

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR



Paintings with Myanmar traditional drawing styles are seen.



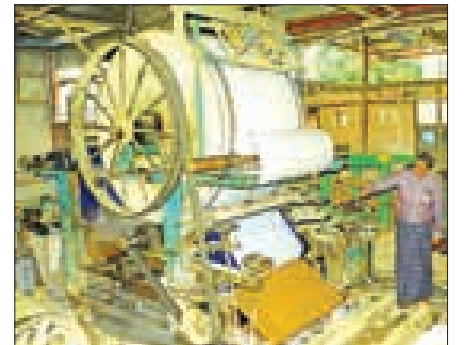
Myanmar traditional style paintings to enter world market and to bring out new generations

Contemporary Myanmar Traditional Artists Association is trying to grasp share of international market for Myanmar traditional style drawings and paintings, while it is also organizing the artists who consistently draw only the Myanmar traditional styles to help bring out new generation artists, according to the association's chairperson Pachi Ko Shan Lay.

The association is trying to collect the artists who draw the Myanmar traditional styles consistently all over the country and to expend the network widely. The association is also going to offer drawing and painting courses, display the annual pictures shows and support the social and health affairs of the member artists.

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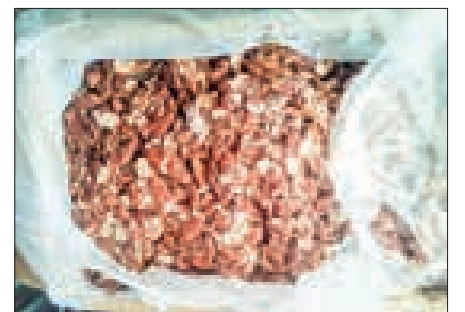
Plan to produce pulp and paper made of straw

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Some 5,000 visitors daily flock to Yangon Zoo on public holidays

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Price of new tamarind turns down from K6,000 per viss in Yangon market

Specialists offer medical treatments to residents in Myitkyina on 2nd field trip

The specialist medical teams including professors and physicians from Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw are offering the medical treatments in the States and Regions. Specialist medical teams from general hospitals of Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay Children's Hospital (550-bed) and Mandalay Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat Hospital travelled to Myitkyina in Kachin State on 24 and 25 February for the second time to give the medical treatment to local people.

Over the course of these medical trips, a total

of 1,241 patients, including individuals from Myitkyina Township and eight townships from Kachin State, received treatment for a range of medical conditions. These conditions encompassed cardiac diseases, gastrointestinal issues, neurological ailments, orthopaedic and dermatological problems, cleft lip and palate surgeries, among others. The medical check-ups included various procedures such as Echocardiography, Oesophago-Gastro-Duodenoscopy (OGD) Scope, Colonoscopy, CT scans,

SEE PAGE-3



A patient receives medical treatment by a specialist medical team in Myitkyina, Kachin State.

NATIONAL

Objectives of 79th 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.

CBM announces bank counters to sell foreign currencies at air ports



The Central Bank of Myanmar.

THE Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) notified on 23 February 2024 those going abroad of available exchange counters to buy the foreign currencies as petty cash.

The notification stated that the money changers of the authorized dealers (private banks) are entitled to transact the foreign currencies denoted in US dollar, euro, Singapore dollar, Thai Baht, Malaysian Ringgit, Chinese Yuan and Japanese Yen.

In order to facilitate the purchase of foreign currencies in addition to internationally accepted debit card and credit card and prevent illegal money exchange and curb forex market manipulation, those studying abroad, working abroad and traveling abroad for medical treatment are entitled to buy foreign currencies that are equivalent to US\$300-500 per person at the authorized banks' FX counters and money changers at the Yangon International Airport starting from 31

May 2023, while those going on a pilgrimage and those leaving for the designated countries to attend the meeting as per the invitations of the foreign governments and institutions, from 18 August 2023.

The CB Bank PCK, KBZ Bank and AYA Bank PCL, UAB Bank, Myanmar Oriental Bank Limited and Yoma Bank are authorized dealers selling the foreign currencies at the three counters of the YIA in turn.

Additionally, the foreign currencies as petty cash can be purchased at the respective bank counters of the CB Bank PCL, Myanmar Oriental Bank, KBZ Bank, Innwa Bank, AGD Bank, AYA Bank PCL, UAB Bank, Myanmar Apex Bank, Myanmar Citizens Bank, Global Treasure Bank, Yoma Bank and Ayeyawaddy Farmers Development Bank, according to notifications of those banks on their official websites and Facebook Pages. — NN/EM

Plan to produce pulp and paper made of straw



Production of paper through recycle of waste seen at Phyo Wai Wai paper mill in Myitkyina.

THE Ministry of Industry and the Myanmar Pulp and Paper Industrial Association will cooperate with each other in producing pulp and paper to meet the local demand, according to the Ministry of Industry.

Plans are underway to produce advanced paper from pulp made of straw, which is a byproduct of the paddy plant, and the cooperation will be raised to manufacture machinery for production of pulp and paper at home.

Therefore, arrangements are being made to build small-scale factories with a small amount of

investment and to create jobs for the local people. Currently, the Ministry of Industry will continue to develop only heavy industries, while small-scale industries will be transferred to private industries for further development.

In Myanmar, paper production was carried out at Sittoung paper mill, Yeni paper mill and Thabaung paper mill. The newsprint factory (Thabaung), which has been suspended for various reasons, was put into service again in August 2023, and the Sittoung paper mill was dissolved due to old age. — ASH/TKO

Shwebo Thanaka's business is booming with increased domestic sales and exports to Thailand

DEMAND for Shwebo thanaka is rising both in the local market and among the buyers from Thailand, according to the thanaka business circle.

Thanaka, a yellowish natural cosmetic paste made of bark, is the most popular cosmetic in Myanmar while a round patch of Thanaka stripes on the cheeks of Myanmar women and girls is a unique world-famous beauty.

"Sales of Thanaka are good. Shwebo Thanaka sells well through both online channels and at physical stores. As people living in Thailand resell Thanaka,

we also export to Thailand. Shwebo Thanaka is mainly produced in Ayadaw. Ayadaw Thanaka is Shwebo Thanaka. Pakokku Thanaka is different and they are not the same," said a seller from Phyo Shwebo Thanaka Trading.

Most Thanaka orders come from Yangon and Ayeyawady regions, but other regions and states also buy for resale.

A piece of Shwebo Thanaka costs from K 500 for a 4 1/2 inch sized piece of stem to a maximum of K 5,000, depending on the size. — Thit Taw/ZN



NATIONAL

MoI Union Minister visits Daewoo Bus manufacturing workshop, Paper Factory (Yeni)

Union Minister for Industry Dr Charlie Than visited the Daewoo Bus manufacturing workshop in Htaukkyant, Mingaladon Township, Yangon Region, yesterday morning.

He inspected the production of Daewoo buses and provided guidance on accelerating the implementation of electric bus assembly and production projects, aligning with the State's policies to support electric vehicle development. The minister encouraged company officials to fulfill Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) obligations by establishing charging stations and mobile chargers for electric vehicles according to established protocols.

The Union minister proceeded to the Paper Mill (Yeni)



Union Minister for Industry Dr Charlie Than visits Paper Mill (Yeni) in Bago Region yesterday.

in Bago Region. He conducted a tour and inspection of the repair and adjustment work on small-scale pulp and paper

production machinery. He emphasized the need to organize groups for manufacturing small pulp machines capable of pro-

ducing three to five tonnes per day, with efforts aimed at developing machines capable of producing up to ten tonnes per

day. Additionally, he instructed that the design of the small pulp machines should undergo pre-processing, and laboratory equipment should be reviewed and improved.

Furthermore, the Union minister directed the repair of machinery producing spare parts and the restoration of equipment requiring maintenance to facilitate the operation of the cardboard paper factory, which can produce 20 tonnes per day. Despite the employees' experience in pulp and paper production, the Union minister recommended organizing workshops and training sessions to ensure they are acquainted with modern technology.— MNA/KZL



Union Minister Dr Thet Thet Khine together with Chief Minister U Tin Maung Win meets government officials and businesspersons in the hotels and tourism industry at Azura Hotel in Chaungtha beach on 24 February.

Emphasis placed on tourism promotion in Ayeyawady Region

UNION Minister for Hotels and Tourism Dr Thet Thet Khine and Chief Minister of Ayeyawady Region U Tin Maung Win visited Azura Hotel in Chaungtha Beach to hold a meeting with government officials and businesspersons in the hotels and tourism industry on 24 February.

She discussed importance of maintaining cleanliness and promoting sustainability at Chaungtha Beach, lower number of foreign visitors to the beach than local visitors and the need for cooperation between the public and private sectors to strengthen travel campaigns.

Additionally, the Chief Minister provided insights into travel destinations at the beach, promotional efforts, cleanliness initiatives, and human resource

development endeavours.

The Union minister visited New Chaungtha Hotel to observe its operations. The following day, she visited more hotels and stopped at the Sea & Lake Resort to check its operations regarding ecotourism service and the mangrove forest bridge.

At Pathein Hotel, she briefed the attendees on the ministry's initiatives and aspirations and addressed the challenges they face.

Later, she paid homage to the Shwemokhtaw Pagoda and inspected the pilgrimage facilities. Her tour also included an exploration of Strand Road in Pathein. — MNA/NT

Myanmar traditional style paintings to ...

FROM PAGE-1

The chairperson said, "Now, we have 37 members of artists from Yangon Region and we are also continuing to welcome and to invite the other members."

The association has been established since last two decades as Myanmar Traditional Artists Association and it is organized with the famous veteran artists.

The artists who draw and paint with Myanmar traditional styles are rare in the current art industry. However, Myanmar traditional drawing and painting styles are popular among the foreign audiences. — ASH/TRKM



Specialists offer medical treatments ...

FROM PAGE-1

glycated haemoglobin (HbA1c) tests, X-ray examinations, laboratory tests, ultrasound scans, and electrocardiograms (ECG). Patients requiring further treatment were referred to Mandalay, and Nay Pyi Taw General hospitals.

Chief Minister of Kachin State U Khet Htein Nan and officials comforted patients and presented cash assistant

for medical service of the specialist teams.

These specialist medical teams conducted field trips every Saturday and Sunday in 2024. Similar efforts have been made in Taunggyi, Pyay, Thandwe, Pathein, Mawlamyine, Magway, Myeik, NyaungU and now in Myitkyina in 2024, with plans for continuous implementation in the future. — MNA/KZL

NATIONAL

Illegal medicine, intermediate goods, foodstuffs, vehicles seized

UNDER the supervision of the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee, illegal trade is effectively prevented and prosecuted in accordance with the law.

On 22 February, combined teams under the management of the Customs Department confiscated 3,771.36 square metres of RIALTO Porcelain Tile (estimated value of K39,599,280) from three containers at Myanmar Industrial Port and 3,500 kilogrammes of plastic packing foil printed for soft drink (estimated value of K39,837,000) at the Asia World Port, and action is being taken in accordance with customs procedures.

In addition, on 22 February,



Confiscated Lactasoy soy milk in Yangon Region.

the combined teams under the management of the Mandalay Region Illegal Trade Eradication Special Task Force conducted an inspection near the Kyaukse detour and seized a Mitsubishi

Fuso truck and a Hino Profia truck, valued K65 million carrying 27,500 kilogrammes of Chinese garlic (estimated value of K44 million) and a Hino truck and an Isuzu Giga truck carrying four kinds of goods (estimated value of K46.306 million), including 653 kilogrammes of polyester cotton fabric, near the Myitnge toll-gate, and action is being taken in accordance with customs procedures.

In addition, on 23 February, the combined teams also conducted inspections under the management of the Yangon Region Illegal Trade Eradication Special Task Force seized a Yutong bus that entered the Aung Mingala Highway Bus Terminal,

carrying nine kinds of goods (estimated value of K112.152 million), including 408 bottles of Sir Edward's whiskey, 150 bottles of Ostonil tablets, 500 cartons of Napoli cigarettes and 14,040 bottles of Lactosoy soy milk, and six kinds of goods (estimated value of K25.95 million), including 1,896 cans of Maximus Beer, at a warehouse in Ward No.1 of Shwepyitha Township, and action is being taken in accordance with customs procedures.

Therefore, on 22 and 23 February, a total of 16 illegal trade cases (estimated value of K465.845 million) were seized, according to the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/TKO

Counter-argument to false information

Fake news fabricates Kanhtooma Village ablaze by Tatmadaw in Taze Township



Screenshots of Khit Thit media which validate their fake news.

THE subversive media Khit Thit is intentionally circulating fake news that security forces are burning down and destroying Kanhtooma Village located in Taze Township, Sagaing Region.

The truth is that the so-called PDF terrorists tried to attack the regional police outpost in Kanhtooma Village on 21 February. Therefore, fire exchanging occurred between security forces and the terrorists near the village. The terrorists retreated with casualties by shelling of heavy weapons by the security forces. The security forces then conducted regional security within and surrounding of the Kanhtooma Village after the terrorists' retreat, as explained by an official from the security forces.

The malicious news outlets are intentionally delivering misinformation to poison the public and to humiliate the pride of the Tatmadaw security forces. — MNA/TMT

Misinformation: Fake travel ban on Rakhine youths spread by malicious outlets

MALICIOUS media outlets have been circulating false information on social media, claiming that the government has imposed a ban on Rakhine youths aged 18 to 35 travelling from Yangon to Rakhine State by flight, effective from 24 February.

A security official in Yangon Region clarified that there is no such ban in place and that the information being circulated is simply fake news.

Malicious media outlets are deliberately spreading false re-



Screenshots of Narinjara media which validate their fake news.

ports to instill fear in the public and undermine law and order. — MNA/NT



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NATIONAL

Iron-cast frog, snake statues preserved at Koehtatgyi Pagoda

THE Koehtatgyi Pagoda, located in Sangyoung Township, Yangon Region, still preserves iron-cast frog and snake statues under the custodianship of the pagoda's cultural heritage trust.

A traditional architect and member of the trust, U Myat Kyaw, said: "The statues date back to the early colonial era. Many mistake them for bronze or stone statues due to the complete disappearance of the art of casting iron."

The architect highlighted the importance of preserving cultural heritage with the help of experts. The art of iron-casting has become extinct for many years, leaving Myanmar with

only a few remaining sculptures crafted through this traditional method.

"The statues are 117 years old, and were crafted at the same time with the pagoda during an era when blacksmiths were the masters of iron-casting. Remarkably, the pagoda is the sole location in Yangon Region, and one of the rare sites across the country, that hosts iron-cast statues," U Myat Kyaw said.

U Kyin and his spouse Daw Ngwe Zan built the Koehtatgyi Pagoda in August 1905. The statues of frog and snake are situated on each side of the eastern stairway at the pagoda.

The remaining iron-cast statues include a snake and frog at the Shwenattaung Pagoda in Bago Region, twin snakes, Sanda Mukhi Ogress Statue, Ngataunggyi Ogre Statue and its 25 followers, a monk statue paying homage to the pagoda, King Kyansittha Statue with his spear by his side, and a hunter accompanied by his two dogs at the Mandalay Hill in Mandalay Region. — ASH/NT

The Iron Frog at the Koehtatgyi Pagoda on Bagaya Road in Yangon.



Some 5,000 visitors daily flock to Yangon Zoo on public holidays



Visitors seen at Yangon Zoological Gardens.

THE number of visitors to the Yangon Zoological Gardens is increasing on a daily basis, and daily peaks up around 5,000 visitors during public holidays, according to U Than Myint Tun, the warden of Yangon Zoological Gardens.

"Around 5,000 people per day visit the zoo on weekends and it is about 1,000 per day on weekdays. In November and December at the end of 2023, about 2,500 visitors toured the zoo on each Saturday and Sunday, and the number of visitors increased after opening elephant museum. The elephant

museum was opened in March 2022," U Than Myint Tun said.

In the elephant museum, the public can visit and study the Asian elephant's habitats, wild elephant in Myanmar, their behaviors and history through various eras. Accessories, fossils, skeleton pictures, tusks, and traditional Myanmar handicrafts are displayed for public observation, and the books about elephant nature are also kept. Moreover, quality souvenirs are available at the souvenir shop.

The entrance fee to Yangon Zoo is 2,500 kyats per

adult, 1,500 kyats per child, 7,000 kyats per foreign tourist, and 5,000 kyats per foreigner child. Monks, and nuns are allowed for free. The plans have been processed to ensure for the safety for picnicker families who come to Yangon Zoological Gardens to enjoy their leisure time peacefully.

Yangon Zoological Gardens covers an area of 57 acres and has kept around 350 species of animals and 1,400 animals. In addition to the aquarium, the Elephant Museum has also been established. — ASH/TKO

Sesame price rebounds following Chinese New Year

THE prices of sesame bounced back in the Mandalay market on account of Chinese New Year.

The sesame prices stood at K380,000 per 45-viss sack for black sesame (Samone variety), K395,000-K400,000 for white sesame, K315,000 for brown sesame, K330,000 for red sesame, K320,000 for yellow sesame, K200,000 for Niger seed and K350,000 for winter sesame on 15 February.

The prices surged to K435,000 per 45-viss sack for black sesame (Samone variety), K405,000-K420,000 for white sesame, K320,000 for brown sesame, K330,000 for red sesame, K320,000 for yellow sesame, K200,000 for Niger seed and K365,000 for winter sesame on 24 February.

The figures indicated a significant increase of K5,000-K55,000 per sack of other sesame seeds, when the prices of red sesame, yellow sesame and Niger seed remain unchanged for ten days.

At present, the market sees a roaring trade of the various sesame seeds on the back of strong demand in Mandalay's

market. They are primarily exported to China. Also, demand from Japan, Thailand, Singapore and Chinese (Taipei) is significantly rising. Furthermore, there is a steady demand from the domestic oil millers and sesame-based food industries such as sesame jam and roasted sesame businesses.

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

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

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

NATIONAL



The photo shows Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein is observing the expansion of the frontage road of the Thilawa Port and establishing the lamp-posts along the traffic island.

Thilawa Port's frontage road construction 65% finished

ACCORDING to the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC), the construction process of the frontage road of the Thilawa Port has been finished at 65 per cent so far.

The coordinating meeting on constructing the frontage road was held on 22 February at the Yangon City Hall. The chairman of the YCDC (Mayor) urged all to install junctions at the necessary corners and places so as to ensure the safety and convenience of the automobiles on the frontage street of the Thilawa Port, to finish the construction processes within the targeted period, to grow plants and trees for ensuring the green environment along the road, to build the bus-stops along the road, and to build the modern lamp-posts for ensuring to have enough lighting at night."

He also urged officials to prioritize the long-term sustainability of the road after its completion, to monitor every step of the construction of the road within the established timeframe, and to practice measures to ensure traffic safety in the road construction.

The Thilawa Port frontage road has been constructing as per the road design submitted by the Ministry of Construction within the targeted timeframe in accordance with the criteria and standards. At present, 65 per cent of the construction project has been completed and the remaining 35 per cent is underway. Constructing the lamp-posts along the traffic island will be carried out coordinating with the Yangon Electricity Supply Corporation. — TWA/ TMT

Construction of advanced Mingala market currently 72 per cent complete

THE advanced Mingala market under construction in Mingala Taungnyunt Township, Yangon has reached 72 per cent completion.

The construction of the new market has 15 floors, including two underground floors, and the first level of shops and 4,065 shops from the ground floor to the 4th floor has been handed over to the Yangon City Development Committee and is scheduled to be completed in mid-2024.

According to the project, the second phase, which is the high-rise 5th to 15th floors, is still under construction. The shops that will be handed over to the Yangon City Development Committee will be 25 square feet in size and the second-level section will be 100 square feet in size, with 20 escalators and 750 parking spaces.

The entire construction work of the new market will be targeted for a 100-per cent completion in 2025. — TWA/KZL

Black bean price likely to continue declining till the end of Feb

PRICE of matpe (black gram) is likely to face continual decline till the end of the month after the peak, according to black bean traders.

At present, the beans and sesame market has fallen while peanut price has been good.

"Black bean price has declined. Price of a bag is K291,000. It reached K300,000 again a few days ago. It has been dropping from K300,000-K300,500 to K291,000 now. The price rises and falls. I think it will continue declining till the end of the month," said an official from Naing Mahar black bean trading.

It is reported that the crop has received many demands in overseas markets. In January, the export price rose to K3.1 million a tonne, said traders.

"Newly harvested beans entered the market so the supply has been surplus and price declined," said an official from Aung rice and beans trading.

There is probability that the price has fallen due to the news that India would set a reference price for beans, and at present, the trade has been normal, according to traders. — Thit Taw/ZS

THE Kachin State government has invited a tender for the construction of a temporary terminal for heavy cargo trucks and related measures in Myitkyina, Kachin State.

The heavy cargo truck terminal project will be implemented on more than seven acres of land designated for the market and brokerage under the management of Township Development Committee in Pammati Ward, Myitkyina. This is the third tender invitation for Myanmar entrepreneurs who want to invest for 100 per cent in eight related businesses of the temporary heavy cargo truck terminal



Tender invited to construction of temporary terminal for heavy trucks in Myitkyina

through the BOT system.

The tender applications can be purchased at the office of the Kachin State's Development Committee during office hours, and the tender forms must be submitted by 22 March. — TWA/TKO

Some cargo trucks station on roadside in Myitkyina.

SINCE monsoon paddy arrived in the market in 2023, the prices of monsoon rice and new rice remain high.

In the last week of February 2024, the prices are K85,000 per sack for the non-premium rice and K100,000 per sack for new Pawkywe. Ayeyawady Pawsan rice price is ranging between K140,000 and K145,000 per sack and Shwebo Pawsan rice is K160,000 per sack respectively.

According to the rice price statistics, 100 baskets of Shwebo Pawsan price is valued at K4 million, and a sack of Pawsan rice is K150,000 and old rice K160,000. New Ayeyarmin rice of 100 baskets is K3.2 million and Ayeyarmin new rice one sack is K140,000 in the third week of February 2024.

A paddy grower from Bogale Ko Soe Tint told the Global New Light of Myanmar that 100 baskets of new Pawsan paddy in the Delta region is K3.5 million.

In the third week of Febru-



Paddy growers earn more since rice prices remain surged

A labour is seen in a rice wholesale market.

ary 2024, the price of 100 baskets for Shwebo Pawsan is even higher than the price of a tical of pure gold. In 2023, price for Shwebo Pawsan 100 baskets was K3.7 million while the pure

gold price for a tical was K3.3 million. Thus, 100 baskets of Shwebo Pawsan cost higher than the price of a tical of the pure gold.

According to the daily

price statistics of some rice mills in Wakema Township in delta region in mid-2023, 100 baskets of paddy was priced at K1.93 million for Pawsan, K1.45 million for Hnankar, and K1.6

million for Thukha monsoon paddy.

The rice related NGOs revealed the monthly reference prices of rice in harvesting time of monsoon paddy in 2023. However, the rice reference prices are not found on social media this year as on-ground rice prices are getting much higher, a consumer told the GNLM.

A total of nearly 250,000 acres of summer paddy are grown in Sagaing in 2024. Ayeyawady, Bago, and Yangon regions produce the highest volume of rice annually.

The rice price is getting surged in 2023 and 2024. The 2022 monsoon rice earns much more when arriving in the market.

There are approximately 5.2 million acres of paddy cultivations in Ayeyawady Region and therefore, it accounts for 30 per cent of paddy cultivations in the whole country. Accordingly, the rice growers earn more from 2023 monsoon rice. — TWA/ TMT

Price of new tamarind turns down from K6,000 per viss in Yangon market

THE price of tamarind has skyrocketed on 13 February 2024 pricing at K6,000 per viss in Yangon market while it was ranging at K1,900 to K2,500 per viss in 2023.

However, the prices were turning downward trend after a week. It becomes K4,500-K5,000 per viss while chopped pieces of tamarind is priced at K3,700 per viss, a trader from tamarind wholesale market on Khayay Street at Bayintnaung brokerage told the Global New Light of Myanmar. The chopped pieces of tamarind arrived in Yangon market later than the previous years and thus opened the market with K3,000-K3,100 per viss in the Yangon market.

Chopped pieces of tamarind started arriving in the

market on 22 January. On the day, the old tamarind was priced at K1,200/K1,300 per viss and the tamarind flesh was priced at K1,900/K2,900 per viss. However, the new chopped pieces of tamarind was priced at K2,700/K2,800 per viss on 5 February.

On 24 February, old tamarind was priced at K3,000 per viss; regular pod K2,700 and Pwintkat K1,500 respectively. The pod tamarind old has less moistures than the new and is K2,000 lower than the new per viss. Therefore, new tamarind is less popular and the price is turning down.

The tamarind prices have been stable at these low prices for two years, which in turn has led to the tamarind traders losing money without profit. This

year, traders from tamarind growing areas forecasted that tamarind productivity will be declined. In addition, chopped pieces of tamarind and new tamarind arrived in Yangon market at high prices than other years.

The statistics show that chopped pieces of new tamarind was priced at K1,700/K1,800 and tamarind flesh was K2,500/K3,000 per viss on 23 February 2023. Starting in mid-2023, tamarind was K1,200/K1,300 per viss and tamarind flesh was K1,900-K2,500 per viss respectively and remained steady at the low prices.

Veined tamarind was only K800 in 2023 especially in the tamarind growing regions. Now tamarind prices in Lanmadaw retail market are K7,000 per



Tamarind flesh in the market are seen.

viss for new tamarind while it is K4,000 per viss for old.

Tamarind leftover stocks were many in 2023 since both the export and domestic demands in that year were declined. However, this year the export returns high; thus, the leftover stock has been declining; and again, the tamarind

productivity this year is getting low. Therefore, tamarind prices are expected to be high in the Yangon market this year.

Notwithstanding, a tamarind seller from Bayintnaung market told the GNLM that only few amount of tamarinds have been exported within these months. — TWA/ TMT

Daily newspapers available online

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News and Periodicals Enterprise



OPINION

Manage legal trade for economic stability, livelihood preservation

The global economy bears a significant burden due to the rampant expansion of illegal trade, causing a staggering 8-15 per cent loss and waste in the Gross Domestic Product. The Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade highlights the dire consequences, emphasizing that the billions of USD invested from illegal trade into other illicit activities fuel instability in the economic sector, ultimately financing terrorism and posing a grave threat to global security.

It is imperative to respond robustly to this crisis by taking severe action against illegal traders and exposing their illicit measures. This requires a comprehensive approach considering trade, economic, and security measures tailored to the specific needs of each country and its people. In Myanmar, illegal traders blatantly violate laws, prioritizing their self-interest over the welfare of the nation, necessitating immediate attention.

Direct consequences of illegal trade include a decline in productivity and profits, reduction in legal businesses on an annual basis, hindrance to economic development, and the dwindling of production, sale, and import processes of legal businesses due to unfair competition from illegal trade. This, in turn, leads to a degradation of job opportunities and diminished investment, especially in developing countries.

The most severe consequence manifests as criminal gangs emerging in connection with illicit trade measures. Indirect impacts are equally distressing, with illegal fishing depleting natural fish resources, jeopardizing businesses, and threatening the livelihoods of communities dependent on them. Gangs resort to forced labor on illegal fishing trawlers, contributing to the deterioration of ecosystems through illegal wood cutting and timber trade. Illegal trade poses threats to societies and animals relying on forests and forestry businesses, while the use of counterfeit pesticides compounds the issue, resulting in agricultural losses and environmental degradation.

The pervasive use of low-quality pesticides accelerates the decline in environmental quality. To counter these multifaceted challenges, concerted efforts are required. Authentic incomes for businesses and legitimate revenues for governments contribute to societal prosperity by alleviating the burden of high commodity prices. Therefore, a collaborative effort between citizens and local authorities is indispensable to eradicate illegal trade comprehensively, fostering the growth of legal businesses and ensuring the well-being of the populace.

Authentic incomes of businesspersons and real revenues of the government will help improve prosperity of the society, reducing prices of commodities as high prices of various goods and medicines are the burden of the people. As such, all citizens of Myanmar have to join hands with local authorities in eradicating illegal trade measures in all aspects for booming the legal businesses.

Authentic incomes of businesspersons and real revenues of the government will help improve prosperity of the society, reducing prices of commodities as high prices of various goods and medicines are the burden of the people. As such, all citizens of Myanmar have to join hands with local authorities in eradicating illegal trade measures in all aspects for booming the legal businesses.

The State Administration Council (SAC) issued a statement that the People's Military Service Law shall come into force starting from 10 February 2024. It is witnessed that several points of view and noises have appeared. Some people have an optimistic view on it but some have pessimistic view. Again, some people say like it is a strange thing in our country. People's Military Service Law is the one which has been enacted since 1959. It can be observed that the People's Military Service Law 1959 concerns all citizens in the specific age ranges but it was mainly practised for doctors. The People's Military Service Law 1959 had been a law until the People's Military Service Law 2010 has been enacted. In fact, the People's Military Service Law 2010 is the one which is precisely drafted and updated, keeping the essence of the People's Military Service Law 1959. It can be clearly seen that the People's Military Service Law has been enacted since 1959 and come in force since 1st of July 1962.

Let's take a glance on the salient points of the People's Military Service Law which has come into force starting 10 February 2024:

Eligible age for serving military service

- If a male, any citizen from the age of 18 to 35
- If a female, any citizen from

- the age of 18 to 27,
- If he is an expert [professional occupation] male, a citizen from the age of 18 to 45,
- If she is an expert female, a citizen from the age of 18 to 35,
- Expert means those who are medical doctors, engineers, technicians or anyone who practises some form of expertise.

Duration of military service

- Any citizens who are in eligible age for military service can be called up to serve the military service not more than 24 months.
- Among the citizens who are in eligible age for military service, those who are called up for the Tatmadaw (military) technician service, he or she has to serve not more than 36 months.
- Any citizens who are in eligible age for military service as expert, he or she can be called up to serve the military service not more than 36 months.

Who are exempted from military service?

The following individuals shall be exempted from military

service;

- Member of religious order;
- Married women (including those women with children even she is divorced);
- People with permanent disability;
- Individuals those are recognized as permanently inappropriate for military service by the Tatmadaw medical examination board; and
- Those who are exempted by order from Central Body for Summoning People's Military Servants.

Regarding the question whether every person who has turned 18 shall have to serve military service, those appropriate with underneath criteria can apply for temporary postponement of the military service duty. They are:

- Those who temporarily fail to meet medical fitness for military service with recommendation from the Tatmadaw medical examination board;
- Civil servants;
- Students;
- Those who are taking care of their helpless aged parents;
- Those who are under medical treatment for terminating drug abuse and;

- Those who are imprisoned. Depending upon the situation in the State, temporary postponement might be changed into permanent exemption for military service. People evidently come to understand the condition when specific by-laws, rules and regulations come out.

Some people are worrying about themselves whether they would have to serve military service this instant or they would be arrested for military service as the law has come into force. Nonetheless, those who understand the law will not worry about it. Subversive media and pessimists will surely instigate the public panic. As of the list of adult at the age of 18 and over that relevant governmental departments have registered, if they are summoned for, they must to be registered. The departments will issue a certificate for the registration. Those who have received certificate shall be summoned for medical examination. After they pass the medical examination, they have to enlist for military service as per the prescribed duration. All registered citizens shall not be summoned but proportional/rotational system will be exercised, depending upon

the required number.

There is no condition for all eligible persons to serve military service at the same time. Depending upon manpower the State needs, proportional and rotational system will have to be practised to avoid negative impacts on: job opportunity of the people; businesses of entrepreneurs; the right to education of students; and tasks and functions of civil servants and governmental departments. If one serves the military service early, the State's duty will be fulfilled fast. Under the law, his turn to fulfil the duty will be also accomplished early. When the citizens receive the certificate of completion duty, they may obtain particular benefits.

Here, one thing I wish to say is that the criticism on the Law starting in Myanmar like an act of newly and strange wrong doing is not an objective assessment although such law is being practised in other foreign countries under the name of National Military Service System, People's Military Service System and Mandatory Military Service System. Some people say that it needs not for internal conflicts but for external war of aggression. If we take a glance at which

People's Military Service System supposed as Mandatory Military Service System

By Min Khant Kyaw (Law)

countries around the world have practised such system, we can see that a lot of countries have done it. Among them, you can study which country are going to war against another country. During 1861-1865 when civil war was being waged in the

United States, the conscription system was practised by both the south and the north. Such practice was a push towards voluntary military service system. It is observed that the draft was abandoned following the civil war.

Serving mandatory military service is a duty prescribed by the State for the people to enlist in the armed forces as soldiers. Such kind of service existed in the past and majority of countries in the world pursued such practice until present days under various names. National conscription system for the youths that is nearly congruent in most of the countries in today's world originated from the French Revolution broke out in 1790s. Later, many European countries replicate the system even in peace time.

Number of the countries

practising such system may vary depending upon the study conducted. As of <https://www.thesoldiersproject.org>, it can be observed that 49 countries have practised the conscription system. As the ASEAN regional countries, such system is being practised in Cambodia, Laos, Singapore and Viet Nam. Arab countries: Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Qatar, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and UAE are still practising it. In Asia, Armenia, Iran, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan can be found as the countries that practise mandatory military service system. In Europe, Austria, Belarus, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Greece, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Sweden, Turkiye and Ukraine are stated as the countries that practise mandatory military service system.

Numbers of countries are building up their armed forces to defend the State, to perpetuate national sovereignty and not to disintegrate the State. In terms

of the economic power and the population, nations chose either voluntary military service system of conscription system. Occasionally, they practise both. Thailand, the neighbouring country of Myanmar, is also practising both voluntary military service system and mandatory military service system simultaneously. Despite People's Military Service Law has been enacted in Myanmar since 1959, it took priority over voluntary military service system. Nonetheless, under the need of the State today, both systems will be practised to a certain extent. Under the constitution, the State guarantees citizen's right, in return, citizens shall fulfill the State's duty when it comes on the shoulders.

Hereof, everybody is required to fill bio data correctly if they are summoned under the law. It does not mean that every registered person shall have to serve the military service. People will have the opportunities given by the law. However, if one attempts to evade military service by all means, there is no way to escape it under **Section 28 of the People's Military Service Law**. Here, what I would advise you is that you shall be dutiful when the State's duty comes on your shoulders. I hereby urge you to feel and visualize yourself as a dutiful soldier fulfilling the State's duty when necessary. ■

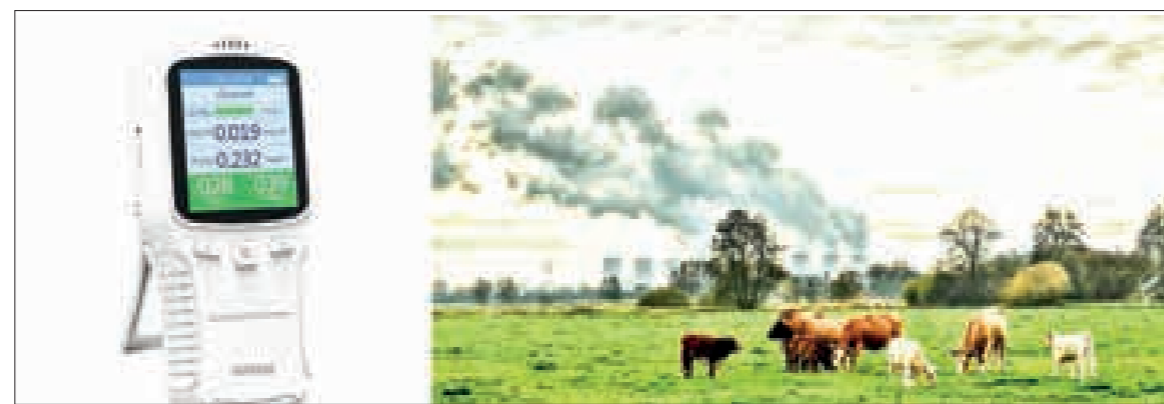
Clean air is essential to people's health

Clean air is air that has no harmful levels of pollutants (dirt and chemicals in it). So clean air is suitable for people to breathe on a hot day with no wind, which can make the air heavy and have a terrible smell.

Breathing clean air can lessen the possibility of disease from strokes, heart disease, and lung cancer, as well as chronic and acute respiratory health problems, both long and short-term.

Air pollution is the contamination of air due to the presence of substances called pollutants in the atmosphere that are harmful to the health of humans and other living beings or causes damage to the climate or to materials. Clean air is classified as a

Air is essential for life on Earth as it provides oxygen for respiration and carbon dioxide for photosynthesis in plants.



Ensuring clean air is vital for maintaining human health and ecological balance. **ILLUSTRATION: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/PIXABAY**

public good. This type of good has two main features: it is non-rival and non-excludable. The first

feature, non-rivalry, means that when some people consume the goods, their availability is not de-

pleted (that is, others will also be able to consume the goods with no problems). The second feature,

non-excludability, refers to the fact that people cannot be excluded from consuming these goods.

Why is air being essential component for the survival of life on Earth. We breathe in air, and the oxygen present in the air is required for the respiration of living beings. The carbon dioxide present in the air is essential for green plants to manufacture their own food through the process of photosynthesis.

Clean air is the air that has no harmful levels of pollutants (dirt and chemicals) in it. Even clean

air is good for people to breathe on a hot day.

Air pollution consists of chemicals or particles in the air that can harm the health of humans, animals and plants. It also damages buildings.

Pollution enters the Earth's atmosphere in different ways. Most air pollution is created by people, taking the form of emissions from factories, cars, planes or aerosol cars. Second-hand cigarette smoke is also considered to be air pollution. These man-made sources of pollution are called anthropoid sources. The same types

of air pollution, such as smoke from wildfires or ash from volcanoes, occur naturally. These are called natural sources. Pollutions in the air take many forms. They can be gases, solid particles, or liquid droplets. Air pollution can directly contaminate the surface of bodies of water and soil. This can kill crops or reduce their yield. The densely wooded hillsides along the banks of the Yangtze River in China are shrouded by air pollution. Rapidly developing countries like China must often deal with air pollution as new factories emit substances such as smoke and carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

Simple things you can do to improve your indoor air quality include reducing dust by vacuuming regularly and using a microfibre or damp cloth for dusting. Reduce humidity to avoid mould and mil-

dew buildup and change appliance filters regularly. And make sure to test your home for dangerous gases like radon.

The Earth around us naturally provides clean air that is produced from the series of complex interactions between the land and atmosphere. Forests, for example, absorb carbon dioxide and produce oxygen. To help produce clean air, natural resources such as wetlands, trees and soil filter many pollutants from the air.

Q1 values below 100 are generally thought of as satisfactory. When AQ1 values are above 100, air quality is considered to be unhealthy at first for certain sensitive groups of people, then for everyone as AQ1' values get higher; each category corresponds to a different level of health-concerned remedies. ■

SCI/ENVIRON: WORLD

China unveils names for manned lunar exploration vehicles

The lunar lander is named Lanyue, meaning embracing the moon, symbolizing the Chinese people's confidence in exploring the universe. These names were chosen from nearly 2,000 proposals from the public.

THE China Manned Space Agency (CMSA) on Saturday unveiled the names of the new vehicles for future manned lunar exploration missions.

The new manned spacecraft is named Mengzhou, meaning dream vessel, which reflects the fact that the manned lunar exploration carries the Chinese people's space dream and opens a new journey of space adventure, according to the CMSA.

The lunar lander is named Lanyue, meaning embracing the moon, a term that appeared in a poem written by the late Chairman Mao Zedong. The word symbolizes the Chinese people's confidence in exploring the universe, said the agency.

The names were selected from nearly 2,000 proposals solicited from the public.

China plans to land its taikonauts on the moon before 2030



A visitor takes photos of the model of a manned lunar rover during the 2020 World Industrial Design Conference in Yantai, east China's Shandong province, 25 November 2020. **PHOTO: XINHUA/FILE**

to carry out scientific exploration. The plan is to launch two carrier rockets to send a manned spacecraft and a lunar lander, respectively, into lunar orbit. The

spacecraft and lunar lander will rendezvous and dock with each other, after which the taikonauts will enter the lander.

So far, the research and

development of Mengzhou, Lanyue and Long March-10 carrier rocket have been progressing smoothly, said the CMSA. — Xinhua

In a doughnut in Japan, unlocking the power of the Sun

Japan's JT-60SA machine may appear like a relic from 1970s sci-fi, but it houses a vessel where experiments conducted at millions of degrees could pave the way for nuclear fusion, a potential carbon-free and safe power source for the future.



The holy grail of the project is to develop technology that releases more energy than is needed to fuel it. **PHOTO: AFP**

WITH its tangle of pipes and pumps leading to a metal pot the size of a five-storey building, Japan's JT-60SA machine looks to the untrained eye like a contraption from 1970s sci-fi.

But inside it is a doughnut-shaped vessel where experiments done at millions of

degrees could help unlock a carbon-free, inexhaustible and safe power source for the future: nuclear fusion.

"Fusion energy, the power behind the Sun and the stars, has been a great prize for energy research for decades, ever since it was first attempted in

the 1950s and 60s to find some way to reproduce this power of the Sun here on Earth," project leader Sam Davis told AFP on a recent tour.

"Not only is (fusion) free from greenhouse gases and free from long-lived nuclear waste, but it's compact, doesn't cover the whole landscape, and can generate industrially useful quantities of power," the British-German engineer said.

Unlike fission, the technique currently used in nuclear power plants, fusion involves combining two atomic nuclei instead of splitting one, generating vast amounts of energy. The process is safe and there are no nasty by-products like fissile material for a nuclear weapon or hazardous radioactive waste that takes thousands of years to degrade, its proponents say. — AFP

'Zombie' blazes and drought: Canada headed for another brutal fire season

BENEATH the ground in Western Canada, dozens of so-called "zombie fires" that started last year are still burning.

And even though it's the dead of winter, the lack of snow this year is compounding ongoing drought conditions, leaving Canadians already bracing for another brutal forest fire season.

"We are having an exceptional winter after an exceptional summer," laments Josee St-Onge, a spokesperson for Alberta firefighters.

It's a never-ending struggle. Even in bone-chilling temperatures, Canadian firefighters are still hard at work battling nearly

150 fires.

This year there are 10 to 12 times more zombie fires burning in Western Canada than usual. They smolder beneath the surface of the boreal forest through the winter, sustained by layers of dried peat and organic matter.

Eradicating them is painstaking work. They are difficult to detect — only letting out wisps of smoke — and require deep scraping of the ground to expose the humus, or all the decomposed leaves and other plant material compacted into an up to 80-centimetre (31-inch) layer that burns slowly. — AFP



This handout picture provided by Alberta Wildfire shows authorities battling a blaze in Fox Lake that persist despite the cold and snow on 6 February 2024. **PHOTO: ALBERTA WILDFIRE/AFP**

UK midlifers turn back time with embrace of day clubbing

A crowd eagerly waits for the doors of a London nightclub to open on a Saturday in February. But it's not the small hours — it's midafternoon and the party will end at 8:00 pm.

Visiting a nightclub in the middle of the day is a new concept in Britain for those who still have an urge to dance but no longer want to endure a sleepless night to do so.

"I'm 52 years of age and it's not a great look for a man of my vintage to be in a nightclub at two o'clock in the morning anymore," Jonny Owen, organizer of the Day Fever event in central London, told AFP.

Owen and his wife, actor Vicky McClure, organised their first daytime disco in the north-central English city of Sheffield in December before bringing it to the "HERE at Outernet" venue in the UK capital.

The idea is quickly becoming popular, with the next seven dates sold out, running to May and taking place in cities includ-

ing Nottingham, Glasgow and Newcastle.

Women who managed to secure a £17 (\$22) ticket for the London bash donned glittery tops while men wore smart shirts.

The clientele was mostly in their forties and fifties, many with jobs and young children, so they could ill afford to suffer the effects of a wild night out the next day.

Katy, 41, anticipates a nostalgic night with friends, looking forward to drinks and reminiscent ambiance. Darren, 58, aims to relive his clubbing days after 35 years, while Sara, also 58, values the judgment-free atmosphere at Day Fever.

Inside, guests immerse in 1980s nostalgia, dancing joyously to iconic hits. Kelly, in her 50s, enjoys the youthful experience and plans to catch her train home. Organizer Owen stresses the importance of catering to their generation's desire for enjoyable events. — AFP



Vintage images projected at the club take the revellers back in time. PHOTO: AFP

Strike ends, Eiffel Tower reopens on Sunday

FRANCE'S Eiffel Tower, which had been closed for five days due to a strike, reopened on Sunday after the monument's management announced that a deal had been struck with unions.

The stoppage since Monday at one of the world's best-known tourist sites was the second within two months in protest at what unions say was insufficient investment.

The tower's operator SETE said it had reached agreement

with the unions on Saturday "under which the parties will regularly monitor the company's business model, investment in works and revenue through a body that will meet every six months".

With an aim to balance its books by 2025, both sides also agreed to see an investment of some 380 million euros up to 2031 toward works and maintenance of the tower, the statement said. — AFP

Buoyed by holiday moviegoing, China's February box office hits 10 bln yuan



A citizen walks past movie posters at a cinema in Hangzhou City, east China's Zhejiang Province, 16 February 2024. PHOTO: LONG WEI/XINHUA

Comedian Jia Ling's latest film "YOLO" dominates, earning 3.16 billion yuan during the holiday season, comprising 31 per cent of the total monthly earnings.

BOOSTED by a record-breaking revenue of over 8 billion yuan during the Spring Festival holiday, which ran from 10 to 17 February, China's box office earnings for February have surpassed the impressive milestone of 10 billion yuan (approximately 1.41 billion US dollars).

Data from film platforms Maoyan and Beacon reveals that the monthly box office revenue reached 10.18 billion yuan, with an additional 243 million yuan collected on Friday.

Jia Ling, the comedian who made waves three years ago with her self-written, self-direct-

ed, and self-starring comedy "Hi, Mom," has returned with yet another comedic triumph, "YOLO."

This holiday season, "YOLO" has emerged as the reigning champion at China's box office, raking in a staggering 3.16 billion yuan, accounting for 31 per cent of the total monthly box office revenue thus far.

Chen Xuguang, director of Peking University's Institute of Film, Television and Theatre, has emphasized the profound connection between the uplifting life story of "YOLO's"

protagonist and Jia Ling's own personal journey of weight loss. This connection weaves a powerful modern-day allegory that resonates with audiences.

"The movie serves as an inspiring guide, balancing humor and tears, and has enjoyed both commercial success and critical acclaim, despite some controversies," Chen said.

experience, stating, "If a person truly desires to transcend her self-doubt and experience personal growth, the power lies within herself. She must have the courage to pursue it!" — Xinhua

Beyonce becomes first Black woman to helm top country songs chart



US singer Beyoncé accepts the Best Rap Performance award during the 63rd Annual Grammy Awards. PHOTO: KEVIN WINTER / THE RECORDING ACADEMY / AFP / FILE

AHEAD of the release of her album that's set to take the country music scene by storm, Beyonce this week became the first Black woman to top the US charts in that genre.

Ahead of the release of her album that's set to take the country music scene by storm, Beyonce this week became the first Black woman to top the US charts in that genre.

Her song "Texas Hold 'Em" dropped smack in the middle of the Super Bowl earlier this month, and has debuted on the Billboard charts on the number

one slot of "Hot Country Songs".

A second single, "16 Carriages", is also on that chart, clocking in at number nine.

"Prior to the triumph for 'Texas Hold 'Em,' no Black woman, or female known to be biracial, had previously topped" that chart, said industry tracker Billboard.

Country is a quintessentially American style of music with influences from Africa: the banjo notably grew out of instruments brought to the United States by enslaved people in the 1600s and 1700s. — AFP

ECONOMY WORLD

Cooperative sector instrumental in shaping a resilient economy: PM Modi



Modi highlighted the significance of cooperation in strengthening agriculture and rural development, stating it transforms subsistence into industrial capacity, thereby rejuvenating the economy. **PHOTO: ANI**

PM Modi highlighted that out of the targeted 10,000 Farmers Producers Organizations (FPOs), 8,000 have already been established, with their success stories gaining recognition internationally.

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi outlined the role of the cooperative sector in shaping the economy of the country while launching multiple key initiatives in the sector at Bharat Mandapam in Delhi on Saturday.

“Today, Bharat Mandapam is becoming a witness to another major accomplishment in the Amrit Yatra of Viksit Bharat. We are going ahead in realising

this resolution of ‘Sahakar se Samridhi’ taken by the country. In strengthening the foundation of agriculture and farming, the power of cooperation plays a very big role”, PM Modi said while addressing a gathering at Bharat Mandapam.

“The cooperative sector is instrumental in shaping a resilient economy and propelling the development of rural areas. Sahkarita is not just a system,

but also a feeling and a spirit!” he added.

“It can transform a simple subsistence system into a huge industrial capacity! This is a proven way of rejuvenating the country’s economy, especially the rural and agricultural economy,” the Prime Minister said.

Modernization of India’s agricultural systems is equally important for a developed India, he said. — ANI

Comprehensive bonded zone of China’s Xiong’an launches export business



An aerial drone photo taken on 6 February 2024 shows the construction site of the headquarters of China Satellite Network Group in Xiong’an New Area, north China’s Hebei Province. **PHOTO: MU YU/XINHUA**

ON Saturday, a truck carrying 150,000 piezoelectric quartzs left the comprehensive bonded zone of the Xiong’an New Area in north China’s Hebei Province, marking the first export business conducted by the zone.

This export business marks the start of regular operations in the comprehensive bonded zone, said Wang Lei, deputy head of Xiong’an Customs.

The goods will first be transported to Beijing and then

exported to Japan.

Approved in June 2023, the zone covers a total area of approximately 0.63 square km. The first phase of the zone occupies around 0.42 square km. The zone’s policies, such as tax refunds, bonded imports and free circulation of goods within the zone, are expected to reduce institutional transaction costs and promote the agglomeration and development of high-end manufacturing and production services in line with the positioning of the new area, according to Wang.

Comprehensive bonded zones are special commercial zones that enjoy favorable taxation policies. — Xinhua

Iraq reopens key oil refinery to reduce imports

IRAQ reopened on Friday what was once the country’s largest oil refinery, a step the government hopes will lead to an end to its dependence on fuel imports.

The North Refinery in the city of Baiji, 200 kilometres (124 miles) north of Baghdad, was heavily damaged in some of the fiercest battles with the Islamic State group (IS) after it swept across a third of Iraq in 2014.

After the facility’s full rehabilitation, “the refinery’s effective capacity is 250,000 barrels per day”, Assem Jihad, the spokesman for Iraq’s oil ministry, told AFP.

Two smaller production units at the refinery complex were opened in recent years, but Friday’s reopening restored the refinery closer to its previous

capacity, with an additional unit capable of producing 150,000 bpd.

“With this accomplishment, we are getting closer to meeting the country’s (oil) derivative needs no later than mid next year,” Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani’s office said, adding that doing so would enable Iraq to end its fuel imports.

The oil-rich country “produces four million barrels a day, but still imports oil derivatives”, Sudani added during the inauguration ceremony aired on state television.

Constructed in 1975, the refinery produced up to 300,000 barrels per day (bpd) before IS seized the city of Baiji — Iraq’s one-time industrial hub — in June 2014. — AFP



A picture shows an oil refinery on the outskirts of the Iraqi central city of Karbala, on the day of its inauguration, on 20 October 2022. **PHOTO: MOHAMMED SAWAF/AFP**

Thousands protest as hunger grows amid Argentine austerity

THOUSANDS protested across Argentina on Friday to demand food aid for the poor as soaring inflation and President Javier Milei’s harsh austerity measures take their toll.

Since he took office in December, Milei has slashed public spending, winning the approval of the International Monetary Fund and securing a budget surplus for the first time in 12 years in a country whose previous governments oversaw rampant inflation and multiple fiscal crises.

However, annual inflation

has still risen to 254 per cent, the price of bus tickets has more than tripled, and the government has frozen crucial aid to soup kitchens that have ever more mouths to feed.

“In a little more than two months, this government has generated a very critical situation of poverty,” Alejandro Gramajo of the UTEP union told AFP. “No to the increase in transport costs,” protesters chanted, along with cries of “Hunger doesn’t wait” and “Pots are empty, pockets are too.” — AFP

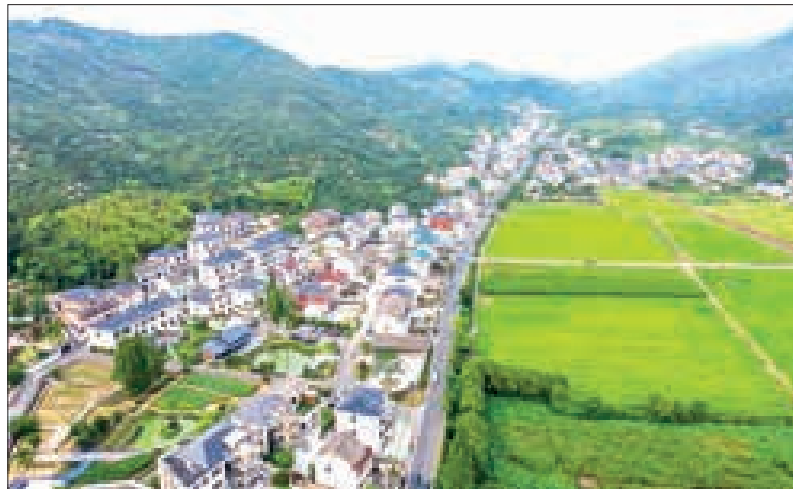
China's rural policy bank to increase financial support for rural revitalization

The Agricultural Development Bank of China announces increased credit support for the Green Rural Revival Programme, focusing on rural living improvements, ecological conservation, infrastructure development, digital villages, and income growth for farmers, with measures to manage loan risks.

THE Agricultural Development Bank of China, the country's rural policy bank, has unveiled a guideline to step up credit support for China's Green Rural Revival Program, as part of efforts to promote rural revitalization.

The bank said it will target financial demands in key areas of the program, which highlights living condition improvements and the modernization of agriculture and rural areas, while also exploring effective means of providing financial support for the programme.

Greater support will be given to improve rural living conditions, protect and conserve the ecological environment, increase the coverage of infrastructure and public services in rural areas, and build digital villages, the lender said.



This aerial photo taken on 12 June 2023 shows a view of Changlong Village in Cixi City, east China's Zhejiang Province. PHOTO: XU YU/XINHUA

It further pledged to broaden channels for farmers to help them increase their income, while keeping loan risks under control.

In 2023, the bank had issued

loans totaling 488 billion yuan (about 68.67 billion US dollars) to key areas of the Green Rural Revival Programme, data showed.

— Xinhua



Japan's Sanrio Puroland amusement park closed for the day due to a terrorism threat received via email, ensuring the safety of visitors, performers, and staff. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Hello Kitty-themed Tokyo theme park shut after threat

A popular Hello Kitty-themed amusement park in Japan closed for the day on Saturday after receiving an "email threatening terrorism", its operator said.

Sanrio Puroland in the capital Tokyo is known for its rides, shows and cutesy cartoon mascots including the beloved feline-like heroine.

"We decided to temporarily close for the day because the safety of visitors, performers and staff cannot be guaranteed at

the moment," the indoor theme park said in a message on its website.

"Today, Saturday, 24 February 2024, we received an email threatening terrorism," it added.

The unspecified threat prompted police to scour Sanrio Puroland for suspicious objects, but none were found, public broadcaster NHK reported.

Authorities were trying to identify the sender of the email, NHK added, citing unnamed police sources. — AFP

MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY HOLIDAY NOTICE

AS the wharves, warehouses and chellan Offices of Yangon Port will be closed on the 2nd March 2024 (Peasant's Day), 24th March 2024 (Fullmoon Day of Taboung) and 27th March 2024 (Armed Forces Day), Loading, Unloading and delivery for Goods will be received on Payment as Holiday Fees.

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V METHI BHUM VOY.NO. (417S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V METHI BHUM VOY.NO. (417S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 26-2-2024 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 REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES

Employee well-being tops HR priority in 2024: India employers

Rahul Goyal, ADP's Managing Director for India and Southeast Asia, emphasizes the importance of prioritizing employee financial well-being for a motivated and productive workforce.

EMPLOYEE well-being has emerged as a pivotal focus for Indian organizations in 2024. A whopping 62 per cent of the companies say employee well-being — including financial well-being and wealth creation — is the top consideration in their HR strategy for the year, according to The Future of Pay in India 2024 re-

search released today by ADP.

Financial well-being refers to an individual's overall financial health and stability. It encompasses areas such as income, budgeting, saving, and wealth creation such as financial planning and investment.

"Companies now recognise they must



In 2024, Indian organizations prioritize employee well-being, with 62 per cent focusing on financial health and wealth creation in their HR strategy, according to ADP's The Future of Pay in India 2024 research. PHOTO: ANI

prioritise their employees' financial well-being to create a motivated workforce and boost productivity, employee

retention and satisfaction," said Rahul Goyal, Managing Director of India and Southeast Asia at ADP. — ANI

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

Japan to spend extra \$660 mln on quake relief

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida vows continued support as he visits devastated areas.

JAPAN will spend an additional \$660 million rebuilding areas ravaged by a devastating New Year's Day earthquake, its prime minister said, taking the total amount of quake relief to \$1.7 billion.

The magnitude-7.5 earthquake and its aftershocks devastated parts of the Ishikawa region on the Sea of Japan coast, toppling buildings, ripping up roads and sparking a major fire.

So far 241 people were con-

firmed to have been killed by the disaster, with more than 10,000 people taking refuge at shelters and hotels, and water still cut off in some parts of Ishikawa.

The new financial aid was announced by Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on Saturday as he visited the quake-hit areas to assess the situation.

"The living conditions at temporary shelters are improving, but I will bear in mind that



Japan pledges \$660 million more for earthquake recovery, bringing total relief to \$1.7 billion. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

the reality remains tough as ever," Kishida told reporters at the hardest-hit city of Wajima.

The inspection "renewed the government's determina-

tion to work toward providing more support", he said.

Kishida said the additional spending of around 100 billion yen (\$660 million) from the cur-

rent fiscal year's reserve funds — used for disaster relief and other contingencies — is set to be approved by his Cabinet in the coming days. — AFP

Israel to discuss 'next steps' in Gaza truce talks

ISRAEL sounded a positive note Saturday on efforts to broker a new hostage release and ceasefire deal in its war with Hamas, as concern deepened over the growing humanitarian crisis in the war-torn Gaza Strip.

As aid agencies warned of unprecedented levels of desperation and looming famine, dozens more Gazans were killed in Israeli strikes, the Hamas-run territory's health ministry said.

An Israeli delegation led

by Mossad intelligence agency chief David Barnea travelled to Paris for a fresh push towards a deal over a ceasefire.

National security advisor Tzachi Hanegbi said Israel's war cabinet would meet later Saturday to hear an update after the delegation returned from the talks with mediators.

"There is probably room to move towards an agreement," Hanegbi told N12 News television in an interview, without elaborating. — AFP



This handout photograph taken on 18 February, 2024 by the World Health Organization (WHO), shows a convoy of ambulances during a WHO, UN humanitarian agency OCHA and Palestinian Red Crescent mission to evacuate patients from Nasser hospital in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip. **PHOTO: CHRISTOPHER BLACK / WHO / AFP**

Macron spends day at agricultural show as angry farmers protest

Despite disruptions, Macron tours event, engaging with exhibitors. Police arrest six, with eight officers injured in the chaos.



French President Macron faces angry farmers at agricultural fair, as protests lead to clashes with police. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

FRENCH President Emmanuel Macron spent the entire day at the annual agricultural fair Saturday, as angry farmers heckled him and scuffled with police.

Riot police kept the protesters at a safe distance as Macron toured the fair, inspecting prize cattle, tasting honey from Normandy and cheeses from the Alps, and shaking hands with exhibitors.

But as he entered the fair's

livestock area in the morning, hundreds of protestors crashed the gates and clashed with police.

In the ensuing confusion, the fair was repeatedly closed and then re-opened to the public. Throughout the day, police and protestors pushed each other back and forth in chaotic scenes.

Police arrested six people and eight officers were hurt in the violence, the head of the

Paris force, Laurent Nunez, said Saturday.

In a separate incident, farmers poured manure on the stand of dairy giant Lactalis, which they accuse of not paying enough for its milk.

"Who would have said this morning that 12 hours later we'd still be working and advancing," Macron said at around 8:00 pm.

"It's ridiculous that a small number of farmers spread violence at their own fair," he added. He finally left around 9:00 pm — 13 hours after he arrived.

Macron meets farmers' leaders

While French presidents have often been jeered at the annual fair, Saturday's scenes were a first. Farmers' leaders had warned Macron that his visit to the "Salon de l'Agriculture" — a fixture of the presidential calendar — would not go smoothly if the government had not delivered on their promises to meet their demands. — AFP

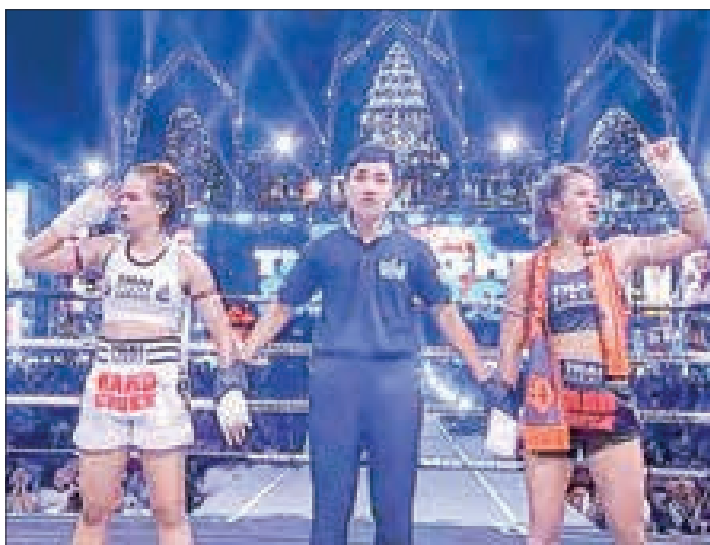
SPORTS

Vero Nika loses to opponent by referee's decision

IN the Muay Thai Fighter of Myanmar Vero Nika faced shock loss to the opponent named Fahsai in three rounds by points, despite having more talents during the bout of the Thai Fight that took place at 8:00 pm Myanmar standard time on 25 February.

In the match, Vero Nika was able to attack her opponent for three rounds with the advantage of ability. But according to the scoring rules, the referee gave Fahsai the win. Therefore, Vero Nika's undefeated streak was also broken.

"When a fighter comes to compete in other countries, she has to win if she can throw down. If she can't do that in three rounds, judges will declare their nationals as a winner. Looking at this match,



Vero Nika (rightmost) and Fahsai (leftmost) are seen with excitements after their bout.

Vero Nika ability is far more superior than the opponent," commented a local sports news analyst.

Regarding the fight Vero

Nika wrote on her social media page that, "I'm sorry everyone. It was a very tiring match. I'm really sorry that I couldn't keep the win". — Htun Htun/KZL



Myanmar Football Federation officials address coordination meeting 1/2024 at Novotel Yangon Max Hotel in Yangon on 25 February 2024. PHOTO: MFF

MFF holds first meeting of 2024 for football development

THE Myanmar Football Federation held coordination meeting 1/2024 at Novotel Yangon Max Hotel in Yangon yesterday.

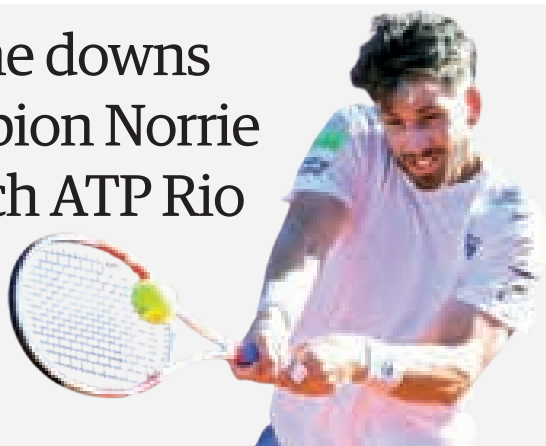
U Zaw Zaw, President of the Myanmar Football Federation, gave an opening speech at the meeting.

Football authorities discussed construction of Myanmar Women's Football Academy in Mandalay, construction of an international level futsal training ground, construction

of High Performance Centre (HPC) for elite teams and construction of two training grounds with the support of the Ayeyawady Foundation.

They also discussed the comprehensive implementation of the FIFA Football For School programme across the country and the ability to jointly open summer basic football courses for young people in various regions. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

Navone downs champion Norrie to reach ATP Rio final



Defending champion Cameron Norrie crashed out of the ATP Rio Open semi-finals on Saturday, losing in straight sets to Argentine qualifier Mariano Navone. PHOTO: AFP

DEFENDING champion Cameron Norrie crashed out of the ATP Rio Open clay court tournament on Saturday, slumping to a straight sets semi-final defeat against Argentinian qualifier Mariano Navone.

British No 1 Norrie — aiming to win back-to-back titles in Rio after defeating Carlos Alcaraz in last year's final — struggled in hot and humid conditions before sliding to a 6-4, 6-2 defeat.

The 22-year-old Navone, currently ranked 113th in the world, was handed three match points when Norrie smacked a forehand long in the eighth game of the second set.

Another miscued return by the second-seeded British world number 23 sealed victory for the Argentine youngster, who advances to the first ATP final of his career, where he will face compatriot Sebastien Baez.

"It's incredible, my first final," Navone said after the win. "I played so good all week. Today was very hot and humid, it's tough to play in these conditions. "But I've played six matches in a row so I feel pretty good". — AFP

Liga Stavok Phygital hockey

Teams engaged in simulated and 3x3 ice hockey, with Baltic Select clinching victory over Quetzales Mexico Na despite the latter's strong start.



Each game consisted of two stages: first, the participants competed in a hockey simulator, and then on real ice in the 3x3 format. PHOTO: EN.GOFUTURE.GAMES

THE first matches of the group stage of the Liga Stavok Phygital Hockey were held at the Kazan Ice Arena. Each game consisted of two stages: first, the participants competed in a hockey simulator, and then on real ice in the 3x3 format.

In the opening match of the tournament, teams from

the Baltic States and North America met, and they pleased the fans with a large number of goals scored.

The Quetzales Mexico Na hockey players played better in interactive hockey, with Sam Blais standing out. They led 6-4 before the physical stage, and for a long time there was

an intense struggle on the ice rink. Both teams actively attacked, but at the end of the match, Baltic Select seized the initiative and, thanks to goals from Nikita Zantmans and Kirils Tambijevs, secured the victory.

"I am disappointed with the outcome of the match. Our team prepared well, but it was not enough. We underestimated the opponent," admitted Carlos Fornaris, captain of Quetzales Mexico Na.

"I think phygital sports is a great idea, and Games of the Future is a unique event. We are impressed, surprised and happy.

It's incredibly beautiful around, the organization is at a very professional level. I'm enjoying this moment. When I was offered to participate, I gladly agreed". — EN.GOFUTURE.GAMES



Brunei holds National Day celebration



Brunei's Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah attends the 40th National Day Celebration at the National Stadium in the capital city of Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei, 24 February 2024. Brunei Darussalam on Saturday held a celebration to commemorate the 40th anniversary of independence. **PHOTO: JEFFERY WONG/XINHUA**

Brunei Darussalam celebrated its 40th independence anniversary with a parade and performances at the Hassanal Bolkiah National Stadium in Bandar Seri Begawan. Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah graced the event.

BRUNEI Darussalam on Saturday held a celebration to commemorate the 40th anniversary of independence.

Parade and performances were held at the Hassanal Bolkiah National

Stadium in Bandar Seri Begawan, the capital of Brunei Darussalam. Brunei's Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah attended the celebration.

The Southeast Asian country is re-

nowned for its beautiful tropical landscapes, abundant oil and natural gas resources. The Bruneian government has been committed to promoting economic diversification. — Xinhua

CPP SECURES DOMINANT VICTORY

Cambodia's ruling party wins sweeping victory in Senate election: spokesperson

THE ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) won a sweeping victory in the fifth election for the Senate, or the upper house, on Sunday, a party's spokesperson said.

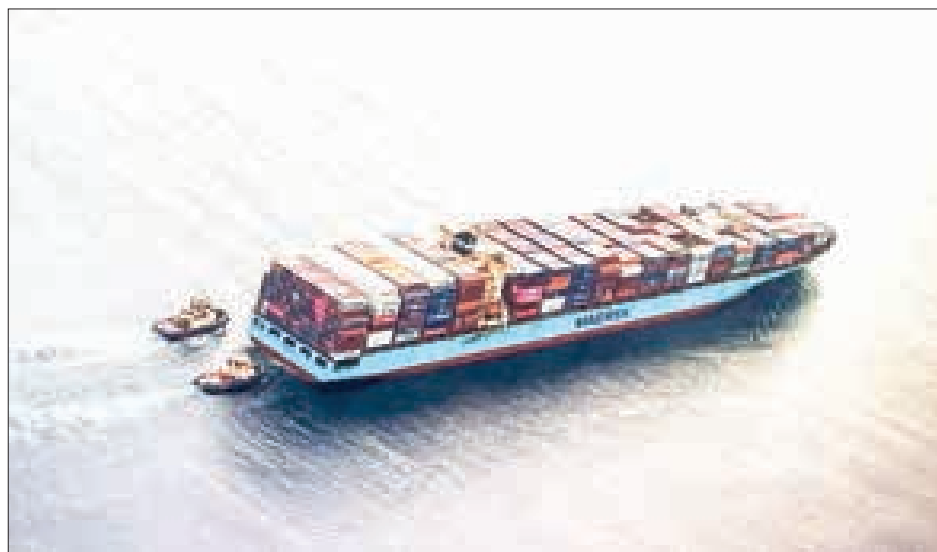
CPP's spokesperson Sok Eysan, citing preliminary results, said the CPP won the most majority votes in the election.

"The CPP won at least 50 of the 58 Senate seats up for grabs, or more than 80 per cent of the total votes," he told Xinhua.

"This is another great success for the CPP after we won a landslide victory in the general election in July 2023," Eysan said.

He confirmed that former Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen, the 71-year-old president of the CPP, will take over as the president of the Senate after the election, giving him the role of acting head of state when the king is overseas. — Xinhua

German frigate joins EU naval mission to secure Red Sea routes



Equipped with a crew of 240 soldiers, two Sea Lynx helicopters, and advanced weaponry, including anti-aircraft missiles, Hessen is tasked with ensuring safe sea lanes.

THE German frigate Hessen has joined the European Union's naval mission to secure sea routes in the Red Sea amid increased attacks on cargo ships by the Houthis, the German Defence Ministry said on Sunday.

On 8 February, German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius unveiled Berlin's plans to send Hessen with a crew of 240 soldiers for participation in the EU mission in the Red Sea.

"The frigate Hessen has arrived in

the Red Sea. Its mission [to ensure] safe sea lanes begins," the ministry said on X (formerly Twitter).

Apart from 240 servicepeople, the frigate carries a team of two Sea Lynx helicopters, as well as a medical team, marines and a chaplain.

The 469-foot-long warship is equipped with anti-aircraft missiles, a radar reconnaissance system capable of tracking 1,000 targets simultaneously, and attack helicopters. — SPUTNIK

The United States and the United Kingdom have bombed more than a dozen Houthi sites in Yemen, officials said, as the Yemeni rebel group stepped up its attacks on ships in the Red Sea in protest against Israel's war on Gaza. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/AFP**