

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

Organizations from armed struggle line must seek the best solution for ensuring durable peace and stability of the nation through dialogues via NCA

THE following is the full-text translation of the message sent by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing to the ceremony to mark the 50th Anniversary (Golden Ju-

bilee) of Mon State Day, today. **Esteemed ethnic national brethren in Mon State,**

I make best wishes for Mon ethnic people in Mon State and other parts of the nation and all national brethren nationwide to enjoy physical and mental well-being with good aspiration and

auspiciousness on the significant 50th Anniversary (Golden Jubilee) of Mon State Day, which falls on 19 March 2024.

The day of 19 March 2024, when Yamanya land was designated as the Mon State, turns 50 years. So, a record has been set for observing the Golden Jubilee celebration. Before designating

the Mon State, Mawlamyine and Thaton districts of the previous areas of Mon State were formed as Taninthayi Region No 1 and Dawei and Myeik districts as Taninthayi Region No 2. According to the Constitution (1974) of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma,

SEE PAGE-2



A small, human-sized entrance to the Bagan Palace, buried under bushes for ages, was discovered during the dredging of an ancient lake.

Forgotten people-only gate to Bagan Palace unearthed during dredging

A HUMAN entrance to the Bagan Palace buried under bushes has been discovered during the dredging of the eastern moat, according to the Department of Archaeology and National Museum (Bagan branch) under the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture.

The gate to the palace, which was buried under bushes, will be properly

preserved after the work of clearing and surveying, said U Kyaw Myo Win, director of the Department of Archaeology and National Museum (Bagan branch).

“We have been dredging the eastern moat. While dredging, we found a small entrance about the height of a man. Bushes had covered it for many years. We are going to clear the area, dredge the moat,

and, after checking, carry out preservation works. Our engineers are now taking a survey. We need to do more research works. It was discovered while clearing. No carts or cars can pass through this entrance. It was meant for persons only. It seems to be for a tightened security purpose, as you can enter the palace directly through this gate. **SEE PAGE-3**

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Kyat depreciates to K3,700 against US dollar

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Enhanced fire safety measures implemented in Yangon Region with CCTV surveillance

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.

Organizations from armed struggle line must seek the best solution for ensuring durable peace and stability of the nation through dialogues via NCA

FROM PAGE-1

Taninthayi Region No 1 was renamed Mon State on 19 March when Mon State Day was designated, and such a significant day has been celebrated in traditional culture and customs of ethnics for 50 years.

Mon ethnics resided in Myanmar at the earliest, and it was located in Thudhammawady state near the Thaton area before the Gotama Buddha had been enlightened. Language, religion, literature, culture, and fine arts flourished in that state, and these good historical events are honourable for the state.

Mon State has fine traditions with the emergence of eminent kings, wise Samgha and laymen, scholars and brave and gallant heroes. Moreover, Mon State possesses a fine tradition in language, literature, culture and fine arts sectors.

Mon State is located in the south of the country and to the north of the Taninthayi coastal area. The state shares borders with Kayin State, Taninthayi Region, Bago Region, the Bay of Bengal, the Mottama Gulf and Thailand. In fact, Mon State is strategically located at the junction of waterways and land roads.

Mon State is blessed with favourable weather, a natural environment, greening forests and historical cultural heritages. As it is close to sea coastal lines, Mon State is endowed with beautifications, plentiful land resources and water resources, and industrial raw products.

Ancient religious edifices, including marvellous sacred hair relics enshrined in Kyaiktiyo Pagoda, take positions in Mon State. As Buddhist missionary laypersons and monk Shin Arahan strived for the propagation and flourishing of Buddhism, the Suvanabhumi region became a focal point for propagating Buddhism, according to historical records.

Esteemed national brethren,

Currently, Myanmar is on track to initiate a democratic system that flourishes on the deterrent principles such as justice, liberty, and equality that the people aspire to. Unity, disciplinary acts, and abiding by the laws are essential for citizens in the establishment of a democratic nation. It is time to noticeably review that the country and the people are at a far distance in peace and stability as well as suffering due to armed conflicts, different political attitudes, instigations, weak unity, seeking selfishness with lack of State interest, weakness in national and patriotic spirit, and destruc-

tion of resources of the State.

Selfish acts and instigations of diverse political forces considerably encroach on the country, harming the interests of the nation and the entire people without farsightedness instead of united cooperation among political, economic and defence forces in building the nation.

Leaders of some ethnic armed organizations brainwash their relevant ethnic groups to be motivated extremely with a narrow racial hatred concept. It is necessary to prevent their attempts to disintegrate the Union.

NUG was declared as a terrorist group, and its subordinate PDF terrorists and varieties of armed terrorist groups under the title of region-wise defence forces emerged after the political change triggered by the voting frauds in the 2020 election. These terrorist groups are committing various terror acts intending to deteriorate the peace and stability of the State and sovereignty.

Hence, now is the time for all citizens to safeguard the State in unison through collaborative efforts based on the Union spirit.

On the other hand, the organizations from the armed struggle line, due to political problems, have to seek the best solution for ensuring durable peace and stability of the nation through the constantly-opened dialogues via the nationwide ceasefire agreement (NCA).

Esteemed ethnic national people,

By upholding Our Three Main National Causes: Non-disintegration of the Union, Non-disintegration of national solidarity and Perpetuation of sovereignty, the State Administration Council is accelerating the measures of strengthening the genuine, disciplined multiparty democratic system and building a Union based on democratic and federal systems.

The foundation for the emergence of a genuine, disciplined democratic system the people aspire to is to hold a just, prestigious, systematic general election. All citizens and ethnic nationals have to participate in forging peace and stability, which is essential for implementing the processes mentioned above.

As basic needs of humans such as food, clothing, and shelter are essential for all, the State Administration Council has adopted two national visions: the prosperity of the State and food security and assists in boosting agricultural produce suitable for time and

circumstances and successfully beefing up the livestock farming tasks beneficial for all citizens.

Agriculture and livestock-based production are enhanced to improve the socioeconomic life of entire ethnic people, whereas encouragement is being given to micro-, small- and medium-scale enterprises (MSME) to produce national products for booming the State economy.

Enhancing the agriculture and livestock breeding sector aims to improve the lives of rural people, who are the majority of the national population. Hence, all people have to strive to boost the state's production.

In the education sector, the government has set the KG+9 educational scheme for compulsory education as part of implementing the comprehensive education system. In this regard, if efforts are made to learn basic education and step-up learning education as well as ensure the development of human resources, Mon State will have to enjoy the fruits of growth in all sectors.

Individuals have to rationally take care of gaining political profit by utilizing the people as a stepping stone to spreading rumours and misinformation, causing wrong thoughts, knowledge, and jobs among the people and raising extreme pessimism. It is necessary to expose those who make attempts to grasp power without exerting efforts by making the lives of followers and innocent persons sacrificed under the title of resistance and those who seek self-interest by cheating various things under titles.

In conclusion, I would like to send the message in honour of the 50th Anniversary (Golden Jubilee) of Mon State Day with deep wishes to urge all ethnic people, including national brethren from Mon State who really love the State and the people to participate in peace and stability of the State collaboratively and forging the durable peace, prosperity of the nation and food security, socioeconomic development, strengthening the genuine disciplined multiparty democratic system, and building the Union based on democracy and federalism based on the Union spirit and patriotism in their respective sectors as much as possible.

**Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu
Thadoe Thiri Thudamma Min Aung Hlaing
Prime Minister
Chairman,
State Administration Council**

NATIONAL

SAC Secretary attends Mon State Day exhibition, observes Mon traditional entertainment

LT-GEN Aung Lin Dwe, Secretary of the State Administration Council (SAC), along with other SAC members and Union Ministers, arrived at Mawlamyine Airport yesterday evening to participate in the 50th Anniversary of Mon State Day, which falls on 19 March 2024. They were welcomed by Mon State Chief Minister U Aung Kyi Thein, Mon State government ministers, departmental personnel, and Mon ethnic dancing troupes.

The group, led by Lt-Gen Aung Lin Dwe, visited the Thamainbayan Field in Mawlamyine, where they observed exhibitions showcasing Mon State's local products, traditional foods, and emblems for the Golden Jubilee Anniversary of Mon State Day.

The purpose of these exhibitions is to highlight the programmes of Mon State Development projects, Mon State's



State Administration Council Secretary Lt-Gen Aung Lin Dwe and officials watch Mon traditional singing, dancing and playing musical instrument competitions at yesterday's event.

customs and traditions, and to showcase local traditional foods. There are a total of 58 exhibition booths at the event, including 11 for the agricultural sector, 10 for the industrial sector, ten for the

service sector, eight for the education sector, eight for the health sector, and 11 for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Additionally, the group led by Lt-Gen

Aung Lin Dwe enjoyed Mon traditional singing, dancing, and playing musical instrument competitions as part of the entertainment provided at the event. — MNA/ TMT

Forgotten people-only gate to Bagan Palace unearthed during dredging

FROM PAGE-1

The structure seems to aim for the people to climb up by keeping abreast of the moat till the entrance to line up to enter, so the design is supposed to allow the people to queue horizontally from the moat. We will restore this entrance properly," he said.

In addition, the reclamation of ancient lakes is also underway, with priority given to the villages facing water scarcity.

"We are digging the lakes, giving priority to supplying water to the villages with water shortages. But we cannot do it recklessly in the places near the pagodas. These lakes are being dredged under close monitoring by our department without affecting the authentic structure. Structures like the embankments will be preserved in their original forms," he explained about the dredging of the lakes. — MT/ZN

MoI, Indian govt ink pact for Sarsobeikman building project

THE Ministry of Information's Printing and Publishing Department and the Indian government signed an agreement yesterday at Lotte Hotel Yangon for the construction of Sarsobeikman, a literary centre.

Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn, India's Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Vinay Kumar and relevant officials attended the event. During his speech, the Union minister highlighted the significance of the day as a symbol of the enduring friendship between the two countries, which dates back to 4 January 1948. He emphasized a traditional solid connection of historical, cultural, and literary bonds shared by Myanmar and India.

The Union Minister underscored that the proposed building aims to celebrate accomplished Myanmar writers and literature itself. In this building, historical, literary materials that everyone can study the history of Myanmar literature will be displayed. Moreover, palm-leaf inscriptions (Pe and Parabaik), hand-written scripts of famous Myanmar writers, their photographs and biographies, rare books, literary prize medals, and photographs of various types of printing presses that have been used for generations throughout the history of Myanmar printing will be showed as a gallery. Likewise, literary events such as literary conferences and seminars, literary award ceremonies, literary talk



The signing ceremony for the Sarsobeikman construction project agreement in progress yesterday in Yangon.

shows, writers-readers discussions, and book launching ceremonies will also be allowed in this building.

The Union minister continued that it will also open a modern reference library that will keep a collection of reference books that writers can easily use. Temporary lodgings will also be arranged for the writers and literary scholars to perform their literary matters. Sarsobeikman can be a place where international and Myanmar writers can meet and discuss copyright issues. Sarsobeikman will be established with great objectives for the authors' benefit.

The Union minister expressed grati-

tude for the support provided by the Indian government for this construction project and expressed hope for future bilateral collaborations across various fields. Subsequently, Mr Vinay Kumar delivered an appreciation speech on behalf of the Indian government.

The project agreement was then signed by Director-General U Win Kyaw Aung of the Printing and Publishing Department and Deputy Chief of Mission Mr Ashish Sharma of the Indian Embassy in the presence of the Union minister and the Indian ambassador. The event concluded with a gift exchange, photo session, and gala dinner. — MNA/NT

NATIONAL

MoI Union Minister chairs meeting on formation of Myanmar digital media association

UNION Minister of Information U Maung Maung Ohn participated in a coordination meeting of the Myanmar Digital Media Association organizing committee held at 1 pm on 18 March at the Film Promotion Division of Department of Information and Public Relations, in Bahan Township, Yangon.

During the meeting, the Union minister highlighted the increasing use of digital media, including social media and creative broadcasting in Myanmar, which has become prevalent in society. He emphasized the importance of maintaining and enhancing the role of digital media, not only for widespread dissemination of information to the public but also for contributing to economic growth. He noted the rapid development of digital media usage in Myanmar in recent years, especially with the proliferation of mobile phones and internet access,



Union Information Minister U Maung Maung Ohn presides over the meeting to establish the Myanmar Digital Media Association yesterday in Yangon.

leading to a surge in social media usage. Consequently, digital technology and media have be-

come integral components of Myanmar's media landscape, necessitating the formation of a

robust association to represent digital media professionals and users. The establishment of the

“Digital Media Association Organizing Committee” aims to safeguard the interests of digital media practitioners and users, manage complaints effectively, and ensure compliance with the Code of Conduct.

Furthermore, the Union minister proposed the expansion of membership in the Myanmar Digital Media Association and encouraged attendees to actively contribute to achieving the association's goals and objectives.

Following this, the director-general of the Department of Information and Public Relations provided an overview of the plans for establishing the Myanmar Digital Media Association.

Subsequently, participants of the organizing committee meeting discussed various suggestions and viewpoints for the association's formation. Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn concluded the meeting with a closing speech. — MNA/TKO

MoHT Union Minister receives delegation led by Thai firm CEO

UNION Minister for Hotels and Tourism Dr Thet Thet Khine received CEO of Thailand Pearl Vacations Co Ltd Mr Komsan Tungthirasuk, and a delegation of Thailand's famous artistes and travelogue documentaries at the ministry yesterday.

Both sides will collaborate on tourism promotion to enhance awareness of Myanmar's destinations among Thai and international tourists. Programmes have been

devised to attract tourists from Thailand and beyond, including discussions on Kachin State's snow-capped mountain region, a renowned ASEAN travel destination. Initiatives include inviting Thai business people to explore the area, promoting tourism investment, creating promotional videos, and boosting cooperation with foreign travel documentaries through extensive social media promotion.



Union Minister Dr Thet Thet Khine poses for the group documentary photo at yesterday's event.

Mr Komsan Tungthirasuk, CEO of Thailand Pearl Vacations Co Ltd, led a group of fa-

mous artistes and travelogue documentaries and planned to visit and film the Maravijaya

Buddha Image and tourist attraction areas in Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay. — MNA/TS

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www.gnlm.com.mm



CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION

(+95) (01) 8604532,
Hotline - 09 255597511

ADVERTISING & MARKETING

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

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gnlmnews@gmail.com
newsroom@gnlm.com.mm
www.gnlm.com.mm

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NATIONAL

2024 matriculation examination continues for social science subject

ACCORDING to the Ministry of Education, one of two registered examinees—one male student in Mandalay and one female student in Yangon region — sat for the social science subject on the seventh day of the 2024 (new curriculum) matriculation examination. Yesterday, a female student from Yangon Region took the social science subject in the matriculation examination. — MNA/TTA



One of the examination centres in Yangon Region – BEHS 2 Sangyoung.

ASEAN initiates measures to protect children from harmful foods, beverages



Union Minister Dr Thein Khin Win virtually participates in yesterday's launching event.

A virtual ceremony was held in Bangkok, Thailand, to launch instructions and basic standards aimed at preventing the sale of food and alcoholic drinks harmful to children in the ASEAN region.

This initiative is developed to implement the ASEAN leaders' declaration on the elimination of malnutrition. The Union Minister for Health, Dr Thein Khin Win, delivered a video message to the ceremony.

During the event, the

Thailand Minister of Public Health also delivered an opening video message, and the EAPRO Regional Director of UNICEF gave a welcome speech. Following this, Health Ministers from ASEAN countries delivered their respective opening speeches via video messages.

Union Minister Dr Thein Khin Win expressed expectations for future ASEAN strategies, statements, and directions within the framework

and action plan on nutrition. Cooperation with respective authorities is emphasized to eliminate nutritional deficiencies.

Then, nutritionists discussed the practicality of directions, basic standards, and guidelines to protect ASEAN children from the sale of harmful foods and beverages. WHO representatives, nutritionists, and UNICEF officials also attended the ceremony. — MNA/TRKM

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News and Periodicals Enterprise

Myanmar, Russia discuss media sector cooperation to strengthen bilateral ties



Discussions on the media sector collaboration in progress yesterday at MRTV in Yangon.

MYANMAR and Russia engaged in a cordial and open discussion regarding cooperation in the media sector, aiming to foster friendship and cultural exchanges between the two nations. The meeting took place at Myanmar Radio and Television (MRTV) in Yangon.

Present at the meeting were MRTV Director-General U Ye Naing, MI Channel Director Daw Lein Maung Pan, The Global New Light of Myanmar's General Manager U Win Zaw Htay, Chief Editor U Aungthu Ya, as well as First Deputy Director-General Mr Mikhail Gusman of Russia's TASS news

agency, and his delegation.

During the meeting, various topics were discussed, including information exchange between the two countries, opportunities for mutual study visits, the exchange programme for music and art troupes, and preparations for signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) regarding these matters. Additionally, arrangements were made to invite a Myanmar media delegation to the 120th anniversary celebration of the TASS news agency, scheduled to take place in September 2024 in Moscow. — MNA/TKO

NATIONAL

MCDC offers tax-free construction permits for water play, entertainment, and charity pavilions

THE Mandalay City Development Committee (MCDC) has announced the provision of tax-free access for the construction of water play, entertainment, and Satuditha (charity feast) pavilions. Applications for constructing these pavilions must be submitted to the MCDC by 10 April.

This year's Mandalay Maha Thingyan Festival will feature water play pavilions, entertain-

ment pavilions, and Satuditha pavilions, along with walking Thingyan festivities around the moat, downtown, and along the strand road.

The festival will take place at various locations, including the southern moat (26th Street, from 66th Street to 78th Street), featuring walking Thingyan and large entertainment pavilions; the eastern Moat (66th Street, from 19th Street to 26th Street),

with water play pavilions and large entertainment pavilions; the western Moat (80th Street, from 26th Street to 12th Street), which will also host water play pavilions and large entertainment pavilions, along with the west moat (80th Street and 12th Street) featuring a fun water play pavilion and water pumps.

Additionally, festivities will be held in front of Mingala Mandalay, with walking Thingyan and



The photo shows a Thingyan decorated bullock cart representing the township at the opening of the Mandalay Thingyan Festival in 2022.

entertainment pavilions; at the Zaychothu water pavilion near the clock tower of the Mandalay Zaygyo Market; and along the

strand road (from 26th Street to 35th Street), featuring water play pavilions and entertainment pavilions. — TWA/MKKS

Seafarers, migrant workers required to pay taxes at CBM rates

ACCORDING to the Internal Revenue Department, holders of seaman and job passports are required to pay income tax based on the exchange rates set by the Central Bank of Myanmar.

When applying for tax clearance certificates at the relevant tax offices, individuals must remit taxes on their salaries in foreign currency, along with an additional two per cent of their income as advance tax based on the CBM rates. Subsequently, they will receive receipts from the bank.

Upon presenting proof of tax payment, the office will issue the certificate containing approved security clearance from the system. If additional taxes are owed as per Myanmar's tax laws or the laws of the taxpayer's destination country, the agreed amount will be adjusted accordingly. The bank will issue receipts for future payments.



The Yangon Region Internal Revenue Department.

The application form for the certificate requires a K50 postage stamp, along with the submission of a passport, copies of the citizenship scrutiny card, and the household registration list. Additionally, evidence of salary, along with either an employment contract or certificate of employment, must be provided.

Taxpayers have the option to engage an agent, who must

be represented by a stamped letter of authorization in accordance with the provisions outlined in the Myanmar Stamp Act. Tax payments can be made in person at the bank, as well as through mobile banking and MPU cards. The Internal Revenue Department assures prompt issuance of tax clearance certificates, promising efficiency and timeliness throughout the process. — TWA/NT

MOGE to extend CNG station operating hours as needed

THE CNG department of Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) has announced that the operating hours of CNG stations in the Yangon Region will be extended.

CNG stations open from 5

am to 10 pm daily, with the possibility of extension until 11:30 pm if required. Both the Yangon Electricity Supply Corporation and the CNG department are working to ensure continuous electricity supply to the CNG

stations.

Out of the 41 CNG stations in the Yangon Region, only 39 are currently operational, as two stations are temporarily closed for building repairs. — TWA/TRKM

MoNREC authorizes essential mineral production for cement manufacturing

THE Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MoNREC) has announced the approval for the production of essential raw mineral resources required for manufacturing cement.

Across regions and states, there are allocated plots for various minerals: 29 for limestone, 13 for quartz and gypsum, 103 for charcoal, two for clay, and two for cast iron and bauxite.

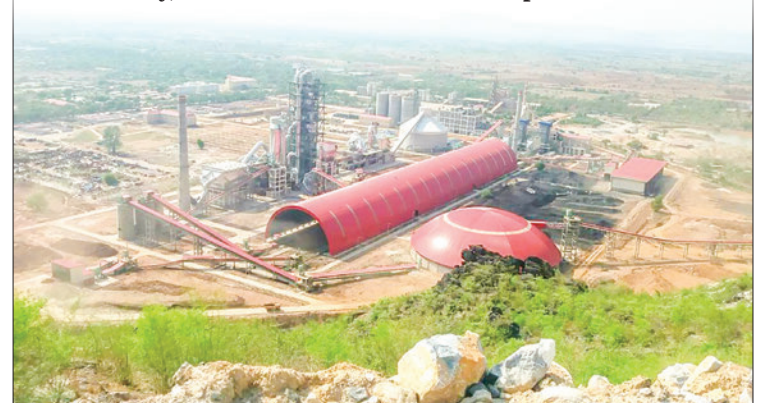
During a coordinating meeting held on 21 February in Nay Pyi Taw, Union Minister for MoNREC, U Khin Maung Yi, stated that the production of necessary raw mineral resources essential for cement manufacturing, such as limestone, charcoal, gypsum, quartz, cast iron, bauxite, and clay, has been authorized.

Currently, there are a total

of 19 cement factories across states and regions, including Nay Pyi Taw. Twelve of these are operational, while the remaining seven are temporarily suspended.

Charcoal produced by charcoal factories serves not only the cement industry but also acts as an alternative energy source in metal recycling, brick, cigarette, beverage, tissue, and rubber manufacturing. Additionally, gypsum and quartz find applications in fertilizer production.

Efforts by the ministry and relevant departments are focused on fully operating cement factories, sourcing input materials domestically, ensuring the availability of high-quality input materials and machinery, and improving operational efficiency. These efforts aim to reduce reliance on imports. — TWA/TMT



The photo shows No 33 Heavy Industry (Kyaukse) cement factory in previous years.

Kyat depreciates to K3,700 against US dollar



Counting greenbacks at the forex counter.

KYAT weakened to K3,700 against the US dollar on 18 March at the over-the-counter market.

The Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) intervened in the currency market by selling the dollars into the financial market to control the dollar gains in the forex market.

CBM injected US\$5 million on 15 March, 50 million Thai baht on 11 March, seven million Chinese yuan and 12 million Thai baht on 5 March for exporters on online trading platforms.

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, totalling \$15 million,

seven million Chinese yuan and 262 million Thai baht in the past 15 days in March.

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.

CBM is working together with law enforcement agencies to inspect and prosecute those involved in forex market manipulation, as per its notification released on 15 March.

The reference exchange rate set by CBM is K2,100 against a US dollar.

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.

The dollar gained to around K4,000 on 19 August 2023.

Under Section 9 of the Foreign Exchange Management Law, only those entities holding foreign exchange dealer licences are allowed to deal in foreign currencies and traveller's cheques. Those holding foreign currencies without valid licences and permits will face legal actions under the law, according to CBM's notification released on 21 August 2023.

According to Notification 7/2014 dated 30 September 2014 issued by the Central Bank of Myanmar, affirmingly stating that under stanza 15 of the Foreign Exchange Management Law, domestic residents are allowed to keep \$10,000 in maximum or equivalent amount of foreign currencies for six months. If those foreign currencies that have been unused for over six months have to be exchanged in local currency at the market price through authorized dealers or deposited into bank accounts.

Those illegally holding foreign currencies are to face legal actions under the Foreign Exchange Management Law, the CBM warned again. — NN/EM

Rubber price on gradual rise

THE price of rubber has increased at a slow pace, reaching over K1,700 per pound in Mon State's rubber market.

The prices hit K1,780 per pound of Ribbed Smoked Sheet Local 3 and K1,760 for sun-dried rubber on 18 March. The prices stood at only K1,640 per pound for sundried rubber and K1,660 for RSS Local 3 in early March.

The figures indicated an increase of K120 per pound in the past two weeks.

Myanmar's rubber prices are influenced by Global demand for rubber, rubber production in Southeast Asian nations and the market supply.

The rubber price in Mon State, a significant rubber production state in Myanmar, is closely tied to those factors as well, the traders elaborated.

Myanmar's annual rubber production is estimated at 300,000 tonnes. Sev-



A worker diligently working on the sap from a rubber tree.

enty per cent of rubber produced in Myanmar goes to China. It is also shipped to Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Viet Nam, the Republic of Korea, India, Japan, and other countries.

Myanmar Rubber Planters and Producers Association aims to achieve rubber exports of 300,000 tonnes in the current 2023-2024 financial year beginning 1 April. Myanmar shipped 114,855 tonnes of rubber with an estimated value of US\$144.046 million as of 29 December in the current financial year 2023-2024.

The rubber production in the last FY 2022-2023 reached over 360,000 tonnes, and more than 200,000 tonnes of rubber were shipped to foreign trade partners.

Rubber is commonly produced in Mon and Kayin states and Taninthayi, Bago, and Yangon regions in Myanmar. As per 2018-2019 rubber season data, there are over 1.628 million acres of rubber plantations in Myanmar, with Mon State accounting for 497,153 acres, followed by Taninthayi Region with 348,344 acres and Kayin State with 270,760 acres.

Myanmar generated more than \$449.102 million in revenue in rubber exports in the 2020-2021 FY. — NN/EM

YGN palm oil wholesale reference price shows uptick this week

THE wholesale reference rate of palm oil for the Yangon market increased to K5,250 per viss slightly this week, ending 24 March, from K5,215 recorded last week, according to the Supervisory Committee on edible oil import and distribution.

The Supervisory Committee on Edible Oil Import and Distribution under the Ministry of Commerce has been closely observing the FOB prices in Malaysia and Indonesia, adding transport costs, tariffs and banking services to decide the wholesale market reference rate for edible oil on a weekly basis.

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

To control overcharging, the Consumer Affairs Department under the Ministry of Commerce informed the



A vendor meticulously arranges edible oil for sale at the outlet.

consumers of lodging the complaints for overcharging through the call centre's hotline in late August. The Department urged consumers not to buy palm oil at high prices.

The Department is making con-

certed efforts to steer the high volatility in palm oil prices in the retail market and offer fairer prices to consumers in coordination with the Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers Association and oil importing companies.

The complaints for overcharging can be lodged over Hot Line: 1535 of the Call Centre of the Consumers Affairs Department or sent to the Facebook Page of the Department and the region and state departments concerned.

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

OPINION

Save each drop of water

ANNUALLY, World Water Day brings attention to vital water issues, with this year's theme, "Water for Peace," emphasizing water's pivotal role in global stability and prosperity. It urges collective action to prevent water loss and waste, recognizing the indispensable nature of safe freshwater for all life forms. Despite lacking in nutrition and calories, fresh water is essential for both living and non-living entities. Currently, numerous regions face water scarcity, leading to potential waterborne disease outbreaks affecting nearly half of the global population by 2025. The United Nations forecasts that by 2050, 3.5 billion individuals in developing countries could confront water shortages.

Presently, over a billion people worldwide lack access to safe drinking water, impacting their health, education, and livelihoods. Additionally, 2.3 billion lack proper sewage systems, prompting the UN General Assembly to designate 2018-2028 as a decade for sustainable water resource development. Factors contributing to freshwater scarcity include climate change, global warming, environmental degradation, inadequate infrastructure, improper waste disposal, and freshwater pollution.

That is why all people in Myanmar have to participate in the freshwater resource conservation process. They all have to avoid blocking the proper flow of water in creeks, rivers, and other natural water areas, as well as the undisciplined disposal of chemicals such as mercury and cyanide, personal and family waste, and sewage from industrial zones. Authorities have to raise public awareness for protecting natural water sources in order to sustain drinking and agricultural water for the society of Myanmar in the long term.

Prioritizing water conservation is crucial for global peace, stability, and prosperity. Through sustainable practices and increased awareness, communities can ensure a sustainable future. Let us unite in our efforts to preserve every drop of water and build a prosperous society for generations to come.

That is why all people in Myanmar have to participate in the freshwater resource conservation process. They all have to avoid blocking the proper flow of water in creeks, rivers, and other natural water areas, as well as the undisciplined disposal of chemicals such as mercury and cyanide, personal and family waste, and sewage from industrial zones. Authorities have to raise public awareness for protecting natural water sources in order to sustain drinking and agricultural water for the society of Myanmar in the long term.

■

MINISTRY of Health, Myanmar, laid down two objectives: to enable every citizen to attain full life expectancy and enjoy longevity of life and to ensure that every citizen is free from diseases.

The ways forward for the Department of Medical Services are retention of human capital in an all-inclusive approach, enhancing individual performance by time motion analysis, proper logistics and administrative support and enhancing the performance of the hospital by result-based management, patient safety and just-in-time response. To do that, hospital administrators have a crucial role in providing and managing those tasks.

Hospital management is the field of managing the administrative and operational aspects of healthcare facilities, such as hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, etc. Hospital management professionals are responsible for ensuring the quality of patient care, the efficiency of processes, the safety of staff and patients, the financial



Hospital Environment Cleaning

sustainability of the organization, and the satisfaction of stakeholders. Currently, the following key points are needed to be considered

in hospital management; **Strategic Planning and Leadership:**

Hospital management in-

volves strategic planning, setting goals, and defining the hospital's mission and vision. Effective leadership is crucial for manag-

Key Notes on Hospital Management

By Dr Than Lwin Tun

ing healthcare facilities. Leaders guide the organization, make decisions, and ensure alignment with organizational objectives.

Financial Management:

Hospital administrators oversee financial operations, including budgeting, revenue management, cost control, and financial reporting. They allocate resources efficiently to provide quality care while maintaining financial stability.

Human Resources Management:

Managing hospital staff is essential. This includes recruitment, training, performance evaluation, and addressing personnel issues. Administrators ensure adequate staffing levels and a positive work environment.

Quality Improvement and Patient Safety:

Hospital managers focus on quality improvement initiatives to enhance patient outcomes. They

implement evidence-based practices, monitor performance metrics, and address safety concerns.

Patient Experience and Satisfaction:

Hospital managers focus on improving the patient experience by addressing communication, responsiveness, and comfort. Patient satisfaction impacts reputation and overall success.

Facility Management and Infrastructure:

Administrators oversee hospital facilities, maintenance, and infrastructure. They ensure compliance with safety regulations, manage equipment, and plan for future expansions.

Hospital Waste Management:

Hospital administrators constantly monitor and check for hospital waste management, including environmental cleaning.

Infection Prevention and Control:

It is also essential for patient

safety and quality care of patients. **Health Information Systems and Technology:**

Hospital management involves implementing and maintaining health information systems (HIS) and health records. Administrators ensure data security, interoperability, and efficient use of technology.

Community Engagement and Outreach:

Hospital management involves engaging with the local community, building partnerships, and promoting health awareness. Administrators participate in community events and collaborate with other organizations.

Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Management:

Administrators develop and implement emergency plans to handle crises, natural disasters, and pandemics. Preparedness ensures a coordinated response to protect patients and staff.

Legal and Regulatory Compliance:

Administrators navigate complex healthcare regulations,

accreditation standards, and legal requirements. Compliance with laws and policies is essential to avoid penalties and maintain ethical practices.

Hospital management relies on data to improve patient care, monitor performance, identify problems, and implement solutions. It involves promoting from within, creating a culture of engagement, and investing in technology solutions to enhance the capabilities and motivation of staff. It also entails managing the resources, such as human, physical, financial, and information resources, and optimizing the utilization and allocation of these assets.

Generally, hospital management aims to improve the quality of services, reduce costs, increase accessibility, and meet the expectations of patients and other stakeholders. Moreover, effective hospital management requires a multidisciplinary approach, collaboration, and adaptability to changing healthcare landscapes.

■

Tiny Particles, Big Impact

By Min Zan

IN our modern world, plastic has become an integral part of our daily lives. From packaging materials to consumer goods, it surrounds us in various forms. However, the convenience of plastic comes at a cost, and one of the growing concerns is the presence of microplastics. These tiny particles, invisible to the naked eye, have a significant impact on our environment and, subsequently, our health. In this article, we'll study the world of microplastics, exploring what they are, how they are formed, and the potential consequences for our planet.

What Are Microplastics?

Microplastics are minuscule plastic particles, typically less than five millimetres in size, that have permeated our environment. They can be categorized into two main types: primary microplastics and secondary microplastics. **Primary Microplastics:** Primary microplastics are

intentionally manufactured to be small in size. These particles are used in various products, such as exfoliating scrubs, toothpaste, and abrasive cleaners. These items are designed to be washed off or disposed of, ultimately finding their way into the environment.

Secondary Microplastics:

Secondary microplastics are the result of the breakdown of larger plastic items. Over time, larger plastic debris in the oceans or on land can be broken down by environmental factors such as sunlight, wind, and waves, resulting in smaller fragments known as secondary microplastics.

Sources of Microplastics Plastic Production and Disposal:

The production of plastic materials and their subsequent disposal are major contributors to the presence of microplastics. Improper disposal methods, such as littering and inadequate waste management, lead to plastics en-

tering water bodies and soil.

Microbeads in Personal Care Products:

Certain personal care products, such as facial scrubs, toothpaste, and body washes, contain microbeads — tiny plastic particles added for exfoliating or abrasive purposes. When these products are washed down the drain, microbeads enter water systems, contributing to microplastic pollution.

Synthetic Fibers:

The textile industry is another significant source of microplastics. When synthetic fabrics like polyester and nylon are washed, they release small plastic fibers into the water. These fibers, too small to be filtered out in wastewater treatment plants, eventually make their way into rivers and oceans.

Breakdown of Larger Plastic Debris:

Large plastic items, including bottles, bags, and packaging

materials, can break down into smaller particles over time. The process is accelerated by exposure to sunlight, heat, and mechanical stress. As these items disintegrate, they contribute to the growing pool of secondary microplastics in the environment.

Environmental Impact

Microplastics pose a considerable threat to the environment, with wide-ranging consequences for ecosystems, wildlife, and even human health.

Impact on Marine Life:

The oceans, in particular, bear the brunt of microplastic pollution. Marine life, from tiny plankton to large whales, can ingest these particles, either directly or indirectly through the food chain. The ingestion of microplastics can lead to physical harm, internal blockages, and malnutrition, with potential repercussions for entire marine ecosystems.

Soil Contamination:

Microplastics also contaminate

soil, affecting terrestrial ecosystems. Agricultural lands can become polluted with these tiny particles, potentially impacting plant growth and the health of soil-dwelling organisms. The consequences of soil contamination can extend to the food chain, with potential implications for human health.

Airborne Microplastics:

Recent research has highlighted the presence of microplastics in the air. These particles can be carried by wind over long distances, leading to widespread environmental contamination. The inhalation of airborne microplastics raises concerns about their potential health impacts on both humans and animals.

Bioaccumulation:

Microplastics have the ability to accumulate in the tissues of living organisms, a process known as bioaccumulation. As smaller organisms ingest microplastics, the particles move up the food

chain, with predators accumulating higher concentrations. This bioaccumulation can ultimately impact the health of top predators, including humans.

Human Health Concerns

While the direct health impacts of microplastics on humans are still an area of active research, there are concerns about the potential risks associated with exposure to these tiny particles.

Contaminated Seafood:

Given the prevalence of microplastics in the oceans, seafood has become a potential source of exposure for humans. Fish and shellfish that have ingested microplastics may carry these particles, posing a risk to consumers.

Airborne Exposure:

As airborne microplastics become more recognized, concerns arise about the potential inhalation of these particles. While the health implications are not fully understood, inhaling microplastics may have respiratory and

systemic effects on human health. **Water Contamination:**

Microplastics have been found in drinking water sources around the world. The extent of human exposure to drinking water and its potential health effects are subjects of ongoing research and concern.

Mitigating Microplastic Pollution

Addressing the issue of microplastic pollution requires a multi-faceted approach involving individuals, industries, and policymakers. Here are some strategies to mitigate the impact of microplastics:

Reduce Single-Use Plastics:

Reducing the consumption of single-use plastics is a critical step in minimizing the input of plastic into the environment. Individuals can make conscious choices by using reusable bags, water bottles, and containers.

Ban or Restrict Microbeads:

Governments and regulatory

SEE PAGE-12

NATIONAL

Shwedagon Pagoda opens daily for Thingyan & Myanmar New Year celebrations



Some pilgrims seen at the Shwedagon Pagoda.

U Tin Wa, a member of the Shwedagon Pagoda Board of Trustees, has announced that during the Maha Thingyan Festival and the celebration

of Myanmar New Year, which falls on 17 April, the Shwedagon Pagoda in Dagon Township will be open daily from 5 am to 9 pm.

“The Pagoda will be open daily to accommodate the numerous pilgrims engaging in meritorious deeds during the Maha Thingyan Festival,” stated U Tin Wa. “Additionally, there will be a programme where Sayadaws will give the Nine Precepts to the congregation at the pagoda’s prayer hall. Plans are also underway for religious groups and donors to donate sticky rice balls and Satuditha (Charity feast) foods at the pagoda. On Myanmar New Year’s Day, an early meal will be offered to Ovadacariya Sayadaws, and New Year Satuditha donations will be made at the Ancient Buddha Prayer Hall.” — ASH/MKKS

Pre-Thingyan (Myanmar New Year) sales festival 2024 to be held for 3 days

PRE-THINGYAN (Myanmar New Year) Sales Festival 2024 will take place over three days at the Kanthaya Shopping Mall in North Okkalapa Township, Yangon Region, as announced by U Maung Maung Aung, Vice-President of the Union of Myanmar Bamar Ethnic Entrepreneurs Association (UMBEEA), the event organizer.

The festival is scheduled to run from 24 to 26 March at Wyndham Hotel’s Kanthaya Shopping Mall in North Okkalapa Township, Yangon Region.

“This year marks the sec-

ond pre-Thingyan sales festival. The event will feature 56 stalls offering various goods for sale. Additionally, to create a festive Thingyan vibe, visitors will enjoy Thingyan music and traditional Thingyan snacks,” said U Maung Maung.

“For the three-day pre-Thingyan festival, we are offering shop space for both members and non-members,” he added.

The press conference for the 2nd Pre-Thingyan Sales Festival 2024, organized by UMBEEA, was held at UMFCCI on 16 March. — ASH/TKO

Ginger gains good price currently, but stays below last year’s price

AT present, the ginger price has been on the rise but is still lower than last year’s price, according to traders.

“Price has gone up now, at around K3,700-K4,000 per viss at farms. The price started climbing up two weeks ago. Local ginger costs K3,000 and Japanese ginger about K4,000. Pinlon is the biggest wholesale market. The retail price can’t be said because retailers sell ginger at K5,000, K6,000 and K7,000. Retail price varies. Generally, wholesale price should be K5,000-K6,000

so that traders can make profits,” said an official from Ko Htut ginger trading in Lashio.

Despite the ginger price rise at present, it is still lower than last year. It reached nearly K13,000 per viss in the same period last year in the wholesale market.

“In fact, the price should be greater than the current price. There is a lot of waste in ginger production. The price normally goes up K7,000-K8,000 over this period. It surged to K12,000-K13,000 last year. It is expected to increase further in next month because the supply is going to face a shortage. Planting season is coming soon, so farmers need to buy seeds around April. If there are exports, the price will be at least K8,000-K10,000. Crops that were planted last year were damaged a lot, so the supply is not as much as expected this year,” he said.

In the summer 2022, ginger prices dropped but climbed up again last year, and the number of ginger farmers increased again. — Thit Taw/ZS



Ginger bags being loaded onto trucks to transport to wholesalers.

Rising Chinese garlic prices due to domestic demand surge

DUE to the high prices in China, Chinese garlic prices have been good in the local market, according to traders.

“Garlic price has been rising again recently. However, garlic is also produced in southern Shan State. The retail price for Chinese garlic is now about K12,000-K13,000, up from K8,300 in Mandalay. Chinese garlic prices have climbed up sharply. It is uncertain what will happen when Shan State-produced garlic enters the market. Chinese garlic prices have also increased in China and Mandalay. Price may go down when garlic from Shan State is available in the market, and Chinese garlic demand becomes low. Chinese garlic is used mainly by restaurants,” said a garlic trader in Mandalay.

The wholesale price of garlic grown in Taunggyi, Shan State, is now between K18,000 and K30,000 per viss.

Due to the high price of Chinese garlic, locally-grown garlic is now priced up to K20,000, up from the previous price of around K8,000 in the wholesale market.

“Shan State garlic is now harvested. Currently, the smallest size of garlic price is now nearly K18,000. Normally, Shan State-produced garlic price is around K7,000 or K8,000. Chinese garlic prices have surged dramatically. When garlic is produced from Monywa, the market will plunge, especially Taunggyi garlic price, which will plunge in the next two months,” said a garlic trader in Lashio.

However, newly harvested garlic is available, garlic prices

have mounted, the supply of garlic imported from China has now decreased due to transportation difficulty, and locally-grown garlic demand has been high.

In the second week of February, the price of locally-produced garlic dropped below K10,000, but due to high demand, the price is now K12,000-K13,000 per viss. In previous years, garlic prices were regularly around K5,000, and this year, they have increased. — Thit Taw/ZS



The photo depicts Chinese garlic being sold in the market.

NATIONAL

Train derailed by mine explosion on Bago-Mawlamyine railway section



Photos show debris and damage left in the wake of the mine blast perpetrated by terrorists.

THE No 686 Down train, which ran for the Thaephyugon-Kali section on the Bago-Mawlamyine railway, derailed between mileposts 123/1-122/2 of Theinseik and Donwun stations after hitting a mine at 7:10 am yesterday. The mine was planted by insurgent groups.

Due to the mine blast, the

No 81 Up train from Yangon arrived at Bago railway station at 9:10 am yesterday and Kyaikto railway station at 12:06 pm. A total of 449 passengers from that train were transported to Thaton station in seven vehicles. The No 82 Down train that departed for Mawlamyine at 9:10 am arrived at Thaton station at 11:38 am

and took the No 81 Up train passengers to Mawlamyine. Meanwhile, 441 passengers of the No 82 Down train were transported to Kyaikto station by these vehicles at 2:30 pm and again by the No 81 Up train to Yangon. The staff of Myanmar Railways (MR) participated in transporting the passengers safely.

Regional officials and security forces members proceeded to the site in a timely manner for inspection, and the MR staff pulled up the derailed locomotives and carriages to reopen the railway section as quickly as possible.

Since 1 February 2021, these terrorist groups have been perpetrating 130 mining incidents

and explosions within railway areas and stations, 52 blasts on railway bridges, and 12 instances of torching stations and employee housings. Their actions aim to destabilize the rule of law and endanger the safety of travellers, drawing widespread condemnation from the public. — MNA/KTZH

Confiscations of illegal items: Timbers, industrial materials, consumer goods, foodstuffs, boats and vehicles

THE Kachin State Illegal Trade Eradication Special Task Force on duty intercepted three trucks (estimated value of K90 million) travelling from Hopin to Mogaung. The trucks were found carrying 36,000 kilogrammes of ammonium nitrate valued at K36 million without official documents near Ingyingon village in Mogaung township on 13 March. This enforcement action was carried out under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

During inspection on 13 and 14 March, combined teams seized 22 types of goods worth K27.873 million. This included 312 sets of Ray smart infrared cooker, which had been stored for many years at the Customs warehouse in Myanmar Industrial Port on 13 March. Additionally, 4,500 kilogrammes of hydraulic oil valued at K18.9 million, exceeding the declared quantity in the Import Declaration (ID), and 50 sets of electric cookers from China valued at K5 million, differing from

the ID, were seized from six containers at the Asia World Port Terminal container checkpoint. This action was conducted under Customs procedures.

On 13, 15, and 16 March, combined teams confiscated various items. This included an MV MCL-18 (estimated value of K3 million) travelling from Myeik to Yangon, carrying goods worth K51.402 million, such as 40,000 kilogrammes of Test Liner exceeding the declared quantity in the ID, at Bayintnaung Port. Two vehicles (approximately worth K36 million) carrying illegal teak weighing 1.284 tonnes worth K848,100 in Insein and Mingaladon, and a Hino Dutro truck (approximately worth K42 million) heading to Yangon from Bago, carrying goods worth K25.496 million, including 300 bottles of One-Shrimp brand palm oil without official documents at Ywathagyi Dry Port. These actions were taken under the Forest Law and Customs procedures.

On 14 March, a combined

team seized a Mitsubishi Canter vehicle (approximately worth K25 million) heading to Bago from Hpa-an, carrying nine types of goods worth K8.83 million, including five sets of NA sound amplifier without official documents, at the Thanwin bridge combined checkpoint (Tayokhla side) in Hpa-an township. This action was taken under Customs procedures.

During inspections on 15 and 16 March, illegal hardwood weighing 6.395 tonnes worth K3,197,700 was seized in Toungoo district, and an unregistered Nissan X-Trail vehicle (approximately worth K10 million) was seized near Yangon-Pyay Road in Gyopingauk township. These actions were taken under the Forest Law and the Export and Import Law.

The Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee reported 16 arrests made over four consecutive days from 13 to 16 March, with an estimated value of K3.38 billion. — MNA/MKKS

Counter-argument to false information

False allegations circulating regarding fire incident in Kalay, Sagaing Region

THE subversive media outlet, Khit Thit is spreading false information that alleges and tarnishes the reputation of the security forces. They claim that on the night of 17 March, a fire broke out at the District Irrigation Office and the District Forest Office in Kalay, Sagaing Region, where the security forces were stationed.

Regarding this news, according to a resident who witnessed the fire, it was caused by PDF terrorists. People were stopped and threatened by PDF members who claimed there were mines in the offices to prevent the fire from spreading to nearby houses. As a result, they were forced to retreat. However, it's important to note that there have been no security forces stationed at the District Irrigation Office and the District Forest Office for several

months.

These malicious media outlets are circulating false information, which only serves to mislead the public and undermine the stability and peace of the state. They fail to provide accurate and timely news to the people, opting instead to sow discord and confusion. — MNA/TKO



NATIONAL

Enhanced fire safety measures implemented in Yangon Region with CCTV surveillance



The 24/7 fire surveillance with the Command-and-Control Centre is functioning.

DIRECTOR U Thein Tun Oo of the Myanmar Fire Brigade HQ has announced the installation of CCTV cameras on high-rise towers throughout the Yangon Region. The Command-and-Control Centre is actively monitoring these cameras as a preventive measure against

fire outbreaks.

“The Command-and-Control Centre was established to detect fire outbreaks within the Yangon Region swiftly,” stated U Thein Tun Oo. “CCTV cameras installed on high-rise towers in Yangon are linked to the Fire Services Department’s

Command-and-Control Centre, providing round-the-clock monitoring of wards, townships, and industrial zones. Smoke during the day and firelight at night can be observed through these cameras. However, relying solely on this system is not sufficient to prevent fire outbreaks. Therefore, individuals are encouraged to immediately report any fire incidents in their community by dialling the Fire Services Department’s Hotline number 191 from their mobile phones, as mobile devices are easily accessible. Once a call is made, the nearest fire station will be alerted and dispatched promptly to the scene.”

In order to bolster fire safety, CCTV cameras are currently being installed on high-rise towers in the Yangon Region. This initiative aims to facilitate seamless 24-hour monitoring by the Fire Services Department’s Command-and-Control Centre, enabling prompt detection and extinguishing of fires. As a result, this system proves highly effective in minimizing loss of life and property resulting from fires. — ASH/TMT

COVID-19 report, 18 March 2024

NEW TESTS

23,167

NEW CASES

22

CASUALTIES

Nil

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.

Tiny Particles, Big Impact

FROM PAGE-9

Research and Innovation:

Investing in research and innovation is crucial for developing new technologies to tackle the issue of microplastic pollution. This includes the development of better filtration systems, eco-friendly materials, and sustainable alternatives to existing plastic products.

In addition, Microplastics may be tiny, but their impact on the environment is anything but insignificant. As we continue to grapple with the consequences of plastic pollution, understanding the sources, environmental pathways, and potential health risks associated with microplastics is crucial. By adopting sustainable practices, supporting research, and advocating for responsible policies, we can work towards a cleaner and healthier planet free from the pervasive influence of microplastics.

Protecting Yourself From Microplastics:

Now that we have a basic



Photo Credit: What Doctors Didn't Tell You.

understanding of what microplastics are and where they come from let’s explore practical steps you can take to protect yourself from their potential harm.

Choose Personal Care Products Wisely:

When selecting personal care items like facial scrubs, body washes, and toothpaste, opt for products that do not contain microbeads. Look for natural alternatives like products with exfoliants made from ingredients like sugar or salt.

Choose Natural Fibers in Clothing:

Consider choosing clothing made from natural fibres like cotton, wool, or silk instead of synthetic materials like polyester and nylon. Natural fibres are less likely to shed microplastic particles during washing.

Reduce Single-Use Plastics:

Cutting down on single-use plastics can have a significant impact on reducing overall plastic pollution. Bring your own reusable bags, water bottles, and con-

tainers when possible. By doing so, you contribute to less plastic waste in the environment.

Be Mindful of Your Clothing Choices:

When doing laundry, use a microfiber filter or laundry bag designed to capture microplastic fibres. This helps prevent these tiny particles from entering the water system.

Support Sustainable Brands:

Choose to support brands and products that prioritize sustainability and use eco-friendly packaging. Many companies are now focusing on reducing their environmental impact by using biodegradable materials and minimizing plastic usage.

Properly Dispose of Plastic Waste:

Ensure that you dispose of plastic waste responsibly by using designated recycling bins. Separating your recyclables from general waste helps properly recycle plastics, reducing the chances of them ending up in the environment.

Get Involved in Clean-Up Efforts:

Participate in local community clean-up initiatives to help remove plastic debris from nat-

ural habitats. By contributing to these efforts, you actively play a role in keeping your environment cleaner and safer.

Stay Informed:

Stay informed about the issue of microplastics and ongoing research. Understanding the latest developments helps you make informed choices in your daily life and stay ahead of new practices to minimize plastic pollution.

In sum, microplastics are a pervasive issue in our modern world, but by making simple and mindful choices, you can protect yourself and contribute to a healthier environment. From selecting the right personal care products to reducing your reliance on single-use plastics, every small effort adds up to make a positive impact. By adopting these practices and encouraging others to do the same, you become part of the solution to the challenge of microplastic pollution. Remember, it’s the collective actions of individuals that lead to meaningful change, and you have the power to make a difference in the fight against microplastics.

Reference: What Doctors Don't Tell You, February 2024

Japan's core machinery orders slip 1.7% in January

JAPAN'S core machinery orders in January declined 1.7 per cent from the previous month, falling for the first time in two months, government data showed on Monday.

Private-sector orders, excluding those for ships and power equipment, closely watched as a leading indicator of corporate capital spending, came in at 823.8 billion yen (5.5 billion US dollars), according to data released by the Cabinet Office.

By sector, orders from manufacturers dropped 13.2 per cent to 362.3 billion yen, dragged by chemicals industries and motor vehicles, while service-sector orders rose 6.5 per cent, the data showed.

The Cabinet Office lowered its basic assessment of machinery orders for the first time since November 2022, changing to "showing some weakness" from "stalling". (1 Japanese yen equals 0.0067 US dollar) — Xinhua

China issues e-CNY user guide to optimize mobile payment for foreigners

CHINA'S central bank issued an e-CNY (digital yuan) user guide on Monday, the latest move aimed at facilitating mobile payment for foreigners.

Mobile phone users can search for "e-CNY" in the App Store or Google Play to download and install the digital yuan app, and tap the "Sign up" option to register an account, according to a bilingual statement from the People's Bank of China.

Next, click "Open/Add e-CNY Wallets" and select any authorized operator that supports international services to complete the registration process and start using



A visitor displays a cup of coffee purchased with China's digital yuan, or the e-CNY, at an exhibition of the 6th Digital China Summit in Fuzhou, southeast China's Fujian Province, 26 April 2023. PHOTO: XINHUA

e-CNY wallet(s), the statement explained.

The e-CNY wallet

can be registered using mobile phone numbers and regions, according to the central bank statement. — Xinhua



Tokyo's Skyline is seen among the Keihin Industrial Zone from the observation deck of Kawasaki Marien in Kawasaki on 17 January, 2023. PHOTO: AFP

AirAsia Cambodia to launch daily domestic services on 2 May

AIRASIA'S Cambodian unit will launch daily domestic flight operations on 2 May, as the low-cost airline aims to boost air travel in the Southeast Asian country, it said in a news release on Monday.

The airline will start with three domestic flight destinations: Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, and Sihanoukville, utilizing two A320 aircraft based at Phnom Penh International Airport, the news release said.

AirAsia Cambodia Chief Executive Officer Vissoth Nam said this will not only improve connectivity but also encourage travellers to stay longer

in Cambodia.

"Our vision is to transform the way people travel in Cambodia and make air travel an integral part of the country's transportation network," he said.

He added that the fares are as low as 49 US dollars in one way to amazing domestic destinations, so more local and international visitors can experience the wonder of Cambodia by air affordably.

He said he believes that the airline will contribute to fostering the local economy by providing jobs to locals and supporting tourism development. — Xinhua

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V BLPL FAITH VOY.NO. (3407S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V BLPL FAITH VOY.NO. (3407S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **18-3-2024** 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.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S BLPL SHIPPING LINE

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V METHI BHUM VOY.NO. (419S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V METHI BHUM VOY.NO. (419S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **19-3-2024** 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.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ISEACO WISDOM VOY.NO. (113N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ISEACO WISDOM VOY.NO. (113N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **19-3-2024** 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.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V UNI-ACTIVE VOY.NO. (0317-766N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V UNI-ACTIVE VOY.NO. (0317-766N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **19-3-2024** 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.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

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

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

Washington's stubborn pursuit of camp confrontation in a multi-polar world

SINCE the end of the Cold War about three decades ago, the majority of the world has supported multilateralism and advocated for a multi-polar world order. Washington, however, has been stubbornly pursuing dominance in disregard of this evolving landscape.

The hegemonic influence of the United States spans economic, political, military, and cultural spheres. One of its most significant manifestations lies in monopolizing the concept of "democracy".

With a binary mindset of "either friend or foe", it again attempts to forcefully divide the world into two camps.

This dangerously simplistic worldview, reminiscent of the Cold War-era mentality, perpetuates a zero-sum game where cooperation is forsaken in favour

of confrontation.

Under the guise of championing the ideals of "democracy", Washington has pursued for decades the establishment of a global order that prioritizes American interests and adheres strictly to American rules.

However, the majority of the world has long concluded that the United States falls far short of being a "beacon of democracy", with its democratic credentials being so lackluster.

A true democracy should ensure that the people are the masters of their country. But American democracy, designed to serve capitalist interest groups, is inherently incapable of prioritizing the majority's interests and has thus degenerated into a "democracy for the few".

Little wonder, the list of challenges troubling US socie-



Photo taken on 28 March 2022 shows the Capitol building in Washington, DC, the United States. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

ty is ever-growing. Aggravated political polarization, a widening wealth gap, growing social divides and deep-seated racial discrimination all have made the narrative of American democracy even less convincing.

Meanwhile, the American political landscape is riddled with systemic flaws, including rampant voter suppression, gerrymandering, and the outsized

influence of corporate interests in electoral politics. These shortcomings have eroded public trust in the democratic process and undermined the legitimacy of American governance.

On the international front, the United States' foreign policy often deviates from the principles it claims to uphold. Washington has a long history of destabilizing democratically

elected countries through covert operations, economic coercion, and even participating in the overthrow of other governments in order to maintain its own strategic interests.

This Machiavellian approach to geopolitics has resulted in turmoil and instability, undermining the same democratic norms it claims to uphold. — Xinhua

Japan finishes first-year ocean discharge of nuclear-tainted wastewater amid backlash

DESPITE opposition and concern from at home and abroad, Japan's crippled Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant has finished its initial year of discharging nuclear-contaminated wastewater into the ocean, according to the plant's operator.

The plant completed the fourth and final round of discharge for the current fiscal year ending in March, Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) said on Sunday.

As per the initial plan, approximately 31,200 tonnes of wastewater, containing radioactive tritium, was released into the ocean since the discharge started in August 2023, with each round of discharge carried out for about



This photo taken on 22 August 2023 shows a "No Swimming" warning sign at Tsurishihama beach in Shinchi town, Fukushima prefecture, Japan. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

two weeks.

Earlier this week, International Atomic Energy Agency Director-General Rafael Grossi emphasized continued efforts in monitoring Japan's

ocean discharge of nuclear-contaminated wastewater from the crippled plant, following his first visit to Fukushima prefecture since the discharge started. — Xinhua

Severe tropical cyclone Megan makes landfall in Australia's north

THE Australian Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) said that a severe tropical cyclone made landfall in the Northern Territory (NT) on Monday afternoon.

"Tropical Cyclone Megan crossed the coast at 3:30 pm Australian Central Standard Time southeast of Port McArthur and is forecast to slowly move inland overnight and weaken below cyclone intensity during Tuesday," the weather bureau announced.

With wind gusts up to 200 kilometres per hour, the "very destructive core" of Megan is now impacting the Sir Edward Pellew Group and adjacent coastal areas between Port McArthur and the Northern Territory-Queensland border.

"After crossing the coast, the system will start moving inland, swinging around to the west. It will start decaying as

well, dropping back to a Category-Two, then Category-One, and eventually back to a tropical low system likely by late tomorrow going into early Wednesday," BOM meteorologist Miriam Bradbury said in a weather update.

Over the weekend, the system already brought significant impacts to the Gulf of Carpentaria in terms of rainfall and winds.

Bradbury noted that during the overnight period from 9pm local time on Sunday up until 8 am local time on Monday, Centre Island received a total rainfall of almost 190 millimetres and saw wind gusts hit 120 km per hour.

"As it crosses the coast and moves inland, we could see several hundred millimetres of rainfall building over the coming days along the path of this tropical cyclone," she said. — Xinhua

SPORTS

Fernandes urges Man Utd to use Liverpool win as fuel for late surge

BRUNO Fernandes has urged Manchester United to use the "spicy" FA Cup quarter-final win against Liverpool as fuel for a late surge in their troubled season.

Erik ten Hag's side came from 2-1 and 3-2 down to beat bitter rivals Liverpool 4-3 after extra-time at raucous Old Trafford on Sunday.

Amad Diallo's last-gasp winner eased the pressure on under-fire boss Ten Hag and kept United in contention to salvage silverware from their rocky campaign.

"The game got a little bit spicy, a little more special because it's an FA Cup game and if you lose, you're out," United captain Fernandes said.

"We know the rivalry between fans, we know how United fans wanted us to win the game to give us something to celebrate because it's not been great for us."

United will face Championship club Coventry in the FA Cup



Manchester United's Antony Matheus dos Santos (4th L) scores during the FA Cup quarterfinal match between Manchester United and Liverpool in Manchester, Britain, on 17 March 2024. PHOTO: XINHUA

semi-finals at Wembley in April.

Before then, Fernandes wants his team-mates to take the momentum from the victory over Liverpool and turn it into a sustained winning streak.

After Ten Hag began his United reign with defeats against Brighton and Brentford last sea-

son, it was a victory against Liverpool in the Premier League that kick-started a largely successful debut campaign for the Dutch coach.

United won the League Cup to end a six-year trophy drought, reached the FA Cup final and clinched a third-placed league

finish.

Portugal midfielder Fernandes hopes Sunday's result can be the turning point as they look to snatch a place in next season's Champions League.

"We've talked about turn-arounds but have never done the next step. I think we have

to understand the FA Cup is a thing and the Premier League is another one," he said.

"In the league now, we have 10 matches to go and we don't depend on ourselves but as we saw Tottenham losing points to Fulham, Villa losing points to West Ham.

"But our main goal is to not lose points to Brentford away (after the international break). We need to put our effort into winning that game."

Meanwhile, Harvey Elliott believes Liverpool's challenge to win the Premier League and Europa League will benefit from the extra rest afforded by their FA Cup exit.

Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp admitted it was the first time he had seen his players struggle physically as they played their 46th game of a hectic season.

And Reds midfielder Elliott, who scored in the loss at Old Trafford, said: "Now we can focus on other things, it frees up a few weeks for us." — AFP

Laura Kenny confirms retirement as Britain's greatest ever female Olympian

BRITAIN'S most successful ever female Olympic athlete, Laura Kenny, on Monday announced she will not compete in the Paris Olympic Games and is retiring from cycling at the age of 31.

Kenny won five Olympic gold medals and a silver, claiming gold in the team pursuit and omnium events in London 2012, and repeating those triumphs in Rio four years later, before winning gold in the Madison and taking silver in the team pursuit in Tokyo.

She also won seven World Championship and 14 European titles in a glittering career.

Kenny gave birth to her second child last July, and speaking to the BBC on Monday, she said the time had come to stop riding competitively.

"I always knew deep down I would know when the right



(FILES) Britain's Laura Trott holds up a flag as she celebrates after winning the Women's Omnium Points race to win the Omnium track cycling event at the Velodrome during the Rio 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro on 16 August 2016. Laura Kenny, Britain's most successful female Olympic athlete, has announced her retirement from competitive cycling. PHOTO: AFP

time was. I have had an absolute blast but now is the time for me to hang that bike up," she commented.

Kenny, who is married to

fellow Olympic cyclist Jason Kenny, explained that "the sacrifices of leaving the children and your family at home are really quite big." — Xinhua

Inter's Acerbi leaves Italy camp after racist abuse claims

FRANCESCO Acerbi on Monday left Italy's training camp ahead of two friendlies in the United States after reports he will be investigated for alleged racial abuse of Napoli defender Juan Jesus.

In a statement Italy's Football Federation (FIGC) said that Inter Milan defender Acerbi had given "his version of events" to his Azzurri teammates and coach Luciano Spalletti "on the alleged racist remark".

The FIGC continued that Acerbi said that he "had no intention of being defamatory, denigratory or racist" but that he would be dropped from the 28-man squad called up to play Venezuela and Ecuador in the build-up to Italy's European title defence.

Roma's central defender Gianluca Mancini replaces

Acerbi, who is set to be questioned by the FIGC's disciplinary authorities following Jesus' claim he used a racist insult during Inter's 1-1 draw with Napoli on Sunday night.

Brazilian Jesus was seen protesting to referee Federico La Penna, pointing to the Keep Racism Out badge on his shirt and apparently saying that "(Acerbi) called me a negro".

After the match Jesus, who scored Napoli's late equalizer, played down the incident by saying that Acerbi had "crossed a line" while not explaining how his fellow centre-back had insulted him and adding that the two had cleared the air.

"He apologized because he realized that he had gone too far... what happens on the pitch, stays on the pitch," Jesus said to DAZN. — AFP



Japan to study health impact of PFAS chemicals amid growing fears

JAPAN will launch a study on the health impact of potentially harmful chemicals known as PFAS, a government source said Monday, after their detection across the country fuelled concern among local residents.

PFAS, or polyfluoroalkyl substances, used in various products such as frying pan coatings and water-repellent clothing, have been detected in high concentrations at places near Self-Defence Forces and US military bases as well as industrial areas.

With some researchers warning of adverse effects on the human body including an increased risk of cancer, the study, planned for three years from around June, will be conducted by three institutions.

In the study, Hokkaido University will use data on concentration levels of 39 kinds of PFAS contained in the blood of around 700 people from the fetal stage to late teens to examine the substances' impact on their fat metabolism and development, the source said.

Hyogo Medical University will conduct experiments on mice to probe whether the substances suppress the immune system and reduce the effectiveness of vaccinations, while the National Institute of Health Sciences will seek to elucidate the mechanism of their toxicity at the molecular level, it said.

PFAS is a general term for a group of over 10,000 artificial chemicals that include PFOS, or perfluorooctanesulfonic acid, and PFOA, or perfluorooctanoic acid.

Japan banned in principle the manufacturing and import of PFOS substances, commonly used in foam extinguishers, in 2018 for all applications, as well as those categorized as PFOA in 2021. Perfluorohexane sulfonic acid, or PFHxS, was added to the list in 2023.

The government-led study comes as 12 local assemblies across eight prefectures urged the Diet to take action to address the contamination after high concentration levels of PFAS were detected in recent years in various parts of the country. — Kyodo

Putin wins Presidential Election with 87.28% of vote after 100% of ballots counted

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin was successful in his re-election bid after he gained over 80 per cent of the votes and secured a new six-year term following the country's three-day presidential election last week.

Vladimir Putin has won the presidential election in Russia with 87.28 per cent of the votes after 100 per cent of ballots were counted, the latest data from the Russian Central Election Commission (CEC) showed on Monday.

Nikolay Kharitonov, the chairman of the lower house's Far East and Arctic Development Committee, received 4.31 per cent of votes, while Leonid Slutsky, the chairman of the lower house's International Affairs Committee got 3.20 per cent and lower house Deputy Chairman Vladislav Davankov 3.85 per cent, the data showed.

For her part, CEC head Ella Pamfilova said that at least 74.44 per cent of voters cast their ballots in the presidential election, the highest voter turnout in the country's modern history.

She also thanked all the international observers who visited Russia "and wanted to see for themselves how the election process is held" in the country.



Russia's incumbent President Vladimir Putin speaks to reporters in Moscow on 18 March 2024. **PHOTO: SPUTNIK**

Delegations of observers continue their work on Monday and the number of their complaints may be close to zero, the head of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia and former presidential candidate Leonid Slutsky said.

Pamfilova's remarks followed Pu-

tin stressing that the goals for his new presidential term are to carry out the tasks of a special military operation in Ukraine and strengthen the country's defence capability and armed forces during a speech at his election headquarters earlier on Monday. — Sputnik

Famine imminent in north Gaza, 'unprecedented' crisis: UN

HALF of Gazans are experiencing "catastrophic" hunger, with famine projected to hit the territory's north by May without urgent intervention, a UN-backed food security assessment said Monday.

"To have 50 per cent of an entire population in catastrophic, near famine levels, is unprecedented," Beth Bechdol, the deputy director-general of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), told AFP.

It amounts to around 1.1 million people experiencing "catastrophic food insecurity" due to the Israel-Hamas war, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) partnership said in its report.

The IPC hunger monitoring system, carried out by



A worker sorts flour bags during the distribution of humanitarian aid in Gaza City on 17 March 2024 amid ongoing battles between Israel and the militant group Hamas. **PHOTO: AFP**

the United Nations and aid agencies, rates hunger levels from one to five and is used by the UN or governments in deciding whether or not to declare a famine.

The situation in the north

of Gaza is particularly dire, and aid agencies have reported difficulty accessing the area to distribute food and other aid.

"Famine is imminent in the northern governorates

and projected to occur anytime between mid-March and May 2024," the IPC report said.

"All evidence points towards a major acceleration of deaths and malnutrition. Waiting for a retrospective famine classification before acting is indefensible," it said.

Donors have turned to deliveries by air or sea, but air and sea missions are no alternative to land deliveries, UN agencies say.

Famine will occur under "the most likely scenario", based on assumptions that the conflict will escalate — including a ground offensive in Rafah — and hostilities continue to impede humanitarian aid delivery, the IPC report said. — AFP