

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

Successful holding of a free and fair election under preparations



Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Mr Gustavo Rocha de Menezes, Ambassador-Designate of Brazil to Myanmar at SAC Chairman's Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

PREPARATIONS are being made to successfully hold a free and fair election, said Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

A ceremony held at the Credentials Hall of the State Administration Council Chairman's Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning, Chairman of the State Administration

Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing accepted the Credentials of Mr Gustavo Rocha de Menezes of Ambassador-Designate of Brazil to Myanmar and expressed the plan of holding the free and fair election.

They also cordially discussed diplomatic relations between Myanmar and Bra-

zil, cooperation and friendly relations measures, boosting bilateral trade, and cooperation in agriculture and livestock sector.

Both sides also focused on cooperation in enhancement of sports sector, political progress in Myanmar, and implementation of the five-point roadmap by the State Admin-

istration Council for ensuring peace and stability of the State and development.

Also present at the meeting were SAC Joint Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Myo Htut and Director General of the Protocol Department U Wunna Han.— MNA/TTA

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MRPPA aims to achieve approximately 300,000 tonnes of rubber export this FY 2023-2024

THE Myanmar Rubber Planters and Producers Association aims to achieve approximately 300,000 tonnes of rubber exports in the financial year 2023-2024.

Myanmar's rubber industry suffered losses of K800,000-K1 million per tonne last year. In December 2023, Myanmar's sea-borne trade recorded over 12,100 tonnes of rubber exports worth \$16.13 million. Out of this, over 8,570 tonnes went to China, over 2,790 to Malaysia, 419 to India,

and 200 to the Republic of Korea, with over 120 to Japan. China constitutes 75 per cent of Myanmar's rubber exports, while the rest is distributed among Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, the ROK, and Japan. At borders, Myanmar exported over 3,540 tonnes of rubber valued at \$4.84 million, with 2,539 tonnes going to China and 1,008 to Thailand. In December, rubber exports through maritime and border channels amounted to \$20.97 million from over 15,650



A female worker measuring Ribbed Smoked Sheets.

tonnes. These figures indicate an increase of \$13 million, and the export volume is up by K9,800 tonnes compared to November.

Rubber cultivation is widespread in Mon State, Kayin State, Taninthayi Region, and other states, covering 1.64 million acres. The annual production is estimated at 950,000 tonnes, with Mon State being the primary supplier, followed by Taninthayi Region and Kayin State. — TWA/EM

NATIONAL

IBEC works towards educational and job opportunities for Myanmar nationals in Japan

THE International Buddhist Education Centre (IBEC) in Sagaing hills is actively working towards creating educational and job opportunities for Myanmar nationals in Japan, as stated by the monastery.

IBEC, founded by Venerable Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Dr Ashin Sobhita, a recipient of the Stockholm Peace Prize, known as IBEC Sayadaw, is taking significant steps in this initiative.

At the invitation of Project Professor and Research Fellow Senior Member of IEEE Dr. Shouji Usuda, the IBEC and KBU education team, led by Principal Dr Ashin Sobhita, conducted a study tour to Hosei University in Iriya City. The Sayadaw has been actively working to bridge the high-level education sector



IBEC Sayadaw Dr Ashin Sobhita observes functions of OISCA Academy.

between Myanmar and Japan, as reported by IBEC-Myanmar Official Information Office Committee.

The IBEC and KBU education team also visited OISCA Senior High School, including OISCA Academy and Agricultural

College in Hamamatsu, discussing collaboration matters in the education sector:

The meeting included repre-

sentatives from both sides, such as OISCA Principal Mr Nakano Yoichiro, Head of International Student Affairs Department Mr Hihara Morohito, and International Relations Officer Mr Nakamura Katsutoshi from the Japanese side, and Principal Dr Ashin Sobhita, General Manager U Bo Bo Lin, Managing Director Daw May Nyo from New Dana Company, Japan-based Research Associate U Thein Htike, IBEC IT Technician, and BOD members of KBU from the IBEC side.

Discussions encompassed various aspects, including the further study of Myanmar students at the undergraduate level in Japan, Japanese language learning, and the creation of more and better job opportunities for Myanmar youth in Japan. — Thit Taw/ZN

75,000 fish from Maha Muni Buddha Image's fish pond released into Ayeyawady River



Netting fish in the ponds.

Releasing Carnivorous catfishes into the river.

A total of 75,000 fish from the turtle and fish pond at the Maha Muni Buddha Image were released into the Ayeyawady River, as reported by U Thein Oo, the Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the Maha Muni Buddha Image in Chanmyathazi Township, Mandalay Region.

The pond at the Image is teeming with fish, including many Carnivorous catfish. In collaboration with the Department of Fisheries, the Board of Trustees conducts pond

cleaning every three months. However, due to an increase in fish spawning, a portion of the fish needs to be released into the Ayeyawady River.

“Pilgrims often release fish into the pond, leading to overcrowding among the fish. Some die due to fighting, while others suffer from a lack of food. Therefore, periodic releases are necessary. We consulted with the Department of Fisheries about six months ago. After releasing all the fish and cleaning the pond water, we plan to

introduce pet fish,” explained U Thein Oo.

Presently, there are over 150,000 fish in the pond. On 16 January, more than 75,000 fish were released, with the remaining a half scheduled for release in May. According to regulations, Carnivorous catfish cannot be released into streams, creeks, and rivers without permission. The Department of Fisheries carefully identifies the types of fish that can and cannot be released to protect the environment. — ASH/TKO

YRTC initiates bus driver training to address vacancies left by dismissal of undisciplined drivers

THE Yangon Region Public Transport Committee (YRTC) has extended an invitation to new trainee bus drivers to address the vacancies created by the dismissal of undisciplined drivers, as stated by U Lyan Cin Mang, joint secretary of YRTC.

“We are now dismissing some who have traffic rule-breaking records. We have dismissed drivers who have run a red light three times. We will fill these positions,” he said.

Consequently, the Yangon Bus Public Company Limited

will launch YBS Bus Driving Training 1/2024 with 50 trainees under the supervision of YRTC in the near future.

Applicants must be between 25 to 55 years old, possess at least five years of “B” licence, and have completed middle school education. Successful candidates will be selected after their basic driving skills are tested.

“The objective of giving this training course is to meet the demand for drivers for YBS buses operating in Yangon,” a training official said. — MT/ZN



NATIONAL



SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing accepts Credentials from Ambassador-Designate Mrs. Aya Saad Mohamed Abdelkarim of Egypt at Credentials Hall of SAC Chairman's Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Myanmar, Egypt forge diplomatic and friendship relations

MEASURES are being taken to enhance Myanmar-Egypt diplomatic relations, friendly relations and bilateral cooperation, said Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing accepted her credentials of Ambassador-Designate of Arab Republic of Egypt to Myanmar Mrs Aya Saad Mohamed Abdelkarim at the Credentials Hall of the SAC Chairman Office in Nay Pyi Taw at 10:45 am yesterday.

At the ceremony, they frankly discussed measures to cooperate in development of agriculture sector, cooperation in manufacturing sector, plans to

cooperate in development of education sector, bilateral friendly relations between peoples of both countries, and political progress in Myanmar.

The Senior General explained that the government of the State Administration Council has adopted the five-point roadmap for forging peace and stability of the nation and development undertakings, and preparations for successfully holding a free and fair election.

The ceremony to accept the Credentials was also attended by SAC Joint Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Myo Htut and Director General U Wunna Han of the Protocol Department. — MNA/TTA

Myanmar to join hands with NAM countries towards achieving peace, prosperity, justice, equality and development of developing countries

AT the official invitation of Mr Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda and the upcoming Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe participated in the Ministerial Meeting of NAM on 17-18 January 2024 in Kampala, Uganda.

The Foreign Ministers and representatives of the NAM Member States and delivered the country statements at the Plenary Session of the meeting held at the Rwenzori Convention Centre.

At the Plenary Session of the Ministerial Meeting of NAM, the Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Minister congratulated the efforts of the Azerbaijan, the current Chair of the NAM and Uganda, the upcoming Chair of the NAM. He highlighted that as the world

today is confronting with multi-faceted international security environment and daunting challenges, the NAM must remain as the most relevant platform for the common interest of developing countries. He mentioned that as a founding member of the NAM, Myanmar has been strictly following the principles of NAM. He also stressed the need for NAM to continue to maintain its solidarity in consistent with its established rules and norms. The Deputy Prime Minister also assured Myanmar's commitment to work hand-in-hand with other NAM member countries towards achieving peace, prosperity, justice, equality and development of the developing countries and beyond. In his statement, the Deputy Prime Minister also apprised the meeting of the Myanmar Government's efforts to ensure peace, development and democracy in the country and the



Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe delivers his statement at the Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement.

latest developments of Myanmar.

The Foreign Ministers and representatives exchanged views on NAM cooperation mechanisms as well as region-

al and global issues. The NAM member countries discussed reforming the UN Security Council, achieving the goals of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable De-

velopment, and jointly tackling the challenges of climate change and poverty alleviation. Moreover, they updated the Meeting on the developments taking place in their respective countries.

On 17 January, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uganda Gen Odongo Jeje Abubakhar hosted a cultural gala dinner in honour of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of NAM Member Countries.

The Senior Officials' Meeting of NAM was held on 15-16 January and the Myanmar delegation led by U Myint Lwin, Myanmar Ambassador to Egypt attended the meeting.

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is a forum which was founded in 1961 with the view to advancing interests of developing countries. Currently, 120 countries are members to the NAM. Myanmar is a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement. — MNA

NATIONAL

Mawlamyine Zone team claims champion in Inter-University Football Tournament



SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing watches the final match between Mawlamyine and Myitkyina zone teams in Inter-University football Tournament at Wunna Theikdhi Stadium in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

MAWLAMYINE Zone team clinched the championship trophy with a 5-3 win over Myitkyina Zone team in the inter-university football tournament for 2023-24 academic year yesterday.

The final match of the inter-university football tournament for 2023-24 academic year of the Ministry of Education took place at Wunna Theikdhi Stadium

in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, attended by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

The final match between Mawlamyine and Myitkyina zone teams ended in a goalless draw at the final whistle due to vice versa attacks and counterattacks and pressure over each other.

Both teams also ended their competitions in a goalless draw after the 30-minute extra time. In the penalty decision, Mawlamyine Zone team defeated Myitkyina Zone team 5-3 and secured the championship trophy.

After the match, SAC members presented awards for best players in respective places and cash awards to relevant winning

players.

SAC member Admiral Tin Aung San and Joint Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo presented individual medals and cash awards to third prize-winning Patheingyi Zone team and second prize-winning Myitkyina Zone team.

Secretary Lt-Gen Aung Lin Dwe gave individual medals to players of champion Mawlamyine

Zone team.

The Senior General presented cash award and a championship trophy to champion Mawlamyine Zone team and cordially greeted the players.

Among the spectators were Union-level dignitaries, Union ministers, the chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council, senior military officers and officials. — MNA/TTA

DPM MoFA UM holds talks with State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar during NAM Ministerial Meeting



Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe meets with the State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar.

ON the sidelines of the Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) being held in Kampala, Uganda,

U Than Swe, Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs, met Mr Soltan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi,

State Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar at the Rwenzori Convention Centre on 17 January.

During the meeting with the Qatar State Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs appraised the Myanmar Government's efforts to ensure peace, development and democracy in the country and the latest developments of Myanmar. Furthermore, they cordially exchanged views on further strengthening of friendly relations between Myanmar and Qatar as well as closer collaboration in the regional and international fora including cooperation in the NAM. — MNA

Myanmar, Egypt to boost bilateral economic cooperation

UNION Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations Dr Kan Zaw received Mrs Aya Saad Mohamed Abdelkarim, Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to Myanmar in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

During the meeting, the Union Minister congratulated the Ambassador for being appointed as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary designate

of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. They cordially exchanged views on measures to boost the bilateral economic cooperation between Myanmar and Egypt. The meeting was also attended by the Deputy Minister and senior officials from the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations. — MNA



Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations Dr Kan Zaw receives Mrs Aya Saad Mohamed Abdelkarim, Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to Myanmar in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

NATIONAL

MoI UM discusses role of media in building a nation

UNION Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn presided over a discussion on the topic of “The Role of Media in Building a Nation” at the Convocation Hall of Yezin University of Agriculture in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. First, a documentary video clip on preventing the risk of media poisoning and the role of media in nation-building tasks was played.

Speaking at the event, the Union Minister stated that malicious media outlets are deliberately spreading misinformation through social media platforms with the malicious intention to mislead the public and harm the peace and stability of the nation. Therefore, people should read the newspaper published by the ministry and access the website. Moreover, everyone should believe in the real situation of the country and stand with the



Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn cordially greets students and faculty members at Yezin University of Agriculture yesterday.

government and the public.

He then highlighted destructive cases in 1988 that defamed the Myanmar people and the terrorist acts of terrorists today. He also mentioned the Prime Minister’s focus on youth affairs and the education sector, urging students to study hard for the development of the country, region, and community. They should fight against terrorism with a patriotic spirit and participate in the relevant sectors, as every citizen is concerned with state affairs.

Then, Rector of Yezin University of Agriculture Dr Nang Seng Huom, expressed words of thanks. During the event, the Union Minister provided 5 MRTV DTH satellite dishes and 65 DVB T2 Set Top Boxes to faculty members and students through a draw-lot. — MNA/KTZH

MoALI UM receives ambassadors of Russia, Egypt



Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Min Naung meets with Russian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Iskander Azizov at the ministry yesterday.

ON the morning of 18 January, Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation U Min Naung met with Russian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Iskander Azizov. In the afternoon, he met with Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to Myanmar Mrs Aya Saad Mohamed Abdelkarim.

During the meeting with

the Russian Ambassador, discussions focused on coordinating the signing of a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in fisheries, implementing agreements from the third Russia-Myanmar trade and economic cooperation commission meeting, collaboration on priority activities related to food security

between Myanmar and the Russian Federation, issues regarding the construction of an organic plant growth medicine factory in Myanmar, importing fertilizers from Russia that aligns with Myanmar’s water, land, climate and crop needs, and cooperating to explore market opportunities for Myanmar agricultural produce, including rice and pulses.

In the meeting with the Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to Myanmar, discussions included sending trainees from Myanmar to attend the cotton cultivation and production technology course at the Egyptian International Centre for Agriculture (EICA), coordinating the signing of a new memorandum of understanding on agricultural sector, cooperation between the two countries, exchange of cotton varieties, technical cooperation in cotton and potato production, and addressing human resource development issues. — MNA/TKO

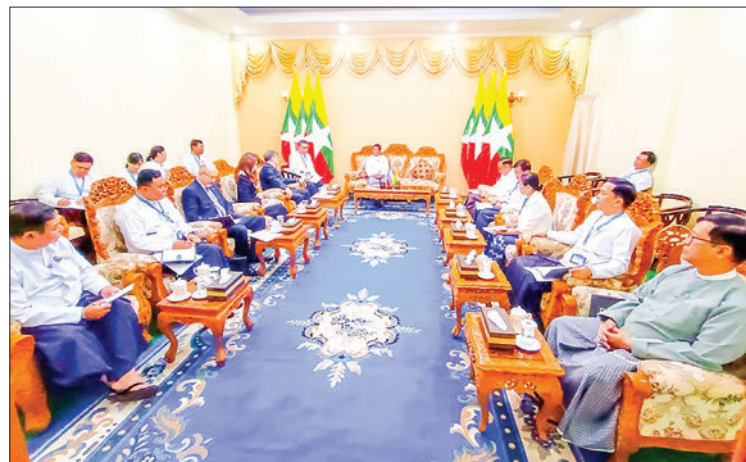
MoEP UM receives Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Myanmar

U Nyan Tun, Union Minister for Electric Power, received Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Myanmar Mr Iskander Azizov at the Ministry office in Nay Pyi Taw at 10 am yesterday.

During the meeting, they had a frank and cordial discussion on successes achieved by the two countries in all sectors,

cooperation of Russian companies in hydropower, wind power, solar power, and thermal energy projects for the development of Myanmar’s electricity sector.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Minister U Aye Kyaw, heads of department and officials from the embassy of the Russian Federation to Myanmar. — MNA/TS



Union Minister for Electric Power U Nyan Tun talks with Russian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Iskander Azizov at the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

NATIONAL

Nearly 460 free vocational short-training courses already conducted by MoCRD

NEARLY 460 short courses on vocational training have been conducted by the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development (MoCRD).

These courses cover the following topics: the production of value-added products, consumer goods, and cosmetics; basic motorcycle maintenance; basic home wiring; basic welding; basic diesel engine maintenance; air-conditioner and refrigerator repair; EFI engine maintenance;

bamboo handicraft products; wooden furniture; coconut handicraft products; manufacturing traditional Patheingyi parasol; plastic products; basic sewing; sewing machinery maintenance; and fabric printing and painting.

Similarly, the Ministry offers courses in weaving machinery maintenance, lacquer technology, weaving, and textile skills, etc. — TWA/MKKS

Myanmar plans re-registration of vintage cars as classic vehicles



A 1979-1980 Chevrolet Caprice car is seen.

THE Ministry of Transport and Communications in Myanmar is planning to re-register cars manufactured in 1980 and earlier, which had their registrations cancelled, as classic vehicles. This initiative aims to officially preserve the value of ancient classic vehicles, allowing old classic vehicles with cancelled registrations to be registered again with a specific fine.

During the re-registration process, only vehicles that were previously registered will be eligible, and a new relevant vehicle number will be assigned. However, old vehicles that were not previously registered will not qualify for registration. The re-registration process can be completed at the respective Region/State/District Road Transport Administration Department offices within a six-month period, from 11 February to 31 July.

Following the announcement, there has been a surge in advertisements on social networking sites, offering to purchase cars with expired license books at attractive prices.

Ko Khin Maung Win, a car buyer and seller, mentioned that this statement significantly impacts the automobile landscape, providing owners of old cars with an opportunity to earn money, and may lead to the establishment of a price range for used cars. — TWA/TH

Myanmar-Thailand cross-border trade reaches \$62 million in December 2023

THE value of cross-border trade between Myanmar and Thailand in Kawthoung, Tachilek, and Myawady totalled \$62.059 million in December 2023, according to statistics from the Ministry of Commerce.

At the Kawthoung border, trade in December amounted to \$25.742 million, with exports worth \$22.572 million and imports worth \$3.17 million. These figures represented an increase of \$6.544 million in exports and \$0.614 million in imports compared to the corresponding period of the previous financial year, totalling \$7.158 million.

Similarly, the Tachilek border experienced an increase of \$11.799 million, with \$2.114 million in exports and \$9.685 million in imports. The export indicated a drop of \$2.52 million, whereas imports had a rise of \$4.169 million compared to the year-ago period.

Furthermore, Myawady border trade crossed \$24.518 million in December 2023, comprising exports worth \$6.819 million and imports worth \$17.699 million. The trade witnessed a drop of



Some trucks are seen entering Tachilek checkpoint.

\$29.952 million in exports and \$43.237 million in imports compared to that of the same period in the previous financial year.

Myanmar exported agricultural products, minerals, fisheries, finished industrial goods, and other goods to Thailand, while importing consumer goods, fishing nets, construction materials, iron and steel, air-conditioners, wires, pharmaceuticals, clothes, sewing threads, kitchen wares, and other goods. Intermediate goods import declined, while capital goods and consumer goods increased. — TWA/KK

Job opportunities in civil engineering: Ministry of Transport and Communications announces vacancies

IT has been reported that the Department of Civil Engineering under the Ministry of Transport and Communications has forty vacant positions for civil engineering roles. The available positions include 23 posts for deputy assistant supervisor (operation) and 20 posts for junior engineer-4 (rail/apprentice), making a total of 43 vacancy posts.

Applicants for the deputy assistant supervisor position must be citizens (male or female) of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, while those applying for the junior engineer (apprentice) position must be male citizens of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. The application forms must be submitted by 16 February, and applicants should be be-

tween 18 and 35 years old on that day. Additionally, it is mentioned that exam cards for the deputy assistant supervisor will be available on 19 February, and for the junior

engineer-4 (Intern) on 21 February at the Civil Engineering Department of the Head Office

of Myanma Railways. Applicants are required to bring their original citizenship scrutiny card, labour registration card, and engineer-

ing degree certificate. The writing test and viva voce will take place at the railway station of Nay Pyi Taw in Pobbathiri Township. It is further noted that selected candidates will be contacted directly. — TWA/ TRKM



Photo of the Railway Station (Nay Pyi Taw)

MoALI initiates project to boost hilsa shad production

U Nyunt Win, Director of the Development and Research Division of the Department of Fisheries under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation, has stated a project aimed at conducting research and controlled breeding to sustainably enhance hilsa shad production.

The initiative responds to the realization that Myanmar's hilsa shad exports constitute only three per cent of aquatic products, the lowest volume among neighbouring countries.

"While Bangladesh and India export hilsa at rates of 65 per cent and 32 per cent, respectively, Myanmar struggles with a mere three per cent export capacity. Rakhine State, contributing only 0.5 per cent, faces particular chal-



Myanmar's Hilsa shad.

lenges. Hence, our focus is on fish resource conservation and research activities in the state," stated U Nyunt Win. The diminished hilsa export is attributed to unregulated fishing practices, including the use of the local Kyarpiké fishing method. In response, 11 conservation areas have been established in Rakhine State's townships, including Myebon and Pauktaw, with research and development efforts initiated since the 2022-2023 financial year.

Hilsa, a prized catch, is mainly harvested in 11 countries globally, with Bangladesh, India, and Myanmar leading the production. Additionally, the species is found in countries like Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, and Bahrain. — ASH/TH

ADVERTORIAL

Successful Lifting of Rotor of 2# Generator Set in Dapein (1) Hydropower Station in Myanmar



Engineers and technicians seen at successful lifting of the rotor of 2# generator set at Dapein (1) Hydropower Station in Myanmar.



RECENTLY, the rotor of 2# generator set was successfully lifted into the foundation pit in Dapein (1) Hydropower Station in Myanmar, marking the completion of an important milestone of A-level overhaul of 2# generator set. Overhaul of generator sets is actively implemented in Dapein (1) Hydropower Station, laying a solid foundation for cultivation of talents from China and Myanmar and grid connection of generator sets as scheduled.

In order to ensure the successful lifting of the rotor (236t)

of 2# generator set, the overhaul unit was organized to check the bridge crane in the main plant of Dapein (1) Hydropower Station. In overhaul meetings, supervisors of various disciplines, team leaders and related personnel of China and Myanmar learned the rotor lifting scheme, improved the lifting measures and clarified respective responsibilities. The A-level overhaul of 2# generator set was commenced at the end of December 2023. Related work was done in a safe and orderly way according to

the constantly optimized procedures, so the overflow parts such as the rotor, top cover and bottom ring were replaced in advance, and the rotor was reassembled 5 days ahead of schedule, laying a foundation for successful overhaul.

Following the principle of "timely and proper maintenance", other work tasks such as overhaul and technical upgrade will be carried out as scheduled in Dapein (1) Hydropower Station, in strict accordance with the overhaul procedures,

instructions and construction schemes for generator sets, to ensure the safety, quality and compliance and provide a reliable support for long-term safe and reliable operation of generator sets.

In the future, Dapein (1) Hydropower Station will provide high-quality career development opportunities for more young people in Myanmar, as a good beginning for new tasks and goals, thus promoting the development of new projects, local employment rise and eco-

nomical development as well as China-Myanmar power cooperation, laying a foundation for work safety and facilitating the Company's high-quality and sustainable development.

Dapein (1) Hydropower Station of China Datang Corporation is located in the deep mountains of northern Myanmar, close to the Dapein River at the Sino-Myanmar border, and surrounded by mountains and primitive forests, with an installed capacity of 240,000 KW. It was commenced in July 2007, and all generator sets were put into operation at the end of 2010. It is the first overseas power station invested and completed by China Datang Corporation, a power corridor connecting China and Myanmar, and an important window towards Southeast Asia through Myanmar. In the past 15 years, Dapein (1) Hydropower Station has provided reliable clean energy for the people of Myanmar, effectively improved the people's livelihood and local economic development in northern Myanmar, and praised by all walks of life in Myanmar. It also presents an excellent image of China Datang Corporation.

OPINION

Overcome climate challenges: A call for united strength

ON 12 January 2024, the United Nations issued a stern warning to all nations, highlighting the anticipated rise in global temperatures for the year, driven by the impacts of El Nino. This projection, surpassing the record set in 2023, underscores the urgent need for collective efforts to curtail greenhouse gas emissions and address the imminent threat of climate change.

According to data from the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the period from June to December witnessed an unprecedented spike in monthly temperatures. The WMO further cautioned that the El Nino phenomenon could contribute to a sustained warming trend in affected regions. Scientists and meteorologists estimate a 50-50 likelihood of increased temperatures this year, building upon the already alarming records of July and August 2023 being the hottest months in history.

Now is the best time to defy severe climatic conditions. Even though El Nino may bring bad impacts to the world, all humans should be ready to completely survive them and lend a helping hand to others. So, Myanmar people need to remember a motto: 'Strength of the nation lies within' and build themselves up with physical and mental strengths to successfully overcome climate challenges.

The repercussions of climate change have manifested in severe heatwaves, prolonged droughts, and widespread forest fires globally. The Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) reports a staggering 1.48° Celsius rise in global temperatures compared to previous years. The year 2023 serves as a sobering precursor to the climatic challenges that lie ahead. Nations worldwide must proactively prepare to mitigate the potential impacts of El Nino, demonstrating resilience in the face of an evolving climate.

Despite the catastrophic potential of the 1.48° Celsius temperature increase in 2023, humanity exhibited remarkable resilience and foresight in preparing for potential impacts. This collective strength became a driving force in overcoming challenges and extending support to vulnerable communities globally.

Looking ahead to 2024, comprehensive preparedness becomes imperative for all inhabitants, especially those in regions like Myanmar that may be disproportionately affected. Resilience and capacity-building must be prioritized, transcending borders, nationalities, and religious affiliations. The need for solidarity among nations is paramount, as everyone must contribute to enhancing their ability to withstand and adapt to the hardships that climate-related catastrophes may bring.

In the face of impending challenges, there is no room for despondency. Instead, a united front, irrespective of national boundaries, is essential to fortify our collective resolve. By fostering global cooperation and pooling resources, humanity can navigate the uncertain climatic landscape, paving the way for a sustainable and resilient future.

Now is the best time to defy severe climatic conditions. Even though El Nino may bring bad impacts to the world, all humans should be ready to completely survive them and lend a helping hand to others. So, Myanmar people need to remember a motto: 'Strength of the nation lies within' and build themselves up with physical and mental strengths to successfully overcome climate challenges.

THE ritzy Swiss Alpine town of Davos is set to again host global dignitaries, from political elites to business leaders, for the annual gathering of the World Economic Forum (WEF), where talks of how to revive the world economy will take center stage.

Sluggish growth has dogged the world economy for too long. Earlier this week, the World Bank expected global economic growth to slow down for a third straight year to a "sorry record by the end of 2024", hampered by tight monetary policies, geopolitical tensions and feeble global trade and investment.

This backdrop has made the WEF, running from 15 January to 19 January this year, more relevant to the world. Klaus Schwab, founder and executive chairman of the WEF, called on the international community to rebuild trust and take strong and effective global measures to invigorate the ailing world economy.

AILING WORLD ECONOMY

Factors such as debt crises, high inflation and interest rates, and weak trade performance have hampered global economic growth, WEF President Borge Brende said.

The current total global debt accounts for more than 200 per cent of the global gross domestic product (GDP), the highest level in more than a century. "The situation is severe," Brende said.

Davos calls for rebuilding trust amid sluggish global growth outlook

The annual World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos is set to bring together global dignitaries, focusing on discussions to revive the world economy.



This file photo taken on 20 January 2023 shows a view of the snow-covered Davos in Switzerland. PHOTO: LIAN YI/XINHUA

Global trade has been lackluster, with the World Trade Organization downgrading its forecast for world merchandise trade volume growth to 0.8 per cent in 2023. Brende said that performance had

held back the momentum of economic recovery as global trade is one of the engines of global economic growth.

Brende further argued that inflation has a domino effect on

interest rates and investment. If global inflation levels decline, interest rates will drop accordingly, stimulating investment growth, creating more jobs, and fueling economic recovery, he said.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development has also predicted that 2024 will be the slowest year for global economic growth since 2020.

The United Nations (UN) has voiced similar concerns. In the newly released World Economic Situation and Prospects 2024, the UN said that persistently high interest rates, further escalation of conflicts, sluggish international trade, and increasing climate disasters pose significant challenges to global growth. Global economic growth is projected to slow from an estimated 2.7 per cent in 2023 to 2.4 per cent in 2024, trending below the pre-pandemic growth rate of 3.0 per cent, the report said.

Growth in several large, developed economies, especially the United States, is projected to decelerate in 2024 given high interest rates, slowing consumer spending and weaker labor markets, it continued.

The short-term growth prospects for many developing countries — particularly in East Asia,

West Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean — are also deteriorating because of tighter financial conditions, shrinking fiscal space and sluggish external demand, it warned.

CHINA REMAINS ENGINE FOR GROWTH

Brende said that despite the severe challenges facing the world economy, China remains an important engine of global economic growth.

Brende is optimistic about China's economic development prospects, saying China has enough policy tools to boost the economy while shifting from growth based on investment and infrastructure to growth based on new areas such as electric vehicles.

Transitioning from exports to services and digital trade, China is also an important producer of renewable energy-related equipment, the WEF president added.

The 2024 Global Risks Report recently released by the WEF estimated that the coming years will be marked by persistent economic uncertainty and growing economic and technological divides.

"Uncertainty is the key word for most economies around the world, including China. The positive is that China is one of the very few large economies in the world that is not struggling with inflation, that is not struggling with very high interest rates at

present," said WEF managing director Saadia Zahidi.

"The measures taken by the Chinese leadership are starting to work and starting to bear fruit, whether that is more focused on the manufacturing sector, whether that's more focused on green technologies, whether it's making sure that there's a revival in trade," she said.

Liang Guoyong, a senior economist with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, said that China's economy is vital to the world, as China will continue to promote a high-level opening-up with its economy scale, which is of great significance in promoting the development of international trade and the growth of the world economy.

Dismissing concerns about China's growth prospects, UBS plans to expand China onshore wealth and the asset management business. The Swiss bank sees the "bright spots" in China's economy, believing the country's government can do more to grow the economy "with a lot of tools in the toolbox", Eugene Qian, country head for UBS, was quoted as saying by Bloomberg.

REBUILDING TRUST, DRIVING GROWTH

The main topics at the forum range from achieving security and cooperation in a divided world, creating jobs and growth for a new

era to a long-term strategy for climate, nature and energy. Analysts believe those topics are relevant to paving the way for reviving global economic growth.

Days before this annual meeting, Schwab said in an article that intensifying divisions, increasing hostility and ongoing conflicts together constitute the characteristics of the current global situation. "The current level of pessimism is unprecedented and rebuilding trust in the future is crucial," he said.

Schwab urged countries to take advantage of the opportunities of developing a green, digital and inclusive economy to create jobs, increase purchasing power and ultimately promote sustained economic growth.

The UN report also called for strong and effective global cooperation measures to avoid a debt crisis and provide adequate funds to developing countries. Low-income and middle-income countries with fragile fiscal positions need debt relief and debt restructuring to avoid a long-term cycle of weak investment, slow growth and heavy debt service burdens, it said.

"2024 must be the year when we break out of this quagmire. By unlocking big, bold investments we can drive sustainable development and climate action, and put the global economy on a stronger growth path for all," said UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. SOURCE: Xinhua

Respiratory infections surge in Europe: WHO

WHO's regional director for Europe, highlighted a surge in influenza infections and hospitalizations, urging health systems to prepare for a likely rise in cases in the coming weeks.

A leading World Health Organization (WHO) official on Tuesday called for vigilance in the face of rising cases of respiratory diseases in Europe.

Hans Henri P. Kluge, the WHO's regional director for Europe, noted a surge in influenza infections and hospitalizations at a press conference in Copenhagen, and urged health systems to prepare for a likely increase in cases in the coming weeks.

The Netherlands is currently grappling with an upswing in respiratory infections, according to the National Institute for Pub-

lic Health and the Environment (RIVM).

Various pathogens, including COVID-19, influenza virus and seasonal coronavirus are "now common" among the population, the RIVM said in its most recent update as of 10 January.

The number of individuals reporting flu-like symptoms is on the rise, it said. In the past week, 44 out of 100,000 people sought medical attention for such complaints, marking a notable increase from the previous week's 27 per 100,000.

Influenza virus

Recent data also reveals a surge in influenza virus cases, with almost 35 per cent of samples from individuals reporting flu-like symptoms testing positive, compared to the previous week's 13 per cent, according to RIVM.

In Italy, hospitals were under intense pressure due to the worst flu wave the country had witnessed in at least 15 years, Italian health professionals warned last Friday.

Admissions to emergency rooms increased by 20 per cent to 30 per cent last week, mainly due to serious flu cases, accord-

ing to the Italian Federation of Health Authorities and Hospitals (FIASO).

In another development, the Spanish government reimposed the mandatory use of facemasks in hospitals and health centers as of 10 January, following a sharp rise in COVID-19 and flu infections since the start of the new year.

Spain reported a sharp rise in respiratory illnesses, with the infection rate soaring to over 952 cases per 100,000 inhabitants. The peak of infections was set to arrive, Health Minister Monica

Garcia warned last week.

At a press conference in Copenhagen Tuesday, Kluge said that vulnerable populations must be kept up-to-date with their COVID-19 and influenza vaccinations. He also underlined the critical success of COVID-19 vaccines since their introduction in December 2020.

"A new study led by WHO Europe has found that at least 1.4 million lives in our region were saved thanks to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines," said the WHO official.

SOURCE: Xinhua



Medical staff work at a clinic in Madrid, Spain, 15 January 2024. Spain reported a sharp rise in respiratory illnesses, with the infection rate soaring to over 952 cases per 100,000 inhabitants. The peak of infections was set to arrive, Health Minister Monica Garcia warned last week. PHOTO: GUSTAVO VALIENTE/XINHUA

NATIONAL



Union Energy Minister U Ko Ko Lwin holds friendly talks with Ambassador of Egypt Mrs Aya Saad Mohamed Abdelkarim at the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Union Minister for Energy receives Ambassador of Egypt

UNION Minister for Energy U Ko Ko Lwin met with Ambassador of Egypt Mrs Aya Saad Mohamed Abdelkarim and her team at the office of the Ministry in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

At the meeting, they friendly discussed upgrading and construction of new oil

refineries and fertilizer factories in Myanmar, cooperation in investment in exploration and production of inland and offshore oil and natural gas, import of liquefied natural gas (LNG), the opportunities for close cooperation in the energy sector between Myanmar and Egypt, and encouragement for

use of compressed natural gas vehicles instead of fossil fuel-fired vehicles for reduction of carbon dioxide emission and use of fuel in Egypt.

Also present at the meeting were departmental heads and officials.—MNA/TRKM

Counter-argument to false information

Misleading reports circulate amid security forces' operation in Salingyi Township



IT has been discovered that malicious media outlets are disseminating false information, alleging that eight members of the security forces were killed in an attack by PDF terrorists. The reports also claim that security forces members set fire to eight houses and one hut in Sar Htone Village, Salingyi Township, Sagaing Region.

On 17 January, security forces conducted security measures based on information that PDFs were hiding

near Sar Htone village. During the operation, homemade guns and other explosives were seized. A clash ensued between the security forces and PDFs, leading to the terrorists setting houses in Sar Htone village on fire before retreating.

The intention behind these false reports by malicious media outlets is to spread misinformation, covering up the actions of insurgents who perpetrated terrorist acts and misleading the public about security forces. — MNA/KTZH

Malicious media outlets intentionally spread fake news

THE malicious media intentionally spread false information online, claiming that the Tatmadaw fired artillery shells that hit the monastery and pagoda in Wintapan village of Bilin township, Mon State, at 8 pm on 15 January.

However, according to the relevant official, the armed insurgents and PDF terrorists launched an attack using heavy and small weapons on a security outpost near Wintapan village. The artillery shells exploded in the village and destroyed the buildings.



Similarly, the destructive media outlets spread misinformation, claiming that two civilians were injured in the Tatmadaw's attack near Thonegwa village of Theinzayat, Mon State, at 6:30 pm on 16 January.

The relevant regional official affirmed that there was no armed engagement in Theinzayat on 16 January.

The malicious media outlets intentionally spread misinformation to affect the stability and mislead the public about security forces. — MNA/KTZH

MoFA Deputy Minister receives Brazilian Ambassador to Myanmar

U Lwin Oo, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, received Mr Gustavo Rocha de Menezes, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federative Republic of Brazil to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, yesterday at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, the Deputy Minister congratulated the Brazilian Ambassador on his recent appointment as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federative Republic of Brazil to the Republic of the Union of My-

anmar and they cordially exchanged views on enhancement of Myanmar-Brazil bilateral relations and potential areas of communication for mutual benefit, including the technical cooperation in the production of snake anti-venom in Myanmar, as well as the expansion of bilateral cooperation in the fields of aviation, agriculture, trade, health, sports and technology and the holding of political consultations between Myanmar and Brazil as well as closer collaboration in the international arenas.— MNA



Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Lwin Oo receives Brazilian Ambassador Mr Gustavo Rocha de Menezes yesterday.

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

NATIONAL

Ngalaik elephant camp earns over K26.1 mln from April to December 2023



Travellers and elephants are seen in Ngalaiktha elephant protection camp.

tection Camp.

“Our Ngalaiktha Elephant Protection Camp is located approximately two furlongs west of the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway Mile Post No. 217/0. It covers 573 acres, including 288 acres of pastureland for elephants. Between 30 and 50 visitors come here on weekdays, and about 100 on weekends,” said U Kyaw Swa Win.

He added, “There are 21

elephants in the camp. Visitors can relax by feeding the elephants, riding them on a short or long jungle trip, and enjoy performances by the elephants. Moreover, visitors can observe and study the plantations of teak, gum-kino, and pine.”

The Ngalaik Elephant Conservation Camp was inaugurated on 8 May 2017, and it features bungalows and parking lots. — ASH/ TMT

THE Ngalaiktha Elephant Protection Camp, situated in Oattarathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area of Union Territory, generated over

26.1 million kyats from visitors during the period from April to December 2023, as reported by U Kyaw Swar Win, in charge of the Ngalaiktha Elephant Pro-

Priority construction of infrastructures in Taikkyi Multiple Livestock Zone

A multipurpose livestock zone is being established in Taikkyi Township, Yangon Region, and the Yangon Region Government has given priority to the construction of infrastructure in the zone.

The zone will cover an area of 2,000 acres and will include farms for cattle, chickens, pigs, and goats. Entrances to the zone and circular roads it are being constructed, and plots of land are being allocated for livestock entrepreneurs.

The livestock zone will offer an opportunity for livestock entrepreneurs and local farmers to work together in a joint venture. In addition, animal feed stalls, veterinary medicine shops, as well as veterinary clinics will be opened for the convenience of farmers in the zone. The multipurpose livestock zone will reportedly implement advanced breeding practices without harming the environment. — ASH/TKO

K1.1 billion worth of heroin seized in Pyigyidagun Township



Heroin seized in Pyigyidagun Township.

A total of 44 kilogrammes of heroin, valued at K1.1 billion, was seized in Pyigyidagun Township of Mandalay Region, as reported by the Myanmar Police Force.

Acting on a tip-off, a combined team, including members of the Anti-Drug Police Force, conducted a search of a Toyota Hiace driven by Zin Min Htun at the corner of 62nd Street and 138th Street in Pyigyidagun Township at 8 am on 10 January. They

confiscated 44 kilogrammes of heroin, estimated at K1.1 billion, concealed in 4,400 plastic dishes.

The perpetrator confessed that the seized drugs were to be transported from Shan State to Mandalay Region.

Legal proceedings have been conducted against the offender, and an ongoing investigation is underway to apprehend others involved in the case. — MNA/ MKKS

Illegal timbers, industrial materials, consumer goods, foodstuffs and vehicles confiscated

A combined team supervised by the Kachin State Illegal Trade Eradication Special Task Force impounded a Dongfeng truck (approximately worth K15 million) carrying 5,000 kilogrammes of ammonium nitrate worth K5 million without official documents on the outskirts of Namti on Shwebo-Myitkyina road and a total of 12,640 kilogrammes of ammonium nitrate worth K12.64 million without official documents in Mokaung township on 17 January. The action was taken under the Narcotic Drug and Psychotropic Substances Law.

During inspections on the same day, the combined team managed by the Yangon Region Illegal Trade Eradication Special Task Force captured two Mitsubishi Fuso trucks



Smuggled toys seized in Yangon Region on 17 January.

(approximately worth K100 million) carrying six kinds of goods worth K11.906 million, including 21 toy cars and 4,000 kilogrammes of toys that were not declared in the Import Declaration (ID), at the Ywathagyi Dry Port on 17 January. The action was conducted under the Customs procedures.

On 18 January, the combined teams under the Taninthayi Region Illegal Trade Eradication Special Task Force seized 370 kilogrammes of various kinds of illegal fishes

and 850 kilogrammes of illegal Parkay fishe valued at K532,500 at the Natthamee Yaytwin island in Myeik township and a total of 3.816 tonnes of illegal timbers worth K572,520 at the Khamaukgyi checkpoint in Kawthaung township. The action was conducted under the Myanmar Marine Fisheries Law.

Ten arrests were made on 17 and 18 January, with an estimated value of K145.651 million, as reported by the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS

ECONOMY WORLD

China's unemployment rate drops to 5.2% in 2023

In December 2023, the surveyed urban unemployment rate was 5.1 per cent, while the figure for the entire year in 31 major Chinese cities was 5 per cent.

THE surveyed urban unemployment rate on average in China stood at 5.2 per cent in 2023, down 0.4 percentage points from 2022,

official data showed Wednesday. The employment situation is generally stable, the National Bureau of Statistics said in a report.

The surveyed urban unemployment rate in the country came in at 5.1 per cent in December 2023, the NBS said, adding that the figure for 31 major Chinese cities stood at 5 per cent for the whole year.

The total number of rural migrant workers grew by 1.91 million from a year earlier to 297.53 million in 2023, with their average monthly income up 3.6 per cent year on year to 4,780 yuan (US\$672).

The surveyed unemployment rates of the 16-24, 25-29 and 30-59 age groups, excluding students, were 14.9 per cent, 6.1 per cent and 3.9 per cent, respectively. — Xinhua



A job seeker fills in a form for employment at a job fair in Harbin, northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, 18 March 2023. PHOTO: L WANG/XINHUA JIANWEI/XINHUA

UAE banking sector demonstrates resilience amid global challenges

JAMAL Saleh, Director-General of the UAE Banks Federation (UBF), has underscored the robustness of the UAE banking sector in the face of global challenges. Saleh attributed this success to the effective strategies implemented by the Central

Bank of the UAE (CBUAE), establishing frameworks for sustained sector growth.

Speaking at a round-table held yesterday, Saleh highlighted the CBUAE's commitment to enforcing strong regulations, safeguarding the banking sec-

tor's integrity against challenges faced by major global banks. Expressing confidence in the sector's continued achievements, Saleh revealed a remarkable 1,200 per cent growth over the past two decades, signalling a twelfold increase. — ANI

Jakarta-Bandung HSR aims to serve 31,000 passengers per day in 2024

The Jakarta-Bandung High-speed Railway (HSR), the first of its kind in Indonesia and Southeast Asia, aims to serve 31,000 passengers per day in 2024.



A staff member helps as a passenger checks in at the Halim Station in Jakarta, Indonesia, 17 January 2024. PHOTO: XU QIN/XINHUA

THE Jakarta-Bandung High-speed Railway (HSR), the first of its kind in Indonesia and Southeast Asia, has set a target to serve 31,000 passengers per day throughout this year, said PT Kereta Cepat Indonesia-China (KCIC), a joint venture consortium between Indonesian and Chinese state-owned firms that constructs and runs the HSR.

KCIC's manager of corporate communications,

Emir Monti, told local media on Wednesday that the HSR, locally known as Whoosh, can serve 31,000 passengers with 68 trips per day, an outcome of study by the University of Indonesia, said Monti.

He said that KCIC is continuing the work on increasing the number of trips while improving services and facilities at stations and providing attractive promotions for passengers. — Xinhua

Syrian farmers abandon the land for steadier jobs

AFTER years of war, drought and economic crisis, Omar Abdel-Fattah was forced to rent out his farmland in northeast Syria, preferring a more stable job to provide for his family.

"It breaks my heart to see someone else working my land," said Abdel-Fattah, 50, who grew wheat, cotton and vegetables in Jaabar al-Saghir, in Syria's Raqa province, for three decades.

He said he had to abandon agriculture to make ends meet and provide an education for his eight children because he can "no longer keep up with the costs of farming", including irrigation.

Agriculture was once a pillar of northeast Syria's economy.

The region was the country's breadbasket before 2011,

when the government repressed peaceful protests, triggering a conflict that has killed more than 500,000 people and displaced millions.

Now the effects of climate change — particularly rising temperatures and drought — along with spiralling costs are dealing a heavy blow to agricultural production and the families that depend on it to survive.

Abdel-Fattah found a job at a water pumping station run by the area's semi-autonomous Kurdish administration.

It pays around \$70 a month, so he also runs a small shop on the side selling hardware and other items to get by.

Some of his relatives have also rented out their land, while

others have left Syria because of the dire financial situation there, Abdel-Fattah said.

Syria has endured more than 12 years of civil war, and Raqa was the centre of the Is-

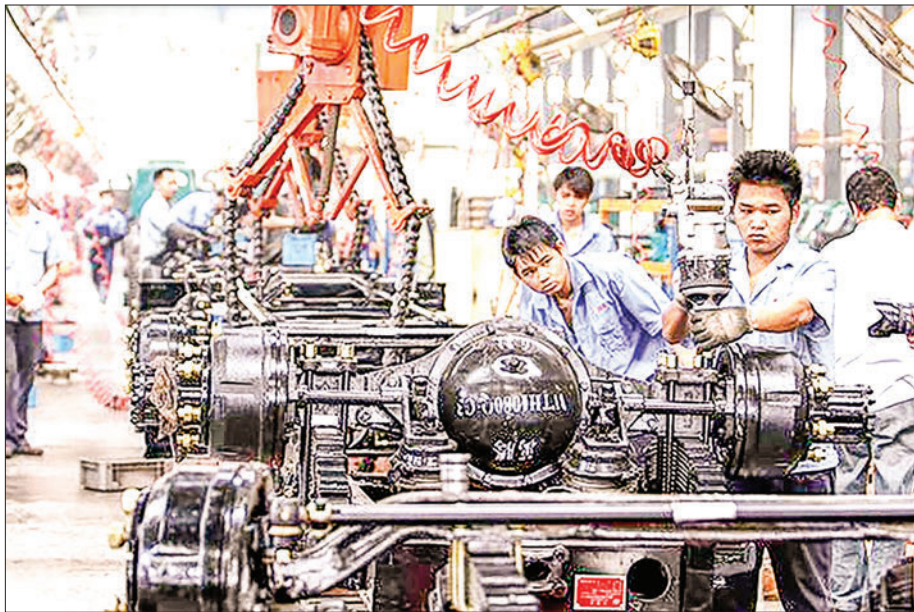
lamic State group's brutal "caliphate" in Syria until their ouster from the city in 2017. — AFP



Agriculture was once a pillar of northeast Syria's economy, but years of war and the effects of climate change have dealt a blow to farmers. PHOTO: AFP

China's industrial output picks up pace in 2023

The industrial output metric is used to assess the activity of large enterprises with an annual main business turnover of at least 20 million yuan (US\$2.81 million).



China's industrial production demonstrated steady growth in 2023, with a 4.6 per cent year-on-year increase in value-added industrial output. **PHOTO: CHINA DAILY**

CHINA'S industrial production registered steady growth last year, accompanied by a faster pace of intelligent and green transformation, official data showed on Wednesday.

The value-added industrial output, an important economic indicator, went up 4.6 per cent year on year in 2023, the National Bureau of Statistics said. In December alone, the figure grew 6.8 per

cent from a year earlier and 0.52 per cent from November.

The industrial output is used to measure the activity of large enterprises, each of which has an annual main business turn-

over of at least 20 million yuan (US\$2.81 million).

"Industrial production picked up steadily, with equipment manufacturing growing rapidly," Kang Yi, head of the NBS, told a press conference Wednesday.

Following a sustained economic recovery, China's industrial businesses have bounced back due to improving market demand.

The NBS data showed in November, the combined profits of industrial businesses rose for a fourth straight month, up 29.5 per cent from a year earlier. The industrial capacity utilization rate stood at 75.9 per cent in the fourth quarter, up from 75.6 per cent, 74.5 per cent, and 74.3 per cent in the third, second, and first quarter, respectively. — Xinhua



Japan Airlines' current president Yuji Akasaka and new president Mitsuko Tottori attend a press conference in Tokyo, Japan 17 January. **PHOTO: CFP**

Japan Airlines appoints first female president

Tottori, 59, will officially assume the role on April 1. With a background as a flight attendant, she will also be the first JAL president with such a professional history.

JAPAN Airlines (JAL) has decided to promote its senior executive Mitsuko Tottori to the position of president, the company announced on Wednesday. Tottori, 59, now representative director and senior managing executive officer, will become the first female president of the Japanese carrier as she assumes the post on 1 April.

Tottori, who joined the airline in 1985, will also become the first JAL president with a flight attendant background, according to

the biography attached to the company's online statement.

Yuji Akasaka, the current president, will become chairman with representative authority after 1 April.

In 2020, Tottori, as senior vice president for cabin attendants, facilitated the secondment of the company's cabin attendants to municipalities and other companies during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the airline industry faced difficult business conditions, Nikkei Asia reported. — Xinhua

Apple ends Samsung's 12-year run as world's top smartphone seller

APPLE'S iPhone for the first time became the world's biggest selling smartphone after rival Samsung's 12-year run as leader, data showed. According to data from the International Data Corporation released on Monday, the iPhone stole Samsung's crown in 2023 with 234.6 million units sold, compared to the South Korean firm's 226.6 million units.

The US tech giant commanded a 20.1 per cent market share ahead of Samsung's 19.4 per cent, the IDC said. — AFP

Shell sells onshore Nigeria unit, exits Niger Delta

BRITISH energy major Shell on Tuesday announced the sale of its Nigeria onshore division SPDC for up to \$2.4 billion, having already flagged its exit from the troubled Niger Delta.

The oil-rich region has long faced attacks and supply disruptions, making it a major factor driving Shell's switch from onshore assets to offshore activities.

"Shell has reached an agreement to sell its Nigerian onshore subsidiary The Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited (SPDC) to Renaissance,



Shell is selling its onshore facilities in Nigeria to focus on offshore production. **PHOTO: FLORIAN PLAUCHEUR/AFP**

a consortium of five companies comprising four exploration and production companies based in Nigeria and an international energy group," it said in a statement.

"Shell will remain a major investor in Ni-

geria's energy sector through its Deepwater and Integrated Gas businesses," it added. The consortium comprises ND Western, Aradel Energy, First E&P, Waltersmith and Petrolin. — AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MSC ANDREA F VOY.NO. (SB403A)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MSC ANDREA F VOY.NO. (SB403A)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **19-1-2024** 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.

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Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S MEDITERRANEAN SHIPPING COMPANY S.A

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

Non-Aligned Movement nations push for greater say in int'l affairs



Senior officials from members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) attend a meeting in Kampala, the capital of Uganda, on 15 January 2024. **PHOTO: HAJARAH NALWADDA/XINHUA**

NON-ALIGNED Movement (NAM) member states meeting here are coalescing positions to ensure that the 120-member state organization has a greater say in international affairs.

Ugandan Vice President Jessica Alupo, while opening the two-day NAM Ministerial Meeting Wednesday, as part of the 19th Summit of the NAM, said the Movement gathers at a time of increased geopolitical tension.

Alupo said with such happenings on the international fora, NAM countries should remain united and stick to the founding principles of the Movement, including respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations, recognition of the equality of all races and the equality of all nations, large and small, and abstention from intervention or interference into the internal affairs of another country.

“As countries of the Global South, we have regularly come together to discuss issues of common interest and concern. This meeting is yet another opportunity for you to continue with a constructive conversation on these issues,” she said. “Ongoing geopolitical tensions and conflicts, such as the current conflict between Ukraine and Russia, Israel and Palestine, are a matter of concern for us all.” — Xinhua

Philippines bans poultry imports from Japan due to bird flu outbreak

THE Philippines has imposed a temporary ban on the importation of poultry and poultry products from Japan due to an outbreak of bird flu there, the Philippines' Department of Agriculture said Thursday.

The department said Philippine Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel signed the order on Wednesday to immediately suspend the issuance of sanitary and phytosanitary import clearance for the inward shipment of wild birds, poultry and poultry products from Japan.

“Only wild birds, poultry, and poultry products imported from Japan that are already in

transit, loaded, and accepted on or before 10 November 2023, will

be allowed entry to the Philippines,” it said. — Xinhua



Photo taken from a Kyodo News helicopter on 25 November 2023, shows officials in protective suits working to cull about 40,000 chickens at a poultry farm in Kashima in Saga Prefecture, southwestern Japan, after the season's first outbreak of bird flu across the country was confirmed there. **PHOTO: KYODO/FILE**

Pakistan strikes against “terrorist” hideouts in Iran

PAKISTAN carried out a series of highly coordinated and specifically targeted precision military strikes against “terrorist” hideouts in the Sistan and Baluchestan province of Iran on Thursday morning, said Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The ministry said in a statement that several “terrorists” were killed during the intelligence-based operation which was named “death to separatists”.

“Over the last several years, in our engagements with Iran, Pakistan has consistently shared its serious concerns about the safe havens and sanctuaries enjoyed by Pakistani origin terrorists on the ungoverned spaces inside Iran,” said the ministry, adding that there was no action on Pakistan's serious concerns.

“This action is a manifestation of Pakistan's unflinching

resolve to protect and defend its national security against all threats and Pakistan will continue to take all necessary steps to preserve the safety and security of its people,” added the ministry.

“Pakistan upholds the principles and purposes of the UN Charter including territorial integrity and sovereignty of member states,” the ministry said, adding that in the exercise of the country's legitimate rights within international law, Pakistan would never allow its sovereignty and territorial integrity to be challenged, under any pretext or circumstances.

Terming Iran as a brotherly country, the ministry said Pakistan always emphasized dialogue and cooperation in confronting common challenges including the menace of terrorism and would continue to endeavor to find joint solutions. — Xinhua



A car leaves the district headquarter hospital (DHQ) in Panjgur town of Balochistan province where victims of an Iranian air strike were moved. **PHOTO: AFP**

TOP NEWS

Britain's King Charles III seeks treatment for enlarged prostate: Buckingham Palace

BRITAIN'S King Charles III will visit a hospital next week for a procedure to treat his enlarged prostate, the Buckingham Palace said on Wednesday, CBS News reported.

The Buckingham Palace said in a statement: “In common with thousands of men each year, The King has sought treatment for an enlarged prostate. His Majesty's condition is benign and he will attend the hospital next week for a corrective procedure. The King's public engagements will be postponed for a short period of recuperation.”

King Charles was crowned last year at the age of 74 after inheriting the monarchy upon the death of his mother, Queen Elizabeth II.

His health is generally understood to have been good. In 2008, he had a non-cancerous growth removed from his face. — ANI

SPORTS



ASEAN Football Federation plans to hold eight tournaments this year

THE ASEAN Football Federation is planning to host eight tournaments this year, featuring participation from Myanmar football and futsal teams. These events include the ASEAN Mitsubishi Electric Cup, the ASEAN Women's Championships, the ASEAN U-23 Championship, the ASEAN U-19 Championship, the ASEAN U-16 Championship, the ASEAN Futsal Championship, the ASEAN Beach Soccer

Tournament, and the ASEAN Club Championship in 2024.

With the exception of the ASEAN Beach Soccer Tournament, Myanmar teams are set to compete in the other tournaments, and some teams have already commenced training. The ASEAN Football Federation has scheduled the ASEAN Mitsubishi Electric Cup from 23 November to 21 December, utilizing a home and away format. The ASEAN Club Championship is scheduled to take place from August 2024 to May 2025.

The ASEAN U-16 Championship is slated for June in Indo-

nesia, the ASEAN U-19 Championship in July, the ASEAN Futsal Championship in Thailand in May, and the ASEAN Beach Soccer Championship in Thailand in November. The details regarding the ASEAN Women's Tournament, including the date and host country, will be announced later. The ASEAN Football Federation will provide updates on whether the ASEAN Futsal Club Championship, the ASEAN U-16 Women's Championship, and the ASEAN U-19 Women's Championship will take place. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

Myanmar players are training hard ahead of the international football tourneys. **PHOTO:MF**

AFC Asian Cup: China held goalless draw again, host Qatar wins Group A

China secured another goalless draw at the AFC Asian Cup, tying 0-0 with Lebanon in the Group A second round.

CHINA got another goalless draw at the AFC Asian Cup after being held 0-0 by Lebanon in the second round of Group A here on Wednesday.

In the first round, China had a 0-0 draw with Tajikistan, while Lebanon lost to host Qatar 3-0. Both China and Lebanon were desperately seeking a win to keep their chances of advancing to the knockout

stage alive.

In the 45th minute, China's forward Zhang Yuning unleashed two consecutive strikes in the penalty area which were saved by Lebanese goalkeeper Ostafa Matar.

Lebanon was close to open scoring in the stoppage time of first half, but Hassan Maatouk's right footed shot from outside the box went off the crossbar in



China will take on Qatar in the third round next Monday, while Lebanon plays against Tajikistan at the same time. **PDCHINASPORTS/TWITTER**

a counterattack. The Lebanese side hit the woodwork again in the 52nd minute by Hasan Srour following a combination play with Bassel Jradi. In the 65th minute, Chinese striker Wu Lei had the best opportunity of match, but his close range shot was cleared before the goal

line, after Dai Weijun crossed the ball into the goal area. In the other match of Group A on Wednesday, Qatar secured a spot in the knockout stage as group winners, beating Tajikistan 1-0 thanks to Akram Afif's third goal in two matches. — Xinhua

World No 1 Swiatek survives Collins scare at Australian Open

WORLD No. 1 Iga Swiatek advanced to the third round after surviving a major scare from former finalist Danielle Collins in a three-set thriller on Thursday at the Australian Open.

Under the closed roof at Rod Laver Arena, Swiatek snatched a remarkable 6-4, 3-6, 6-4 victory in three hours and 14 minutes.

Four-time Grand Slam winner Swiatek was on the brink of a shock exit after being broken twice and falling behind 4-1 in the third set.

But the resilient Pole dug deep as she capitalized on a nervous Collins, who struggled to close it out.

With momentum on her side, Swiatek clinched her 18th straight victory with a spectacular backhand winner down the line after advancing to the net as she threw her racquet in celebration.

Swiatek, who sported a knee brace on her left leg, remains on course for a maiden triumph at Melbourne Park with her best previous finish being in 2022 when she lost in the semifinals to American Collins. — Xinhua

Straightforward games for Madrid duo in La Liga game 21

MATCHDAY 21 of La Liga this weekend sees both Real and Atletico Madrid have what should be relatively straightforward games, while FC Barcelona has a much tougher task as it looks to keep in the title hunt.

Real Madrid is at home to

bottom of the table Almeria on Sunday, and although Almeria has improved under coach Gaizka Garitano, and took a well-deserved point from league leaders, Girona last weekend, it shouldn't have enough to trouble Real Madrid in the Santiago

Bernabeu.

The only factor that could give Real Madrid problems is that it has its second derby against Atletico in a week on Thursday night in the Copa del Rey, while Almeria's early exit from the tournament means it

has all week to prepare for the clash. League leaders, Girona is also in action on Sunday at home to Sevilla, who is struggling just one point above the relegation zone after consecutive home defeats in La Liga. — Xinhua



China reaffirms increased open-up commitment in premier's first overseas trip of new year

China's much-celebrated visa-free policy for Switzerland and Ireland announced by Chinese Premier Li Qiang in his official visits to the two European countries sent an unmistakable signal that against the headwinds of mounting protectionism, the world's second-largest economy will open its door even wider to the outside world.

SWITZERLAND and Ireland have become the latest of a handful of countries to benefit from China's much-celebrated visa-free policy.

The special treatment was announced by Chinese Premier Li Qiang in his official visits to the two European countries from Sunday to Wednesday, his first overseas trip this year, during which he also attended the opening plenary of the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting at Davos, Switzerland.

The overtures, widely reported by media outlets in both countries, sent an unmistakable signal that against the headwinds of mounting protectionism, the world's second-largest economy will open its door even wider to the outside world.

This cordial posture has been

the hallmark of the premier's four-day tour which kicked off the high-level exchanges between China and Europe this year.

In Bern, Switzerland, Li and President of the Swiss Confederation Viola Amherd announced the completion of the joint feasibility study on the augmentation of their Free Trade Agreement. Signed in 2013, it marked the first free trade deal between China and an economy in continental Europe. In Dublin, Li and Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar pledged that the two countries will regard each other as "development opportunities" and continue to expand trade and two-way investment.

Ireland wants to have "a very strong and constructive relationship with China", said Varadkar, "one based on trust and respect,



Chinese Premier Li Qiang is greeted by Viola Amherd, president of the Swiss Confederation, upon his arrival at Zurich international airport in Zurich, Switzerland, 14 January 2024. **PHOTO: WANG YE/XINHUA**

and one informed by our values and the multilateral system in which we're both stakeholders."

Ireland was the fourth European country Li has visited since taking office as China's premier last March. He visited Germa-

ny and France in June last year, making Europe the destination for his first trip abroad.

The island nation, whose development is underpinned by trade and openness, played a special part in China's reform and

opening-up. In 1980, two years after the reform and opening-up policy was launched, a group of Chinese officials landed in Shannon, a tiny Irish town some 189 km southwest of Dublin. — Xinhua

Russia paves way for cutting-edge commercial 'nuclear power plant of the future'

RUSSIA is bolstering its power generation capabilities by con-

ducting operational tests on the core technologies of the closed

nuclear fuel cycle. This progress is particularly evident at the Beloyarsk Nuclear Power Plant, where the energy complex utilizes "fast" reactors BN-600 and BN-800 that employ sodium as a liquid metal coolant. In a significant stride towards strengthening domestic nuclear energy, the Beloyarsk Nuclear Power Plant is gearing up to construct an advanced power unit.

The BN-1200M, equipped with a fast neutron nuclear reactor, is set to be the first of its kind in commercial installations. Director Ivan Sidorov confirmed that the construction is scheduled to begin in 2027. — SPUTNIK



A Russian national flag and flags with the logo of Rosatom flutters at the construction site of a cooling tower at the Kursk II nuclear power plant near the village of Makarovka outside Kurchatov, Kursk region, Russia. **PHOTO: MAKSIM BLINOV / SPUTNIK**

CORRUPTION AND OBSTRUCTING JUSTICE

Singapore transport minister resigns amid 27 corruption charges

SINGAPORE'S former Transport Minister S. Iswaran was charged with 27 offences in court on Thursday, according to local media reports.

Iswaran was charged with corruption, obtaining items from someone he had business dealings with as a public servant, and obstructing the course of justice, said the reports.

He was reported to receive benefits from local business tycoon Ong Beng Seng, with a total value of more than 384,000 Singapore dollars (about 286,000 US dollars).

Iswaran rejected the charges and reiterated his innocence, noting that he will focus on clearing the name.

Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong accepted Iswaran's resignation as the transport minister and as a member of Singapore's ruling People's Action Party (PAP) on Wednesday, according to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office Thursday.

Iswaran also resigned as a member of parliament, said the statement. Lee appointed Chee Hong Tat as the transport minister to replace Iswaran. — Xinhua