic silver medalist, European champion Gulnaz Khatuntseva, world championship medalist, European champion Sergey Rostovtsev, World Cup medalist Diana Klimova, and Russian road cycling champion Petr Rikunov.

Foreign teams Italian Espresso, Team Argentina, Team Spain, Matos Mobility, Tashkent City, and Qazaqstan have also assembled accomplished athletes.

While they have all triumphed on the track and road so far, soon someone will add a virtual track title to their collection. Participants will tackle it in the Russian simulator WattAttack.

The indoor cycling race consists of five stages: individual time trial, elimination race, scratch race with a single finish (mass start), Tempo, and Criterium (races with intermediate finishes). — GOFUTURE.GAMES



Mohamed Salah (left) and Darwin Nunez (right) could be fit for Sunday's League Cup final. **PHOTO: AFP**

## Liverpool's Salah, Nunez in contention for League Cup final

LIVERPOOL could be handed a major boost ahead of the League Cup final against Chelsea on Sunday, with Mohamed Salah, Darwin Nunez and Dominik Szoboszlai all in contention to play after injury problems. All three sat out Wednesday's 4-1 win over Luton as Liverpool moved four points clear at the top of the table despite missing nine first-team players.

Alisson Becker, Trent Alexander-Arnold, Joel Matip, Thiago Alcantara, Curtis Jones and Diogo Jota will not be available for the match at Wembley as Liverpool aim to win the first of a potential quadruple of trophies in Jurgen Klopp's final season.

"Dom, Darwin and Mo we have to really see. We have two more days, today's session and tomorrow's session and last minute we will check if they can be there," Klopp's assistant Pep Lijnders told Friday's pre-match press conference.

Liverpool hammered Chelsea 4-1 in the Premier League less than a month ago but Lijnders is wary of the Blues, due to the improvements they have made since then. — AFP

## Major winner Kim in three-way lead at LPGA Thailand

MAJOR winner Kim Sei-young of South Korea was among a trio leading by one shot in blustery conditions at the halfway stage of the \$1.7 million LPGA Thailand on Friday.

Also at 10-under after two rounds at Siam Country Club Pattaya were Sweden's Madelene Sagstrom and home-

grown talent Patty Tavatanakit.

Three more players were tied for fourth — Switzerland's Albane Valenzuela, Thailand's Jaravee Boonchant and the Korean world number nine Kim Hyo-joo.

Together with home hope Ariya Jutanugarn, who was in a tie for 10<sup>th</sup>, Valenzuela fired the lowest round of the day

with her seven-under-par 65.

World number one Lilia Vu, the defending champion from the United States, carded a 67 to go with her opening-round 73 and is tied 30<sup>th</sup>.

Co-leader Kim won the Women's PGA Championship in 2020 and is chasing a 13<sup>th</sup> LPGA title. — AFP

## Lewandowski helping Barcelona cling on in title race

REIGNING La Liga champions Barcelona's faltering title defence has been kept just about alive in recent weeks, boosted by Robert Lewandowski's timely return to form.

The Poland striker endured a dry run of just three goals in 14 appearances heading into the winter break as Barca slipped adrift of league leaders Real Madrid and surprise challengers Girona.

But Lewandowski has netted nine goals in 13 appearances in all competitions since, including five

in his last four matches, to help third-placed Barca stay within striking distance of the top.

The Catalan giants could move into second and within five points of Real, who host Sevilla on Sunday, with victory over Getafe on Saturday.

"Robert is 'plugged in', it makes me emotional to see the unity in the team," said coach Xavi Hernandez after Lewandowski's match-winning brace at Celta Vigo last weekend.

"I am happy for Robert's goals but also for his hard work."



Robert Lewandowski (R) has netted 18 goals in all competitions this season. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

The 35-year-old also netted Barcelona's goal in a 1-1 draw at Napoli in their Champions League last-16 first leg in midweek. Only Paris Saint-Germain's Kylian Mbappe has scored more goals than Lewandowski so far in 2024 for a club in one of Europe's top five leagues.

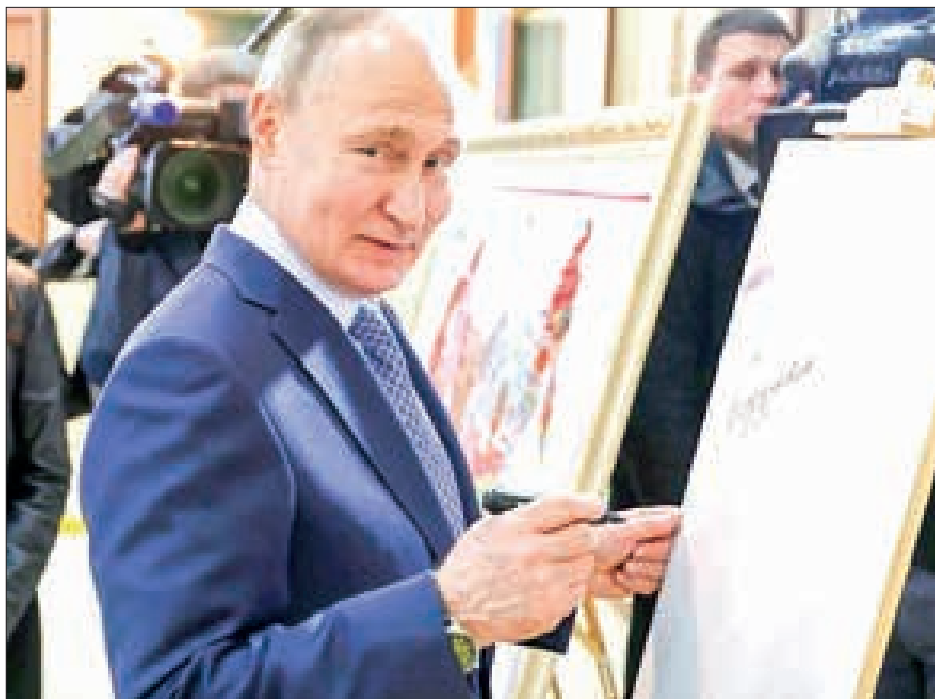
Madrid have opened up a six-point lead over Girona this month and could stretch that further when they face Sevilla, with Girona not in action until Monday when they take on Rayo Vallecano. — AFP





## Putin congratulates Russians on Defender of Fatherland Day

Russian President Vladimir Putin congratulated Russians and military personnel on Defender of Fatherland Day, highlighting its widespread celebration and reverence. He praised the significance of military work, emphasizing the army and navy's role in ensuring Russia's security and sovereignty.



Putin has spent recent days flying bomber planes, handing out medals to troops and highlighting a 'turning point' in Ukraine. PHOTO: POOL/AFP

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin on Friday congratulated Russians and all those who served in the military on the Defender of Fatherland Day, celebrated in Russia on 23 February, noting that this holiday has long become a popular holiday and is widely celebrated throughout the country.

"I congratulate veterans, military personnel, civilian personnel of the armed forces, all those who have completed military service, on Defender of the Fatherland Day," Putin said in a video message.

The Russian leader noted that this holiday is one of the most revered in Russia.

"It has long become popular and is always celebrated widely throughout the country, in all collectives and families, in every town or village.

With the understanding of the great significance of military work, with great respect for our service-people, for all those who stand for the fatherland, protect its interests, the security of citizens, the sovereignty and independence of Russia," Putin said.

The Russian president said the high level of combat readiness of the army and navy is a guarantee of Russia's security and its free sovereign development, adding that Russia is proud of the army and navy, their undaunted character and loyalty to the Russian military school. Putin also said defence industry enterprises in recent years have multiplied delivery of most in-demand weaponry to the army, including precision weapons, drones, tanks, armoured vehicles, artillery and air defence systems.

"The development and serial production of advanced equipment and the introduction of artificial intelligence technologies in the military industry are next in line," the president said in a video address. — SPUTNIK

### KIWI PATIENT TREATED

## New Zealand opens first 'kiwi hospital' for injured birds

NEW Zealand on Friday opened its first hospital exclusively treating kiwi birds, and vets have already nursed the first patient back to health — a chick nicknamed "Splash" that tumbled into a swimming pool.

Rising numbers of the once-threatened national bird have led to the construction of a purpose-built facility in Kerikeri, a three-hour drive north of Auckland.

The Department of Conservation told AFP the new kiwi hospital is the first of its kind in New Zealand.

The rehabilitation centre, built by local conservation group Kiwi Coast, is in the heart of the Northland region, which has a brown kiwi population of nearly 10,000.

Roughly 26,000 brown kiwi live in the wild across New Zealand — a thousand more than in 2008, when conservationists classed them "Nationally Vulnerable".

The species is now listed as "Not Threatened".

The population growth is mostly due to conservation groups culling predators like stoats and ferrets, while dog owners have been offered special courses to teach pets not to attack the flightless bird. — AFP

## ASEAN countries discuss plans for financial cooperation

Discussions centered on finance and banking initiatives, ASEAN Economic Community plans, and performance indicators for financial integration and liberalization.

REPRESENTATIVES from the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the ASEAN Secretariat have reviewed the work of a key committee on financial cooperation and outlined strategic plans for the years ahead.

The representatives gathered in Lao capital Vientiane for the 78<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Working Committee on Financial Services Liberalization (WC-FSL), accord-

ing to a report issued by Laos' central bank, the Bank of the Lao PDR, on Thursday.

During the meeting held on Monday, officials in charge of the WC-FSL highlighted the progress in the body's activities, including key initiatives in the finance and banking sector, and the ASEAN Economic Community strategic plan.

They also focused on key performance indicators for fi-

nancial integration, crucial areas related to financial liberalization under the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services, and the ASEAN Trade in Services Agreement.

The meeting also reviewed the status of the annual priorities for 2023-2024, and key priorities for capacity initiatives, especially for the green economy and the digital economy, according to the report. — Xinhua



This photo taken on 25 January 2024 shows a scene at the ASEAN Tourism Exhibition held in Vientiane, capital of Laos. PHOTO: KAIKEO SAIYASANE/XINHUA