

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

Myanmar foreign trade surpasses US\$27B in 11 months



A file photo depicting containers in the bustling commercial zone of Yangon Port, set against the backdrop of the Yangon River.

MYANMAR's external trade with foreign partners reached over US\$27.758 billion as of 1 March in the current financial year 2023-2024, beginning 1 April, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Myanmar's exports were worth over \$13.378 billion, whereas the country's imports were valued at \$14.379 billion between 1 April 2023 and 1 March 2024.

Myanmar's seaborne trade value crossed over \$20.55 billion this FY, while border trade was valued at \$7.207 billion.

The trade figure over the past 11 months shrank from \$31.36 billion recorded in the corresponding period last FY, indicating a sharp drop of over \$3.605 billion.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods, while it imports capital goods, intermediate goods, raw materials imported by the CMP enterprises and consumer goods.

Myanmar has been implementing the National Export Strategy (NES) 2020-2025 in order to bolster exports. The priority sectors of the NES comprise agricultural production, garment and apparel, industrial and electronic device, fishery business, forest product, digital manufacturing and service, logistic service, quality management, trade information service, innovation and entrepreneurship sectors. — NN/EM

Myanmar, Russia discuss plans to build edible oil factory

ACCORDING to the Ministry of Industry, discussions are currently underway between Myanmar and Russia regarding the construction of an edible oil factory. It is expected to produce 35,000 tonnes of oil per year from various oil crops.

On 14 March, Union Minister for Industry Dr Charlie Than and representatives of Russian NPP A - Engineering LLC Company met and discussed collaboration in agricultural produce and oil crops.

The talk involved matters related to constructing the edible oil-producing factory that will produce 35,000 tonnes of oil annually from oil crops, producing feedstuffs and fuel pellets from the by-products of grinding oil crops, cultivating crops, conducting processing and packaging training, installing machines in the production lines, testing and monitoring processes.

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45,125 students take Biology, 83,510 students take Economics on 6th day of 2024 matric exam

BUSINESS

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Chilli pepper traders likely to achieve profit potential

Authentic taste of tea, enjoy

SHWE PHE OO

Sales Department- Ph-09 30861655, 09 420218438
 STARMART nine mile Showroom- (9)mile, Pyay Road, Yangon, Ph-09 30860180
 KHA YAE PIN MART - Mingaladone, Pyay Road, Yangon, Ph- 09 871443055
 STARMART MANDALAY Wholesale -Corner of 28th and 66th road, Mandalay Ph-09 691702244
 STARMART Nay Pyi Taw Yangon- Mandalay Highway Road, Year Gauk Ward, Pyawbata Ph- 09 845118077

2023-2024 Myanmar Best Practices Award

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.



Myanmar, Russia discuss plans to build edible oil factory

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Furthermore, the discussion covered various topics, including expanding the cultivation of oil crops, ensuring targeted productivity across all cultivation areas, promoting investments in the oil crop sector, selecting high-quality seeds and cultivation systems, determining optimal growing times, preparing the land, providing necessary inputs, managing pest control, and implementing systematic harvesting processes. These measures are aimed at ensuring an adequate supply of domestic edible oil.

The two delegations also discussed upgrading the manufacturing processes for edible oil to comply with international safety standards and regulations, as well as the technological requirements for refineries and the procurement of edible oil refinery machines. — ASH/TMT

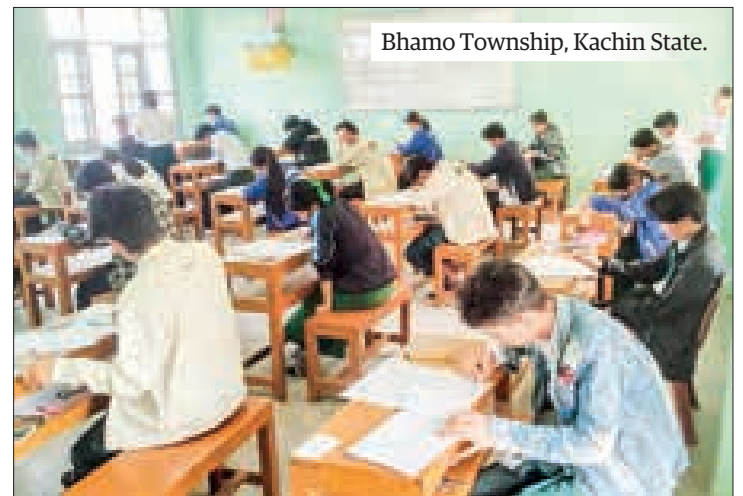


Twantay Township, Yangon Region.

45,125 students take Biology, 83,510 students take Economics on 6th day of 2024 matric exam

THE 2024 matriculation examination (new curriculum) continued its sixth day yesterday. A total of 45,125 students sat for the Biology exam, and 83,510 students took the Economics exam across the nation, including overseas exam centres.

This year, a total of 768 exam centres for biology exams, including six overseas exam centres and 762 exam centres at home, are open for students. Altogether, 45,125 students out of 48,482 registered



Bhamo Township, Kachin State.



Pwintbyu Township, Magway Region.

students sat for Biology with 3,357 absentees. The number of students sitting for the exam was 93.08 per cent.

A total of 98,041 students registered for Economics at six overseas exam centres and 828 exam centres at home, and 83,510 students sat for Economics with 14,531 absentees. The number of students sitting for exams accounted for 85.18 per cent, according to the figures of the Ministry of Education. — MNA/KZL



Chaungzon Township, Mon State.

NATIONAL

MoALI Union Minister inspects fishery industry in Myeik

THE Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation, U Min Naung, along with Taninthayi Region Chief Minister U Myat Ko, regional government ministers, and departmental officials, conducted a field inspection tour of the fishery industry and value-added aquatic production in Myeik district.

During the inspection, the Union minister and his team visited the shrimp hatchery ponds operated by Pyi Phyto Tun International Company Limited. It was suggested that the company focus on farming and producing fish and shrimp rather than relying on capture.

Subsequently, they examined the installation of 3.77-megawatt solar panels for a

floating solar system, a collaboration between Pyi Phyto Tun International Company Limited and Myanmar Solar Power Trading Company Limited.

Additionally, the team observed the harvesting and transportation process of 80-day-old shrimps to a cold storage plant, inspected RT-PCR laboratories, and observed soft crab farming activities.

The Union minister stressed the importance of adhering to overseas export standards, protecting the environment, and complying with current laws to promote the development of fish and shrimp farming production.

Furthermore, they assessed aquatic farming oper-



Union Minister U Min Naung observes the fishery industry and value-added aquatic production in Myeik.

ations on Payee Island conducted by various companies. In the evening, the Union

minister convened a meeting with all staff at the office of the Department of Agricul-

tural Land Management and Statistics in Myeik township. — MNA/TRKM

NUAC (Mandalay) hosts academic research symposium 1/2024



Attendees of the academic research symposium 1/2024 pose for the documentary group photo at Myinzuthaka Hall of the National University of Arts and Culture, Mandalay yesterday.

DEPUTY Minister of Religious Affairs and Culture Daw Nu Mra Zan, Director-General of the Fine Arts Department, Rector of NUAC Mandalay, pro-rectors, scholars from the literature and arts fields, professors, heads of the departments, members of higher education, authors of the research, teachers, staff, and other invitees attended the academic research symposium conducted by the ministry.

The deputy minister highlighted six academic research studies presented at the symposium that were deemed necessary for the university.

She emphasized the need for international research that applies to real-life situations, given the rapid spread of cultural currents across countries. Additionally, it's essential to understand different cultures without compromising our own and to share them with future generations. The importance of showcasing Myanmar's traditional cultures to the world was also stressed.

Following this, the rector elucidated the objectives of the symposium.

Subsequently, Myanmar tutors Daw Ei Kuu, music tutor U Min Min Myat, assistant

lecturer Daw Myint Myint Aye, painting tutor Daw Myint Myint Win, lecturer Daw Myat Thiri Aung, and the movie and play tutor Daw Zin Thu Maung presented their respective researches related to their expertise fields and engaged in discussions with the guests.

After the discussions concluded, the deputy minister inspected the paintings and sculpture galleries at Myinzuthaka Hall of the National University of Arts and Culture Mandalay and made necessary arrangements. — MNA/TRKM

Public Notice

The Anti-Corruption Commission has established corruption prevention units within ministries to curb corruption effectively.

The ACC used SMS on mobile phones to ask the public who sought services at an office of the department of the relevant ministries via short code No "1111" for feedback, including the public feedback programme (PFP).

According to the PFP, the proper replies of the citizens via short code No "1111" will provide the quality of services of each department and the requirements for corruption prevention to be fixed.

Therefore, the public should reply to the questions of the ACC and corruption prevention units of the ministries via SMS at short code "1111". Such doing is a supportive measure for PFP, and the people are urged to cooperate in the operations.

Anti-Corruption Commission

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NATIONAL

AA commits War Crimes for its attacks in Sittway Tsp



The location map of attacks committed by AA terrorists.



Photos show injured persons due to heavy arms fired by AA terrorists.

AA insurgents intentionally opened fire from Ponnagyun to the wards in Sittway Township of Rakhine State yesterday, and the artillery shells fell into Set Yone Su 2, Konbaung ward and exploded. After the explosion, one male and one female were seriously injured and taken to General Hospital (500-bed) in Sittway Township.

The AA insurgents launched attacks using Drop Bombs and heavy weapons. Villages and public places in Sittway to affect the socioeconomic of locals.

They committed 13 attacks using heavy weapons in Sittway township, including the attacks in villages in Sittway station on 28 February, Myoma Market (locally called Korea jetty) on 29 February, Kathe ward on 9 March, near No 7 BEHS in Padalate village on 11 March, school in Shwepyitha villages on 13 March, and Set Yone Su 2, Kongbong ward on 16 March.

Due to the attacks of AA, 18 people, including a 12-year-old child, died, and 47 people, including two matric examinees

were injured. Moreover, schools, houses and departmental buildings were destroyed.

AA terrorists launched attacks in townships, villages, and wards, attempted to start fighting, and successively conducted destructive actions in real situations, saying it was for the sake of the region. They also intentionally shot the students and educational buildings. Their attacks on non-military targets, schools and wards seemed to break the Geneva Conventions and War Crimes. — MNA/KTZH

Brazil to support Myanmar in establishing diplomatic school

BRAZIL has expressed its support for Myanmar's establishment of a diplomatic school. Moreover, discussions are underway regarding potential diplomatic exchange visits between the two nations, as reported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On 14 March, Myanmar Ambassador to Brazil U Aung Kyaw Zan and acting head of the Rio Branco Institute under the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ms Mariana Moscardo convened the meeting at the institute to deliberate on bilateral diplomatic collaboration.

They explored avenues for cooperation between the Department of Strategic Studies and Training under the Myanmar Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Rio Branco Institute, particularly in the realm of diplomatic exchange visits. Brazil affirmed its backing for curriculum development, management, administration, teaching, and research for the proposed diplomatic school in Myanmar.

Established in 1945, the Rio Branco Institute



The Myanmar ambassador meets Brazil's diplomatic school acting head.

boasts a rich history of training Brazilian diplomats who go on to serve in Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Additionally, it plays a pivotal role in nurturing young diplomatic officials in the fields of international relations and foreign diplomacy.

Over the years, the institute has produced numerous Brazilian diplomats and has also welcomed foreign diplomats, cementing its status as a cornerstone of diplomatic education and training. — ASH/NT

Counter-argument to false information


Subversive media circulates fake news about conscription for military

THE subversive media is circulating false news on social networking sites claiming that Muslims have died during the battle and that Muslims are being forcibly recruited into the troops. According to an official in Sittway Township, the news is simply false, and the malicious media is intentionally spreading misinformation about Muslims in Rakhine State.

Similarly, false news has been fabricated by Khit Thit, a subversive media outlet that

promotes terrorism, claiming that a monthly fee of K5,000 per household has been collected for young men who will serve in the army in Minmyay Village, Pwintbyu Township.

There is no money collection for young men, and the news is just false and circulating to mislead the public. The malicious media and those who support terrorist groups are only spreading propaganda to scare people with various types of misinformation. — MNA/TKO



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YGEA calls for trading halt unless gold traders transact below reference price

YANGON Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA) warned gold traders to halt business unless they make transactions below the YGEA's reference price, according to a notification released on 16 March.

Those unscrupulous dealers are manipulating the market by misleading information. Authorities are inspecting the cause of price fluctuations, and legal proceedings against them are underway.

As a result of this, the YGEA requested dealers to make gold transactions below the set reference price and avoid the spread of false news and price manipulation on 12 March.

The YGEA opened the reference price at K3.7945 million per tical (0.578 ounce or 0.016 kilogramme) on 16 March.

The pure gold price hit up to K4.16 million per tical in the unofficial market, with the spot gold price rallying US\$2,150 per ounce and Kyat devaluation against the US dollar to K3,680 on 16 March.

The figures showed a gap of K360,000 per tical between the YGEA's reference price and the actual market value.

Earlier, the 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-K500,000 per tical.

Following the CBM's liberalization for authorized dealers for online forex trading on 5 December 2023, the gap between the YGEA's reference price and the actual market value narrowed.

The kyat-US dollar exchange rate soaring up to K4,000 drove the gold price up to a record high of K4 million per tical in late August 2023. — NN/EM

Chilli pepper traders likely to achieve profit potential



Chilli pepper bags seen being prepared to be distributed to the domestic market.

WHOLESALEERS who collect large quantities of chilli peppers at low prices might reap a great profit this year.

Yangon's commodity market saw price decreases of tamarind and chilli pepper in 2023. When the new tamarind

price rose in early 2024, the prices of new chilli peppers remained on a downward trend.

The figures for kitchen supplies in the Yangon market in mid-March 2024 showed that only chilli pepper prices were

lower than those of the year-ago period. Low prices barely affect consumers amid low consumption. Although it can benefit the wholesalers, growers will earn less income.

Buyers are barely seen in the market, the depot owners said.

The wholesale prices of long chilli peppers moved in the range between K6,000 and K8,200 per viss on 15 March. Additionally, Moehaung chilli pepper fetched K8,800 per viss. Bell pepper prices were K10,800-K14,500 per viss.

The prices stood at K10,000-K13,500 per viss for chilli pepper and K12,000-K13,000 for bell pepper in the corresponding period last year.

There is less chance for traders to face losses in 2024, unlike the unfortunate event of 2023.

Chilli pepper price is expected to increase depending on exports like onion. Transport disruption at borders hindered chilli pepper exports this month.

The prices hit an all-time high of K20,000 per viss of Moehaung chilli pepper processed in cold storage and K31,000 for bell pepper processed in cold storage in late 2022. — TWA/KK

Premium Myittha onion price starts falling

THE price of premium Myittha onion (large size) dipped to K3,500 per viss on 15 March after it was stable at K3,700 during the past ten days of market opening.

About 1.08 million visses of onions from various regions entered the Yangon market between 11 and 15 March. The wholesale prices of onions are K2,700-K3,500 per viss.

It touched a high of K3,800 per viss on 27-28 February.

Meanwhile, Seikphyu onion was valued at K2,400 per viss on 15 March, plunging drastically from K3,200 per viss on 4 March.

The highest prices of onion were K1,850-K2,000 per viss in Pakokku, Seikphyu and Myingyan markets.

Myittha onion was valued at K3,000 per viss on 15 March in Mandalay's market. Although they fetch the highest price in the market, they are not included in the traders' inventory list.

The prices of summer onions peaked at K5,100 per viss in December 2023, whereas monsoon onions hit a high of K4,400 for Myingyan onion and K4,800 for Myittha onion. — TWA/KK



The bustling Pakokku onion market on 16 March 2024.

Daily newspapers available online

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News and Periodicals Enterprise



NATIONAL

Myanmar passport office updates procedures for PP applicants



Processing to issue UID in Kangyidaunt Township of Ayeyawady Region in 2023.

THE Myanmar Passport Office has announced that applicants who have made online bookings for passports need to have their UID (Unique Identity) numbers verified by the respective township office.

Passport processing is being carried out as usual by the Myanmar Passport Office, with the Yangon office processing passports for approximately 2,700 individuals using the QR

system. Additionally, passport offices in Nay Pyi Taw, Myitkyina, Haka, Loikaw, Magway, Mandalay, Monywa, Taunggyi, Kengtung, Lashio, Tachilek, Hpa-an, Myawady, Mawlamyine, Dawei, Kawthoung, Pathein, Sittway, and Bago townships are issuing passports to a specified number of applicants on weekdays.

Starting from 26th February, branches in Mandalay,

Pathein, Nay Pyi Taw, and Bago will enable applicants to schedule appointments online using a KBZ Pay/MPU card, providing convenience for applicants listed in the relevant state or region's household register.

It has been advised that appointments will not be scheduled for applicants who are not listed in the household register of the relevant state or region. — TWA/TKO

Two local companies licensed for EV, motorcycle production

THE Directorate of Investment and Company Administration permitted two companies with K31.4 billion total investment for the production of electric vehicles and motorcycles.

They are both locally owned companies, with one additional local EV company and one electric motorcycle company awaiting licences, according to the Myanmar Investment Committee.

The National-level Leading Committee on Development of Electric Vehicles and Related Businesses analyzes the businesses and hands its findings over to the Myanmar Investment Committee, which verifies them, and issues licences in line with relevant laws and by-laws. The National-level Leading Committee on Development of



The office of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration in Yangon.

the Electric Vehicle and Related Businesses has granted licences to 83 companies for EVs and related ventures. Additionally, it will consider import licenses for any companies that meet the necessary criteria, allowing electric vehicle (EV) importers to operate brand showrooms

since 1 February to sell their products.

The licensed companies include Amazing Auto, Aungga Motor, Auto Top Power, Myanmar Brilliance, Yaungnioo, Super Seven Stars, Dongfeng Motor, and Htet Waiyan Hein Company. — TWA/NT

NEWS In BRIEF

Myanmar-China border trade surpasses US\$3.1 bln

FIGURES from the Ministry of Commerce indicate that Myanmar-China border trade exceeded \$3.1 billion, marking a \$324.7 million increase compared to the same period last year. Similar increases were observed at other border checkpoints, including Chinshwehaw (\$395.3 million), Kanpaikti (\$75.5 million), and Kengtung (\$99.1 million).

K-Pop stars, artistes to participate in Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan 2024

AS part of the special programme for the Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan 2024, the government, in collaboration with the Boss and Jobs Company and other South Korean entertainment companies, will invite K-pop stars and artistes to the Central Pavilion. The Ministry of Information announced the organization of the national-level Thingyan Water Festival in Nay Pyi Taw, featuring four zones: Ethnic Thingyan, Complementary Feast Thingyan, Ministries Thingyan, and Youth Thingyan.

Online streamers required to register

ACCORDING to an announcement from the Ministry of Information on 13 March, individuals streaming videos on social media platforms must register. This activity has been classified as an important service, with each registration valid for one year. The ministry has set a one-month registration window starting from the date of the announcement.

Temporary power outage in Yangon

YANGON Region experienced a temporary power outage at 3:33 pm on 16 March due to grid malfunctions, as reported by the Yangon Electricity Supply Corporation. Power was restored by 6 pm.

Loyalty: Diplomat's most essential quality, says MoFA Union Minister

UNION Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe emphasized loyalty as the most essential quality for a diplomat during the 77th-anniversary ceremony of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw on 15 March. He also stressed the importance of continuous learning in communication, language, negotiation skills, strategic thinking, courage, and confidence. Myanmar currently maintains diplomatic relations with 126 countries and operates 51 embassies and consular offices worldwide.

Establishment of nationwide shoe entrepreneurs federation

THE Nationwide Shoe Entrepreneurs Federation, representing all shoe businesses in Myanmar, was established on 16 March. Chairman U Kan Nyunt expressed the federation's goal of reclaiming the market share currently dominated by Chinese and foreign shoemakers. — Htun Htun/NT

ARTICLE

77th Anniversary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs commemorated

By MoFA

THE Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) is proud to celebrate the 77th Anniversary of its founding on 17 March 1947, a year before the country gained Independence on 4 January 1948.

Although the history of MoFA as an institution is only 77 years old, Myanmar's diplomatic history can be traced back to more than 2,000 years ago, in the 2nd century BC. Over seven decades, MoFA has expanded in its strength at home and its Missions abroad. Along with this growing strength, flourishing diplomatic relations and activities, enhanced capacity and achievements of Myanmar Diplomats are also discernible.

At its founding, the "Department of Foreign Service" had a total strength of 9: one official (Secretary) and eight rankers under the leadership of Bo Gyoke Aung San. On 4 May 1948, the department was renamed as the "Foreign Office", and the Secretary was also renamed as "Permanent Secretary". The Ministry got its current name as the "Ministry of Foreign Affairs" (MoFA) on 25 May 1967. Nowadays, MoFA is functioning with a total strength of more than a thousand, two-thirds of which are serving at headquarters, and more than one-third are serving at 51 Myanmar missions across the world.

Over seven decades, the Ministry has been consistently pursuing "Independent, Active and Non-Aligned Foreign Policy" and making remarkable contributions to the interest of the people, the country and beyond by fulfilling its foreign policy objectives for *Peace, Prosperity and the Image of the nation*.

Under post-independence administrations, a *historical recognition of Myanmar as a contributor to global peace* was brought by the outstanding Myanmar diplomat, U Thant, who played a major role as the Secretary General of the United Nations for two consecutive terms from 1961 to 1971 in diffusing the Cuban Missile Crisis, terminating the civil war in Congo, easing tensions between major powers. The country's image was significantly enhanced by the outstanding Myanmar Diplomat, who is well respected globally today.

Another significant joint initiative Myanmar took together with China and India in June 1954 was "the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence", which has now become the basic norm for state-to-state relations. The principles include mutual respect for sover-

eignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. These principles ensure the peaceful conduct of mutual relations and their relations with other countries in Asia and the world.

Building on this joint initiative, MoFA was able to set another significant milestone demonstrating Myanmar's diplomatic leadership by co-organizing the Bandung Conference (also known as the Asian-African Conference) on 18-24 April 1955 together with Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan. The Conference brought together representatives from 29 countries, which account for more than half of the global population. The Conference laid out the Ten Principles of Bandung, which expanded the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.

Myanmar played an active role in the founding of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in 1961, and continuing commitment to NAM was made known by Myanmar at the Ministerial Meeting of NAM on 17-18 January 2024 in Kampala, Uganda, ensuring to work more closely with its members for greater peace, prosperity, justice, equality and development of the developing countries and globally.

Under the administration of the State Law and Order Restoration Council and State Peace and Development Council, MoFA was able to manoeuvre amidst the Western sanctions while bringing about security and economic development outcomes.

The Ministry has been able to project the image of Myanmar as an active contributor to international peace and security by signing and promoting universal adherence to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and acceding to the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material in 1996. Particularly, Myanmar diplomats in Jakarta, Geneva and New York frontlines are actively promoting the agenda of disarmament, specifically nuclear disarmament adhering to and promoting the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free-Zone Treaty (SEANWFZ). Also, Myanmar has been tabling a draft resolution on Nuclear Disarmament in the First Committee with the support of the majority of UN member states since 1995.

Another remarkable step taken by

MoFA was joining the Association of South East Asia Nations (ASEAN) in 1997. Since its joining ASEAN, Myanmar has been part of the success story of regional integration in many aspects of the regional community. The issues of common interests were addressed while respecting the spaces and pace with which each member was comfortable.

When the country took a democratic turn in 2011, MoFA contributed to regaining diplomatic glory by hosting the visits of statesmen from Western capitals; Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom, President Barack Obama of the United States, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton paid respective visits in 2012, 2013 and 2014.

MoFA was able to promote Conference Diplomacy, hosting the World Economic Forum for Asia in 2013, the ASEAN Summit and BIMSTEC Summits in 2014. The lifting of sanctions followed. From 2011 to 2015, the country's Official Development Assistance (ODA) profile was tripled, and its trade value, FDI and tourist arrival increased. The very first elected government of the country since 1960 built a firm foundation for the country's external relations.

Under succeeding administrations from 2016-2020, greater diplomatic gains were made as the United States and the European Union lifted the economic sanctions imposed on Myanmar for decades. The country was able to foster better relations with world superpower the United States, economically powerful Japan, and emerging power China.

Under the State Administration Council, MoFA took a vibrant approach by following the guidance of the Chairman of the State Administration Council to abide by Section 41, 42(a) and (b) of the State Constitution to practice independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy aiming at world peace and friendly relations with all nations and upholds the principles of peaceful coexistence among nations and fulfil its international commitments.

At this age, when every nation is exposed to more complex and challenging domestic, regional, and global circumstances, disruptive technologies, and adversarial hazards of information and social media, Myanmar is no exception. Despite the challenges the country is facing domestically and their repercussion in ASEAN and UN, MoFA has been trying its best to achieve its foreign policy goals in promoting the interests of its people and nation.

Promoting the interests of Myanmar nationals, particularly those abroad, is one of the major tasks of MoFA, and thus, it gives careful attention to this matter. Since 2020, MoFA has facilitated the safe return of 2075 Myanmar nationals from Thailand and 26,716 from China. MoFA also made necessary arrangements with local authorities of respective countries for the return of 146 Myanmar migrant workers who faced difficulties due to employer-employee issues in some Middle Eastern countries.

Similarly, MoFA facilitated the safe return of 52,823 foreign nationals (from 24 countries) who were illegally living or trapped in Myanmar territory for several reasons, including falling victim to online job scams.

The resilience of MoFA and Myanmar Diplomats is more telling in the face of the multi-dimensional challenges. Particularly, the country's commitments to multilateralism and regional and international cooperation have also tested and proven that Myanmar abides by agreed principles even in the toughest situations when some other countries in the UN and ASEAN ignore some principles. The Ministry has been redoubling its efforts to turn this resilience into greater strength.

It is important to learn from the country's history that the soft skills of statesmen made it possible to stand in unity, in dignity and at peace, even at a time when its physical strength was incomparable to its three neighbouring mighty Empires. MoFA and Myanmar Diplomats today will continue to strive to overcome current day's challenges of complex nature, geopolitical situation, transnational crimes, climate change, disruptive technology, etc., through strengthened cooperation in bilateral, regional and international contexts.

Taking the opportunity of the 77th Anniversary of MoFA, this article pays tribute to the exemplary works of Myanmar diplomats under successive administrations. It also calls new generation Myanmar diplomats to take bolder steps in fulfilling the country's Foreign Policy objectives for greater peace, progress and a stronger image of Myanmar by making use of diplomatic tools made available by the new technology, innovation, creativity and renewed vigour of seasoned diplomats as well as that of the new generation diplomats.

■ ■ ■

OPINION

ARTICLE POEM/BOOKRACK

Harbour empathy in minds in doing everything

IN THE current global scenario, numerous countries, Myanmar included, grapple with financial crises stemming from factors like armed conflicts and disputes. These crises have far-reaching implications, significantly impacting the daily lives of the people in Myanmar. The repercussions are evident in the escalating prices of essential commodities, driven by the surge in fuel prices that, in turn, increase transport costs and the prices of agricultural inputs.

This domino effect culminates in an onerous burden on the general public, pushing them into debt as they struggle to cope with the soaring costs of basic necessities such as vegetables, rice, fruits, and oil crops. It is imperative for both businesspersons and the general populace, encompassing diverse ethnic backgrounds,

to imbibe empathy in their approach, contemplating how to alleviate the distress faced by their compatriots. Simultaneously, employees within the general public should actively contribute to their workplaces, aligning their efforts with the interests of employers and themselves. This collaborative approach fosters increased productivity, benefiting both employers and employees. The overarching message is clear: every individual in Myanmar, irrespective of their background, must embrace empathy in their actions, recognizing the interconnectedness of their society and the importance of collective well-being.

The prices of commodities, from daily essentials to intermediate and capital goods, pose challenges for businesses and consumers alike. Business owners and traders in Myanmar possess the agency to alleviate these hardships by considering the reduction of profit margins on their commodities. Recognizing that a slight sacrifice in profit margins can have a substantial impact on consumers' well-being, they can contribute significantly to easing the burden on the general public. The pervasive impact of financial crises transcends economic strata, affecting not only businesspeople but the entire populace. The daily struggles for food supply faced by the general public may not be readily apparent to business owners. Additionally,

fewer employment opportunities exacerbate the challenges faced by individuals who grapple with the persistent costs of daily life. In this context, it becomes crucial for businesspersons to empathize with the daily struggles of the general public and consider reducing profit margins on their traded commodities. By doing so, they can play a pivotal role in improving the well-being of the populace. This act of empathy, particularly relevant in a predominantly Buddhist society like Myanmar, can be seen as a virtuous deed aimed at genuinely reducing profits for the greater good. Simultaneously, employees within the general public should actively contribute to their workplaces, aligning their efforts with the interests of employers and themselves. This collaborative approach fosters increased productivity, benefiting both employers and employees. The overarching message is clear: every individual in Myanmar, irrespective of their background, must embrace empathy in their actions, recognizing the interconnectedness of their society and the importance of collective well-being.



A Strand of Hair
By Chit Ko Pe

When in one and togetherness,
beauty is graciously added
with love and fondness.

When getting discarded,
and mixed in a meal set,
it draws utter hatred.

ဆံတစ်ပင်
ကိုယ်မှာ အနေနဲ့
ချစ်ကြီးယူလွှာ
တသာသာ။
ရှုမဝ အလှဖြာ
ထည့်ဝါပြည့်ခန့်ညား။
ကိုယ်မှာ ဖယ်ရှားလို့
အစားမှာရောက်တော့
မုန်းရက်စိမ်းကား။

ချစ်ကိုဗေ





Occasion
By Naung
Translation by Myint Zan

'left the home because
disentangling
the meaning
of the text
has not been resolved

entered the house
since
the circumstances
outside is
not good

First published in Moe Wai magazine, 1969
Translation on 5 March 2024



Body and Mind
By Mya Thae (Research)

Some people are proud of richness.
They treat the poor with bitterness.


Richness and poverty are not long
These are no need to belong.

Some people are proud for dignity
It is also temporary.

Human beings and creatures belong to the body and mind
So, treat the poor person with kind.

One day, we all go to the cemetery.
We left all kinds of luxuries.

We do good deeds for several lives
It will send you Nibbana (Neikban).



Researchers develop simple blood test to quickly recognize sarcoidosis

RESearchers have developed a technique for quickly and cheaply identifying sarcoidosis, a chronic inflammatory illness characterized by the growth of microscopic lumps called granulomas in the lungs and other organs.

The technique, which uses a simple blood test, may allow for the selective use of more intrusive diagnostic tests that are commonly employed to identify the disease. The results were reported in the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine.

“Currently, diagnosing sarcoidosis isn’t a straightforward process and requires tissue removal and testing with additional screenings to rule out other diseases, such as tuberculosis or lung

cancer,” said James Kiley, PhD, director of the NIH’s Division of Lung Diseases at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI).

“Using a blood test will help diagnose faster, particularly in those organs that are more challenging to biopsy and with less harm to the patient.”

Though the exact cause of sarcoidosis is unknown, researchers suspect it is an immune disorder triggered by a group of specific antigens, which are generally foreign substances that incite an immune response in the body. In the United States, an estimated 8-11 people per 100,000 are affected by sarcoidosis each year, according to previous research.

SOURCE: ANI



- Book Title - Hline Bagyi Phyoutget
- Writer - Aung Chein Bwa
- Publishing House - Moe Kyaw
- Publication Date - March 2024 (1st Edition)
- Price - K30,000

Hline Bagyi Phyoutget (An Autobiography)

THIS is the biography of Sayagyi U Aung Chein Bwa. His name is U Hla Maung. When he writes, he uses Aung Chein Bwa as his penname. This book is written by himself, and so it is an autobiography. Matter-of-factly, he is an economist. This being so, we can dub him an economist turned writer. Nonetheless, he can also be called a politician because he served as a Deputy Minister in those days. He has also been a personal assistant to a Deputy Minister named U Ohn Kyaw. He has been media-friendly in his capacity as a public administrator and public official. As a consequence, he is well known among the media. At the moment, he is staying away from journalists

because of his over-ripe age of 86. This book has over 600 pages. I wonder how he has been able to produce a book of this size at his age. At the book launching ceremony held at the Central Hotel in Yangon on 9 March, he disclosed that he decided to write this book on his 85th Birthday Anniversary, which fell on 9 June 2022. As he constantly exerted tremendous effort, he finished writing in a year. This is explained in his foreword to this book. The rationale behind his effort is to confess his wrongdoings, incorrect attitude towards his superiors, fellow service personnel and subordinates and his strengths and weaknesses in order that the readers can learn lessons from his wrongdoings

and incorrect attitude in addition to his desire to share his knowledge, experience and expertise. He wants the readers to know what failures he has met so that they can learn lessons from the causes of his failures. He said, “My objective in writing this book is for the younger generations to learn lessons from my misdeeds and wrong behaviour. I’ve to admit that my life is overwhelmed with failures with very few cases of accomplishments or achievements. I have only a little strength, but I want the readers not to follow my steps. If the readers can make themselves free of the mistakes I’ve made, I will be delighted with the thought

that my effort can be of some value to the readers.”

I would like to praise the writer because most people would prefer to keep their dark side hidden. People only want to show their good personality. In fact, he has made a great sacrifice in confession to his misdeeds for the sake of the readers.

In addition to his own life experiences, Saya Aung Chein Bwa provided the success stories of great businesspeople in Myanmar like Ko Teza, Ko Htay Myint and Ko Khin Shwe. Ko Teza did not finish his education at the Defence Services Academy. Although he has not become an Army Officer, he has become a great man, achieving the recognition of the people. Ko Htay Myint attended the Government Technical Institute, while Ko Khin Shwe only finished the Technical High School education. Nevertheless, they have both become great entrepreneurs, to the big surprise of those people who know their careers.

In the end, the writer said that he has come to realize that he has to lead a not very prosperous life in his old age because he has committed wrongdoings and held wrong beliefs and incorrect attitudes towards his superiors, fellow workers and subordinates.



- Book Title - Bawa Ah Kyaung Daze Dazaung (In commemoration of the diamond anniversary birthday)
- Writer - Gondoo U Aung Khine
- Publishing House - Khin Cho Tun
- Publication Date - January 2022 (1st Edition)
- Price - K5,000

Bawa Ah Kyaung Daze Dazaung (In commemoration of the diamond anniversary birthday)

THIS is the autobiography of Saya U Aung Khine, better known as Gondoo U Aung Khine. Saya did his primary and secondary education studies at a Christian Missionary School in Pyin Oo Lwin called St Albert’s High School. He finished his Bachelor’s Degree at the University of Yangon. Soon after graduation, he went to Sayagyi Gondoo U Thein Naing, the great Myanmar teacher, from whom he learnt Myanmar. His teacher appointed him as a clerk at his private tuition school. Later, his teacher made him the English language teacher at his school. Gondoo U Aung Khine be-

lieves in the policy of self-reliance. He is pretty frank in revealing his younger days, the memoirs of the University of Yangon, how he became an English teacher unexpectedly, his devotion to his teaching career, the kindness and support of his teachers and how his profound respect for the Triple Gems has helped him overcome the great difficulties.

There are 21 episodes in his autobiography dealing with the memoirs of the University of Yangon (1), the memoirs of the University of Yangon (2), the memoirs of the University of Yangon (3), the memoirs of

the University of Yangon (4), reminiscence of the birthdays, six years in St Albert’s, having respect for the teachers, the benefactors, an unforgettable ceremony to pay homage to the teachers, the lovely smile of a person with the spectacle, Ahovata, the specialist surgeon, education, the golden bowl, the whiteboard and I, constantly pouring the libation water, my beloved students, imposter U Aung Khine, the journey to Kualalumpur, the scenic beauty of Singapore and America and I. The writer said that the rationale behind this is to urge

the people to build up a civilized society where people set a high value on the benefits they owe to their benefactors. Saya U Aung Khine said he has written this book in a lovely and entertaining way. And the remarks made by his good friends and fellow teachers are highly positive. One of them is Daw San Myint, who is a great teacher of Myanmar. She said, “There are many things in his book the readers would like. The way he writes is so interesting that people can’t help but stop reading till the end. They will, I’m sure, read this book in one sitting. Another thing is that he is very frank in disclosing his career and his feelings and emotions. I can see his Cetana, the goodwill, towards the readers.”

Another friend of his who gives his comments is U Ye Myint Pe, former Chief Editor of Myanmar Ahlin Daily, the state-owned newspaper. He said, “The way Saya U Aung Khine writes is very entertaining. Besides, the contents are updated.” Saya U Win Nyein from Shwe Ah Myu Tay has also provided very positive remarks. In my capacity as a person who writes book reviews, this book of Gondoo U Aung Khine is strongly recommended.

NATIONAL Entertainment



Cho Pyone

NEARLY 80-year-old great actress and singer Daw Cho Pyone is in good health and stars in advertisements. She donated Dufliex medicines and other offertories to Thi monks at Wat Thewarat Kunchorn Worawihan in Thailand, together with her grandson Win Khant Moe, on 11 March. Dufliex Family and Daw Cho Pyone made donations monthly, and they also donated day alms to monks at Zawtikayone Pariyatti monastery in Yangon in February.



Tyron

TYRON plays various characters in "Honey Kal" movie, said director Ko Zaw (Aryonoo). Actor Tyron said that the actors Aung Ye Lin and Htoo Aung supported him a lot in that movie and that such a character could be the first and last. He also faced specific difficulties in playing LGBT characters.



Yadana My

SINGER Yadana My, daughter of famous singer My, released an MV of "A Lwan Ma Lay Ma Lwan Po" song recently. She created a new version of her mother's song, and both the old and new fans were satisfied with her work. The song was composed by Ko Lay Lwin and arranged in music by Myo Kyaw

(Strings), KB by Ko Key and mixing by Ba Nya at Studio Strings. The MV was created by Ye Naing Kyaw.



Alinyaung

ALINYAUNG posted good news on his Facebook page on 13 March, saying that he will attend the Asia Top Awards 2024 to receive the award in Thailand. The event will be held at Siam Paragon, and he did not notify Lighter and his fans as he decided not to go there initially. He also told his fans that he would be in Bangkok on 18 March.



Offering ceremony of Kataw Pwe (coconut and three bunches of bananas in a large pot) for the movie was made at Shwedagon Pagoda.

Aung Khit Min Production to make Mhan movie in Yangon

MYANMAR movie "Mhan" by Aung Khit Min Production will be filmed in Yangon Region, according to director Than Htike(Shwe Yeik).

Nyi Ye Min created the story, and Than Htike (Shwe Yeik) is the scriptwriter and director of the movie.

"This is my very first movie. I made the Say Talone Maung Bhone series. I created it naturally. Now, the movie will include proper scenes that can be watched by the families all together," said director Than Htike(Shwe Yeik).

The casts are Kyaw Htet Zaw, academy May Myint Mo, Thiha Aung, Min Paing, Htin Thitsar, Academy Myat Kaythi Aung, Lin Zarni Zaw, Myo Myo Khine, Aye Khet Khet Paing, Pa Pa Thin, Myo Myo, and Thuriya as special guest.

The press show of the "Mhan" movie was organized at My Garden Restaurant in Dagon on 14 March. - ASH/KTZH

May Myint Mo

Academy May Myint Mo, who takes the leading role in the "Mhan" movie, told the media that the movie would be a memory of actor Kaw Htet Zaw, who was like her family member in an actual situation. They have the same facts, and they prepare in advance to create their characters.



Ko Ko Oo

ALTHOUGH the villains take bad characters in the movies, they are kind-hearted compared to the actors, and they treat the actresses like brothers and sisters, said Ko Ko Oo. He also talked about the stunt performance with actress Tint Tint Tun and urged the fans to understand the villains who treat the artistes like family members at shooting. - Htun Htun/KTZH

WORLD

Indian Navy foils Somali pirates' hijacking attempt

An Indian Navy warship engaged the pirate vessel, which opened fire in response. Naval officials swiftly reacted to neutralize the threat and ensure maritime security.

IN a daring operation to safeguard maritime security, the Indian Navy successfully thwarted Somali pirates from using an ex-merchant vessel Ruen to hijack ships traversing the region, the Indian Navy spokesperson said.

The ex-MV Ruen, which had been commandeered by Somali pirates on 14 December 2023, was reported to have reappeared as

a pirate vessel, threatening merchant shipping in the high seas. Responding swiftly to the threat, an Indian Navy warship engaged the pirate vessel on 15 March.

According to a statement issued by the Indian Navy, it was revealed that upon interception, the Ruen when intercepted opened fire on the Naval warship, prompting a response from naval officials.

The Indian Navy stopped Somali pirates from hijacking ships in the area by stopping the ex-MV Ruen. This ship had been taken over by pirates on 14 December 2023. It was trying to carry out piracy again. The Indian Navy followed international laws to stop them with as little force as needed, protecting sailors and shipping routes. — ANI



The Indian Navy effectively prevented Somali pirates from using the ex-merchant vessel Ruen to hijack ships in the region. **PHOTO: ANI**

Houthis attack three US, Israeli ships in Indian Ocean



Houthi military spokesman Yahya Sarea (C) makes a statement during a rally in Sanaa, Yemen, on 15 March 2024. Yemen's armed Houthi forces said on Friday that they have launched fresh attacks targeting an Israeli ship and a US warship in the Red Sea. **PHOTO: MOHAMMED MOHAMMED/XINHUA**

YEMEN'S Houthis said on Friday that they have attacked three US and Israeli vessels in the Indian Ocean.

"The Yemeni Armed Forces, within the framework of implementing these directives, carried out three operations against three Israeli and American ships in the Indian Ocean, using a number of suitable naval missiles and drones, and all three operations successfully achieved their objectives," the statement said.

The Houthi movement,

which controls large parts of northern and western Yemen, vowed in November 2023 to attack any ships associated with Israel until it halts military actions in the Gaza Strip.

This led the United States to announce a multinational operation to secure freedom of navigation in the Red Sea. US and UK forces later launched multiple strikes against Houthi positions in a bid to degrade their ability to target commercial vessels. — SPUTNIK

Judge pushes back Trump's 'hush money' trial by 30 days

THE judge overseeing former US President Donald Trump's 'hush money' trial delayed it by 30 days after new evidence was turned over to the parties, The Hill reported.

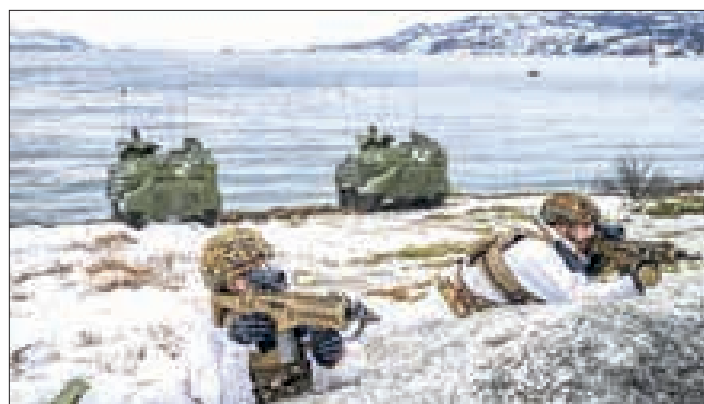
Jury selection was set

to begin on 25 March, which would have marked Trump's first criminal trial. However, judge Juan Merchan agreed to delay the trial after prosecutors consented to the one-month delay. The court's decision came

after the parties told the judge that the US Attorney's Office for the southern district of New York turned over more than 70,000 pages of records in recent days, some of which are relevant to the case. — ANI

War games in Arctic: What's driving the West's new passion?

Thirteen NATO nations participate in the Nordic Response 2024 exercise in Finland and Sweden, while the US Army conducts a separate training event near Fairbanks, Alaska.



NATO's Nordic Response drill was part of the alliance's biggest military exercise since the Cold War. **PHOTO: JONATHAN NACKSTRAND / AFP**

TWO unprecedented military exercises are being conducted by the US and its NATO allies

simultaneously in various parts of the Arctic, signaling a new aggressive stance by the West

in the region.

Thirteen NATO countries participated this week in the Nordic Response 2024 exercise held in Finland and Sweden, near the border with Russia. Additionally, the US Army recently conducted a training event near Fairbanks, Alaska, also close to Russia's borders.

The US exercise was conducted within the framework of the Joint Pacific Multinational Readiness Centre (JPMRC) and involved 8,000 American servicemen from the 11th Airborne Division and an unspecified smaller number of "foreign allies". — SPUTNIK

ECONOMY WORLD

Nippon Steel defends US Steel buyout deal after Biden's opposition

Nippon Steel promised no layoffs or plant closures until September 2026 under specific conditions and pledged to make further investments totaling \$1.4 billion after the acquisition.

NIPPON Steel Corp said Friday it is committed to its \$14.1 billion plan to acquire United States Steel Corp. after US President Joe Biden voiced opposition to the buyout plan.

"Our transaction delivers clear benefits to US Steel,

union workers, the broader American steel industry, and American national security," Nippon Steel said in a statement. "We are determined to see this through and complete the transaction."

Japan's largest steelmak-

er also announced there will be no layoffs and plant closures until September 2026 under certain conditions and pledged to make additional investments worth \$1.4 billion after the completion of the deal. — Kyodo



Photo taken on 26 February 2024, shows United States Steel's Mon Valley Works Clairton Plant in Clairton, Pennsylvania. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Bitcoin not invented by computer scientist Wright: court

AUSTRALIAN computer scientist Craig Wright is not "Satoshi Nakamoto", the pseudonym used by the creator of the cryptocurrency bitcoin when it launched in 2008, a UK court ruled Thursday.

The decision follows a trial in London's High Court after the Crypto Open Patent Alliance (COPA), a nonprofit organization set up to keep cryptocurrency technology free from patents, sued Wright.

Wright, 53, has claimed since 2016 that he was Satoshi



Craig Wright has claimed since 2016 to be bitcoin's purported creator "Satoshi Nakamoto". **PHOTO: AFP**

Nakamoto and the author of a white paper that unveiled what would grow to be the world's most popular cryptocurrency — and which Thursday reached a record high.

But in his ruling handed

down Thursday, judge James Mellor dismissed Wright's claims, calling the evidence for his decisions "overwhelming". "Dr Wright is not the author of the bitcoin white paper," Mellor said. — AFP



El Salvador's President Nayib Bukele said that his country has stored \$406.6 million in bitcoin in an offline 'cold wallet'. **PHOTO: AFP**

El Salvador stashes \$406 million in bitcoin in 'cold wallet': Bukele

Bukele explained that a significant portion of their bitcoin holdings has been moved to a cold wallet stored in a physical vault within the country, providing added security against hacking attacks.

EL Salvador's President Nayib Bukele said Thursday that his country has stored more than \$400 million in bitcoin in an offline "cold wallet" as the cryptocurrency forges new record highs.

"We've decided to transfer a big chunk of our bitcoin to a cold wallet, and store that cold wallet in a physical vault within our national territory," Bukele said on social media site X.

"You can call it our first bitcoin piggy bank," he added.

The cold wallet protects cryptocurrency investments by keeping them offline to prevent hacking attacks.

Bukele shared a screenshot of the investment showing a total of 5,689.7 bitcoin, with a valuation of \$406.6 million.

El Salvador became the first country in the world to legally circulate bitcoin as legal tender on par with the US dollar in September 2021.

"It's not much, but it's honest work," Bukele said about the cold wallet initiative.

Bitcoin surpassed \$73,000 this week — before shedding some of its gains — in a rampant rise after US authorities eased mainstream investor access to the cryptocurrency. Other cryptocurrencies such as ether or ethereum have also registered increases in their price.

Eighty-eight percent of Salvadorans did not use bitcoin in their transactions in 2023, according to a survey by the private Central American University (UCA) in January. — AFP

IMF chief Georgieva says 'available to serve' for second term

THE managing director of the International Monetary Fund has told AFP she is making herself "available to serve" for a second five-year term running the Washington-based financial institution, shortly after she received the backing of European finance ministers.

"I'm not running to force people to choose me, I'm making myself available to serve, if people want me to serve," IMF managing director Kristalina Georgieva said in a video call interview ahead of a speech in the UK city of Cambridge on Thursday.

"I would bring to the job a determination for the Fund to be an institution that leans forward in addressing the most challenging problems we face," she said. — AFP

Alibaba's e-commerce expo in Sydney highlights opportunities in China, Southeast Asia

The two-day event features over 100 exhibitors and more than 20 speakers from Alibaba Group and local brands.

ALIBABA launched a two-day e-commerce event AliExpo 2024 in Sydney on Friday to help inspire reading about opportunities in China and Southeast Asia and provide attendees with relevant information.

Over 100 exhibitors from China, Australia, New Zealand and other countries and regions join

in the expo. More than 20 speakers from Alibaba Group's affiliates and Australian and New Zealand brand leaders attended the AliExpo Business Conference.

Michael Evans, president of Alibaba Group, delivered a welcome address in a video at an opening ceremony, saying that this event aims to create signif-

icant growth opportunities for businesses in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, as well as Alibaba's business partners in Southeast Asia and China.

"Our key focus is to enable local brands and businesses to export to China and other parts of Asia through both B2C and B2B channels," he said. — Xinhua



People visit the AliExpo 2024 in Sydney, Australia, March 15, 2024. PHOTO: XINHUA

Nissan, Honda explore partnership in electric vehicles



The all-electric Honda Prologue is on display at the 2023 Los Angeles Auto Show at the Los Angeles Convention Centre on 24 November 2023. PHOTO: JOSH LEFKOWITZ/WIKIPEDIA

JAPANESE arch-rivals Nissan and Honda said Friday they were explor-

ing a strategic partnership in electric vehicles to face up to a "once-in-a-centu-

ry" upheaval in the car industry.

Analysts said the move was aimed at catching up with Chinese competitors who have stolen a march in EVs while Japanese firms have lost ground by focusing more on hybrid vehicles.

"We are not competing only with the traditional car makers, but also with new players... with innovative products and new business models" as well as "overwhelming

price competitiveness and amazing speed," said Nissan CEO Makoto Uchida.

"We cannot win the competition as long as we stick to conventional wisdom and traditional approach," he told a joint news conference announcing a feasibility study of the partnership.

The scope includes automotive software platforms, core components related to EVs, and complementary products, the companies said. — AFP

China's coastal bulk freight index down in February

CHINA'S coastal bulk freight index fell 7.4 per cent month on month in February, data from the Shanghai Shipping Exchange (SSE) showed.

Last month, the composite index for coastal bulk freight, which measures transportation costs in the coastal shipping market, stood at 961.66, according to the SSE.

During this period, the sub-index for grain logged the most notable month-

on-month decrease of 15.6 percent, followed by that for coal and metal ore.

The sub-index for crude oil edged up 0.1 percent from the previous month, while the figure for refined oil dipped by 0.9 percent monthly.

The SSE initiated the index in 2001 under the guidance of the Ministry of Transport to fully reflect fluctuations in the Chinese coastal transport market. — Xinhua

EU chief outlines more concessions for bloc's farmers

EUROPEAN Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen on Friday laid out a further series of concessions to EU farmers, especially for those on smaller properties, in a bid to calm rolling protests in the sector.

The measures aim "to further ease the administrative burden" and loosen compliance with some environmental rules farmers encounter when getting money from the bloc's subsidy

programme, von der Leyen told Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk in a phone conversation, a commission statement said. The changes affecting the EU subsidy programme, known as the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), were officially proposed on Friday evening.

Farmers in Poland, which has a particularly big agricultural base, have been protesting farm imports from war-



These measures respond to protests from farmers in Poland and other countries over issues like low prices and burdensome regulations. PHOTO: AFP

torn Ukraine, which they say undercut prices for

their own produce. — Xinhua

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MSC FORTUNE F VOY.NO. (SB409A)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MSC FORTUNE F VOY.NO. (SB409A)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **17-3-2024** 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 MEDITERRANEAN SHIPPING COMPANY S.A

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

Smokes and votes: Could menthol cigarette ban sway US election?



Menthol cigarettes are more popular among Black smokers, raising concerns about the ban's impact on them. **PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS**

In the US presidential election, menthol cigarettes have become a hot topic, especially among African Americans. President Biden's plan to ban menthol cigarettes has upset some Black voters, who fear it could lead to over-policing and racism.

IN a quintessentially American tale of race and politics, the lowly menthol cigarette is playing a curiously large role in the US presidential election this year.

A proposed ban from President Joe Biden's administration on the mint-flavoured smokes has miffed some African Amer-

icans, a key Democratic Party base. To complicate matters, narratives linked to the tobacco lobby have ginned up fears that the ban could lead to over-policing and racism.

Those are normally left-wing concerns, but in an election year, anything goes — and

Republicans are using the issue to try to appeal to Black voters.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 2022 released draft plans for axing the production and sale of flavoured tobacco, to deter future smokers and help current smokers quit. — AFP

German economy threatened by wave of traffic strikes: association

Strikes affect not only affected companies but the entire economy.



This photo taken on 10 January 2024 shows empty platforms at Berlin Central Train Station in Berlin, Germany. Train drivers in Germany went on strike for three days, severely restricting passenger transport across the country. **PHOTO: STEFAN ZEITZ/XINHUA**

FREQUENT strikes by rail and air staff in Germany could bring negative consequences for the country as a business location, an employers' association warned Friday.

Steffen Kampeter, managing director of the Confederation of German Employers' Associations (BDA), told Rheinische Post newspaper: "The strikes in critical infra-

structure are not only annoying, they are also a brake on growth." The economic damage "not only concerns the companies directly affected, but the entire economy," he added.

The German Economic Institute (IW) estimates that a single day of a nationwide rail strike costs up to 100 million euros (109 million US dollars)

in economic output.

"The loss of confidence in the reliability of the infrastructure is a disadvantage for the location," said Kampeter, criticizing the unions' actions as "disproportionate". He called on legislators to "make a clear commitment that industrial action must remain the exception". — Xinhua

True Italians: Children left waiting for citizenship

WHEN rapper Ghali sang "I'm a true Italian" to 10 million television viewers last month, he spoke for hundreds of thousands of people born to immigrants in Italy who struggle to obtain citizenship.

The 30-year-old musician, born in Milan to Tunisian parents, sang a version of Toto Cutugno's global hit "L'Italiano" (The Italian) at the Sanremo music festival, one of the biggest cultural events in Italy.

In doing so, Ghali — who was naturalised only at 18 — put the issue of the so-called "New Italians", as second-generation immigrants are often known, centre stage.

Italy has one of the toughest citizenship regimes in Europe, with children born in the country to foreign parents unable to apply for an Italian

passport until they are 18.

They have only one year to apply under a streamlined system, otherwise they must enter a costly and lengthy process, during which time they are left in limbo. "I feel Italian, I went to school here, Italian is the language I speak every day but I wasn't a true Italian by law until I was 24, when I obtained citizenship," said Daniela Ionita.

Now a spokeswoman for campaign group Italians Without Citizenship, she describes the failure to allow children to become citizens as "psychological violence". But she has little hope of a change in the law under the current hard-right government of Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, whose deputy, Matteo Salvini, regularly rails against immigration. — AFP



Campaign groups in Italy have called for citizenship rights. **PHOTO: ALBERTO PIZZOLI/AFP**

SPORTS

Team Myanmar to start training for Asia Cup futsal tournament on 18 March

THE Myanmar national futsal team will begin training on 18 March for the final stage of the 2024 Asian Cup futsal tournament to be played in April.

The Myanmar team will start training days after the league tournament and will prepare with 20 preliminary players. Thailand's Bunlert Chanlerwong will manage the team as the head coach, and this is the second training session.

Team Myanmar trained for the first time from 20 January to 10 February, then went to Indonesia in the second week of February to play friendly matches against Indonesian clubs. The Myanmar squad will also play friendly matches in this second



The Myanmar team player (white) seen in action against the Indonesian Club Team during the friendly match. **PHOTO: MFF**

practice, on 30 and 31 March, as they will play two friendly matches against the Afghanistan national team in Yangon.

In addition, the Myanmar team is trying to play a friendly match with some of the elite teams who have been allowed to compete in the final stage before going to Thailand, where the Asia Cup futsal tournament will be held.

Myanmar is falling in the same group as Thailand, Vietnam and the Chinese team in the final stage of the Asia Cup Futsal Tournament. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

Catlin shoots Asian Tour's first 59 to lead in Macau

Catlin's eagle on the final hole secured him a two-shot lead over Jason Kokrak. He started strong with six birdies on the front nine.

JOHN Catlin carded the first sub-60 round in Asian Tour history on Saturday, his 11-under-par 59 catapulting him into the lead at the International Series Macau.

The American rolled home a curling, left-to-right 15-foot putt on the final green for an eagle three as he moved to 18 under par after three rounds.

"I never, never, never thought I'd shoot 59," said a delighted, but slightly stunned, Catlin.

He has a two-shot cushion over LIV Golf's Jason Kokrak, who carded an eight-under-par 62, at the top of the leaderboard at the \$2 million event with one round to play.

Catlin, who was the Asian Tour player of the year in 2018,



got off to a blistering start in his third round, draining six birdies for a front nine of 28 on the par-70 coastal layout at Macau Golf and Country Club. — AFP

John Catlin carded the first 59 on the Asian Tour. **PHOTO: AFP**

Sakkari thwarts Gauff rally to book Indian Wells title clash with Swiatek

MARIA Sakkari needed three sets and four match points to get past US Open champion Coco Gauff on Friday, setting up a title clash with world number one Iga Swiatek at the ATP-WTA Indian Wells Masters.

In a match halted twice by rain, Greece's ninth-ranked Sakkari squandered three match points in the second set but pulled away in the third to win 6-4, 6-7 (5/7), 6-2.

For the second time in three years, she'll take on Swiatek for the title after falling to the Polish star in 2022.

Four-time Grand Slam champion Swiatek needed just 69 minutes to clinch her return



Greece's Maria Sakkari shakes hands with Coco Gauff after beating the American world number three in the semi-finals of the ATP-WTA Indian Wells Masters. **PHOTO: AFP**

to the championship match, beating 32nd-ranked Ukrainian Marta Kostyuk 6-2, 6-1.

There would be no easy victory for Sakkari, who trailed 4-3 in the opening set when light rain stopped play for 20 minutes.

Sakkari returned and held serve before gaining the only break of the opening set, converting her fifth break point.

The second set had barely begun when heavier rain halted play for two hours. When it resumed, Sakkari struck first, breaking an error-prone Gauff for 2-1 and again for a 5-2 lead.

But the world number three, playing in the Indian Wells semi-finals for the first time, responded.

Gauff broke Sakkari handily to claw back to 5-3. — AFP

South Korean scientists create lab-grown beef as sustainable source of protein

It's one small step for this lab, and one giant leap for protein.

Researchers in South Korea have successfully infused raw grains of rice with beef cells to create what they believe is a sustainable, affordable and environmentally friendly source of protein.

This “beef rice” is the first product of its kind, says Professor Jinkee Hong of Yonsei University in Seoul, who led the research published in the journal *Matter* this month.

This protein rich grain, which looks like fluffy pink rice, was first coated in fish gelatin allowing the beef muscle and beef



South Korean researchers created “beef rice”, combining raw rice grains with beef cells for sustainable protein. **PHOTO: YONSEI UNIVERSITY**

fat cells to attach to the grain.

Then, the researchers in-

serted cow muscle and fat stem

cells into the rice grain which

was left to culture in a petri dish

for nine to 11 days.

Rice grains are porous and have an organized structure which means they can provide a solid scaffold to house animal-derived cells.

Rice grains, which have a low incidence of allergy, have molecules that can help nourish and prompt the growth of these new cells, making it an ideal source for this meat-alternative meal.

Beef rice offers a more environmentally friendly alternative to traditional beef, with significantly lower CO2 emissions and costs. It also contains higher protein and fat content than regular rice.

Despite its low food safety risk, researchers aim to enhance its nutritional value before market release. Livestock farming’s impact on CO2 emissions underscores the importance of sustainable food options like beefrice. — SUPTNIK

Women bus drivers, a first for Uzbekistan



Saodat Shermatova drives the 51 bus in Tashkent. **PHOTO: VYA/AFP**

SAODAT Shermatova “cried with joy” after Uzbekistan, a predominantly Muslim former Soviet republic, lifted a ban last month on women working as bus drivers. “I was waiting a long time,” said the 49-year-old, who used to work in public transport maintenance in the Uzbek capital, Tashkent. Shermatova now drives the number 51, an electric bus, around Tashkent — the biggest city in Central Asia with a population of three million. She said her husband, also a bus driver, was concerned at first but has given her “full support” although he “tells me every day to be careful”. — AFP

An extension of the Hokuriku Shinkansen line connecting Kanazawa and Tsuruga in central Japan opened on Saturday, establishing bullet train services in Fukui Prefecture for the first time and carrying hopes for a tourism boost in areas hit by the New Year’s Day earthquake.

The new section shortens travel time between Tokyo and the city of Fukui by 33 minutes to as fast as two hours and 51 minutes. Passengers now no longer must transfer to high-speed and limited express trains after Kanazawa. The 125-kilometre section from Kanazawa in Ishikawa Prefecture to Tsuruga in Fukui adds six new stations to the shinkansen line. Two are in Ishikawa — Komatsu and Kaga Onsen stations — while the other four are Awara Onsen, Fukui, Echizen-Takefu and Tsuruga stations, all in Fukui. At the opening ceremony of the first Kagayaki 502 service from Tsuruga Station to Tokyo, Kazuaki Hasegawa, president of West Japan Railway Co, expressed hopes for increased shinkansen usage. Passengers, including Satoshi Masuda, are traveling for leisure and to support areas affected by the Noto Peninsula earthquake. At a separate event in Tokyo Station, actress Minami Hamabe, from Ishikawa, expressed hopes of bringing people closer to the Hokuriku region and creating memorable experiences during trips there. — Kyodo

Extension of Hokuriku Shinkansen line opens, tourism hopes boosted

Travel time from Tokyo to Fukui is now as fast as 2 hours and 51 minutes, eliminating transfers after Kanazawa. Six new stations are added along the 125-kilometre route.



On 16 March 2024, the first train bound for Tsuruga departed from JR Fukui Station in Fukui Prefecture, central Japan. This marked the inauguration of a new extended route of the Hokuriku Shinkansen Line, connecting Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture, with Tsuruga. **PHOTO: KYODO**