

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

Security and health guidelines to successfully convene 77th Anniversary of Union Day 2024

AS the Union Day celebration is a national-level ceremony, it is necessary to emphasize health and security measures, significantly tightening the security measures, said Vice-Senior General Soe Win.

At the first meeting of the Central

Committee for Organizing the 77th Anniversary of Union Day 2024 held at the SAC Chairman Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win, who is also in the capacity of Chairman

of the Central Committee for Organizing the 77th Anniversary of Union Day, stressed the need to organize the ceremony aligned with five objectives of the 77th Anniversary of Union Day and Our Three Main National Causes.

The Vice-Senior General also

stressed the need for relevant committees and subcommittees to review weaknesses and difficulties from previous ceremonies to make better processes for this year's celebration through cooperation and coordination among them.

SEE PAGE-3



The Yangon Region Investment Monitoring Team inspects a garment factory working on the CMP basis on 11 October 2023.

62 investments logged in Yangon Region in 2023

ACCORDING to statistics released by the Yangon Region Investment Commission, 62 local and foreign investments were made in Yangon Region in 2023.

Of these, 46 were foreign investments, three were joint ventures, and Myanmar citizens made the remaining 13. Most investments were in the electricity, service, and industrial sectors.

These foreign direct investments (FDIs) created over 32,000 job opportunities and came from countries such as China, Japan, South Korea, Thailand,

and others.

The endorsed enterprises covered a wide range of sectors, including the distribution of electricity from solar energy systems, oil production from grinding peanuts and sunflowers, purification and manufacturing of palm oil, dyeing and printing on fabrics and textiles, garment factories using the CMP system, warehousing and logistics services, hotels and tourism services, rice grinding and polishing, manufacturing various types of electric wires, manufacturing of aluminium, tin, and

copper for export, exporting high-value rubbers, producing and selling cardboards in the domestic market, manufacturing various types of shoes with cut, make, and package systems, manufacturing and exporting construction materials, packaging and exporting fruits and vegetables with cold storage systems, manufacturing instant noodles, manufacturing value-added rice, grinding and polishing beans and pulses for export, and manufacturing construction-used grinding stones. — TWA/ TMT

NATIONAL **PAGE-4**



Ceremonies for Maykha Garden, tar road held marking 76th Kachin State Day

NATIONAL **PAGE-5**



Myanmar National Committee on Child Labour Elimination holds 6th coord meeting

NATIONAL **PAGE-6**



Road transport disruption at border scales down exports

BUSINESS **PAGE-7**

Trade Dept approves relocation of licensed goods amid transport challenges in Myawady Zone

NATIONAL

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Order No 3/2024

12th Waning of Nattaw 1385 ME
8 January 2024

Appointment of Union Ministers

THE State Administration Council has appointed the following persons as Union Ministers of the Ministries, shown against each of their names under Section 419 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. U Ko Ko Hlaing | Ministry 1 at Office of Chairman of the State Administration Council |
| 2. U Aung Naing Oo | Ministry 2 at Office of Chairman of the State Administration Council |
| 3. Admiral Moe Aung | Ministry 4 at Office of Chairman of the State Administration Council |

By order

Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary
State Administration Council

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Order No 4/2024

12th Waning of Nattaw 1385 ME
8 January 2024

Substitution appointment of National Security Adviser

TO be able to advise the Chairman of the State Administration Council and the State Administration Council on various aspects of national security affairs, Union Minister for the Ministry 4 at Office of Chairman of the State Administration Council Admiral Moe Aung has been appointed as the National Security Adviser, the post previously held by Member of State Administration Council Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Yar Pyae.

By order

Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary
State Administration Council

Capital assistance announcement for oil millers

- The Oil Mills Development Loan Management Task Force has granted loans at low-interest rates using the oil mills development fund of the State economic promotion fund to the local oil mills to install modern machines, upgrade, set up new oil mills and support working capitals under the guidance of the State Administration Council.
- Those who meet the undermentioned requirements can apply for the oil mills development loan;
 - the oil mill must be currently operational
 - must have a valid work licence
 - it must submit immovable property under its own name and land use certificate Form (7) as collateral for the loan
 - those who take loans from state-owned banks and private banks can apply with a separate insurance
 - those who receive FDA certificates, small-scale industry work licences and members of relevant regions' oil millers associations and edible oil dealers' associations will be prioritized
- The rules for oil mill development loans are as follows: -
 - loan amount
 - Working Capital – K10 million (minimum)-K300 million (maximum)
 - Fixed Capital – K20 million (minimum)-K300 million (maximum)
 - loan term and repayment period
 - Working Capital – one year
 - Fixed Capital – three-year term, three instalments
 - Interest rate – five per cent per year
- The oil millers who want oil mill development loan can get loan application forms at the following places: -
 - oil millers' association offices in Nay Pyi Taw, Regions/States
 - edible oil dealers' association offices in Nay Pyi Taw, Regions/States
 - Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection offices in Nay Pyi Taw, Regions/States
 - Myanma Economic Bank Branches in Nay Pyi Taw, Regions/States
 - Myanma Agricultural Development Bank Branches in Nay Pyi Taw, Regions/States
- The loan application forms are at www.mopf.gov.mm and <https://msmewebportal.gov.mm/>, <http://www.meoma.org>, <http://meoda.myanmarwebtraining.com>, www.meb.gov.mm and www.madb.gov.mm.

Oil Mills Development Loan Management Task Force

5 special civil appeal cases passed judgment and 5 cases heard

A special appeal tribunal consisting of Chief Justice of the Union U Thar Htay and Judges of the Supreme Court of the Union U Khin Maung Gyi, U Tin Hone, U Thein Ko Ko and Daw Pyone Pyone Aye was convened Monday morning at the Supreme Court of the Union and passed judgments for five special civil appeal cases – Nos 26/2022 (Mandalay), 7/2023 (Bago), 18/2023 (Yangon), 37/2023 (Shan) and 38/2023 (Magway).

In addition, a total of five special appeal cases—Nos 19/2022 (Ayeyawady), 17/2023 (Taninthayi), 19/2023 (Ayeyawady), 23/2023 (Yangon) and 39/2023 (Yangon) were heard. — MNA

COVID-19 report, 31 December 2023 to 8 January 2024

NEW TESTS	NEW CASES	CASUALTIES
14,363	48	Nil

NATIONAL

Security and health guidelines to successfully ...



SAC Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win addresses the meeting of the Central Committee on Organizing 77th Anniversary of Union Day yesterday.

FROM PAGE-1

He highlighted that all attendee national brethren and dignitaries have to follow the protocol of COVID-19 issued by the Ministry of Health, although the COVID-19 virus may infect anyone despite the completion of the infectious period.

With regard to the important role of security, the Vice-Senior General called for increased security measures during the rehearsal and ceremonial process of the significant day.

He continued that products

of the One Region-One Product scheme in relevant regions and states contributing to the MSME businesses for the development of the State economy should be displayed at the exhibition at the Union Day ceremony to enable businesspersons to exchange production technologies and seek good ideas for products.

The Vice-Senior General instructed officials to draw up a plan to identify significant occurrences in time and solve them during the Union Day ceremony.

He underscored that the Minis-

try of Information needs to provide proper information and talk shows about Union Day through radio, TV, and newspapers.

Chairman of the Management Committee Nay Pyi Taw Council Chair U Than Tun Oo reported on the formation of relevant committees and the progress of work. Union ministers and officials from subcommittees also presented the progress of their sectors.

The 8th Anniversary of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement signed by the government,

Tatmadaw and ethnic armed organizations for initiating the dialogue as a political culture for ending the more than 70-year ethnic armed conflicts was convened on a grand scale on 16 October 2023.

The 77th Anniversary of Union Day 2024 will be marked in line with five national objectives: To protect the perpetuity of the Union by the entire ethnic people through the Union spirit, to join hands in harmony with the government, Tatmadaw, and the entire people to ensure the

state stability and rules of law, to promote all-inclusive livestock breeding-based manufacturing industries and MSMEs, ensuring the socioeconomic development of the entire ethnic people, to make collaborative efforts of all ethnic nationals to ensure the prosperity of the nation and food security which are the two national visions, and to strive to emergence of a modern and developed country, as well as a Union based on democratic and federal systems, by all ethnic nationals. — MNA/TTA

SAC members attend inter-region/state Judo competition 2023-2024



SAC members watch competition of athletes in IRS Judo competition 2023-2024.

TO foster the development of the next generation of athletes and elevate the standards of Myanmar Judo sports, the

Inter-Region and State Judo Competition 2023-24 opening ceremony took place at Wunna Theikdhi Gymnasium A in Nay

Pyi Taw yesterday.

Members of the State Administration Council, including Porel Aung Thein, Dr Ba

Shwe, Khun San Lwin, and U Yan Kyaw, along with Union Ministers, deputy ministers, the President of the Myanmar Judo Federation, officials, administrators, coaches, and athletes, attended the event.

U Min Thein Zan, the Chair of the Myanmar Olympic Committee and Union Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs, addressed the gathering, expressing his wish for the athletes to compete at their best. He emphasized that participating in the competition held as much significance as winning and urged the athletes to strive for the utmost performance in representing their respective states

and regions. Following the opening speech, athletes recited four sports oaths. Subsequently, SAC members, Union Minister U Min Thein Zan and officials warmly greeted the athletes. They then observed the demonstration of the under-45-kilogramme individual men's and women's Judo competition.

A total of 14 men's and 14 women's teams, comprising 266 administrators, coaches, and athletes, participated in the competition scheduled from 8 to 12 January at Wunna Theikdhi Gymnasium A. The event is open to all and offers free admission for spectators. — MNA/NT

NATIONAL

Ceremonies for Maykha Garden, tar road held marking 76th Kachin State Day

STATE Administration Council Member Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Defence Admiral Tin Aung San, accompanied by SAC members and Union Ministers, left for Kachin State by Tatmadaw aircraft yesterday to attend the 76th Kachin State Day ceremony that falls on 10 January 2024.

On arrival at the Myitkyina Airbase, they were welcomed by Kachin State Chief Minister U Khat Htein Nan, Commander of Northern Command Brig-Gen Soe Hlaing, Chief Justice U Tu Jar and relevant officials and with dance performances of six tribes of Kachin, five tribes of Shan and Myanmar dance troupes.

The Deputy Prime Minister and party attended the Welcome to Myitkyina (LED) signboard opening ceremony and Maykha Garden, which was implemented using the Kachin State government budget for the 2023-2024 financial year under the Flower City Project.

SAC Member Daw Dwe Bu, Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung, Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Min Naung, Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn



State Administration Council Member Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Defence Admiral Tin Aung San warmly greets local people at the opening ceremony of Pariyatti Monastery tar road yesterday in Myitkyina, Kachin State.

and state Chief Minister U Khat Htein Nan cut ribbon to inaugurate the Maykha garden.

Admiral Tin Aung San then pressed the button for the garden and inspected the garden compound.

The Admiral also attended the opening ceremony of the 1,013-foot-long Duwazawyt tar road, which is carried out with the state budget for the 2023-2024 financial year, in the Sitapu ward of Myitkyina Township. Also present at the ceremony were SAC Member Dr Hmu Thang,

Union Minister for Construction U Myo Thant, Union Minister for Electric Power U Nyan Tun, Union Minister for Cooperatives and Rural Development U Hla Moe and Commander Brig-Gen Soe Hlaing.

The Admiral proceeded to the opening ceremony of the 1,400-foot-long Pariyatti Monastery tar road in the industrial zone of the same ward, together with SAC member U Shwe Kye-in, Union Minister for Health Dr Thet Khaing Win, Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism Dr

Thet Thet Khine, Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs Jeng Phang Naw Taung and Deputy Minister U Zaw Aye Maung.

The Admiral and party also joined the ceremony of returning capital and interest for the first year from livestock breeding industries under the State Economic Promotion Fund held at the public stadium in Myitkyina.

Speaking at the event, Admiral Tin Aung San said efforts should be made to achieve standard and marketable agricultural produce by support-

ing and fulfilling the needs of livestock industries. It should emphasize the production of the regionally-produced crops as value-added products in Kachin State.

He also appreciated the local entrepreneurs who repaid the capital and interest on the first anniversary of the State Economic Promotion Project in Kachin State and the efforts of the state government and committees.

The state chief minister then explained the plans to grant loans for the second-year project, and four departments that carried out the project transferred the received capital and one-year interest to Union Minister U Hla Moe.

The Admiral and party attended the opening ceremony of a three-storey building at Kachin State Vaccine Cold Storage (Myitkyina) of the Public Health Department.

After the ceremonial procedures, they inspected the storage chamber of the new building.

The three-storey cold storage building can store the normal vaccines, COVID-19 vaccines and related devices at different temperatures. — MNA/KTZH



Officials observe the map of the zone and land allocation.

Bago Region plans integrated livestock zone with natural fertilizer production

THE Bago Region Government is developing a multi-purpose livestock zone (North Nawin) in Pyay Township, integrated with a natural fertilizer production facility.

The zone, located near Titut village, aims to rear farms of cattle, chickens, pigs, and goats, utilizing their waste as raw material

for natural fertilizer production.

The zone comprises 60 plots of 200 x 200 feet for cattle, 16 for chickens, eight for pigs, and seven for goats, all of the same size. Each 200x200-foot plot is considered one unit, with each unit accommodating 10-50 cattle, 30-100 pigs, 1,000-3,000 chickens,

and 50-100 goats. Additionally, the zone will allocate space for animal feed shops, veterinary clinics, and animal drug stores to facilitate livestock farmers. The regional government has committed to minimizing environmental impacts and adopting high-quality livestock practices. — ASH/NT

Global NEW LIGHT of MYANMAR
www.gnlm.com.mm

CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION
(+95) (01) 8604532,
Hotline - 09 255597511

ADVERTISING & MARKETING
(+95) (01) 8604530,
Hotline - 09 251022355
marketing@gnlm.com.mm
subscription@gnlm.com.mm

Printed and published at the Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the Global New Light of Myanmar Daily under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.
gnlmnews@gmail.com
newsroom@gnlm.com.mm
www.gnlm.com.mm

Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm with your name and title.

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



NATIONAL

Myanmar National Committee on Child Labour Elimination holds 6th coord meeting

STATE Administration Council Member Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Yar Pyae addressed the 6th Coordination Meeting of Myanmar National Committee on Elimination of Child Labour yesterday.

At the event, the Union minister, in his capacity as Chairman of the committee, talked about the reformation of the Myanmar National Committee on Elimination of Child Labour on 24 August 2023 with 36 members, ongoing national tasks carried out by respective working committees, and completion of works out of 17 facts approved at the 5th meeting except six goals to be carried out sustainably.

He continued that the child labour elimination activities aim to promote awareness and knowledge concerning child labour, ensure the qualification of Union and regional/state-level organizations to settle child labour problems, designate responsibilities, and implement child labour elimination long-term plans through progress assessment.



Myanmar National Committee on Child Labour Elimination in progress in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The national-level work project is estimated to implement three five-year short-term and one 15-year long-term programmes. The first five-year short-term plan was approved in January 2019 under six goals: collecting precise basic facts, conducting awareness and ability promotion campaigns, generating educational and vocational

opportunities, improving legal matters including amendment of laws and implementations, eliminating the worst forms of child labour and carrying out rehabilitation, and generating better employment vocational opportunities for families.

As per the national-level first five-year action plan for elimination of child labour, tasks for

reduction and elimination of child labour are being taken in the first short-term five years from 2019 to 2023 in the prioritized fields of industrial manufacturing sector and commerce sectors in Kayin and Mon states and Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions of the 14 regions and states.

He also stressed that the ASEAN prioritizes the elimina-

tion of violence against children and the worst forms of child labour. Moreover, the social organizations also focus on “no child left behind”.

He then stressed the need to raise awareness programmes regarding child labour elimination activities focusing on child labour and their parents and to hold national/regional/state level ceremonies marking World Day Against Child Labour on 6 June and conduct other educating activities regarding child labour.

He also highlighted the key role of the physical and psychological development of children in shaping the future of the country. He urged the committee members and ministries concerned to work together.

Then, Committee Vice-Chairman Union Minister U Myint Naung, secretary of the committee Deputy Minister U Win Shein and relevant officials explained the national-level work plans to eliminate the child labour and activities of eight core working committees. — MNA/KTZH

Counter-argument to false information

Misinformation spread on social media: Natthankwin market fire caused by Tatmadaw mortar explosion

MISINFORMATION circulated that the Natthankwin market in Kyaukkyi Township, Bago Region, caught fire on 7 January due to the explosion of heavy weapon fire by Tatmadaw.

It was discovered that the illegal, malicious news media, Mizzima, was spreading misinformation on social media.

According to a security official, the actual incident occurred on 7 January when security forces, working to ensure the safety of locals and maintain peace in Natthankwin, came under fire from terrorists using heavy weapons.

Terrorists aim to disrupt people’s lives and socio-economic activities. In the process, to conceal their activities and distort the local perception of Tatmadaw, they circulate mis-

information on social media through malicious news media. — MNA/KZW



A screen-shot of misinformation.

Spreading misinformation: Tatmadaw arrests 60 civilians in Sittway

THERE has been false news circulating in the Development Media Group, a Rakhine news outlet, claiming that the Tatmadaw arrested approximately 60 civilians in Sittway, Rakhine State, on 7 January, using massive force.

Upon investigation, it was found that the Development

Media Group, a Rakhine media organization, had spread misinformation on social networks.

However, there is no truth to this news. According to a local security official, routine checks are conducted on local peace and security activities to ensure the community can live peacefully. The security forces

have not arrested any innocent civilians without reason.

Malicious news media are reportedly spreading unverified misinformation to disrupt peace and order in the areas. Their goal is to misrepresent the actions of security forces among the ethnic communities. — MNA/KZW

False claims circulate regarding political prisoners’ detention and prison riot

FABRICATED news has been circulating, claiming that, according to a statement from the All Myanmar Political Prisoners Network, 28 political prisoners who were sentenced to long-term prison terms for political crimes were kept in shackles at custody for almost two years.

Regarding the fabricat-

ed news, an official from the relevant prison countered by saying, “Twenty-eight prisoners took the prison officials as hostages and tried to escape in a violent riot, so they were placed in solitary confinement, shackled, and prosecuted under the Prison Act. They have been freed from shackle after completion

of the case.” Reports indicate that media outlets supporting terrorists and spreading malicious news are fabricating and circulating false information, misleading the public about the Correctional Department and the staff doing their duties under the Prison Act. — MNA/TKO

NATIONAL

Road transport disruption at border scales down exports

The prices of new monsoon onions are on a downward trend.



Monsoon onions are displayed at the Seikphyu market on 7 January 2024.

ROAD transport disruption at the border wreaked havoc on onion exports, and newly harvested monsoon onion still fetches low prices, U Aung Ko, a trader, told The Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM).

Myanmar's onion exports hit the highest in Q3 (October-December) of the financial year when those traders who store them sell the onion stocks. Myanmar aims to achieve 100,000 tonnes of onions to external markets in the current financial year 2023-2024. About 20,000 tonnes of onions in Q3 and 35,000 in Q4 (January-March) were sched-

uled to be exported.

Road freight is commonly used for onion exports through western border trade posts as seaborne export takes long delivery times, and monsoon onions have a short shelf-life, unlike summer onions. Moreover, traders barely use the air freight. Maritime shipping is the only option to export them to the Philippines.

Onion exports were witnessed at the Myawady border to Thailand and Viet Nam in 2022. Export via those channels has not yet returned to normalcy from the end of 2023. Therefore, transport hurdles

disrupt onion exports at present.

The large onion prices touched a high of K3,800-K4,700 per viss at the end of December. The prices dropped to K3,000-K3,500 per viss on 8 January 2024.

Yangon market sees a daily supply of 200,000 visses of onions. With 22,000 visses of onions entering the Pakokku market that day, the price hit the highest of K2,500 per viss only. The highest prices were K1,500-2,900 per viss in the Myingyan market, with an influx of 190,000 visses of onions. — TWA/EM



Patron of Yangon Region Child Labour Elimination Committee Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein addresses the coordination meeting of the committee.

YR Child Labour Elimination Project to proceed with 8 new working committees

ACCORDING to the Yangon Region government's coordination meeting, the child labour elimination project will be conducted by forming eight working committees.

"The development of children plays a key role in creating the significant image of a nation, and it is such a precious resource. The child labourers and youths in poor countries do not have a chance for learning and are becoming child labourers," said the Yangon Region chief minister, who is also patron of the Yangon Region Child Labour Elimination Committee.

He also added that the Child Labour Elimination Project in the Yangon Region needed to be implemented with collective effort, including the Ministry of Labour, NGOs, civil society

organizations and INGOs for a better image of the country.

The eight committees include a data collecting working committee, an education and capacity building working committee, an education and vocational working committee, a legal affair working committee, a working committee on elimination and remedial for forced child labour who face the worst form, a job opportunity working committee, a working committee on assessment and fundraising and financial working committee. Then, Yangon Region Child Labour Elimination Committee Chairman Minister for Ethnic Affairs U Saw Jacob Htoo reported on forming eight committees. Then, the chairpersons of the committees explained the relevant work implementation. — TWA/KTZH

Employment agencies required to submit OWIC applications with attached Excel file

OVERSEAS employment agencies applying for the Overseas Worker Identification Card (OWIC) to dispatch workers to Malaysia must include the specified Excel file with their application. Applications without the Excel file will not be accepted, as per Safe Migration guidelines.

It is emphasized that the worker's name and passport number must match, and the job type should align with the recommendation of the diplo-

matic officer.

In cases where the email file size is substantial due to many employees in the one-stop service, separated PDF files for passports and contracts are acceptable.

Furthermore, the overseas employment sending process submission requires PDF files of the cover letter, diplomatic officer's letter, demand letter, KTN, KSN, AC, calling visa, and a copy of the licence. — TWA/MKKS

Licences granted to over 400 new private health services, including 275 hospitals

ACCORDING to the Central Committee on Private Healthcare Services, licences have been issued to over 400 new private health services, including 275 private hospitals.

As of 31 December 2023, the central committee has granted licences for 275 private hospitals, 40 maternity clinics, 73 specialized laboratories, 17 special x-ray facilities, 20 healthcare services, and 18 general healthcare services.

Moreover, to enhance the private healthcare service industry, kidney blood purification and kidney transplant



The meeting 1/2024 of the Central Committee on Private Healthcare Services held on 3 January.

treatments are permitted in alignment with the country's health policy. The Union Minister for Health emphasized the crucial role of private hospitals and clinics in medical

treatment, underscoring the need to expedite the licensing process for private hospitals and clinics while ensuring strict compliance with rules and regulations. — TWA/TKO

Trade Dept approves relocation of licensed goods amid transport challenges in Myawady Zone

THE Trade Department under the Ministry of Commerce notified on 7 January that exporters can be shifted to other Myanmar-Thailand border posts to facilitate trade amid the transport disruption at the Myawady trade zone after receiving export licences for the goods.

If they want to change the mode of transport to maritime transport, the authority will give the green light to it as well.

Also, this policy applies to the importers engaged in Myanmar-Thailand border trade for permitted goods. For seaborne

import, capital goods, intermediate goods and industrial raw materials that need to be transported with container shipping will be allowed after screening each case.

On 8 November 2023, similar events occurred at the Muse and Chinshwehaw borders, and goods were relocated to other posts. — NN/EM

Muse 105th-Mile Trade Zone.



YGN palm oil wholesale reference price remains stable for three weeks



Palm oil production in Taninthayi Region.

ACCORDING to the Supervisory Committee on edible oil import and distribution, the wholesale reference rate of palm oil for the Yangon market has stayed the same for three weeks.

The rate has remained unchanged at K4,955 per viss from the last week of December to the second week of January, ending 14 January 2024.

The Supervisory Committee on edible oil import and distribution under the Ministry of Commerce has been closely observing the FOB prices in Malaysia and Indonesia and issuing the wholesale market reference rate for edible oil

weekly by considering the following factors: transport costs, tariffs and banking services.

Nevertheless, the market price is way higher than the reference price.

To control overcharging, the Consumer Affairs Department under the Ministry of Commerce informed the consumers of lodging the complaints for overcharging through the call centre's hotline in late August 2023. The Department urged consumers not to buy palm oil at high prices.

The Department is making concerted efforts to steer the high volatility in palm oil prices in the retail market and offer

fairer prices to consumers in coordination with the Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers Association and oil importing companies.

The complaints for overcharging can be lodged over hotline 1535 of the call centre of the Consumers Affairs Department or sent to the Facebook page of the Department and the region and state departments concerned. The domestic palm oil consumption is estimated at 1 million tonnes per year. The local palm oil production is just about 400,000 tonnes. About 700,000 tonnes of palm oil are imported yearly through Malaysia and Indonesia to meet domestic demands. — NN/EM

Agri export earnings in Myanmar total US\$2.3 bln in 9 months

MYANMAR'S agricultural exports generated US\$2.313 billion in the past nine months of the current financial year 2023-2024, the Ministry of Commerce's statistics indicated.

The figures plunged from \$2.688 billion in the corresponding period last FY, showing a drop of \$374.172 million.

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 implemented the National Export Strategy (NES) 2020-2025 to boost exports. The priority sectors of the NES consist of 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/KK



Bags of rice being loaded aboard cargo vessel at Patheingyi Port for exporting rice to Bangladesh.

OPINION

Introduce an effective IP protection system in Myanmar

MYANMAR, having joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), recognized the imperative need to align with international standards by implementing a robust intellectual property (IP) protection system. In response, the government enacted four crucial copyright laws, namely Trademark Law, Industrial Design Law, Patent Law, and Copyright, starting in 2019.

A significant milestone was achieved in 2023 with the enforcement of the Trademark Law on 1 April, marking the official acceptance of trademark registrations from 26 April of the same year. Subsequently, the Patent Law and Copyright Law were enforced on 31 October 2023, with preparations underway to facilitate intellectual property applications. This pivotal year marked Myanmar's transition towards establishing an internationally recognized IP system.

The essence of an IP system lies in its ability to safeguard the creative works and rights of all innovators and inventors, ensuring that their contributions benefit Myanmar society. The idea is to provide creators with the deserving benefits for their efforts in generating innovative products. Every individual engaged in creating a product can enjoy the fruits of their labour and obtain protection for their interests in the production.

The link between enjoying benefits from creative works and fostering increased creativity is undeniable. When creators receive due recognition and compensation for their efforts, they are motivated to continue their creative endeavours, ultimately contributing more to society. Therefore, it becomes crucial to prevent any unauthorized manipulation of creative works until a specified timeframe has elapsed. Myanmar urgently requires an effective IP protection system to cultivate a conducive environment for creativity, innovation, and competitiveness within both government and private sectors. Individuals play a vital role in the implementation of copyright laws. They must actively participate in raising public awareness about IP-related matters, ensuring compliance with legal stipulations.

Myanmar is actively engaged in the ASEAN IPR Action Plan, aiming to position itself as a leading country in regional IP development. The benefits derived from copyright laws extend beyond individual creators, contributing to the overall development of the state's economy, strengthening IP protection for entrepreneurs, attracting foreign investment, enhancing human resources, creating new job opportunities, and fostering improvements in the manufacturing sector by transferring high technologies.

Introducing a comprehensive IP protection system in Myanmar is not only a legal necessity but a strategic move to stimulate creativity, innovation, and economic growth, positioning the country as a frontrunner in regional intellectual property actions.

Myanmar is actively engaged in the ASEAN IPR Action Plan, aiming to position itself as a leading country in regional IP development. The benefits derived from copyright laws extend beyond individual creators, contributing to the overall development of the state's economy, strengthening IP protection for entrepreneurs, attracting foreign investment, enhancing human resources, creating new job opportunities, and fostering improvements in the manufacturing sector by transferring high technologies.

Introducing a comprehensive IP protection system in Myanmar is not only a legal necessity but a strategic move to stimulate creativity, innovation, and economic growth, positioning the country as a frontrunner in regional intellectual property actions.

After Covid-19, advanced MRI technology detects alterations in brain

The findings, published in Brain Communications, could offer insights into the origins of persistent neurological disorders following COVID-19.

RESEARCHERS from Linköping University in Sweden analyzed the brains of 16 people who had previously been hospitalized for Covid-19 and still had symptoms. They discovered changes in brain tissue structure between patients who experienced persistent symptoms after taking Covid-19 and healthy people. Their findings, which were published in the journal *Brain Communications*, may shed light on the underlying causes of neurological disorders that persist following Covid-19.

Several previous studies of persisting problems after Covid have involved MRI brain scanning. Although researchers have found differences compared with healthy brains, these differences are not specific to Covid-19.

"It can be frustrating for me as a doctor when I understand that the patients have problems, but I can't find an explanation because there's nothing in the MRI scan to explain it. To me,

this underlines the importance of trying other examination technologies to understand what's happening in the brain in patients with persisting symptoms after Covid-19," says Ida Blystad, neuroradiologist in the Department of Radiology at Linköping University Hospital and researcher affiliated with the Department of Health, Medicine and Caring Sciences at Linköping University and the Centre for Medical Image Science and Visualization (CMIV).

MR imaging

In their current study, the researchers have therefore added a new type of MR imaging called advanced diffusion MRI. They were particularly interested in the brain's white matter. This consists mainly of nerve axons and is very important for transporting signals between the different parts of the brain and the rest of the body.

"Diffusion MRI is a very sensitive technology that allows

changes in how the nerve axons are organized to be detected. This is one of the reasons why we wanted to use diffusion MRI to study the effects of Covid-19 on the brain that other imaging technologies might not pick up," says Deneb Boito, doctoral student at the Department of Biomedical Engineering at Linköping University.

To get an idea of what diffusion MRI is, we can imagine a big city at night. Car headlights and rear lights shine like red and white strings of pearls on the most trafficked roads. We cannot see the road itself, but we understand that it is there, as the cars can easily move about right there. Similarly, doctors and researchers can get an insight into how the brain is constructed on a microscopic level through diffusion MRI. This technology builds on the fact that there is water everywhere in the brain moving in the tissue according to the law of least resistance. Water mole-

cules move more easily along the neural pathways. By measuring the movement of water molecules through the neural pathways, researchers can indirectly infer the structure of neural pathways, just as we can indirectly understand that there is a motorway where there are many cars driving.

Healthcare usages of diffusion MRI include diagnosing stroke and planning brain surgery. In their current study, the researchers used a more advanced version of diffusion MRI. They examined 16 men who had been hospitalized for severe Covid-19 and who are participating in the Linköping Covid-19 Study (LinCos) at the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine in Linköping. They still had persisting symptoms after seven months. This group was compared with a group of healthy individuals without post-Covid symptoms who had not been hospitalized for Covid. The participants' brains were examined

with both conventional MRI and diffusion MRI.

White matter structure

"The two groups differ when it comes to brain white matter structure. This can be one of the causes of the neurological problems experienced by the group that had suffered from severe Covid-19. It's a result that's in line with other studies that have shown changes to the brain's white matter. However, having examined only a small group of patients, we are cautious about drawing any major conclusions. With this technology, we're not measuring the function of the brain, but its microstructure. To me, these findings are a sign that we must investigate long-term effects of Covid-19 in the brain using more advanced MRI technology than conventional MRI," says Ida Blystad.

There are several issues that the researchers want to study further. It appears, for instance, that white matter in different



Ida Blystad and her colleagues examine the brain using MRI. PHOTO: EMMA BUSK WINQUIST/LINKÖPING UNIVERSITY

parts of the brain is affected in different ways, although it is too early to draw any conclusions as to what these differences mean. An upcoming study will investigate whether changes detected with diffusion MRI are in any way connected to brain activity, and

how different parts of the brain communicate with each other through the brain white matter in patients suffering from post-COVID fatigue.

Another question is what happens over time. The MRI scan provides an image of the brain at

that particular moment. As the participants were examined on one occasion only, it is not possible to know whether the differences between the two groups will disappear over time or whether they are permanent.

SOURCE: ANI

Study finds how two forms of CBT are useful in fibromyalgia treatment



Fibromyalgia, characterized by widespread pain, exhaustion, and stiffness, lacks a known cure, and current medications often prove insufficient in efficacy. ILLUSTRATION: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ DUKE HEALTH

A study from the Karolinska Institutet finds no substantial differences in treating fibromyalgia between exposure-based Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and standard CBT, both significantly reducing symptoms in affected individuals.

ACCORDING to a study, there do not appear to be any substantial differences in the treatment of fibromyalgia between so-called exposure-based CBT and standard CBT.

Both methods of therapy reduced symptoms significantly in people suffering from the illness.

The findings of the Karolinska Institutet study, published in the journal *PAIN*, are one of the largest to date evaluating different treatment regimens for fibromyalgia.

Fibromyalgia, a long-term pain illness that causes widespread pain, exhaustion, and

stiffness in the body, affects around 200,000 people in Sweden today.

Fibromyalgia has no known cure. Existing medications frequently have insufficient efficacy, necessitating the development of new, effective therapeutic options.

Although cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) has demonstrated some promise, there is a scarcity of certified CBT practitioners.

There is also a lack of understanding about which type of CBT is the most beneficial.

The study examined two types of internet-delivered cogni-

tive behavioural therapy in terms of how well they lessen fibromyalgia symptoms and functional impact.

In summary, exposure-based CBT entails the participant systematically and repeatedly confronting situations, activities, and stimuli that the patient has previously avoided due to pain, psychological discomfort, or symptoms such as exhaustion and cognitive impairments.

Different strategies

In traditional CBT, the participant is presented with several different strategies to work on during treatment, such as re-

laxation, activity planning, physical exercise, or strategies for managing negative thoughts and improving sleep.

The study showed that traditional CBT was by and large equivalent to the newer treatment form of exposure-based CBT.

"This result was surprising because our hypothesis, based on previous research, was that the new exposure-based form would be more effective. Our study shows that the traditional form can provide an equally good result and thus contributes to the discussion in the field," said Maria Hedman-Lagerlof, licenced

psychologist and researcher at the Centre for Psychiatry Research at the Department of Clinical Neuroscience, Karolinska Institutet.

The randomised study involved 274 people with fibromyalgia, who were randomly assigned to be treated with traditional or exposure-based CBT.

The treatments were delivered entirely online and all participants had regular contact with their therapist.

Participants answered questions about their mood and symptoms before, during, and after treatment.

SOURCE: ANI

SCI/ENVIRON: WORLD



This aerial photo taken on 6 January 2024 shows China's research icebreaker Xuelong 2 conducting scientific expedition in the Amundsen Sea. Members of China's 40th Antarctic expedition team have recently conducted scientific work aboard China's research icebreaker Xuelong 2 in the Amundsen Sea. **PHOTO: CHEN DONGBIN/XINHUA**

Israel sees sharp rise in climate damage to agriculture in 2023: report

ISRAEL'S agricultural sector reported a record high number of damage cases last year, found an annual report released Sunday by Israel's Insurance Fund for Natural Risks in Agriculture (Kanat).

In 2023, Kanat received more than 12,200 reports of crop damage, a notable in-

crease from about 11,000 reports the previous year, said Kanat, owned by the government and 11 leading agricultural organizations.

Climate-related damages claimed by practitioners totalled 390 million shekels (about 106 million US dollars) last year, a 13 per cent rise com-

pared to 2022, and the highest since 2015, showed its report.

The fruit sector suffered the most significant losses, totalling nearly 130 million shekels in 2023, followed by damage to vegetable crops at 79 million shekels and over 70 million shekels for animal breeders. — Xinhua

Glass bottles responsible for majority of emissions from winemaking: study

GLASS bottles are responsible for the majority of greenhouse gas emissions from the winemaking process, Australian research has found.

In a study published on Monday, a team from the University of South Australia (UniSA) and the University of Adelaide found that the production and transport of glass bottles account for more than two-thirds of the winemaking industry's total carbon footprint.

According to their research, the production of a single glass wine bottle generates 1.25 kg of carbon dioxide. Their unique shape means they also take up more space and require

more fuel to be transported.

"If we could find another way to tackle the (bottling) process, we'd be looking at a much more carbon-efficient wine industry," Jakob Mesidis, lead researcher on the project from UniSA, told the Australian Associated Press.

Alternative receptacles for wine include casks, cans and plastic bottles, all of which can be transported more efficiently and recycled more easily.

A survey of 1,200 people undertaken by Mesidis and his fellow researchers found that consumers favoured glass wine bottles, associating them with tradition and prestige, over the alternatives. — Xinhua

Chinese, US scientists develop revolutionary graphene semiconductor

A collaborative team of Chinese and US scientists have created a viable semiconductor with an on-off switch made of graphene, a carbon material far superior to silicon in terms of its electronic potential.

Graphene, a two-dimensional material made up of just a single layer of carbon atoms, is currently considered to be the most promising electronic material in this field.

However, graphene's zero bandgap structure, resulting in no energy difference when electrons in semiconductors jump between low and high energy zones, previously prevented it from being used to represent 1's and 0's in the electronic computing system.

The researchers from Tianjin University and Georgia Institute of Technology have successfully managed to open the bandgap by producing a graphene on single-crystal silicon carbide (SiC) substrates with a bandgap of 0.6 eV.

In addition, room tempera-

ture mobilities of the graphene developed by the two research teams is 10 times greater than that of silicon, according to the study published recently in the journal Nature.

Therefore, it is chemically, mechanically and thermally robust and can be synthesized with conventional semiconductor fabrication techniques, said the researchers.

Moore's Law, stating that computing power doubles every two years, has been challenged by a slowing pace in recent times. This slower pace is due to the extreme difficulties experienced in trying to reduce the size of silicon-based chips to less than two nanometres.

The two-dimensional graphene semiconductor could open up a new path for high-performance electronic devices beyond traditional silicon-based tech, heralding a fundamental change in electronics, said Ma Lei, the paper's corresponding author from Tianjin University.

— Xinhua



This aerial photo taken on 6 January 2024 shows solar thermal collectors at a heating plant in Xainza County, southwest China's Xizang Autonomous Region. Xainza situated at an average elevation of 4,700 metres deep in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau has fiercely cold weather in winter, when locals used to keep themselves warm by burning cow dung. The situation was ended for good when a central heating system powered by solar energy was put into operation in the county in 2019, which ensures warmer indoor space while reducing carbon dioxide emissions during winters. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

11 preschoolers become endorsers for winter tourism

ELEVEN preschool children, bundled up in bright orange down coats, have captured the hearts of Chinese netizens as they embark on a “brave” camp trip to north-east China, a region renowned as an Arctic-like snowy wonderland in winter.

The children, aged between 3 and 6 years old and escorted by three teachers, came from Nanning, the capital city of south China’s Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, over 3,000 km away, with a daytime temperature currently above 20 degrees Celsius.

Upon their arrival about a week ago in Harbin, capital of Heilongjiang Province, they sparked huge discussions on multiple social media platforms due to their adorable uniforms and overall cuteness.

Wherever they go, they set off a craze on cyberspace and have accumulated a flood of followers curious about their adventure in the north.

As Guangxi is closely linked with sugar oranges, which has a peel colour exactly the same as the down jackets worn by the



Children from south China’s Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region meet with penguins as they visit the Harbin Polarpark in Harbin, northeast China’s Heilongjiang Province, 6 January 2024. PHOTO: XINHUA

children, these little intrepid travellers have been affectionately referred to as “little sugar oranges” by online communities.

The team of 11 immersed themselves in the immense fun

of ice and snow during their travels. Their trip in Heilongjiang included tours to Harbin, China’s northernmost city Mohe and the “Snow Town”, during which they were pampered, both online and

offline.

To express gratitude for the hospitality received in Heilongjiang, 189 tonnes of freshly picked tangerines from Guangxi were sent to the province last week,

and given out at a popular tourist destination free of charge.

On Sunday, the children kickstarted a new journey to the neighbouring Jilin Province. They were showered with affection by the locals and received gifts from a group of friends dressed in blue outfits, representing the region’s iconic rime ice.

“Jilin, here we come,” said the young southerners in a soft, babyish tone.

In Jilin, the children embarked on a night boat trip, tried skiing and also plan to visit some popular sights within the province.

“The kids learned very fast and showed a lot of enthusiasm for skiing. Some of them just lay down to feel and play with the snow. I look forward to the chance to meet them again,” said Geng Shilin, a ski coach at Lake Songhua Resort.

“It was a total surprise that the children’s trip went viral on the internet. They received a lot of love and attention, and we are deeply moved,” said a parent of a child in the tour group. — Xinhua

Greece reopens ancient palace where Alexander the Great was crowned



This photo taken on 5 January 2024 shows a view of the site of a palace of the ancient kingdom of Macedonia at the archaeological site of Aigai in Vergina, Greece. PHOTO: DIMITRIS TOSIDIS/XINHUA

GREECE is ready to reopen on Saturday a palace of the ancient kingdom of Macedonia where Alexander the Great (356 B.C.-323 BC) was declared king.

Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis inaugu-

rated the restored palace in the northern Greek city of Vergina on Friday. The site has been under restoration over the past 16 years.

The palace, named after Philip II, father of Alexander the Great, is the centrepiece at

the archaeological site of Aigai.

Mitsotakis expressed hope that the restored palace will draw more visitors to Aigai, which served as the capital of the ancient kingdom of Macedonia and was awarded UNESCO World Heritage Site status. The archaeological site of Aigai was the largest building in classical Greece, covering nearly 15,000 square meters.

The palace was destroyed in the 2nd century BC, after the definitive destruction of the kingdom by the Romans. Over the centuries, most of its building materials have been looted. The remains of the stones were revealed through the excavations that began in the 19th century.

The 20.3-million-euro (22.22 million US dollars) restoration project was funded by the European Union, Greek national news agency AMNA reported. — Xinhua

Summernats car festival draws record crowd in Australian capital

AUTHORITIES have celebrated a successful edition of Australia’s biggest motoring festival despite safety concerns following a crowd brawl.

Organizers of Summernats, Australia’s biggest celebration of horsepower, on Sunday announced a record sell-out crowd of 130,000 people attended the 36th edition of the four-day festival at Exhibition Park in Canberra (EPIC), beating the previous record crowd of 125,000 set in 2023.

Attendees at the festival saw 2,500 cars from Australia and New Zealand displayed as well as competitive driving events, music and exhibition and trade shows.

A 1968 Dodge Charger belonging to Queensland-based collector Joe Bauer was on Sunday named the Summernats 36 Grand Champion, which recognizes modified car excellence,

and Victoria’s Andrew Lynch won Summernats Burnout Masters for the first time.

However, the event was marred by a large crowd brawl on Saturday. Videos of the altercation published on social media show a large group of men, some of whom were wearing vests marked “crowd safety”, clashing.

Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Policing made no arrests in relation to the brawl but said it was investigating.

In a statement on Sunday, Summernats organizers said they, along with security contractor Red Dawn, have launched an investigation into an incident involving patrons and security staff.

“Summernats and Red Dawn take their responsibilities for the safety and security of everyone at the event very seriously,” the statement said. — Xinhua

ECONOMY WORLD

Direct air route linking China's Dalian, Japan's Kitakyushu resumed

A direct air route linking Dalian, a city in northeast China, and Japan's Kitakyushu was resumed on Monday, after a hiatus of almost four years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tianjin Airlines, the operator of the air route, is scheduled to carry out flights on Mondays and Fridays, starting from Monday.

The air route was launched in August 2019 and was sus-

pending in February 2020.

This year marks the 45th anniversary of the establishment of a sister city relationship between Dalian and Kitakyushu. The resumption of the air route will help strengthen personnel, economic and trade exchanges between northeast China and Kitakyushu, according to sources with the Dalian international airport. — Xinhua



People buy freshly harvested strawberries at a market in Qalyubia Governorate, Egypt, 6 January 2024. PHOTO: XINHUA



Staff members prepare for a copper hot pot banquet in Wenshan Zhuang and Miao Autonomous Prefecture, southwest China's Yunnan Province, 6 January 2024. Yunnan has attracted legions of tourists this winter due to its mild climate. PHOTO: XINHUA

Libya's 2023 oil revenues reach 23.3 bln USD

THE Central Bank of Libya said Sunday that the country's oil revenues in 2023 were 111.4 billion Libyan dinars (about 23.3 billion US dollars).

The central bank said of the total oil revenues, 99.1 billion dinars were oil sales and 12.3 billion dinars were

oil royalties revenues.

The country's total public revenues in 2023 were 125.9 billion dinars, while expenditures were 125.7 billion dinars, it added.

In 2022, the country's revenues were 134.4 billion dinars, while expenditures

were 127.9 billion dinars.

Despite representing a major source of national revenues, Libya's oil and gas sector has suffered over the past years from armed conflict as well as oil field and port closures. — Xinhua

China still has favourable conditions to attract foreign investment: official

CHINA still boasts favourable conditions to attract foreign investment, an official with the country's Ministry of Commerce told the China Economic Roundtable hosted by Xinhua News Agency.

Noting that China was estimated to contribute around one-third of the global growth and remain the biggest engine of global economic development in 2023, Zhu Bing, director of the commerce ministry's department of foreign investment administration, stated that the fundamentals of China's sound economic development remained constant in the long run.

Zhu added that multinationals value the Chinese market's massive scale, innovative competitiveness, and attractiveness of global innovation factor resources.

From January to November 2023, China's high-tech industries attracted investment of 386.65 billion yuan (about 54.45 billion US dollars), accounting for 37.2 per cent of total foreign direct investment volume. During the period, the number of new foreign-invested firms in China increased by 36.2 per cent year-on-year.

The data reflects the effectiveness of a series of policies issued by the government, such

as the Catalogue of Encouraged Industries for Foreign Investment, support on the development of foreign-funded research and development centres, and expansion of foreign investment in the manufacturing sector.

At the annual Central Economic Work Conference held last month, the country also pledged to expand high-level opening up and reinforce the stable performance in foreign trade and foreign investment.

Looking ahead, Zhu noted that more efforts will be made to ease market access. For example, the ministry will work hard to eliminate all restrictions for foreign investors entering the manufacturing industry, intensify stress tests on opening up in pilot free trade zones, and deepen opening up in the service sector.

Zhu said that China has extended its preferential tax policies for foreign nationals working in the country till the end of 2027, which gives a stable expectation for foreign investors.

The ministry will also step up efforts to go abroad to introduce investment opportunities in China, improve the working mechanism, and provide more support for local governments to attract foreign investment, Zhu added. — Xinhua

Laos aims to transform economy to be more resilient

GENERAL Secretary of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party Central Committee and Lao President Thongloun Sisoulith has vowed to transform the economy by guiding it towards independence and Lao ownership, so as to make it more resilient.

Lao Economic Daily on Monday quoted Lao President Thongloun saying at a nationwide meeting of the finance sector 2023, "From now on, the Party Central Committee and the Politburo will quickly devise policies to transform our country, in particular the economic system, from the current overwhelmingly dependent situation to a system based on independence and Lao ownership of the economy."

The move comes as the economy is heavily dependent on external factors, such as heavy reliance on imports for domestic consumption, which causes economic fragility and exposes the country to external shocks and disruption, according to the report.

At the meeting held in the Lao capital Vientiane on 19 December 2023,

President Thongloun laid down the concept of an independent and Lao-owned economy for economists, researchers, scholars and various institutions to consider, analyze and shape this economic model that better suits Laos' circumstances.

Giving guidance on the proposed economic model, the president said an independent and Lao-owned economy does not mean that Laos has to produce and manufacture everything. Rather, the concept aims to reduce Laos' heavy dependence by making the most effective use of the country's natural resources and other areas of potential, so that more Lao people are involved in the process.

Lao President Thongloun stressed the need to commercialize and capitalize on natural resources sustainably and to export products to a broader global market. Foreign capital, know-how and technology should also be encouraged to commercialize natural resources, while value must be added to these products to maximize the benefits. — Xinhua

Cambodia earns 4.3 bln USD from export of agricultural produce in 2023

CAMBODIA made the gross revenue of 4.3 billion US dollars from the export of agricultural produce in 2023, said a Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) report on Monday.

The Southeast Asian country shipped almost 8.45 million tons of agricultural produce to about 75 countries and regions during the January-December period last year, a year-on-year decrease of 1.9 per cent, the report said.

Key agricultural items for exports included rice, rubber, cassava, mangoes, fresh bananas, pepper, cashew nuts, longan, corn, and palm oil, among others.



Workers slice ripe mangoes at the Zhong Bao (Cambodia) Food Science & Technology Co., Ltd in Kampong Speu province, Cambodia on 7 March 2023. PHOTO: XINHUA

China, Viet Nam and Thailand are the major importers of Cambodia's agricultural items.

Cambodian Ministry

of Commerce's Secretary of State and Spokesperson Penn Sovicheat said China is a huge market for Cambodia, especially for

its potential agricultural produce such as milled rice, yellow bananas, mangoes, longans, and pepper, among others. — Xinhua

S Korea's overseas construction orders rise for 2nd year in 2023

SOUTH Korea's overseas construction orders rose for the second straight year in 2023, due to solid demand from the Middle East and North America, government data showed Monday.

Construction orders, won by local builders from

abroad, amounted to 33.31 billion US dollars in 2023, up from 30.98 billion dollars in 2022 and 30.58 billion dollars in 2021 each, according to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport.

Orders from the Middle East grew to 11.43 bil-

lion dollars in 2023 from 9.02 billion dollars in the previous year, while those from North America and the Pacific region surged from 4.54 billion dollars to 10.31 billion dollars.

Orders from Asia divided from 12.21 billion dollars to 6.79 billion dol-

lars in the cited period, while orders from Europe retreated from 3.41 billion dollars to 2.1 billion dollars.

Overseas orders to build industrial facility ranked first with 15.78 billion dollars last year, accounting for 47.4 per cent of the total. — Xinhua

Viet Nam's rice export hits all-time high in 2023

VIET Nam's rice export volume and prices hit an all-time high of 8.3 million tons and 4.78 billion US dollars in 2023, Vietnam News Agency reported Monday, citing the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

According to the ministry, Viet Nam's export prices averaged 663 dollars per ton as a result of high demand.

The total rice output in the country increased

1.9 per cent to 43.5 million tons thanks to increasing farming areas and productivity, meeting both domestic demand and export, said the ministry.

Rice exporters said as global supply is still low, demand for Vietnamese rice will surge in 2024, especially from the Philippines and China.

Viet Nam targets producing 43-43.5 million tons of rice in 2024. — Xinhua

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V BLPL FAITH VOY.NO. (3401S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V BLPL FAITH VOY.NO. (3401S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **8-1-2024** 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.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S BLPL SHIPPING LINE

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V UNI-ACTIVE VOY.NO. (0312-761N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V UNI-ACTIVE VOY.NO. (0312-761N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **9-1-2024** 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.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S EVERGREEN MARINE (ASIA) PTE.LTD.

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

BRICS expansion boosts global economic balance, Global South development: Egyptian expert

THE historic expansion of BRICS to include five new members helps create a more balanced global economy and push for further development of the Global South, an Egyptian economist has told Xinhua in a recent interview.

Diaa Helmy, a member of the Economic Committee of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs, said that the BRICS expansion “opens new markets for economic cooperation and trade exchange between the countries of the group, which is in the interest of South-South cooperation among emerging markets and developing countries”.

Originally comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, the BRICS group welcomed Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates as new members during the bloc’s summit in August 2023. Their membership has



A worker arranges a signboard of the 15th BRICS summit outside the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg, South Africa, 17 August 2023. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

taken effect since 1 January.

With the new members, BRICS would also contribute to counterbalancing the Western hegemony in the global econ-

omy, said Helmy, also secretary-general of the Cairo-based Egyptian-Chinese Chamber of Commerce.

“The BRICS bloc helps cre-

ate a global economic balance, which would promote international economic justice, and remove barriers to the sustainable development of some countries,”

said the Egyptian expert.

Calling BRICS “a moderate and balanced group”, Helmy commended its efforts to seek win-win cooperation for a shared future.

“This is the philosophy of BRICS and its founding members,” he said, adding that he expected more countries to apply for BRICS membership in the future.

The BRICS expansion, which indicates a growing global awareness of the dominance of a few rich nations in the international affairs, has also raised the hope of emerging economies to reform the global governance system where the Global South is underrepresented, Helmy said.

“The US control over international economic decisions leads to the suffering of other countries, especially countries of the Global South,” the expert said. — Xinhua

California law banning guns in public once again blocked

A recent California law prohibiting the possession of guns in most public spaces has faced another setback following a ruling from a US appeals court.

The law, signed by California Governor Gavin Newsom in September last year, had been in effect for only five days since 1 January before a US appeals court halted it on Saturday.

The law was first blocked last month after US District Judge Cormac Carney issued a temporary injunction.

Carney ruled on 20 December that the law violated the Second Amendment of the US Constitution which protects the right to keep and bear arms, saying the law would “unconstitutionally deprive” concealed carry permit holders of “their constitutional right to carry a handgun in public for self-defence”.

Carney’s ruling was subsequently paused on 30 December by a panel of the US Ninth

Circuit Court of Appeals that determined more time was needed by the court to consider the constitutionality of the law.

That pause was however “dissolved” on Saturday by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, which indicated arguments in the case will be heard in April, reinstating the district judge’s ruling blocking the law.

Newsom’s office slammed the appeals court’s new ruling as a “dangerous decision” that “puts the lives of Californians on the line,” and vowed to not stop working to “defend our decades of progress on gun safety in our state”.

The new state law prohibits people from carrying concealed guns in 26 categories with various locations, including hospitals, playgrounds, public transportation, stadiums, amusement parks and museums.

The ban is applicable regardless of whether an individ-

ual possesses a concealed carry permit. An exemption exists for privately owned businesses that display signs permitting the presence of firearms on their premises.

Gun rights organizations have been opposing the law, including the California Rifle and Pistol Association, which brought the case to court.

California has a reputation as a tough place to buy a gun. Its gun laws have been ranked the strongest in the nation by the gun-control advocacy group Giffords.

Upon signing the legislation in September, Newsom endorsed several gun control measures, which encompassed the implementation of micro-stamping on gun cartridges to aid in crime tracing. Additionally, there was an initiative to allocate funds from bullet sales toward enhancing gun violence intervention programs and school safety. — Xinhua

Renewed flooding displaces over 8,000 in Malaysia

FLOODING has displaced 8,563 people in Malaysia as of 6 pm local time on Monday, with Johor state being the worst hit.

According to the country’s social welfare department, 7,153 have been displaced in Johor state, while another 1,410 have been displaced in Pahang state with the victims being housed in

77 flood relief centres.

The meteorological department has issued warnings of heavy rains due to the northeast monsoon, which typically lasts from October to March, with strong winds and rough seas expected in northern states and the east coast of the Southeast Asian country. — Xinhua



A warning sign of floods is seen in Frankfurt, Germany, 7 January 2024. Some areas in Frankfurt were flooded due to continuous rainfall and rising water level of the Main River. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

SPORTS

Juventus edge Salernitana on Vlahovic's late winner

DUSAN Vlahovic took the centre stage as his winner deep into the stoppage time helped Juventus get the better of 10-man Salernitana 2-1 in Serie A on Sunday.

Juve just came off a 6-1 comeback win over Salernitana in the Coppa Italia on Thursday, but found themselves on the back foot again in the 39th minute when Giulio Maggiore broke the deadlock with a left-footed curler.

However, Maggiore went from hero to zero in the 53rd minute as the 25-year-old saw red for another bookable defence.

The Bianconeri got back on level terms in the 65th minute

when Timothy Weah pulled back for Vlahovic's fresh-air shot, but it made its way through for Samuel Iling Junior to blast into the net.

Juve grabbed the winner in the dying minutes when Danilo's floated pass found Vlahovic for a twisting header.

With the win, Juve still rank second on 46 points, keeping the pressure on leaders Inter Milan.

Elsewhere, AC Milan registered their third consecutive win on all fronts as they sailed away with a 3-0 victory over Empoli.

The Rossoneri put their nose ahead in the 11th minute when Rafael Leao collected the ball on the left side and out-



FC Juventus players celebrate at the end of the Italian Serie A football match between Salernitana and FC Juventus in Salerno, Italy, 7 January 2024. PHOTO: XINHUA

paced the defender before assisting for Ruben Loftus-Cheek to hit in a first-time strike.

The home side made it 2-0 in the 31st minute as Olivier Giroud converted a penalty, before Christian Pulisic's sensational run drew the defenders, allow-

ing Chaka Traore to grab his first Serie A goal.

Also on Sunday, Napoli's woes continued as they fell to Torino 3-0. Antonio Sanabria put the home side in charge in the first-half, Napoli's new arrival Pasquale Mazzocchi had an aw-

ful debut as he saw red just five minutes after coming off the bench, before Nikola Vlasic and Alessandro Buongiorno completed the scoresheet.

In other fixtures, Roma tied with Atalanta 1-1, Lazio beat Udinese 2-1 away. — Xinhua



A fan walks past the poster in tribute to Brazilian football legend Mario Zagallo at the museum of the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF), in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 7 January 2024. Mario Zagallo died on 5 January at the age of 92. PHOTO: XINHUA

Matildas captain Kerr suffers devastating knee injury

TONY Gustavsson, head coach of Australia's national women's football team, on Monday described a serious knee injury for captain Sam Kerr as devastating.

Kerr's club side, English giants Chelsea, on Sunday announced that superstar striker Kerr sustained a torn anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) dur-

ing a warm weather training camp in Morocco.

The injury, which typically has a recovery time of between nine and 12 months, means the 30-year-old Kerr will likely miss the 2024 Paris Olympics if the Matildas beat Uzbekistan over two legs in February to qualify for the major tournament.

Acknowledging the inju-

ry in a statement on Monday, Gustavsson said it was a devastating blow for the national team's aspirations in 2024.

"With her ability to lead by example, Sam's guidance and influence on the team is significant and, as a result, this will be an incredible loss for the national team," he said. — Xinhua

Barca struggle but get through as top-flight sides do well in Copa del Rey

FC Barcelona qualified for the last-16 of the Copa del Rey on Sunday, but once again failed to convince as they narrowly defeated RFEF II (fourth tier) Barbastro 3-2.

A strong Barca side led 2-0 through goals from Fermin Lopez and Raphinha after 18 and 51 minutes, but Adria de Mesa allowed the Barbastro to dream with his 60th minute goal.

It wasn't until Robert Lewandowski scored from the penalty spot two minutes from time that Barca sealed the win and there was still time for Marc Prat to net a second for the home side from the penalty spot deep into injury time.

Celta won an entertaining game 4-2 away to second division Amorebieta on a rain-soaked pitch, with two goals from Anastasios Douvikas tilting the game Celta's way after they had trailed 2-1 at halftime.

Mallorca had fewer problems as they enjoyed a 3-0 win over Burgos with Giovanni Gonzalez, Cyle Larin and Ab-

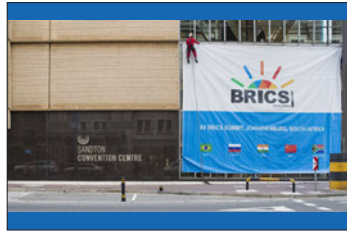
don Prats all scoring in the last half-hour of the game.

Sevilla needed an 87th minute goal from Juanlu to get past Racing Ferrol after Fran Manzanara had cancelled out Marcao's opener for Sevilla, although Manzanara spoiled his afternoon by getting sent off in the 75th minute.

Asier Villalibre scored twice as Athletic Club Bilbao won 3-0 away to Eibar, with Iker Muniain also scoring in a game the side that is currently fourth in La Liga wrapped up in the first 45 minutes.

Real Sociedad had to dig deep to beat RFEF I (third tier) Malaga 1-0, thanks to an own goal from Einar Galilea, who headed into his own net under pressure from Haimar Zubeldia.

Osasuna needed a goal to avoid a penalty shoot-out away to third tier Castellon, with Jose Arnaiz putting last season's beaten finalists into the last-16, and Valencia also fought hard to get past second division strugglers Cartagena. — Xinhua



Israel's army chief says Gaza conflict to continue throughout 2024

ISRAEL'S military chief said on Sunday that the conflict in Gaza, persisting for three months already, would likely last throughout 2024 and spill over to other fronts.

Herzi Halevi, the chief of staff of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF), made the remarks during a visit to the West Bank, a Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967.

Halevi said 2024 would be "challenging" and that Israel would "certainly be involved in fighting in Gaza throughout the year", implying that the current full-scale conflict with Hamas, the Palestinian faction that rules Gaza, could ease but not end.

He also warned of a possible flare-up in violence "on other fronts, especially the West Bank", where tensions have risen since the start of the ongoing conflict in Gaza, which started on 7 October 2023, following a surprise attack from Hamas.

Halevi also said the IDF would increase "the pressure it exerts" on Israel's northern border with Lebanon, where it has traded fire with Hezbollah,



Rescue work is underway after Israeli attacks in the southern Gaza Strip city of Rafah, on 7 January 2024. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

lah, a Shi'ite militant group, in recent months.

"Hezbollah has decided to join this war. We are increasingly exacting a toll on them," he said, adding that the army had "a responsibility, a duty, to securely return northern residents to their homes".

The Palestinian death toll from the ongoing Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip rose to 22,835, and the injuries have reached 58,416, the Gaza-based Health Ministry said Sunday. Additionally, around 1,200 people in Israel have lost their lives due to the Hamas attack. — Xinhua



This file photo taken on 15 December 2023 shows European Council President Charles Michel speaking at a press conference during the European Council meeting in Brussels, Belgium. European Council President Charles Michel has informed Belgian media of his decision to run for the election of the Member of European Parliament (MEP) in June, leading to his early departure from the Council presidency in July. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

European Council President Charles Michel announces early quit

EUROPEAN Council President Charles Michel has informed Belgian media of his decision to run for the election of the Member of European Parliament (MEP) in June, leading to his early departure from the Council presidency in July.

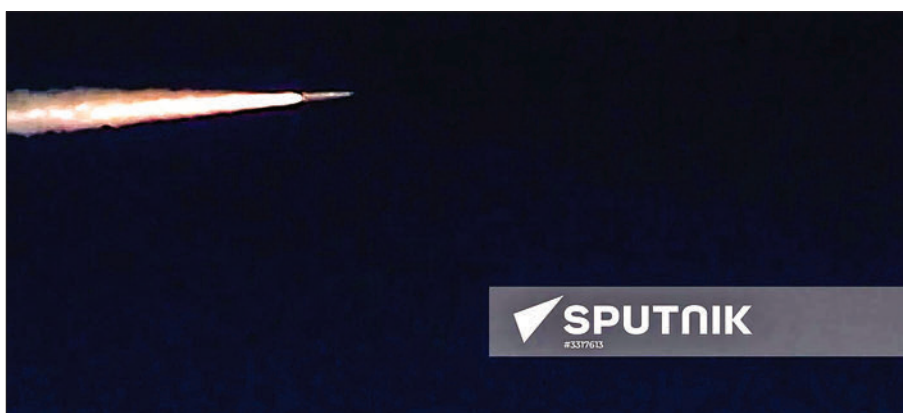
Reflecting on his four-year term as a European leader, Michel said, "It's my responsibility to give an account of my work these past years and to propose a project for Europe's future."

While Michel's current mandate concludes in November, the European Parliament elections are slated for June. He is expected to lead the list of the liberal Reformist Movement party, of which he is a former leader, in the European Parliament elections.

"That means I would continue my work as European Council president until being sworn in as an MEP on 16 July," he stated.

Michel has served as the president of the European Council, the group of government leaders of the 27 European Union (EU) member states, since late 2019. Prior to his EU responsibilities, he served as the Prime Minister of Belgium. — Xinhua

Russia strikes Ukrainian military facilities with Kinzhal missiles – MoD



The crew of the Russian Aerospace Forces MiG-31 have conducted simulated firing of Kinzhal hypersonic aeroballistic missile with a small radar signature and high maneuverability. **PHOTO: SPUTNIK**

RUSSIA dramatically ramped up missile strikes targeting Ukraine's energy and military infrastructure in late December, attacking ammunition and fuel depots, airfields, military HQs, and other pertinent targets.

Russia has launched a new round of strikes against Ukrainian military targets, including military production facilities and a decision-making centre, using Kinzhal missiles and other precision weapons, the Ministry of Defence

has announced.

The operation included missile, artillery and drone attacks against Ukrainian forces in 108 separate areas and against 113 artillery units and firing positions. They included a strike on a facility known to be used as a meeting place by commanders of Ukraine's 101st Territorial Defence Brigade.

The MoD's report follows reports by Ukrainian media Monday morning of air raid sirens and explosions in Kharkov,

Dnepropetrovsk, Khmelnytsky, Krivoy Rog and other cities and regions. Ukrainian Armed Forces Commander-in-Chief Valery Zaluzhny confirmed that Russian strikes had hit infrastructure, industrial and military facilities, but did not elaborate on the targets.

Russia dramatically ramped up its strikes against Ukrainian energy infrastructure, military bases, military production facilities, and decision-making centres last month, in the wake of Ukrainian attacks on Russian Black Sea Fleet assets using NATO-provided naval and aerial drones. Kiev responded with terror bombings against cities and settlements in the Donbass and Belgorod, with Moscow firing back with further attacks on targets in Ukrainian rear areas.

Russia first began targeting Ukrainian energy, defence sector, command and communications infrastructure in October 2022 after a Ukrainian attack on the Crimean Bridge, but the military has sought to avoid targeting residential buildings or social infrastructure. — Sputnik