

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

Myanmar's ready-to-apply Thanaka to expand in ASEAN market



The photo depicts Myanmar Thanaka and Myanmar damsels sorting out Thanaka barks.

Myanmar Thanaka will be processed into ready-to-apply products for export to the ASEAN market, as announced by the Myanmar Thanaka Growers and Exporters Association.

At present, Myanmar Thanaka sells regularly in the domestic market. Since exporting raw materials to foreign markets is not feasible, they will be processed into ready-to-apply cosmetic paste for exportation.

“Myanmar Thanaka already has a strong domestic market, and traditional skincare products have been successfully exported to China’s Yunnan market through border trade. Recently, we have been planning to produce finished products such as powder, paste and cream, and plans are underway to export them to ASEAN countries such as the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia,” said an official from the Myanmar Thanaka Growers and Exporters Association. Furthermore, the relevant ministries and the Myanmar Thanaka Growers and Exporters Association are collaborating to have Myanmar Thanaka recognized on the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO) Intangible Cultural Heritage List. **SEE PAGE-3**

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MDY readies for 76th Buddha Pujaniya Festival of Shwesayan Pagoda

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Thukha Dagon Housing winners face revocation unless occupied by 31 March

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Myanmar's watermelon exports struggle for market share in China



International travellers seen shopping, among others, in the Tachilek market.

1.5M visitors, including 60,000 foreign tourists, enter Shan State in 2023

ACCORDING to the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism, a total of 1.5 million travellers, including more than 60,000 foreigners, entered Shan State in 2023.

Most of the tourist arrivals in Shan State are in eastern Shan, southern Shan, and northern Shan areas. In 2023, a total of 1,413,015 domestic tourists and 68,317 overseas travellers, a total of nearly 1.5 million domestic and international tourists, arrived in Shan State.

SEE PAGE-2

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.

1.5M visitors, including 60,000 foreign tourists, enter Shan State in 2023

FROM PAGE-1

Shan State has many places that can be visited all year round, besides the 12-month festivals and the plantations and natural scenery in the highland areas such as Pindaya and Ywangan, and the ethnic dress and lifestyle are attracting tourists.

Out of the 457 hotels and guesthouses licensed by the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism for the convenience of domestic and foreign tourists, 337 hotels and guesthouses are currently open and providing services.

In addition, Shan State's famous Inlay Lake will host rowing competitions on Saturday and Sunday, according to the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism (Shan State). — TWA/KZL

Notice for Implementation of MACCS for Cargo Clearance Processes at Tachilek Border on 22 March 2024

1. The Customs Department will extend the Myanmar Automated Cargo Clearance System (MACCS) to the Tachilek border area on 22 March 2024. This system is currently operational in Yangon, the Myawady border, Muse border, and Chinshwehaw border areas.
2. To ensure the successful implementation of the system, the department has arranged negotiation meetings with trade bodies, provided comprehensive training to MACCS users encompassing both theoretical knowledge and practical skills, and conducted running tests in collaboration with customs staff, trade bodies, the Tachilek Border Chamber of Commerce, export and import companies located in Tachilek, and the Myanmar Customs Brokers Association.
3. Anyone engaged in export and import business and customs service along the Tachilek border area and related trading routes can apply the MACCS for Customs clearance starting from 22 March 2024.

*Customs Department
Ministry of Planning and Finance*



MDY readies for 76th Buddha Pujaniya Festival of Shwesayan Pagoda

THE 76th Buddha Pujaniya Festival of the Shwesayan Pagoda in Patheingyi Township, Mandalay Region, will be organized as usual, according to the pagoda trustees.

The festival begins annually on the full moon day of Tabaung, 24 March this year, and lasts for ten days.

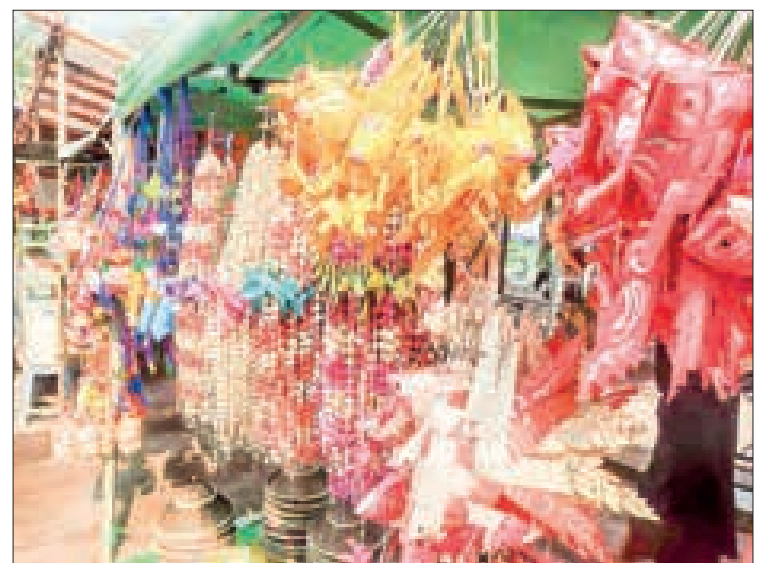
U Soe Hlaing, a member of the trustees, said: "During the festival, we'll arrange facilities for pilgrims to release fish into the Dohtawady River. There'll also be over 200 Shan ethnic shops and 600 Myanmar shops as in previous years."

The market fair is where festival-goers visit to buy local products from Shan State as well as traditional Myanmar handicrafts, clothes and food.

Legend has it that big river fish swim upstream of the Doht-



Photos depict the festival at the Shwesayan Pagoda in the previous year and a local souvenir stall.



away River to visit the pagoda during the festival. Pilgrims feed the fish or gild their heads.

The pagoda is situated north of the river, which originates from the Namtu-Hsipaw area in

northern Shan State. Mongmaw Empress Saw Mon Hla, or Sao Mom La in Shan, commissioned the construction of the pagoda.

Myanmar is home to two pagodas named Shwesayan: one

located in Thaton, Mon State, and another situated in Patheingyi, Mandalay.

Pagoda's history suggests that a flock of sparrows, known as "sar" in the Myanmar lan-

guage, circled the sacred relics at the onset of the pagoda's construction, inspiring the name Shwesayan, which loosely translates to "surrounded by golden sparrows". — ASH/NT

NATIONAL

Myanmar delegation meets Russian Central Election Commission Chairman in Moscow

AT the invitation of the Chairman of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation, a Myanmar delegation led by Union Election Commission Chair U Ko Ko, who is in Moscow to study the presidential election of the Russian Federation, visited the press release centre of the Central Election Commission on 13 March and attended a briefing.

In the afternoon, the Myanmar delegation met Russia's

Central Election Commission Chair Ms Ella Pamfilova and had a friendly and cordial exchange of views on election issues and activities that need to continue cooperation according to the agreement signed amicably between the election commissions of the two countries. Ambassador to the Russian Federation U Thit Lin Ohn also attended the meeting along with the Myanmar delegation. — MNA/TS



The UEC Chair U Ko Ko-led delegation hold talks with Ms Ella Pamfilova, Chair of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation on 13 March 2024 in Moscow.

2023-2024 Inter-State/Region U-25 Men's Football tourney kicks off



SAC members, Union ministers and officials open the 2023-2024 Inter-State and Region U-25 Men's Football tourney yesterday.

AN opening ceremony of the 2023-2024 Inter-State and Region U-25 Men's Football Tournament was held at Wunna Theikdhi Stadium in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

State Administration Council members, Union ministers, deputy ministers, officials, athletes and coaches joined the event.

During the ceremony, Union Minister for Sports and

Youth Affairs U Min Thein Zan, who is also the Myanmar Olympic Committee Chairman, stated that state and regional youth football competitions were organized to improve the level of Myanmar football sports in Asia and ASEAN and to contribute the Myanmar national football team successful.

He added that the players need to follow the rules and play their best. Athletes then recited

four sports pledges.

Next, the State Administration Council members and officials watched the first match played between the Kachin State team and the Taninthayi Region Team. With the aim of attracting new talented football players, the tourney will be held from 15 to 29 March, with participation of 13 men teams. All the football lovers can enjoy the matches for free. — MNA/KZL

Public Notice

The Anti-Corruption Commission has established corruption prevention units within ministries to curb corruption effectively. The ACC used SMS on mobile phones to ask the public who sought services at an office of the department of the relevant ministries via short code No "1111" for feedback, including the public feedback programme (PFP).

According to the PFP, the proper replies of the citizens via short code No "1111" will provide the quality of services of each department and the requirements for corruption prevention to be fixed.

Therefore, the public should reply to the questions of the ACC and corruption prevention units of the ministries via SMS at short code "1111". Such doing is a supportive measure for PFP, and the people are urged to cooperate in the operations.

Anti-Corruption Commission

Answer "1111" to fight against corruption



Answer "1111" to improve services

Myanmar's ready-to-apply Thanaka to expand ...

FROM PAGE-1

Thanaka trees (*Limonia acidissima*) are primarily found in Sri Lanka, western India, Thailand, Pakistan, and the upper regions of central Myanmar. However, Myanmar Thanaka is renowned for

its superior quality.

Myanmar Thanaka thrives in the tropical regions of Myanmar, including Sagaing Region, Mandalay Region, and Magway Region. Not only are they cultivated commercially, but they are also

traditionally grown in household yards.

Thanaka trees grow rapidly, even after cutting branches, enabling new plantations. Consequently, once planted by successive generations, these trees can generate income through their sale as a

result of the new plantations. Thanaka trees can be ready for market sale within six to seven years after planting, and it takes 35 years to grow a high-quality Thanaka tree. — ASH/TKO

NATIONAL

Printing & Publishing Department celebrates 52nd anniversary celebration



Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn speaks on the occasion of the 52nd anniversary of the Printing and Publishing Department yesterday.

THE 52nd-anniversary ceremony of the Printing and Publishing Department (PPD) under the Ministry of Information took place in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

The ceremony was attended by Union Information Minister U Maung Maung Ohn, Deputy Minister U Ye Tint, Permanent Secretary U Myo Myint Maung,

departmental heads, staff, officials and guests.

First, a video clip recording the work of the department within 52 years was played.

Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn, in his speech, said that Myanmar's literary development is included while carrying out the objectives of the ministry - to inform, to entertain and to

educate. The Sarpay Beikman, under the PPD, carries out the Myanmar literary development activities such as publishing various kinds of books, holding symposiums and literary talks and giving literary awards in successive years. The PPD also cooperates in presenting a private literary award- the Pakokku Literary Award, which is a sup-

portive measure in promoting Myanmar literature.

He also appreciated the PPD for participating in preliminary selection winners for honorary titles, conducting development programmes of Myanmar literary and the ones from those ones by cooperating with local/foreign authors, journalist organizations, publishers and publishing indus-

tries.

He then mentioned that the construction of Sarso Beikman was to be set under the PPD.

He presented uniforms for PPD staff, certificates of honour and cash prizes to three outstanding staff who completed Civil Service Academy (Upper Myanmar).

Then, Deputy Minister U Ye Tint presented certificates of honour and cash prizes to three outstanding staff who completed the Civil Service Academy (Lower Myanmar).

The permanent secretary and departmental officials also presented certificates of honour and cash prizes to the outstanding staff of affiliated departments.

Then, the Union minister and the deputy minister conducted a raffle draw session for the staff.

The Union minister and party enjoyed lunch together with officials and staff from the Printing and Publishing Department. — MNA/KTZH

Myanmar to enhance collaboration with Thailand

THE discussions pertaining to the advancement of cooperation in diplomatic ties and cooperation between Thailand and Myanmar embassies were held in Tokyo, Japan, on 13 March, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Myanmar Ambassador U Soe Han met Thai Ambassador Mr Witchu Vejjajiva at the Myanmar Embassy in Tokyo to enhance bilateral diplomatic relations and collaboration between the two embassies. During this meeting, both sides had a cordial exchange of views regarding the bilateral diplomatic ties between Thailand and Myanmar, the promotion of cooperation between two embassies, the collaboration among ASEAN embassies, and improving ASEAN-Japan relations through the ASEAN Committee in Tokyo. — ASH/MKKS

MoC celebrates World Consumer Rights Day

THE celebration ceremony for World Consumer Rights Day took place yesterday at the Consumer Affairs Department of the Ministry of Commerce in Nay Pyi Taw.

The Chairperson of the

Myanmar Consumer Protection Commission Union Minister for Commerce U Tun Ohn, Deputy Minister U Min Min, commission members, departmental officials, and invitees attended the ceremony.

The Union Minister, the deputy minister, and the acting director-general of the Consumer Affairs Department first opened the ceremony by cutting the ribbon, after which they toured the

commemorative gallery.

The Union Minister then delivered an opening speech for the ceremony, and the acting director-general of the Consumer Affairs Department explained the objectives of celebrating World Consumer Rights Day.

Moreover, the Union Minister and the guests enjoyed the performances on how to settle complaints from consumers and the entertainment of the ceremony.

Additionally, the Union minister, the deputy minister, and officials awarded the winners of the competitions held in commemoration of World Consumer Rights Day and presented gifts to the performers. — MNA/TRKM



The photo shows the celebration of the World Consumer Rights Day ceremony.

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

NATIONAL

Coord meeting held for Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan

A coordination meeting on the holding of Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan to celebrate the 2024 Myanmar Traditional Thingyan Festival was held at the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn, in his capacity as Chairman of the Organizing Committee for Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan, said the Walking Thingyan will be celebrated this year, and the State-level Thingyan festival will be celebrated in Nay Pyi Taw under the guidance of the Prime Minister.

He also highlighted the intention of holding walking Thingyan and added that systematic arrangements would be conducted by cooperating



Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn presides over the coordination meeting for the Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan yesterday.

with Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman, especially with Boss and Jobs Company and Korean companies, to present enter-

tainment programmes with Korean K-POP artists and famous artistes. The Myanmar artistes will also be invited to

the festival.

He then called for the active participation of people and departmental staff in celebrat-

ing the Myanmar New Year.

Then, Committee Vice-Chair Mayor U Than Tun Oo, joint secretary of committee Permanent Secretary of Information Ministry U Myo Myint Maung, project director of Brilliant Aura Co Ltd, Coordinator for the Walking Thingyan Deputy Director-General of MRTV U Myo Myint Aung and relevant departmental officials discussed the successful holding of Nay Pyi Taw walking Thingyan in four zones such as ethnic Thingyan, Thingyan with refreshment services, ministries' Thingyan and youths' Thingyan, designated locations for pavilions, security measures, access to water, electricity, regulatory matters and healthcare services. — MNA/KTZH

111,462 students take Physics, 17,207 students take History on 5th day of 2024 matric exam

THE 2024 matriculation examination (new curriculum) continued on its fifth day yesterday. A total of 111,462 students sat for the Physics subject exam, and 17,207 stu-

dents took the History subject exam across the nation, including overseas exam centres. This year, a total of 835 exam centres, including 11 overseas exam centres and 824 exam

centres at home, are open for students. Altogether, 111,462 students out of 125,870 registered students sat for Physics with 14,408 absentees. The number of students sitting for

the exam was 88.55 per cent.

Meanwhile, a total of 20,651 students registered for History at two overseas exam centres and 707 exam centres at home, and 17,207 students sat for His-

tory with 3,444 absentees.

The number of students sitting for exams accounted for 83.32 per cent, according to the figures of the Ministry of Education. — MNA/KTZH



Nay Pyi Taw.



Yangon.



Singaing, Mandalay Region.



Kyaukkyi Township, Bago Region.



Thaboung, Ayeyawady Region.



Madaya, Mandalay Region.

NATIONAL

Thukha Dagon Housing winners face revocation unless occupied by 31 March

THE Department of Urban and Housing Development, under the Ministry of Construction, has announced the lots-drawing winners of the Thukha Dagon public rental housing will be taken back if they do not live there by 31 March.

The selection of residents have been announced through a drawing-lots system to live starting from 1 December at the Thukha Dagon public rental housing in Dagon Myothit (South) Township.

Some of the selected residents in the first round of drawing system do not come to live and their living permits will be revoked even though the relevant department thinks they are able to live comfortably.

“When some are actually struggling to obtain living permits, the house owners involve in the drawing-lots system. At



The Thukha Dagon public rental housing.

present, people who don't come to live there while paying the room rent but the rooms are closed like this. It is challenging for individuals who are waiting to live,” said Daw Yi Yi Hla, an

applicant from Thakayta Township.

“If such a deadline is announced, no one will be taken back the room. There is only one thing that it can become a rental

market. It is important for the department to check carefully so that this type of rental market does not appear. In most of the government rental housing, the selected applicants rent

these rooms. For example, for Bandoola public rental housing, the rental fee is K30,000 per month to pay the government. But this flat rent in private is K100,000. Some flats have been sold at the hundreds of thousands,” said retired employee U Ngwe Thaug who is a winner of second lots-drawing.

A total of 1,728 flats were drawn from 108 buildings of the Thukha Dagon Public Housing project on 13 and 14 November 2023 and 1,376 flats were drawn from the remaining 86 buildings.

Currently, the lots-drawing winners of the first round have the living permits on 13 November and the lots-drawing winners of the second round on 14 November have not been informed to live including payment system, according to the winners. — TWA/MKKS

15 financial services, banks link for easy electricity bill payments

ACCORDING to the Ministry of Electric Power, banks and fifteen financial services are connected so that the public can quickly pay the electricity bills.

The ministry received over 91 per cent of the electricity bills from December 2020 to January 2024, and notices will be sent to users to remind them of any outstanding payments for these bills in order to collect the total amount owed.

People can pay their electricity bills every day, and the online payment system, con-

nected with fifteen banks and financial services, can be used if transportation is difficult. Nearly nine per cent of the electricity arrears remain in regions and states where collection is challenging. The collection of electricity bills is ongoing in some villages, and security plans are in place. Arrears for FY 2023–2024 will be collected before April 2024. Electricity supply will be cut for those who fail to pay their bills, and it will be restored upon payment. — TWA/TRKM



The photo depicts household electricity meter boxes.

Shan garlic price plunges, yet Kyukok garlic price rises



Photos show stacked Kyukok garlic sacks at a warehouse.

THE price of Shan garlic drastically dropped while the cost of Kyukok garlic rose in the Yangon market.

The Yangon market saw a decrease in Sinphyukyun potato and Shan garlic prices on 14-15 March, whereas the prices of Kyukok garlic and sugar climbed.

Sinphyukyun potato prices were just K1,200 per viss on 15 March, Ko Thein Myint, a potato seller from Yetama Street of Bayintnaung Brokerage, told The Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM).

The potatoes from the Heho area fetched K1,350-K1,600 per viss. Shan garlic prices touched a low of K6,500-K7,500 per viss on 15 March, whereas imported Kyukok garlic prices hit K10,500-K10,600 per viss on 14 March, rising from K9,000 per viss in mid-February.

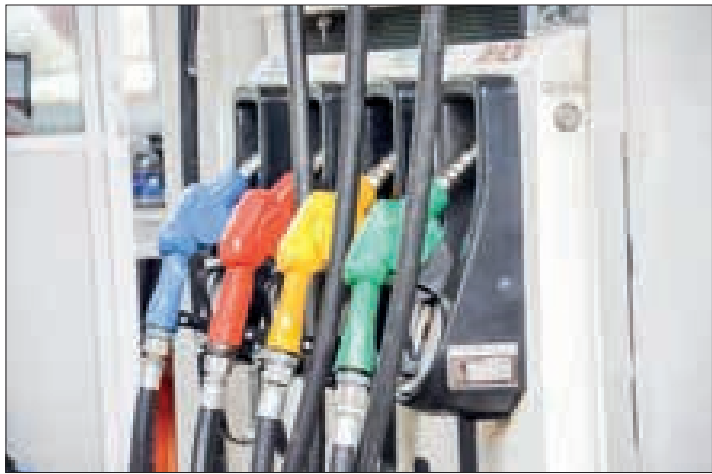
Old Shan garlic price hit a record high of K17,800 per viss then. Nevertheless, the new supply pushed down the Shan garlic prices.

Additionally, garlic from the Pakokku area fetched K3,000-K8,000 per viss, depend-

ing on size. New Kyukok garlic might flow into the market in May. Therefore, there is less chance for the price to decrease for now. The extensive price difference from Shan garlic resulted in low demand for Kyukok garlic, Ko Thein Myint, a trader, told the GNLM.

The Kyukok garlic price reached a record high up to K17,000 per viss on 3 November 2023. At present, consumers are satisfied with the price decrease in kitchen supplies such as onions, potatoes, chilli peppers and rice. — TWA/KK

Octane prices rebound slightly in recent upturn



Pumps from a refuelling station in Yangon. The figures reflected a slight increase of K50 to K55 per litre.

OCTANE prices moved up slightly in the domestic fuel oil market as the MOPS price index ticked up.

Fuel prices were K2,680 per litre of Octane 92 and K2,790 for Octane 95 on 14 March 2024. Then, the prices increased to K2,730 per litre of Octane 92 and K2,845 Octane 95 on 15 March.

The figures reflected a slight increase of K50 to K55 per litre.

Domestic fuel prices are closely tied to the price index set by Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS), the pricing basis for many refined products in southeast Asia, according

to the Supervisory Committee on Oil Import, Storage and Distribution of Fuel Oil.

The diesel oil prices hit the highest of K3,330 for premium diesel and K3,245 for diesel in August 2023.

The committee is, therefore, steering the market to ensure price stability and fuel oil security. Under the supervision of the committee, the Petroleum Products Regulatory Department has been issuing daily reference prices to ensure price stability for energy consumers.

The committee is inspecting the fuel stations to see whether they are over-

charging. The authorities are taking action against those retailers of fuel stations under the Petroleum and Petroleum Products Law 2017 if they are found overcharging rather than the set reference rate.

As per the statement, 90 per cent of fuel oil in Myanmar is imported, while the remaining 10 per cent is produced locally. Domestic fuel prices are highly correlated with international prices. The government is steering the market to mitigate the losses experienced by importers, sellers, and energy consumers. Consequently, the government is trying to distribute the oil at a reasonable price compared to those of regional countries.

Some countries levied higher tax rates and hiked oil prices than Myanmar's. However, Malaysia's oil sector receives government subsidies, and the prices are about 60 per cent cheaper than those of Myanmar. Every country lays down different policy patterns to fix oil prices. Myanmar also levies only a lower tax rate on fuel oil and strives for energy consumers to buy the oil at a cheaper rate. — NN/EM

CBM sells US\$15M, 7M yuan, 262M Thai baht in 15 days

THE Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) pumped US\$15 million, seven million Chinese yuan and 262 million Thai baht in the past 15 days in March.

The CBM sold five million dollars on 15 March, 50 million Thai baht on 11 March, seven million Chinese yuan, and 12 million Thai baht on 5 March to exporters on online trading platforms.

The CBM injected seven million Chinese yuan and 12 million Thai baht into the financial market on 5 March and \$10 million and 200 million Thai baht on 4 March.

The CBM also sold \$77.38 million and 850 million Thai baht in February and \$68.33 million, 313.5 million Thai baht and 4.2 million Chinese yuan in January 2024.

The exchange rate for Thai baht, Chinese yuan, and US dollar settled in those transactions has not been revealed.

The reference exchange rate set by the CBM is K2,100 against a US dollar, while it is valued at some K3,375 at the over-the-counter market at present. The exchange rates currently stand at K103 for a Thai baht and K504 for a Chinese yuan.

The CBM allowed the authorized dealers (private banks) to operate online forex trading freely as per the market rate depending on supply and demand, starting from 5 December.

Additionally, the outward remittance procedures must adhere to the rules and regulations specified by the Foreign Exchange Supervisory Committee. — NN/EM



The office of the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) in Yangon.

Domestic sugar price jumps despite stable global sugar price

ALTHOUGH global sugar prices are flat, domestic sugar prices reach another peak of over K4,300 per viss.

The global sugar price is stable at around US\$600 per tonne. Meanwhile, domestic sugar prices surged to K4,340 per viss on 15 March from K4,100 on 1 March, indicating an increase of K240 per viss in half of the month.

High production cost now hikes up domestic sugar prices.

The sugar mills notified sugarcane growers that they raised the price of sugarcane to K150,000 per tonne for the 2023-2024 sugarcane season.

The company set the



Photos show sugar being arranged neatly for sale at the market.



sugarcane floor price at K90,000-K100,000 per tonne last season. Sugarcane and sugar traders emphasized that the rise in the offering price

is aimed at covering the high input cost of the growers amid the increase in sugar prices this year.

Additionally, sugar mills

encouraged the growers to ramp up the per-acre yield and expand the cultivation acres.

Myanmar's annual sugar production is estimated at

450,000 tonnes. Myanmar earlier sent sugar to China and Viet Nam beyond self-sufficiency. At present, it is delivered to Viet Nam only, as stated by the Myanmar Sugar and Cane Related Association.

Sugarcane is commonly found in the upper Sagaing Region, followed by northern Shan State. It is also found in the western and eastern Bago Region, Yangon Region and Mandalay Region.

The sugarcane is grown in December-January. It can be harvested from November to February of the following years. The sugarcane growing rotation cycle lasts four years in Myanmar. — NN/EM

OPINION

Efficiently spend allocated budgets on development projects

THROUGHOUT its tenure, government ministries, region and state governments have demonstrated unwavering determination in overcoming challenges to achieve economic targets. Despite facing obstacles, they have showcased collective strength and unity in their endeavours.

Budget allocations are crucial for facilitating the implementation of projects outlined by various ministries within a designated financial year. These allocations are carefully structured to align with objectives such as controlling inflation and managing budget deficits relative to GDP. Therefore, it is imperative for ministries to utilize their allocated budgets efficiently for project implementation.

Some ministries encounter difficulties that result in underspending their allocated budgets.

Efficient utilization of allocated budgets is crucial for the successful implementation of development projects. Ministries must navigate challenges and strive for efficiency in spending to maximize the impact on national development. Collaboration between government and private sectors, coupled with prudent financial management, will contribute to sustainable economic growth and benefit the nation as a whole.

transportation ensure that development projects continue unhindered. This demonstrates that budget allocations remain aligned with the nation's development goals.

A significant budget deficit can lead to increased State debt, posing challenges to financial resilience and currency stability. Therefore, it is essential to maintain an appropriate level of budget deficit within manageable limits to mitigate these risks effectively.

The ratio of deficiency to GDP will be 5.67 per cent in the 2024-25 financial year, compared to 5.65 per cent in the 2023-24 FY with a 0.02-per-cent exceeding because of expenditures on Kyat-US dollar exchange rate, trainee assistance, socioeconomic development measures and infrastructure development tasks. Hence, ministries earning incomes for the State have to strive to exceed the target of earnings in the coming financial year while cutting unnecessary costs. Likewise, all governmental organizations have to thriftily and efficiently spend the allocated budgets for the national interests.

Efficient utilization of allocated budgets is crucial for the successful implementation of development projects. Ministries must navigate challenges and strive for efficiency in spending to maximize the impact on national development. Collaboration between government and private sectors, coupled with prudent financial management, will contribute to sustainable economic growth and benefit the nation as a whole.

However, returning unspent funds to the government could have adverse effects on investment and manufacturing sectors, potentially affecting the nation's GDP. Therefore, ministries must strive to overcome challenges and find ways to utilize their budgets for the nation's development efficiently.

The promotion of manufacturing is essential for driving economic growth and increasing the State's GDP through exports. Collaboration between the government and private sectors is vital in expanding the manufacturing sector for both domestic consumption and export purposes, thereby generating revenue for the State.

Despite some ministries returning their allocated budgets, reallocations to sectors such as health, education, and

Introduction:

1. May I start with a well-known and universally accepted old proverb, "Knowledge is power". In this connection, I would also like to quote an extract from a famous speech by Abraham Lincoln, known as the father of freedom from slavery in the United States of America's history. It reads: "With malice toward none; with charity for all, with firmness in the right." So, with firmness, I would like to assert that "knowledge is power." Ignorance or lack of knowledge is a shame and sin." Well, to be free from a shame and sin in our life, we should go on learning to gain knowledge. Learning is a life-long process. "No education process is ever the end, it is always the beginning of more education, more learning, more living." Knowledge and Human Resources are inseparable. "Reading makes the people developed and that the developed people go on reading."²
2. Well, what does investment mean? "Investment in something means the act of investing money in something." And

An investment in knowledge pays the best interest

By U Khin Maung (A retired diplomat)

"invest" something in something" means to buy property, shares in a company, etc. in the hope of making a profit."³ In connection with the topic "an investment in knowledge pays the best interest, may I mention some more writings about knowledge and education." They know enough who know how to learn "Only the educated are free." The more we study, the more we discover our Ignorance. And often, in the modification, the more we know, the more we don't know. MR. Benjamin Disraeli,

a famous writer, again said, "To be conscious that you are ignorant is a great step to knowledge."¹ I would also like to present Myanmar proverbs and some words of wisdom, such as "on knowledge and education," translated into English by myself, an old learner. "In this world of ours, education, knowledge, skill, art, and craft are really our true friends." The light of knowledge and skill is really so bright and brilliant that each and every one of us, including all of us,

has to wonder about it.⁴ "Of the lights, firelight, moonlight and sunlight; moonlight is brighter than firelight. Sunlight is brighter than moonlight. Ah, the light of knowledge is the brightest of them all. No light is there brighter than the light of knowledge. As such, Lord Buddha has preached. Therefore, all and sundry, each and everyone should strive to acquire knowledge. Good knowledge is just like a Badeithabin tree, a tree of plenty and an inexhaustible store."⁵ Western scholars have also asserted



that the "brain is just like a muscle". You use it, or you lose it. So, if you want to keep your brain sharp, active and alert, go brain-jogging." "Go brain-jogging" means read, read and read. As a matter of fact, Learning is a never-ending process. We live to learn

and learn to live. A day without Learning is a day lost." So, Let us go on learning continuously to get the best interest in our investment in knowledge. In conclusion, I would like to advise you on the strength of the following words of wisdom to keep on Learning and get

better every day. "Knowledge is not static. It accumulates and expands all the time. In the quest for knowledge there must be a strong will and perseverance." "We should create a desire and dedication to update

- and upgrade ourselves continuously."
- "Knowledge is power" seems to have quite a following these days."
- "The object of education should be to increase the usefulness of man, usefulness to himself, and usefulness to others."

Reference;

- (1) A book of essential quotations Edited by Eric Partridge.
- (2) U Thant, United Nations Organization Secretary-General (Retired)
- (3) Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English. (Sixth Edition)
- (4) ဤလောကမှာ တတ်ပညာ၊ မှန်စွာ စိတ်ကောင်းဝါ၊ ပညာအရောင်ထွန်းလင်းပြောင်၊ မြားမြောင်အံ့ကြကု။
- (5) မီးရောင်၊ လရောင်၊ နေအရောင်၊ ဉာဏ်အရောင် လွှမ်း၍မိုး။ ပညာသာမာ၊ အဘာန်တို့၊ မြတ်မှန်၊ ဟော၍ ကျမ်းကိုကို။ ထို့ကြောင့်များစွာ လူတကာ ပညာရအောင်ကြိုး။ ပညာကောင်းမှာ၊ ပဒေသာ၊ သုံးရာမဂုန်နိုး။

Should The Ocean Be Cleaned Up More?

By Yin Nwe Ko



PHOTO CREDIT: NEW SCIENTIST JANUARY 20 2024

waste, leading to the recognition of the "Great Pacific Garbage Patch." Scientists had known about plastic hotspots since the 1970s, but Moore's efforts brought it to public attention. In 2018, estimates of plastic in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch were revised to at least 79,000 tonnes, with surprising findings. While household refuse was thought to be the main source, a 2022 study by The Ocean Cleanup revealed that up to 86 per cent of identifiable waste could come from the fishing industry. Unlike land-based plastics that stay near the coast, fishing waste is often found far offshore. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch, often termed an artificial island, is not a solid mass but an oceanic soup of microplastics. Consisting of billions of tiny shards, each less than five millimetres across, it is twice the size of Texas. Swimmer and activist Benoit Lecomte, who crossed

the patch in 2019, described it as swimming in a "snowstorm" of tiny plastic. Approximately 94 per cent of the estimated 1.8 trillion pieces of plastic in the patch are believed to be microplastics. In conclusion, the Ocean Cleanup project, initiated in 2012, aimed to address the growing issue of plastic waste in the oceans. Despite successful tests, concerns arose from marine scientists who deemed mechanical cleanup efforts futile and potentially harmful to marine ecosystems. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch, first brought to public attention by Charles Moore in 1997, is a vast area accumulating plastic waste. Surprising findings in 2018 revealed that a significant portion of the waste could originate from the fishing industry, challenging previous assumptions. The patch, often misconceived as an artificial island, is actually an aggregation of microplastics, making up the

majority of the estimated 1.8 trillion pieces of plastic. The debate continues on whether cleaning up these garbage patches is a viable and effective solution to the ocean plastic problem. Many dangers from these tiny pieces to sea life are well-known. The buildup of microplastics has been linked to problems including thyroid issues in mammals, illness-causing bacteria in sea-birds, and digestive problems in crustaceans. However, some issues are just starting to be understood. In 2021, Karin Kvale, at the GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel in Germany, and her colleagues discovered that extended exposure to microplastics severely harms the function of zooplankton, negatively impacting their ability to convert atmospheric carbon dioxide into oxygen. This, the researchers

found, undermines the ocean's capacity to support marine life. Nevertheless, one fascinating aspect we are discovering about the Great Pacific Garbage Patch is that the larger plastic pieces, despite being a small percentage of the total, are now creating a unique habitat for marine life. In 2022, researchers, including Rebecca Helm from the University of North Carolina, Asheville, studied samples collected by Lecomte during one of his swims. They found that the patch is full of aquatic life, mainly tiny floating "neustons," which are surface-dwelling aquatic organisms ranging from snails to jellyfish. Helm, now at Georgetown University in Washington DC, emphasizes that the North Pacific Gyre has always been an ecosystem, challenging the notion of it being just a garbage patch.

A year earlier, Linsey Haram at the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center in Maryland and her colleagues discovered that 90 per cent of marine debris analyzed was now home to plants and animals. This ranged from tiny invertebrates like bryozoans and barnacles to small marine insects and crabs. Then, in 2023, a study led by Haram found that three-quarters of the species living on the plastic were coastal rather than pelagic, suggesting that plastic is creating a "neopelagic" ecosystem, allowing coastal species to adapt to life at sea. This could fundamentally change oceanic communities and ecosystem processes in this environment. You might think that cleaning up this ocean plastic is a good idea, and The Ocean Cleanup is certainly moving forward. Its system has evolved over the years, but the basics are simple. Shaped like a horseshoe extending from a central reservoir, two 2.2-kilometre-long "wings" push the plastic toward a floating barrier with a net hanging up to four meters below the surface.

SEE PAGE-12

NATIONAL

Myanmar's watermelon exports struggle for market share in China



The photo showcases Myanmar watermelons that are to be exported to China.

WATERMELON exports from Myanmar to China are struggling to gain market share due to the conditions of transport routes, according to fruit depots.

Myanmar has been facing various difficulties in exporting watermelon since 2019 COVID-19, and its popularity has been affected because of low quality when it arrives in the market.

“The Chinese side used to prefer Myanmar’s fruit, which blooms on good soil and water

without much fertilizer. But the problem lies in the transport route. Since 2019, due to COVID-19 and the current situation after COVID-19, the roads have been blocked, causing traffic jams and stale fruits. No matter how good it was, the fruit had no quality. So, it became less popular,” said a salesperson from the Khwanyo Fruit Depot.

If the road situation improves and bilateral cooperation can be restored with full support, the fruit market, including

watermelons, could recover, he added.

Therefore, watermelon exporters should be very cautious by closely monitoring the demand, the wholesaler said.

“Chinese buyers have suffered huge losses due to many rotten watermelons they bought earlier. So, they are reluctant to repurchase watermelons. At that time, when they saw defects in some fruits, the demand went from bad to worse,” he said. — MT/ZN

Bangladesh demand depletes Ayeyawady coconut supply

BANGLADESH has been purchasing coconuts, so sales and prices have been pretty good, resulting in a shortage of supply at coconut farms in Ayeyawady Region, said U Aung Kyaw Kyaw, a coconut farm owner.

Owing to purchases from foreign buyers, the price per coconut is now nearly between K800 and K900, depending on the size.

“Due to purchases from Bangladesh, coconut becomes rare. Due to high foreign demand, coconut traders give nearly K700 per one. Some even give K40-K50 more than the market price so that they can stock coconuts and resell them at K800-K900 per one when Bangladesh buyers come to

purchase. Bangladesh buyers come by ship and buy approximately 200,000 coconuts,” he said.

Previously, the price of coconut was just around K300 and K400 per one, and it has been about three years since Bangladesh purchased coconut in Myanmar, and since then,

the price has been getting high.

Because of the demand from foreign markets, coconuts have been rare in local markets, and consumers have to buy them at a higher price. In the Yangon market, the cost of a dried coconut is now around K1,500-K2,000, said a housewife. — MT/ZS



A coconut farm in Ayeyawady Region.

Myeik's dried shrimp gain local popularity



THE sale of dried shrimp produced from Myeik in the Taninthayi Region has been good in the market, and it has gained many consumers, according to dried shrimp sellers.

Myeik-produced dried shrimp taste good, and its quality can satisfy consumers, which is why it has gained popularity in the market.

“Supply and demand has been fine in this period. We sell Myeik-produced items only. We have regular customers because the products we sell are good. Myeik-produced dried shrimp are categorized as large, medium and small,” said a salesperson from Myeik Cho Mwe dried shrimp.

The majority of dried shrimp, which are commonly available in the market, are produced in Rakhine State and

Myeik-produced dried shrimp are on display at the market.

Ayeyawady Region, and dried shrimp are regularly sold even during the monsoon season when fish and meat production is usually abundant. The price varies depending on quality.

“Dried shrimp trading is not bad. There are regular customers. There are different prices. At present, we mainly sell varieties of dried shrimp whose prices are moderate. The market price can't be said because it is not stable yet. But we can say that sales have been good,” said Ma Nyo Nyo Thant, a dried shrimp retail and wholesale trader from Yangon Region. — Thit Taw/ZN

Planes land at Bhamo Airport after brief pause



An aircraft parked at Bhamo Airport last year.

AEROPLANES resumed landing at Bhamo Airport after it was closed for several days, according to communication with locals.

Bhamo Airport was temporarily closed last week, and landings resumed on 15 March, according to a resident.

“Today, the planes started taking off and landing again. They were Yangon-Mandalay-Bhamo flights. A replacement flight for the one that was suspended last week also arrived,” he said.

The resumption of flights

has made it convenient for people planning to travel by air, he added.

“Travelling by air is now convenient. Our residents want these flights to operate as usual. There were many passengers today,” he explained.

Air tickets cost K243,000 for Bhamo-Mandalay, K245,000 for Mandalay-Bhamo, K200,000 each for Bhamo-Myitkyina and Myitkyina-Bhamo, K358,000 for Bhamo-Yangon and K360,000 for Yangon-Bhamo. — Htet Oo Maung/ZN

NATIONAL

Announcement

- The Central Bank of Myanmar sells foreign currencies to importers via an Online Trading Platform. It allows private banks to sell foreign currencies for petty cash at their exchange counters for people who go abroad to undergo medical treatment, study, and work, aiming at stabilizing currency exchange rates and preventing price manipulation.
- The dollar transaction is K3,375 per dollar at the Online Trading Platform between the banks and importers/exporters, and the following three private banks under the guidance of CBM are selling between US\$300 and \$500 at K3,100 per dollar as a special plan.

Name	Yangon	Mandalay	Nay Pyi Taw	Taunggyi
KBZ	9 th -Mile branch, U Wisara (2) branch, Yangon International Airport (Arrival)	IBD branch, (22) branch, (4) branch	Branch (5)	Branch (1)
AYA Bank PCL	Yangon International Airport, Parami branch, Kyauktada branch, Ahlon branch, Mayangon branch	30 th street branch, (22) branch	Nay Pyi Taw branch	
UAB	Sangyoung branch, Yangon International Airport, Shwegondine branch, Theinbyu branch	84 th street branch, Saingdan branch, Diamond branch	Nay Pyi Taw branch	

- The operations are also expressed on the Official Website of CMB, social media pages and Official Websites of AYA Bank, KBZ Bank and UAB Bank.
- Although foreign currencies are sold under such operations, the saboteurs who destroy the foreign currency exchange rates release disinformation to raise the exchange rates via the following Facebook pages, groups, Apps and websites;
 - Mr. Hamburger Channel (Viber)
 - Myanmar Market Price App & (Facebook)
 - Htet Yan Money Exchange (Facebook)
 - Dollar Exchange Rate (Facebook)
 - Daily Gold (Facebook)
 - Myanmar Future News (Facebook)
 - ရွှေဈေးဒေါ်လာဈေး (Facebook)
 - GG-Money Exchange (Facebook)
 - ရဝေထွန်း-စိန်ရွှေရတနာဆိုင် (Facebook)
 - ရွှေဈေးနှုန်း၊ ငွေဈေးနှုန်း (Facebook)
 - Domestic Price Now
 - Shwedingar.com
 - Gold (Facebook)
 - Law Ka Media (Facebook)
 - Money Changer (Yangon) ငွေဈေး ဒေါ်လာဈေး (Facebook Group)
- The above-mentioned Facebook pages, groups, Apps and websites intentionally spread misinformation and false news and conduct Forex trading without possessing any work licences. Therefore, cooperation is being done with law enforcement organizations to take action against them under Section 505-a (b) Penal Code, Section 68 (a) Telecommunication Law, and Sections 38 and 42 of the Foreign Exchange Management Law.
- The people should buy foreign currencies at the above-mentioned exchange counters that sell under a special plan and should not believe the information and statements of currency manipulators. Moreover, people can also visit News & Announcements at <https://www.cbm.gov.mm/> of CBM to observe the daily Online Trading Platform and trade the currency at the banks and officially authorized exchange counters.

Central Bank of Myanmar

Counter-argument to false information

Khit Thit malicious media circulates fake news alleging security forces



The screenshot validates misinformation.

THE subversive media outlet Khit Thit is spreading fake news on social media platforms, alleging that security forces set fire to and destroyed Thetkeyyin village in Monywa Township, Sagaing Region, on 14 March without engaging in clashes.

The reality is that PDF terrorists are moving around Thetkeyyin village, extorting money, and forcibly conscripting youths. As a result, one resident who does not support the PDF terrorists informed the security forces on 14 March. Upon this information, the security forces conducted a security op-

eration and seized two homemade guns and explosive devices from two makeshift tents.

During the local security operation, PDF terrorists launched an attack on the security forces using heavy weapons, resulting in explosions and fires in residential houses, according to an official from the security forces.

However, the malicious media Khit Thit is covering up terror acts perpetrated by PDF terrorists since Khit Thit media supports PDFs and is circulating fake news alleging the security forces on social media. — MNA/TKO

Daily newspapers available online

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

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NATIONAL/ARTICLE

MNHRC inspects Hmawby police lock-up, court detention centres, Home for the Aged (Hmawby)



MNHRC members seen viewing round the Home for the Aged (Hmawby) yesterday.

THE inspection team, led by U Kyaw Myint, a member of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, inspected the Hmawby Police Lock-up, Hmawby

District Court Detention Centre, Hmawby Township Court Detention Centre and Home for the Aged (Hmawby) in Hmawby Township, Yangon Region un-

der Sections 43 and 44 of the Commission Law on 15 March 2024.

The inspection team inspected Hmawby police lock-up and court detention centres on the conditions of remand period of detainees, family visits, the status of appearance, food supplies, water sanitation system, the status of cleanliness and the status of communication with lawyers of the detention centres.

Then, the inspection team inspected the Home for the Aged (Hmawby) under the MNHRC Law and procedures to determine whether the old aged persons can get fundamental human rights, including healthcare services, food supply, provision of purified drinking water, right to freedom of religion, adequate dormitories and leisure arrangements.

MNHRC will send recommendations to the relevant departments for the necessary action based on the findings during the inspection. — MNHRC

Rehabilitation materials delivered to Rakhine State

UNDER the guidance of the National Disaster Management Committee and the planning and supervision of the Transport and Communications Committee, rehabilitation materials are being delivered to Rakhine State by ship, plane, and vehicle.

The MV Sunshine carrying the construction materials, health products and foodstuffs, 11 transformers, electrical accessories, construction materials, food and consumer goods, including office furniture ordered by the Rakhine State government totaling 1,561.40 tonnes left for Sittway on 14 March 2024. — MNA/KZL

Should The Ocean Be Cleaned Up More?

FROM PAGE-9

Pulled behind two boats, plastic collected by the net is gradually funnelled to the middle of the barrier, forming a central “retention zone” — essentially, a giant trash bag.

Up to now, the process has gathered several hundred tonnes of plastic. Its newly launched system is ready for full-scale operations, capable of collecting many tonnes of waste at once, as demonstrated in the 2023 expedition. Even within the patch, currents create areas of denser plastic waste, so the organization is using machine learning to anticipate and track those, making its efforts more efficient.

But, as critics have noted, it's not as easy as just getting rid of the problem. Firstly, collecting large pieces of plastic won't address the tiny plastic particles that make up most of the waste in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. While there have been interesting studies into nature-based solutions to the microplastic problem — like mussels naturally filtering those fragments from water — there is currently no feasible way to remove microplastics from the ocean, let alone at the needed scale. Even when it comes to

the larger pieces of plastic in the patch, there are reasons to question the idea of removing them. One major issue with the system is animals accidentally caught in the net, as Helm points out when reviewing The Ocean Cleanup's early pictures of plastic capture.

The current system aims to reduce unintentional capture of marine life in various ways. It moves at half the speed of a walking human and has multiple openings to provide ample opportunities for animals to avoid being caught or for them to escape. Disruptive lights and sounds are also used to deter them. According to Egger, only 0.3 per cent of the catch consisted of marine life in the most recent versions, measured by weight. However, this figure could be skewed by the presence of large plastic items.

Despite these precautions, the system cannot prevent all collateral damage. Neustons, in particular, are challenging to separate from waste. An environmental impact assessment from 2021 indicated that, even at the slowest speeds, the previous system would capture millions of these creatures each day.

The emerging concept of a neopelagic ecosystem could further complicate matters. Egger,

co-author of the 2023 study led by Haram, describes these coastal species as “invasive” and suggests they may be “competing for the very limited resources for the species that are naturally occurring out there”. This raises the argument for removing them. However, Helm points out that many coastal species have a history of riding on more natural ocean flotsam. He questions whether further disturbing the ecosystem to clean up plastic is a genuine solution to the problem of ecosystem disturbance caused by plastic.

Beyond these considerations, there is a broader question of whether these areas are worth the substantial effort at all. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch represents just one aspect of a global plastics crisis. Every year, an estimated million tonnes of plastic trash enters the ocean, with only one per cent ending up in garbage patches. The whereabouts of the other 99 per cent remain uncertain. Currents suggest that much of it stays within 160 kilometres of the shore, slowly breaking down along coasts and moving up and down from the seafloor. A significant portion is also believed to be trapped in Arctic ice. Given

that gyres contain only a small fraction of ocean plastic, some question the focus on targeting plastics in these regions.

Moreover, accessing these garbage patches is not straightforward. “All of the gyres exist in the very centre, more or less, of the ocean basins,” notes Nick Mallos at the Ocean Conservancy organization. He emphasizes the high cost, time, and fuel required to reach these remote locations. Research from Imperial College London in 2016 suggests that cleanup efforts near shores and coastal environments are more efficient at removing plastic.

The fate of collected waste adds another layer of complexity. While there is hope for reuse or recycling, plastic that has been in the ocean for an extended period often breaks down in ways that hinder these outcomes. This can result in the need to deposit it in landfills, where it can still contaminate soil and air.

In November 2023, a collaboration including Richard Thompson at the University of Plymouth cautioned against relying on physical cleanups as the primary solution for tackling ocean plastic, deeming them a fallacy. The report suggests that even 200 of The Ocean Cleanup's devic-

es running for 130 years would only capture five per cent of the world's floating plastic. Thompson emphasizes the concern that these efforts may distract from addressing the root cause of the issue.

The Ocean Cleanup advocates for a shift in plastic consumption habits. The company has increasingly focused on building machines to intercept plastic in waterways, with systems in operation in multiple rivers. Despite efforts to curb emissions, there is already a significant amount of plastic causing harm to the marine environment. According to Egger, cleanup efforts and prevention initiatives can complement each other, with cleanup data aiding prevention efforts. Nevertheless, with 430 million tonnes of plastic produced annually and two-thirds becoming waste, some argue that cleaning up the open ocean is an immense challenge. Mallos suggests that efforts should prioritize turning off the tap, with Thompson advocating for directing one per cent of efforts to clearing and 99 per cent to preventing plastic pollution at its source.

Reference: *New Scientist*, 20 January 2024

Vodafone sells Italian unit to Swisscom for 8 bln euros

The telecom giant, which rejected previous offers, is focusing on cost-cutting measures including layoffs and divestitures.

BRITISH telecoms giant Vodafone said Friday it has agreed to sell its Italian unit to Swisscom for eight billion euros (\$8.7 billion), completing efforts to overhaul the UK group's European operations.

Vodafone, which previously rejected offers from French billionaire Xavier Niel's Iliad group, has been on a cost-cutting campaign that has included layoffs and the

offloading of divisions abroad. The UK group said it intends to return four billion euros to its shareholders following the sales of its Italian and Spanish businesses, which together total 12 billion euros.

Vodafone chief executive Margherita Della Valle said the deal with Swisscom marked the "third and final step in the reshaping of our European operations". — AFP



Vodafone has finalized the sale of its Italian unit to Swisscom for eight billion euros, concluding its efforts to restructure its European operations. PHOTO: AFP

Industry insiders upbeat about seafood trade between US, China despite multiple uncertainties

AMERICAN and Chinese Seafood industry players have expressed optimism about expanding business in each other's country despite uncertainties from multiple fronts.

Nearly 60 companies from China participated in the 2024 Seafood Expo North America from Sunday to Tuesday.

The prospects of the US market are promising and "we're confident in the US market," said Danny Deng, vice-president of Zhanjiang Manxian Attain Seafood Co Ltd.

Speaking at his booth on the exposition, Deng said his firm has focused on South America and this is the first time to present products on the trade show in Boston.

China has full-fledged industry chains for tilapia, and tuna and other aquatic products that are a kind of necessity in people's daily life, Deng said, adding that quite a number of poten-



Seafood samples are displayed at the 2024 Seafood Expo North America in Boston, Massachusetts, the United States, 10 March 2024. PHOTO: ZIYU JULIAN ZHU/XINHUA

tial customers visited his booth with clear business purposes.

"I believe follow-up cooperation will be materialized," he said.

Deng said his company would take a step-by-step manner in opening up the US market and would offer the best-quality products to

customers here.

China is such a significant part of the export market and "it's really critical", said Allison Melvin, who is responsible for marketing of Maine-based Greenhead Lobster LLC.

Lobster exports to China stopped for a while following the outbreak of the

COVID-19 pandemic, but now everything is recovering and getting back to where it was, said Melvin.

Lobster exports to China seem to be going well and the company always looks forward to expanding business to China and other places as well, he added. — Xinhua

JPMorgan fined almost \$350 mln for 'inadequate' trade reporting

US regulators unveiled fines of almost \$350 million Thursday against US bank JPMorgan Chase for what they called inadequate trade reporting and surveillance. The fines, levied by the US Federal Reserve and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC), relate to issues with the US banking giant's trading programme between 2014 and 2023, the Fed said in a statement.

The Fed said it had fined JPMorgan around \$98.2 million for running "an inadequate programme to monitor firm and client trading activities for market misconduct." — AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V BANGKOK VOY.NO. (172N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V BANGKOK VOY.NO. (172N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **16-3-2024** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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Declaration of objection to change of manufacturer's name and Distributor's name

It should be announced that anyone can come and object within two weeks to the Myanmar Pesticide registration body if there is any objection related with the matter to change manufacturer's name Shandong Max Agro Co., Ltd to Royal Golden Brothers International Pte, Ltd and Distributor's name Royal Golden Citizen Co., Ltd to Farmer's Friend Co., Ltd related with the following (13) types of agricultural chemicals which are still applying registration by Shandong Max Agro Co., Ltd.

The following (13) types of agricultural chemicals which are still applying registration by Shandong Max Agro Co., Ltd are :-

1. Copper Oxychloride 45% + Kasugamycin 5% WP
2. Emamectin benzoate 4% + Thiamethoxam 11% WDG
3. Bensulfuron-methyl 10% + Bispyribac-sodium 40% WP
4. Fenoxaprop-p-ethyl 7.5% EC
5. Azoxystrobin 20% + Difenoconazole 12.5% SC
6. Thiamethoxam 35% SC
7. Emamectin Benzoate 5% WDG
8. Lufenuron 5% + Profenofos 50% EC
9. Hexaconazole 5% SC
10. Thiophanate-methyl 70% WP
11. Lambda cyhalothrin 1.5% + Profenofos 35% EC
12. Cyhalofop-butyl 20% EC
13. Sodium Nitrophenolate 1.8% SL

According to the instruction

Khing Hay Hlaing
(Serial - 7916/21-12-2011)
LL.B, D.B.L., Dip in English
Advocate

Cho Mar Lwin
(Serial - 10998/28-7-2016)
LL.B
Advocate

Building (10/12), 1st Floor, Room - (104-D), 35th Street (Lower), Kyauktada Township, Yangon City. 09-420038986

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

Russians head to the polls to elect next president

Over 110 million eligible voters out of the country's 145+ million citizens can cast their votes at over 100,000 polling stations, with remote voting options available.



A polling station during early voting for Russia's presidential election in the village of Sennaya Guba, republic of Karelia. **PHOTO: NATALIA KOLESNIKOVA / AFP**

RUSSIA is holding its 2024 presidential election from 15 to 17 March. The list of candidates running for the nation's highest office include Vladimir Putin (independent), Leonid Slutsky (LDPR), Nikolai Kharitonov (CPRF), and Vladislav Davank-

ov (New People party).

Out of Russia's 145+ million citizens, over 110 million voters are eligible to vote at more than 100,000 polling stations, in addition, remote voting is also available.

Around one million election

organizers are there to ensure that every single vote is secured and accounted for. Besides, the 2024 voting process also involves election observers and CCTV monitoring systems present at polling stations across the country.

This year's election will also usher in such technical innovations as remote electronic voting (REV) and ballots with QR codes. According to the Russian Central Election Commission (CEC), these features will make the voting process more convenient and transparent.

On the first day of the presidential elections, over a million people took part in remote voting on Russia's federal online platform, according to the data of the monitoring portal. — SPUTNIK

Secret cabinet talks: Sunak's troubles deepen as Tories mull replacement

AS Rishi Sunak's premiership woes mount after a series of blunders that have diminished Tory faith in his administration, senior cabinet ministers are engaging in secret discussions about having a caretaker leader. But is now the time?

British PM Rishi Sunak

risks losing the support of the majority of his Conservative peers since taking the reins of government 16 months ago, Bloomberg reports.

Recently, there have been secret talks among Cabinet members about possibly kicking Sunak out of 10 Downing

Street before the UK general election — which must be held by 28 January next year. The plot hinges on who could replace Sunak and cut the opposition Labour Party's 20-point poll lead in a few months, sources acquainted with the matter said. — SPUTNIK



An image of a next-generation fighter aircraft to be jointly developed by Japan, the United Kingdom and Italy. **PHOTO: DEFENSE MINISTRY / VIA KYODO**

Thai tourist hotspot Chiang Mai tops world's most polluted cities

Chiang Mai, a popular tourist destination in Thailand, was engulfed in thick smog on Friday, causing discomfort and health concerns for residents and visitors alike.

THAI tourist hotspot Chiang Mai was blanketed by hazy smog Friday, as residents and visitors to the usually picturesque northern city were left wheezing in the toxic air. The city topped air monitoring website IQAir's table of the world's most polluted cities early Friday.

Levels of PM2.5 pollutants — cancer-causing microparticles small enough to enter the bloodstream through the lungs — were classified as “very unhealthy” and hit more than 35 times the World Health Organization's annual guideline.

“It's very high. All I have is this mask which is the same one

I used for Covid,” orange seller Kamol, 62, told AFP at the city's Warorot Market.

Thailand's former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who was recently freed early from a jail sentence for graft and abuse of power following 15 years in self-exile, visited the market on Friday, donning a face mask while he posed for photos with well-wishers. High levels of pollution frequently hit Thaksin's hometown of Chiang Mai during the early months of the year when farmers often burn crops to clear land, and forest fires and exhaust fumes also add to the problem. — AFP



An Air Asia plane descends towards Chiang Mai International Airport amid high levels of air pollution in Chiang Mai on 10 April 2023. **PHOTO: LILLIAN SUWANRUMPHA / AFP**

Japan to greenlight next-gen fighter jet exports

JAPAN'S ruling coalition, the Liberal Democratic Party and the Komeito Party, on Friday agreed to permit the export of the next-generation fighter jet jointly developed by Japan with Britain and Italy, to third countries, marking a further relaxation of Japan's arms export control and another step contrary to the country's pacifist constitution.

According to the agreement between the two parties, Japan will only be allowed to directly export weapons to third countries that are currently involved in the joint development of the new fighter jet. Moreover, the recipient country must have signed defence equipment export-related agreements with Japan and must not be engaged in any ongoing conflict. — Xinhua

SPORTS

VUC clinch champion in MFF Futsal League 1 two successive years

VUC futsal club claimed champion in the MFF Futsal League 1 on Friday after playing the play-off final match at the MFF Futsal Gymnasium.

After completion of the third final match, VUC defeated a 2-1 win over MIU to secure the championship trophy. Both teams played three final matches due to tying at one win each. The third final match became decisive for them, and VUC bagged the win in the third match.

In the first half, VUC could lead the match with more football possession than the opponent team. At 10 minutes, Naing Lin Tun Kyaw scored an opening goal, and Aung Zin Oo added one more for his team. MIU, which made many mistakes in football possession in the first half, tried hard to get a great chance to score a goal. So, Ampo scored an equalizer for MIU in the 28th



Champion VUC celebrates their victory for winning the championship trophy in MFF Futsal League 1. PHOTO: MFF

minute.

Although MIU poured out the utmost effort to net more goals, VUC controlled the match. In the first final match,

MIU won over VUC with a penalty decision, but VUC converted the results as a 2-1 win over MIU in the second and third final matches.

Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein and ministers, President of Myanmar Football Federation U Zaw Zaw and officials presented prizes

to relevant winners and winning teams, respectively. The Champion VUC team bagged a K10 million award and individual medals. — Ko Nyi Lay/TTA

FIFA increases investment in football development to US\$2.25 billion

The FIFA Council has unanimously approved the Annual Report 2023 and increased investment in football development to \$2.25 billion, nearly seven times the previous investment before 2016.



THE FIFA Council unanimously approved the Annual Report 2023 and the increase of investment in football development to 2.25 billion US dollars, the world football governing body announced on Thursday. FIFA confirmed that the budget for the 2023-2026 cycle is almost seven times as much as the investment in the development programmes prior to 2016.

The Annual Report will be submitted to the 74th FIFA Congress in Bangkok,

Thailand, on 17 May 2024 for final approval. The Congress will hold a vote on the host(s) of the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup in Bangkok after FIFA received a bid from Brazil, a joint bid from Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, as well as a joint bid from Mexico and the United States. The FIFA Council also supported the FIFA President Gianni Infantino's call to fight racism in football, FIFA said. — Xinhua

IFA confirmed that the budget for the 2023-2026 cycle is almost seven times as much as the investment in the development programmes prior to 2016. The Annual Report will be submitted to the 74th FIFA Congress in Bangkok, Thailand, on 17 May 2024 for final approval. PHOTO: FIFA

Boniface 'close' to return, says Leverkusen coach Alonso

BAYER Leverkusen coach Xabi Alonso said Friday Nigeria striker Victor Boniface was "close to getting back on the pitch" and could return in March.

Boniface injured his adductor while preparing for the Africa Cup of Nations with Nigeria in January and has been out since.

Originally scheduled to return sometime in April, Alonso said the 23-year-old could be fit for Leverkusen's home clash with Hoffenheim on 30 March.

"He's not ready yet, but next week we have an international break and we'll use the time to take a step forward with him.

"Maybe for Hoffenheim if everything goes well, but we'll see. "We need to have a bit more patience but he's close to getting back on the pitch." Moving from Union Saint-Gilloise in the summer, Boniface has had an excellent start to life in Leverkusen, scoring 16 goals and laying on eight assists in 23 games in all competitions. — AFP

Liverpool face Atalanta in Europa League quarters

LIVERPOOL will play Italian outfit Atalanta in the quarter-finals of this season's Europa League after the teams were paired together in Friday's draw, which left open the possibility of the Anfield side meeting Xabi Alonso's Bayer Leverkusen in the final.

Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool, who are still in contention to win a quadruple this season, will entertain Atalanta at Anfield on 11 April and go to Italy a week later for the return.

The Reds hammered Sparta Prague 11-2 on aggregate on the last 16 and will be

favourites to beat Atalanta, who currently lie sixth in Serie A.

The clubs met in the group stage of the Champions League in 2020/21, with Liverpool winning 5-0 away in Bergamo and Atalanta winning 2-0 at Anfield. — AFP



Setting up nuclear power unit in space is priority for Russia: Putin



The head of Russia's Roscosmos space agency, Dmitry Rogozin stands in front of the Soyuz MS-20 spacecraft as the crew of Japanese billionaire Yusaku Maezawa, his assistant Yozo Hirano and Russian cosmonaut Alexander Misurkin prepare for the launch at the Baikonur cosmodrome on 8 December 2021. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ SHAMIL ZHUMATOV/ POOL/ AFP/FILE**

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin emphasised on Thursday the importance of prioritising space projects, including the establishment of a nuclear power unit in space, during discussions with government officials, as reported by state news agency TASS.

Russia "has good competencies and, moreover, even has such reserves that we can be proud of, which we can count on in the future," Putin said at

Russian President Vladimir Putin stressed the importance of advancing space projects, including the development of a nuclear power unit for space, during discussions with government officials, according to state news agency TASS.

a meeting with members of the government, pointing as an example to a nuclear power unit that would operate in space.

"We need to finance it on time," Putin said, according to TASS.

"We just need to set priorities," he said, adding "there are issues there that require additional attention."
— ANI

TRAFFIC SURGE INDICATES LUNAR NEW YEAR DEMAND

Singapore Airlines transports nearly 2 mln passengers in February

SINGAPORE Airlines transported 1.99 million passengers in February, up 29.7 per cent year on year, according to the operating statistics revealed Friday.

The low-cost airline Scoot within the same group recorded over 1.06 million passengers in February, a year on year growth of 25.6 per cent.

The Singapore Airlines (SIA) Group attributed the significant passenger traffic growth to a boosted demand during the Chinese Lunar New Year holiday season.

The cargo carriage also increased by 12.9 per cent year on year in February on the back of robust e-commerce flows, said the SIA Group.

The SIA Group's passenger network covered 121 destinations in 35 countries and regions by the end of February.
— Xinhua

Chinese publishers explore advanced technologies at London Book Fair

AS the publishing industry embarks on a new era driven by emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), Chinese publishers, alongside their international counterparts, delved into the potential of innovative tools to revolutionize their practices at this year's London Book Fair (LBF).

In a panel talk held in China's exhibition area, professionals discussed the pragmatic application, potential, and inherent constraints of AI technology, which has drawn much attention at the LBF from Tuesday to Thursday.

Publishers worldwide have been using AI-supported tools in editing, market analysis and online book recommendations for

years. However, the recent surge in AI development has prompted the industry to contemplate the issue.

"This marks a shift in the publishing market towards

more efficient, personalized and insightful processes and standards," Professor Shen Yang at Tsinghua University's School of Journalism and Communication said in the panel. — Xinhua



This photo taken on 12 March 2024 shows the London Book Fair in London, Britain. **PHOTO: LI YING/XINHUA**