

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR



Damsels of Shan ethnics perform traditional dancing entertainments at the commemorative day last year.

Taunggyi to host Shan State Day ceremony for six days

A ceremony to mark the Shan State Day, which falls on 7 February, will be held magnificently from 7 to 12 February at the Awayya

hot-air balloon field in Taunggyi Township, Shan State (South), according to U Khun Thein Maung, Minister for Economic Affairs of the Shan State

Government.

The visitors to the ceremony will be served with foods, and local products will be sold at the market place of

the ceremony. Ethnic groups of Shan nationalities will present traditional dances and dressing of traditional costumes at the ceremony.

“In the market of the ceremony, a full range of foodstuffs, consumer goods, cosmetics and clothes will be sold at Awayya hot-air balloon ground,” U Khun Thein Maung said.

In the event, traditional foodstuffs and various local products can be purchased at low prices. — ASH /TKO

NATIONAL

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Over 300 employees from Myanmar sent to Republic of Korea through EPS

NATIONAL

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COVID-19 fund loans to film, media sectors prolonged by one year

Myanmar plans to export more parboiled rice, broken rice in 2024-25FY

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Rice bags for export purpose are being loaded at the port.

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

NSCI identifies four new species of snakehead murrels in Myanmar

THE Native Species Conservation and Identification in Myanmar (NSCI) has identified four new species of dwarf snakehead murrels native to Kachin State, Rakhine State, and Taninthayi Region.

Researchers have classified 56 varieties of snakehead murrels, with 53 being native to Asia and three to Africa. Myanmar hosts 20 species, and over ten are endemic only to Myanmar.

Snakehead murrels are highly sought after both as delicacies and pets. Traditionally, they were recognized primarily by their common names until researchers initiated efforts to classify them systematically.

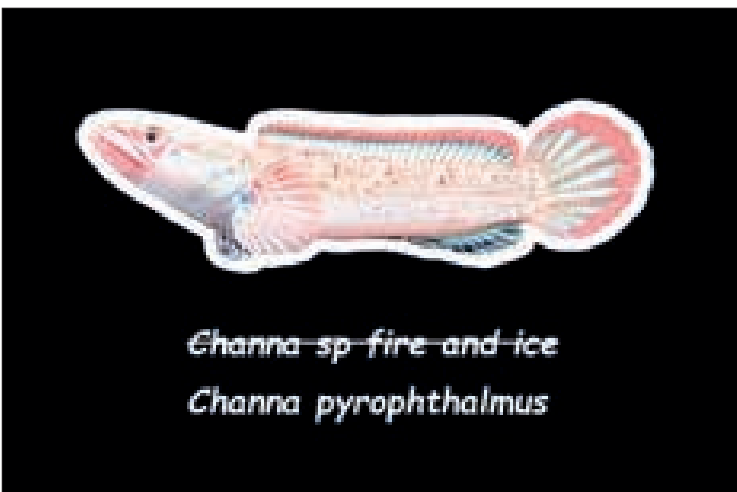
Ko Min Htet Kyaw explained: "Channa sp fire and ice, native to the Taninthayi Region, is a prized species in the pet fish market. It's now scientifically identified as *Channa pyrophthalmus*. Similarly, another popular

pet fish, *Channa sp* redbfin, hailing from Kachin State, is formally known as *Channa rubora*."

Another species native to Kachin, *Channa sp ignis*, corresponds to *Channa coccinea*, while a species from Rakhine, *Channa sp mimetic pulchra*, is scientifically classified as *Channa rakhinica*.

Researchers Ko Min Htet Kyaw and Ko Shin Paing Oo studied the fish samples, habitats and life cycles in collaboration with many local and international scientists. They identified four new species within the *Channa gachua* species complex and documented these new species.

NSCI is a team of local and foreign researchers working to conserve biodiversity, share knowledge, and debunk popular myths concerning flora and fauna through in-depth articles. — ASH/NT



Channa sp fire and ice
Channa pyrophthalmus

Photo shows Myanmar's native dwarf snakeheaded murrel called *Channa pyrophthalmus*.



Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein and Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Chen Hai beat the gong at the Chinese New Year festival and Spring Festival as awaking the Dragon at the Chinese Culture Centre in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: TWA**

Pyay Shwesandaw Pagoda to host Sesbania stalk fire offering and Htamane-making festival

THE annual Sesbania stalk fire offering ceremony and Htamane-marking competition will be held on a grand scale at the Shwesandaw Pagoda in Pyay, Bago Region, according to U Aung Soe, a member of the Pagoda's Board of Trustees.

The plant, locally known as Sesbania, is used as firewood to make a fire in a temporary brick tank to offer warmth dedicated to the Lord Buddha. Locals believe the Sesbania stalk fire offering gives them wisdom.

"The 100th Sesbania stalk fire offering ceremony and the 22nd Htamane-making competi-

tion of Pyay Shwesandaw Pagoda will take place on 23 February. The 22nd Htamane-making competition will occur at the Mahabawdi terrace of the pagoda at 7 am on 23 February. At 5 am on 24 February (the full moon day), the 100th Sesbania stalk fire offering ceremony — a unique traditional ritual that happens in the morning of the full moon day of Tabodwe in Myanmar colander and found only in Pyay Township — will be held with the pilgrims each bringing their share of Sesbania stalk. The pilgrims offering fire to the Buddha using aromatic woods for warmth

in the winter season will be provided with Htamane. Sesbania stalk fire offering is more popular among local students as they believe the practice can give them great wisdom," said U Aung Soe.

It is a kind of shrub that is primarily found in the wetlands that surround Pyay Township. The devotees collect the Sesbania plants by cutting, peeling, and sun-drying it about one month before the offering festival. The plants are usually sold along the street near Shwesandaw Pagoda before the offering festival starts. — ASH/MKKS

NATIONAL

MoI Union Minister honours Outstanding employees of IPRD

The welcome and congratulatory ceremony for the outstanding employees and departmental heads of the State and Region Information and Public Relations Departments, who attended the annual general meeting and 33rd anniversary ceremony of the department was held in the meeting hall of the Ministry of Information yesterday.

Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn appreciated for the outstanding employees of the department who won the awards in the respective competitions and the

staffs who served dutifully in the various areas of responsibility. He also stated that the Ministry of Information generally has no holidays as it has to serve for the public. He also urged the staffs to develop good manners and sprit.

Furthermore, he mentioned that the Chairman of the State Administration Council has given guidance to fulfill the necessary things of the staffs serving in the border areas and the staff also need to cooperate with the relevant departments to meet the missions and visions of the government, especially to work



Information and Public Relations Department's annual general meeting and 33rd anniversary ceremony of the department in progress in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

together in countering the misinformation that are destroying the nation's peace and tranquili-

ty by convincing the public on social media. Then, the Union Minister gave the financial supports

to the staff from the respective border areas before enjoying dinner together. — MNA/TRKM



The second virtual workshop on ASEAN Project Development for ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Control in progress in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Development of ASEAN plans crucial for eradicating illicit drugs

COLLABORATIVE efforts of all global countries are of great importance in solving the problems of narcotic drugs most of them are facing at present, said Police Brig-Gen Win Naing, Head of Drug Enforcement Division under the Myanmar Police Force, who is also in the capacity of Joint Secretary of Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control of Myanmar.

He made a speech at the second virtual workshop on ASEAN Project Development for ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Control held at the office of

the Nay Pyi Taw Drug Enforcement Division on 1 February.

He expressed his belief that today's meeting hosted by Myanmar would cement the cooperative strengths to solve the challenges triggered by illicit drugs as well as would be a good contribution to implementing the ASEAN Work Plan on Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs 2016-2025 and the effective eradication of drugs in the region.

He underscored that the development of ASEAN plans is crucial for eradicating illicit

drugs in ASEAN region, adding that thanks to the workshop, all ASEAN members would expose the best ways to overcome drug dangers and challenges in the region.

The meeting was also attended by Police Colonel Myint Htoo from the Drug Enforcement Division of MPPF and party, delegates from ASEAN countries, those from ASEAN Secretariat and dialogue partners China, India, Korea and Russia who discussed development of ASEAN plans and implementation processes. — MNA/TTA

MoHT DY Minister inspects development of tourism industry in Mandalay Region



Deputy Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Phyo Zaw Soe inspects hotels and their surrounding areas in PyinOoLwin Township on 3 February 2024.

DEPUTY Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Phyo Zaw Soe visited the information counter operated by the ministry at Mandalay International Airport on 3 February and gave necessary instructions to the officials.

At the ministry's counter, domestic and foreign tourists travelling through airlines can easily find out information about Myanmar's travel areas, tourist attractions and information that they want to know.

The Deputy Minister inspected Nan Myaing Hotel, Thiri Myaing Hotel and Gandhamma Myaing Hotel in PyinOoLwin

Township to ensure that the hotel premises and surroundings are green, clean and beautiful that contributes to health and safety of the tourists who stay in the hotels.

During the inspection, the Deputy Minister instructed officials that photos and videos of PyinOoLwin's natural beauty and unique attractions must be promoted through well-known media channels and online media, while arranging tours in cooperation with travel agencies in order to attract more domestic and oversea tourists. — MNA/TKO

Daily newspapers available online

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News and Periodicals Enterprise

NATIONAL

Myanmar delegation attends 2024 ASEAN-China Year of People-to-People Exchanges Presentation and Opening Ceremony

THE Myanmar delegation led by U Tin Oo Lwin, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture, attended the “2024 ASEAN-China Year of People-to-People Exchanges Presentation and Opening Ceremony” held in Fuzhou City of Fujian Province of the People’s Republic of China on 1 and 2 February and returned to Yangon yesterday afternoon.

The ceremony was attended by Shen Yiqin, State Counsellor of the People’s Republic of China, Kikeo Khaikhamphitoun, Deputy Prime Minister of the Lao Democratic Republic, provincial officials of China, guests from ASEAN member countries, the Deputy ASEAN Secretary-General for ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, and other invited guests. The Myanmar delegation attended the logo presentation ceremony to commemorate the “2024 ASEAN-China Year of People-to-People Exchanges” held on the evening of 1 February, and the dinner hosted by the Fujian Province Government.

Union Minister U Tin Oo



Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Tin Oo Lwin arrives back at Yangon Int'l Airport yesterday from 2024 ASEAN-China Year of People-to-People Exchanges Presentation and Opening Ceremony.

Lwin and party attended a meeting with Shen Yiqin, the State Counsellor of the China, at 9:00 am local time on 2 February, together with leaders of the delegations from the ASEAN member countries, and toured the exhibits displayed at the Fuzhou Strait International Conference and Exhibition Centre Lobby.

Furthermore, the Union Minister attended the Opening Ceremony held at the Multi-Function Hall of Fuzhou Strait

International Conference and Exhibition Centre and delivered a speech. In his speech, the Union Minister said Myanmar, which is an important member of ASEAN, recognized and supported the importance of promoting people-to-people exchanges in building a bridge of friendship and cooperation, cultural heritage, traditions and diversity are the things that shape the colourful picture of the ASEAN region, strengthening regional

cooperation and promoting mutual understanding among the people. Those activities are in line with Myanmar’s goals. He also expressed his belief that through 2024 ASEAN-China Year of People-to-People Exchanges Programme, regional countries will be able to promote unity, friendship, mutual respect and cooperation between diverse societies.

Furthermore, the Union Minister attended the luncheon

hosted by the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries at the Empark Exhibition Grand Hotel. In his speech, the Union minister said that it is appropriate to realize the importance of preserving and promoting cultural traditions, promoting mutual respect, and mutual dialogue between different cultures.

In the afternoon, the Union minister attended the ASEAN-China Spring Festival Carnival held at the Maritime Silk Road Culture Square together with the ASEAN representatives. In the evening, they attended the music concert “The Dream of the Maritime Silk Road” held at the Fujian Theatre.

On 3 February, the Myanmar delegation went on a study tour to Fuzhou Hotspring Park, Three Lanes and Seven Alleys Historical Cultural Area, “Vision 3820” Strategic Plan 30th Anniversary Exhibition, and Yantai Mountain Historical Areas along with representatives from ASEAN member countries. — MNA/TKO

Counter-argument to false information

Misinformation: Security forces burns Chanpyan village of Matupi township, Ngagatwin village of Monywa township

THE malicious Khit Thit media is spreading the misinformation, saying that the security forces burned Ngagatwin Village of Monywa Township on 3 February, leading villagers including from nearby 10 villages to run away from their homes. Again, the media also reported that Chanpyan Village of Matupi Township was burnt down by security forces as they were blown up by mines near the village on 1 February.

According to the informa-

tion from the local people and the local authorities, it is just false news, and the security forces did not serve security duty near Ngagatwin Village of Monywa Township on that day. Similarly, it is reported that the security forces did not go near the Chanpyan Village of Matupi Township on 1 February.

The malicious media outlets are poisoning information to destroy the nation’s peace and stability. Consequently, the government media are

reporting the up-to-date true information for the public not to misunderstand the real situations. — MNA/TRKM



Screenshots on misinformation about the security forces.

False news accuse Loikaw prison of detaining former prisoners illegally

KHIT Thit, a malicious media, is spreading the false news about the Loikaw prison stating that 20 prisoners including political prisoners who have completed their terms are arrested again for security reasons and are still detained in the same prison.

According to the official of the prison, the former prisoners in the question were freed but they were provided food supplies legally and let them to stay free as there are no transport facilities to take them home right now and the officials are trying to ar-

range a smooth transportation for them. It is also reported that under the law, the prison authorities are responsible to take care of the former prisoner who are set free but they cannot go home for various situations. The officials also said they are not unfairly detained. The malicious media outlets are spreading the false news that may attract western countries by creating the misinformation intentionally to destroy the nation’s peace and stability and to cause panic among the citizens. — MNA/TRKM

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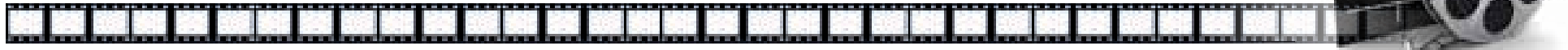
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Most popular "The Lucky (Kan Kaung)" movie grabs most of academy awards

It is known that "The Lucky (Kan Kaung)" movie which is the most popular among the audiences grabbed most of the academy awards at the Myanmar Academy Awards Ceremony 2023. Besides, the other popular movies of 2023 such as "The Lucky (Kan Kaung)", "A Red Blanket (Saung Ni Lay Tahtel)", "The Teacher" also secured the outstanding awards, and actress May Myint Mo and actor Nay Win got the Academy Awards as the exception of the audience.

The movies which got the best supporting actor and actress awards, "Yeeywal Moe (Intended Rain)" and "Monekhwint (The right to hate)", were created by director Soe Moe Min.

"The Lucky (Kan Kaung)" movie won three outstanding awards as the Best Film, the Best Cinematography and the Best Music for 2023.

"The Lucky (Kan Kaung)" is produced by Khattiya film industry and is directed by director Win Lwin Htet,



Capturing the essence : Actor Paing Takhon and canine co-star.

script by Moe Ni Lwin and actor Paing Takon, academy Thu Htoo San, academy Khin Zarchi Kyaw and Nay Htut mainly acted in the movie.

Director Nyo Min Lwin got the best film script award for 2023 with "The Teacher" movie. Mya Yar, Myat, Win Lei Shwe Yee, Lin Htel Wah, Than Dana Soe, June Nine Aung, Paing Thit, U Moe Yan, Hnin Wut Yee, Eaint Juyee Mon, Hmon Nathar, other artistes and Yin Myo Myo Aye as special guest acted in the movie and it is received by audience support.

Moreover, director Tin Aung Soe (Pan Myotaw) won the best director award and actor Yan Aung achieved the best actor award respectively with "A Red Blanket (Saung Ni Lay Tahtel)" movie. Yan Aung, Soe Myat Thuzar, Soe Myat Nadar, Kyaw Zaw Hein, Nat Khat, L Nay Naw, L Seng Zi, Nay Yaung, Thiha Naing, Thar Htwe and Zizi performed in the movie which was based on a true story.

Actor Nay Win was awarded the best supporting actor award for 2023 with "Yeeywal Moe (Intended Rain)". The movie's script was written by Didi Htet Aung and director Soe Moe Min directed it. Other actors and actresses of the movie are academy Kyaw Ye Aung, Ye Yint Aung, Nay Win, May Myint Mo, Min Arkar, Cho Madi Thwin and more.

Furthermore, actress May Myin Mo

attained success as the best supporting actress with the "Monekhwint (The right to hate)" movie which was directed by director Soe Moe Min. Academy Shwe Htoo, academy Khin Wint Wah, May Myint Mo, Henry, Min Thu, Hnget Pyaw Kyaw and Maung Kin acted in the movie.

Additionally, actress Soe Myat Thuzar grabbed the best actress award for 2023 with the movie "Never Give Up". Moe Set Wine wrote the script of the movie which was directed by director Steel (Dway Myitta) and the plot by Barani Kyaw. The other actors and actresses are academy Nay Toe, academy Soe Myat Thuzar, academy Aye Myat Thu, Nay Myo Aung, Tun Ko Ko and Shwe Thamee.

The Myanmar Academy Award Ceremony 2023 was held on a grand scale at the Jade Hall of Myanmar International Convention Centre-I (MICC-I) on the evening of 3 February. State Administration Council Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win and wife, the members of State Administration Council, the government officials, Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn and wife, departmental heads and intellectuals and intelligentsia from all arenas attended the mentioned the academy award ceremony. — ASH/ TRKM



Photo shows the posters of Myanmar film "A Red Blanket".

NATIONAL

Over 300 employees from Myanmar sent to Republic of Korea through EPS

IN January, more than 300 Myanmar employees were sent to the Republic of Korea through the Public Overseas Employment Agency Employment Permit System (POEA-EPS), according to the Myanmar Embassy to the Republic of Korea.

Under POEA-EPS system, a total of 303 new manufacturing workers — 151 and 152 on 10 and 31 January — were sent to the

Republic of Korea last month.

When the Myanmar workers arrived at the Incheon International Airport of the ROK from Yangon, they were welcomed by the labour attaché from the Myanmar Embassy in Seoul, who inform the workers about the information and the regulations they should follow before providing them with necessary assistance. — MT/TKO



Photo: Myanmar Embassy, Seoul. Zar

More than 50 bus lines of YBS accept YPS QR Code for fare payment

BUS fare can be paid by scanning QR code with the use of MPypys+ Application from mobile phones at more than 50 bus lines, according to Yangon Payment Service-YPS.

A ceremony to introduce MPypys+ Application to be applied in scanning QR code for payment of bus fare took place at the Yangon Region Private Transport Committee-YRTC yesterday.

On 11 January 2024, Yangon Payment Service-YPS informed passenger people about using YPS QR Code on some YBS bus lines. Currently, such an application can be applied at YBS bus lines numbers: 13, 55, 57, 63, 42, 65, 22, 64, 111, 133, 134, 84, 130, 135, 142, 39, 136, 138, 139, 21, 80, 81, 131, 27, 66, 76, 79, 85, 132, 12, 14, 25, 30, 38, 117, 128, 19, 100, 103, 35, 40, 61, 68, 137, 62, 87, 88, 108, 37, 43, 96, 104, 109, 72 and 89.

Users need to download MPypys+ Application (Android Version) at first for applying YPS QR Code through Google Playstore or Huawei AppGallery. Moreover, the MPypys+ Application can be downloaded



Photo: Yangon Payment Service YPS. Zar.

on QR Code stickers at relevant buses.

YPS card service and YPS QR Code top-up service are available at YPS Card sale centres (KOISK), sale agents, G&G Convenience Store, Mingala Advanced Cinemas, Capital departmental stores and Wellington Pharmacy.

Further formation related to YPS QR Code can be taken through the posts on the Facebook Page. Anyone can enquire detailed information on the page messenger or dial the call centre hotline: 09-969990905 from 9 am to 5 pm daily during the weekdays.— MT/TTA

Myanmar entrepreneurs invited to 11th International Engineering Sourcing Show

ACCORDING to the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization, the 11th Edition of the International Engineering Sourcing Show welcomes participants of Myanmar business persons engaged in the engineering sector.

This event, organized by the Engineering Export Promotion Council affiliated with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of the Government of India, will be held from 4 to 6 March in Coimbatore City, India.

It will be a significant

platform for promoting international trade and investment in India's engineering sector. India's engineering exports have grown remarkably, and the SMEs are the backbone of the prosperous Indian engineering industry. Participants can join the B2B meetings, workshops, gala and networking discussions.

Additionally, overseas delegates will have three-night hotel accommodation, partial airfare reimbursement for some countries, and meeting invitations. Interested buyers

can register online through the following link: <http://iesshow.in/home/overseasbuyer>. For further details or any queries, the exhibition director can be reached through +91 98811583353, +91 9910445432 and email njumde@eepcindia.net, rsharma@eppcindia.net or visit <http://www.iesshow.in/>.

Those who wish to participate in the event can contact the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization at 067 3408622 or email event.td.myantrade@gmail.com for further assistance and facilitation. — NN/EM

Eight Myanmar sailors kidnapped by pirates in West Africa released

EIGHT Myanmar sailors who were kidnapped by pirates off the coast of West Africa have been released on 30 January, according to the Myanmar Seafarers Federation.

The pirates seized the ship and detained eight Myanmar sailors including one officer, and an African sailor one month ago.

President of the federation Captain U Soe Min Aung said: "Their ship has previously sailed along the West African coast and has often carried many Myanmar sailors. The pirates targeted the sailors for ransom, considering it more convenient than seizing cargo."

Typically, the waters along the East African coast are in-

festated with pirates, often based in Somalia.

"Since this incident happened off the west coast, we don't think the pirates were Somalis. Perhaps, they are from economically challenged countries like Nigeria or Sierra Leone," U Soe Min Aung commented.

The negotiation between the shipping company and the pirates went well, resulting in the release of the sailors.

A few months ago, Somali pirates kidnapped some Myanmar sailors. The shipping company is still negotiating with the pirates for the release of the sailors. — Htet Oo Maung/Zaw/NT

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Prices of Moehtaung chilli, long chilli continue declining

MOEHTAUNG chilli and some long chilli prices are dropping to K10,000 and lower than K10,000 per viss in the Bayintnaung chilli market in early February 2024, a chilli trader U Hla Han told The Global New Light of Myanmar yesterday.

Also, Moehtaung new chilli from Maubin Township arriving at the market these days are priced at K10,000 per viss. Only bell peppers are priced at more than K10,000 per viss. On 3 February, prices of Hinthada chillies were K11,500-K11,800 per viss, Myanaung long chillies K11,500, Salin red long chillies K13,000, Thazi long chillies K9,000-K9,500, and Shan long chillies K9,500.

Hinthada Moehtaung chilli is priced at K10,000 per viss, Shan Moehtaung K8,500, Moehtaung chillies with cold storage process K10,500, and ordinary Moehtaung chilli K9,000/



Hmyarni new chillies are seen before arriving in the market.



K9,500. Sinphyukyun bell pepper is priced at K15,000/K15,500 per viss, Thazi and Zee bell pepper K12,300, and Chinese bell pepper K17,000. Chilli varieties are arriving in the market and thus, prices are trending downward.

And also, demands of Thazi long chilli and Moehtaung chilli in cold storage process are significantly declining.

On 3 February 2023, prices of Sinphyukyun bell pepper are priced at K15,500/K16,500 per

viss, Moehtaung K11,000, Shan Moehtaung K11,500, Maubin Yayle Moehtaung K11,000, Hinthada Moehtaung K11,500, Hmyarni Hinthada long chilli K11,000/K12,000, and red long chilli K11,000/K12,000.

Hence, as new chillies are arriving in the market in early February, the prices are falling and lower than that of last year similar period.

Chilli prices are the highest among the other kitchen commodities and therefore, the traders who stock the chillies gained a lot of profits. However, both chilli and garlic are the items that can be reduced in cooking. Thus, both of those items are less important for the housewives.

High quality chillies from India were imported to Yangon market before 2020 with each bag contains six visses and prices were higher than the chillies domestically produced. However, since local farmers can produce those kind of chillies. Therefore, it has been a few years since the Indian chillies have been imported.— TWA/TMT

Agricultural exports earn over US\$2.6 bln in 10 months

AS of 26 January 2024, the Ministry of Commerce's statistics showed that agricultural exports generated more than \$2.6 billion during the first 10 months of the financial year 2023-24.

However, the figure falls \$321 million short of the earnings from the same period in the previous year.

The primary agricultur-

al exports include rice, broken rice, pulses and beans, and corn. Additionally, fruits, vegetables, sesame, dried tea leaves, sugar, and various other farm products are also exported.

Major buyers for Myanmar agricultural produce are China, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, and

Sri Lanka.

Myanmar exports agricultural produce, animal products, fishery products, minerals, forest products, finished industrial goods on a cut-make-pack (CMP) basis, and other commodities. The main imports comprise capital goods, raw materials, consumer goods, and materials used in CMP businesses.— TWA/NT



Containers ready to be shipped are seen at the port.

Myanmar plans to export more parboiled rice, broken rice in 2024-25FY

FROM PAGE 1

ACCORDING to President U Ye Min Aung of the Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF), MRF intends to export more value-added rice products such as rice powder and rice noodles as well as parboiled rice and broken rice in the 2024-25 financial year.

Myanmar's domestic rice consumption is ten million tonnes per year, while the country produces 12-14 million tonnes yearly, limiting the export capacity to only three million tonnes annually. Thus, relevant personnel focus on exporting more value-added rice products to create more income instead of shipping increased tonnes of rice.

"We plan to expand the export items. Instead of exporting rice, we will also export rice powder and rice noodles. On the other hand, rice bran oil is increasingly being produced, and we can also export the oil. Again,

the by-product resulting from the rice bran oil production is planned to be sold in both the domestic and the external markets next year. We also plan to export animal foodstuff," U Ye Min Aung said.

He also said the MRF will propose to the relevant departments to export more parboiled rice and broken rice in February and March of this financial year, while white rice is scheduled to be exported with limitations to ensure enough rice stock for domestic consumption.

In the 2023-24 financial year, income did not decline, although rice exports were reduced by 500,000 tonnes. In previous years, Myanmar earned approximately US\$60 million monthly, although rice was exported in more tonnes. However, due to increasing global rice prices, the country earned up to \$100 million in some months of this financial year.— ASH/TMT

OPINION

Promote high-quality salt for local consumption and global export

Optimal conditions for sun-dried salt production align with the open season, providing a prime opportunity for salt farmers. Nevertheless, Myanmar's salt farmers grapple with the essential prerequisites of investment, modern methodologies, and machinery to enhance salt production.

Presently, Myanmar caters to both domestic and export markets with the production of fine and coarse salt. Salt farms located in Mon and Rakhine States, as well as the Ayeyawady Region, contribute to the diverse array of salt varieties. Notably, 66 per cent of the total output hails from the Ayeyawady Region, with the remaining 34 per cent originating from Rakhine and Mon states. Traditionally reliant on stove-based techniques, Myanmar transitioned to sun-dried salt production at the Kyaikkhami salt farm in Thanbyuzayat Township, Mon State, six decades ago.

However, sun-dried salt production remains contingent on favourable weather, resembling the seasonality of agricultural tasks. Salt farmers engage in daily collections from sun-dried farms to sustain production. In contrast, the stove-dependent salt industry relies on firewood, posing long-term risks to deforestation and contributing to climate change.

Salt farmers need to seek the best ways and means through research processes so as to produce quality salt for the safe consumption of the people and to occupy the market share of the international community with the export of quality salt. The systematic salt production process based on sun-dried and other conventional salt production and modern salt production techniques will contribute to local salt sufficiency and safety measures for consumption in keeping abreast of other countries.

local demand for both fine and coarse salt production at home.

To elevate salt production techniques, farmers must explore innovative methods through research, focusing on delivering high-quality, safe salt for consumption while gaining a competitive edge in the international market. A systematic approach that integrates sun-dried and conventional salt production with modern techniques will not only contribute to local salt sufficiency but also enhance safety measures for consumption, aligning Myanmar with global standards.

Salt farmers need to seek the best ways and means through research processes so as to produce quality salt for the safe consumption of the people and to occupy the market share of the international community with the export of quality salt. The systematic salt production process based on sun-dried and other conventional salt production and modern salt production techniques will contribute to local salt sufficiency and safety measures for consumption in keeping abreast of other countries.

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The Ayeyawady Region, encompassing Labutta, Ngaputaw, and Pyapon townships, has historically been renowned for salt production. Cyclone Nargis wreaked havoc on salt farm infrastructures, devastating the lives and property of salt farmers in 2008. Despite the entry of high-priced Thai salt into the domestic market during that period, demand persisted due to the preference for quality salt.

Statistics indicate an average daily salt consumption of 0.5 ticals per individual, translating to a national demand exceeding 160,000 tonnes of fine salt annually. This presents a lucrative market for businesspersons to strategize how to meet the

The Burma Circle of the Geological Survey of India and their Contributions to the Geology of Myanmar

By THAN HTUN (GEOSCIENCE MYANMAR)

EPISODE: 28

Mr J J A Page returned to headquarters from Burma on 7 June 1908 and was subsequently reposted to South Burma to continue his investigations of the tin deposits. He departed headquarters on 16 October 1908. Mr Page's findings on the geology and tin deposits of the Mergui Archipelago and Tavoy district were documented in Volume XXXVIII, Part 1 of the Records of Geological Survey of India in 1908. I am delighted to provide a concise account of the granite islands in the Mergui Archipelago and Tavoy district, where I conducted tin and tungsten exploration both on land and offshore areas between 1974 and 1987 as part of the UN-aided Tenasserim Tin/Tungsten Project and Offshore Tin Exploration Project.

Mr Page continued his survey of the Mergui district, devoting the first quarter of the year to an examination of the archipelago. In these islands, granite forms the prevailing rock feature, and it occurs both in the gneissoid form, apparently similar to the usual Archaean gneiss, and in a distinctly intrusive form, the latter penetrating both the older granitoid gneisses and the sedimentaries.

The islands in which granite was observed may be divided into six groups: -

(1) The western group consisted of Moscos, Metcalfe, Great Western, Torres, Hayes, Fletcher and Clara. All the intermediate parts of this outer group are also probably granitic. Both kinds of granite were observed in this group.

(2) An ill-defined group comprises the western part of Elphinstone, southeast Elphinstone, Grant, the northern half of Ross, Maingay's, and smaller islands as far east as Cantor. The larger portion is of gneissose granite, into which the younger granites and numerous quartz porphyry dykes have pen-

etrated.

(3) A large domed outcrop, a little south of King's Island Sound, all the south of King's, Mergui, Sellore, Tucker, Julian, and the central ranges of Kissering. In this group, gneissose granites predominate.

(4) Parker and Domel, down to and including High Island, form another series of basal granites; they may be traced north through the Pickwick group into Cantor, south through the Gregories, and down the coast to Victoria Point and the adjacent islands.

(5) Davies Island is apparently an isolated granite outcrop, but extremely bad weather prevented the adjacent islands from being carefully examined, and there may be granites in the interior of St. Matthew's.

(6) Koolagyun and the low islands, mostly covered by swamps which extend for miles down the coast, are composed of granite, usually of the basal variety, with intrusive granites and pegmatite veins penetrating them in all directions. Quartz-porphyrines form a very important factor in group 2. They occur intrusive into granites and the sedimentaries.

Mount Elphinstone (west coast Elphinstone Islands), the peak on Maingay's, and Cantor are all examples of intrusion into granites; and Hayes, Julia, the extreme south of Cantor, and some islands east of Ross show examples of intrusions into slates. Jhonny, Paton, Allan and other islands nearby are composed for the most part, if not entirely, of quartz-porphyrines.

The series may be observed in the following groups of islands: Central Kings, some 7 miles from the east coastline. Iron, the north-east of Maingay's island and the adjacent islands, central and north-east Elphinstone, Macleod's, Southern Ross and adjacent islands, the Warden, Christmas, Bentinck, the Five Sisters, St Luke's, St Matthew's in parts, Bushby, Father and Son, Lord Loughborough, and Governor Swinton and Cavern are all of sandstone and belong to the lower part of the Mergui series. Hayes, Julia, Cantor (south end) and Sullivan

Mergui Series

Above the granitic rocks is a series of indurated sandstones, quartzites, slates and schists. As a rule, these rocks are much crushed, at times sparsely mineralised, and generally do not cover any considerable area. They are usually met within



Tenasserim Province, District of Mergui, 1854.
By J & C Walker, engravers

small mountain streams. Above these comes a series of slates, sandstones, grits and conglomerates. But they are not always all present, denudation having generally removed the last-mentioned rocks. As far as is known, Pataw is the only island formed of conglomerate.

The series may be observed in the following groups of islands: Central Kings, some 7 miles from the east coastline. Iron, the north-east of Maingay's island and the adjacent islands, central and north-east Elphinstone, Macleod's, Southern Ross and adjacent islands, the Warden, Christmas, Bentinck, the Five Sisters, St Luke's, St Matthew's in parts, Bushby, Father and Son, Lord Loughborough, and Governor Swinton and Cavern are all of sandstone and belong to the lower part of the Mergui series. Hayes, Julia, Cantor (south end) and Sullivan

cemented boulder-breccia and lithomarge.

They are all shallow, the laterite being seldom thicker than 14 feet, the conglomerates even less, and the lithomarge seldom over 60 feet. They all appear near granite and overlie them and the older Mergui series' adjacent slates, schists, etc.

The laterites and the conglomerates are often found associated with the laterites and the lithomarges in the more southern parts of the archipelago. The laterites on Koolagyun and some adjacent islands are rich in iron, which can be used as an ore.

The conglomerates in the vicinity of Yengan-Bokpyin often cover workable tin-bearing gravels and some of the felspar of the granites; the mottled appearance (red to blue) being due to the oxidation of iron derived from the dark mica, the tourmaline and the magmatic of the granites. The islands of Pumpkin, Pig, the Gregories, Carnac, Collins, Jenkins, etc, all furnish examples of these three younger deposits.

Cassiterite

Cassiterite is found in gravels on King's, Kissering and Davies Islands. On the first name, it has worked. Kissering is the best of the three and is worth prospecting, the cassiterite occurring within six feet of the surface. The tin on Davies Island, to be judged by the places tested in the stream that enters the sea near the southeast corner of the island, would not pay to work. All the granite of subgroup 2 is worth prospecting for cassiterite. Although quartz lodes were frequently found, none carried visible minerals of economic value.

Gold

Gold is found on Horsborough Island and has been worked. It occurs as small flakes in gravel at comparatively shallow depths. On Russel Island, a series of pyrite veins a little above sea level yield ten dwts gold or assay. Several quartz

stringers cross these veins.

Tavoy district

At the end of March 1908, Mr Page proceeded to the Tavoy district. In this district, tin mining was found to be at a standstill. The following localities in which stream washing is carried on during the monsoons were visited: -

- Maungmeshaug river.
- Ongbingwin.
- The Hindu River and its tributary streams, including the Hinda river.
- There are old workings in the vicinity of the granites near Wagon and about the village of Pagaye.

The investigation results hold out no great hopes for the future of the tin industry in this district. The following is a more detailed description of these localities.

(a) Maungmeshaug: The cassiterite is derived from the granites as well as from quartz veins at the slate-granite junction. Boulders of each of these rocks carrying cassiterite are to be found in the stream. Apparently, two concentrations have taken place, one in which the cassiterite was concentrated on a thin clay layer on the denuded slates, where the present stream washed them. The gravels are irregular, and the concentrated cassiterite will only pay to wash at intervals. European prospectors will find it more profitable to search for lodes in this locality than to work the gravels. Wolfram is associated with cassiterite and occurs in rather large irregular segregations and thin veins in larger quartz veins in the slates.

(c) The Hindu River and its tributaries drain a portion of the central range east of Wagon. The Hindu enters the Khamaungthway, the Hinda, and the Bean River, each tributary of the Great Tenasserim. Cassiterite, in quantities that should be payable, exists within a few feet of the surface, and in the valley of the Hindu, gold is found with the tin concentrate. Evidence obtained from boulders shows a strong probability of a quartz lode existing between the Hinda and Hindu. The boulders discovered carry tin payable proportion and indicate that the lode is at least 30 inches wide. This lode will cross streams which are already leased for lampan workings.

(b) Ongbingwin: The cassiterite occurs in quartz veins; the widest cassiterite-bearing vein found was only 12 inches thick.

(d) At the base of the granite hills near Wagon and north of the road, there are old workings, and in isolated patches, cassiterite, sufficiently concentrated to be worth washing on a small scale, may be found. This locality is approximately south-south-east of the tin workings on the Maungmeshaug stream. There is a possibility of lodes being found, but pits will be necessary. At Pagaye, there are tin-bearing gravels, which are, however, worked out. The quartz veins occur in slate of the Mergui series, which is partly metamorphosed to schist. This locality gives promise of future success to the prospector.

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ARTICLE

Cassiterite also occurs in small quartz stringers, which have penetrated the sandstones near the granites in directions that cause the sandstones to split in irregular rhomboidal masses. Probably, most of the cassiterite found in the gravels about the base of Kehdaung is derived from this source. For a long time to come, cassiterite will be concentrated in the streams during the monsoon in quantities that will pay to work. It is extremely doubtful whether it would pay a company to attack the hill on a large scale. The natives are only able to work the gravels down to about 6 feet, and from one or two who worked with European prospectors provided with pumps, it was ascertained that the concentrate proper is some 30 feet below the present surface.

Besides visiting the above localities, a tour was made from the Tavoy River, in a general south-easterly direction to near Mount Myinmolet-kat and down the Bean River to Myitta. The structure of this region is much the same as that of the archipelago. Numerous gravel areas looked like they might contain cassiterite, but testing them in stream cuttings even down to 14 feet proved unsuccessful.

In November, a tour was made across the country from the Tavoy to the coast and along the granite hills to the Heinze Basin. All the highland is granite, and the disintegrated granite sands cover large flats. Floods prevented panning in the streams, but from the general appearance of the country, there should be gravels worth working on, as well as lode formations near the granites worth testing.

References: Page J J A, 1908: *General Report for 1908, Record of Geological Survey of India, Vol. XXXVIII, Part 1.*

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NATIONAL

COVID-19 fund loans to film, media sectors prolonged by one year



Shooting crew prepare to take photos.

THE recovery committee announced on 31 January that the repayment period for the loans issued to nearly 900 businesses, including the film and media sector and the COVID-19 fund's loans have been extended by one year.

Loans have been lent to businesses most affected by the

film, music, press and media sectors since 28 January 2022 to recover from the economic damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Union government order extended the loan repayment period to 8 March 2023.

However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, businesses are

being affected again, and local firms have been instructed to extend the loan repayment period for the second time by another year from the date of the loan repayment period to facilitate financial operations.

A total of 879 companies and businesses from these sectors were issued loans amounting to K13.1325 billion from the COVID-19 fund, with an interest rate of one per cent and a loan term of one year, according to the statement. Therefore, from the above 879 companies and businesses that received loans from the COVID-19 fund, the businesses that have paid interest for the first and second years will be extended another year from the day the loan period reached two years. If someone fails to repay the loans, further action will be taken under the law, as described by the statement. — TWA/KZL



Portrait photo of director and photographer Ye Myint Lwin.

Senior director photographer Ye Myint Lwin passed away

A senior director and photographer, Ye Myint Lwin, passed away at the age of 61 on the evening of 1 February at his home in Mae Sot, Thailand, according to actress Mo Kham, his sister.

He has been a well-known director and photographer in the video industry since 1985.

His sister said that he died of gastrointestinal bleeding.

Director-cum-photographer Ye Myint Lwin is the son of Maw Tin Myo Kyin, a poet, photojournalist, songwriter, and model Yin Yin Myint, a makeup performer. He is the husband of singer Sheelar. — ASH/TRKM

200 staff positions needed for GTIs

THE Department of Technical, Vocational Education and Training of the Ministry of Science and Technology announced on 31 January that it is recruiting 200 staff members to serve in the Government Technological Colleges, Government Technical Institutes and Government Technical High School of the Department of Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

The department will recruit 200 staff members, including 50 accountants, 80 junior clerks, 40 office boys, 15 security personnel, and 15 office cleaners.

In addition, according to the

office demands, priority will be given to ethnic residents, according to the ministry.

Applications can be downloaded from the Department of Technical and Vocational Education and Training website at www.dtvvet.gov.mm or obtained from the nearest Government Technological Colleges, institutes, schools, and departments by 13 February. Applicants must take a written exam in Myanmar and English and general knowledge subjects and will be interviewed for relevant positions. — TWA/KZL

Myanmar attends European Parliament's New Year Reception in Brussels



The photo shows Mrs Roberta Metsola and some attendees.

ACCORDING to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Myanmar attended the New Year Reception organized by the European Parliament on 31 January in Brussels, Belgium.

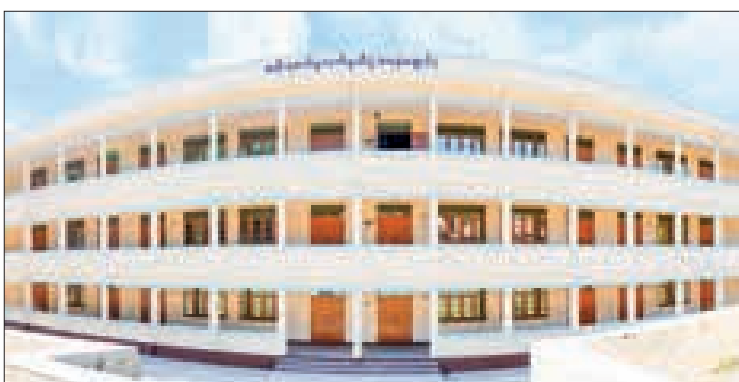
Myanmar Ambassador U Soe Lin Han from the Myan-

mar Embassy to Belgium was invited by Mrs Roberta Metsola, Speaker of the European Parliament, to attend the New Year Reception at the European Parliament. The Myanmar Ambassador expressed the New Year wishes to Mrs

Roberta Metsola for the best blessings in 2024.

The New Year Reception was attended by respective officials from the Embassies and organizations based in Brussels. European Parliament Speaker Mrs Roberta Metsola said current affairs like the Russia-Ukraine conflict and Gaza conflict are transforming the geopolitical and security landscape of the world, with Europe playing a significant part in this transformation. All nations must work together to overcome the difficulties and changes, Mrs Roberta Metsola continued.

After the reception, Mrs Roberta Metsola took a commemorative photo with the Myanmar Ambassador, including the heads of the Embassies, agencies and offices. — ASH/MKKS



The Government Technical Institute (Yenangyoung).

World's largest toy fair features games for grown-ups

THE world's largest toy fair in the German city of Nuremberg focuses on games and toys for adults this year. It opened on Tuesday and experts believe this high-spending target group has great potential for the industry. This year, some 2,000 exhibitors from 70 countries display their wares at the fair.

Toys that appeal to more than just children are part of the corporate philosophy of wooden building block manufacturer Kapla.

"The adults don't just play

with the children to give them a treat," inventor Tom van der Bruggen said. "They have fun with it themselves, and the children feel that."

Van der Bruggen invented the flat wooden blocks to recreate buildings such as the Eiffel Tower, animals and vehicles.

The table football game Tipp-Kick has also focused on children and adults for 100 years, said Matthias Mieg, managing director of the family business from southwestern Germany. — AFP



A visitor poses for photos with a Bumblebee figure at the Nuremberg International Toy Fair (Spielwarenmesse) in Nuremberg, Germany, 30 January 2024. PHOTO: ZHANG FAN/XINHUA

Record number of Japanese teachers on mental health leave raises concerns

A record high number of teachers in Japan were reported taking leave due to mental illness in the fiscal year of 2022, reaching 6,539, local media reported on Saturday, citing an education ministry survey as saying.

According to the Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Ministry, the figure from April 2022 to March 2023 marks the second consecutive annual increase, with a rise of 642 individuals compared to the previous year, national news agency Kyodo reported.

The figure, accounting for 0.71 per cent of all teachers across elementary, junior and high schools, as well as special needs schools, highlights the growing impact of mental health challenges within the education sector.

Experts suggest that the increased workload, particularly arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for infection prevention measures, may be contributing to the surge, the report said.

Over the past two years since the onset of the pandemic, the number of teachers on mental health leave has risen by more than 1,300, breaking from the previously stable trend of around 5,000, according to the survey.

The shortage of school teachers in Japan is considered a serious issue, with a declining interest among young people due to the perceived heavy workload. Additionally, experts note that more teachers are taking leave due to illness or childbirth. — Xinhua

Beijing museums to open to public during Spring Festival holiday



This photo taken on 27 December 2023 shows an interior view of the newly-opened Grand Canal Museum of Beijing, also called the Capital Museum East Branch, in the Beijing Municipal Administrative Centre in Beijing, capital of China. PHOTO: CHEN ZHONGHAO/XINHUA

Special exhibitions and activities will be featured in these museums during the holiday period, which spans from 10 February to 17 this year.

MORE than 100 museums in Beijing will open to the public during the upcoming Spring Festival holiday, according to the Beijing Municipal Cultural Heritage Bureau.

The bureau revealed 10 museum visiting routes, focusing on the cluster area of museums in Beijing, and exhibitions or special activities in museums, that will provide more choices for the public and tourists during the

holiday, which runs from 10 February to 17 February this year.

The Spring Festival, which falls on 10 February this year, marks the beginning of the Year of the Dragon, according to the Chinese zodiac, which assigns one of the 12 animals to each year.

Among the museums, the Capital Museum will identify and explore the dragon elements in its collection of cultural relics,

and carry out activities including a "dragon element cultural and creative exhibition" to show the Chinese dragon culture in an all-round way.

The Grand Canal Museum, meanwhile, will launch activities such as making dragon lanterns, and displaying intangible cultural heritage with Beijing characteristics. As of the end of August 2023, Beijing had a total of 218 registered museums. — Xinhua

Cambodia warns of serious effects from smoking e-cigarettes, shisha, heated tobacco products

CAMBODIA'S Ministry of Health warned on Sunday that e-cigarettes, shisha and heated tobacco products (HTPs) have caused serious effects on users' health, urging people, especially youth, not to try these products.

"The Ministry of Health is very concerned that most e-cigarettes, shisha and HTPs are beautifully designed, attractive to young people to try," the ministry said in a statement.

Although the country has banned the import, trade and use of e-cigarettes, shisha and HTPs since 2014, some opportunists still sell these products on social media platforms with exaggerated content claiming that they are a tool to quit smoking and safer than cigarettes, the



Vaping is as dangerous as smoking normal cigarettes but many people think e-cigarettes are not harmful. ILLUSTRATION: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/FACEBOOK

statement said.

"In fact, e-cigarettes, shisha and HTPs have really caused hazards to health and society," it said.

E-cigarettes and HTPs highly contain nicotine that

could have a more serious impact on health than cigarettes and these products are used with marijuana and other drugs, while shisha contains high levels of toxins, the statement said. — Xinhua

ECONOMY WORLD

S Koreans favour China over US for overseas direct shopping: S Korean media



The skyline of Beijing. **PHOTO: VCG/CHINA DAILY**

Mega-sized online shopping malls in China, including AliExpress and Temu, played a significant role in this shift by offering low-cost products and widespread online promotions.

CHINA has emerged as the top overseas direct purchase destination for South Koreans last year, surpassing the United States for the first time, the Korea Times reported on Friday.

Citing data from Statistics Korea released on Friday, the report said the overseas direct purchase market last year was primarily led by China, which has several mega-sized online

shopping malls such as AliExpress and Temu. These platforms attracted South Koreans with their low-cost products and pervasive online promotions.

Out of the total 6.75 trillion won (approximately 5.08 billion US dollars) spent by South Koreans on overseas direct purchases, China accounted for about 48 per cent, marking a remarkable 121.2 per cent in-

crease compared to the previous year, it said.

Quoting experts, the report highlighted that China's strength in the overseas direct purchase market is likely to persist for the time being, given that China's huge consumer market is continuing to expand and the country's robust and efficient online shopping landscape. — Xinhua

Washington's discriminatory subsidy policy on EV production bound to backfire



Aerial photo taken on 24 June 2022 shows the building of the Contemporary Amperex Technology Co., Ltd. (CATL), China's leading automotive lithium-ion battery maker, in Ningde, southeast China's Fujian Province. **PHOTO: JI CHUNPENG/XINHUA**

IN a recent letter submitted to the US government, Hyundai Motor Group complained that it is impractical to im-

mediately remove foreign entities of concern (FEOCs) from the electric vehicle battery supply chain for certain key minerals.

The South Korean automaker is concerned about the United States' new subsidy regulation for electric vehicles, which took effect in January under the Inflation Reduction Act. The regulation stipulates that starting this year, electric vehicles eligible for tax relief in the United States must not include battery components manufactured or assembled by any FEOCs, including Chinese companies. — Xinhua

Erdogan picks ex-Amazon economist to head Türkiye central bank

The reshuffle is seen as maintaining Erdogan's commitment to market economics, a shift observed after years of financial instability in Türkiye.

PRESIDENT Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Friday picked a former senior economist at the US online retail giant Amazon as the new head of Türkiye's central bank.

Fatih Karahan's appointment follows the resignation of Hafize Gaye Erkan after less than a year in office over a media scandal involving her family.

The reshuffle appears to keep in place Erdogan's newfound commitment to market economics following years of

financial turmoil.

Erkan won major plaudits from Western investors for spearheading a rapid series of interest rate hikes that helped stabilise the slumping lira and tame Turkey's dire cost of living crisis.

But the 44-year-old came under withering attack on social media and in some opposition publications for allegedly allowing her father to make unauthorised personnel decisions at the bank. — AFP



Fatih Karahan's appointment follows the resignation of Hafize Gaye Erkan after less than a year in office over a media scandal involving her family. Turkish Central Bank Governor Hafize Gaye Erkan. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

China pavilion at World Expo breaks ground in Japan's Osaka

THE China Pavilion at Expo Osaka, Japan, broke ground here on Friday, marking the commencement of construction for the venue highlighting green development and human-nature harmony.

About 200 people participated in the groundbreaking ceremony at Yumeshima, an artificial island in Osaka Bay, where the expo site is located.

Noting that Friday's ceremony signified a crucial step forward in China's participation in the expo, Chairman of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade Ren Hongbin said the council will collaborate closely with relevant parties to

make the China pavilion a dazzling "business card" for the expo, presenting a vibrant and multi-dimensional image of China to the world and advancing economic and trade exchanges and mutual understanding between China and other nations.

Citing good foundation of bilateral cooperation in terms of the world expo in 2025, Chinese Ambassador to Japan Wu Jianghao said that the China pavilion will present modern Chinese civilization and showcase China's rapid development, its open, inclusive and friendly image, helping build a community with a shared future for humanity. — Xinhua



More than 15 years after its launch the creator of bitcoin is still unknown. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Did Australian invent bitcoin? UK court examines claim

A court case starting in London on Monday will seek to determine whether Australian computer scientist Craig Wright invented bitcoin, the world's first and biggest cryptocurrency.

Wright says he is Satoshi Nakamoto, the pseudonym of bitcoin's creator and author of a white paper that introduced the cryptocurrency to the world in 2008. Crypto Open Patent Alliance (COPA), a non-profit organisation set up to keep cryptocurrency technology free from patents, is suing Wright over his claims first made in 2016 — resulting in the trial at London's High Court set to last six weeks.

The enigmatic programmer describes himself on X as "Crea-

tor of Bitcoin".

"I conceived bitcoin, and I unveiled it to the world," he last month wrote in a posting on the platform, formerly known as Twitter.

Wright, who on his website describes himself also as a businessman, has been involved in a number of lawsuits brought by himself but this time around is being asked to defend himself.

"The very concept of bitcoin from the beginning was open source," a COPA spokesperson told AFP. It "raises a reasonable question: is Satoshi Nakamoto the kind of person who would sue people for (re)publishing the white paper? We think obviously not". — AFP

Chinese automakers expand presence at Stockholm's eCarExpo

MG, steadily gaining traction in the Swedish market since its debut in 2021, celebrated the recent sale of its 20,000th car in the country.

THE eCarExpo 2024 opened here on Friday, with a strong presence of Chinese electric cars.

MG Cyberster, a sporty roadster manufactured by Shanghai-based SAIC had its Swedish premiere here and was a crowd-pleaser with many of the visitors admiring its "scissor" doors.

The brand has grown steadily in the Swedish market since the first model was launched here in 2021, MG Sweden's PR manager Emma Harnstrom told Xinhua.

"It was only days ago that we sold our 20,000th car in Sweden," Harnstrom said.

Xpeng, Zeekr, and the brand previously known as Ora in Europe but now trading under the GWM brand were also among the brands present.

"We have now sold close to 1,000 cars in Sweden since we entered the market in November 2022," Martin Jonsson, service manager at GWM Sweden told Xinhua.



People look at an electric vehicle of Zeekr at the Swedish eCarExpo 2024 in Stockholm, Sweden, on 2 February 2024. **PHOTO: PATRICK EKSTRAND/XINHUA**

YOUNGER GENERATION EMBRACES CHINESE CARS

The fact that most Swedes recently have not known of the GWM brand's existence does not mean that buyers are skeptical.

Part of the reason is that the guarantee is five years with unlimited mileage, while the battery pack is under an eight-year or 160,000-kilometre

guarantee.

"Of the cars, 95 per cent are also on a leasing contract, so customers have no reason to worry," Jonsson said, adding that the younger generation is more keen on trying new brands.

One of the visitors at eCarExpo told Xinhua that this is true, judging by the purchase patterns of his sons, aged 19 and 21. — Xinhua

Airlines learn patience in constrained Airbus-Boeing duopoly

WITH the latest Boeing crisis, airlines are staring down more delays, a familiar problem in a market in which both the US giant and rival Airbus face supply chain constraints.

Over the past year Boeing has struggled with difficulties on its star plane, the 737 MAX, culminating with a major in-flight safety incident on Alaska Airlines in early January.

Boeing had been eyeing a ramp-up of MAX production through 2025, but that plan has now been frozen by the Federal Aviation Administration.

The FAA's move likely will further slow Boeing's delivery

timetable, which was already behind schedule. While the manufacturer's European rival Airbus has avoided comparable safety troubles, it also faces a major headache due to a problem with engines built by Pratt



Airlines are grappling with additional delays due to the latest crisis at Boeing, compounding existing supply chain challenges faced by both Boeing and its competitor Airbus. **PHOTO: AFP**

& Whitney, a unit of RTX.

Hundreds of Airbus 320neo jets must be inspected between 2023 and 2026 to check for microscopic "contamination" of metals used to make the engines. — AFP

Dollar dazzles after hot US jobs data

RED-HOT US jobs data sent the dollar and bond yields higher on Friday as chances of an early interest rate cut faded.

Wall Street nevertheless mostly moved higher, buoyed by tech stocks and the silver lining of the jobs data pointing to the US economy avoiding a recession.

The US labour market smashed expectations last month in a surprise hiring pick-up, adding 353,000 jobs in January and the Department of Labour revising December's figure sharply higher.

The unemployment rate held steady at 3.7 per cent for a third straight month.

"If March wasn't off the table as far as rate cuts were concerned before today's payroll numbers, it's not even in the same room now," said CMC Markets analyst Michael Hewson.

US Federal Reserve boss Jerome Powell earlier this week dampened expectations of an early cut to interest rates, but the strong job creation figures and wage gains are likely to give policymakers additional pause before proceeding.

"The data exemplifies the concerns about inflation that we heard from the Fed," said Kathleen Brooks, research director XTB. — AFP

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

Sri Lanka, Thailand sign free trade agreement

The agreement, signed during Srettha's two-day visit to Sri Lanka, is anticipated to strengthen economic cooperation and foster deeper integration with Asian economies, aiming to benefit both nations.

SRI Lanka and Thailand signed a free trade agreement on Saturday, the President's Media Division announced.

The deal was signed in the presence of Prime Minister of Thailand Srettha Thavisin and Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe.

Srettha arrived in Sri Lanka on Saturday for a two-day visit, and he was accompanied by a high-level delegation. Srettha is scheduled to attend events to celebrate the 76th anniversary of Independence Day of Sri Lanka as guest of honor.

The free trade agreement is expected to bolster trade and investment ties between the two nations, and also promote deeper integration with Asian economies, the media division said.

Negotiations for the free trade agreement between Sri Lanka and



In this picture taken on 15 August 2002, a long-tail water taxi zips across Bangkok's industrial and commercial port. **PHOTO: STEPHEN SHAVER/AFP**

Thailand resumed in 2023 after being COVID-19 pandemic, local media reported. — Xinhua

OPEC Fund delivers record results in 2023 with USD 1.7 bln in development funding

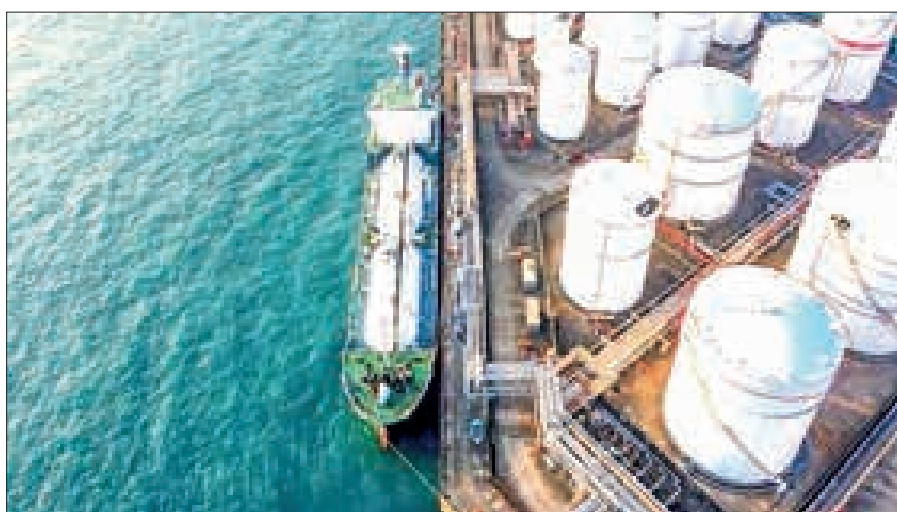
Established 48 years ago, the organization, under the leadership of Director-General Abdulhamid Alkhalifa, increased its impact amid a challenging global environment by growing its lending programme in response to strong demand from partner countries and successful fundraising from the capital markets.

THE OPEC Fund for International Development, a multilateral development finance institution headquartered in Vienna, Austria, expanded its new commitments to USD 1.7 billion across 55 projects globally in 2023, providing funding to address climate change and energy transition, support social and economic resilience and boost sustainable growth.

The organization was established 48 years ago and the 2023 results represent a record in new commitments.

OPEC Fund Director-General Abdulhamid Alkhalifa, said, "In 2023, the OPEC Fund increased its impact through the delivery of development support in a challenging global environment. We grew our lending programme across the board in response to strong demand by our partner countries and thanks to our success in raising additional funds from the capital markets.

"We were also able to leverage our



The OPEC Fund for International Development, headquartered in Vienna, Austria, achieved a record in new commitments, expanding its funding to USD 1.7 billion across 55 global projects in 2023 to address climate change, facilitate energy transition, enhance social and economic resilience, and promote sustainable growth. **PHOTO: ANI**

partnerships to mobilise development support by working with multilateral development banks and development finance institutions such as the Arab

Coordination Group. And we are well on track with our 2030 target to commit 40 per cent of all new financing to climate action." — ANI

Australia to set fuel efficiency standards after decades of debate

AUSTRALIA unveiled plans on Sunday to set mandatory fuel efficiency standards, matching long-existing rules in other advanced economies in a bid to get high-polluting gas guzzlers off the road.

Climate change minister Chris Bowen said a 'new vehicle efficiency standard' would be introduced by 2025, ending decades of foot-dragging and debate about the policy.

"The United States has had a similar policy in place for fifty years," Bowen said. "Australia still stands alongside Russia as one of the only advanced economies without the Standard."

"This is costing families and businesses thousands of dollars at the petrol pump," he said.

Australia currently has no mandatory fuel efficiency standards for new vehicles.

In a 2022 study, the Australia Institute think tank suggested that the lack of an efficiency standard was costing the country billions of dollars on fuel, and meant vehicles were 30 per cent more polluting than vehicles in the US.

Advocates have blamed climate-skeptic governments, as well as lobbying from oil refiners and car dealerships for repeatedly scuppering reforms.

"By giving Australians better choice of cleaner, cheaper-to-run cars, a strong fuel efficiency standard will cut household costs and clean up our air," said Amanda McKenzie, chief executive of the Australian environmental lobby group the Climate Council.

They hope the new fuel standard will make petrol vehicles more efficient but also catalyse slow sales of electric vehicles.

According to International Energy Agency data, 33,000 electric vehicles were sold in Australia in 2022. That compares to 73,000 in the Netherlands, which has about eight million fewer people. — AFP

SPORTS

Slovakia rout Serbia in Djokovic absence to make Davis Cup finals

SERBIA, without Novak Djokovic, proved no match for Slovakia who surged into the group stage of the Davis Cup finals for the first time, with Germany and Finland among five other countries qualifying on Saturday.

Slovak doubles duo Lukas Klein and Igor Zelenay clinched the deci-

sive point with a 7-6 (7/4), 6-3 win over Nikola Caci and Miomir Kecmanovic to take an unassailable 3-0 lead in the tie. Lukas Pokorny made it 4-0 after Laslo Djere retired while trailing in the first set of the reverse singles on indoor clay at Kraljevo.

"Too many years we didn't qualify but finally we made it," said Zelenay.

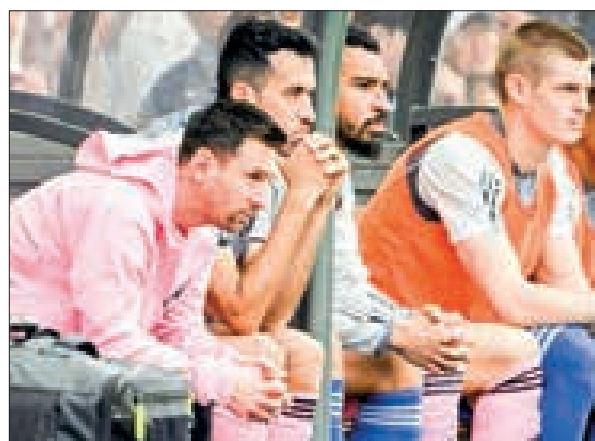
Alex Molcan, who won Friday's second singles, added: "We knew it was going to be tough against Serbians in their home nation. I'm happy we were able to win two matches today." Zelenay and Klein had recovered from a break in the first set, digging deep with 31 winners to see off 2010 champions Serbia. — AFP

OBITUARY

Daw Onma Maw, age 90, passed away peacefully on 4th February, 2024 at 9:09PM surrounded by family.

Born on October 2nd 1934, Daw Onma Maw was the beloved youngest daughter of Naingngandaw Adipadi (Dr. Ba Maw) & (Daw Khin Ma Ma Maw), daughter-in-law of Attorney General (U Chan Htoon) & (Daw Khin Khin Thein), wife of (U Ye Htoon (Roland Chan Htoon)), mother of Daw Yuza Maw Htoon & Dr. Phone Win, (Ko Ogga Maw Htoon), grandmother of Ma Hai Thi & Ko Zwe Lynn Ngwe, Ko Phone Maw Htoon, sister of (Daw Tinsa Maw Naing) & (Bo Yan Naing), (U Zarli Maw), (Dr. Malar Maw), (Daw Thida Maw) & (Mr. William Sturtevant), U Banyar Maw & Daw Kyu Kyu, (U Nayta Maw) & (Daw Aye Aye Thein).

Her funeral will be held on 5th February, 2024 (Monday) at 1:30 PM at Yayway Cemetery.



Lionel Messi remains on the bench during Inter Miami's friendly against a Hong Kong. PHOTO: AFP

Messi, Beckham booed after superstar sits out Hong Kong friendly

LIONEL MESSI and David Beckham were booed on Sunday after the Argentina superstar sat out Inter Miami's pre-season friendly in Hong Kong.

The World Cup-winning captain, who has a hamstring strain, stayed rooted to the bench throughout the 4-1 friendly win against a Hong Kong select XI.

It brought a show of anger from the near-capacity crowd of 38,323 who had paid upwards of 1,000 Hong Kong dollars (\$125) to see their hero, and in many cases a lot more.

Halfway through the second-half, chants of "We want Messi" rose around the Hong Kong Stadium from fans desperate to see the greatest footballer of his generation in the much-hyped exhibition game. The booing became louder during the

last 10 minutes when it became clear that the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner would not make even the briefest of cameos.

The jeers rose to a crescendo at the final whistle after former Liverpool and Barcelona striker Luis Suarez also failed to take to the pitch because of a knee injury.

Miami co-owner Beckham was drowned out by booing as he tried to thank the crowd "for their incredible support" while fans signalled their anger with thumbs-down gestures.

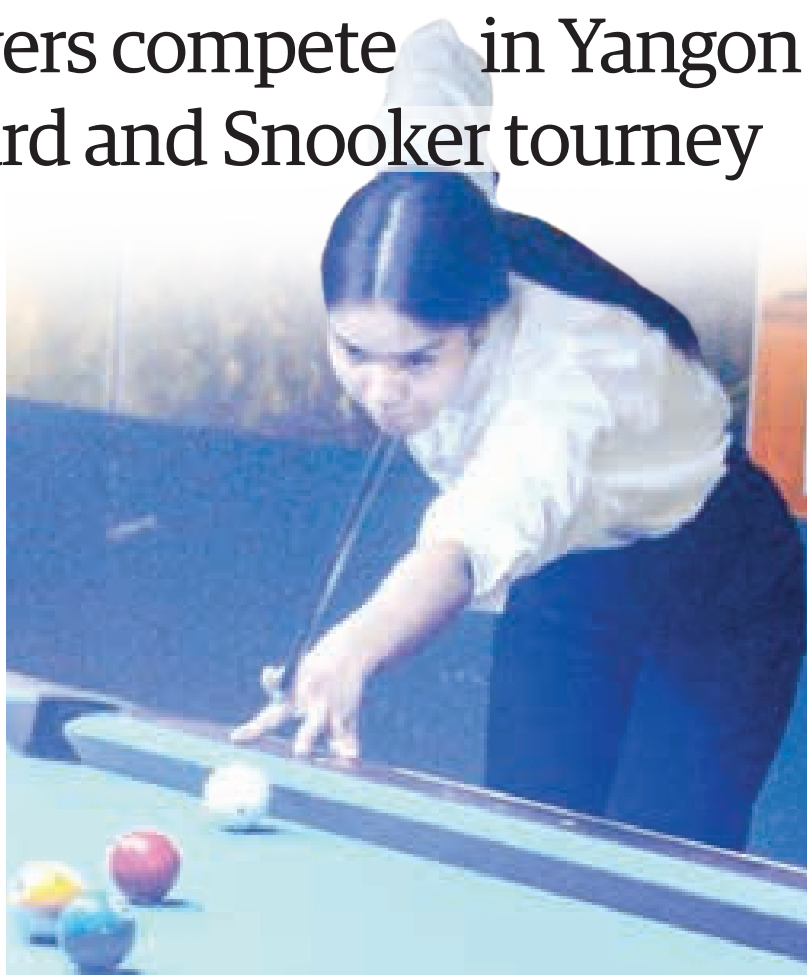
"We understand the disappointment of the fans for the absence of Leo (Messi) and Luis Suarez," Miami coach Gerardo Martino told reporters, explaining the club's medical team had taken the decision after an assessment on Sunday morning. — AFP

Over 100 players compete in Yangon Region's Billiard and Snooker tourney

IN commemoration of the 77th Anniversary of Union Day, the Yangon Region Chief Minister's Trophy inter-township men's and women's open billiards and snooker competitions were held at designated gymnasiums yesterday afternoon.

The knockout stages of the Snooker tournaments were held at the Urban Cue Billiards Hall while the Billiard and 9 Ball tournaments took place at Urban Asia in Yangon.

"The tourney represents states and regions. The first, second and third placed players will be selected for Yangon Region team. All the players except for professional players competed in the tourney," said chairman of the Yangon Region Billiard and Snooker Subcommittee U Kyaw Naing Oo. Over 100 players from 37 townships across Yangon Region took part in the tourney which will be held till 9 February. — Bala Soe/KZL



A player taking part in Yangon Region's Billiard and Snooker tourney. PHOTO: BALA SOE

Jordan plot South Korea upset as Asian Cup braces for semi-finals

Jordan is set to make history by facing South Korea in the Asian Cup semi-final, marking their first-ever appearance at this stage.



Hussein Ammouta has taken Jordan to the semi-finals. PHOTO: AFP

JORDAN will make a slice of history when they face Son Heung-min's South Korea in the Asian Cup on Tuesday while hosts and holders Qatar play Iran in the other semi-final. On paper South Korea would be expected to beat a Jordan side who are the lowest-ranked team left in the tournament and in the last four for the first time.

But Jordan held South Korea 2-2 in the group phase, with Jurgen Klinsmann's side salvaging a draw in injury time when Yazan Al-Arab deflected Hwang In-beom's shot into his own net.

Under their admired Moroccan coach Hussein Ammouta, Jordan scored twice at the death to beat Iraq in the last 16 and then saw off fairytale debutants Tajikistan in the quarter-finals. That put Jordan, who are 87th in the FIFA rankings and made their Asian Cup debut in 2004, into their first semi-final. — AFP



World's first floating nuclear power plant (NPP) Akademik Lomonosov is pictured at the port of Murmansk, Russia. PHOTO: SPUTNIK

US lags behind Russia in next-gen nuclear power - Report

Russia, particularly through Rosatom, dominates the market by providing fuel for small modular reactors (SMRs) that are more compact, efficient, and three times more powerful than traditional nuclear plants, with a notable presence in constructing conventional nuclear plants worldwide.

THE International Energy Agency predicts that by 2050 nuclear power production should double in order to meet the challenges of the global economy.

The US would like to dominate this market, however its resources are dwarfed by Russian expertise and technologies.

Russia dominates here, outshining the US on the nuclear energy market, "making almost all the world's" fuel for small modular reactors (otherwise known as SMRs), says a report by CNN.

SMRs are compact and efficient sources of energy that surpass traditional, huge nuclear plants in terms of

power, being three times more potent.

The report laments that Rosatom, the Russian state-run nuclear company, has already built or helped construct conventional nuclear plants in various countries such as China, Turkiye, Iran, Bangladesh, India, and Egypt.

However, it is only part of the US's concern, because several years ago, Russia built the first-ever floating nuclear power plant — the Akademik Lomonosov — that's currently docked in the region of Chukotka and supplies electricity to roughly 200,000 people on shore, using SMR technology.

Earlier, Sputnik reported that Rus-

sia is mulling the creation of a nuclear power fleet for Africa in order to supply it with cheap energy as part of Moscow's partnership with the continent.

While Russia is rapidly exporting its technologies to the nations of the Global South, "the US hasn't managed to get an SMR working commercially", CNN admits.

Russia's Akademik Lomonosov is the world's first floating industrial nuclear power supplier, designed to provide electricity to Russia's hard-to-reach regions and areas like the Extreme North or offshore oil and gas platforms.

— SPUTNIK

TOP NEWS

Sri Lanka celebrates 76th Independence Day

SRI Lanka celebrated its 76th Independence Day on Sunday with a military parade.

President Ranil Wickremesinghe delivered his Independence Day message, inviting all Sri Lankans, at home and abroad, to contribute their utmost energy to rebuilding the country.

Wickremesinghe said the government is steering the economy toward stability despite numerous impediments and challenges.

He said Sri Lanka is overcoming challenges progressively, owing to the steadfast support of citizens, who endured hardships in keeping with a comprehensive, long-term national rebuilding program. — Xinhua

Chile wildfires kill at least 51 in 'unprecedented catastrophe'

WILDFIRES blazing across Chile have killed at least 51 people, leaving bodies in the street and homes gutted, with flames continuing to spread on Sunday and the toll expected to rise.

President Gabriel Boric has decreed a state of emergency in the central and southern parts of the country "due to catastrophe", as dry conditions and temperatures soaring to 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) exacerbated the crisis. — AFP

China's Smart Dragon-3 rocket launches 9 satellites from sea

China successfully launched the Smart Dragon-3 (SD-3) carrier rocket from the sea, placing nine satellites into orbit during the third flight mission of the SD-3 rocket.

CHINA on Saturday launched a Smart Dragon-3 (SD-3) carrier rocket from the sea, sending nine satellites into planned orbit.

The rocket blasted off at 11:06 am (Beijing Time) from waters off the coast

of Yangjiang, a city in south China's Guangdong Province. The Taiyuan Satellite Launch Centre conducted the offshore launch. It was the 3rd flight mission to use an SD-3 rocket, said the centre. — Xinhua



A Smart Dragon-3 (SD-3) carrier rocket carrying nine satellites blasts off from waters off the coast of Yangjiang, a city in south China's Guangdong Province, 3 February 2024. (Beijing Time) on Saturday. PHOTO: AN DI/XINHUA