

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

Education soars with unified efforts of students, teachers, parents, and administrative bodies

SENIOR General Min Aung Hlaing stressed that administrative bodies, security organizations, town elders, students, teachers and parents must collaborate to successfully complete all basic education school examinations. Chairman of the State Adminis-

tration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing highlighted administration, development, economic, agriculture, manufacturing, rule of law, and education sectors at the Union government meeting 1/2024 at the SAC Chairman Office in Nay Pyi Taw yes-

terday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Senior General highlighted that authorities in regions and states have to emphasize successfully holding the basic education school examinations in February and March in cooperation with security

personnel and residents. Although saboteurs commit destructive acts against the education sector without empathy and rationality, he added that the government and the people have to improve the education sector through strenuous efforts.

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Trucks seen incoming and outgoing in the Lweje border trade post. Officials conduct a routine inspection of export cargoes on the Myanmar-China border.

Daily export of goods transported to China with over 800 trucks via Kampaiti

Exports increased as demands from China climbed in the third week of January.

ACCORDING to the person responsible for the Lweje border trade post of the Department of Trade under the Ministry of Commerce, U Myint Zaw Moe, the Myanmar-China border trade through Kampaiti in Kachin State transports export cargoes with over 800 trucks daily.

Exporting through the Lweje border trade post from Kachin State trends upward as demands from China on local products of Kachin State and commodities

from other regions such as watermelon, mango, rice, chilli, onion, dried fish, and corn increase.

U Myint Zaw Moe said, "Export to China is the main business via the Lweje trade post. Over 800 trucks are running up and down between Lweje and China daily. Up to the second week of January, over 700 trucks were coming and going every day. Starting from the third week of January, daily operating trucks reached over 800 per day as demand increases."

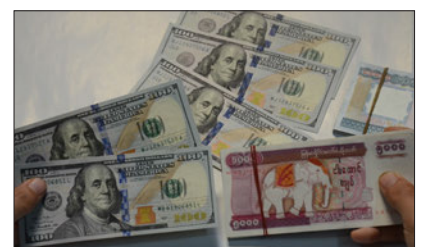
Tissue-cultured bananas, pigeon peas, red kidney beans, cashew, rice, sugarcane, rattan, rubber and butter beans are mainly exported through Lweje, while electronic devices, pharmaceutical products, vehicle-related products, and foodstuffs are imported. The Lweje border post is located 56 miles and four furlongs from Bhamo Township, Kachin State, and territorially connects with Laying village, Jingpo autonomous prefecture in Longchuan County of China. — ASH/TMT

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Myanmar delegation attends AICHR-EU dialogue on disinformation & misinformation in Singapore

BUSINESS PAGE-7



CBM boosts liquidity to stabilize financial markets amid surging US dollar

NATIONAL PAGE-10



Hlawga picnickers embrace popularity of stand-up paddleboarding

NATIONAL

National Objectives of 77th Union Day 2024

- 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 the rule 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
- To strive to emerge a modern and developing country, as well as a Union based on democratic and federal systems, by all ethnic nationals

Mottos of 77th Union Day 2024

1. Unity is strength
Power of Union
2. Drifting in one boat, on the same voyage we float
Ethnic brethren of the land joining hand in hand
3. Marching towards with unity
Ensuring the destination of the Union
4. Let's firmly join hands among ethnic national brethren of the Union
5. Let's go forward with unity of the ethnic nationals

Myanmar Gazette

Appointment of Head of Service Organization confirmed

THE State Administration Council has confirmed the appointment of Daw Nwe Ni Tun as Director-General of the Foreign Exchange Management Department of the Central Bank of Myanmar after the one-year probationary period.



Devotees and pilgrims embrace the serenity at the Alodawpyae Pagoda.

Four Buddha images in Alodawpyae Pagoda calm visitors' hearts

VISITORS can pay homage to the four Buddha images and view the paintings about the Buddha interior wall of the Alodawpyae Pagoda of Bagan, NyaungU Township, Mandalay Region, according to the officials of the Department of Archeology and National Museum (Bagan Branch).

Alodawpyae Pagoda is located north of Anawrahta Road, the main road from NyaungU to Bagan.

The pagoda is a temple with its arch facing east, and visitors can enter from the east arch of the pagoda and see a sitting statue of the Buddha.

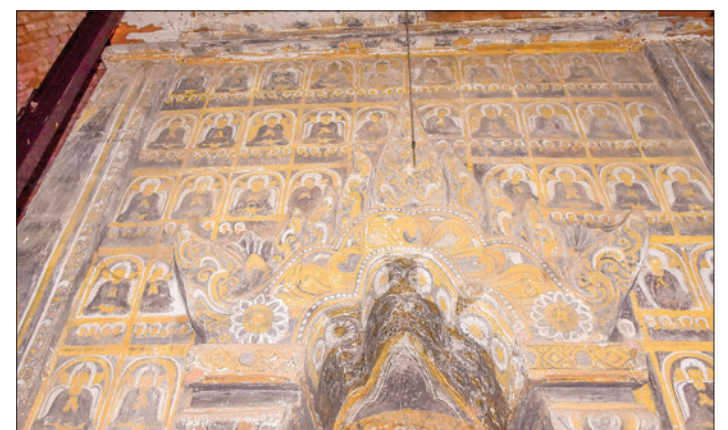
Inside the temple, there are mural paintings with inscriptions written in the ancient Mon language, and archaeologists believe that the

architecture of the building can be related to late King Kyansittha era and the beginning of the reign of the King of Alaungsithu. Inside the temple, a Myanmar ink inscription dating back to 556 Myanmar Era can also be found on the wall.

On the interior of the temple, there are 28 Buddha images with various mudras and

postures, as well as ancient Mon inscriptions.

Hteelominlo Pagoda and Shweleiktu Pagoda are located north of the Alodawpyae Pagoda while to the east is Shin Boh Mei brick monastery, Wuttanataw Cluster of Pagodas, to the south is Bueleithi Pagoda and to the west is Lawkahmankin Pagoda. — Depalin/KZL



COVID-19 report, 29 January 2024

NEW TESTS 16,269

NEW CASES 73

CASUALTIES NIL

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NATIONAL

Education soars with unified efforts of students, ...



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing addresses the Union government meeting 1/2024 yesterday.

FROM PAGE-1

However, basic education schools, universities and colleges cannot be re-opened in Kayah, Chin, Shan (North), Rakhine states, and Sagaing Region due to regional situations, armed terrorism and intimidation.

With regard to the administrative issue, the Senior General said that the government, in its term, strived to ensure equal development in all regions and

states as much as it could.

The Union government is implementing the road map and objectives while assisting authorities of regions and states in their development tasks. From 2021 to 2023, he recounted that the country unavoidably encountered political unrest and violent acts, attacks, and outbreaks of Covid-19. He added that if the government did not face unconstructive responses from the international commu-

nity, the country would have greater progress than now.

The Senior General outlined that it is necessary to successfully carry out the tasks that are actually beneficial for the State, especially emphasizing security, education, health, and transport sectors.

He stressed the need to upgrade defence capability for improvement of State capability. So, it is necessary to provide equipment and accessories to Tatmadaw and the Myanmar Police Force.

The Senior General disclosed that the State economy attained 3.4 per cent progress despite political problems and economic sanctions in the 2022-23 financial year as well as 3.3 per cent development till Decembers in 2023-24 FY. In this regard, he added that all regions and states have achieved success except for Kachin, Kayah and Rakhine states.

The government is responsible for creating deserved economic opportunities for the

nation. In the domestic consumption measures, the Senior General highlighted that products must be manufactured with the least cost and sold at prices with a narrow margin.

He stressed that seeking a solution to the lack of target production and lesser per-acre yield of agricultural produce is necessary. If all crops meet target production, the volume of products will increase, and incomes will rise. As such, he added that efforts must be made to boost production to have greater progress in the State economy.

The country faces trade deficiency yearly as well as weaker production than regional countries. If agricultural and livestock breeding sectors meet the target production, the State economy will be boosted. The Senior General noted that although the government has allocated capital to businesspersons from the State economic promotion fund, achieving success is still less likely for various reasons.

The Senior General underscored that implementation of the rule of law measures has many weaknesses, adding that carrying out correct acts in forging rule of law and administration without bias is necessary.

Union Ministers reported on respective measures.

In conclusion, the Senior General gave guidance that relevant ministries have to operate cement plants at full capacity in the country to ensure cement sufficiency at home. He urged officials to lure businesspersons into investing in the iron and steel industries. He emphasized that efforts must be made to implement the State electricity projects as well as generate small-scale electricity in regions and states through renewable energy such as hydropower, wind power, and solar energy.

The meeting was also attended by SAC Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Union ministers and officials. — MNA/TTA

Salient points from the speech of the Senior General at the Union government meeting 1/2024

- Authorities have to emphasize the successful holding of the basic education school examinations in February and March.
- The government strived to ensure equal development in all regions and states as much as possible.
- If the government had not faced unconstructive responses from the international community, the country would have made greater progress than now.
- Electricity projects of the State as well as generating small-scale electricity in regions and states must be implemented through renewable energy.

Daily newspapers available online

FOR those who would like to read the Myanmar Alinn, the Kyemon and the Global New Light of Myanmar, published daily by the Ministry of Information, please visit www.moi.gov.mm/mal, www.moi.gov.mm/km, www.moi.gov.mm/nlm and www.gnlm.com.mm/e-paper.

NATIONAL

Myanmar delegation attends AICHR-EU dialogue on disinformation & misinformation in Singapore

THE Myanmar delegation consisting of Myanmar Minister to Singapore/charge d'affaires ad interim U Zaw Zaw Soe, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Information U Myint Kyaw, Deputy Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Man Hauk Thang and Chairman of the Myanmar Press Council U Ohn Maung (aka) Myinmu Maung Naing Moe attended the meeting between the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights and the European Union regarding disinformation and misinformation held at JEN Singapore Tanglin by Shangri-La in Singapore yesterday.

At the meeting, Minister of Communications and Information of Singapore Mr Tan Kiat How gave an opening speech, and Singaporean in-charge to AICHR Dr Shashi Jayakumar and EU Ambassador to ASEAN Mr Sujiro Seam extended words of greeting.

The discussion was divided into four parts, and officials discussed the impacts of misinformation and disinformation on society, approaches to handle and control fake news, challenges and ways to solve the difficulties due to the fake news in Southeast Asian countries and European countries, different perspectives in combatting fake news through various



The ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights and the European Union dialogue on disinformation & misinformation in progress yesterday.

means and disseminating of accurate information to be done not only by the individual country but also every country of the region and the world in the future. — MNA/KTZH

Counter-argument to false information

Misinformation alert: False news by subversive media outlet Khit Thit

MALICIOUS Khit Thit Media is circulating false information on social media platforms, claiming that Tatmadaw is using chemical fumes in attacks on residential wards in Yanbye, Rakhine State.

Tatmadaw engaged with AA insurgents with supporting fire of heavy weapon and airstrikes, resulting in heavy casualties. The insurgents, feeling defeated, spread misinformation through the malicious media to deflect from their defeat, falsely accusing the Tatmadaw of using chemical fumes. Tatmadaw has repeatedly stated that it never employs poison gas in any clashes.

Similarly, the subversive media outlet Khit Thit spread fake news alleging that four civilians died and seven were wounded due to heavy weapons fired by Tatmadaw in MraukU Township, Rakhine State, on 27 January.

In reality, AA insurgents committed a drone attack, dropping bombs on residential houses in MraukU on 27 January, resulting in explosions

and fires that left casualties.

Therefore, the malicious news outlet Khit Thit spreads misinformation and fake news daily on social media platforms, intentionally causing misunderstanding between Tatmadaw and the people. — MNA/TKO



Screenshot validates misinformation.

Fake news spread to smear Tatmadaw, security forces

THE malicious media outlets intentionally spread the fake news online, claiming that Tatmadaw torched two villages, Thaminchan and Thahtaygon, and arrested four locals in Madaya township of Mandalay Region on 28 January.

Regarding that news, the locals and a security official affirmed that Tatmadaw conducted security measures after receiving the tip-off that PDFs were hiding and doing destructive elements in these two villages, and a clash occurred. Terrorists torched the houses and retreated.

Similarly, the false news was spreading on social media, saying that Tatmadaw com-

mitted an arson attack on Kyu village in Yesagyto township on the same day.

A dutiful resident informed the security forces that the PDF terrorists entered the Sinma village to recruit and ask for money forcibly. Therefore, the security forces conducted security measures, and an armed engagement occurred. The terrorists torched the houses and ran away.

Tatmadaw protects the lives and property of locals while serving duties for state stability and the rule of law. The malicious media outlets intentionally cover such fake information to affect the State's stability. — MNA/KTZH



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

NATIONAL

Awareness Workshop on Anti-Money Laundering held

THE Anti-Corruption Commission office held an awareness workshop on Anti-Money Laundering related to corruption in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

At the event, Chairman U Sis Aye stated in his opening speech that this is the second workshop in which the commission has collaborated with the Financial Intelligence Unit. Money laundering (ML) involves violating any action on Proceeds of Crime (POC) and transferring, concealing and converting the origin, appearance, location and ownership of funds to make them seem like white money. Money laundering cannot be committed directly; it involves laundering proceeds of crime obtained by committing an original offence. As law enforcement organizations take action against the original crime, they need to verify whether money laundering has occurred. This necessitates conducting a financial investigation. If there is an investigation



The Anti-Money Laundering Awareness Workshop in progress yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

related to corruption, a financial investigation should be performed in parallel, regardless of whether money laundering is suspected or not. Enacting laws and procedures to enhance financial investigations when dealing with corruption cases is crucial.

The adverse effects out-

weigh the actual financial losses incurred due to money laundering. In modern times, technological advancements have made crime cases more complex and challenging to be solved. Providing necessary training to investigators is crucial for improving their work efficiency.

It is convinced that lectures

on AML delivered by experts from various ministries will support the enhancement of knowledge on AML for staff and officials from ACC. Then, FIU head Police Brig-Gen Myo Thu Soe gave a remark, saying that as Myanmar is a member of UNCAC, it is also vital to combat money launder-

ing in the implementation of the provisions of UNCAC, the cooperation between FIU and Anti-Corruption Commission will effectively fight corruption and money-laundering.

Police Lt-Col Myint Soe then discussed 40 recommendations of FATF (Financial Action Task Force), Myanmar's mutual assessment of AML/CFT member countries and technical compliance and effectiveness on 40 recommendations of FATF (Financial Action Task Force). Police Captain Win Naing Tun discussed methodologies of Anti-Money Laundering/Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT). Deputy Director U Thurain Aung addressed the issue of Parallel Investigation, and Commissioner U Kyaw Win Thein presented the results and recommendations derived from the discussions in the workshop. The workshop concluded after a questions and answers session. — MNA



The image captures a successful liver transplant surgery at No 1 Defence Services General Hospital.

Successful liver transplant operations continue at No 1 DSGH (1,000-bed)

ON the third day of the 5th liver transplant operation at the special care centre of the No 1 Defence Services General Hospital (1,000 bed) in Mingaladon Township, Yangon Region, the procedures continued yesterday.

Patient U Nyan Htun underwent a liver transplant from his wife, Daw Sandar Aung, during the operation. Surgeons harvested the liver from the donor at 8:30 am and transplanted it into the patient at 4 pm, completing the entire procedure in approx-

imately 11 hours.

Both the patient and the donor are reportedly in good health. Professors, medical experts, and nurses are providing attentive care for them in the intensive care unit.

Additionally, responsible officials from Tatmadaw offered comfort and support to the patients throughout the operation.

The two donors and two patients from the previous days are also reportedly doing well. — MNA/NT

YRTC completes 4 out of 8 planned YBS overnight parking zones in Yangon

THE Yangon Region Public Transport Committee (YRTC) has completed the construction of four out of eight planned parking areas for the overnight parking of YBS vehicles operating in Yangon, says the YRTC.

In addition to the seven YBS parking zones already constructed, another parking lot is being built on a 5-acre plot of land within the Thukha Dagon housing complex in Dagon Myothit (South) Township, allocated by the Department of Urban and Housing Development.

“Parking is essential. Seven areas have already been constructed. During the term of YRTC, we have completed four parking lots. One is still under construction. We plan

to build eight zones in total. We have car parks in Hline-thaya and taxi parking zones in North Okkalapa and Dagon Myothit (North) townships. We will build others in the Thukha Dagon housing complex, Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) and

South Okkalapa townships,” said a YRTC official.

The area of the YBS parking zones ranges from five to seven acres, and it can accommodate about 200 to 300 buses, depending on the location. — MT/ZN



The image showcases YBS buses parked at one of their designated overnight parking lots.

NATIONAL

Yangon Region govt initiates youth scouting & development programmes



The photo shows the opening ceremony of the summer scouting course for 2023-2024 academic year at BEHS (1) Pyay on 23 April 2013.

THE Yangon Region government has announced plans to launch youth scouting and development initiatives. On 28 January, the Yangon Region Youth Affairs Committee presented its proposal to the Myanmar Youth Committee for the implementation of scouting courses and youth development projects.

U Htay Aung, the Vice-Chairperson of the Yangon Region Youth Affairs Committee and the advocate-general of Yangon Region, outlined the proposed scouting projects. Following this, the head of Yangon Region Sports and Physical Education Department reported on the committee on youth development affairs,

while the deputy director-general from the Yangon Education Office explained the processes for conducting youth scouting courses.

Youth scouting encompasses various age groups. For boys, Cub Scouts are aged between 7 and 11, and Scouts are for those aged 12 to 15, catering to middle and high school students. Similarly, girls' scouting includes Blue Bird Scouts for primary school children aged 7 to 11, Girl Guides for middle and high school students, and Rover Scouts for those over 15. The tradition of female scouting in Myanmar dates back to 1916, with the establishment of scouting ranks in 1920. —TWA/TRKM



The photo depicts pilgrims and visitors at Kyaiktiyo Pagoda during the December holidays.

Kyaiktiyo Pagoda welcomes over 100,000 pilgrims in January

OVER 113,000 pilgrims from across the nation visited the Kyaiktiyo Pagoda in Mon State from 1 to 26 January, according to U Soe Hla, the chairman of the board of trustees.

The number of pilgrims from nationwide to Kyaiktiyo Pagoda reached 301,534 from October 2023 to January 2024.

“From November 2023 to January this year, 301,534

pilgrims visited the Kyaiktiyo Pagoda. On 20 and 21 January (Saturday and Sunday), 45,000 locals and foreigners came to Kyaiktiyo Pagoda,” U Soe Hla said.

Currently, over 250 hill-ascent buses operate daily, and all the lodges, guesthouses, free housing, and restaurants are open for the pilgrims.

The famous places along the Kyaiktiyo Pagoda moun-

tain, restaurants in the market square and souvenir shops are crowded with pilgrims, and many pilgrims are staying at free and paid accommodations.

Additionally, Kyaiktiyo Pagoda is open to the public year-round. It hosts the annual Buddha Pujaniya Festival from the full moon day of Thadingyut to the full moon day of Kason. —ASH/MKKS

NPTDC to auction 43 business licences for revenue collection, operating pawnshops

THE Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee has announced that 43 business licences for revenue collection and operating pawnshops will be auctioned in Nay Pyi Taw.

For the financial year 2024-2025, the committee's Revenue Department will auction 43 business licences off. These licences will cover various operations, including six revenue collection licences and 37 pawnshop licences.

The revenue collection licences encompass the collection of Nay Pyi Taw entrance fees in Tatkon, Dekkhinathiri, and Oattarathiri townships, vehicle excess weight fees in Oattarathiri township, entrance fees for the Bawgathiri High-



The general view of the Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee office.

way Bus Terminal (which also includes fees for using toilets and bathrooms). Additionally, there will be 37 pawnshop licences available across eight townships.

The auction for these business licences is scheduled for 25 February at the meeting hall

of the Markets Department under the committee. Interested parties must submit their applications by 13 February. Application forms, terms and conditions can be obtained from the Revenue Department of the committee during office hours. — TWA/TKO



An offshore natural gas project.

FDI trends in Myanmar: Energy sector leads with US\$374M

THE Directorate of Investment and Company Administration reported that during the nine months of the 2023-24 financial year, the energy sector emerged as the recipient of the highest foreign investment, attracting over US\$374 million.

Trailing closely behind were the manufacturing industry, which secured \$112 million, and the transport and communications sector, with an investment of \$77.8 million, between April and December 2023. In contrast,

the service sector saw the least investment, only \$0.809 million.

Overall, investments across seven sectors surpassed \$602 million during this timeframe. However, the country witnessed a significant drop in foreign investment last month, receiving only \$15 million. Myanmar's investment landscape comprises seven key sectors: agriculture, livestock and fishery, manufacturing, energy, transport and communications, real estate, and service. — TWA/NT

Border trade crosses US\$6.52 bln as of 19 January

Border trade achieves surplus as exports outpace imports.

MYANMAR'S border trade with the neighbouring countries amounted to US\$6.52 billion as of 19 January 2024 in the current financial year 2023-2024 beginning 1 April, comprising exports worth \$4.38 billion and imports valued at \$2.14 billion, said Daw Cho Thet Mu, deputy director of the Trade Policy Division of the Trade Department under the Ministry of Commerce.

"There is a trade surplus because of the lower import and

higher export," she elaborated.

Myanmar conducts border trade with China, Thailand, India and Bangladesh. It exports agricultural, forest, fisheries and other products, while consumer products, capital goods and intermediate goods are imported.

Myanmar aims to achieve a trade target of \$32.5 billion for the current FY 2023-2024, consisting of \$16.5 billion in exports and \$16 billion in imports. — ASH/KK



Trucks seen entering the Tachilek border checkpoint in eastern Shan State.

YGN palm oil wholesale reference price heads for second weekly high



Yangon residents procure affordable palm oil in local markets.

ACCORDING to the Supervisory Committee on Edible Oil Import and Distribution, the wholesale reference rate of palm oil for the Yangon market was set for the second consecutive weekly high.

The reference rate for the week ending 4 February 2023 was set higher at K5,380 per viss compared to K5,250 per viss registered last week (22-28 January) and K4,955 per viss for the week ending 21 January.

The figure reflected an increase of K105 per viss compared to the previous week.

The Supervisory Committee on Edible Oil Import and Distribution under the Ministry of Commerce has closely observed the FOB prices in

Malaysia and Indonesia, adding transport costs, tariffs and banking services to decide the weekly wholesale market reference rate for edible oil.

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

CBM boosts liquidity to stabilize financial markets amid surging US dollar

THE Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) injected significant liquidity into the financial market to steer the gaining US dollar in the unauthorized forex market.

The CBM sold US\$9 million on 29 January, \$5 million on 26 January, \$9 million on 25 January, \$15 million on 15 January, \$16 million on 5 January and \$12.93 million on 1 January, respectively, totalling \$66.93 million this month.

Nonetheless, the CBM has not revealed the exchange rate for those transactions. The CBM set the reference exchange rate at K2,100 in the past. In contrast, the kyat against the greenback weak-

ened, exceeding K3,500 at the over-the-counter market.

Additionally, the CBM injected \$22.15 million into the fuel oil sector last year, selling \$9.72 million on 18 December and \$12.43 million on 21 December for fuel oil importing companies.

The CBM allowed authorized dealers (private banks) to operate forex freely as per the market rate determined by the supply and demand market forces on 5 December 2023. Also, the CBM notified that outward remittance must follow the rules and regulations of the Foreign Exchange Management Committee. — NN/EM



Piles of greenbacks displayed at the Foreign Currency Exchange Counter.

OPINION

Completely harness water sources for interests of nation

IN Myanmar, the annual challenges associated with water utilization persist due to geographical conditions and the impacts of climate change. Despite boasting a larger number of water sources compared to other ASEAN countries, effective water management remains crucial.

Recognizing this, the State Administration Council established the Water Resources Assessment Committee on 7 March 2022, as per notification No 43/2022. The committee's mandate is to conduct comprehensive surveys and explorations on the current flow rates, conditions of water courses, and volumes of water sources in key rivers—Ayeyawady, Chindwin, Sittoung, and Thanlwin—from their origins to the sea.

The outcomes of surveys and exploration efforts should contribute to the development initiatives of the State in relevant regions and states through collaborative endeavours involving relevant authorities. Such processes align with the sustainable development goals outlined by the United Nations. It is imperative for both the government and the public to collaborate in implementing a systematic water utilization process that serves their collective interests.

The effects of climate change on major rivers, watershed alterations, and river conditions, particularly concerning silting.

The outcomes of surveys and exploration efforts should contribute to the development initiatives of the State in relevant regions and states through collaborative endeavours involving relevant authorities. Such processes align with the sustainable development goals outlined by the United Nations. It is imperative for both the government and the public to collaborate in implementing a systematic water utilization process that serves their collective interests.

Efforts by relevant ministries and organizations to efficiently use and explore water resources in major rivers aim to systematically manage their utilization, prepare against waterborne natural disasters, and foster the development of pertinent regions. The government is actively pursuing long-term plans to improve water resources and ensure their judicious use for consumption and cultivation.

To accommodate the growing population, these efforts must be effective, necessitating collaborative actions by the public to harness natural resources, especially major rivers and creeks, thereby averting water shortages nationwide and addressing water resource challenges in all seasons. By conquering water and effectively harnessing water sources, the country stands to gain numerous benefits in the future.

A recent Water Resources Assessment Committee meeting emphasized the imperative of efficiently utilizing water resources in regions connected to major rivers and basins. The primary goal is to meet the nation's water demands for public consumption and cultivation of crops. Effective water resource utilization holds significant potential to supply water for consumption and agriculture, generate hydropower, facilitate waterway transport, and mitigate risks associated with waterborne natural disasters, ultimately enhancing the socio-economic well-being of the populace.

The compilation of data related to major rivers is essential for implementing water resource measurement, development, and assessing natural environmental impacts. Surveys must carefully examine

Handy Tips for Picking and Choosing Books

Across the globe, citizens, especially in well-developed countries, often utilize their spare time for reading.

By Hu Wo (Cuckoo's Song)



While some in the modern world opt for screen-based reading, a significant majority maintains a strong affinity for traditional book reading. PHOTO: ILLUSTRATION: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/PIXABAY

THERE is one thing that almost everybody can do without costing a fortune. This is nothing else but just reading. Truly, reading may not only be the first step towards learners' study on the subject matter but also be beloved by nearly all from every corner of the globe. It will often be seen that citizens in well-developed countries throughout the world usually make good use of their spare time reading. As we know, U Thant, an architect of global peace, once stated that a reading nationality gets advanced, and an advanced nationality likes to read as well. When reading is said to be a big matter, non-living but essential things called books might never be missed out for sure. In the interest of people's convenience to obtain all-round knowledge, reading has been going through ages in concert with books for donkey's years. On the one hand, some in the new world take screen time to do reading, but on the other hand, most still have a great affection for a book read. Thus, a good question should arise as to how much effect in the world books exerts on reading.

Allegorically speaking, books are an island of treasure for any learner who takes up different major subjects. Doctors, engineers, teachers, or whoever specializes in the field of study must have books to hand at first by the time they pursue their studies. This is because those persons can manage to get facts and figures connected with their study fields from books at will; that comes easily to them. Doctors have got to read for their respective fields of study besides carrying out practicals, and so has an engineer or a teacher. If the truth is known, books ought to be far beyond fixed prices – to be said better, books cannot be priceless when they have even had real-life influences on people about the application of their theory and practice until today. As a Myanmar saying goes, 'A hundred spoken words are equal to only one written

word' (hnotetaya-satalone). This saying seems to spotlight the importance of books regarding their validity, reliability, and long-standingness over the written word. In addition, learners could bring books with them here and there for their liking, and the books would not cost a packet more than their absolute cost-worthy value, too.

As far as I can see, most writers find it impossible to publish a book with ease because this costs a bomb, even though they will be able to write the entire book out. The writers have to, consequently, rely on a possible publisher, or only if they do that by themselves must they think about whether to be quids in or come full circle in reference to sale prices before one book is distributed. Nevertheless, it is perhaps every writer's dream in which he wishes to issue his described pieces of writing as a book. The book is, figuratively speaking, similar to one year of a writer's expected lifetime. The more books the writer has left in the world of literature until his death, the better it is off for him. Even some writers' excellent works of literature are brought out many times, or more specifically, at least ten times, thanks to readers' demand. Writers frequently say that they do enjoy seeing their books put in apple-pie order on others' bookshelves. Furthermore, writers sometimes want to be given some literary award for a book of theirs. That is why they had to probably fall over themselves on all sides from afar in the past to win such an award.

Both young learners and advanced students are mostly readers with a reading fever and a passion for books. Strangely enough, most readers are from the middle class, and they cannot afford a high or even reasonable price for books. As always, they should lead a frugal life so as to buy as many books as best they can by spending money on food, drinks, and clothes. Readers are also those who take

great care of books; they look at upside-down books that they will buy for certain in order to find out how neat and tidy they are, especially their covers and colours. For some readers who are inclined to adore pretty books, the book's front or back covers might be by far more important than their inside pages, even if the covers cannot decide the value of the books. Adult readers ache to collect and keep books systematically in their private libraries rather than on bookcases. Bookworms devote themselves to their reading, possibly with a bookmark. A book-lover may become a bookseller but probably not a lender or borrower of books. Nonetheless, they willingly get their beloved person books for presents.

As my teacher U Hla Kyi said, starter readers are scared to death of a big book, yet they lose a small one, too. They are

inclined to the view that big books may be of an advanced level, and such books give readers aged a short-lived span of reading bored stiff merely at first glance. Small books appropriate to their literacy skills seem as easy as anything to read for beginner readers. The thickness, cover, and price of a book do not directly relate to whether it is good or bad. More importantly, a reader will need to pick and choose books suitable for his reading skills. Some thick books eminently attract readers' attention till the end of the books, as large as they are in size. Although small, some little books hold real literary value for readers. Maybe the cover of a book can tell its subject matter entry. Perhaps it cannot.

What is more, it does not matter to readers how nice the book's cover is. Not every expensive book is grand in a very similar way. A number of read-

ers take pleasure in reading solely their favourite writers' books one after another, which allows them to get hold of the writers' writing styles. Indeed, I think these readers do not necessarily take a liking to all of the only writer's books.

Subsequently, it would be better for readers to read up on great books, for example, worldwide classics. If so, what the most remarkable books turn out to be is the critical question that is absolutely worth asking readers. The main traits of a great book are, to my knowledge, depending upon universal truths, following the colourful life of most folks from various parts of the world, creating interpersonal-intrapersonal peace globally, idealizing its written language as modelled writing for modern writers, and standing a best-seller through ages. Also, such books can turn a person's life situations from

low to high and even change the whole world towards a better condition. Accordingly, great works of literature – particularly novels, poems, and plays – are living but old; these works act long on modern literature somehow or other. Several readers and writers assume that literature is outdated, dead even. In actual fact, literature is an absolute must for all lovers of books. Unless a writer has read any literature yet, he will potentially lose face among their contemporaries who are famous in the field of literature. Indeed, literature is the writer's life, and literature profoundly influences the language he uses.

Books are either the apple of my eye or dead living friends of mine according to the statement 'Books for All'. As a devotee of books, I cannot help buying at least one or two books whenever I arrive at bookshops. Seikku Cho Cho, Sarpaylawka, Innwa, and Yar Pyae from Hledan, Yangon, Myanmar, were the bookshops where I always used to go and buy books. The book first beckons most at my heartstrings among inanimate objects of interest, as if a boy had seen his childhood sweetheart by chance. While I went to university, the library was a bank of knowledge for me, where I could read rare books above and beyond free Wi-Fi use. I spent most of my own time in the library, so I allowed myself the luxury of reading in full measure on weekdays as a university student to the core. Holding books in hand produces a sort of taste for university students, which taste says is looking good or taking pride in the university. Just by glancing at the book that a person is reading, good readers would be able to assess his educational level with their eyes shut. As the reading age is getting longer and longer, the fact that a reader will ably formulate his personal standards of picking and choosing books is a foregone conclusion. ■

ARTICLE

Letter to the Editor

A Call to The Gunmen

You are born a freeman
In free, independent Myanmar
Be proud to be a joyful citizen
Having freedom of speech and worship

You are free to work
You are free to love
And fly all over the land and sea
I wonder why you took a gun
To shoot and kill your kith and kin?

With whom are you fighting?
What is your aim?
Why have you slain?
What do you gain?

Do you trust the aliens
Would come and help you?
Think about the fate of other lands
That were aggressed and enslaved!

Myanmar, the Land of Peace
Where Lord Buddha's Dhamma flourish
Tatmadaw follow the Dhamma
Preserve the dignity of humanity

Myanma Tatmadaw waves
The olive branch of peace!
Calls the gunmen in the jungle
To adopt the way of peace
And enjoy the tortures of life!

In the Union of Myanmar
You get free education and medical care
Equal rights and justice
That you never get anywhere in the world!

Hanthawady Thar

The Global New Light of Myanmar

www.gnlm.com.mm

သတင်းစာ မှာယူလိုပါက ဆက်သွယ်နိုင်ပါသည်

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NATIONAL

Hlawga picnickers embrace popularity of stand-up paddleboarding



Stand-Up Paddleboard riders enjoying Hlawga Park scenery.

AMONG the parkgoers who visit Hlawga Park to enjoy the natural beauty around Yangon, the number of people who come to play stand-up paddleboarding (SUP) is increasing, according to an interview with a park official.

More picnickers have chosen to play SUP, besides the nature of forests, trees and tranquillity at Hlawga Park.

It costs K18,500 per person

to ride SUP, and it is available both on weekends and on weekdays, with more riders on the former.

“Stand-up Paddleboarding is available every day. No day off. There is a guide nearby. He will teach you how to paddle before you start. There are many riders. Especially on Saturdays and Sundays, it is more crowded than on weekdays,” said an official.

In SUP, a water sport originating from surfing in the Hawaii Islands, the rider stands up on a board and paddles. Some SUP Yoga practitioners combine paddle boarding with yoga practice.

As skilful trainers from the park will closely teach those who want to try it, even a beginner with no experience can enjoy SUP in Hlawga Park, it was announced. — MT/ZN

Media invited to attend Myanmar Film Academy Awards ceremony

THE Myanmar Motion Pictures Academy Awards 2023 ceremony will be held on 3 February 2024 at Myanmar International Convention Centre MICC-1 in Nay Pyi Taw.

Depending on the number of media persons attending the ceremony and the limited space where the ceremony will be held, A Zone and B Zone will be identified for the news media.

In addition, the certified media who wish to attend the ceremony and receive information must fill in the information in the application form, such as the name, Citizenship Scrutiny Card number, position, and news agency, at the rate of two media personnel per news media.

Interested media can contact 067 3412143, iprd.crd.npt@gmail.com; (Yangon) 01 544582, 01 544583, iprd.crd.ygn@gmail.com of the Copyright and Registration Division (Nay Pyi Taw) of the Information and Public Relations Department, Ministry of Information by 27 January 2024.

Ministry of Information

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.

3 more bodies of Myanmar nationals found in Malaysia landslide

AMONG five Myanmar nationals who died in a landslide in Malaysia, further bodies of three missing people were found on the evening of 27 January, according to the Myanmar Social and Rescue Association (Malaysia).

Five ethnic Chin people

from Mindat township who worked at a plantation field in Cameron Highlands, Pahang District in Malaysia, died in a landslide that occurred around 8 pm on 25 January, and the bodies of two victims were discovered on 26 January.

“With residents’ assistance, Malaysian rescue teams carried out searches on 25 January and two bodies were found. In continued searching, three further bodies were found on the evening of 27 January. All bodies will be kept at a hospital

in Cameron Highlands, and their funeral will be made following Christian tradition, cremation and burial after DNA test result comes out,” said an official from the association.

Due to continual heavy rain, the landslide happened in Cam-

eron Highlands, where tens of thousands of Myanmar nationals work.

“It is safe for those working in this region to avoid living nearby foothills and should live in residential areas,” he said. — Thit Taw/ZS

Confiscated illegal items: Industrial materials, consumer goods and vehicles

IN a concerted effort to combat illegal trade activities, the Shan State Illegal Trade Eradication Special Task Force conducted inspections on 26 January, apprehending 12 vehicles en route from Muse to Mandalay. The cars were found to transport 33 types of goods valued at K82.1 million. Among the seized items were 48-wheel rims with tyres and 600 pairs of baby shoes, lacking official documentation. The interception occurred near the detour of Lashio township and

was carried out as per Customs procedures.

Similarly, on 26 and 27 January, the on-duty teams overseen by the Sagaing Region Illegal Trade Eradication Special Task Force seized an unregistered Nissan Wingroad vehicle and an unregistered Toyota Lucida car, approximately valued at K16 million, at a checkpoint on the outskirts of Monywa. Additionally, at the Yadanabon Bridge combined checkpoint in Sagaing township, seven types of goods



Confiscated illegal items in Shan State.

worth approximately K25.3 million were confiscated. These included 1,690 kilogrammes of sodium cyanide and 450 litres of hydrogen peroxide, all lacking official documentation. The operations were conducted in compliance with Customs procedures.

According to the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee, 30 arrests were made on 26 and 27 January, with an estimated value of K263.4 million. — MNA/MKKS

Australian universities call for free places for disadvantaged students

THE peak body for Australia's universities has urged the government to fund free degrees in areas of skills needed to address workforce shortages.

Universities Australia (UA) on Monday published its pre-budget submission to the federal government, making the case for fee-free university places for disadvantaged students to help employers overcome skilled worker shortages.

According to the UA, the number of students enrolled in higher education in Australia fell by five per cent between 2021 and 2022.

In order to meet workforce needs for a future where half of new jobs are projected to require a university degree, UA acting chief executive Renee Hindmarsh said higher education participation rates among people from disadvantaged backgrounds must increase.

"Australia requires more university-educated workers to drive economic growth and prosperity, but as demand for graduates grows, less Austral-

ians are going to university," she said in a statement.

"Fee-free university for disadvantaged students in areas of critical national priority could help attract more people to university who otherwise wouldn't pursue a degree. This is what the nation needs."

In 2022 the federal, state and territory governments committed 493 million Australian dollars (323.9 million US dollars) in funding to provide 180,000 fee-free vocational education places under the five-year National Skills Agreement.

The UA called for the governments to match that funding to support up to 20,000 fee-free university places in areas of critical skills shortages.

It also advocated for an increase in funding for research and development to maintain the country's world-class research reputation and cost-of-living assistance for students undertaking compulsory placements as part of their studies. — Xinhua

Activists splash soup on glass-protected Mona Lisa

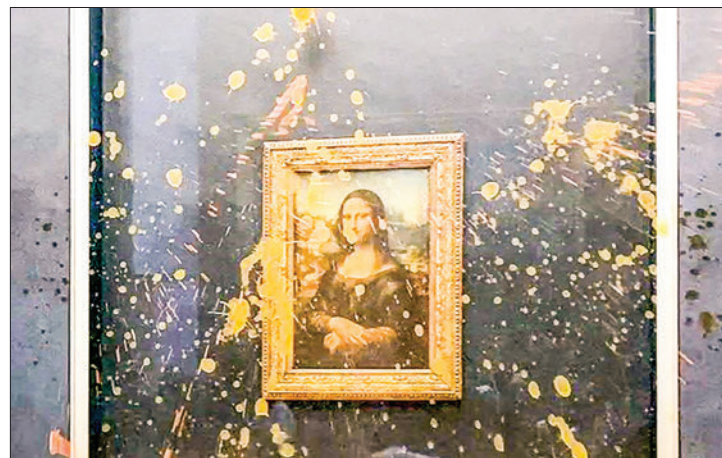
TWO protesters on Sunday hurled pumpkin soup at the bullet-proof glass protecting Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" in Paris, demanding the right to "healthy and sustainable food", an AFP journalist and the museum said.

The action, which comes as French farmers protest across the country, is the latest in a string of similar attacks against artworks to demand more action to protect the planet.

Two women on Sunday morning flung streams of orange-coloured soup onto the glass protecting the smiling lady to gasps from the crowd in the French capital's Louvre museum, according to an AFP journalist at the scene.

"What is more important? Art or the right to healthy and sustainable food," the activists asked, standing in front of the painting and speaking in turn.

"Your agricultural system is sick. Our farmers are dying at work," they said, before security staff evacuated the room.



This image grab taken from AFPTV footage shows Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" (La Joconde) painting doused in soup after two environmental activists from the collective dubbed "Riposte Alimentaire" (Food Retaliation) hurled food at the artwork, at the Louvre museum in Paris, on 28 January 2024. Two protesters on 28 January 2024 hurled soup at the bullet-proof glass protecting Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" in Paris, demanding the right to "healthy and sustainable food", an AFP journalist said. It is the latest attack on the masterpiece in the French capital's Louvre museum, after someone threw a custard pie at it in May 2022, but its thick glass casing ensured it came to no harm. PHOTO: AFP

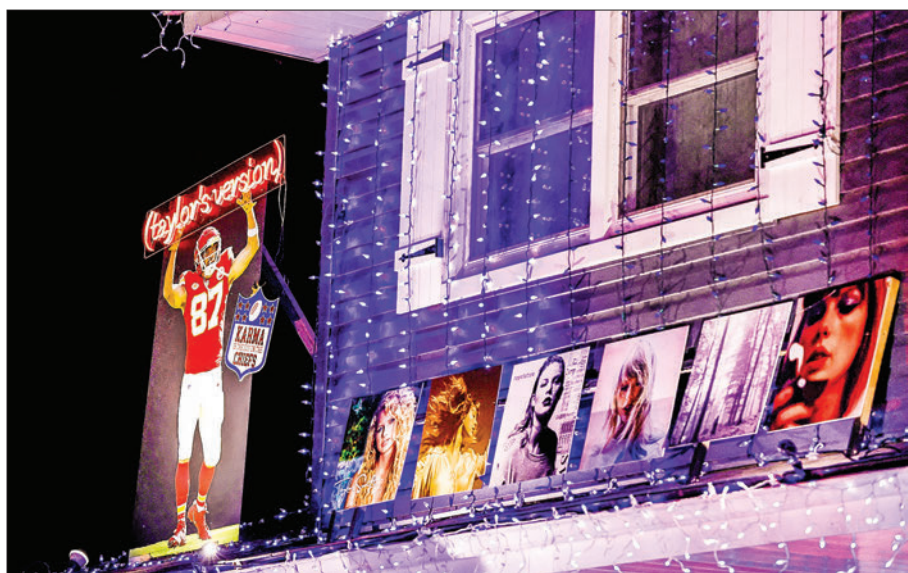
The Paris prosecutors office said both activists had been detained.

The Louvre museum said the women had hidden the pumpkin soup in a coffee thermos. Small quantities of food are allowed inside the museum,

though eating is not allowed in the exhibition rooms.

The museum said the artwork had suffered "no damage", and the room housing the masterpiece had re-opened to the public after closing for around an hour. — AFP

Mad dash? Swift will have to speed across globe to see Kelce in Super Bowl



The home of Amy and Brian Scott is decorated for Christmas in a Taylor Swift theme and an image of NFL's Travis Kelce of the Kansas City Chiefs, on 14 December 2023, in Naperville, Illinois. PHOTO: AFP

POP music icon Taylor Swift is reportedly ready to make a lightning trip from Ja-

pan next month to see boyfriend Travis Kelce's Kansas City Chiefs in the Super

Bowl.

Swift and Kelce exchanged a lingering on-field embrace Sunday after the reigning champion Chiefs beat the Baltimore Ravens 17-10 to book their fourth trip in five years to the NFL's championship extravaganza — which will be held in Las Vegas on 11 February.

Ian Rapoport of NFL Network and NFL.com, citing unnamed sources, said Swift would be there — even though she has an Eras tour performance in Tokyo the night before the big game.

In a video posted on X even before the Chiefs-Ravens game, Rapoport explains the international travel math, reckoning Swift can finish up a performance in Tokyo, hop a plane and make it to Vegas "just in time to party".

Her presence would pump up the volume on what is already one of the biggest annual events on the US calendar. — AFP

South Korea's Yu wins top award at Gerardmer festival for 'Sleep'

SOUTH Korean filmmaker Jason Yu was on Sunday awarded the prestigious Gerardmer International Fantastic Film Festival Grand Prix for his first feature-length offering, "Sleep".

The 34-year-old's movie is a comedy horror about a young couple's lives being turned upside down after the husband's nightmarish sleepwalking habits terrorize his wife.

The Jury Prize was awarded to "Amelia's Children" by Portuguese filmmaker Gabriel Abrantes and Frenchwoman Celine Rouzet's "En Attendant la Nuit" (For Night Will Come).

"Amelia's Children" is about a man who believes himself to be an orphan but then finds his family.

"En Attendant la Nuit" is about a teenager who needs human blood to survive and falls in love with his neighbour. — AFP

ECONOMY WORLD



This picture taken on 21 September 2023 shows sheep being moved in a paddock at the 6,500-hectare Lake Hawea Station, located on the eastern shores of Lake Hawea, near the town of Wanaka on the South Island of New Zealand. **PHOTO: AFP**

New Zealand exports, imports down: statistics

NEW Zealand's annual goods exports were valued at 68.7 billion NZ dollars (41.9 billion US dollars) in the year ending December 2023, down 4.5 per cent from the year ending December 2022, according to the statistics department Stats NZ on Monday.

Over the same period, imports were valued at 82.3 billion NZ dollars (50.21 billion US dollars), down five per cent, which resulted in an annual trade deficit of 13.6 billion NZ dollars (8.3 billion US dollars) in the year ending December 2023,

compared with a deficit of 14.6 billion NZ dollars (8.91 billion US dollars) in the year ending December 2022, the largest annual December deficit since the record began, Stats NZ said.

Despite the adverse weather and resulting flooding causing significant damage and disruption across the North Island, monthly export values generally increased in the first five months of 2023, when compared with the same period in the previous year, and decreased for the remaining seven months of 2023, it said.

The fall in exports for the second half of 2023, when compared with 2022, was led by unit price falls for most of the main export commodities, Stats NZ international trade manager Alasdair Allen said.

"Milk powder and sheep meat were two of the most affected commodities," Allen said.

Another contributing factor was the fall in exports to China over the second half of 2023, he said, adding that China also led the fall in total imports in 2023 compared with 2022. — Xinhua

Ryanair quarterly profit dives 93% on higher fuel cost

IRISH no-frills airline Ryanair on Monday said net profit dived 93 per cent in its third quarter as higher fuel costs offset rising revenues, resulting in a lower full-year earnings forecast.

The carrier, which flies mostly throughout Europe, said net profit slumped to 14.8 million euros (\$16 million) in the final three months of 2023 compared with one year earlier.

Chief executive Michael

O'Leary said Ryanair was narrowing its forecast for annual net profit to a range of 1.85 billion and 1.95 billion euros.

It previously estimated between 1.85 billion and 2.05 billion euros.

"This guidance and the full year result remains heavily dependent upon avoiding unforeseen adverse events" in the group's current fourth quarter, O'Leary added in the earnings statement.

He identified risks as being "the Ukraine war, the Israel-Hamas conflict and further Boeing delivery delays".

In the third quarter, Ryanair's fuel costs surged 35 per cent, while revenue jumped 17 per cent.

Passenger traffic grew seven per cent to 41.4 million, despite higher average fares which helped to offset other rising costs such as higher salaries. — AFP

UK unveils plan to ban disposable e-cigarettes

THE UK will introduce legislation to ban disposable e-cigarettes in order to tackle a rise in youth vaping, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak was to announce Monday.

"As any parent or teacher knows, one of the most worrying trends at the moment is the rise in vaping among children, and so we must act before it becomes endemic," Sunak said ahead of the official announcement of his plan.

"I am taking bold action to ban disposable vapes — which have driven the rise in youth vaping — and bring forward new powers to restrict vape flavours, introduce plain packaging and change how vapes are displayed in shops," he added.

The government cited recent figures showing the proportion of vapers under the age of 18 who use disposables has increased

almost ninefold in the last two years.

Sunak's government also plans to introduce fines for shops in England and Wales that sell vapes illegally to children.

Health experts welcomed the proposal, with Chief Medical Officer Chris Whitty saying the legislation would have "a major public health impact across many future generations".

Sunak last year proposed plans to eventually make the UK a smoke-free nation.

His proposal would make it an offence for anyone born on or after 1 January 2009 to be sold tobacco products — effectively raising the smoking age by a year each year until it applies to the whole population, a statement by Sunak's Downing Street office said. — AFP

Sri Lanka's export earnings decline slightly in 2023: data

SRI Lanka's total exports for 2023 were 14.49 billion US dollars, a minor decline of 0.39 per cent compared to 2022, data from the Export Development Board (EDB) showed on Monday.

The EDB said that cumulative merchandise exports in 2023 decreased by 9.54 per cent to 11.85 billion dollars, compared to 2022.

On the other hand, the estimated value of services exports in 2023 increased by 63.1 per cent compared to 2022, the EDB said.

The service imports for 2023 were around 3.1 billion dollars, the EDB said.

Earnings from the export of apparel and textiles, rubber and rubber-finished products, coconut and coconut-finished products, and seafood are among those that decreased.

Meanwhile, earnings from the export of tea, spices and concentrates, electronics and electronic components, and food and beverages increased, the EDB said. — Xinhua



A woman farmer reaps leaves at a tea estate in Nuwara Eliya on 27 December 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

Philips stops selling sleep devices in US amid recall woes

UNDER-FIRE Dutch medical device maker Philips said Monday it would halt new sales of sleep machines in the United States after a series of recalls that continued to weigh on results.

The firm trimmed its losses for 2023 compared with the previous year, as it seeks to bounce back from what it had described as a “very difficult” 2022.

Philips posted losses of 463 million euros (\$501 million) over the full year, compared with 1.6 billion euros in 2022, with chief executive Roy Jakobs hailing “strong results.”

“While there is more work to be done, the progress we achieved in a volatile world lays a solid foundation for sustained performance,” said Jakobs.

Traders appeared downbeat on the prospects, however, with Philips being the biggest loser at the opening of the Amsterdam stock exchange, down around four per cent.

Since 2021, the company has been battling a series of crises over its DreamStation machines for sleep apnoea, a disorder in which breathing stops and starts during sleep.

“Resolving the consequenc-

es of the Respironics recall for our patients and customers is a key focus area and I acknowledge and apologize for the distress and concern caused,” said Jakobs.

The firm said it had clinched a “consent decree” deal with US authorities that consists of a “roadmap” of targets to allow Philips to conform with regulatory requirements.

“Until the relevant requirements of the consent decree are met, Philips Respironics will not sell new... sleep therapy devices or other respiratory care devices in the US,” the company said. — AFP

Toyota group firm rigged data on diesel engine power output



(FILES) The logo of Toyota Motor is seen during the press day of the Japan Mobility Show in Tokyo on 25 October 2023. Toyota said on 29 January 2024 it was suspending shipments of 10 models that use engines linked with testing irregularities at an affiliate company. **PHOTO: AFP**

TOYOTA Motor Corp said Monday its affiliate fabricated power output data on diesel engines it makes and supplies for 10 of the automaker’s models sold globally.

Toyota said it will suspend shipment of vehicles with the engines supplied by Toyota Industries Corp, including the Land Cruiser 300 and the Hilux.

Toyota said it has confirmed the affected engines and vehicles now meet engine output standards following a reevaluation after the rigging

was discovered.

The Toyota group has been hit with a number of quality control problems in recent years. Its small-car subsidiary Daihatsu Motor Co stopped all shipments at home and abroad last month after a third-party investigation found that safety tests for most of its models were rigged.

Hino Motors Ltd, another Toyota subsidiary, admitted in March 2022 to having submitted fraudulent emissions and fuel economy data to transport authorities. — Kyodo

China-Russia trade fair inks cooperation deals of 13.6 bln yuan

A total of 55 deals, together worth 13.6 billion yuan (1.91 billion US dollars), were concluded on Monday by Chinese companies and their Russian business partners in Shenyang, the capital of northeast China’s Liaoning Province.

The deals cover such sectors as cold-chain warehousing, financial services, and imports and exports. They were

signed at a China-Russia economic and trade cooperation conference held in Shenyang.

More than 100 entrepreneurs from Russia and other countries in the Eurasian Economic Union attended the event, together with representatives of Chinese enterprises, industrial experts and scholars.

The Shenyang municipal

government and Liaoning’s department of commerce were among the organizers of the event.

The Shenyang municipal government and China Eastern Airlines signed a letter of intent at the conference, agreeing to open a regular passenger air route between Shenyang and Moscow in late February. — Xinhua



Staff members of a vegetable seedling cooperative work at a greenhouse in Xiaomazhuang Town of Luanzhou, north China’s Hebei Province, 29 January 2024. In recent years, Luanzhou City has vigorously integrated cooperatives, planting bases and households to develop large-scale and standardized greenhouse planting of cherries, cucumbers, tomatoes and other fruits and vegetables in an effort to increase farmers’ income. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Professional housecleaning demand surges as Spring Festival approaches

ORDERS for professional housecleaning services ahead of the upcoming Chinese New Year are rising as more consumers choose to trade money for time.

Data from China’s leading online classifieds marketplace 58.com showed that orders for a comprehensive housecleaning jumped by 200 per cent month on month during the first three weeks of January 2024 — reaching the highest level since 2021.

A general and thorough cleanup of one’s home is a major tradition on the agenda of Chinese people as they pre-

pare to welcome the Spring Festival by dusting or discarding the old to embrace the new. It is also one of the most tiring tasks among lunar New Year traditions.

Demand for window cleaning and cleaning of the kitchen extractor fan has surged by around 300 per cent and about 100 per cent month on month, respectively, according to 58.com.

Beijing posted the strongest demand for housecleaning services among Chinese cities, followed by other first-tier cities including Shanghai and Shenzhen.

Geng Xinyu, head of 58.com’s household services, attributed the growing demand for housecleaning services to China’s burgeoning service sector, which is driven by the increasing affluence of consumers and the rise of the platform economy.

In 2023, China’s service sector saw its added value account for 54.6 per cent of the country’s GDP, 1.2 percentage points higher than the previous year. Retail sales of services jumped by 20 per cent year on year in 2023. — Xinhua

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

Japan's Moon explorer begins functioning again, resumes mission

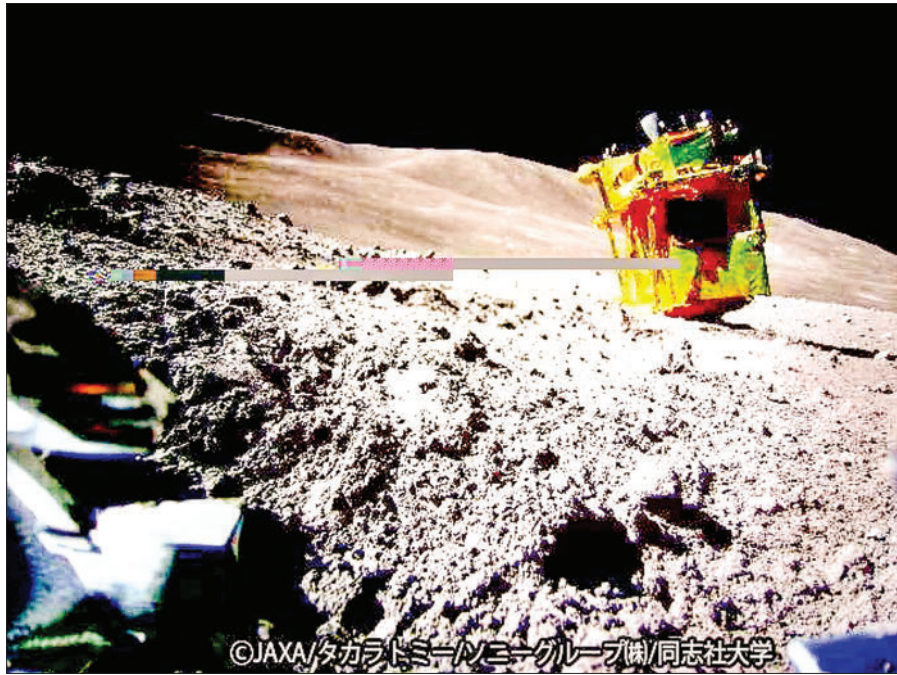
A Japanese lunar explorer has begun functioning again and resumed its mission on the Moon aimed at unravelling its origins after a successful landing earlier this month, the country's space agency said Monday.

The built-in solar panels of the Smart Lander for Investigating Moon, or SLIM, have likely started generating power after they failed to do so due to the panels not facing the Sun properly upon landing, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency said.

The agency has been communicating with the probe since Sunday night, and the explorer's multi-band camera has resumed taking pictures of the Moon's surface, with its operations expected to continue for several days, it said.

It is looking for a mineral called olivine originating from the Moon's mantle, a rocky inner layer that surrounds its core, the agency said, adding that the camera can scan and carry out an analysis of the olivine's composition.

Comparing the mineral with samples found on Earth and looking for similarities could provide evidence for the "giant-impact hypothesis", which suggests the Moon was formed by the Earth impacting with another planet



File photo shows Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency's Smart Lander for Investigating Moon, or SLIM, (top R) on the Moon surface, taken on 20 January 2024, by the SORA-Q tiny vehicle detached from the lander. (Copyright JAXA/Tomy Co./Sony Group Corp./Doshisha University)(No trimming allowed) **PHOTO: KYODO**

some 4.6 billion years ago, according to JAXA.

Japan landed SLIM on 20 January becoming the fifth country to achieve the feat after the former Soviet Union, the United States, China and India.

It landed around 55 metres from the target site, accomplishing a separate

mission of conducting a pinpoint landing within 100 metres.

The explorer had a positioning accuracy of less than 10 metres, possibly within around three to four, before it began conducting maneuvers during its descent to avoid obstacles on the lunar surface, JAXA said. — Kyodo

3 US soldiers killed, many wounded in drone attack in Jordan

US President Joe Biden said Sunday that three US soldiers were killed and many others wounded in a drone attack targeting US forces stationed in northeast Jordan near the border with Syria Saturday night.

The president said in a statement that his administration was still gathering facts about the attack. Nonetheless, he attributed the attack to Iran-backed militant groups operating in Syria and Iraq.

In a separate statement, US Central Command confirmed that the number of wounded soldiers stood at 25 in the attack launched by a one-way attack drone. The command said updates will be issued when available.

Biden said the United States "will hold all those responsible to account at a time and in a manner (of) our choosing."

US troops in Syria and Iraq have frequently come under attack since the Israel-Hamas conflict broke out on 7 October 2023. US retaliatory counterstrikes against Iran-backed militias in the region have so far failed to deter them, culminating in the deaths of US soldiers in attacks for the first time. — Xinhua

Funding suspension forces UNRWA to halt all Gaza activities in weeks: official

FUNDING suspension would force UNRWA to halt all its activities in the conflict-ridden Gaza Strip in a few weeks, the UN relief agency's commissioner-general said Sunday.

Philippe Lazzarini said on his social media X account that the suspension decision is "regrettable", stressing that the agency "relies on the support of our partners to maintain our humanitarian response to two million people in Gaza and Palestinian refugees in the region".

The United States, Canada, Britain, Germany, Australia, Finland, and the Netherlands decided to pause funding to UNRWA after Israel accused several UNRWA employees of suspected involvement in the 7 October attack on Israel last year.

Lazzarini said he was "shocked" upon knowing the accusations against its employees, adding that the agency has decided to "dismiss the employees concerned

and to commence an investigation without delay."

"UNRWA is also implementing structural reforms to enhance the commitment of its staff to humanitarian principles, including the principle of neutrality, with independent experts responsible for assessing and deepening our efforts in this direction," he noted.

UNRWA, established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1949, is tasked to provide humanitarian assistance and protection to Palestinian refugees registered in the agency's operational areas until a just and lasting solution to their plight is found.

Also on Sunday, Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Nasser Kanaani condemned Israel's accusations against UNRWA employees. "The accusations hurled by Israel against some of the UNRWA staff members are another malicious act in



A man carries relief supplies provided by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) in the southern Gaza Strip city of Rafah, 28 January 2024. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

completion of Israel's inhumane actions against Palestinians," he was quoted in

a statement published on the ministry's website as saying. — Xinhua

SPORTS

59 new bodybuilders vie for spots in SEA, International Championships



Some bodybuilders seen participating in the preliminary selection event in Myanmar.

FIFTY-NINE aspiring bodybuilders showcased their prowess in the preliminary selection competition for the 18th Southeast Asian Bodybuilding and International Bodybuilding Competition slated for 2024. The event unfolded at the Myanmar Convention Centre (MCC) hall in Yangon on 28 January.

Competitors battled various weight classes, including 55 kilogrammes, 60 kilos, 65 kilos, 70 kilos, and 75 kilos for men's

bodybuilding and a category for those weighing 75 kilos and above. Moreover, divisions such as Men's Athletic Physique (up to 170 centimetres and over 170 cm), National Sports Physique (up to 170 cm and over 170 cm), Men's Fitness Physique (open category), Women's Athletic Physique (open category), and Women's Model Physique (up to 160 cm and over 160 cm) added diversity to the contest.

Judges, comprising officials from the Myanmar Body-

building and Physique Sports Federation and the Vice-Mayor of the Yangon City Development Committee, meticulously evaluated participants across various categories to identify top talents.

Notably, Myanmar's previous outing at the 17th Southeast Asian Bodybuilding and Physique Competition in Batam, Indonesia, yielded commendable results, with the nation clinching one gold, three silver, and three bronze. — TWA/KZW



The file photo shows the 6th MFF Congress 2023 held for football development on 30 December 2023 by videoconferencing.

MFF to hold executive committee election on 30 March

AN election of MFF under its election rules recognized by the International Association Football Federation-FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation will be held to choose the president, vice-presidents, and executive committee of the Myanmar Football Federation on Saturday, 30 March, in Yangon.

It will be one more four-year term of MFF from 2024 to 2028. In the election, a total of 19 persons will be elected: one president, two male vice-presidents and one female vice-president, six for regions and states, three for Myanmar National League-I, one for MNL-II, one for refer-

ee committee, one for coach committee, one for player committee, one for women's football committee, one for futsal and beach football sports.

Candidate applications are available at the election commission office at MFF office, the Goal Hotel on Waizayanta Road in Thuwunna of Thingangyun Township, from 10 am to 3 pm from 7 February. Applications must be submitted there no later than 3 pm on 29 February.

For further information, dial 09-266071410, 09-976503201 and 09-5035143 of the MFF election commission. — Ko Nyi Lay/TTA

Xavi drops bombshell after Barca defeat, while top teams all win in La Liga

THE main story of the weekend in La Liga was Saturday's announcement by FC Barcelona coach Xavi Hernandez that he would step down at the end of June.

Xavi made his announcement following his side's chaotic 5-3 defeat at home to Villarreal following a match that saw them claw their way back following goals from Gerard Moreno and Ilias Akhomach, only to lose when it seemed they had the game won.

Ilkay Gundogan, Pedri and an Eric Baily own goal turned the game around, but Goncalo

Guedes scored an excellent third for Villarreal, and after the VAR ruled out a Barcelona penalty appeal, Alexander Sorloth and Jose Luis Morales won the game for the visitors.

Girona remain top of La Liga and are 11 points ahead of Barca, as they recovered from their midweek Copa del Rey exit in Mallorca with a 1-0 win away to Celta Vigo on Sunday.

Both sides rested players in their respective cup defeats in midweek, but Girona's quality was decisive as Portu collected the ball just inside the Celta area, turned his defender and scored

with a shot across Vicente Guaita to pile the pressure on Celta coach Rafa Benitez.



Atletico de Madrid's Memphis Depay (2nd L) shoots to score during a La Liga football match between Atletico de Madrid and Valencia CF in Madrid, Spain, 28 January 2024. PHOTO: XINHUA

Substitute, Aurelian Tchouameni headed an 83rd-minute winner for Real Madrid to complete

a comeback away to Las Palmas, who ran out of steam in the closing minutes.

Javi Munoz put Las Palmas ahead in the 53rd minute, but Vini-cius Jr equalized for Real Madrid 12 minutes later.

Atletico Madrid moved third after a 2-0 win at home to Valencia, which ended the visitors' four-game winning run.

Samuel Lino opened the scoring after a defense-splitting pass on the stroke of halftime and Memphis Depay doubled Atletico's lead from close range after a low cross from Nahuel Molina. — Xinhua

Japan's Moon explorer begins functioning again, resumes mission

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Putin says Russia, Belarus have common interests in Antarctica

RUSSIA and Belarus are going to cooperate in Antarctica as both countries have common interests in the region and things to work together on, Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Sunday.

"Today we have considered such an unusual issue as cooperation in Antarctica. One could wonder as to where we are and where Antarctica is. No, it turns out that there are joint interests there as well, there is something to work on together. And we will certainly do so," Putin said at a meeting with his Belarusian counterpart, Alexander Lukashenko.

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko also said he discussed the economy and defense industry cooperation at a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Sunday.

Lukashenko added that the two allies would take the experience of the Russian special military operation in Ukraine into account when advancing their defense industry cooperation.

Putin said ahead of the meeting in St Petersburg that he would update his



Russian President Vladimir Putin and Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko. PHOTO: SPUTNIK

counterpart on the latest developments on the battlefield.

Putin, for his part, welcomed advances in cooperation between Russia and Belarus, singling out trade as a case in point.

Putin hosted Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko in his home city on Sunday ahead of a Union State summit on Monday. He said Russia was Belarus' largest investor, with a total of \$4 billion. — Sputnik

Top DPRK leader guides test-fire of submarine-launched strategic cruise missile — KCNA

KIM Jong Un, the top leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), guided the test-fire of the newly-developed submarine-launched strategic cruise missile "Pulhwasal-3-31" on Sunday, the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported Monday.

Two cruise missiles the DPRK navy test-fired flew above the eastern waters for 7,421 seconds and 7,445 seconds respectively before hitting the island target, the KCNA report said.

The test-fire had no impact on the security of any neighbouring country and had nothing to do with the regional situation, it said.

"The nuclear weaponization of the country's navy is an urgent task of the times and a core requirement for building the state nuclear strategic force," Kim was quoted by KCNA as saying. — Xinhua

Israel says Gaza ceasefire talks in Paris "constructive" but "gaps remain"

ISRAEL said Sunday that the discussions in Paris involving top US, Qatari, Egyptian and Israeli officials on a ceasefire in Gaza have adjourned, delivering "constructive" results.

"The meeting was defined as a constructive meeting," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said in a statement while noting that "significant gaps" remain and will be further discussed this week in additional meetings.

According to the office, the "intelligence summit" in Paris was attended by the director of the US Central Intelligence Agency, the Qatari prime minister, and the Egyptian intelligence minister. The Israeli delegation is led by David Barnea, chief of the Mossad intelligence agency, and Ronen Bar, head of the Shin Bet internal security agency.

The meeting is aimed at achieving a deal to end the



Palestinian children watch the rubble in the southern Gaza Strip city of Rafah, 27 January 2024. PHOTO: XINHUA

conflict between Israel and the Hamas movement. Netanyahu has repeatedly stated that his government will not agree to a ceasefire deal while Hamas remains in power in Gaza, and the Israeli military escalation in the Palestinian enclave aims to "eliminate" Hamas.

Israel launched a massive offensive in Gaza on 7 October 2023, in response to an assault by Hamas on southern Israeli communities, in which Hamas militants killed about 1,200 people and took more than 200 as hostages. Currently, over 100 hostages are still held in Gaza by Hamas and other militant groups in the strip.

The deadly conflict has led to a Palestinian death toll of 26,422 in Gaza, with the number of injuries rising to 65,087, according to the Gaza-based Health Ministry on Sunday. — Xinhua