

# The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

## SAC Chairman C-in-C of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing virtually meets senior officer instructors, trainees at NDC



State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing addresses the meeting with senior officer instructors and senior officer trainees of the National Defence College through videoconferencing yesterday.

**C**HAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing delivered a speech to senior officer instructors and senior officer trainees of the National Defence College through videoconferencing yesterday morning.

In his speech, the Senior General said that although only senior military officers were selected to attend the National Defence College in the past, now senior civilian officers are also chosen to attend the same course. If nobody thoroughly carries out their tasks without political, economic, administrative and defence outlooks, these tasks will be requirements for the State. Departmental heads must be capable of serving their duties with these four outlooks. Trainees have to discuss with each other and study for the whole year, so it is a valuable training course. As such, they

have to try hard to benefit the State. Trainees have to push hard to contribute to themselves and the State through their experiences.

In political affairs, the Senior General noted that Myanmar is a sovereign nation with water and land territories under a strong historical background. Although the country gained development in relevant eras, it gradually lags behind the development of contemporary countries and some neighbouring countries. In the mathematics and industrial technology of the education sector, the country faces many weak points, and it is far from other countries. Hence, the Senior General urged all to discover lessons based on the aforesaid points for the sake of the nation.

Afterwards, the Senior General clarified invasion of colonialists to Myanmar to take out natural resources and independence struggle of the My-

anmar people, competition of socialists and capitalists in the pre- and post-independence periods, ethnic armed conflicts triggered by instigation of colonialist government and different political doctrines and economic policies, occurrences of unrests and uprisings due to weakness in management of the socialism with downtrend of the State economy, efforts of the Tatmadaw for taking the State responsibilities in September 1988 due to deterioration of sovereignty of the nation, leading the endeavours of initiating the multiparty democratic system the people aspire to, drawing the Constitution in conformity with the democratic system, discussions of people from all walks of life to draft the Constitution at the National Convention, approval of the Constitution (2008) through the referendum, serving the State responsibilities by the State Administration Council under the Constitution (2008) due the fact that

the voting fraud could not be solved in the 2020 multiparty democratic general election, implementation of two political and national visions each by the State Administration Council, continuous walking on the path to the multiparty democratic system, preparations to hold a free and fair election, implementing the missions and visions for development of the nation, turning out the educated citizens, and future plans to fortify political, economic and military might for the State.

Also present at the meeting were SAC Vice-Chairman Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Maung Maung Aye, senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army), the commandant of the college, senior officer instructors and senior officer trainees. — MNA/TTA

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MoHT UM attends knowledge-sharing seminar on ASEAN tourism standards in Patheingyi

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38<sup>th</sup> AICHR meeting addresses human rights, anti-poverty, and misinformation

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Strawberry cultivation in Hopong supports country's agricultural development

# NATIONAL

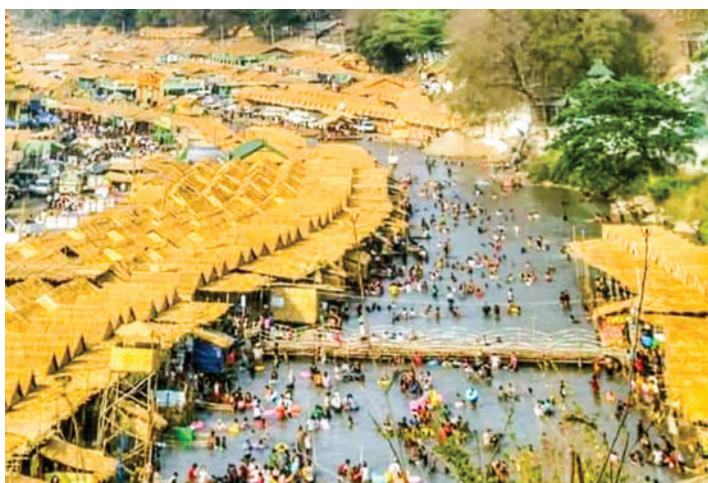
## Objectives of 79<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Armed Forces Day 2024

- (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.



An aerial view captures the enchanting Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda.

## Visitors flock to historic Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda



A bird's-eye view captures the vibrant Shwesettaw Pagoda Festival bustling with visitors.

VISITORS thronged the famous Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda situated in Minbu (Sagu) Township, Magway Region, according to U Thein Hlaing,

vice-chairperson of the pagoda board of trustees.

The pagoda festival was opened on 14 February 2024 with many amusement pro-

grammes, including concerts and music entertainment, and it was crowded with visitors across Myanmar on public holidays. This year is a leap year, so the festival can only be held for 64 days. The construction of new buildings related to the pagoda has also been upgraded.

Reportedly, there are four upgraded lodgings and 54 standard lodgings for visitors. First-class lodgings cost K100,000 per day, while second-class rooms cost K80,000 per day, third-class lodgings cost K50,000 per day, waterfront lodgings cost K50,000 per day, and inland accommodations cost K35,000. — Zeya Htet (Minbu)/KZL

## Surveys planned to conduct tourist destination research

THE Ministry of Hotels and Tourism will conduct data collection on tourist attractions, and research will be followed for the development of the tourism industry in those areas, said the ministry's Permanent Secretary U Hlaing Oo.

Since last year, the conduction of a survey on statistics related to the tourism industry, about visitor stay, what visitors enjoy, and opportunities for the travel industry has begun with the support of the Lancang-Mekong project, he said.

"Surveying has been started since last year with the aid of China under the Lancang-Mekong project. The survey covered destinations where foreigners visited as well as popular destinations for local visitors such as Ngwehsaung, Chaungtha, Ngapali, PyinOoLwin, Mandalay and Bagan. We collected data, especially on destinations. Through surveying popular destinations for both local and foreign visitors, we will continue to carry out research for the tourism development of those areas," he said.

Besides, Myanmar has

opportunities for implementing community-based tourism (CBT), and at the same time, SOPs have been developed, he said. The ministry will continue to develop procedures for job creation and business opportunity when there is a common consent for SOPs, he added.

"There are many opportunities to implement CBTs in our country. Because the environment of those destinations and the culture and customs of local ethnics have been displayed for the visitors. CBT means the conservation of the environment and the culture of the tribes with the cooperation of local organizations like wards or villages, and job creation and means of livelihood will be developed at the same time. So, we have now developed SOPs to implement CBT, and we will continue to write procedures for job creation and business opportunities for residents after SOPs are set," he said.

At present, the arrival of both foreign and local visitors has increased, and it is likely to develop more in 2024, said the permanent secretary. — MT/ZS



International travellers seen in the Bagan Ancient Heritage Zone.

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

# NATIONAL

## Myanmar Embassy in Viet Nam offers alms meals to State Sangha Maha Nayaka Sayadaws

ALMS food was donated to members of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Sayadaws at the Myanmar Embassy in Viet Nam on 20 and 21 February.

Members of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Sayadaws visited Viet Nam at the invitation of Sayadaw Bhaddanta Tazathara of the Vija Vihara Monastery.

Chargé d'affaires ai U Soe Ko Ko of the Myanmar Embassy and Military Attaché Brig-Gen Myat Htun Naing, together with family members, donated offertories and day meals to Sayadaws. Afterwards, attendees received the five precepts from Sayadaws and listened to Patthana recitation. — ASH/MKKS



The photo shows families of the Myanmar Embassy and attendees observing the Five Precepts and listening to Pathana chanting at the event on 20-21 February 2024.

## MoHT UM attends knowledge-sharing seminar on ASEAN tourism standards in Pathein



Union Minister Dr Thet Thet Khine poses for a group documentary photo at yesterday's event in Ayeyawady Region.

UNION Minister for Hotels and Tourism Dr Thet Thet Khine, along with Ayeyawady Region Economic Affairs Minister U Tin Aye and officials, visited the Ngwehsaung Resort Elephant Camp at the 19-mile post along the Pathein-Ngwehsaung highway to observe its operations yesterday.

The Union Minister was in Pathein to attend a knowledge-sharing seminar on ASEAN tourism standards at the Pathein Hotel on 26 February.

During the seminar, she presented the goals of the

ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (2016-25) and discussed the implementation of ASEAN tourism standards.

She emphasized the necessity for collaboration between the public and private sectors to achieve sustainable development and provide quality services.

She proudly shared that Myanmar has already implemented ten tourism norms and has received 121 ASEAN tourism standard awards.

Subsequently, Ayeyawady Region Chief Minister U Tin

Maung Win outlined the regional government's initiatives for tourism development and provided an update on visitor statistics.

After the meeting, the Union Minister visited the Yamonnar Oo Hotel in Ngwehsaung and met with stakeholders in the region to discuss destination promotions.

She emphasized the importance of cleanliness and shared future plans. Then, both she and the chief minister addressed questions raised by the attendees. — MNA/NT

## Antique fire engine museum opens in Yangon Region

A museum dedicated to preserving antique fire engines has opened within the compound of the Department of Fire Services in Mayangon Township, Yangon Region, and it is open to the public.

Director U Thein Tun Oo of the department said, "We opened the museum for the public to learn about the history of fire services and to study fire engines used throughout different periods. That is the first of its kind in Myanmar, and we are very proud of it. Similar muse-

ums exist in other countries".

Foreign visitors were also among those who came to observe the vehicles, some of which date back to the colonial era.

The museum exhibits nine antique fire engines, including the "Fire Kings" – Merryweather (Steam) and Merryweather (Petrol) – which were manufactured in the UK and arrived in Myanmar in 1909.

Currently, the Department of Fire Services has 3,665 fire engines at its disposal nationwide. — ASH/NT



The museum located at the Myanmar Fire Services Department in Mayangon Township is dedicated to preserving antique fire engines.

### COVID-19 report, 26 February 2024

NEW TESTS

16,076

NEW CASES

31

CASUALTIES

NIL

# NATIONAL

## 38<sup>th</sup> AICHR meeting addresses human rights, anti-poverty, and misinformation

THE Ministry of Foreign Affairs has reported that the 38<sup>th</sup> meeting of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) took place in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic. The meeting focused on human rights, poverty alleviation, and combatting misinformation and disinformation.

The 38<sup>th</sup> Meeting of AICHR occurred from 20 to 23 February. U Mang Hauk Thang, Deputy



The AICHR meeting and documentary photo of attendees.

Director-General of the ASEAN Affairs Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, led the Myanmar delegation.

According to the report, the meeting addressed various topics, including current developments in ASEAN, matters concerning the organization of AICHR, and the implementation of prioritized projects for 2023 and 2024. These projects encompassed human rights, human

trafficking, environmental and climate change issues, rights of persons with disabilities, children's rights, and efforts to combat poverty, misinformation, and disinformation in line with sustainable development goals.

The AICHR Myanmar representative discussed citizen rights, peace, prosperity, and democracy during the meeting. — ASH/ TMT

### Counter-argument to false information

## Rakhine State govt clarifies fake news about Bengali conscription

THE news that the State Administration Council has been enrolling the Bengalis in Rakhine State to serve in military service is not absolutely true; it is just a fake story, according to the Rakhine State government.

Such a news item on the website of The Business Standard, a Bangladeshi media, accused the Myanmar Government of recruiting Bengalis from refugee camps by luring

them with free travel. Some Bangladeshi media have just quoted the false and unsubstantiated statements of RFA and some malicious Myanmar media outlets.

"There is no such a case. Bengalis are not even our citizens. The People's Military Service Law is only at the stage of forming state and regional committees. It still needs to form many committees at dif-

ferent levels, such as district, township and ward/village. And it must also draft and stipulate the bylaw for it. So, the aforesaid news is not true. There is no such thing in Rakhine State," an official of the Rakhine State government said. The Bangladesh-based Dhaka Tribune also published another item of false news that there was an unverified report about the arrest and recruitment of

thousands of Bengali refugees from the border region to fight in the ongoing war. As malicious media have been fabricating misinformation after the announcement of the enforcement of the People's Military Service Law in order to cause anxiety and worry among the people and locals, that is another pattern of spreading fake news, said a Yangon-based media observer. — Myo Khine/ZN

## Fake news claims 15 MDY youths recruited under overnight guest inspection



THE subversive news media RFA intentionally circulates fake news that at least 15 youths were arrested by the security forces in Aungpinle Ward, Chanmyathazi Township in Mandalay, on 25 February under overnight guest list inspection. It was found to be false news as no security forces conducted an overnight guest list inspection on 25 February, and no youth was arrested, a relevant officer confirmed. In addition, there is no such incident of exchanging money with the detainees.

Likewise, Khit Thit publishes false news that Tatmadaw is encouraging university students to serve in the military and forcing the outstanding students who received stipends from the government to serve military duty.

With regard to fake news, state-owned media publishes accurate news and announcements from time to time. However, malicious news outlets are intentionally spreading rumours and fake news to flame the fear among the public regarding the People's Military Service Law. — MNA/TNT

## Misleading media falsify reports of security forces' actions in Loneyi Village



The screenshot validates misinformation.

ON 25 February, malicious media circulated false news on social platforms, alleging that security forces had attacked Loneyi Village in Sedoktara Township, Magway Region, using heavy artillery and setting houses ablaze without provocation.

A security official clarified that the People's Defence Force (PDF) insurgents were responsible for acts of violence

in villages across Sedoktara. By acting on a tip-off from a local source, security forces launched operations alongside residents to address the situation.

The insurgents had reportedly erected barricades at critical locations such as the monastery, school, and residential buildings in Loneyi Village, engaging in confrontations with security personnel on the date mentioned above.

Following the clashes, the terrorists fled the village, leaving behind burning homes in their wake.

Certain malicious media outlets disseminate false narratives to disrupt community peace and stability, aiming to conceal the collaborative efforts between security forces and residents in maintaining security. — MNA/NT

## Misleading reports by Khit Thit media on events in Kawkareik

KHIT Thit media has been spreading false information, alleging that security forces looted valuables from the homes of residents fleeing conflict in Kawkareik, Kayin State, and destroyed their houses by burning them and dropping bombs.

However, a resident refuted these claims, stating that the reports were entirely fabricated. Additionally, a security official in the area confirmed that innocent civilians were harmed solely due to violent actions by terrorists within Kawkareik township. These terrorists indiscriminately attacked security forces with small arms and heavy weapons, resulting in injuries to locals and damage



The screenshot validates fake news.

to their properties.

These malicious media outlets are evidently circulating false news intentionally, with the aim of sowing discord and unrest in the country. — MNA/TRKM

# NATIONAL

## Farmers switch modern system in agriculture increasing grain output

**M**YANMAR farmers are adapting with modern agricultural technologies, and they have switched from the manual to the mechanized farming, increasing the output of rice, and meeting the domestic demand.

Since Myanmar is an agricultural country, more than 70 per cent of the country's population is farmers, and in order to improve the lives of farmers, the government changed the manual farming system to a mechanized farming. In addition to monsoon farming, irrigated farming has been introduced by using dams, solar system irrigation, and underground water tapping to enable cultivation for the whole year.

From the previous system of monoculture farming per year, now double and triple cropping systems and mixed-cropping are expanded to increase the yield and planting methods. Officials from the Department of Agriculture in



various townships have educated the farmers the methods of applying compost and fertilizers proportionately and demonstrated planting in the

agricultural offices and in field. In addition, the government is implementing the rural area development and poverty reduction projects as a national

goal, developing the agricultural sector and improving the socioeconomic life of farmers. Therefore, the work of cultivation, planting, seedling, and

harvesting used to be carried out by humans are replaced with modern agricultural machinery such as power-tillers, paddy transplanting machines,

combine harvesters and tractors. Instead of the old varieties of paddy pedigrees, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Agricultural Research jointly produced Hsin Thukha-1, Hsin Thukha-2, Hsin Thukha-3, Hsin Thukha-4, Shweyitoe, YMR-20 rice varieties and medium-grain high-quality rice varieties such as Sarphotha, Thai Hnankauk and GW-11 rice varieties. Previously, 60 or 70 baskets of paddy per acre were produced but now the rate of rice production has improved significantly, and the output has increased from 90 to 120 baskets per acre. — Zaya Htet (Minbu)/TKO

## Myanmar's Pathein parasol gains decoration market attention despite slow trade



MYANMAR handicraft Pathein parasol has gained popularity in the decoration market, and the business has still survived, though its sales have not been good.

"Now, Pathein parasols have been used in decoration for shops. There is attention in the market as they have been used for shop decoration. So, parasols have been sold, though there

The photo showcases exquisite Pathein parasols.

is no steady sale. It is a Myanmar handicraft, so the business has been running, but the sale is not active. An order has at least 50 parasols. It is fine if we normally have an order from a shop. They order 100-200 parasols," said an official from the Duda Pathein parasol trading from Mandalay.

Local products — wood, hteeyoe bamboo (*thyrsostachys siamensis*), Taragu bamboo, persimmon, satin fabric and cloth are used mainly to make a parasols originally produced

in Pathein. The whole process is made by hand, including dyeing and painting the whole body.

The price of a Pathein parasol in 4-10 inches is K3,000 on average, and it can even be up to K100,000 depending on size. Pathein parasols are made in different forms — monk or nun umbrellas, fancy umbrellas, rain umbrellas, royal umbrellas, table umbrellas, lamp umbrellas, hotel decoration umbrellas and beach umbrellas. — Thit Taw/ZS

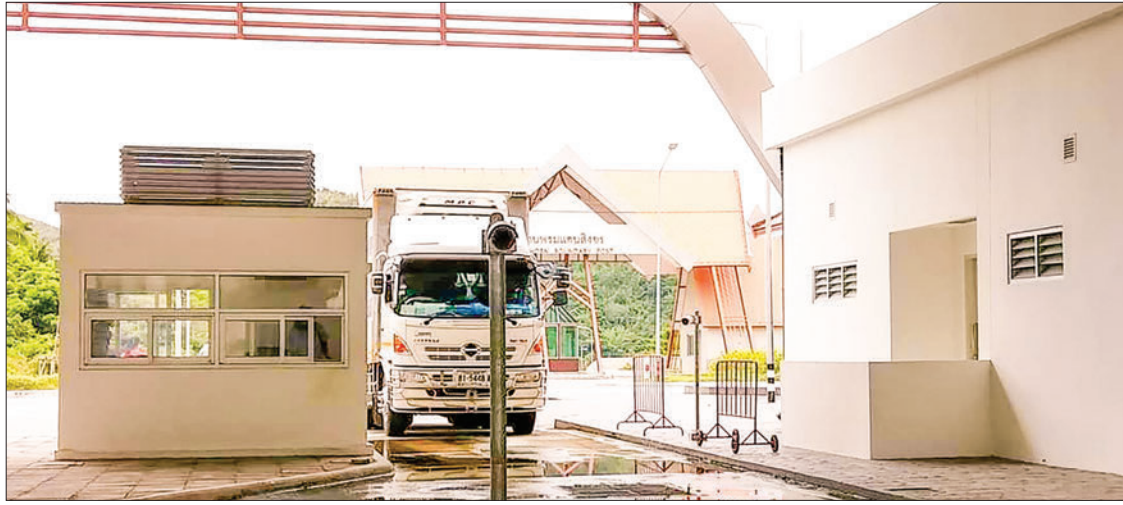
# NATIONAL

## Myanmar exceeds border trade targets, achieving US\$26.567M in Feb third week

THE report indicates that Myanmar conducted a total of US\$25.9768 million in trade during the third week of February, particularly through the Mawtaung, Kawthoung, and Kampaiti border trade posts.

Breaking down the figures, the Mawtaung border saw a total of \$0.9648 million in trade, comprising \$0.6582 million in exports and \$0.3066 million in imports from 21 to 25 February.

At the Kawthoung trade post, the primary exports consist of aquatic products to Thailand under the FOB system. Key export items include various fishes, shrimps, octopus, squids, crabs,



The photo shows the Sinkhun-Mawtaung border trade post through which aquatic products are transported to Thailand.

and palm oil. During the period from 20 to 24 February 2024, the country traded a total of 4,922.645 tonnes in imports, amounting to a total trade value of \$6.065

million.

The targeted trade amount for February 2024 was set at \$20 million. However, as of 24 February, the actual trade figure stood at \$26.567 million, exceeding the target by 130 per cent. Similarly, the Kampaiti border also surpassed the targeted trade amount by 123.908 per cent, with the real trade figure reaching \$18.947 million.

On 25 February, Union Minister for Commerce U Tun Ohn urged a review of the process for issuing import licences and the taxation imposed on commodities imported via land borders. — TWA/TMT

## Shwesettaw festival organizers tackle concerns over high lodging fees

THE Board of Trustees of the Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda has stated that complaints regarding excessive lodging fees during the Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda Festival can be lodged with them should they surpass the rates set by the relevant authorities.

The Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda Festival, known as the longest-running festival in Myanmar, typically takes place in Minbu Township of Magway Region and spans approximately two months.

This year's festival boasts over 1,000 guesthouses and more

than 400 stalls.

Guest house rates are as follows: K100,000 per day for first-class rooms, K80,000 per day for second-class rooms, and K50,000 per day for third-class rooms. Waterfront lodgings are priced at K50,000 per day, while inland accommodations are priced at K35,000 per day.

The Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda Festival will run for 64 days, starting from the 5<sup>th</sup> Waxing of Tabodwe until the first day of the Myanmar New Year. — TWA/MKKS



The photo shows high-class lodgings in the Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda.

## Weekly market update of dry groceries at Bayintnaung Commodity Wholesale Centre

FOR the week from 20 to 27 February 2024, prices of black grams bounced back. Prices of green grams (Shwewah variety), chickpeas and pigeon peas declined. The onion price remained high. The wholesale reference price for palm oil inched higher a bit compared with that of the previous week.

### Onion

With 240,000 visses of onions flowing into the Bayintnaung market, the opening price was on the high side. The wholesale prices hit the highest of K1,900-K3,800 per viss depending on the producing areas (Seikphyu, Myittha and Myingyan) on 27 February.

### Chilli pepper

Wholesale prices of chilli peppers were registered at K9,000-K11,000 per viss for long chilli pepper and Moehtaung variety on 27 February. Prices of bell peppers from the Sinyu and Bilin areas were K14,500-K17,000 per viss.

### Garlic

Prices of garlic from Aungban, Shan State, hit K16,000-K17,800 per viss, depending on varieties and qualities on 27 February, whereas



The photo depicts a dry grocery store in a market complex.

the Kyukok garlic price rose to K9,800 per viss. Newly supplied garlic from Shan State fetched K12,500-K14,500 per viss.

### Potato

Shan potatoes touched a high of K1,900-K2,400 per viss on 27 February.

### Rice

Prices hit K86,000-K90,000 per sack of non-premium monsoon rice K103,000-K115,000 per sack of Pawkywe variety on 21 February. Meanwhile, the new Pawsan rice of premium quality was worth K140,000-K166,000 per sack depending on producing areas (Pyapon, Myaungmya, Shwebo). The sticky rice fetched K100,000-K102,000 per sack.

### Palm oil

For the week from 26 February to 3 March 2023, the wholesale reference price of Yangon Region is set higher to K5,180 per viss, which is up by K40 compared with that of last week.

### Pulses

The prices of various pulses stood at K3,220,000 per tonne of black grams (Fair Average Quality/RC), K3,442,000 per tonne of black grams (Special Quality/RC), K3,710,000 per tonne of pigeon peas (red gram) RC, K4,250 per viss of green grams (Shwewah) and K6,250-K6,400 per viss of chickpeas in Yangon's wholesale markets on 27 February 2024. — TWA/KK

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.

# Strawberry cultivation in Hopong supports country's agricultural development

IN accordance with the nine objectives of the State Administration Council "To enhance agriculture and livestock production with modern technologies for the benefit of all National people and to promote growth in other sectors of the economy for achieving national prosperity and food security.", strawberry cultivation is increasingly formulated for the agricultural development with the State economic promotion fund.

Many farmers in Lwaiaun Village, Yankin Village, Htanchar Village, and Pharloi Village located in Hopong Township, Pa-O Self-Administered Zone in southern Shan State, grow strawberries in the winter season. Those cultivation fields are also attractive to travellers. Strawberry cultivation is costly and needs many input factors to increase productivity. The state also subsidizes the strawberry growers to promote the country's economy.

Promoting the strawberry market and cultivation in Hopong will assist the development of local farmers' socio-economic development, market turnovers achieving good quality strawberries, and attracting tourists.

To formulate the agricultural sector development with the State economic promotion fund, the strawberry growers' group, namely 'Yankin Strawberry Group' has been established with 108 farmers from five villages where strawberry growing is the major business in Hopong. Member of the Yankin Strawberry group U Khun Tun Sein remarked that the land, water, weather, and natural resources of Hopong favours strawberry cultivation. Strawberry is a regional fruit; thus, the agricultural department also assists the farmers to get good quality seeds. Strawberries from Hopong can be

delivered to Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw markets since the quality is good. The Strawberry group from Loiaun, Kantan, Htanchar, and Pharloi villages has already received K5,000,000 from the State economic promotion fund with low-interest rates.

To promote the country's agricultural sector with modern technologies, loans are subsidized by the State economic promotion fund from November 2023 to April 2024. There are a total

of 100 cultivation acres by 108 farmers involving 94 acres by 99 farmers from Yankin Village, one acre by two farmers from Pharloi Village, 1.5 acres by two farmers from Tonkhum, 2.5 acres by three farmers from Kanta, and one acre by two farmers from Loiaun Village. A total of 10,000 strawberry seedlings can be grown in one acre which costs over K14,000,000. Approximately 2,800 visses are expected to be produced per acre, especially in harvesting time from January to May. The strawberry price is K6,500 per viss on average.

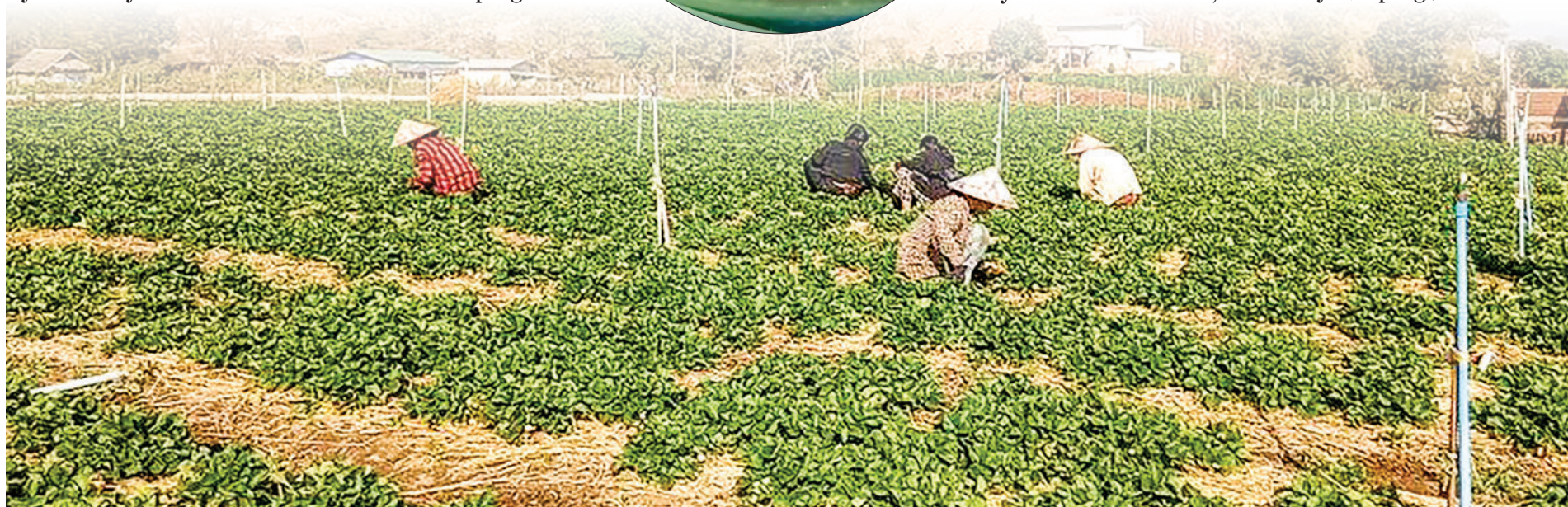
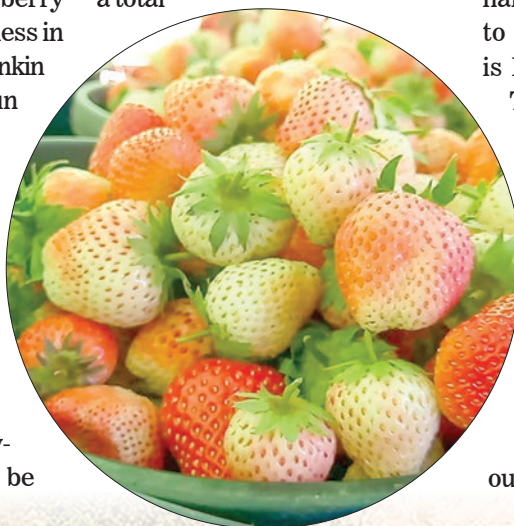
Therefore, approximately K18,200,000 will be earned for an acre, which generates K4,000,000 profit for an acre.

The strawberry growers reported that strawberry yield in Hopong this year is much better than years before and earns more than the previous year. On the other hand, the

cost was also high this year. For instance, fertilizer prices and labour charges are getting higher much more than last year. There are various colours in strawberries; mostly red, pink, and white with various shapes including oval. Locally called 'Japanese species' are primarily grown and are also good to transport to faraway regions.

Strawberries are usually seeded in late April (after Thingyan) and grown in July. It is harvested in December. Productivity is low in the initial harvesting time. The strawberries are harvested once every three days for three-acre cultivation. It has to harvest at least 70 buckets, each containing more than one viss of strawberry in each harvest time.

Various species of strawberries such as Chinese Taipei soft, brittle, species combination of Japanese species and Myanmar species, Japanese species, local species, etc in Hopong. — Pan Khaye (Hopong)/TMT



## CBM clarifies misinformation on March release of K20,000 note

THE Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) refuted the printing of K20,000 notes in March, as per its notification dated 26 February.

That false news spreading on social media pages triggered people to buy automobiles and

US dollars in large quantities. Subsequently, the news of vehicle and dollar values moving up was also circulating on social media.

CBM has issued new K20,000 notes from 31 July 2023 in return for defaced and dam-

aged notes. The new notes are distributed in a limited number. CBM mentioned in the statement that those unscrupulous individuals deliberately intended to stir chaos in the forex market, sparking concerns.

Under Section 10 and

Paragraph 15 of the Foreign Exchange Management Law, domestic residents are allowed to keep US\$10,000 in maximum or equivalent amounts of foreign currencies for six months.

Those holding foreign currencies without valid licenc-

es and permits will face legal action under the existing law. CBM beefed up its crackdown on illegal forex transactions and combatted the misleading information that those with manipulative behaviour created to deceive people. — NN/EM

# OPINION

## Don't give favour to illegal traders and their activities

**A**VOID providing support to unlawful traders and their activities. The Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee is actively engaged in combating illegal trading and implementing measures to curb such activities. The committee, tasked with safeguarding the interests of legal trade and traders, operates nationwide, ensuring the prosperity of the state's economic sector and private businesses.

In the period spanning from January to December 2023, the Department of Customs executed a substantial number of seizures, with a focus on international airports, permanent checkpoints, trade zones, and trade camps, including international ports. Special task forces in regions and states, in addition to Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, work under the committee's supervision and target smuggled goods and illegal trade activities across various regions and states.

Notably, Mandalay Region witnessed the highest volume of seized commodities, trailed by Taninthayi Region and Kachin State, among the 14 regions and states, in addition to Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.

Over a two-year period, the committee underwent restructuring to diminish the index associated with illegal trade measures. Consequently, it spearheaded operations resulting in the confiscation of smuggled goods valued at K200.422 billion in 10,395 cases. However, the figures revealed a decrease of K70.31 billion in seizures of illegal commodities and smuggled goods in 2022 compared to 2023, indicating a persistent occurrence of illegal trade within the nation.

Seized contraband typically includes unregistered vehicles, vehicles transporting smuggled goods, intermediate

goods, and capital goods. Task forces from various regions and states must intensify their efforts to enforce legal measures in designated areas such as international airports, ports, border camps, and permanent checkpoints.

During the 1/2024 coordination meeting of the steering committee, Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win emphasized the importance of collaboration between state service personnel, officials, businesspersons, and the public in consistently eradicating illegal trade. This collaborative effort is considered a national duty to mitigate the adverse effects of illicit trade on legal businesses, trade, and overall national development.

As such, it is crucial for the public to acquire a comprehensive understanding of illegal trade activities, recognizing them as destructive acts that hinder the nation's economic development. Such activities contribute to soaring commodity prices, leading to daily challenges and manipulating the state's business inflation rate. Consequently, active participation from everyone is essential in eradicating illegal trade and holding traders accountable in all locations without exception.

**I**T IS well known that social skills play an essential role in this 21<sup>st</sup> century almost everywhere, including international study programs on a scholarship. Such programmes often call for the social development of adolescents, for instance, communicative and collaborative skills, in that they will meet adolescents of their own ages under diverse cultures from different parts of the world. Social development can be herein defined as the progressive improvement through the direct activity of each individual in the comprehension of social heritage and the formation of flexible conduct patterns of reasonable conformity with this heritage.

There are found certain aspects of adolescent social development as fundamental and influence upon the youth's maturing personal characteristics. Speaking clearly, an adolescent wants to be liked by his peers. Also, he attempts to his behaviour in terms of what he considers to represent the standards of peer groups. The adolescent may say he wants complete freedom, but he will need somebody to have sympathy towards his troubles, thwarting and conflicts. In this context, he usually seeks to choose friends among the opposite sex of the opposite sex than the same sex, also in the conduct of his family, his home appearance and his father's vocational activities. He is, therefore, constantly striving for status, his own appearance and outward behaviour included. Exceptionally,

some adolescents become isolated because they have no social dealings at all, due to either physical unattractiveness, lack of suitably presentable clothes, poise or sensitivity to adverse criticism.

As regards the social development of adolescents, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory focuses on the social contexts in which adolescents live and the people who influence their development. This theory comprises five environmental systems ranging from close interpersonal interactions to broad-based influences of culture: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. The microsystem is a setting in which every individual spends considerable time having direct interactions with his family, peers, school and neighbourhood. He reciprocally interacts with others and helps to construct the setting. The mesosystem simply covers linkages between microsystems. The exosystem lies at work when experiences in a setting where the adolescent does not have an active role influence what they and their teachers meet with the immediate context. The macrosystem involves the broader culture that takes the roles of ethnicity and socioeconomic factors in adolescent development. At last, the chronosystem deals with the sociohistorical conditions of adolescent development.

Bronfenbrenner's analysis of social contexts is complemented by Erikson's Eight Stages of Human Development. Each stage contains a developmental period which confronts individuals with a crisis between positive and neg-

# Adolescents and Their Social Development

By Hu Wo (Cuckoo's Song)

ative sides. These stages are as follows - Trust versus Mistrust (1<sup>st</sup>-year infancy), Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt (2<sup>nd</sup>-year infancy), Initiative versus Guilt (between the ages of 3 and 5), Industry versus Inferiority (six years of age to puberty), Identity versus Identity Diffusion (10-20 years of age), Intimacy versus Isolation (20s, 30s), Generativity versus Stagnation (40s, 50s), and Integrity versus Despair (60s onwards). According to the above-mentioned stages, it cannot be said for sure that a person will have all the positive sides through his whole lifespan. Only if the person is well cultivated and developed or grows up sound as a bell will he have possessed the positive sides for certain. Thus, a teacher should encourage initiative in young children; promote industry in elementary school children; stimulate identity exploration

in adolescence; examine his life just as a teacher through the lens of Erikson's eight stages; and benefit from the characteristics of some of Erikson's other stages.

On the basis of Erikson's work are James Marcia's Four Identity Statuses identified from the in-depth interviews with adolescents. Adolescents in the state of FORECLOSURE have never experienced an identity crisis. Instead, they have prematurely established a pseudo-identity based on their parents' choices rather than their own. Adolescents facing IDENTITY DIFFUSION have not found an occupational direction nor an ideological commitment of any kind except that they have made little progress towards these two ends. In such a context, they may have felt the above-shown identity crisis that would not be resolved by them. Adolescents in

the status of MORATORIUM have begun to experiment with occupational and ideological choices but have not yet made definitive commitments to either. Those directly in the midst of an identity crisis are currently examining alternate life choices. IDENTITY ACHIEVEMENT signifies the condition of identity consolidation in which adolescents have autonomously and freely made their clear-cut decisions about occupation and ideology, reflecting their true colours and deep inner commitments, mostly between the ages of 18 and 22.

As children enter adolescence, friendship changes also take place naturally. In general, adolescents spend more time with their peers than with family members or by themselves. Adolescents who have satisfying and harmonious friendships report higher levels of

self-esteem, are less lonely, have more mature social skills, and do better in school than do the ones who lack supportive friendships. During adolescence, the capacity for mutual understanding and the knowledge that others are unique individuals with their own feelings contribute to a dramatic increase in self-disclosure, intimacy, and loyalty among peers. Early adolescents usually strive to establish personal identities independent of those of their parents, increasingly looking to their peers for security and social support. Besides their close friends, most adolescents put a high value on the larger peer group as a source of ideas as well as companionship and entertainment.

Peer relationships in adolescence are of cliques and crowds with whom adolescents associate. A clique is a fairly small, intimate group that is defined by the common interests, activities, and peers of its members, whereas a crowd is a larger group described by its reputation. Allegiance to a clique or crowd is common during adolescence while not necessarily long-term or stable. Here, care should be taken that peer rejection and negative behaviour together can place adolescents at risk.

Children grow up in diverse families that impact greatly on adolescent socioemotional development. Some parents nurture and support their children while others treat them harshly or ignore them. Some children have encountered their parents' divorce whilst others live their entire childhood in a never-separated family. Some even live in a stepfamily. There

are children in an ethnically uniformed neighbourhood, and others in a more mixed one. Some families lead a poor life, but some are economically advantaged. Some children have siblings; others are an only child. These varied circumstances affect adolescents in and beyond the class.

According to Diana Baumrind, parents should be neither punitive nor aloof. Whatever is said, they will develop four parenting styles one way or another. Firstly, authoritarian parenting is restrictive and punitive. Authoritarian parents exhort their children to follow directions and respect them, planning firm limits or controls and allowing little verbal exchange. The children tend to be anxious about social comparison, fail to initiate activity and have poor communication skills. Secondly, authoritative parenting encourages children to be independent, despite still placing limits and controls on their actions. Extensive verbal give-and-take is allowed to them. They are self-reliant, delay gratification, get along with their peers and show high self-esteem. Thirdly, children of neglectful parents like to have poor self-control, do not handle independence well and are not motivated achievement. Fourthly, indulgent parents are given to let their children do what they want and get their way, believing in the combination of nurturant support and lack of restrictions that will produce a creative, confident child. The result is that these children do not usually learn to control their own behaviour as well as their parents must not take into

account the overall development of the whole child.

Finally, the self occurs in the social development of adolescents. Often "I" is referred to as the self by psychologists. Two important aspects of the self are self-esteem and identity. Self-esteem means an individual's overall view of himself, having the same meaning as self-worth or self-image. An adolescent with high self-esteem might perceive that he is not just a normal person but a good person. Low self-esteem is due to the fact that adolescents are not given adequate emotional support and social approval. For many adolescents, periods of low self-esteem come and go. On the other hand, persistent low self-esteem translates into other more serious problems such as low achievement, depression, eating disorders, and delinquency, the seriousness of which depends upon not only the nature of adolescent low self-esteem but also other conditions. When low self-esteem is compounded by difficult school transitions like the transition to middle school or family cases like divorce, adolescent problems can intensify. Moreover, the self-esteem of girls drops more than that of boys during adolescence. Among the reasons why self-esteem declines in both boys and girls are the upheaval in physical changes of puberty, increased achievement demands or expectations and inadequate support from schools and parents. However, this happens, because the social development of adolescents begins at home only, especially in the hands of parents, to my way of thinking.

## New multi-colour 3D printing technology is inspired by chameleons, says study

*Researchers developed a sustainable 3D-printing method inspired by chameleons, allowing dynamic colour changes from a single ink.*

**R**ESearchers created a sustainable approach for 3D-printing various, dynamic colours from a single ink, inspired by chameleons' colour-changing abilities.

"By designing new chemistries and printing processes, we can modulate structural colour on the fly to produce colour gradients not possible before," said Ying Diao, an associate professor of chemistry and chemical and

biomolecular engineering at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and a researcher at the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology. The proceedings of the study were published in the journal PNAS.

### The power of collaboration

"This work is a great illustration of the power of collaboration," said coauthor Damien

Guironnet, an associate professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering.

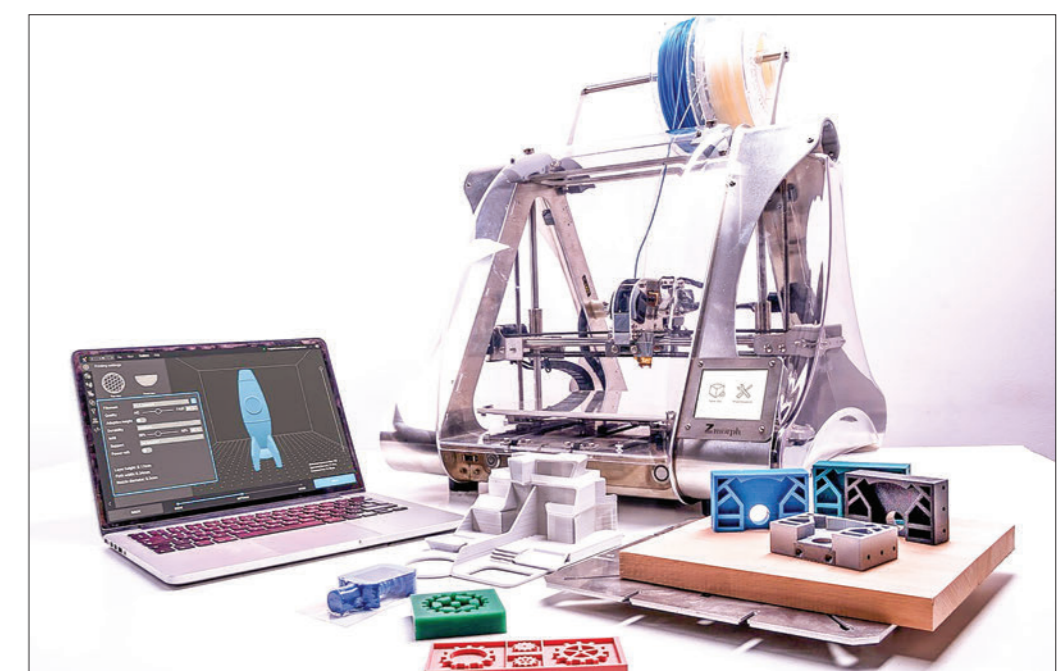
In this study, Diao and her colleagues presented a UV-assisted direct-ink-write 3D printing approach capable of altering structural colour during the printing process by tuning light to control the evaporative assembly of specially designed crosslinking polymers.

"Unlike traditional colours which come

from chemical pigments or dyes that absorb light, the structural colours abundant in many biological systems come from nano-textured surfaces that interfere with visible light.

This makes them more vibrant and potentially more sustainable," said Sanghyun Jeon, the lead author and a graduate student in the Diao Lab.

SOURCE: ANI



Led by Ying Diao at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, the team published their findings in PNAS. ILLUSTRATION: PIXABAY



# NATIONAL

## Statements issued over PDFs in abducting faculty members, educational staff, students of Kalay University

ABOUT 130 PDF terrorists entered Kalay University in Kalay Township of Sagaing Region from the southern direction at 7:30 am on 26 February and forcibly abducted faculty members, students and staff.

Young Men's Buddhist Association (Central), Myanmar Interfaith Dialogue Group (Central), Myanmar Evangelical Christian Alliance, Union of Myanmar Methodist Church (Lower Myanmar), Faith Evangelical Church (Bago), Deliv-

erance Church (Yangon), All Myanmar Hindu Central Council, All Myanmar Tamil Hindu Foundation (HQ), Thananta Dhamma Palaka (Hindu) Association, Islamic Religious Affairs Council Myanmar, Myanmar War Veterans

Organization, Myanmar Press Council, Myanmar Sports Media Federation, Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization, Myanmar Music Association (Central), Myanmar Artists Organization (Central), Myanmar Theatrical As-

sociation (Central), Myanmar Comedians' Association, Myanmar Writers' Association, Pinnaygon Yakhine Jaame Mosque and Buthidaung-Maung-taw Regional Development Association issued statements that they strongly

condemned the acts of terrorism that seriously affect the education sector, and also stated that the abduction of teachers and students for the purpose of using as human shields are totally unacceptable. — MNA/KTZH

### Statement of Young Men's Buddhist Association (Central)

27 February 2024

1. PDF terrorists reportedly abducted faculty members and educational staff serving duties and students studying at Kalay University of Kalay in Sagiang Region on 26 February 2024.
2. The Young Men's Buddhist Association (Central) does not totally accept and also strongly condemns terror acts of PDF terrorists who committed abducting faculty members serving duties for the development of the education sector and human resources of the nation, educational staff and students of Kalay University and using them as human shields.

*Young Men's Buddhist Association (Central)*

### Deliverance Church (Yangon) Statement

27 February 2024

DELIVERANCE Church (Yangon) does not totally accept the acts of PDF terrorists who abducted faculty members, staff and students of Kalay University as human shields and strongly condemns their acts.

*Deliverance Church (Yangon)*

### All Myanmar Hindu Central Council Statement

27 February 2024

1. PDF terrorists reportedly abducted faculty members, students and educational staff of Kalay University on 26 February 2024.
2. As PDF terrorists who abducted faculty members who teach rights and wrongs and good and bad things to students and new generation students are totally unacceptable, the All Myanmar Hindu Central Council strongly condemns their acts.

*All Myanmar Hindu Central Council*

### Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization Statement

27 February 2024

SOME 130 PDF terrorists who abducted faculty members, students and staff at Kalay University of Kalay in Sagaing Region engaged with security forces. Some PDF terrorists took away some staff, faculty members and students as hostages. In this regard, as it was a war crime that PDF attacked the educational institution, which was not a military target, the Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization strongly condemns those PDF terrorists.

*Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization*

### Republic of the Union of Myanmar Myanmar Interfaith Dialogue Group (Central) Statement

27 February 2024

PDF terrorists reportedly abducted faculty members and staff serving duties and students studying at Kalay University of Sagaing Region on 26 February 2024.

MYANMAR Interfaith Dialogue Group (Central) strongly opposes and condemns terror acts of PDF terrorists.

*Executive Committee  
Myanmar Interfaith Dialogue Group (Central)*

### Statement of Myanmar Artists Organization (Central)

27 February 2024

1. PDF terrorists forcibly abducted faculty members, educational staff and young students of Kalay University on 26 February 2024.
2. Myanmar Artists Organization (Central) released this statement, strongly condemning PDF terrorists for their terrorist attacks.

*Myanmar Artists Organization (Central)*

### All Myanmar Tamil Hindu Foundation (HQ) Statement

27 February 2024

1. It was sorrowful to hear that terrorists forcibly abducted faculty members, new generation students and educational staff of Kalay University in Kalay of Sagaing Region as human shields on 26 February.
2. All Myanmar Tamil Hindu Foundation (HQ) strongly condemns the inhumane acts of terrorists.

*All Myanmar Tamil Hindu Foundation (HQ)*

### Statement of Myanmar Comedians' Association

27 February 2024

MYANMAR Comedians' Association released the statement, strongly condemning PDF terrorists for abducting faculty members, staff and students of Kalay University in Kalay Township of Sagaing Region on 26 February 2024.

*Myanmar Comedians' Association*

### Statement of Islamic Religious Affairs Council Myanmar

27 February 2024

1. PDF terrorists forcibly abducted faculty members, educational staff and young students of Kalay University on 26 February 2024.
2. Islamic Religious Affairs Council Myanmar issued this statement, strongly condemning PDF terrorists for their terrorist attacks.

*Islamic Religious Affairs Council Myanmar*

# NATIONAL

## Myanmar Evangelical Christian Alliance Statement

27 February 2024

PDF terrorists reportedly abducted faculty members and education staff serving at Kalay University of Kalay, as well as students learning at the university, on 26 February 2024.

As the terror acts of PDF terrorists who abducted new generation students who will serve the State duties in the future, educational staff and faculty members are unacceptable, the Myanmar Evangelical Christian Alliance does not totally accept such acts and strongly condemns their acts.

*Myanmar Evangelical Christian Alliance*

## Faith Evangelical Church (Bago) Statement

27 February 2024

PDF terrorists, using various ways and means to undermine the development of the education sector, abducted faculty members, educational staff and students of Kalay University in Kalay on 26 February 2024.

Faith Evangelical Church (Bago) does not totally accept the terror acts of PDF terrorists and issued the statement, strongly condemning the terror acts of PDF terrorists.

*Faith Evangelical Church (Bago)*

## Union of Myanmar Methodist Church (Lower Myanmar) Statement

27 February 2024

AS it is totally unacceptable that PDF terrorists abducted faculty members and educational staff serving duties at Kalay University and students peacefully studying at the university on 26 February 2024 to use them as human shields, the Union of Myanmar Methodist Church (Lower Myanmar) does not totally accept it and strongly condemns such acts.

*Union of Myanmar Methodist Church (Lower Myanmar)*

## Statement of Myanmar Theatrical Association (Central)

27 February 2024

1. PDF terrorists intentionally abducted faculty members, educational staff and young students of Kalay University on 26 February 2024.
2. Myanmar Theatrical Association (Central) released this statement, strongly condemning PDF terrorists for forcibly abducting faculty members, educational staff and students.

*Myanmar Theatrical Association (Central)*

## Statement of Pinnaygon Yakhine Jaame Mosque

27 February 2024

1. Faculty members, educational staff and students of Kalay University in Kalay Township of Sagaing Region were reportedly taken hostage by PDF terrorists on 26 February.
2. The abduction of faculty members, educational staff and students caused delays in the education development of the country, and the Pinnaygon Yakhine Jaame Mosque released this statement, strongly condemning PDF terrorists for their terrorist attacks.

*Pinnaygon Yakhine Jaame Mosque*

## Statement of Buthidaung-Maungtau Regional Development Association

27 February 2024

PDF terrorists detained faculty members from the Physics and Zoology departments, educational staff and students of Kalay University in Kalay Township of Sagaing Region on 26 February, and they took some of the faculties, staff and students.

The Buthidaung-Maungtau Regional Development Association released a statement strongly condemning the terrorists who deteriorate the lives of government employees and youths.

*Buthidaung-Maungtau Regional Development Association*

## Statement of Thananta Dhamma Palaka (Hindu) Association

27 February 2024

PDF terrorists forcibly abducted faculty members, educational staff and young students of Kalay University on 26 February 2024.

The Thananta Dhamma Palaka (Hindu) Association released this statement strongly condemning the terrorist attacks of PDFs that deteriorate the education development of the country.

*Thananta Dhamma Palaka (Hindu) Association*

## Statement of Myanmar Writers' Association

27 February 2024

1. On 26 February 2024, armed insurgents raided Kalay University and detained faculty members, office staff and students. The rescue work was conducted, and 285 people were saved, but some staff, faculty members and students (still unidentified) were taken as hostages.
2. The Myanmar Writers' Association released this statement strongly condemning the attacks on non-military targets: educational buildings and use of faculty members, students, family members and staff as their protection, threats against civilians and holding teachers, students and staff as hostages.

*Myanmar Writers' Association*

## Myanmar War Veterans Organization Statement

27 February 2024

PDF terrorists attacked Kalay University in Kalay Township of Sagaing Region and also abducted educational staff and students on 26 February 2024.

Myanmar War Veterans Organization issued the statement, strongly objecting to PDF's irrational attacks on educational staff and students of the university, non-military targets, and using them as hostages.

*Myanmar War Veterans Organization*

## Myanmar Press Council Statement 1/2024

27 February 2024

1. Terrorists launched an attack on Kalay University in Kalay Township of Sagaing Region using heavy and small weapons and forcibly abducted some faculty members.
2. The attack on non-military targets such as educational buildings and faculties are destructive action on human resources that are essential in building a democratic nation.
3. Myanmar Press Council released this statement saying the terrorist attack on Kalay University is totally unacceptable and strongly condemns such an attack.

*Myanmar Press Council*

## Myanmar Sports Media Federation Statement

27 February 2024

MYANMAR Sports Media Federation issued this statement, strongly condemning the taking of the educational staff and students of Kalay University as hostages by PDF terrorists, as it is an act that delays the development of the country's education sector.

*Myanmar Sports Media Federation*

## Statement of Myanmar Music Association (Central)

27 February 2024

PDF terrorists launched various destructive actions aiming at deteriorating the State's stability. On 26 February, they raided Kalay University in Kalay township of Sagaing Region and abducted faculty members, students and office staff. Security forces conducted rescue work in time and saved 285 people, whereas some staff, faculty members and students (still unidentified) were taken as hostages.

The Myanmar Music Association (Central) released this statement strongly condemning terrorists for their attacks on universities and schools and for using these places as shelters.

*Myanmar Music Association (Central)*

# ECONOMY WORLD

## Japan's consumer inflation slows to 2.0% in January

JAPAN'S core inflation declined to 2.0 per cent in January, the slowest pace of increase in nearly two years, government data showed Tuesday, despite growing confidence among policymakers about sustainable price increases supported by wage growth.

The easing of inflation, as measured by the nationwide core consumer price index that excludes volatile fresh food, came as the effects of higher import costs partly due to a weak yen continued to dissipate. But it beat market expectations that it would slip below the Bank of Japan's two per cent target for the first time since March 2022.



Customers gather at a souvenir shop that sells local seafood in Tokyo on 27 February 2024. **PHOTO: AFP**

The outcome will likely keep alive market expectations that the BOJ will end its negative interest rate policy as early as in

March or April, after confirming that the upward momentum for wage growth remains intact, analysts said.

BOJ Governor Kazuo Ueda said last week that underlying inflation is beginning to pick up, with price hikes spreading further to services from goods. He told parliament that Japan is "in a state of inflation, not deflation".

The core-core CPI excluding both fresh food and energy, seen as reflecting underlying price trends, rose 3.5 per cent last month from a year earlier, according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

"Inflation has been slowing because of the waning effects

of import costs but core CPI is expected to remain above two per cent this year," said Saisuke Sakai, a senior economist at Mizuho Research & Technologies Ltd.

The BOJ is expected to end negative rates once achievement of its two per cent target appears likely, but further interest rate hikes will not be implemented unless private consumption increases, supported by real wage growth, he said.

A major drag on CPI was a 12.1 per cent drop in energy prices, as the government has been reducing utility bills for households with subsidies for oil wholesalers. — Kyodo

## Rapidus, US start-up Tenstorrent to jointly produce AI chips

STATE-BACKED Japanese chip venture Rapidus Corp and US start-up Tenstorrent Holdings Inc said Tuesday they will jointly produce next-generation artificial intelligence chips.

The two companies will work on chips for powering AI in a variety of products from robots to automobiles, with Rapidus taking on the task of producing central processing units and accelerator chips that can increase computing performance and significantly curb electricity consumption compared to currently available chips, they said.

The Japanese company and the US chip designer are aiming to mass produce their jointly developed chips based on a 2-nanometre process technology from 2028, they said.

Rapidus President Atsuyoshi Koike said at a press conference that he is focusing the company on development speed and that such a business model should appeal to many potential customers.

"Speed is our utmost priority. Tenstorrent has superb design. Together, we can create synergy," Koike said. — Kyodo

## TikTok-Tokopedia helps Indonesian MSMEs improve business



TikTok Indonesia's Executive Director of E-commerce Stephanie Susilo (R), President of Tokopedia Melissa Siska Juminto (L) and Indonesia's Trade Minister Zulkifli Hasan (C) look at items selling online during the launch of social media video sharing app TikTok and Indonesia's leading e-commerce site Tokopedia's Buy Local Campaign in Jakarta on 12 December 2023 **PHOTO: AFP**

ANDRI, a 40-year-old clothes seller at Tanah Abang shopping centre in Central Jakarta, was busy packing the clothes that he would send to his buyers via expedition. Next to him was a pile of packages ready to go.

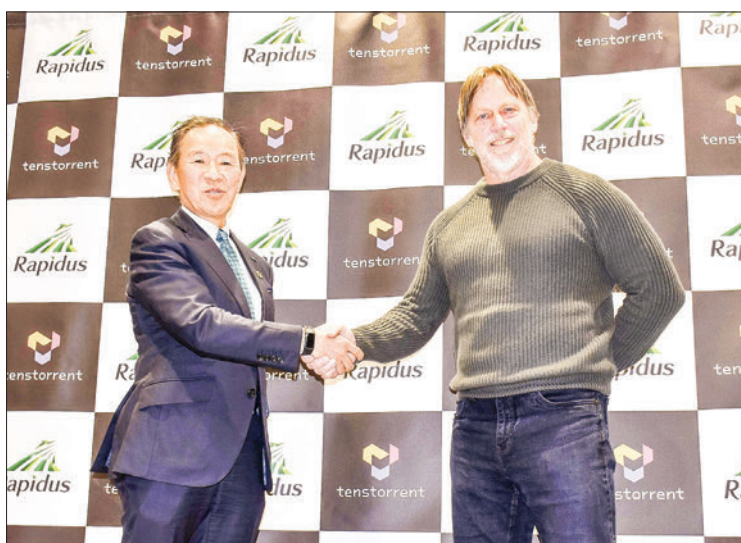
"460 packages for today," he said when Xinhua visited his merchant last Sunday. A funny fact was that no one came to his merchant on that day. Most of his customers, he said, were online buyers.

"You can see that not a single soul comes here, but hundreds of people check out my products on my online shop account every day, thanks to this technology called online shop."

Andri said the online shop application that he used the most, and attracted the most customers, was Tokopedia. Thousands of people have followed his shop account. He could earn as much as

30 million rupiahs (1,915 US dollars) in a month, far higher compared to only four million rupiahs (255 dollars) he had earned before he went online.

Tokopedia is an Indonesian giant e-commerce company, a business entity of Indonesia's GoTo Group that is the country's largest internet technology company. The entity has merged with Chinese social media platform TikTok since mid-December 2023. — Xinhua



Rapidus Corp President Atsuyoshi Koike (L) and Tenstorrent Holdings Inc. CEO Jim Keller shake hands at a press conference in Tokyo on 27 February 2024. **PHOTO: KYODO**

## Kenya coffee exports hit 47,861 tonnes in 2023

KENYA'S coffee exports reached 47,861 tonnes in 2023 out of a total production of 48,648 tonnes, a senior government official said on Monday.

Simon Chelugui, cabinet secretary for the Ministry of Cooperatives and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Development, told journalists in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, that the country earned 251.86 million US dollars from its coffee exports in 2023. "Despite the myriad challenges facing our coffee industry, including fluctuating international prices and climatic uncertainties, Kenya's coffee continues to uphold its esteemed reputation for unparalleled quality on the global stage," Chelugui said during the Kenya-Colombia coffee technical cooperation forum.

Coffee is one of Kenya's top foreign exchange earners, alongside tea and horticulture. Benson Apuoyo, acting director of the Coffee Directorate at the Agriculture and Food Authority, said that the top destinations for Kenya's coffee include the United States, Belgium, Germany, South Korea, Sweden, Australia, Denmark and Norway.

Apuoyo added that coffee exports to African countries in 2023 amounted to less than one per cent of the total exports, with the largest African destination being South Africa. He noted that the government is currently implementing several reforms, such as the rollout of the 27.4 million dollars Coffee Cherry Fund, to enable farmers to access affordable financing. — Xinhua



Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua (2nd L) looks at coffee varieties at the Nairobi Coffee Exchange Auction in Nairobi, capital of Kenya, on 15 August 2023. PHOTO: XINHUA

## Central banks of Cambodia, Malaysia sign deal on cooperation in cross-border QR payment scheme

THE central banks of Cambodia and Malaysia on Tuesday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on cooperation in cross-border QR payment scheme and financial innovation, said a joint press statement.

The deal was inked in Malaysia's Putrajaya City between National Bank of Cambodia (NBC) Governor Chea Serey and Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) Governor Abdul Rasheed Ghafour, the statement said.

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim and visiting Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet witnessed the signing ceremony, it added.

"The MoU will promote closer cooperation between NBC and BNM to drive financial innovation and foster more efficient and secure cross-border payments for the benefit of individuals and businesses in both countries," the statement said. — Xinhua

## Mobile World Congress 2024 opens with focus on 5G, AI innovations



People try on Virtual Reality (VR) devices during the 2024 edition of the Mobile World Congress (MWC) in Barcelona, Spain, 26 February 2024. PHOTO: XINHUA

THE 2024 edition of the Mobile World Congress (MWC), the world's leading trade fair for mobile technology and related industries, opened in Barcelona, Spain, on Monday.

This year's MWC centres on the "Future First" concept, highlighting the importance of uniting industries, continents, technologies and communities to realize the potential of the future.

GSMA, the organizer of the event, expects some 95,000 visitors from all over the world to attend the congress at Barcelona's Gran Via venue, compared

to the 88,500 recorded last year. GSMA is an industry group representing the world's biggest mobile phone operators.

Artificial intelligence (AI) applications across devices and networks, advancements in 5G and 6G technologies as well as enhancing connectivity will be among the major topics at this year's event.

In his opening speech, GSMA's Director-General Mats Granryd stressed the need to align with the challenges and opportunities. "Together we are strong, and alone we are nobody," he said. "With over

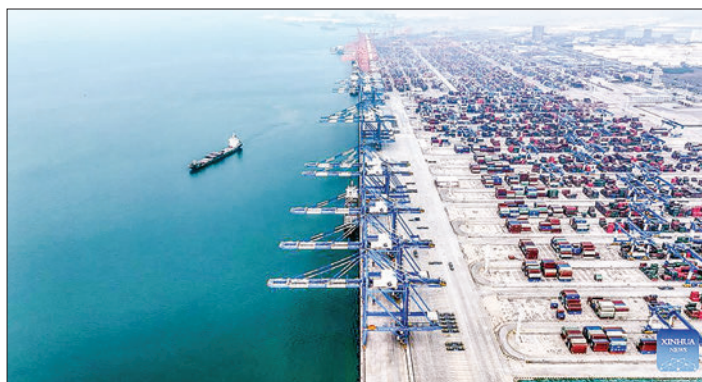
half of our attendees coming from beyond the core mobile ecosystem, MWC no longer represents just one industry. As connectivity brings us together, technology opens possibilities — with connectivity driving a fusion of technology and purpose across all sectors, enabling new possibilities."

This year's MWC features around 2,400 exhibitors and 1,100 speakers, including nearly 300 Chinese companies such as China Mobile, China Telecom, Huawei, ZTE, Lenovo, Xiaomi and iFlytek. — Xinhua

## China remains leading trading partner for most countries: ADB

CHINA remains a crucial trading partner for most countries worldwide despite so-called de-

coupling from China, CNBC reported Monday, citing the Asian Development Bank (ADB).



This aerial photo taken on 24 November 2023 shows the Qinzhou Port in Qinzhou City, south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. PHOTO: XINHUA

"China's still probably the number one trading partner for the majority of countries in the world," ADB Chief Economist Albert Park told CNBC.

While it might be true for certain goods or particular countries that are seeking to limit trade with China, on a broader global scale, the notion of delinking is far less apparent, said Park.

"The story of China being delinked from the global economy, I think those are probably generally very overdone or very partial," he said. — Xinhua

# ROLLING UPDATES

## WORLD

## Michigan voters go to polls for 2024 US presidential primary

VOTERS went to the polls across Michigan, a battleground state, on Tuesday for the 2024 US presidential primary.

In the Republican race, former US President Donald Trump, who remains undefeated so far this year, continues to be challenged by former US Ambassador to the United Nations and former South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley. Tuesday's GOP primary will determine only a portion of how Michigan's delegates will be awarded while the rest will be decided at a state party convention scheduled for Saturday. Trump has a clear lead over Haley in Michigan polls.

US President Joe Biden does not have a major challenger in the Democratic primary, with Minnesota congressman Dean Phillips polling only in single digits nationally, but some activists are urging Michigan Democrats to vote "uncommitted" in protest of the Biden administration's re-



US Republican presidential hopeful and former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley greets supporters at a rally in Troy, Michigan, on 25 February 2024. The Michigan Republican primary is scheduled for 27 February 2024. **PHOTO: AFP**

sponse to the conflict in Gaza.

The economy is the top issue for 31 per cent of Michigan voters, followed by immigration, threats to democracy, health-care, housing affordability, education, crime, and abortion access, according to a new Emerson College Polling/The Hill

survey.

Trump narrowly flipped Michigan, also a Rust Belt state, in the 2016 presidential election, defeating Hillary Clinton by just 0.2 per cent. Four years later, Biden won by 2.8 per cent, bringing it back to the Democratic column. — Xinhua

## UK 'net zero' economy bucks recession: study

BRITAIN'S green economy grew in 2023 to buck a broader recession, a report showed Tuesday that urged politicians heading into a general election to stick by climate-friendly investments.

The UK's "net-zero economy" — from electric cars to carbon capture and renewables like solar and wind power — in-

creased nine per cent to £74 billion (\$94 billion) year-on-year, said the study by think-tank Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit in conjunction with business lobbyists CBI and The Data City research group.

The overall British economy slipped into recession in the last six months of 2023, according to

official data.

"Against the backdrop of economic stagnation, the net zero economy is bucking the trend," said ECIU director Peter Chalkley. "Thousands of jobs depend on net zero... right across the country.

"The question now is will political parties provide the leadership, stability and investment needed to generate further growth or shy away from the global race for net zero?" Chalkley questioned. The Conservative government's long-standing target is to achieve net zero carbon emissions for the UK by 2050.

The Tories, however, are widely predicted to lose power to the main opposition Labour party in a general election expected this year. Tuesday's report added that net zero businesses, supply chains and employee spending together totalled 3.8 per cent of Britain's GDP last year, supporting hundreds of thousands of jobs. — AFP



Ship to shore container cranes stand on the quayside over the MSC Freeport freight container ship at Liverpool2 deep-water port, at the Port of Liverpool, pictured across the River Mersey from New Brighton, in northwest England on 15 January 2024. **PHOTO: AFP**

## Oil spills pile on pressure for Iraq's farmers

IRAQ enjoys tremendous oil wealth but many hard-scrabble farmers in the north say crude spills have contaminated their lands, piling on pressure as they already battle drought.

Amid the hills of Salaheddin province, puddles of the viscous black liquid pollute the otherwise fertile and green fields, rendering vast swathes of farmland barren.

"The oil has damaged all that the land can give," said one farmer, Abdel Majid Said, 62, who owns six hectares (15 acres) in the village of Al-Meaibdi. "Every planted seed is ruined. This land has become

useless." Oil spills in Iraq — a country ravaged by decades of conflict, corruption and decaying infrastructure — have contaminated farmland in the northern province, especially during the winter rains.

Authorities blame the jihadists of the Islamic State group who overran large swathes of Iraq and Syria in 2014 and were only defeated in Iraq three years later.

The IS group blew up oil pipelines and wells and also dug primitive oil storage pits, causing crude to seep into the ground, from where annual rains wash it out again. — AFP



Iraqi farmers watch as excavators build up dirt barriers, a temporary measure to stem the flow of contaminated water onto farmland below, following an oil spill at agricultural land in the region of Hamrin, north of Tikrit, in the province of Salaheddin, on 19 February 2024. **PHOTO: AFP**

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Israeli army discovers 10-km tunnel in Gaza: media

THE Israeli army revealed Monday a strike on a newly discovered 10-kilometre-long tunnel in the Gaza Strip, claiming to have identified dead Hamas members in the facility.

Citing Commander of Israel's Nahal Brigade Yair Zukerman, the Hebrew public radio reported that the tunnel, which connects the north and south of the Gaza Strip, was discovered in recent weeks by the brigade forces in cooperation with Israeli engineering forces.

The army said the tunnel passes beneath the Turkish Friendship Hospital, Al-Isra University in Gaza, and the Al-Zaytoun neighbourhood in Gaza, adding that Hamas used the tunnel to transport its elements between different brigades in the Palestinian enclave.

The Israeli army said it destroyed wide parts of the tunnel after inspecting it, and claimed that some bodies found at the site were identified as Hamas members. Living quarters, toilets, weapon depots, and combat equipment were also found in the tunnel.

Hamas has yet to respond to the reports. — Xinhua

# SPORTS

## MNL Cup tournament to begin on 1 March

THE 2024 version of the Myanmar National League-MNL Cup tournament featuring 20 teams will launch on 1 March.

The tournament will be held from 1 March to 19 June, and the group matches will be held from 1 March to 21 May. Twelve MNL clubs and eight MNL-2 clubs will compete in the tournament.

Group matches will be held in two rounds between Thuwunna Stadium, YUSC Stadium, University Stadium and Padonma Stadium, and the top team from each group will qualify for the semi-finals. Group A first, Group D first, Group B first, and Group C first will compete in semi-final matches. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL



Players from the Shan United are seen under training. PHOTO: THAW GYI.

## Spain women look to add Nations League to World Cup, Olympic qualification

THE Spanish and French women's football teams play the final of the UEFA Women's Nations League in the Estadio de la Cartuja in Seville on Wednesday night.

Spain booked their place in the final on Friday with a comfortable 3-0 win over the Netherlands in the same ground, while the French beat Germany 2-1 to reach the final.

The semifinal win also means that the Spanish assured their first ever qualification for the Olympic Games, giving them the chance to add an Olympic medal to the World Cup that they won in the summer, while the French were already assured an Olympic place as hosts.

France coach Herve Renard is without Sandy Baltimore, who has been forced to withdraw from the squad due to a family issue. Vicky Becho, who was part of the French World Cup squad, has been called up from the Under-23's to replace her.

The big question mark for Spain is whether Alexia Putellas and Tere Abelaira will be able to play after both missed out on the semifinal. Former Balon d'Or winner Alexia remains one of the stars of the Spain squad, although she has struggled with injuries over the past year.

Spain has done well without Alexia in recent matches, with coach Montse Tome overcoming initial doubts after she was named the replacement for Jorge Vilda, the World Cup winning coach, who was sacked in the wake of the "Rubiales affair."

That controversy saw the former President of the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) sacked for his lewd gestures in the VIP box at the World Cup final and giving an unsolicited kiss on the lips to Jenni Hermoso in the post-game celebrations. — Xinhua

## Ko back on happy Singapore hunting ground eyeing world hat-trick

DEFENDING champion Ko Jin-young is aiming for an unprecedented "three-peat" when the HSBC Women's World Championship tees off in Singapore on Thursday.

After finishing tied for 20<sup>th</sup> at the LPGA Thailand event on Sunday, Ko returns to her happy hunting ground hoping to become the first player to win three consecutive titles at the tournament dubbed "Asia's major".

The world number six from South Korea won both the 2022 and 2023 editions by just two shots and expects another closely fought contest as she aims for a 16<sup>th</sup>



Ko Jin-young of South Korea tees off during the first day of the 2024 Honda LPGA Thailand golf tournament at the Siam Country Club in Pattaya on 22 February 2024. PHOTO: AFP

LPGA Tour title.

"There are a lot of good players in the field and

everyone is looking to win this tournament, including myself," the 28-year-old Ko

told reporters at Sentosa Golf Club.

"I cannot control how they play but the only thing I can do is to try my best and see what happens from there.

"I played the back nine today, and there has been a little bit of changes in the pin positions from last year. The bunkers also seem a little bigger.

"It's not easy to play this golf course but if I can hit a lot of fairways, and greens and make many birdies like last year, I'll be okay," said the former world number one. — AFP

## Broadcasts of Games of the Future collected more than one billion views during the first week of competitions

IN the first seven days of Games of the Future, broadcasts of the competitions and the Opening Ceremony of the tournament have gained more than one billion views worldwide. This was announced at the Forum of National Achievements within the framework of the Russia International Exhibition by Deputy Prime Minis-

ter of the Russian Federation Dmitry Chernyshenko.

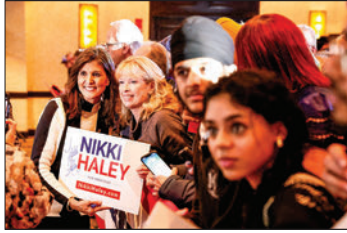
Broadcasts are available worldwide for free and as convenient as possible for spectators. Games of the Future is the first tournament of this scale, focused on the online audience and the interests of young people who are used to watching content online. Partnership

agreements have been signed with more than 100 streaming platforms — from YouTube and Twitch to local ones. Agreements have been concluded with large media holdings in many countries for television broadcasts. The success of the strategy was confirmed on the very first day of competition: only on one of the platforms in

China YOTA Phygital MOBA. Dota 2 matches have been watched by more than 7 million people.

The increased interest in Games of the Future is explained, among other things, by the fact that they meet the needs of society, which, on the one hand, strives for digitalization in all spheres of life,

and on the other — pays more attention to a healthy lifestyle and maintaining good physical shape. The symbiosis of activities in two dimensions — real and virtual — was called "phygital". Phygital sports contribute to the development of a person who is harmonious in all respects. — en.gofuture. games



## Major firms still failing to tackle deforestation: report

MANY global brands with supply chains linked to tropical forest loss do not have a single deforestation policy, according to a report published Tuesday that said 10 years of monitoring showed voluntary action from industry “has failed”.

From land clearance for cattle farming to palm oil plantations, there is growing recognition of the human-driven threats to the world’s forests and the importance of protecting them in the fight against climate change and devastating biodiversity loss. Nearly 200 countries at the COP28 climate talks last year gave their support to the goal of halting and reversing deforestation by 2030.

The Forest 500 analysis, by non-profit research group Global Canopy, noted “pockets of progress” from a handful of leading brands.

But 10 years after it first began its annual monitoring of a rolling selection of firms with the biggest impact on tropical forests, the organization said companies and the financial institutions that fund them are still falling short.

Of the 257 companies and financial institutions that have been in the Forest 500 for the past decade, 61 — 23 per cent — still have not published a single commitment on addressing deforestation, it said. — AFP



Brazil’s Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira delivers a press conference at the end of the G20 foreign ministers meeting in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 22 February 2024. PHOTO: AFP

## G20 finance debates in Brazil to focus on taxes, inequalities, sustainable development: official

**I**NEQUALITIES, international taxation and financing for sustainable development will be the focus of debates among finance ministers and central bank presidents of the Group of 20 (G20) who will convene here on Wednesday, a Brazilian official said Monday.

“We hope that these debates, which will take place at the ministerial level,

will provide us with the opportunity to exchange ideas, but also to achieve concrete progress in the formation of a consensus that will allow the massive mobilization of national and international resources to achieve sustainable and balanced development with inclusive growth,” said Tatiana Rosito, secretary of International Affairs at the Ministry of Finance and

coordinator of the G20 Finance Track, at a press conference. The meeting will be held from Wednesday to Thursday at Ibirapuera Park’s Biennial Pavilion, a convention centre in Sao Paulo.

Brazil, the rotating presidency of the G20, will also host the bloc’s summit of heads of state and government in November in the city of Rio de Janeiro. — Xinhua

## West risks ‘worst-case scenario’ in Ukraine — Slovak PM



France’s President Emmanuel Macron greets Slovakia’s Prime Minister Robert Fico (R) as he arrives at the Elysee presidential palace in Paris, on 26 February 2024, to take part in an international conference aimed at strengthening Western support for Ukraine. PHOTO: AFP

MOSCOW has stressed many times that it regards the conflict in Ukraine as a US proxy war against Russia, with Ukrainians serving as “cannon fodder” for the West.

Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico has warned Western countries could opt for the “worst solution” at a high-profile meeting hosted by France on Monday.

Fico expressed fears ahead of the meeting via a video on X, stating that “the information about the issues we’re supposed to talk about on Monday sends chills down my spine”.

On Sunday, he confirmed he would attend the summit dispelling earlier doubts.

The Elysee Palace portrayed the event as a platform for participants to reassert their solidarity with the Kiev regime and commitment to confront Russia.

One French presidential official told reporters that supporters of Kyiv should remain united despite the huge losses incurred by the Ukrainian military on the battlefield. In response, the Slovak PM voiced doubts about a full-scale escalation of the conflict and the “unlimited military and

financial assistance” that strategy entails. Fico also reiterated his stance of keeping Slovak troops out of the conflict, even at the expense of his position. He insisted on seeking advice from Slovakia’s National Security Council and his coalition government partners before heading to Paris. The Paris summit comes as the Ukraine conflict enters its third year. Kyiv declined a peace agreement with Moscow in 2022 and in favour of attempting to win on the battlefield — counting on promises of military aid from its Western backers. — Sputnik