

Myanmar and Sri Lanka forge tourism cooperation



State Administration Council Chair PM Senior General Min Aung Hlaing exchanges commemorative gifts with Sri Lankan Ambassador Mr J M J P Bandara during the latter's courtesy call on the former yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

MYANMAR and Sri Lanka cooperate with each other in the development of the tourism industry, said Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing held talks with Ambassador of Sri Lanka to Myanmar, Mr J M J P Bandara, who has completed his tour

of duties, at the SAC Chairman Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

They cordially exchanged views on bilateral relations and diplomatic relations, cooperation in religious affairs, members of the Sangha and nuns from Myanmar studying in Sri Lanka, and offering religious titles to venerable members of the Sangha from Sri Lanka by Myanmar.

Both sides frankly discussed cooper-

ation in trade promotion and investments between the two countries, enhancement of bilateral cooperation in the education sector, and preparations of Myanmar to hold a free and fair election.

Also present at the meeting were SAC Joint Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo, Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe and officials. — MNA/TTA

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Domestic travel picks up pace in late February, early March

CBM sells 7M Chinese yuan, 12M Thai baht for exporters on 5 March

THE Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) sold seven million Chinese yuan and 12 million Thai baht on 5 March for exporters on online trading platforms.

It injected US\$10 million and 200 million Thai baht into the financial market on 4 March.

CBM also sold \$77.38 million and 850 million Thai baht in February and \$68.33 million, 313.5 million Thai baht and 4.2 million Chinese yuan in January 2024.

The exchange rate for Thai baht, Chinese yuan and US dollar settled in those transactions is not revealed.

The reference exchange rate set by

CBM is K2,100 against a US dollar, while it is valued at some K3,610 at the over-the-counter market at present. The exchange rates currently stand at K101 for a Thai baht and K492 for a Chinese yuan.

CBM allowed the authorized dealers (private banks) to operate online forex trading freely as per the market rate depending on supply and demand, starting from 5 December.

Additionally, the outward remittance procedures must adhere to the rules and regulations specified by the Foreign Exchange Supervisory Committee. — NN/EM



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.

Notice

1. The POSCO International Corporation (Myanmar E&P), a joint venture with Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise for oil and gas exploration and production in Myanmar, is operating the oil and gas exploration processes of the Shwe Gas Project. The SHP Platform and SHK Compression Platform are connected with the 100.484-metre-long bridge, and the Coordinate of SHK Compression Platform is at North Latitude 19° 40' 20.5 seconds and East Longitude 92° 32' 35.9 seconds.
2. The Notice to Mariners that four kilometres around the SHK Compression Platform have already been released to ensure safety and reduce accidents. Therefore, ships, vessels, fishing boats, and motor boats are not allowed to pass and are also banned from anchoring, fishing and placing fishing gear.

Fisheries Department

Daily newspapers available online

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UEC issues rules amending rules for Registration of Political Parties

THE Union Election Commission of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar issued the “Rules Amending the Rules for the Registration of Political Parties” by Decree No 12/2024 on the 10th Waning of Tabodwe 1385 ME, 5 March 2024. These rules will be published in daily newspapers and can be downloaded from the Union Election Commission website, www.uec.gov.mm. — MNA

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Union Election Commission Notification No 12/2024

10th Waning of Tabodwe 1385 ME
5 March 2024

THE Union Election Commission of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has issued the following rules exercising the authority under Section 26 of the Political Parties Registration Law.

1. These rules shall be called the Rules Amending the Political Parties Registration Rules.
2. The wording “90 days” mentioned in clause (j) of paragraph (2) of Form (e) and clause (i) of paragraph (1) of Form (e-1) of Sub-section (a) of Article 13 of the Political Parties Registration Rules shall be substituted with the wording “the date when the Commission issues the notification at least 90 days before the election day”, respectively.
3. The wording “at least 100,000 party members” mentioned in clause (j) of paragraph (2) of Form (e), clause (i) of paragraph (1) of Form (e-1), and paragraph 3 of Form (f) of Sub-section (a) of Article 13 of the Political Parties Registration Rules shall be substituted with the wording “at least 50,000 party members”, respectively.
4. Rule 20 of the Political Parties Registration Rules shall be substituted as follows: -
 - (a) If a party is revoked from registration due to getting entangled with any provisions mentioned in clauses 4, 5, 6 or 7 of Sub-Section (a) of Section 12 of the law, assets of the party shall be handed over to the departments or organizations designated by the government under the relevant ways and means.
 - (b) If findings in verification show that the party as considered has been automatically revoked from the political party due to lack of re-applying for the registration of the political party or if a person who is not lower than the rank of central executive committee member of such a party which is get entangled with any provisions of clauses 4, 5, 6 or 7 of Sub-Section (a) of Section 12 of the law in the findings of verification, assets of the party shall be handed over to the departments or organizations designated by the government under the relevant ways and means.
 - (c) Relevant departments or organizations shall follow the directives of the government with regard to the assets handed over under Sub-section (a) and (b).
 - (d) If political parties that have registered at the commission are allowed to register a combination of two or more parties as a single party, the combined party shall have to inherit the assets of relevant parties that were revoked.
5. Article 22 of the Political Parties Registration Rules shall be substituted as follows: -

“22. A party –

 - (a) Shall be complete in drawing its annual financial statement in the relevant financial year, compilation of the annual statement on assets of the party, inspection of these accounts by an internal audit committee, and seeking approvals for them under the rules and regulations of the party and financial rules within three months after the relevant financial years.
 - (b) The fund of the party opened as an account under Sub-Section (g) of Section 5 of the law shall be spent under the order or directive issued by the commission.
6. The wordings “180 days” mentioned in clause (k) of paragraph (2) of Form (e) and clause (j) of paragraph (1) of Form (e-1) of the Political Parties Registration Rules shall be substituted with the wording “the date when the Commission issues the notification at least 90 days before the election day”, respectively; and the wording “at least a half of all townships” with the wording “at least one-third of all townships”, respectively.
7. The wording “not later than 90 days” mentioned in paragraph (3) of Form (f) of the Political Parties Registration Rules shall be substituted with the wording “the date when the Commission issues the notification, not later than at least 90 days before the election day”.
8. The wording “100,000 party members” mentioned in paragraph (1) of Form (h) of the Political Parties Registration Rules shall be substituted with the wording “50,000 party members”.

*Sd/ Ko Ko
Chairman
Union Election Commission*

NATIONAL

Central Committee on Trade & Goods Flow holds 2/2024 meeting

STATE Administration Council Member Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Transport and Communications General Mya Tun Oo, who is also Chairman of the Central Committee on Ensuring Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods, attended the 2/2024 meeting of the central committee in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

At the meeting, the General said the relevant committees should supervise successively for the public to be able to purchase fuel at fairer prices and to sell as per the reference prices by the business people. Moreover, it also prevents the illegal trade of fuel from occurring. There were seizures of 14.247 tonnes of illegal fuel valued at K47.992 million in regions and states in February 2024.

Moreover, CCTV link connections were also installed at eight fuel terminals and 591 fuel stations in regions and states, including Nay Pyi Taw, between 14

November 2023 and 29 February 2024. Similarly, 542 CCTV cameras were installed at 52 tollgates in regions and states, including Nay Pyi Taw, to be able to know the passing of fuel bowser trucks in a timely manner.

He also talked about the drafting of a software application for people to easily access the sorts of fuel and prices at the fuel stations online, the pilot project at over 300 fuel stations in Yangon and Mandalay in March, the release of weekly basic reference prices and the systematic palm oil distribution across the nation.

He added that the country received export earnings of US\$283.36 million, 321.80 million yuan and 876.15 million baht from 1,301 companies between October 2023 and February 2024. It received only \$45.14 million, 109 million yuan and 187.67 million from 215 companies compared to the same period from October 2022 to February 2023.



SAC Member, Deputy Prime Minister and MoTC Union Minister General Mya Tun Oo chairs the 2/2024 meeting of the Central Committee on Ensuring Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods yesterday.

It showed an increase of \$238.22 million, 212.80 million yuan and 688.48 million baht received from 1,086 companies compared to the same period.

He also pointed out the need to follow the decisions made at the 1/2024 meeting regarding export and import financial poli-

cies and duties of ministries concerned to supervise the export so as to meet the target in the 2023-2024 FY.

Then, he pledged that the central committee would explore the difficulties of exporters in promoting the export volumes and added that the relevant min-

istries should report the challenges and delays in the trading sector to find solutions.

He finally gave proper instructions after hearing the reports of central committee members and attendees and concluded the meeting. — MNA/KTZH

DPM MoFA Union Minister receives Sri Lankan Ambassador



The Sri Lankan ambassador calls on Deputy Prime Minister MoFA Union Minister U Than Swe yesterday.

DEPUTY Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Than Swe received Mr J M Janaka Priyantha Bandara, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, who has completed his tour of duty in Myanmar, yesterday at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the call, they cordially exchanged views on matters pertaining to the further enhancement of the existing friendly bilateral relations, expansion of the mutually beneficial cooperation, including trade and investment, agriculture and education sectors between the two countries, as well as the regional and international issues of mutual interests. — MNA

Call for nominations for ASEAN Prize 2024

THE ASEAN Secretariat is calling for nominations for the ASEAN Prize 2024, a prestigious regional award which aims to acknowledge the inspiring and outstanding achievements of an individual or organization in fostering the ASEAN identity, promoting the ASEAN spirit and championing the ASEAN way.

Nominees should have exceptional merit in contributing to the following designated focus areas: -

- Collaboration between ASEAN Member States
- Cooperation between ASEAN and the world

- People-to-people engagement among ASEAN Member States
- Economic integration and promotion of standards between ASEAN Member States or
- Excellent contribution to ASEAN Community Building

The Judging Committee Meeting for the ASEAN Prize, chaired by Secretary-General of ASEAN Dr Kao Kim Houm, will convene an intensive assessment to select its year's recipient. The panel of judges for the ASEAN Prize-2024 comprises former living and

current Secretaries-General of ASEAN.

Submissions for ASEAN Prize 2024 are open from now until 31 May 2024. The nominee must be an ASEAN citizen or an ASEAN-based organization. The nomination form for the ASEAN Prize 2024 can be downloaded at the ASEAN Secretariat Website: <https://asean.org/nomination-form/>. The nominee must submit the duly filled-in form not later than 20 April 2024 to the ASEAN Affairs Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Office No 9, Nay Pyi Taw or amns.mofa@gmail.com. — MNA

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NATIONAL

16th Plenary Meeting of 8th 47-member State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee held



The 16th Plenary Meeting of the Eighth 47-member State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee in progress yesterday in Yangon.

THE first session of the sixteenth plenary meeting of the Eighth 47-member State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee was administered at the Wizaya Mingala Dhamma Thabin of Thiri Mingala

Kaba Aye Hill in Yangon yesterday. Present at the occasion were members of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee led by Presiding Nayaka Sayadaw of

Thanlyin Min Kyaung Pahtampyan Monastery Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Dr Bhaddanta Candima Bhivamsa, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture

U Tin Oo Lwin and other relevant officials. Secretary of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Dr Bhaddanta Candima Bhivamsa presided over the meeting.

Joint Secretary Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Siha Nandaka acted as the master of ceremonies. Union Minister U Tin Oo Lwin reported on religious affairs-related matters.

Then, Sayadaws reported on Vinicchaya, religious affairs and educational matters. The Sayadaws discussed Vinicchaya affairs and concluded the first session.

The Vinicchaya affairs, religious-related matters and educational matters were discussed by the Sayadaws at the second session at 1 pm.

The Yangon Region government offered alms for the whole day to the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee member Sayadaws, who attended the ceremony yesterday. — MNA/KTZH

MNHRC pays field visit to Mandalay Boys' Training School



MNHRC members are pictured during the inspection tour yesterday.

THE inspection team, led by Members of Myanmar National Human Rights Commission U Kyaw Soe, Dr Than Myint, Dr Tin Maung Maung Than and U Tin Aung, inspected Mandalay Boys' Training School in Aungmyaythazan Township, Mandalay Region, on 5 March 2024 under Section 43 and Section 44 of the MNHRC Law.

The inspection team inspected under the MNHRC Law and procedures whether the young boys who are detained in the centre can get fundamental rights,

including healthcare services, food supplies, provision of purified drinking water, adequate dormitories, availability of Citizenship Scrutiny Cards, support programmes for physical and mental development as well as right to education, vocational training, communication with their families, reintegration with their families and freedom of religion. MNHRC will send recommendations to the relevant department for necessary action based on the findings during the inspection. — MNHRC

Workshop on enhancing agriculture trade facilitation in Myanmar held

THE project's inception workshop, "Improvement of Agriculture Trade Facilitation to Encourage Supply Chain of Myanmar's Agriculture Products in Collaboration with LMC Countries", initiated with the LMC Special Fund (2023), was organized in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

At the ceremony, Union Minister for Agriculture, Live-

stock and Irrigation U Min Naung talked about the role of trade facilitation in promoting the agricultural produce export volumes and expanding the market, proper measures for the farmers and those who participate in demand and supply chain, the needs to follow the trading agreements, rule and regulations of the partner countries and proper solutions

for the challenges in trading the meat, fish and agricultural produce.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation was permitted to implement 35 projects with US\$12.18 million with the LMC Special Fund from 2017 to 2023. The ministry implemented four projects in 2023 with US\$1.29 million. — MNA/KTZH



Memorial group photo captured at yesterday's workshop event in Nay Pyi Taw.

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



NATIONAL

Myanmar-Thai border trade logs US\$4.06 bln in 2023-24 FY

ACCORDING to Daw Cho Thet Mu, the Deputy Director of the Trade Policy Division within the Trade Department under the Ministry of Commerce, the trade volume between Myanmar and Thailand reached US\$4.06 billion via land borders during the period from April 2023 to February 2024 in the 2023-24 Financial Year.

Breaking down the figures, Myanmar exported goods worth \$2.86 billion while importing \$1.20 billion, resulting in a total trade value of \$4.06 billion within the specified period.

Daw Cho Thet Mu stated, "For the Myanmar-Thai border trade from 1 April to 25 February of the 2023-24 FY, Myanmar exported goods worth \$2.86 billion and imported goods worth \$1.20 billion. Currently, the trade surplus stands at \$1.66 billion for Myanmar".

The main export products include CMP products, agricultural produce,



The photo shows a truck passing within the Myawady trade zone.

and fishery products. On the other hand, Myanmar imports construction materials, equipment, machines and accessories, medicines, raw materials for factory use, fertilizers, foods, cosmetics, and electronic items from

Thailand.

The Myanmar-Thai border trade posts encompass Myawady, Tachilek, Kawthoung, Myeik, Hteekhee, Mawtaung, and Maese. — ASH/ TMT

Myanmar seeks foreign investment in oil crop cultivation for self-sufficiency in edible oil

NEGOTIATIONS are underway to attract foreign agricultural companies to invest in Myanmar by growing oil crops on vacant land, according to U San Lin, Chair of the Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association. This initiative aims to achieve self-sufficiency in edible oil production.

Despite cultivating marketable oil crops domestically, Myanmar's production of edible oil remains low due to limitations in grinding and milling technology. As a result, locally grown peanuts are exported as raw produce

rather than processed into peanut oil.

To address this challenge, the Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association is engaging in negotiations with foreign agricultural companies. These companies would be granted permission to cultivate oil crops, such as sunflowers, on vacant and unused land in the country.

"We are negotiating with foreign agricultural companies interested in investing in Myanmar's agricultural sector," explained U San Lin. "We have vacant land available, and we will collaborate with relevant authorities to

facilitate land acquisition. Once land is secured, these companies will be allowed to establish factories and oil mills nearby to process the crops into edible oil."

This initiative is crucial as Myanmar's domestic production of edible oil (approximately 300,000 tonnes annually) falls significantly short of national consumption (around 1,200,000 tonnes annually). Consequently, Myanmar imports nearly 900,000 tonnes of edible oil each year, with over 90 per cent originating from Indonesia and Malaysia. — ASH/ MKKS



The photo shows a plantation of oil crops thriving in the up-country.

Myanmar to export 200 tonnes of areca nuts monthly to India for three years

U Aung Myint Oo, a central executive member of the Myanmar Areca Nut Entrepreneurs Association, has reported that Myanmar and India have initially agreed to export 200 tonnes of dried betel nuts from Myanmar to India each month. This agreement will remain in effect for three years.

India's Lax Corporation Co Ltd has expressed interest in purchasing tonnes of dried betel nuts from Myanmar on a monthly basis. The two countries are



The photo shows a worker cleaning the dried betel nuts.

currently engaged in discussions regarding the terms and conditions of export, including payment methods. In January, the Myanmar Areca Nut Entrepreneurs Association already sent a sample of dried areca nuts to Lax Corporation Co Ltd.

"Lax Corporation requested the possibility of 200-tonne monthly exports, and we agreed," explained U Aung Myint Oo. "We have already sent a 17-tonne initial shipment in a 20-foot container. Once they confirm the quality meets their criteria, they will proceed with regular 200-tonne purchases. We will finalize the transportation details after finalizing agreements on export procedures and payment methods."

Myanmar has an annual betel nut production of approximately 230,000 tonnes. With domestic demand met, the country aims to export the surplus production.

Across the nation, there are 253,370 acres dedicated to areca nut cultivation, yielding around 230,000 tonnes annually. Mon State is the leading producer with 56,508 acres and 90,000 tonnes, followed by Taninthayi Region with over 80,000 tonnes. — ASH/ TMT

NATIONAL

Solar-powered pumps enable eco-friendly farming in two villages



Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein and officials observe the solar-powered water pumping process.

THE Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department has commenced solar-powered water pumping operations in Yaepawthaung Village, Htantabin Township, and Thabyaytan Village, Taikkyi Township.

Electric-powered water pumping stations were implemented on 1 February 2000, and they were solar-powered in the 2023-2024 financial year, funded

by regional government development funds. These operations can supply irrigation water for 1,300 acres of summer paddy in Yaepawthaung and 1,350 acres in Thabyaytan.

Each project features a pair of 160 kW solar power systems that began operation on 22 January 2024. Running for seven hours daily, they collectively save 1,120 kWh of electricity per day. Throughout a

summer paddy season, which is roughly 100 days, this translates to a total saving of 112,000 kWh, resulting in cost reductions of approximately K16.8 million.

The department deploys solar-powered pumps in agricultural areas with inadequate access to electricity. As solar energy is both clean and renewable, this initiative also contributes to environmental sustainability. — TWA/NT

Excess supply cuts onion market price



Monsoon onion dried plants are seen being loaded onto a truck. **PHOTO: U KYAW KYAW**

THE prices of onions tended to shrink with the bulk supply of 250,000 visses of onions on 4 March.

The prices fell to K1,800-3,700 on 4 March. Yangon market saw a high influx of

500,000 visses of onion on 1 and 4 March. A high inflow of onions from various regions cut the prices in late February when there is a regular demand, an onion trader told the Global New Light of Myanmar.

The price is down by K100-300 per viss. The highest prices in the Seikphyu area were K2,350 per viss on 1 March from K2,650 on 27 February, with 70,000 viss of onions being supplied to the market. The Myingyan market witnessed a supply of 30,000 visses of onions on 4 March, and the price hit the highest point of K2,600 per viss, which decreased from K3,100 per viss on 28 February. The onion price hit the highest in February 2024, whereas it peaked in mid-2023.

During the harvest season of summer onion, the onion in regions outside Yangon is expected to fetch around K2,000 per viss," said U Aung. — TWA/KK

Traders prepare to buy chilli peppers when price declines

THERE is a roaring trade of chilli peppers in Yangon's market this month, said U Hla Han, a trader of chilli peppers on Seinpan Street in the Bayintnaung area.

The prices are on the low side in early March. The long chilli pepper prices dipped to K7,500-K9,000 per viss on 4 March. The chilli pepper from the Moehtaung variety decreased to K10,000 per viss. The bell pepper from the Sinphyukyun area was worth K13,500 per viss.

The traders received a significant profit in 2022, yet they suffered losses in 2023. The price is likely to drop further in 2024. Therefore, traders prepared to buy them in large quantities. The cold storage facility charges K125 per viss. It is profitable when the price rises. Strong demand from traders also raised the prices as well.

The profit tripled in 2022

as the price of chilli pepper processed in cold storage hit K21,000-K22,000 per viss, and the bell pepper price peaked at K31,000 per viss in late 2022. — TWA/KK



The Moehtaung chilli pepper seen flowing into the market on 5 February 2024.

Myanmar Fisheries Federation advises farmers to prepare for El Niño phenomenon

THE Myanmar Fisheries Federation (MFF) urges fish and shrimp farmers to prepare backup ponds in anticipation of the El Niño phenomenon, which may occur this month.

Farmers are advised to store water in these backup ponds and to be cautious with their water exchange systems. Currently, Myanmar has over 460,000 acres dedicated to freshwater fish, shrimp, and crab farming. Fish farming is the most common,

covering more than 2,000 acres for crab farming.

The El Niño phenomenon can lead to extreme weather conditions such as abnormal rainfall, high daytime temperatures, unusual storm patterns, and drought. The livestock sector has been alerted in advance to mitigate potential impacts.

Fish and shrimp farming are primarily concentrated in Ayeyawady, Yangon, and Bago Regions. — TWA/TRKM

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

Myanmar's honey export exceeds 1,700 MT in 10 months

MYANMAR shipped 1,726.42 tonnes of honey with an estimated value of over US\$2.589 million to foreign trade partners in the past ten months (April-January) of the current financial year 2023-2024, according to the Apiculture Division under the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department.

Myanmar exports honey to the Republic of Korea, Japan, the US and Singapore. Myanmar's beekeeping businesses are primarily found in Sagaing Region, Mandalay Region, Magway Region and Shan State.

Myanmar produces sesame honey, jujube honey, Niger honey, sunflower honey, lychee honey and flower honey.

Myanmar's honey production is estimated at over 4,000 metric tonnes annually. Sixty per cent went to foreign markets, while the remaining is designated for domestic consumption.

Honey is utilized as a traditional medicine in the coun-



Captivating photos display the orderly array of beekeeping hives and Myanmar's unique bee habitats.

try. Myanmar's honey fetched \$2,500-\$3,000 per tonne in external market.

There are some state-

owned beekeeping stations with 6,200 beehives in 31 townships and over 950 private beekeeping businesses operating with nearly

200,000 beehives.

Moreover, two million acres of crops yearly contribute to bee pollination every year. The beekeeping businesses near the crop fields contribute to the successful yield of the crop as well as quality bee production.

Over 1,900 tonnes of honey

were shipped to external markets in the 2022-2023 FY (April-March), with an estimated value of over \$2.8 million.

Myanmar exported 1,853.74 tonnes to foreign markets by sea and 63.44 tonnes to neighbouring countries via cross-border. — NN/EM

YGEA raises gold reference price to around K3.8M per tical amid spot gold rally

FOLLOWING the spot gold price rally, the Yangon Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA) set the pure gold price higher to K3.797 million per tical (0.578 ounce or 0.016 kilogramme).

The spot gold price is US\$2,120 at present.

Yet, the market value of the pure gold hit K3.98 million per tical. There is a price difference of over K180,000 per tical between the YGEA's set price and the unofficial market price.

YGEA calculated the price depending on the Central Bank of Myanmar's interbank reference exchange rate, with some addition, in spite of the US dollar gain in the unofficial forex market, causing the price gap to widen to K400,000-500,000 per tical.

Following the CBM's liberalization for authorized dealers for online forex trading on 5 December 2023, the gap be-



The photo highlights gleaming gold bars on display at the jewellery outlet in Yangon.

tween the YGEA's reference price and the actual market value narrowed. The Kyat-US Dollar exchange rate is K3,610 at present.

The US dollar exchange rate, therefore, weighs on the gap between the domestic gold market value and YGEA's reference gold price.

The soaring dollar exchanging up to K4,000 drove the gold price up to a record high of K4 million per tical in late August 2023.

The YGEA also requested its members on 24 January to deal in gold with immediate payment and cooperate to stabilize the gold price. — NN/EM

Yangon palm oil wholesale rate increases to K5,215 per viss

THE wholesale reference rate of palm oil for the Yangon market is set higher to K5,215 for this week ending 10 March from K5,180 per viss recorded in the past week ending 3 March, according to the Supervisory Committee on Edible Oil Import and Distribution.

The Supervisory Committee on Edible Oil Import and Distribution under the Ministry of Commerce has been closely observing the FOB prices in Malaysia and Indonesia, adding transport costs, tariffs and banking services to decide the wholesale market reference rate for edible oil on a weekly basis.

However, the market price is higher than the reference price.

To control overcharging, the Consumer Affairs Department under the Ministry of Commerce informed the consumers of lodging the complaints for overcharging through the call centre's hotline in late August. The Department urged consumers not to buy palm oil at high prices.

The Department is making concerted efforts to steer the high volatility in palm oil prices in the retail market and offer fairer prices to consumers in coordination with the Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers Association and oil importing companies.

The complaints for overcharging can be lodged over Hot Line: 1535 of the Call Center of the Consumers Affairs Department or sent to the Facebook Page of the Department and the region and state departments concerned.

The domestic consumption of palm oil is estimated at 1 million tonnes per year. The local palm oil production is just about 400,000 tonnes. About 700,000 tonnes of palm oil are imported yearly through Malaysia and Indonesia to meet domestic demands. — NN/EM

OPINION

Mitigate effects of intense summer weather based on El Niño

EL NIÑO and La Niña are opposing climate patterns that disrupt the usual weather conditions, collectively forming the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) cycle. These phenomena exert global influences on climate, wildfires, ecosystems, and economies, with durations typically spanning nine to 12 months, although instances of longer persistence have been observed. While occurring every two to seven years on average, their schedule remains unpredictable, with El Niño generally manifesting more frequently than La Niña.

Currently present in the tropical Pacific, El Niño is displaying signs of attenuation in its atmospheric component. Conditions are anticipated to shift to ENSO-neutral between April and June 2024, with a 55 per cent likelihood of La Niña emerging from June to

August 2024. El Niño's warmer waters can displace the Pacific jet stream southward, influencing temperatures in different regions.

Myanmar is currently grappling with the impacts of El Niño, witnessing a gradual rise in day temperatures. According to the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology, the effects will be felt in Mon State, Kayin State, Ayeyawady, and Yangon regions in March 2024, with daytime temperatures increasing. However, night temperatures in early March are expected to remain relatively cool.

El Niño's impact on temperatures will be particularly noticeable in Kayin and Mon States, Bago, Ayeyawady, Yangon, and Magway regions, reaching 38°-39°. The Sea Surface Temperature (SST) over the Tropical Pacific Ocean near the Equator and atmospheric conditions are currently moderate, according to Numerical Weather Prediction models from the International

Meteorological Agency, projecting a sustained moderate El Niño condition throughout March 2024.

Despite the high temperatures associated with El Niño, individuals are advised to seek shelter and take measures to alleviate its impacts on their well-being. Authorities should emphasize water storage for consumption and agricultural needs, while rescue teams must conduct frequent rehearsals to be prepared for potential emergencies. Healthcare services should also be organized to cater to patients during this critical period. Not only government servants but also volunteers always have to be ready to save life and property of the people without delay.

Recognizing the strength in unity, the people of Myanmar, with their valuable experiences in overcoming severe weather challenges, are urged to collaborate in defying the impacts of El Niño this summer. Through collective efforts, a safe and secure society in Myanmar can be shaped to withstand and adapt to the challenges posed by these climatic phenomena.

HOW are you doing, little Teresa? I hope you are in the best of health like me. It has been two years or so since we last met each other. Sincerely, I am constantly yearning for you despite the fact that I can go and see you in no condition. Sorry for that. By the way, there are not so many days left until the matriculation examination, you know. I think your heart is constantly pounding with exam nerves as near as the examination is drawing. Don't worry. I will herein give you some exam tips which enable you to do well in your examination.

Test anxiety is a student nature. Any student has more or less text anxiety, believe me. That is, you are not the only one to feel this emotion. The best way to overcome test anxiety is just having studied enough, to say nothing of studying at all. Overall, the study would be better, of course. I strongly believe you will have studied all your

Special Exam Tips for My Doting Sister

By Hu Wo (Cuckoo's Song)

subjects to an adequate extent. But you may sometimes forget your well-taken lessons due to either retroactive and proactive inhibitions or even text anxiety. Not to worry — you can revise them as many times as you should. It will not have escaped your notice that it is normally difficult to get distinctions in Myanmar and English as they are both languages which should be well learned through practice in advance only. Never underestimate any of your subjects involving these two languages, whether you have mastered them or not. Try to remain calm.

May you be ready for your final examination at all times.

I know you usually skip your breakfast. Not having breakfast is a bad habit, actually. Before sitting for an exam, you must have breakfast, which makes you feel a pretty full stomach and cannot nauseate you. You are able to eat Mont-hin-ga, fried rice, coffee and cake, or something like that. On exam days, you have to avoid eating too much oily food, sticky rice, spicy food, salad, and some drinks, mainly because they are most likely to cause you an upset stomach. In particular,

you need to have food and drink that will not keep you hungry during exam time. It would also be best if you answered the call of nature before doing an exam. Otherwise, that will certainly prevent you from taking an exam.

Before you start answering your questions, first check your answer sheets to see whether or not they are coloured and torn. If the papers are so, swap them by asking exam invigilators. Then, write your roll number correctly and clearly, only once! If you write it wrong, ask for help from the proctor in your room. Please

read the whole question paper or at least skim it. Work out your estimated time for answering as soon as possible on the basis of the time allocated to examinees. You had better begin answering the question number so that you could do your best. Luckily or unluckily, don't waste too much time in the question examining your half-studied subject matter. It is better if your handwriting is neat and clear in your exam. In spite of that, it is not beautiful. As my final tip to you, check your answers again and again till the allowed time is up if you have got ample time from your answering. After your exams, please stay calm. Don't make peer checking between the exams at all. That is responsible for nothing but your undesirable worries.

Good luck with your final examination. I hope you pass your exams with flying colours. Sleep well and enough every day.

Danish study finds drug reduces 'forever chemicals' in blood

In a clinical trial, cholestyramine led to a 20-fold reduction in PFAS levels, with a remarkable 63 per cent decrease in plasma observed. While these results are promising for individuals with high PFAS exposure, further research is needed to understand its impact on chronic health conditions.

A MEDICATION for high cholesterol can drastically cut "forever chemicals" (PFAS) — associated with an increased risk of cancer and banned in Europe — in the blood, researchers said Thursday.

But the drug was not suitable for widespread and prolonged use because of its side effects and more research was needed to explore its possible impact on certain chronic health conditions.

A clinical trial with cholestyramine led to a reduction 20 times greater than the normal result without intervention, Morten Lindhardt, a doctor involved in a clinical trial, told AFP.

"The effect of treatment was actually a decrease in the plasma of 63 per cent," said Lindhardt, who is based at Holbaek hospital.

Researchers say the results are promising for treating people who have been exposed to high doses of the "forever chemicals",



Researchers have discovered that a medication typically used to treat high cholesterol can significantly reduce levels of "forever chemicals" known as PFAS, which are linked to cancer risk and banned in Europe.

ILLUSTRATION: PIXABAY/CCO PUBLIC DOMAIN

so called because they tend to accumulate and stay in the body.

But Lindhardt added of the

new treatment: "I don't think you should take this medication permanently because there are side

effects".

It could nevertheless alleviate the "feeling of being poisoned" that people with high levels of pollutants could feel, he added.

PFAS (Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances), refer to a family of some 4,000 chemical compounds.

They can reduce the immune response from vaccination, hit cholesterol levels, and have also been linked to cancers or obesity. **Side effects risk**

Some residents of the town of Korsor in central Denmark, were exposed to high levels of one of them; perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS).

It was present in a foam used to extinguish fires at a local fire-fighting training facility.

This community, where the measured PFOS levels were well above normal levels, was chosen for the clinical trial on 45 residents.

Despite the small sample

size, Lindhardt argued that the effect of the treatment was beyond dispute.

Nevertheless, widespread treatment for everyone with elevated PFAS levels was out of the question, he added.

"The risk of side effects is way too big," he explained. "If you went on to treat everybody, it will be a disaster."

But one potential use could be for women of child bearing age, to limit the transmission of the chemicals to their children.

"It could break the chain of delivering these chemicals to the next generation," Lindhardt said.

Lindhardt argued for caution, even though the effects of the drug were documented in terms of their effect on PFAS levels in the blood.

The impact on the kidney or on immune deficiencies was not studied, he said.

SOURCE: AFP

More than one billion now afflicted by obesity: Lancet

The rate of obesity is growing among children and adolescents faster than adults, according to the study carried out with the World Health Organization.



The estimates were derived from analyzing the height and weight measurements of over 220 million individuals across more than 190 countries. ILLUSTRATION: CCO PUBLIC DOMAIN

MORE than one billion people around the world are now suffering from obesity with the number having more than quadrupled since 1990, according to a study released by The Lancet medical journal.

The "epidemic" is particularly hitting poorer countries and the rate is growing among children and adolescents faster than adults, according to the study carried out with the World Health Organization.

The study, released ahead of World Obesity Day on 4 March, estimated that there were about 226 million obese adults, adolescents and children in the world in 1990. The figure had risen to 1,038 million in 2022.

Francesco Branca, director of nutrition for health at the WHO, said the rise past one billion people has come "much earlier than we have anticipated".

While doctors knew obesity numbers were rising fast, the symbolic figure had previously been expected in 2030.

Researchers analyzed the weight and height measurements of more than 220 million people in more than 190 countries to reach the estimates, Lancet said.

They estimated that 504 million adult women and 374 million men were obese in 2022. The study

said the obesity rate had nearly tripled for men (14 per cent) since 1990 and more than doubled for women (18.5 per cent).

Some 159 million children and adolescents were living with obesity in 2022, according to the study, up from about 31 million in 1990.

The chronic and complex illness is accompanied by a greater risk of death from heart disease, diabetes and certain cancers. Being overweight increased the risk of death during the coronavirus pandemic. Countries in Polynesia and Micronesia, the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa have suffered more from the rise.

"These countries now have higher obesity rates than many high-income industrialized countries, especially those in Europe," the study said.

"In the past we have tended to think of obesity as a problem of the rich, now a problem of the world," said Branca, who highlighted the fast lifestyle changes in low and middle-income countries.

Eating badly helps obesity

The "very rapid transformation of the food systems is not for the better". Majid Ezzati of Imperial College London, the study's lead author, said there were signs that obesity was levelling out in some southern European countries such as France and Spain, "especially for women".

SOURCE: AFP

NATIONAL

Domestic travel picks up pace in late February, early March

THE number of domestic travellers has increased since late February and early March, according to travel agents.

With the gradual recovery in the post-COVID-19 era, Myanmar's tourism sector has now gained significant momentum to rise again.

"When basic education school examinations were over in mid-February, the number of travellers increased steadily. Since late February and early March, the number of domestic travellers has increased significantly. Many people travelled after contacting tour companies. Hotels and guesthouses on the beaches were full. Some hotels require early bookings. Com-



Some domestic travellers seen in Inlay Lake, Shan State.

pared to last summer, it is an improvement," said U Naung Naung Han, chairman of the Myanmar Tourism Entrepreneurs

Association.

Seeing the recovery of the local tourism sector this year, some hotels that were closed

for various reasons have started to reopen, while some even have plans to make more rooms available.

"Some suspended hotels have reopened with more extended rooms. As we all work with a focus on this summer, the outlook for the local visitors' sector is quite promising," he added.

However, local tourism may experience the usual downturn from the beginning of May as basic education schools reopen and agricultural activities resume in the pre-monsoon season.

"There are fewer local travellers during the rainy season. March, April and the Thingyan holidays are the peak periods for domestic tourism. We will be entering that peak soon. So, we are busy preparing for it, and the potentials are great," he commented. — Thit Taw/ZN

ME in Japan to introduce online reservation for passport extension, consular services



The Myanmar Embassy in Tokyo.

AN online appointment system will be initiated for passport extension and consular services for Myanmar nationals in Japan, the Myanmar Embassy in Japan announced on 4 March.

Myanmar Embassy in To-

kyo works on Myanmar nationals' welfare and consular services in compliance with rules, regulations, and procedures. Thousands of Myanmar nationals come to request consular services at the embassy monthly, and submissions for

passport extension by post are received daily, it said.

The number of people who came to seek consular services at the embassy has, on some days, much exceeded the consulate's capacity, and it made Myanmar nationals take time to wait for their turn.

Therefore, it will switch to an online appointment system in order to be more efficient for consular services, excluding visa applications as of 1 April (Monday).

Online appointments can be made at <http://www.myanmar-embassy-tokyo.net/2024/onlineappointment/onlineappointment/htm> or through the QR code. — MT/ZS

Yangon Zoo to celebrate 3-day Summer Party

A three-day Summer Party in which children and youths can participate will be held at Yangon Zoo from 8 to 10 March.

The event will feature a magic show, photo shoots with tamed birds, a music concert, and a random K-Pop dance, as well as photo booths and games for young children.

"There is no separate entrance fee for the Summer Party, but just admission to the zoo. There is an admission fee for some competitions. The Summer Party event is mainly intended for sporting activities, but they won't make children exhausted. This event is organized to prioritize children and youths," said an official from Yangon Zoo.

It will also include book shops, consumer product sales,



A poster advertising the Summer Party.

and food stalls, and the public will be invited to visit the zoo and participate in games.

Detailed information about stalls can be enquired about through the page messenger or phone numbers 09 421055332, 09 674071155, and 09 450037909 during office hours. — MT/ZS

MoL recognizes most job agencies for Japan's good reputation

AMONG the licensed agencies for overseas employment service, those sending workers to Japan regularly submit monthly summaries in prescribed forms and there are fewer cases of complaints, according to the data released by Safe Migration (the Ministry of Labour).

The ministry's statement expressed its appreciation to most overseas employment agencies for Japan, acknowledging their respectful conduct.

As the majority of taxpayers have

fully paid their due income tax, some agencies have even been able to attach the list of remittances to families, while almost all of them have completed IRIS training and there have been few cases of complaints.

Since the purpose of granting an agency license is to find overseas job opportunities and enable the socio-economic development of workers, the agencies that have obtained business licences are required to prove them-

selves to be dignified enterprises by respecting and complying with the licence conditions, it said.

From 1 January 2024, overseas employment agencies will no longer need to report to the headquarters in person or by letter for recruitment procedures, and will only be required to submit relevant matters by email.

There are now more than 500 overseas employment agencies in Myanmar. — MT/ZN

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A sample Excel sheet for the monthly list of recruited workers to be submitted by agencies from February 2024.

NATIONAL

Confiscations of illegal items: Timbers, foodstuffs and vehicles

A total of six kinds of goods worth K8.1 million, including a set of DJI Drone Mavic Air (used) and four boxes of Yu Yan Fitter cigarettes without official documents, were seized from luggage at the Yangon International Airport (Import Desk) on 3 March. This enforcement was carried out under Customs procedures.

On the same day, the combined teams supervised by the Mon State Illegal Trade Eradication Special Task Force captured two Mitsubishi Canter cars (approximately worth K40 million) heading to Mawlamyine from Zathapyin, carrying 200 jerrycans of Shrimp brand palm oil (each jerrycan containing 18 litres) valued at K9.8 million and 15,000 bottles of M1-150 energy drink worth K9 million near the Zathapyin bridge. The action was conducted under

Customs procedures.

During inspections on 4 March, an unregistered Jailing Super Cub motorbike (approximately worth K150,000) was seized in Kalewa Township, an unregistered Suzuki Carry vehicle (roughly worth K4 million) was captured in Yadanabon Bridge combined checkpoint in Sagaing Township and illegal teak weighing 1.164 tonnes and illegal timbers worth K3.542 tonnes valued at K1,299,996 was impounded in Tamu Township. The action was taken under the Export and Import Law and the Forest Law.

Additionally, on the same day, the combined teams captured a So Jen truck (estimated value of K40 million), travelling from Malikha village to Nangwae village, carrying 1,050 kilogrammes of Ammonium Nitrate valued at



Illegal teak and timbers seized in Bago Region.

K1.05 million without official documents in Myitkyina Township. The action was taken under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

Similarly, the combined teams confiscated 7,500 bottles

of LipoVitan-D energy drink and 13,200 bottles of Sponsor energy drink valued at K17 million that were not declared in the Import Declaration (ID) from a Nissan Diesel truck (estimated value of K35 million) travelling

from Myawady to Yangon near Kamawkasin village in Hpa-an Township and 100 jerrycans of Shrimp branded palm oil (18 litres each) and 780 jerrycans of Two-Shrimp brand palm oil (each jerrycan containing two litres) from a Mitsubishi canter (estimated value of K25 million) heading to Mawlamyine from Myawady near Eindu village on Eindu-Zathapyin road. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

K3.134 million worth of 9.498-tonne illegal teak was captured in Toungoo district on 4 March, and the action was taken under the Forest Law.

The Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee reported that 20 arrests were made from 3 to 4 March, with an estimated value of K206.934 million. — MNA/MKKS

Myanmar repatriates over 2,000 undocumented migrants, vows continued efforts

THE Myanmar government is repatriating undocumented migrants who have crossed the border after conducting thorough investigations. This proactive measure aims to maintain law and order within the country.

Between 9 February and 5 March, the government repatriated a total of 2,201 individuals to their respective countries. Those included 1,969 Chinese nationals, 93 Thai nationals, 38 Vietnamese

nationals, 33 Indian nationals, and 24 Indonesian nationals.

This latest repatriation effort brings the cumulative total to 52,820 undocumented migrants systematically repatriated since 5 October 2023. Chinese nationals constitute the majority at 50,772.

The government has reported that its efforts to locate and repatriate undocumented migrants will continue. — MNA/NT



Officials receiving undocumented migrants at the border crossing.

Counter-argument to false information

False news: 400 young people across Myanmar sent to Military Training Academy in Yamethin

OVER 400 youths from Yangon, Mandalay, Nay Pyi Taw, Bago, Magway and Sagaing Region were transported to the Military Basic Training Academy in Yamethin Township via 20 12-wheeled vehicles on 2 March, as stated by the malicious news media as a piece of false information.

An official said that the

news is not reliable. Malicious news media and people who don't want peace in the community are spreading false news, such as forceful conscription and arrests by the security forces and administrative organizations, in order to make people and young people afraid so that there is no peace and stability in the country. — MNA/KZL



Screenshot validates misinformation.

Misinformation: Security forces kill 11 people, burn 56 houses in Taze

KHIT Thit, a malicious news media, has created false news about the killing of 11 people from villages in Taze Township, the burning of 56 houses from nine villages, and the taking of public property by security forces. It is also spreading propaganda on social media to mislead the public.

A security official from Taze Township said that the news that the security forces

killed 11 people, burned down houses, and took away public property is untrue.

PDF terrorists have been carrying out acts of terror to disrupt law and peace in Taze Township. They attacked the local police station in Kanhtooma village and burned down houses and the local police station on 21 February.

In addition, terrorist groups attacked security forces

operating in the area with heavy weapons and drones on 23, 24, 29 February and 4 March. Thus, the security forces retaliated with heavy weapons and airstrikes, causing terrorists to retreat and flee with many casualties.

The security forces are working together with the local people to ensure peace and stability in the area. — MNA/KZL

ECONOMY WORLD

China targets economic growth of around 5% in 2024

CHINA targets economic growth of around five per cent in 2024, according to a government work report submitted Tuesday to the national legislature for deliberation.

The country expects to create over 12 million jobs in urban areas and keep the surveyed urban unemployment rate at around 5.5 per cent this year, according to the report.

A proactive fiscal policy and a prudent monetary policy will be continued, with the ratio of deficit to gross domestic product (GDP) set at three per cent and the government deficit to rise by 180 billion yuan



The opening meeting of the second session of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) is held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, 5 March 2024. PHOTO: XINHUA

from the 2023 budget figure.

The country will see 3.9 trillion yuan of special-purpose bonds for local governments to be issued this year, up by 100 billion yuan from last year.

It will also issue ultra-long special treasury bonds over each of the next several years for the purpose of implementing major national strategies and building up security capacity in key areas, starting with 1 trillion yuan of such bonds this year, the report said.

The consistency of the macro policy orientation should be enhanced, it said. — Xinhua

Singapore's private economy expands for 12 consecutive months

THE seasonally adjusted S&P Global Singapore Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) posted 56.8 in February, marking the Singaporean private business condition's continued improving for 12 straight months, according to a statement by the S&P Global Tuesday.

New business activities grew at the fastest rate in nine months as demand conditions improved, S&P noted, adding that the transport, as well as the information and communication sector, saw the fastest rises in

new sales and activity.

The input price inflation climbed to a 12-month peak in February due to higher transportation costs, alongside rising raw material and labour costs, according to the statement.

Selling prices also climbed at an elevated rate as the companies opted to share their increased cost burdens with clients, S&P added.

A PMI reading of 50 and above indicates expansion, while a reading below 50 indicates contraction. — Xinhua

Brazil's president calls for IMF reform to reflect "today's world"

BRAZILIAN President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on Monday called for reform of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to make it "more representative of today's world".

During his meeting with IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva, Lula talked about the necessity of reforming the multilateral lending agency so as to make it more "capable of helping countries that need to

resort to the IMF under better conditions".

The meeting also addressed the development of social inclusion and the global fight against poverty, Lula said on X, formerly Twitter.

Lula had earlier expressed his support for reforming international financial organizations, including the World Bank, and refinancing the debt of the poorest countries. — Xinhua

LEAP tech event to attract 11.9-bln-USD investments

THE LEAP Tech Conference 2024 kicked off in the Saudi Arabian capital Riyadh on Monday, aiming to attract 11.9 billion US dollars in investments, according to the press release issued by the organizing committee.

Saudi Minister of Communications and Information Technology Abdullah Alswaha said the event supports deep and emerging technologies, innovation, and cloud computing in the kingdom and worldwide.

The investments will go towards developing Saudi digital skills and supporting tech start-ups, said the minister, noting the kingdom expects the investments will help consolidate its position as the largest market and digital economy in the Middle East and North Africa.

Of the total investments,

Amazon Web Services announced a 5.3-billion-dollar investment in a new cloud zone in Saudi Arabia; Datavolt announced a five-billion-dollar investment in Saudi data centres with a capacity of more than 300

megawatts; IBM plans to invest 250 million dollars in a global software development center in the kingdom; ServiceNow will invest 500 million dollars to localize its regional services in Saudi Arabia. — Xinhua



A visitor looks at a robot at the LEAP 2024 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on 4 March 2024. The LEAP Tech Conference 2024 kicked off here on Monday, aiming to attract 11.9 billion US dollars in investments, according to the press release issued by the organizing committee.

PHOTO: XINHUA

'Muted' South African economy skirts recession as vote looms

THE South African economy grew 0.1 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2023, narrowly avoiding a recession that could have hurt the ruling ANC ahead of May elections, official figures showed Tuesday.

The key mining industry recorded a 2.4 per cent increase in output helped by stronger production figures for platinum group metals, chromium ore, coal and diamonds, the national statistics agency StatsSA said.

Alongside a 2.9 per cent expansion in the transport, storage and communication sector, this helped reverse the 0.2 per cent contraction the country recorded in the previous three months. — AFP

Japan eyes up to 800,000 more skilled foreign workers over next 5 yrs

JAPAN is set to sharply increase the number of foreigners it accepts under its skilled worker visa with plans to receive up to 800,000 people in the next five years, a source familiar with the matter said Tuesday.

In an attempt to cope with an acute labour shortage, the government is considering adding the road transportation, railway, forestry and timber industries as targets of the visa system, which was introduced in April 2019, the source said.

The projected figure for the five years from April this year is more than double the up to

345,150 workers the government had expected to accept through fiscal 2023 ending March in its estimate when the system was created.

As of the end of last November, there were around 200,000 working under a resident status called Specified Skilled Worker No 1 that currently covers 12 sectors such as construction and farming for up to a total of five years.

Meanwhile, there were 29 holders of No 2 status that allows them to bring in family members and has no limit on the number of times they can renew their visa. — Kyodo

S California eyes stronger cooperation with China on low-carbon shipping

PARTICIPANTS in a US-China Green Port and Low-Carbon meeting have called for stronger port cooperation between the two countries to jointly promote carbon emissions reduction and sustainable port operations.

Representatives from over 60 global shipping and logistics companies, container terminals, zero-emission technology developers, and original equipment manufacturers gathered at the meeting in Long Beach, Southern California, on Sunday to explore potential opportunities for trans-Pacific cooperation between Southern California and China's Shenzhen, a technological innovation hub in southern China's Guangdong Province.

They focused on ways



A container ship of China's COSCO Shipping docks at a container terminal of the Port of Long Beach in California, the United States, 20 August 2021. PHOTO: XINHUA

to lower emissions and further decarbonize the shipping and logistics sectors at the two countries' ports.

They also held in-depth discussions regarding potential sister-port cooperation between the

Port of Long Beach, the US second busiest port, and the Port of Shenzhen and potential collaboration in green ports and low-carbon shipping initiatives.

The Port of Long Beach is the most impor-

tant gateway for China-US trade, with more than 70 per cent of its cargo volume related to China, said Peng Jing, commercial counselor of the Chinese Consulate-General in Los Angeles. — Xinhua

Uber Eats to start robot deliveries in central Tokyo from Wednesday

UBER Eats Japan Inc and Mitsubishi Electric Corp will launch a new food delivery service from Wednesday in central Tokyo using self-driving robots, with plans to roll out the service more widely in the future.

The sidewalk robot deliveries will be initially offered in a small area around Tokyo's Nihombashi district from 10 am

to 5 pm on weekdays, with two restaurants participating. Customers cannot specify that they wish to have their orders delivered by robot. The box-shaped robot is 71 centimetres long, 46 cm wide and 60 cm high. It runs on six wheels at around a maximum speed of 5 kilometres per hour and can carry up to 20 kilogrammes. — Kyodo



An Uber Eats Japan Inc self-driving robot makes a delivery in Tokyo's Chuo Ward on 5 March 2024. PHOTO: KYODO

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09251022355

NOTICE OF APPROVAL OF SHARE CAPITAL REDUCTION

In accordance with section 116(i) of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017, Volka 919 Co.,Ltd, a company incorporated in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar with Company Registration Number: 123366255, (Volka) hereby gives notice that its shareholders have approved a reduction in share capital. The resolution approved the cancellation of unpaid shares 52,500. Total paid up capital of the company is reduced from MMK 750,000,000 to MMK 225,000,000.

For Volka
May Mon Min Thein (Advocate – No.17348)
SCM Legal Limited
email: office@scm-legal.com

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V BANGKOK VOY.NO. (171N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V BANGKOK VOY.NO. (171N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **6-3-2024** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.
Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:
M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V UNI-ACTIVE VOY.NO. (0316-765N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V UNI-ACTIVE VOY.NO. (0316-765N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **6-3-2024** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.
Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:
M/S EVERGREEN MARINE (ASIA) PTE., LTD.

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

10 million Thais treated for pollution health problems in 2023

THAILAND must do more to tackle air pollution, a government agency has warned, saying more than 10 million people required treatment for pollution-related health problems in 2023.

The kingdom's cities often rank among the worst in the world for PM 2.5 particles — so tiny they can enter the bloodstream — during the early months of the year thanks to farmers burning stubble and exhaust fumes.

The National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC) said that “prioritization should be placed on... the impact of PM2.5 on public health”.

“According to the Health Data Centre system of the Ministry of Health, in 2023 the number of patients with diseases related to air pollution is 10.5 million,” the NESDC said in a



Tourists take photos at a hotel amid moderate levels of air pollution in Bangkok on 15 December 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

regular update issued on Monday.

The NESDC advises Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin on

economic and social development issues facing the kingdom, and makes recommendations. Data from the health min-

istry show that since the start of 2024, some 1.6 million people have needed treatment for problems linked to air pollution.

The figures include people with conditions such as chronic bronchitis, lung cancer, asthma, and heart diseases.

Last month, Bangkok city employees were told to work from home for two days as a layer of noxious haze blanketed the Thai capital.

Air quality in Thailand regularly plummets in the early months of the year as smoke from farmers burning stubble in the fields adds to industrial emissions and vehicle exhaust fumes.

Srettha has pledged to improve air quality, and his cabinet endorsed a Clean Air Act in January. The news comes as Hanoi, capital of neighbouring Viet Nam, tops the world's most polluted cities, registering on Tuesday PM 2.5 levels that were 24 times the World Health Organization's annual guideline. — AFP

Hanoi chokes as Viet Nam capital tops most polluted cities list

VIETNAMESE capital Hanoi was blanketed by a thick haze of pollution on Tuesday that obscured high-rise buildings and left the city's nearly nine million people breathing toxic air.

The city topped air monitoring website IQAir's table of the world's most polluted cities early Tuesday afternoon.

Levels of PM2.5 pollutants — cancer-causing microparticles small enough to enter the bloodstream through the lungs

— were classified as “very unhealthy” and hit more than 24 times the World Health Organization's annual guideline.

In recent years Hanoi has frequently been listed among the world's most polluted cities, due in part to widespread construction and emissions from the huge number of motorbikes and cars that crisscross the capital every day.

Carbon emissions from coal plants to the north and ag-

ricultural burning exacerbate the problem.

“I have had to wear a mask whenever I've gone out over the last few days as the air quality has been so bad,” said office worker Nguyen Minh Huong.

“It's hard to breathe. I sneeze all the time, so I have had to limit my time outside,” Huong told AFP.

Last month dozens of flights were affected when high humidity caused thick fog to envelop Hanoi, producing a spike in air pollution and causing visibility to plummet.

Weather forecasters have issued regular warnings of thick haze, especially in north-eastern mountainous areas of Viet Nam.

The latest World Bank report on air pollution says 40 per cent of people in Hanoi are exposed to concentrations nearly five times greater than WHO guidelines. The WHO says that a number of serious health conditions are linked to air pollution exposure, including strokes, heart disease and lung cancer. — AFP



Vehicles drive amid high levels of air pollution in Hanoi on 5 March 2024. **PHOTO: AFP**

EU seals deal on banning single-use plastic packaging in cafes from 2030

EU negotiators struck an agreement Monday to ban single-use plastics in cafes and restaurants from 2030, officials said, under new rules to reduce waste from packaging across the bloc.

The EU's 27 nations and lawmakers agreed on the draft text that sets a target of cutting packaging waste in the bloc by five per cent by 2030, compared with the amount in 2018.

The aim is to reduce that further by 10 per cent in 2035 and 15 per cent by 2040.

The text is a key element of the EU's environmental goals under the Green Deal, a set of laws for helping the bloc meet its climate goals.

“This regulation aims to reduce waste caused by packaging, making it more sustainable, while ensuring the highest waste management standards,” the government of Belgium, which holds the rotating EU presidency, said on X.

Plastics in catering had been at the heart of bitter negotiations after intense lobbying by fast-food giants and the paper industry, which said cardboard packaging, recyclable or from sustainable forests, was more environmentally friendly than plastics.

The single-use plastic packaging ban from 2030 will also apply for unprocessed fresh fruit and vegetables, individual portions of products such as condiments and sugar, as well as miniature toiletries and shrink-wrap for suitcases in airports.

Ultra-lightweight plastic bags will also be banned, with some exceptions.

“For the first time in an environmental law, the EU is setting targets to reduce packaging consumption, regardless of the material used,” said Frederique Ries, the Belgian EU lawmaker who pushed the text through parliament. — AFP

SPORTS

Paris 2024 unveils art deco-style posters inspired by famous landmarks

THE iconic posters for the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, designed by French illustrator Ugo Gattoni, were revealed at the Musee d'Orsay on Monday.

A giant version of the posters went on display at the well-known art museum and will remain there until 10 March for visitors from all over the world.

The respective posters for the Olympics and Paralympics could be seen as separate works but also complement each other to form a "double poster", which reflects the idea that the two Games are equal and connected.

"For the first time at the Summer Games, the Iconic Posters take the form of a diptych, with the same artistic direction. They are two independent



The official posters of Paris 2024 Olympic (L) and Paralympic games are seen during the unveiling ceremony at the Orsay Museum in Paris, France, 4 March 2024. PHOTO: XINHUA

posters telling the story of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, which, when placed side by side, tell the whole story of Paris 2024,"

posters showed a dream-like portrayal of a stadium city, echoing the Paris 2024 slogan "Games wide open" and reflecting the organizers' ambition: bringing sport into the city.

Several elements, symbols, and values representing Paris 2024, Olympism, and Paralympism are featured on the posters, including symbols of the Games, special designs and renovations from Paris 2024, and iconic elements representing Paris and France. All the Olympic and Paralympic disciplines can also be found on the posters.

This spectacular landscape invites spectators to dive in and discover a whole range of different details and miniature scenes that form a fascinating and extremely colourful whole.

"When I was asked to design the Iconic Posters for Paris 2024, I immediately imagined a city stadium open to the world, a suspended time in which you can wander through microcosms where Parisian monuments and sporting disciplines joyfully coexist," said Gattoni.

The posters will be available to purchase at the Musee d'Orsay and on the Paris 2024 shop website. From 5 March, they will also be made available within Paris 2024 stores and FNAC, a partner of the Paris 2024 Games.

"It's an incredible opportunity to have my work shown to the world, it's great. It's very important to me that a piece of art has a life in its own time," said Gattoni, who spent around 2,000 hours on finishing the posters. — Xinhua

Inter Milan keep winning streak in Serie A

THE Serie A title race seems to be a foregone conclusion as Inter Milan have run 15 points clear on the table after a 2-1 home victory over Genoa on Monday.

The Nerazzurri kept a perfect record since 2024 as they had managed 11 wins on the bounce before Monday.

The away side tested Yann Sommer in the 26th minute as Mateo Retegui's header from a close range was denied by Sommer; four minutes before Alexis Sanchez assisted for Kristjan Asl-

lani to reap his first goal for Inter.

Sanchez made it 2-0 in the 38th minute as the Chilean converted a spot-kick earned by Nicolò Barella.

Genoa pulled one goal back in the 54th minute when Stefan de Vrij's clearance only fell for Johan Vasquez to hit in a first-time volley, leaving Sommer rooted to the ground.

Inter survived from a scare in the 66th minute as Vitinha found the net, but it was ruled out due to offside. — Xinhua

Real Madrid in strong position against Leipzig for Champions League quarters

REAL Madrid are the clear favourites to qualify for the quarterfinals of the Champions League when they entertain RB Leipzig on Wednesday night.

Carlo Ancelotti's side take a 1-0 first leg lead into the match after Brahim Diaz's goal in Germany three weeks ago. That game saw a Leipzig goal ruled out for a controversial offside in the first half.

Real Madrid were held to a 2-2 draw away to Valencia in La Liga on Saturday, which was marred by a dreadful (and possible career-ending) knee injury suffered by home defender Mouctar Diakhaby, and a controversy triggered by referee Gil Manzano who blew for full time moments before Jude Bellingham headed what would have been the winning goal. — Xinhua

Title-chasing Arsenal 'more mature' than last season: Jorginho



Arsenal's Brazilian midfielder (11) Gabriel Martinelli (C) celebrates scoring the team's third goal with Arsenal's Polish defender (15) Jakub Kiwior and Arsenal's Norwegian midfielder (08) Martin Odegaard during the English Premier League football match between Sheffield United and Arsenal at Bramall Lane in Sheffield, northern England on 4 March 2024. PHOTO: AFP

JORGINHO believes free-scoring Arsenal are approaching the Premier League title race with more maturity than last season, when they faltered in sight of the finishing line.

Mikel Arteta's men were top of the table for most of the 2022/23 campaign but Manchester City overtook them in the run-in to secure their third straight title.

Arsenal have hit a purple patch since the turn of the year,

winning all seven league games by an aggregate scoreline of 31-3 as they seek to become English champions for the first time since 2004.

The third-placed Gunners hammered bottom club Sheffield United 6-0 on Monday to move just one point behind City and two behind Liverpool, with 11 games to go.

"The performance of the squad (was great) and the mentality to start strong and carry

on the momentum," Jorginho said after his side's dominant performance win at Bramall Lane.

"It was really, really good to see a team playing forward and want to keep going."

Asked what is different about the team this year compared to the one that just fell short last season, the Italy international added: "I think the maturity.

"We are way more mature how we compete and how we manage the games. I think that's it."

Arsenal raced out of the blocks, racking up a five-goal lead quicker than any away side in Premier League history — Declan Rice making it 5-0 in the 39th minute. Ben White's second-half thunderbolt completed the rout, scoring the club's 10,000th goal on an evening when they became the first English league side to win three consecutive away games by five or more goals.

"We are pleased that we are doing all this good stuff, but we need to carry on," Jorginho said. — AFP



This photo taken on 27 September 2023 shows an intelligent mobile electron beam irradiation sterilization device displayed at a technology and equipment exhibition for the cultural relic protection in southwest China's Chongqing Municipality. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

China develops robot for cultural relics protection

cave painting conservation over the past decades. From 2020 to 2022, the academy has taken the lead in on-site protection of national tomb murals.

"The tomb mural preservation poses a great challenge," said Yu Zongren, head of the academy's conservation institute.

Being buried deep underground for extended periods exposes tomb murals to highly humid environments, fostering the proliferation of microorganisms that accelerate their deterioration. Furthermore, given the generally confined space within tombs, any negligence in cleaning and protection work can result in additional damage to these invaluable relics.

The conventional disinfection approach involves the use of chemical agents, which, unfortunately, may pose health risks to the people involved as well as affect the murals. — Xinhua

CHINA'S strides in space technology are now enriching the preservation of cultural relics, as spacecraft engineers have repurposed a robot originally designed for orbital missions to protect tomb artifacts.

The China Academy of Space Technology (CAST) recently announced the development of such a robot. Combined

with electron beam irradiation technology, it can be used as an intelligent mobile system to eradicate bacteria that thrive on ancient murals in small tombs.

Equipped with a robotic arm mounted on a mobile wheeled chassis, this device can scan scenes of tomb walls and domes.

Similar to the radiation disinfection

technology used in medical treatment, the electron beams can eliminate harmful bacteria that cause murals to fade or chip over time.

The project was initiated by the Dunhuang Academy, an institute for the protection and research of the World cultural heritage of Dunhuang Grottoes in China. It has accumulated rich experience in

Climbers to pay \$13 fee on popular Mount Fuji trail

HIKERS using the most popular route to climb Japan's Mount Fuji will be charged \$13 each from July, with numbers capped to ease congestion and improve safety, a regional official said Tuesday.

Increasingly large crowds are scaling Japan's highest mountain, which is covered in snow most of the year but draws more than 220,000 visitors each July-September climbing period.

From 1 July, an entry fee of 2,000 yen (\$13) will be charged per person to ascend the famous volcano's Yoshida Trail.

Daily entries to the trail will be capped at 4,000 people, with entry banned between 4:00 pm and 2:00 am, under an ordinance approved Monday by Yamanashi region.

"After Covid restrictions were lifted, we started seeing more people. We want them to dress appropriately for the mountain and be well prepared," Toshiaki Kasai, an official at the local government, told AFP. — AFP

UNGA president calls for great efforts to resolve Gaza crisis

UN General Assembly (UNGA) President Dennis Francis on Monday called for action to end violence and suffering in Gaza.

"First and foremost, an immediate humanitarian ceasefire must be implemented. The bombardment must stop, now," Francis told the General Assembly plenary meeting on the use of the veto, describing the situation in Gaza as "catastrophic", and highlighting the "shocking" death toll and the impact on children and families.

The General Assembly met to examine the US veto of the latest Security Council draft resolution calling for a ceasefire in war-torn Gaza, where a grim, forewarned landscape of famine has seen babies and children die of starvation in recent days.

Francis said that from the UN's inception in 1945, the world body and the Security Council have an overarching duty to save generations from the



UN General Assembly President Dennis Francis speaks during the General Assembly plenary meeting on the use of the veto in the Security Council, held at the UN headquarters in New York, on 4 March 2024. **PHOTO: EVAN SCHNEIDER/UN PHOTO/HANDOUT VIA XINHUA**

scourge of war, and called for the international community to act now to end Gaza crisis.

"I am shocked and horrified at the reported killing and injury of hundreds of people during disbursement of aid supplies, west of Gaza City last week," Francis said.

This comes with a rising death toll, babies dying of starvation, and 85 per cent of Gaza's population — or 1.9 million people — are internally displaced.

Extremely concerned about pending Israeli ground operations in Rafah, where nearly 1.5 million people now reside, the UNGA president called for maximum restraint to prevail in order to save innocent civilian lives.

Israeli restrictions on humanitarian access have drastically reduced the flow of lifesaving aid to a mere trickle, with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East reports a significant 50 per cent reduction in the number of trucks entering Gaza daily from January to February, he said. — Xinhua