

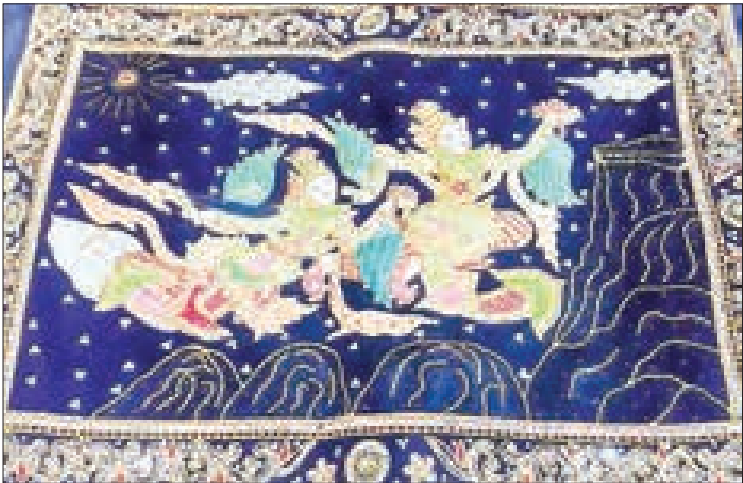
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SUNDAY EDITION



The image showcases some Myanmar traditional gold embroidery paintings.

Gold embroidery paintings secure domestic souvenir market share

Sales of traditional gold embroidery paintings have revived and secured a strong market in the domestic souvenir market, according to a Myanmar traditional souvenir shop in Yangon Region.

The owner of the Myanmar Ahla Souvenirs shop, U Maung Maung Aye, said that the gold embroidery paintings are attrac-

tive to international tourists with their creative fine arts. Thus, foreign tourists choose to buy the gold embroidery paintings. In addition, local companies, hotels, and residential houses buy them. Therefore, the gold embroidery painting market is getting more robust.

Items of higher sales turnover predominantly showcases

Myanmar traditions, including the Mandalay Palace wall, Yaddana horse, white elephant, palace, scenery, monasteries, and lake with lotuses. What is more, the report also states that embassies and international organizations order the designs with relevant countries' emblems and organizations' logos.

Myanmar traditional gold embroideries are created on the velvet sheet with embossed art, gold threads, pearl beads and sequins, crystal stones or gem stones, painting the scenes involved in the life of Buddha, Myanmar traditional festivals, royal events, battlegrounds, and animals that are valued by Myanmar, such as elephants, peacocks, and animals of seven days.

Only one person skilled in the art of gold embroidery is not enough to create a painting. It requires the collaboration of many skilled gold embroidery crafters at every step. Furthermore, they need to have an understanding of art, painting, and tailoring. Typically, it takes a minimum of a week to complete a gold embroidery painting. — ASH/TMT

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Training on banana fibre value-added product opens for new biz opportunities

MAI to expand Chiang Mai, Vientiane, Dhaka flights in April

MAI's acting chief executive officer and chief commercial officer, Mr Tanes Kumar, said during the MAI Flight Forward ceremony that Myanmar Airways International will expand its flights to Chiang Mai, Vientiane and Dhaka beginning in April. According to the MAI Flight Forward ceremony held at Lotte Hotel on 8 March 2024, a total of 21 international flights will be operated, and new flights will be expanded to Chiang Mai, Vientiane, and Dhaka.

MAI's new routes to Chiang Mai, Thailand, will operate weekly on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays starting 3 April 2024. MAI will also operate weekly flights to Vientiane, Laos, on Tuesdays and Thursdays com-

mencing 4 May 2024, and Doha, the UAE, on Wednesdays and Sundays, starting 8 May 2024 and Dhaka, Bangladesh, on Tuesdays and Saturdays beginning on 1 June 2024. MAI will also increase the number of flights to Dubai, Guangzhou and Bangkok's Don Mueang Airport in Thailand.

Similarly, MAI cargo-only flights run from Yangon to Kunming daily, Bangkok six times a week, and Phuket every Monday. MAI will resume domestic flights to Lashio and Loikaw, Nay Pyi Taw, and Kalay and Khamti and will also operate new routes to Homalin and Mawlamyine. Thus, it will operate 20 domestic flights. — TWA/KZL



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NATIONAL

Objectives of 79th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day 2024

- (A) To safeguard the State with the sacrifice of life by upholding Our Three Main National Causes: Non-disintegration of the Union, Non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty as the national policy of Tatmadaw;
- (B) To actively participate in implementing the processes of two national visions of the State: the prosperity of the country and food security by Tatmadaw members together with the government and ethnic people in their respective sectors;
- (C) To steadfastly implement enhancement of three capabilities in accord with the work process of Tatmadaw, such as study, practise and obey in building a modern patriotic Tatmadaw with powerful strength and sharpening prowess;
- (D) To provide necessary assistance to hold a free and fair multiparty democratic general election by Tatmadaw to ensure peace and stability, solidarity and development, which are actual needs of the State and to emerge a Union based on democratic and federal systems.



Yangon prepares for matric exam with 18,951 students

A total of 18,951 students are set to take the matriculation exam in Yangon Region in the academic year 2023-24, reports say.

The region accommodates 73 exam centres for the students taking the science, arts and science-arts subjects. Notably, there is only one examinee sitting for the Optional Myanmar subject.

Yangon Region Education Officer Deputy Director-General Dr Cho Cho Myat Aung said: "This year heralds the inception of the new Grade-12 system nationwide. Teachers and students alike are navigating the new curriculum for the first time, necessitating special training."

Although some students showed concerns about the new curriculum, they had worked hard the whole year, said the officer.

"We also provided support to the education staff to help them navigate this unfamiliar territory. I would like to advise the students to give their best effort and prioritize their health," she added.

The Department of Myanmar Examinations has released mock tests to help students familiarize themselves with the new curriculum. Additionally, both public and private school students can benefit from professors' insights on each subject by reading discussions published in State newspapers.

The regional government also organized enhancement of courses and talks for teachers to undergo training in the new curriculum. The exam will be held from 9 am to 12 pm, starting from 11 to 19 March, covering one subject per day. — Nyein Thu (MNA)/NT



Students, who sit the matriculation exam last 2022-2023 academic year, arrive at BEHS 4, Ahlon Township, Yangon last year.

Thanlyin's Minkyaung Pahtamapyan Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Candima Bhivamsa elected as SSMNC Chairman

THE State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee elected Presiding Patron of Thanlyin's Minkyaung Pahtamapyan Buddhist Learning Centre Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Dr Bhaddanta Candima Bhivamsa, aged 77 and vasa 57, as the Chairman of State Central Working Committee of the Sangha who has already served as the secretary of the SSMNC together with late SSMNC Chairman Bhamo Sayadaw for eight years.

The Eight State Central Working Committee of the Sangha held the second-day session of the sixth meeting to elect the chairman and the secretary of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee at Maha Pasana Cave in Mayangon Township yesterday.

The Chairman Sayadaw tabled a proposal for electing Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Maha Dhamma Kahtika Bahujana Hitadhara Bhaddanta Vasettha Bhivamsa of Dhamma Theikdhi Monastery of Masoeyin Taikthit Monastery in Mahaaungmyay Township as the secretary.

Members of the Sangha at the meeting approved their positions according to the wishes of the members of the Sangha.



Union Minister U Tin Oo Lwin pays homage to Chairman Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Candima Bhivamsa-elected on the second-day session of the sixth meeting yesterday.

The meeting discussed Vinicchaya, religious affairs, and education measures that were conducted within one year. Joint Secretary Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Sihanada responded to the discussions and sought approval.

At the meeting, members of the supervisory committee were selected for election for substitute positions.

Members of the Sangha at the meeting elected Chairman Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Candima Bhivamsa for his excellent performances in flourishing, perpetuation and purification of the Sasana as well as the unity of the Sangha organization in joining hands with the

government for many years and receiving the admiration of members of the Sangha from Myanmar as well as those from all Theravada Buddhist countries and other global countries.

Also present at the meeting were State Ovadacariya Sayadaws, members of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee and State Central Working Committee of the Sangha, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Tin Oo Lwin, departmental heads and the pro-rector of International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University.

Well-wishers offered members of the Sangha meals at the meeting. — MNA/TTA

NATIONAL

MIFER Union Minister attends 30th ASEAN Economic Ministers' Retreat Meeting

A Myanmar delegation led by Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations Dr Kan Zaw attended the 30th ASEAN Economic Ministers' Retreat Meeting, which was held in Luang Prabang, Lao PDR, on 8-9 March 2024.

The Union minister joined the welcome dinner of the ASEAN Economic Ministers' Retreat Meeting held on the evening of 8 March. He then attended the 30th ASEAN Economic Ministers' Retreat Meeting held on 9 March. The meeting was chaired by Malaithong Kommasith, Minister of Industry and Commerce of the Lao PDR and attended by the Economic Ministers from ASEAN and Timor-Leste, Senior Economic Officials (SEOMs) and representatives from ASEAN member countries, members of the ASEAN Business Advisory Council, the ASEAN Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General of the ASEAN Economic Community and officials.

As the first part of the meeting, ASEAN Economic Ministers interface with the ASEAN Business Advisory Council. At the meeting, the ASEAN Business Advisory Council presented the priorities for 2024 and recommendations for strengthening



ASEAN member countries' economic ministers including Union Minister Dr Kan Zaw pose for the documentary group photo at the 30th ASEAN Economic Ministers Retreat Meeting in Luang Prabang, Lao PDR.

regional economic integration and public-private cooperation.

In the second part of the meeting, ASEAN Economic Ministers discussed and gave guidance on the activities to be carried out under the ASEAN economic pillar according to the outcomes from the 43rd ASEAN Summits, Lao PDR's Priority Economic Deliverables (PEDs) for 2024, AEC Annual Priorities for 2024, issues of signing the ASEAN economic agreements, the progress of the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement upgrade negotiation, progress of

the ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA) Negotiations, progress in the implementation of initiatives on sustainability under the ASEAN Economic Community, progress of the implementation of the AEC Blueprint 2025 and the development of the economic components of post-2025 AEC, study on New and Emerging Issues in ASEAN Plus One FTAs, progress of the ACFTA 3.0 Upgrade Negotiations and the implementation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. In addition, during

the meeting, the Ministers endorsed the ASEAN Services Facilitation Framework (ASFF).

During the meetings, the Union minister endorsed Lao PDR's Priority Economic Deliverables (PEDs) for 2024 together with the other ASEAN Economic Ministers and discussed that these priorities are suitable to be implemented for the current time; it is essential to complete and implement this year; it is necessary to consider the way to solve the effects that may be encountered in carrying out these priorities. He also ex-

pressed the need to speed up the negotiations for the completion of the ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement (3.0) upgrade negotiations by 2024. Regarding the establishment of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Cooperation (RCEP) Support Unit, the Union minister highlighted that Myanmar is working with the member countries. As the member countries, it is crucial to maintain the principles of equality, mutual obligation and ASEAN centrality.

U Aung Ko, Ambassador of Myanmar to the Lao PDR, Dr Marlar Myo Nyunt, ASEAN Senior Economic Official of Myanmar, and officials also attended the meeting. The Preparatory Meeting of the Senior Economic Officials for the 30th AEM Retreat was held on 8 March 2024, and the Director-General of the Foreign Economic Relations Department, who is ASEAN Senior Economic Official of Myanmar, and officials participated in the meeting.

The meeting reportedly focused on Digital Economy, Circular Economy, Carbon Neutrality, Blue Economy, supply chain for MSMEs, Trade and Investment Facilitation, regional economic development and economic integration activities. — MIFER



MoRAC Union Minister receives Italian water expert

UNION Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Tin Oo Lwin received Dr Massimo Sarti, an Italian water expert from the University of March from Italy, in Yangon yesterday.

During the meeting, they cordially exchanged views on matters pertaining to the maintenance of water channels, dredging water canals so as not to affect the ancient buildings in case of natural disasters, drafting of a topographic map for waterways, restoration of lakes and dams in the cultural zone, reconnection of lakes and creeks, ancient lakes renovation plans, ongoing work processes and field study on water supply and drainage system of the Bagan era. — MNA/KTZH

Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Tin Oo Lwin holds talks with Dr Massimo Sarti, an Italian water expert from the University of March, in Yangon yesterday.

NATIONAL

Myanmar migrant's funeral held after fatal road accident while shopping before return



Ko Thant Zin's funeral.

THE funeral of a Myanmar migrant who died after being hit by a car while shopping for souvenirs a day before going home was held on 8 March.

Ko Thant Zin, 41, a resident

of Klang, Selangor, Malaysia, was hit by a car and killed while crossing the road on the night of 1 March.

"He was planning to return the next day. He died on the spot

from severe head injuries. After receiving the necessary approval letters from Myanmar, his body was cremated on 8 March," said an official from the Myanmar Social Welfare Association (Malaysia).

Myanmar nationals in Malaysia attended his funeral at the Puchong crematorium at 11 am.

Ko Thant Zin, a legally working migrant, was a native of Wethike village, Salin township, Magway Region.

In another similar road accident while crossing the street on 16 June 2023, Ma Pyay Khin Mel (24 years old) from Nattalin village, Paukhaung, Bago Region, also died on the spot, and her body was cremated in Malaysia on 25 June 2023. — MT/ZN

Counter-argument to false information

Fake news spread: Women for military service might face violence

THE malicious media outlets spread fake news, claiming that the women's organizations, including Hninzi Yaung Women's Union, released statements to raise public concerns saying the women who are recruited to serve in the military might face violence.

Regarding the People's Military Service Law, the phone numbers to be able to contact the Central Body for Summoning People's Military Servants were released on 13 February, and it was also announced that, at present, women would not be recruited for military service yet. Moreover, SMS is also sent to notify the public of information

regarding the People's Military Service Law, which can be explored at <https://mod.gov.mm/node/74>.

However, malicious media outlets circulate misinformation and rumours, saying that pedestrians are being forcibly taken as porters and stimulating young people to lead in the wrong ways. Currently, they also circulate fake news like women might be forcibly taken for military service.

Therefore, accurate information, public awareness talks and announcements regarding military service are being broadcast or released via the State-run media and at <https://mod.gov.mm/node/74>. — MNA/KTZH

YPS card, QR services available for 90 YBS bus lines

YPS card and QR services have been extended step by step, and now they can be used for 90 bus lines and will be continued for the rest of the bus lines, according to Yangon Payment Services-YPS.

These services are currently available on the following bus lines: YBS (55), YBS (13), YBS (57), YBS (63), YBS (42), YBS (65), YBS (22), YBS (64), YBS (111), YBS (133), YBS (134), YBS (84), YBS (135), YBS (142), YBS (130), YBS (136), YBS (138), YBS (139), YBS (39), YBS (21), YBS (131), YBS (80), YBS (81), YBS (132), YBS (85), YBS (76), YBS (27), YBS (66), YBS (79), YBS (12), YBS (14), YBS (25), YBS (30), YBS (38), YBS (117), YBS (128), YBS (100) and YBS (103).

Further bus lines — YBS (19), YBS



A passenger using the YPS QR service via mobile phone for bus fare payment.

(40), YBS (35), YBS (61), YBS (68), YBS (137), YBS (62), YBS (87), YBS (108), YBS (88), YBS (37), YBS (43), YBS (96), YBS (104), YBS (109), YBS (72), YBS (89), YBS (24), YBS (28), YBS (58), YBS (113), YBS (36), YBS (116), YBS (11),

YBS (115), YBS (60), YBS (29), YBS (17), YBS (141), YBS (145), YBS (26), YBS (114), YBS (15), YBS (10), YBS (7), YBS (112), YBS (8), YBS (4), YBS (59), YBS (2), YBS (3), YBS (110), YBS (32), YBS (78), YBS (93), YBS (94), YBS (118), YBS (97), YBS (143), YBS (23), YBS (144) and YBS (66) — have also started providing the services.

YPS cards and YPS QR services are available at YPS counter one at Sule and YPS counter two at Thakin Mya Park. YPS counter three is at Myanmar Plaza, YPS counter four is at Hledan, and YPS counter five is at the 8th mile (in front of Junction 8).

"We have jointly worked with respective bus lines for cases where some YBS bus lines closed card readers. If

passengers take a record of the bus number and bus line number, we will carry out inspections and take action promptly," YPS announced.

For the use of the YPS QR system, the MPyys+ Application (Android version) can be downloaded from the Google Play Store or Huawei AppGallery, and it can be used after registration.

"Some bus lines don't open card reader. A QR code is more convenient, though it is not supported for some phones. We want them to be reformed. Some drivers behave impolitely towards passengers, and we want also it to be repaired," said Ko Pyae Sone, a company employee who uses YPS service every day. — MT/ZS

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NATIONAL

Film, theatre, music and literary artistes to receive free eye surgery

THE artistes from the realms of film, theatre, music and literature will receive eye surgery free of charge by ophthalmologists from Thailand, Cambodia and Myanmar, according to U Nay Win, Secretary of the Myanmar Theatrical Association (Central).

The ophthalmologists from Thailand, Cambodia and Myanmar will provide free eye surgical treatment to the artistes starting from 10 March under the patronage of Shweratu Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida Dhamma Bhandagarika Myinmu Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vamsapala Lankara and Tipitaka Sayadaw Bhaddanta Paññasila Lankara.

“The Myanmar Theatrical Association (Central) warmly

welcomes the offering to provide free eye surgical treatment and arranges coordination with related associations to provide the free eye surgical treatment. Individuals who want to undergo the surgery have to contact the relevant associations by the end of March,” said U Nay Win.

Commencing on 10 March, artistes from all over Myanmar will be given free eye surgery at the Shweratu Tipitaka Cakkhupala Eye Hospital (Yangon) in Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) Township.

Accommodation arrangements will reportedly be made for eye patients who come from other regions and states. — ASH/MKKS



Eye specialists examine eye patients at Shweratu Tipitaka Cakkhupala Eye Hospital in Yangon.

U Nar Auk's architectural legacy preserved in Kayin State



Religious buildings donated by U Nar Auk in Kayin State.

THE Kawhnat Monastery Heritage Trust safeguards the religious buildings commissioned by the Mon national tycoon, U Nar Auk, maintaining the integrity of the original works in Kawhnat Village, Hpa-an Township, Kayin State. These structures showcase a blend of architectural styles from the late Konbaung era, India, China, and Europe.

Trustee U Min Maung Nwe stated, “U Nar Auk funded the construction of this monastery. The Mahavijaya Ordination Hall and the Dipankara Prayer Hall showcase marvelous architectural masterpieces. The prayer hall's ceiling boasts intricate glass mosaic flower patterns crafted by Chinese architects alongside

relief sculptures sculpted by Myanmar artisans using teak. The windows in the ceiling are inspired by the early colonial-era India-European style.”

The prayer hall has a history of 137 years, while the ordination hall stands at 116 years old. The religious buildings, commissioned by U Nar Auk, are renowned for their exemplary designs and continue to captivate curious visitors to this day.

The tycoon enlisted artisans from Mandalay to design the prayer hall with a 12-tiered steeple. The inside wall features sculptures depicting the life of Gautama Buddha, from His birth to the sharing of His remaining relics after His passing. Additionally, the

prayer hall houses sculptures that portray the lives of Kings Manuha, Anawrahta, and Kyansittha.

The prayer hall's rich architectural heritage is further enhanced by two 20-foot-tall standing Buddha statues, each carved from a single teak tree.

The reliefs, ceilings, walls, doors and columns are ornamented with gilded glass mosaics. The rare gold-leaf paintings in the hall are exceedingly magnificent.

To reach Kawhnat Village, visitor follow the Hpa-an-Zathapyin-Mawlamyine road and make a right turn after traveling approximately 15 miles. They can look for the sign indicating “To U Nar Auk Pagoda” at the junction. — ASH/NT

“Traditional Myanmar” short film competition winners awarded

THE Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization (MMPO) awarded the creators of the winning films in the short story competition with the theme “Traditional Myanmar” in a ceremony to mark the 78th anniversary of the organization.

The short story competition was convened to commemorate the 78th anniversary of the organization, held on 8 March at the Film Hall of the Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization.

Actor Academy Yan Aung said that the organization awarded nine winning short films in the “Myanmar Traditional” film competition for the 78th anniversary of MMPO, which was founded on 8

March 1946.

The winning short films “Sinswe Kakyoe”, “Yoeyarpyaw Sinpwetaw”, “Tadinga Padauk”, “Aphantayaryine hnint Kankyamar Hline”, “Pann Say Yar”, “Layaung san hma Pwint Thi Pan”, “Swellanchin”, “Thone-narnyi Trigan” and “Latkhokthan hnint Yatkan” were awarded.

Deputy Minister for Information U Ye Tint, patron U Aung Lwin, and academy director U Zaw Myint Oo gave honorary speeches at the ceremony. Moreover, actors, directors and professionals from various aspects of the Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization attended the ceremony. — ASH/TRKM



A creator of a winning film in the “Traditional Myanmar” short film competition seen being awarded.

NATIONAL

Yangon Pet Expo 2024, Myanmar Grand Dog Show held for pet lovers

YANGON Pet Expo 2024 and Myanmar Grand Dog Show 2024 are being held at the Yangon Convention Centre in Mayangon Township on 9 and 10 March, sponsored by Myanmar Livestock Federation, Myanmar Pet Society and Myanmar Tourism Federation, and organized by Silver Sea International Ltd.

Since it is a Pet Expo exhibition, pet lovers can bring their pets and buy and feed them food. In addition, the audience can see and study the exciting displays of animal-related medicines, healthcare service companies, and accessory sales booths.

The exhibition featured 41 booths from 16 companies. In addition, 15 SME shops, as well as seven hotel and tour



Visitors through the Yangon Pet Expo 2024 yesterday.

operator booths, are participating with the support of the Myanmar Tourism Federation.

An animal competition was featured at the event, and

visitors to the exhibition had the chance to win vacation trip gifts from the Summer Travel Fair through a lucky draw system. — Myo Min Thura/TKO

MoI plans to lease its solar & electronic factories to private investors

SOLAR, electrical and electronic equipment and other industrial product manufacturing factories currently owned by No 2 Heavy Industries Enterprise under the Ministry of Industry will be leased to private investors, according to the ministry.

The ministry is planning to invite expressions of interest (EoI) from domestic and foreign private investors for

a long-term lease/venture of No 24 Heavy Industry (Dagon) in South Dagon Industrial Zone 1, Yangon Region, which manufactures solar, electrical and electronic equipment and other industrial products. The industry is currently being operated by the ministry's No 2 Heavy Industries Enterprise.

Domestic and foreign companies that have a de-

sire to invest should apply and receive an expression of interest form from the Administration Department of No 2 Heavy Industries Enterprise by submitting relevant documents, valid company registration, and company credentials at Office No 41 in Nay Pyi Taw starting 11 March and submit them by 3 pm on 8 April. — TWA/TKO

Tenders open for entrance, parking fees at Mya Kyuntha Resort, Inya Park

THE Playgrounds, Parks and Gardens Department under the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) will invite a tender to charge entrance and parking fees for Mya Kyuntha Resort and Inya Park.

The entrance fee and

parking fee collection measures of Mya Kyuntha Resort in Mayangon Township and Inya Park in Kamayut Township will be leased through tender, and tender applications will be sold at the Playgrounds, Parks and Gardens Department (Head Office) in

U Ottama Park, Dagon Township, from 8 to 22 March.

The tender applications must be submitted to the office as mentioned above by 4:30 pm on 26 March, and the tender will be opened at the City Hall at YCDC at 1 pm on 28 March. — TWA/TKO

NEWS In BRIEF

Empowering women for national development

STATE Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing delivered a speech at the International Women's Day ceremony on 8 March, where he expressed his commitment to providing opportunities for women to participate in business, peace, and social community development activities based on their strengths. Moreover, he added that women must be given the power to partake in the necessary sectors for the country's development.

Myanmar CDC, Training Centre construction 93% complete

THE Ministry of Health announced that 93 per cent completion of the construction work on the three-story building for the Centre for Disease Control (Myanmar CDC) and Prevention, as well as the Health Staff Training Centre, has been completed. The building will house three international-level biosafety laboratories equipped with disease prevention and control systems. The construction work for the facility that started in 2021 was made possible with the aid of the Chinese government.

743 junior clerk positions open at Medical Services Dept

DEPARTMENT of Medical Services under the Ministry of Health offers 743 vacant positions available for junior clerk roles at its central level hospitals, hospitals, and office departments. Applicants must not exceed 30 years of age as of 9 March, and government staff members must not be older than 35. The examination entrance fee is K 1,000, payable through a bank transfer at the relevant branches of the Myanmar Economic Bank in the respective townships. Applicants are required to submit their payments to the bank accounts of the Myanmar Economic Bank, addressed to the Department of Medical Services in Nay Pyi Taw region, not later than the office hours of 9 April.

Myanmar needs economic policies for stability

UNION Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn emphasized the necessity of establishing economic policies to support Myanmar's economic stability during the Geo-Economics and Myanmar Workshop held at the Assembly Hall of the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw. Additionally, he noted that Myanmar is strategically located between two countries with the largest populations and ranks as the second largest in the world. Consequently, some of the strategic interests of both countries are closely related to Myanmar.

Electricity to be provided for 900 villages

ACCORDING to the Department of Rural Development, around K20 billion will be spent to provide electricity for 900 villages that do not have access to electricity. The project aims to provide rural lighting projects such as household solar systems and renewable energy micro-power systems in villages that are more than 10 miles away from the power grid and do not have access to electricity. — TWA/Htun Htun/TRKM

Training on banana fibre value-added product opens for new biz opportunities

YANGON Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein inspected the Nyaungnapin Agriculture and Livestock Special Zone 2 in Hmawby Township yesterday and observed the training on producing value-added products from the banana fibre at Yadana Shwe Moe agricultural farm.

The chief minister observed the value-added products produced from banana fibres and met the trainees. He encouraged them, stating that the State is promoting the production of local products as import substitution goods. He emphasized that producing goods from waste materials can help preserve the natural environment and that promoting these products could attract tourists. Additionally, he urged them to produce interesting items and to understand the market. Finally, financial assistance was



A trainee demonstrates extracting banana fibres and threads at the training on producing value-added products from the banana fibre at Yadana Shwe Moe agricultural farm. **PHOTO: THIHA**

provided to the trainees.

The training is aimed at individuals interested in establishing handmade businesses utilizing waste products from banana trees, including banana growers and women. Its objectives include creating eco-

economic opportunities through handmade businesses and promoting the development of Myanmar's traditional handmade arts. The training will cover various aspects, such as extracting banana fibres and threads and producing banana

paper, slippers, mats, bags, and hats, with practical exercises included.

The training, managed by Green Banana Myanmar Group, will span nine days, running from 9 to 17 March without any breaks, with sessions held daily

from 9 am to 5 pm. Additionally, there will be an advanced training programme focusing on looming with banana threads, weaving with banana threads, extracting threads, and producing textiles and scarves. This advanced training will extend for 15 days following the completion of the initial training.

There are thousands of banana plantations across the country. Manufacturing value-added products from banana fibres and threads will help boost the country's economy, support MSME development, and create job opportunities. Myanmar entrepreneurs are eager to produce creative local items from banana fibres and threads, as other countries have successfully produced papers for sound-proof systems, waterproof papers, and various personal items from them. — Nyein Thu (MNA)/TMT

Seintalone mango sales thrive locally amidst unpredictability of other varieties

ALTHOUGH other mango varieties are yet to be predicted, Seintalone mango sales are good in the local fruit market, according to mango growers.

“Currently, the market is good. Good-quality mango price never declines. Myanmar people who enjoy good taste have an appetite only for Seintalone, and they buy it however much it is expensive. But they may choose another if the price is extremely high,” said an official from the Myanmar Mango Producer and Exporter Association.

It is early to predict the seasonal mango market.

“It is a bit early to say. Trees are in bloom, but some fell, so fruit can be produced as much as expected. Some trees are full of flowers but can't produce much fruit. It seems fruit



Seintalone mangoes on display at the local market.

production may decline. I'm not sure,” said a mango grower.

Of mango export routes, there is no halt in export by air to Singapore and other countries, according to mango exporters.

At present, Seintalone mango is mainly sold for local consumption, and exports are just 35 per cent so far; therefore, exporters have been trying to expand the overseas market. — Thit Taw/ZS

CBM to inject 50M Thai baht via online trading platform on 11 Mar

THE Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) will reportedly sell 50 million Thai baht to exporters and importers on 11 March via an online trading platform.

On 5 March, CBM sold 7 million yuan and 12 million Thai baht through the online trading platform. On 4 March, CBM also injected US\$10 million and 200 million Thai baht into the foreign currency market. Therefore, CBM sold a total of \$10 million, seven million yuan and 262 million Thai baht in early March.

CBM injected \$77.38 million and 850 million Thai baht in February, \$68.33 million, 313.5 million Thai baht and 4.2 million yuan in January.

However, CBM does not disclose the exchange rates of the US dollar, Thai baht and Chinese yuan. Although the CBM forex reference rate is K2,100 per dollar, the rate reaches K3,650 per dollar in the market. Also, it is K102 per Thai baht and K496 per yuan in the market.

CBM announced that a floating forex rate is allowed commencing on 5 December 2023. The announcement further mentioned that CBM would no longer set the forex reference rate and the authorized dealers could carry out exchange transactions independently through online trading. In addition, foreign currencies purchased from the market shall be transferred abroad in accordance with rules and regulations developed by the Foreign Exchange Supervisory Committee. — NN/TMT

OPINION

Promote gender equality in Myanmar society

ON THIS International Women's Day, a global call to action resounds, emphasizing the persistent challenges faced by women in attaining equal participation in the economic sector. Despite strides made in enhancing various facets of society on a global scale, women continue to grapple with significant hurdles in achieving parity with men.

The current thematic focus underscores the pivotal role of equal rights for women and girls across key domains such as education, health, job opportunities, financial services, and literacy. It is imperative to recognize that fostering gender equality is not merely a moral imperative but a strategic investment in the future. Addressing the needs of women and girls, augmenting their capabilities, and empowering them in studies, income generation, and leadership

positions are pivotal steps toward building a more inclusive and prosperous society.

In striving for a peaceful and prosperous society, it is paramount to reject gender discrimination. Both men and women in Myanmar are national brethren, and collective efforts are essential to overcoming daily challenges and advancing socioeconomic well-being without distinction. Embracing this ethos will undoubtedly contribute to the nation's journey towards a more equitable and thriving future.

In Myanmar, the majority of women now exhibit capabilities that rival those of men, contributing significantly to family, societal, political, economic, and overall developmental measures. Unlocking the potential of women is crucial for the nation's modernization, requiring concerted efforts to facilitate their participation across essential sectors.

Investing in the education sector is paramount, not only in urban but also in rural areas. Bridging the educational gap for girls and women who missed formal schooling by providing vocational courses is essential for empowering them to stand tall in their communities. This approach fosters independence, enabling women to operate their businesses, particularly in small-scale enterprises, thereby catalyzing economic growth.

The government's initiatives to develop micro-, small-, and medium-scale enterprises (MSMEs) align with the goal of enhancing women's participation. Implementation of the Social Security Law, including the establishment of nursery units at workplaces with more than 100 female workers, addresses concerns related to family affairs, ensuring a conducive work environment for women.

The Department of Advanced Science and Technology, under the Ministry of Science and Technology, plays a crucial role in human resource development and technological enhancement. The inclusion of both genders in training courses, based on merit and adherence to specific criteria, paves the way for women to engage in skill development programmes actively.

In striving for a peaceful and prosperous society, it is paramount to reject gender discrimination. Both men and women in Myanmar are national brethren, and collective efforts are essential to overcoming daily challenges and advancing socioeconomic well-being without distinction. Embracing this ethos will undoubtedly contribute to the nation's journey towards a more equitable and thriving future.

A Bead of Sweat

By Chit Ko Pe

Potassium, Magnesium, Calcium and Sodium in sweat, I wonder whether such mineral deposits are correct.

I work without rest till late at night so as - to have meals for a dinner set, to pay daily loan interest, to get an extra penny for a child's snack.

It is more accurate and a real fact. A bead of sweat on my forehead, it is the witness!



ကျွန်းတစ်စက်

ချစ်ကိုပေ

ချွေးတစ်စက်မှာ ပိုတက်စီယမ် မဂ္ဂနီစီယမ် ကယ်(လ်)စီယမ် ဆိုဒီယမ် ခြပ်ခံခြပ်သား အမှန်လား။

ညစာချက်ရန်၊ ဆန်မကျန်တော့ နေ့ပြန်တိုးပေး၊ အကြွေးအေးဖို့ ကလေးမှန်ဖို့၊ ပေးနိုင်နိုးနိုး ချိန်တိုးပိုလုပ်၊ ညမိုးချုပ်တိုင် ကျွန်ုပ်မနာ။ မအားရက်ဘူး နဖူးပြင်ထက်၊ ချွေးတစ်စက်ရဲ့ ပြချက်သက်သေ ပိုမှန်နေ။ ။

Rain

By Min Thu Wun (Translated by Myint Zan)

as though it is going to actually rain thither there are 'mountain-like' dark clouds

'tis does not want to pour; brown clouds galore spreading the whole sky

Translator's comments: Sayagyi Min Thu Wun (10 February 1909-15 August 2004) composed this poem on 17 May 1936. Translation on 5 March 2024.

The translator is reminded of the title of a famous short story, 'Rain', by William Somerset Maugham (25 January 1874-16 December 1965). The short story was initially named 'Miss Thompson' when first published in April 1921, but later the title was changed to 'Rain'. If not in May 1936, when Min Thu Wun composed



the poem, then in later years, the poet almost certainly must have read Maugham's short story. In mentioning this, there is no other inference apart from stating the exact title that was in Maugham's short story of 1921 and Min Thu Wun's poem composed and published in 1936.



ဟတ္ထိပတ္တိ ရွာမလို မိုး တောင်က ညို။ မရွာလို မိုးညို ပျံ့တယ် ကောင်းကင် အနံ့။

မင်းသုဝဏ် (၁၇၊ ၅၊ ၃၆)

My Prayer

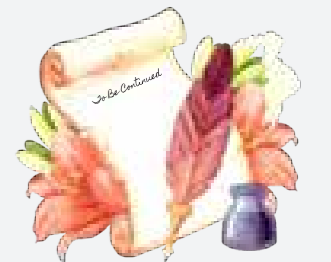
By Maung Swe Ngae

No shelter, no wall in the location Though it's in an exposed position, It's really free from apprehension.

Throughout the three seasons, in effect Taking no heed of heat or coolness Speaking nothing and existing in silence In the secular abode of the world All the troubles it has encountered Though putting up with suffering through, Begrudges no one and remains peaceful.

Withstanding the hardships of the three seasons And taking a stand with dynamism, As an example of the Statue That suffers all fates and vicissitude Let me have such endurance in truth!

(Translated the poem in Myanmar that appeared in the Weekly Journal 'အတွေးသစ်' or 'The New Thought' on 3-8-2009.)



အကျွန်ုပ်ဆုတောင်း

အမိုးဗလာ၊ အကာမဲ့ကင်း ဟင်းလင်းပြင်မှာ၊ နေရပါလည်း သူ့မှာ ပူပင် ကင်းလှသည်။ ဥတုသုံးလီ၊ ရာသီမရွေး အေးသောပူသော၊ စောကြောမရှိ တုံ့ဆိုဘာဝေ၊ ဆိတ်ဆိတ်နေ၍ ဤမြေဝသုန်၊ လောကီဘုံ၏ ကြုံလာဒုက္ခ၊ အဝင်ကို ရေမျှခံယူ၊ ရှိခဲ့မှလည်း ပြုပြုကင်းငြိမ်းတိခြင်း။ နွေမိုးဆောင်းဒဏ်၊ ကြုံကြုံခံ၍ အားမာန်ဝင်ထည့်၊ ရပ်တည်နေရစ် 'ကျောက်ဆစ်ရုပ်' ပမာ၊ ရိုက်ပုတ်လာသမျှ ဘဝ၏ဒဏ်၊ လောကီဘုံကို ခံနိုင်စွမ်းအား ရှိချင်တကား။ မောင်ဆွေငယ် (၈-၁-၂၀၂၃) (၃-၈-၂၀၀၉ ရက်နေ့ ထုတ် 'အတွေးသစ်' ဂျာနယ်တွင် ပါရှိသည်။)



Book Title - Myanmar in the Third Wave (A collection of Academic Talks)
 Writer - Kyaw Win
 Publishing House - Dagaung
 Publication Date - February 2024 (1st Edition)
 Price - K6,000

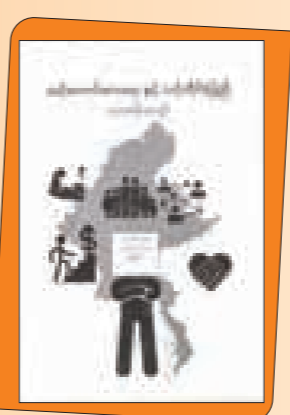
Myanmar in the Third Wave (A collection of Academic Talks)

THIS book under review is written by Saya Kyaw Win, who has written the book titled "The Fate of Third Wave". Now, he is writing another book with a similar name titled, "Myanmar in the Third Wave." Matter-of-factly this book is merely a compilation of two academic talks - Myanmar Socio-Political Value and Democratization and From Electoral Democracy to Liberal Democracy. The two talks are both related to democratization. The writer has sent a good message that there will also come out volumes 2, 3 and 4 of such a compilation as the volume, which is now under review. The book carries charts, graphs, tables and other illustrations to enable the readers to understand his talks vividly.

In the foreword of the writer, he said that his talks commenced with the political background history of the period between 1948 and 1962 when political debates and political talk shows were quite popular among the people. He is nostalgic about the political talks and the election campaigns those days. Pa Ma Nya Ta Party held one particular talk show that the writer could not forget in front of the Sa-Ne-Nan Pagoda. The campaign promises were excellent to listen to, but they were too good to be true, nevertheless. The writer has become an orator himself. He said that he

had to try hard to be an eloquent speaker. He has recounted his bitter experiences. When invited to conduct the literary talks, he was excited because he lacked the skills and expertise to deliver the literary discussions. Therefore, he followed the steps of Saya Bhamo Tin Aung, who gave literary talks in the form of academic talks. This has made Saya Kyaw Win face difficulty because he has difficulty finding a projector in the villages and the small towns to create a presentation as in the academic lectures and talks. Even if the PowerPoint slides are available, he finds it difficult to have an IT assistant to make the presentations. When he delivers

the talks, the audience looks foolish and wonders what I mean. As they do not understand my heavy talk, they do not know how to clap their hands to show their support for my presentation. They feel bored with the result that they are all leaving the show with only one or two left behind to shoot the questions. I am happy with their questions, giving my answers to their satisfaction. I realize that I am defeated by the good speakers who know how to make the audience laugh with their jokes, both political and apolitical. I also talk about politics, but maybe I am tediously speaking about politics. Saya Zargana, a well-known satirist, has made good remarks about this book. He said that as this book was written in 2010, the talks did not reflect the political talks these days. Still, the readers will have something to learn lessons from the topic titled "From electoral democracy to liberal democracy" is worth analyzing and that there are only two groups in Myanmar with one being the apolitical group and the other, the radical group. The good news is that this book under review is selling very well now at Junction Square, being ranked in the top ten best sellers for the third week of February.



Book Title - Thint Kaungzaryay Hnint Thint Taing Pyi
 Writer - Teza Moe Kyaw
 Publishing House - Shwe Pyi Hein
 Publication Date - January 2024 (1st Edition)
 Price - K6,000

Thint Kaungzaryay Hnint Thint Taing Pyi

THE book is written by Saya Teza Moe Kyaw in dedication to the youth. The writer explains his reason for writing this book, saying that his enthusiasm to share his knowledge with the young generation is so great that he cannot help but write this book, that he wants the youth to lead a happy and prosperous life and that he also wants to see the development of the institutions essential to nation building. He also said that today's life is quite complicated, posing great challenges for youth to overcome. The writer has provided infographics and illustrations

to help the readers understand the message clearly, with a focus not laid on highly complicated theories. He has made a reader-friendly presentation so that even laypeople can get a glimpse of the macroeconomic topics, which are, in fact, not very easy to understand. What appeals to me most in the book is the five tips for prosperity amidst the modern tidal waves - what to do, who to do, where to do, when to do, and why to do so. This five Ws are the checklist. Another point worth mentioning is that even pious and ethical people can make a busi-

ness prosper, develop professionally, lead a happy married life, and be strong both physically and mentally. In his introduction, it is written that with the urban population increasing, there has arisen the problem of development gap, that people are being faced with mental problems, that the unsystematic disposal of both household and industrial wastes are posing a big threat to environmental degradation and that the urban areas are the places where the social and political problems converge. The towns and cities of Myanmar are not exempted,

so it is of utter necessity for the authorities to manage the urban affairs properly so that urban economic growth and development can be achieved. It is written that people naturally tend to move from place to place in search of greener pastures. This being so, migration is a natural process which cannot be prevented. What needs to be done is to properly manage the people's migration from rural to urban areas. In this regard, it is worth recalling Professor Lee Coppock from the University of Virginia, who has explained in his book titled, "Principles of Macroeconomics," that there are three basic factors for economic growth: resources, technology, and institutions. This book contains 180 pages, with six chapters dealing with basic household economic welfare, social affairs, marriage life, mental sanity, physical fitness, and dressing style. This book is concluded with the wishing on the part of the writer the peace and prosperity of the union and fulfillment on the part of the people of 50 million of the five-point strength - physical strength, intellectual growth, wealth, strong character, and having good friends.

NATIONAL Entertainment



Artistes from the movie "Than Yaw Zin Tway Thar Kyi San Tway Phyt Khae Yin".

Realistic marriage film 'Than Yaw Zin Tway' to be premiered 15 Mar

THE movie "Than Yaw Zin Tway Thar Kyi San Tway Phyt Khae Yin" which features real marriage life, will be screened starting from 15 March, according to main actor Hein Wai Yan.

It was based on the novel of author Lun Htar Htar with a script by Moe Ni Lwin and was directed by director Academy Mee Pwar and director Aung Zaw Lin. Mya film industry produced it.

"My character is a young man who got mar-

ried. My wife is very jealous and controls me. It was filmed seven years ago. The character is not very different from others, but I tried my best under the guidance of director Mee Pwar. I make great efforts whether it is a famous novel or not," said Hein Wai Yan.

The main cast includes Hein Wai Yan, Myat Hmue Khin, and Academy Soe Pyae Thazin, and the guests are Academy Ye Aung and other artistes. — ASH/KTZH



Khin Zaw (Naing Zaw)

THE 9th solo exhibition of author, poet and artist Khin Zaw (Naing Zaw), "From Tushita to Eternity", is being held from 9 to 13 March at Lawkanat Art Gallery in Yangon. The event will feature 50 paintings depicting Buddha, Dhamma and Jatakas.

Celebrity Brief



Khine Hnin Wai

ACTRESS Khine Hnin Wai takes Daw Htet Wati, the mother role of Thoon Set in "Yin Thway" movie. She said those who watch this movie will get four or five moral lessons. It was produced by Mahar film industry, and the story was written by Lu Nyo Chaw and Lone Ma. The script was written by Thilan and directed by Mel Min Bon. The casts are Ye Aung, Nyi Nanda, Nyi Htut Khaung, Htet Aung Shine, Banyar Phone Pyae, Wai Phyo, Khine Hnin Wai, Phuu Sone, Shwe Thamee, Thoon Set and Yadana Bo.



May Kabyar

ACTRESS May Kabyar donated alms to five monks on 8 March, marking the 20th birthday of her daughter Ginga May (aka) Go Go. Moreover, she donated food for 200 people in East Dagon. She also shared her feelings about donations and her clever daughter.



Nan Myat Phyo Thin

ACTRESS and singer Nan Myat Phyo Thin made a post on her Facebook encouraging all the women who are struggling for their lives on International Women's Day, which fell on 8 March. She is raising her son and daughter alone after her husband died.



Mi Sandi

SINGER Mi Sandi participates in the "Poggala San Eain" movie of Director Thoe Saung as a special guest. The singer said that she had no time to focus on composing songs when she got married. Taylor Swift has been her role model since she was young, and she wants to compose unique songs due to her role model, Taylor Swift. She watched the Taylor Swift Show in Singapore on 3 March.



WORLD

Indian tourists in Maldives drop by one-third amid diplomatic row

The disagreement stemmed from derogatory remarks made by Maldivian officials about Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Lakshadweep, where he proposed tourism development initiatives.

THE number of Indian tourists visiting the Maldives has dropped by 33 per cent as compared to last year, Maldivian website Adhadhu reported, citing data from the Maldives Tourism Ministry.

This comes as the diplomatic row between New Delhi and Male continues to deteriorate.

According to Tourism Ministry statistics for 2023, 41,054 Indian tourists visited the Maldives by 4 March last year. The number of Indian tourists recorded as of 2 March this year was 27,224. This was 13,830 lesser than last

year, Maldives-based Adhadhu reported. In the same period last year, India was the second largest source market for tourists to the Maldives with a 10 per cent market share. However, India is now in sixth place on the list with a six per cent market share.

The row erupted after three Maldivian deputy ministers made derogatory comments against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, over his pictures from the visit to Lakshadweep. PM Modi had called for the Indian island cluster to be developed as a destination



Indian tourist numbers to the Maldives have fallen by 33 per cent compared to last year amid a diplomatic dispute between New Delhi and Male. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

for beach tourism and promotion of domestic tourism.

The matter snowballed into a major diplomatic row, with New Delhi summoning the Maldivian envoy and registering a strong protest against the viral posts.

The three deputy ministers were suspended and they remain under suspension with pay.

Earlier this year, Maldives tourism industry stakeholders expressed concern as the boycott campaign in India grew momentum and gained the support of popular Indian film stars. — ANI

Greek parliament approves private universities bill amid protests

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis hailed the reform as a move to bolster state universities while providing a framework for non-state, non-profit institutions.



Students pass next of the Faculty of Education of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki on 16 April 2021. **PHOTO: SAK IS MITROLIDIS / AFP/FILE**

THE Greek parliament passed a significant bill on Saturday, allowing for the establishment of private non-profit universities in the country for the first time. Greek Prime Minister

Kyriakos Mitsotakis said the reform strengthens state universities while creating a framework for the operation of non-state, non-profit universities in Greece.

The bill received the approval of 159 lawmakers in the 300-member plenary. Under the new legislation, overseas universities will be permitted to establish branches in Greece, charging students fees but operating on a non-profit basis.

The operation of non-state universities aims to reverse the trend of Greek students studying abroad and attract foreign students to Greece, thereby benefiting the Greek economy. — Xinhua

TOP NEWS

US Congress passes government funding package to avoid shutdown

THE US Congress on Friday approved a bundle of six bills to finance certain sections of the federal government until September, narrowly sidestepping a potential partial shutdown.

The US Senate voted 75 to 22 Friday night to approve the package, which cleared the House earlier this week. The bill now heads to President Joe Biden's desk for signing. The latest measure to keep the government funded covers agriculture, energy and the environment, housing, transportation, veterans and the Justice Department through the end of the fiscal year on 30 September. — Xinhua

10 killed, 10 missing in floods, landslides in western Indonesia

At least 10 people were killed and 10 others went missing as floods and landslides hit the Indonesian regency of Pesisir Selatan in the province of West Sumatra, according to the local management agency on Saturday. Pesisir Selatan disaster mitigation agency chief Doni Gusrizal said in a statement that rescuers were still searching for other missing people and evacuating those affected by the floods and landslides amid torrential rains. "The rain was still pouring until this morning. Several access points were still cut off, making it difficult to get through. Then, we use boats to help those isolated villagers," he said. — Xinhua

Plans to get aid into Gaza by sea gain pace as airdrop mishap kills five

A medic at Gaza's largest hospital said Friday a humanitarian airdrop in the north of the Palestinian territory killed five people and wounded 10.

The dire conditions more than five months into the war have led some countries to air-

drop food and other assistance over the besieged Gaza Strip, but a parachute malfunction turned the latest operation lethal on Friday.

Five Palestinians were killed and 10 wounded north of the coastal Al-Shati refugee camp,

said Mohammed al-Sheikh, emergency room head nurse at Gaza City's Al-Shifa hospital.

A witness told AFP he and his brother followed the parachuted aid in the hope of getting "a bag of flour".

"Then, all of a sudden, the

parachute didn't open and fell down like a rocket," hitting a house, said Mohammed al-Ghoul.

Jordanian and US military officials denied that aircraft from either country caused the fatalities. "We express sympathies to the families of those who were

killed," the US Central Command said in a statement.

"Contrary to some reports, this was not the result of US airdrops."

Belgium, Egypt, France and the Netherlands were also involved in the airdrop. — AFP

ECONOMY WORLD

China's foreign trade in goods up 8.7% in Jan-Feb

This marks the fifth consecutive month of year-on-year growth, with trade hitting a historic high.



A container ship sails into the Qingdao Port on 2 June 2022. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

CHINA'S total imports and exports of goods expanded 8.7 per cent year on year in yuan terms in the first two months of 2024, official data showed Thursday.

From January to February, the country's foreign trade in goods stood at 6.61 trillion yuan (about 930.96 billion US dollars), according to the General Administration of Customs (GAC).

Exports grew 10.3 per cent year on year to 3.75 trillion yuan, while imports rose 6.7 per cent from the same period of 2023 to 2.86 trillion yuan, the data showed.

In the first two months, the country's trade in goods continued the upward momentum of the fourth quarter of last year, registering a year-on-year growth for the fifth consecutive month, GAC official Lyu Daliang said, adding that the imports and ex-

ports during the period have hit a historic high.

Private businesses have played a bigger role in fuelling the growth of foreign trade in goods, according to the data. During the period, the trade value of private enterprises took up 54.6 per cent of the total, up 4.2 percentage points from the same period in 2023, while that of the foreign-invested enterprises constituted 29 per cent. Thursday's data also revealed an uptick in China's imports and exports to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the United States.

In the first two months, China's trade with its largest trade partner, ASEAN, rose 8.1 per cent year on year to 993.24 billion yuan, accounting for 15 per cent of the country's total trade value. — Xinhua

Despite oil riches, Libyans hit by plummeting purchasing power

Rising prices and currency devaluation have significantly diminished the purchasing power of citizens, leading to business closures and layoffs and impacting all classes except the wealthiest.

LIBYA may sit on Africa's biggest oil reserves, but many families are struggling with rapidly rising consumer prices as the festive Muslim holy month of Ramadan nears.

Since a currency depreciation has driven up the cost of imported food and other goods, said self-employed Mohamad al-Weheshi, 29, "we have to

make do with the minimum".

With a monthly income of around \$150 at the official exchange rate, he said, "we will soon have to do without meat".

Libya's dinar currency — which officially trades at 4.8 to the US dollar — has recently dropped on the parallel market from around five dinar to the greenback to 7.5 now.

Economic analyst Abubakr al-Tur said "Libya is experiencing a critical situation with rising prices and a currency devaluation".

This, he told AFP, has had "a major impact on the purchasing power of citizens, who are increasingly unable to obtain basic products".

Pointing to recent business closures and lay-offs, the analyst said "it's difficult and impacting all classes, except the richest".

Interim Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dbeibah, who leads a UN-recognized government in Tripoli, said Tuesday that his government "shared the concerns of the Libyans".

He said he is "determined to bring the dinar back to the level of before", evoking "plots hatched to exploit people's difficulties" and to "maintain instability" in Libya. — AFP



The depreciation of Libya's currency has sent prices of basic goods soaring in the country. **PHOTO: AFP**

EU curbs kick in to make big tech play by its market rules



Experts warn that enforcement of the EU's new digital law will be difficult. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

THE EU's landmark curbs on how tech titans do business online kick in from Thursday, but just how far Brussels succeeds in bringing the giants to heel will hinge on bitter battles that lie ahead. Wielding a tough new legal arsenal, Brussels is determined to force a change in behaviour by the world's biggest tech firms, to create a more competitive online field that allows smaller players to flourish.

The bloc's Digital Markets Act (DMA) ushers in a long list of do's and don'ts for six so-called

"gatekeepers" designated by the European Union: Apple, Amazon, Google owner Alphabet, TikTok parent ByteDance, Meta and Microsoft.

"What we need right here from gatekeepers is changing behaviour," the bloc's competition commissioner Margrethe Vestager had told AFP.

The big six will have to tell Brussels about any buyout, as well as provide European users with more choices when they pick web browsers or search engines. — AFP

China's CPI up 0.7% in February

The CPI increased by one per cent on a monthly basis, attributed to rising demand during the Spring Festival holiday.

CHINA'S consumer price index (CPI), a main gauge of inflation, edged up 0.7 per cent year on year in February, reversing a 0.8-per-cent decline in January, official data showed Saturday.

On a monthly basis, the CPI went up one per cent in February, expanding by 0.7 percentage points from that in January, said the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

NBS statistician Dong Lijuan attributed the uptick in CPI to rising demand during the Spring Festival holiday that fell in February this year.

Food prices went up 3.3 per cent month on month in February, accelerating by 2.9 percentage points from that in January, according to the NBS.

Prices of fresh vegetables, pork, aquatic products and fresh fruits

rose 12.7 per cent, 7.2 per cent, 6.2 per cent and 4.3 per cent month on month respectively.

Non-food prices went up 0.5 per cent month on month, compared to a 0.2-per cent increase in the previous month, with prices of air tickets, vehicle rental, tourism, movies and shows jumping between 12.5 and 23 per cent.

The core CPI, deducting food and energy prices,



A drone photo taken on 5 February 2024 shows a view of a Spring Festival fair by the Yellow River in Lanzhou, capital of northwest China's Gansu Province. **PHOTO: XINHUA/MA XIPING**

went up 1.2 per cent year on year in February, according to the NBS.

Saturday's data also showed that China's pro-

ducer price index (PPI), which measures costs for goods at the factory gate, went down 2.7 per cent year on year in February.

On a monthly basis, the PPI edged down 0.2 per cent in February, according to the NBS. — Xinhua

Spain's Mango clothing chain ramps up global expansion

SPANISH fashion retailer Mango, founded 40 years ago in Barcelona, is ramping its global expansion despite economic uncertainties that have shaken some other global mass-market apparel giants.

After a slowdown sparked by the Covid-19 pandemic, the family-owned company has in recent months inaugurated several large stores around the globe.

They include a 400-square-metre (1,300-square-foot) space in Los Angeles, a simi-

lar-sized one in Manchester, England, and a flagship store in India's tech hub of Bengaluru.

Mango has opened a total of 115 stores over the past year, mainly in the United States where its sales outlets have tripled, the company's global retail director, Cesar de Vicente, said in an interview with AFP.

It has more than 2,700 stores in over 115 countries, compared to nearly 6,000 worldwide for Zara-owner Inditex, Spain's other clothing retail success story. — AFP



After a slowdown sparked by the Covid-19 pandemic, Mango has in recent months inaugurated several large stores around the globe. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

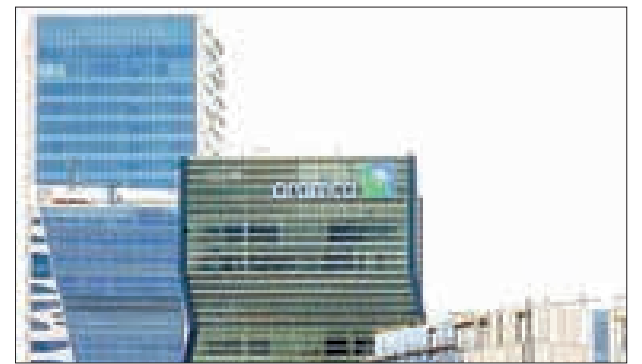
Saudi says 8% Aramco stake transferred to PIF wealth fund portfolio

SAUDI Arabia on Thursday said it transferred an additional eight per cent stake from oil giant Aramco to firms owned by the kingdom's PIF sovereign wealth fund, according to state media.

Aramco is the jewel of the Saudi economy and the main source of revenue for de facto ruler Crown Prince Mo-

ammed bin Salman's ambitious economic and social reform programme known as Vision 2030.

In a statement carried by the official Saudi Press Agency, Prince Mohammed announced "the completion of the transfer of eight per cent of Saudi Aramco's total issued shares from the State's ownership" to companies



Aramco is the jewel of the Saudi economy and the main source of revenue for Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's ambitious economic and social reform programme. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

fully owned by the Public Investment Fund (PIF).

The transfer was "a continuation of Saudi Arabia's long-term ini-

atives to boost and diversify the national economy and expand investment opportunities", SPA said. — AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V T12 APPLE VOY.NO. (2410E)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V T12 APPLE VOY.NO. (2410E)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **10-3-2024** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S T12 LOGISTICS PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V AS SOPHIA VOY.NO. (407W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V AS SOPHIA VOY.NO. (407W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **10-3-2024** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD



Eastern European politicians have been notably absent from top roles in these organizations for the past 20 years, raising concerns about continued underrepresentation despite formal claims of equality within the bloc. **PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS**

Eastern Europe underrepresented in EU institutions

Member states are set to decide on key positions in the EU and NATO, with representatives from Western Europe expected to dominate once again.

MEMBER states will soon decide on who will get key positions in both the EU and NATO, something that is expected to go to representatives of Western Europe once again. But what about Eastern Europe? Sputnik explores.

Eastern European politicians have been absent from top positions in the EU and NATO, as well as in other key EU structures for the past 20 years, such as the European Commission, the European Council and the European Parliament.

Such a disparity comes, at least in the EU's case, despite Brussels' formal stance claiming that all members are equal within the bloc. Two decades after entering the EU and NATO, Eastern European countries are now

concerned that they will again be ignored as the top jobs of both organizations are reshuffled later this year.

While Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte's likely appointment as the new chief of NATO is endorsed by the US, the UK, France and Germany, the alliance's newer members from the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) are not that happy.

It's worth recalling in this regard that other contenders for the NATO secretary general position include Romanian President Klaus Iohannis, whose ministers notified NATO of his possible candidacy in February, and Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas, who has not submitted a bid but voiced interest in 2023. — SPUTNIK

Six missing after South Korean fishing boat capsizes

A South Korean fishing boat carrying nine crew, including seven Indonesians, capsized off the country's southern coast on Saturday, leaving six missing, local authorities said.

The 29-tonne vessel overturned in waters 68 kilometres (42 miles) south of an island in the coastal city of Tongyeong on early Saturday morning, according to South Korea's Yonhap news agency.

So far three crew members have been rescued but all were unconscious, the Korea Coast Guard's Tongyeong office told AFP.

"We are still looking for six missing individuals," official Lee Ho-jun said. — AFP

Indonesia to open probe after airline pilots fell asleep mid-flight

A preliminary report by the National Transportation Safety Committee revealed that both pilots were asleep for 28 minutes, resulting in navigation errors.

INDONESIA'S transport ministry said Saturday it would open a probe into local airline Batik Air after two of its pilots were found to have fallen asleep during a recent flight.

A pilot and co-pilot were simultaneously asleep for approximately 28 minutes during a flight from South East Sulawesi to the capital Jakarta on 25 January, a preliminary report by the National Transportation Safety Committee (KNKT) said.

The incident resulted in a series of navigation errors, but the Airbus A320's 153 passengers and four flight attendants were unharmed during the two-hour-and-35-minute flight.

The transport ministry "strongly reprimands" Batik Air over the incident, air transport director-general M Kristi Endah Murni said, calling on airlines to

pay more attention to their air crew's rest time.

"We will carry out an investigation and review of the night flight operation in Indonesia related with Fatigue Risk Management for Batik Air and

all flight operators," Kristi said in a statement. Batik Air said in a statement on Saturday that it "operates with adequate rest policy" and that it was "committed to implement all safety recommendation". — AFP



A Garuda Indonesia Airbus A330-941 prepares to land at Jakarta's Soekarno-Hatta International Airport in Tangerang, Banten, on 19 June 2021. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/FAJRIN RAHARJO/AFP/FILE**

First Arab woman to graduate NASA training shoots for the Moon

LIKE her ancestors before her, Emirati astronaut Nora AlMatrooshi has spent much of her life gazing up at the stars and dreaming of flying to the Moon.

This week, she became the first Arab woman to graduate from NASA's training programme, ready to blast off into the cosmos. Al Matrooshi, 30, remembers an elementary

school lesson about space in which her teacher simulated a trip to the lunar surface, complete with arts-and-crafts space-suits and a tent for a rocket ship.

"We got out of the tent, and we saw that she had turned off the lights in our classroom. She had everything covered in gray cloth, and she was telling us that we were on the surface of the

Moon," AlMatrooshi told AFP.

Al Matrooshi, a mechanical engineer by training who has worked in the oil industry, was one of two astronaut candidates chosen by the United Arab Emirates Space Agency (UAESA) in 2021 to enroll in a training program with US space agency NASA. Now, after two years of hard work — including practice spacewalks — AlMatrooshi, her fellow Emirati Mohammad AlMulla and 10 others in their training class are fully qualified astronauts.

The group, known as "The Flies", are now eligible for NASA missions to the International Space Station (ISS), Artemis launches to the Moon and, if all goes well, to even fly to Mars. The UAESA announced earlier this year plans to build the airlock — a specialized doorway — for Gateway, the space station in development to someday orbit the Moon. — AFP



Al Matrooshi, selected by the UAE Space Agency in 2021, has completed rigorous training with NASA along with 11 others, making her a fully qualified astronaut. **PHOTO: SKYATNIGHTMAGAZINE/FILE**

'Number one' Joshua defeats Ngannou with brutal second-round KO

Anthony Joshua, a two-time world champion, defeated Francis Ngannou, a former UFC heavyweight champion, with a second-round knockout in their highly-anticipated heavyweight bout.



Down and almost out: Anthony Joshua sends Francis Ngannou to the canvas. PHOTO: AFP

TWO-TIME world champion Anthony Joshua knocked out mixed martial arts star Francis Ngannou in just the second round of their widely-hyped heavyweight clash on Saturday, with his pro-

moter quickly declaring him the division's "number one" fighter.

Joshua had his Cameroonian opponent on the canvas in the first round and twice more in the second in a brutal

and brief exhibition of punching power.

Ngannou, 37, a former UFC heavyweight champion, was taking part in only his second professional boxing match, having lost a split decision to Tyson Fury in an October fight that saw him put the WBC champion on the canvas in the third round.

"I thought this fight was something for the broadcasters to get behind," Joshua told DAZN after his quickfire victory.

"When I saw the fight with Tyson Fury, I thought, 'I want some of that'. He is a great champion and this doesn't take anything away from his capabilities.

"I told (Ngannou) not to leave boxing. He's two fights in and he fought the best". — AFP



Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan has withdrawn from her Indian Wells title defence with a gastrointestinal illness. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Ailing Rybakina withdraws from Indian Wells title defence

DEFENDING champion Elena Rybakina withdrew hours before her opening match at the ATP-WTA Indian Wells Masters on Friday with a gastrointestinal illness.

The former Wimbledon champion from Kazakhstan, seeded fourth, had been due to open her campaign with a second-round meeting with Argentina's Nadia Podoroska.

She was replaced in the draw by American lucky loser Kayla Day. "It is with great sadness I must announce, I will not be able to participate at this year's Indian Wells tournament due to gastrointestinal issues," Rybakina said in a statement.

"Those close to me know

how much this tournament means to me and how much I wanted to come back and defend my title.

"I would like to thank all the fans who came out here to support me and I am sorry they will not get a chance to see me play this year.

"Now I will rest and recover so I can come out and play and compete for my fans to the best of my abilities once again."

Rybakina, who beat Aryna Sabalenka in last year's final, already owns two titles this season, winning at Brisbane and Abu Dhabi. But she pulled out of her scheduled quarter-final in Dubai last month also complaining of gastrointestinal trouble. — AFP

Maha United, Kachin United pick sweet successes in domestic matches

THE third-day group match of the 2024 Myanmar National League Cup continued yesterday with the winning streaks of the Maha and Kachin United football clubs.

Maha United beat GFA FC 3-0 at the University Stadium in Yangon yesterday. With the two-straight win, Maha is still putting pressure on the former champion Yangon United.

Team Maha used key players and scored the leading goal in 15 minutes, which was netted by Captain Toe Satt Naing. Next, the second goal was scored by Nay Lin Soe at 76 minutes and Thet Naing at 90+2 minutes.

Meanwhile, Kachin United celebrated a 2-1 win over Rakhine United at Padonma



The Maha United player vies for the ball with the GFA player during the Myanmar National League Cup match at the University Stadium in Yangon on 9 March 2024. PHOTO: MFF

Stadium in Yangon. The Rakhine team has made a lot of pre-season preparations and recruited foreign players and famous local players. However, they unexpectedly lost and will have to struggle to advance to the next level.

Zaw Lin Oo created the winning goals

for Kachin United at 35 minutes and Kyaw Zin Oo at 45+1 minutes. Trauray produced the single or consolation goal for Rakhine United via a penalty shootout.

Famous Ayayawady United will also take on Dagon Star FC today at Padonma Stadium. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

Israel Olympics sanctions 'out of the question': IOC

THE International Olympic Committee has no plans to sanction Israel ahead of the Paris Olympics over its war in Gaza, a top official said Friday. Pierre-Olivier Beckers-Vieujant, the head of the IOC coordination committee for Paris 2024, said the conflict in Gaza and Russia's war in Ukraine, for which Moscow was suspended by the IOC, were "different situations".

"It's out of question to imagine sanctions (on Israel) right now," Beckers-Vieujant told reporters on Friday at the end of a three-day trip to the French capital. "The reasons that led the IOC to sanction Russia initially and then the Russian Olympic Committee (ROC) are very specific." — AFP

Will 'Oppenheimer' outshine them all? It's Oscars time

"Oppenheimer," directed by Christopher Nolan, is expected to be a major force at the upcoming Oscars. The film, centred around the father of the atomic bomb, is favoured to win several awards, notably Best Picture.

The chain reaction set off by the fusion of "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer" will come to a head this Sunday at the Oscars, where one is expected to own the red carpet, and the other to dominate the awards.

"Oppenheimer" — Christopher Nolan's epic drama about the father of the atomic bomb, and half of last summer's "Barbenheimer" phenomenon — is the overwhelming favourite to win best picture honors and much more on Hollywood's

biggest night.

The combination of a revered director, unimpeachable cast, box office and critical success, and an urgent subject matter means "there is no justifiable reason to predict anything else," Hollywood Reporter awards columnist Scott Feinberg told AFP.

"It would be an all-time upset if 'Oppenheimer' does not win" best picture, he said.

The film is tipped to take golden statuettes for best director, supporting actor for Robert



Cillian Murphy as J Robert Oppenheimer in 'Oppenheimer.' PHOTO: MELINDA SUE GORDON/UNIVERSAL PICTURES

Downey Jr, and a host of technical prizes from cinematography and editing to sound and score.

It also has a strong chance at best actor for Cillian Murphy, who is locked in a tight race with

Paul Giamatti of "The Holdovers." And if the film — based on a Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of J Robert Oppenheimer — wins best adapted screenplay, the sweep could be huge.

"I went pretty much all 'Oppenheimer' this year," said one Oscars voter, who asked to remain anonymous as Academy members are instructed not to discuss their ballots. — AFP

Tourists banned from private alleys in Kyoto's geisha district



A maiko, or apprentice geisha, in the streets of Kyoto, Japan. PHOTO: JAPAN NATIONAL TOURIST ORGANISATION

VISITORS will be banned from entering private alleys in Kyoto's famous geisha district, a local representative said on Thursday, as the ancient city tackles overtourism after the pandemic. Kyoto residents have long expressed frustration with tourists behaving badly, especially in the city's Gion district, home to teahouses where "geiko" — as geisha are locally known — and their young "maiko" apprentices, perform.

In December, a Gion district council comprised of residents urged Kyoto City to tackle the issue, saying their neighbourhood "is not a theme park". One member previously told Japanese media about an instance of a maiko's kimono being torn and another who had a cigarette butt put in her collar. With the problem ongoing, the council decided to step up its response. — AFP

Are Spain's working hours too late? Govt reopens debate

AN integral part of Spanish culture or a longstanding tradition that needlessly burdens staff? Spain's late working hours — predominantly in bars, shops and restaurants — have sparked heated debate over the government's wish to curb "unreasonable" excesses.

Regularly denounced by unions, Spain's working hours hit the headlines this week after some highly critical remarks by Labour Minister Yolanda Diaz.

"It is unreasonable that a country should have its restaurants open until 1 am. It's crazy to keep extending the working day indefinitely," said Diaz, head of the radical left-wing Sumar which is part of Spain's Socialist-led coalition.

Her remarks to a group of journalists on Tuesday, sparked a backlash from the right, who immediately pounced on her remarks as advocating a boring,

stay-at-home lifestyle.

Diaz wants "everyone to go home and read the Communist manifesto by lamplight with a cup of tea", ironized Alfonso Serrano of the right-wing opposition Popular Party.

"Spain has the best night-life in the world, with its streets full of life and freedom. They want to turn all of us into socialist puritans, with no soul,

no light and no restaurants," jeered Isabel Diaz Ayuso, Madrid's hardline right-wing regional leader.

According to Eurostat, the number of weekly working hours in Spain is in line with the European average. But the day is more spread out and ends later, Spain being the European country with the most people working after 6 pm. — AFP



In Spain's traditional way of life, people dine late, often at 10:00 pm. PHOTO: JAIME REINA / AFP