

# The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR



The picture shows a palm tree climber diligently working for the palm syrup.

## Positive outlook for jaggery market as prices rise

When the sugar price was only K900 per viss in 2020, a jaggery combo mixed with sugar was found in the market, which is K300-K400 lower than the organic jaggery, a trader says.

**J**AGGERY market sees optimism in market sentiment along with the price reaching a record high, traders criticized.

The jaggery fetches approximately K5,000 per viss in the jaggery season this year. The wholesale price of jaggery from Yesagy, which is whiter in appearance, hit a high of K5,900 per viss.

The retail price of jaggery peaked

at K10,000 per viss, a retailer from Nyaungpinlay market from Lanmadaw Township told The Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM).

When the sugar price was only K900 per viss in 2020, a jaggery combo mixed with sugar was found in the market, which is K300-K400 lower than the organic jaggery, U Lu Tun, a trader who sent the sugar and jaggery to regions outside Yangon, told the GNLM.

Bayintnaung Jaggery depot's figures showed that the prices stood at K4,800-K5,900 per viss on 18 March 2024, depending on producing areas.

The jaggery prices were registered at K1,500-K2,000 per viss in 2021, K2,100-K2,900 in 2022, K2,800-K3,000 in 2023 and K5,000 in 2024. The jaggery price became higher than that of sugar in 2024.

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## MGE announces expiry of 12 gem trading licences in May

A total of 12 gem trading licences are due to expire in May 2024, Myanmar Gems Enterprise notified.

Under the approval of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, those holding licences (gems and jewellery trading licence, manufacturing licence for finished gems and carvings and rough gemstone and finished products trading licence) issued by the Myanmar Gems Enterprises need to proceed to the renewal process three months before the expiry date. They must renew them at least one month before the expiry.

Additionally, they can inform Myanmar Gems Enterprise of winding down a business with one month's notice prior to ceasing the operation.

Moreover, Myanmar Gems Enterprise gave the green light to the renewal of the expired gem trading licence in the past three years with a three-year fine until 31 March 2024 in accordance with rules and bylaws stipulated by Myanmar Gemstone Law, under the approval of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

Those who want to resume business are notified to proceed to the renewal procedure at the departments concerned of Myanmar Gems Enterprise within office hours.

Nonetheless, only those holding a licence with a two-year expiry can be reinstated with the set penalty starting from 1 April 2024. Those licences that expire more than two years at that time will get cancelled, as per the notification.

Licence renewal applications can be processed at Myanmar Gems Enterprise (Nay Pyi Taw), Gems and Jewellery Museum in Yangon, Mandalay branch, mining departments in Mogok, Lonkhin/Phakant, Mongshu, and Myitkyina branch, in line with the rules and regulations. – NN/EM

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SAC Secretary attends 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Mon State Day ceremony

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CBM suspends two money changer licences for three months

# NATIONAL

## Objectives of 79<sup>th</sup> 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.

## Announcement of Myanmar Press Council

19 March 2024 (Tuesday)

1. The State Administration Council announced that the People's Military Service Law enacted by Law No. 17/2010 on 4 November 2010 must come into effect on 10 February 2024. It can be seen that some malicious news media and individual organizations who want to disrupt the country's peace and security regarding the People's Military Service Law are spreading false information and making people worry too much.
2. The Myanmar Press Council has been conducting seminars and lectures to eliminate false information and to ensure that the truth reaches the public as soon as possible. Regarding the People's Military Service Law, the Myanmar Press Council invited media professionals and literary experts from various news outlets to hold discussions and encourage them to write and disseminate only true news.
3. In order to prevent people's fear and panic from rising, the relevant officials should take step-by-step educational measures because of the initiatives and actions of the organizations in the wards and villages that interact with the majority of the people, either because of the spread of false information by the malicious news media that wants to destroy peace and tranquillity. All citizens have a responsibility to defend the nation and they need to study the People's Military Service Law comprehensively.

Myanmar Press Council



## 2<sup>nd</sup> round group match of 2026 World Cup qualifiers to be broadcast live on MRTV

MYANMAR national football team will face the Syrian national football team in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round group match of 2026 World Cup qualifiers at Thunna Stadium in Yangon at 6 pm on 21 March. The match will be broadcast live on MRTV HD Channel, MRTV Parliament Channel, Skynet Sports HD, Sports 4 and Channel 9 starting at 5:45 pm on the same day. It will also be broadcast simultaneously online, including Myanma Radio and MRTV App. — MNA/KZL

## Myanmar representatives attend Buddhist religious ceremonies in Indonesia



Myanmar's ambassador to Indonesia attends the ceremony of laying the foundation stone at the Vihara Vipassana Giri Yadana Temple in Indonesia.

THE ceremony for laying the foundation stone of the new religious building and the ordination of 50 monks took place on 16 March at the Vihara Vipassana Giri Yadana Temple in Bogor, Indonesia, attended by the Permanent Representative of Myanmar to ASEAN and the Ambassador of Myanmar to Indonesia, according to the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Vihara Vipassana Giri Yadana Temple has been in existence in Indonesia for over 20 years and was officially recognized as a Buddhist Vipassana Temple only in 2024.

The ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the new religious building at the Vihara Vipassana Giri Yadana Temple

and the ordination ceremony of 50 monks were conducted by Buddhists in Indonesia. Thailand's Permanent Representative to ASEAN, Mr Urawadee Sriphiromya, and Myanmar's Permanent Representative laid the foundation stone and contributed cash donations to the ordination ceremony of 50 monks. — ASH/TH

## Zaycho market shop owners to participate in Thingyan Festival at Zaychothu pavilion

ACCORDING to U Thet Naing, the Head of Department of the Mandalay City Development Committee (MCDC), shop owners from markets under the jurisdiction of MCDC will participate in the water festival at the Zaychothu Thingyan pavilion during the Myanmar Traditional Thingyan Festival of 1385 Myanmar New Year.

The Zaychothu Thingyan pavilion is set to be constructed at 26<sup>th</sup> Street, between 84<sup>th</sup> and 85<sup>th</sup> Street, providing an opportunity for people from markets under MCDC's administration to join in the water festival fes-

tivities together.

U Thet Naing stated, "The Zaychothu Thingyan pavilion is a collaboration between Zaychothu marketers and the Mandalay City Development Committee. Marketers from a total of 40 markets will come together to celebrate Thingyan joyously. There will be performances at the pavilion."

Construction of the Zaychothu Thingyan pavilion is scheduled to commence in the final week of March, with Saduthithar (charity feast) offered to all visitors to the Zaychothu Thingyan pavilion. — ASH/TRKM

## SAC Secretary attends 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Mon State Day ceremony

SECRETARY of the State Administration Council (SAC), Lt-Gen Aung Lin Dwe, along with SAC members and Union Ministers, participated in the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Mon State Day in Mawlamyine yesterday.

The event, held at Thaimainbayan Field in Mawlamyine City, was graced by various dignitaries, including SAC members, Union ministers, the chief ministers of Mon and Kayin States, military commanders, and local officials. Lt-Gen Aung Lin Dwe read out a message from SAC Chairman PM Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudamma Min Aung Hlaing, commemorating the occasion.

Mon State Chief Minister U Aung Kyi Thein delivered the closing remarks, and an awarding ceremony for the

Gold Jubilee of Mon State Day was held at State Hall in Mawlamyine. Chief Minister U Aung Kyi Thein delivered a speech, and a video showcasing Mon State's culture, traditions, and attractions was presented.

Following this, SAC members presented awards to the winners in various categories. Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung donated 150 solar sets to improve electricity access in Mon State.

Later, the SAC Secretary visited Fuxing Brother Rubber Industrial Co Ltd and Myanmar Lighting (IPP) Co Ltd's factories to observe their operations.

In the evening, they enjoyed traditional Mon entertainment at Thaimainbayan Field and attended a dinner in honour of Mon State Day. — MNA/TMT



SAC Secretary Lt-Gen Aung Lin Dwe presents prizes to the cultural troupes at yesterday's event.

## MoBA Union Minister inspects development works in Mon State



Union Minister Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung (C) is pictured during his inspection tour in Mon State yesterday.

MINISTRY of Border Affairs Union Minister Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung accompanied Mon State Government Minister of Security and Border Affairs Col Kyaw Myint, and officials arrived at the Women's Domestic Vocational Training School in Mudon, Mon State, yesterday morning, and the

Union Minister fulfilled the requirements on the presentation about the training school by its principal.

Then, the Union minister met with the principal, deputy principal, employee trainers and female trainees and gave a speech about the four policies of the Ministry of

Border Affairs that are being implemented in accordance with policies such as stability and tranquillity in the border areas, development of border areas, to develop the socio-economic condition of the ethnic people living in the border areas and the development of human resources of ethnic youth

residing in border areas. The Union minister emphasised that stability and tranquillity must be built as a priority for development, and all the trainees should be trying and learning the subjects as being taught and be able to carry out their own career and gave cash award to trainees and inspected training halls, dormitories, mess, library and practical exercises of the trainees was followed up and checked.

Next, the Union minister and party arrived at the Mon State Development Supervision Office in Mawlamyine in the afternoon. The State Development Supervisor presented the conditions of regional development activities. The Education and Training Department's officer in charge explained the information about the training school, and the Union minister fulfilled the needs, awarded cash and inspected the office premises. — MNA/TS

### 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*

# NATIONAL

## MoI UM meets staff of affiliated departments in Yangon

UNION Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn met with the staff of affiliated departments under the ministry at Studio A of MRTV in Yangon yesterday.

First, he inspected the recording sessions at Studio 1 and Studio A.

During the meeting with the staff, he said he met staff serving duties in Yangon to comfort them. Although all have different aims, the common intention is the development and prosperity of the nation.

Moreover, AI development can lead to technological war, so all should study media-related technologies while watching the activities of the government continuously to be able to provide the public with factual information.

He also highlighted the need to persuade young people to use the right methods and raise their awareness regarding religion, culture, and traditions in media ways.

He continued that government employees should make efforts for the interest



Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn views round the warehouse of the Printing and Publishing Department yesterday in Yangon.

of the country by applying their knowledge and opinions related to the geopolitical and geo-economic status.

He then urged the staff to carry out their respective duties in unity, whereas the ministry is a focal one that connects

the government and the public.

He also clarified the People's Military Service Law and the critical role of accurate information.

Then, the Union Minister and party drew lots of five MRTV DTH satellite dishes

and 100 DVB T2 Set Top Boxes for the staff and cordially met them.

The Union Minister also inspected the warehouse of the Printing and Publishing Department in Yangon on the same day. — MNA/KTZH

## Union Industry Minister meets Indian firm delegation



The Indian delegation calls on Union Minister Dr Charlie Than yesterday.

UNION Minister for Industry Dr Charlie Than received the delegation led by Vice-President Mr P K Shah of the Nipha Exports Private Limited from India in the reception hall of the Union Minister Office yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed the relevant issues of equipment needed for the industrial sector in Myanmar,

MSMEs, steel, cement, medicine, and textile and garment equipment industries needed to improve the production sector, technology support issues and in order to promote trade and investment between the two countries direct payment in Indian rupees/Myanmar kyats in trade activities. — MNA/TS

## Myanmar youths attend ASEAN-Japan Young Environmental Leaders Symposium

THE Ministry of Foreign Affairs reports that Myanmar representatives participated in the inaugural ASEAN-Japan Young Environmental Leaders Symposium held in Tokyo, Japan, on 15 March.

The symposium, themed 'Inspiring Change' and 'Creating Impact,' took place at the Bellesalle Onarimon Ekimae Hall in Tokyo, Japan. At the event, 11 projects developed by 37 selected students from ASEAN countries and Japan were presented.

The ASEAN-Japan Centre selected these projects from 100 youths aged between 15 and 18 who submitted proposals on eliminating plastics in regional and marine environments to the ASEAN-Japan Centre. One of the chosen projects was the 'Stay Aquatic' initiative, created by four high school students from No 2 BEHS in Patheingyi Township, Ayeyawady Region, namely Maung Min Thant, Ma Hnin Wint Htal, Ma Kyi Sin Thant,

**MYANMAR**

**STAY AQUATIC**

Follows:  
Hnin Wint Htal  
Min Thant Kyaw  
Kyi Sin Thant  
Phoo Pwint Aung

School:  
No. (2), Basic Education High School Of Patheingyi

Supervisor:  
Ms. Thwe Zin Soe

**ACTIVITIES**

- "SAY NO TO PLASTIC" Campaign Series:
  - Educational Presentation
  - Competition
  - Exhibition
- "THE LIBRARY" Educational Movie Night
- Lake cleaning event at Royal Lake, Patheingyi

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- Increased knowledge about proper plastic usage and potential solutions.
- Gradually integrated entertainment with environmental education, fostering valuable environmental discussions.
- Cleaning activities at Royal Lake was pivotal in reducing trash influx from the riverbanks to Patheingyi River.

**Skills developed:**

- Feedback and transparency
- Flexibility and adaptability in the midst of academic workload

**ACHIEVEMENTS**

- Total number of audience reached - 600
- Total number of activities implemented - 4
- Percent of completion - 100%

**FEEDBACK & COMMENTS**

"AJVELA provided me with the opportunity to connect with other young people in tackling global issues." —Hnin Wint Htal

"AJVELA is one of the most innovative experiences I've offered to Patheingyi students." —Min Thant Kyaw

"I'm really glad to join AJVELA. It has helped improve my leadership skills and learn more about the environment." —Kyi Sin Thant

"AJVELA is great for developing team leadership skills. However, getting everyone in the community involved is challenging. It highlights the need for better teaching and outreach to create lasting change." —Phoo Pwint Aung

**MENTOR**

"Thanks to AJVELA for giving me the opportunity to collaborate with teenagers." —Dr. Thant Zin Tan

The first ASEAN-Japan Young Environmental Leaders Symposium seen being observed.

and Ma Phoo Pwint Aung.

Ekkaphab Phanthavong, the Deputy Secretary-General (DSG) of ASEAN for Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC), delivered a speech online. Additionally, Mr. Michihiro OOI, the Director of the Marine Environment Division of the Ministry of Environment of Japan, gave the opening speech.

The event was attended

by U Soe Han, the Myanmar Ambassador to Japan, diplomats from ASEAN offices, officials, representatives from the ASEAN-Japan Centre, selected students, and guests. The report indicates that the project is a collaboration between ASEAN and Japan, planned in December 2023 as part of the Joint Vision Statement on ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation. — ASH/TMT

# NATIONAL

## Myanmar media delegation covers information about Presidential Election in Russian Federation

A Myanmar media delegation visited Moscow of the Russian Federation to take documentary news on the Presidential Election of the Russian Federation from 15 to 17 March 2024 and to carry out media cooperation in Russia under the arrangement of the Myanmar-Russia Friendship Association at the invitation of the President of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation.

During the election period, the Myanmar media delegation

carried out the shooting of documentary records on supervision over the voting cast at the election disciplinary headquarters in the Presidential Election of the Russian Federation, held an interview with Mr Alexsey Valerievich Shaposhnikov, Chairman of the State Duma of the Russian Federation in Moscow and observed monitoring the online voting and casting votes at the disciplinary headquarters, monitoring the polling stations in Mos-

cow, electronic voting and voting techniques, and voting of people in person at polling stations No 410 and 402 in Moscow. The Myanmar media delegation conducted interviews with officials from the polling stations, voters, and international election observers, including Myanmar's Union Election Commission Chairman U Ko Ko. Moreover, the delegation called on Vice-Chairman Mr Sholban Kara-ool of the State Duma of the Russian Federation to ask

about the election measures. The presidential election was held in Russia from 15 to 17 March. Four presidential candidates competed in the election. After completion of counting the votes, Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin secured 87.28 per cent of the votes, Nikolai Mikhailovich Kharitonov 4.31 per cent, Vladislav Andreevich Davankov 3.85 per cent and Leonid Eduardovich Slutsky 3.20 per cent, respectively. Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin clearly won

the election with the excellent voting result.

The Myanmar media delegation could observe the election system of the Russian Federation, election management techniques, applying technologies in the election, and new media and media sectors of the Russian Federation. Moreover, the delegation had chances to exchange views and experiences among international election observers. — MNA/TTA

## Announcement for Oil millers seeking capital

- Under the direction of the State Administration Council, the Oil Mills Development Loan Management Task Force is providing low-interest loans for working capital and fixed capital to expand, upgrade, and develop necessary equipment and new mills. The loans are sourced from the State Economic Development Fund.
- Any oil miller may apply for the loans if they meet the following prerequisites:
  - Operational mill.
  - Valid licence.
  - Form 7 for engaging in activities on farmland.
  - Separate collateral for the loans if the owner has already borrowed from private and public banks.
  - Holders of FDA certificates, small industrial enterprise registration certificates, and members of the Myanmar Edible Oil Millers' Association and the Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association will be prioritized.
- Rules and regulations for the loans:
  - Loan amounts:
    - From K10 million to K300 million for working capital.
    - From K20 million to K300 million for fixed capital investment.
    - Anyone wishing to borrow more than K300 million must apply directly at the Secretary's Office, Oil Mills Development Loan Management Task Force, Myanma Agricultural Development Bank (Head Office).
  - Repayment periods:
    - One year for working capital loans.
    - Three years in three instalments for fixed capital loans.
    - Yearly interest rate of five per cent.
- Oil millers may apply for loans at all branches of the following organizations: -
  - Myanmar Edible Oil Millers' Association.
  - Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association.
  - Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection.
  - Myanma Economic Bank.
  - Myanma Agricultural Development Bank.
- Application forms are available for download on the websites of the Ministry of Planning and Finance ([www.mopf.gov.mm](http://www.mopf.gov.mm)), Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection (<https://msmnewportal.gov.mm>), Myanmar Edible Oil Millers' Association (<http://www.meoma.org>), Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association (<http://meoda.myanmarwebtraining.com>), Myanma Economic Bank ([www.meb.gov.mm](http://www.meb.gov.mm)), and Myanma Agricultural Development Bank ([www.madb.gov.mm](http://www.madb.gov.mm)).

*Oil Mills Development Loan Management Task Force*

## Rural development workshop discusses Mekong-Lancang Cooperation projects



The rural development workshop on Mekong-Lancang Cooperation projects in progress yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

THE Department of Rural Development under the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development held a workshop at MGallery Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. The session focused on sharing experiences related to poverty alleviation and rural water access projects funded through special funds from the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation.

Deputy Minister for Cooperatives and Rural Development, U Myint Soe, along with Mr Wang Xianzhong, the first secretary of the Chinese Embassy in Myanmar, directors-general, responsible officials, businesspeople, and rural residents, attended the event.

In his address, the deputy minister emphasized the ministry's commitment to reducing wealth disparities between ur-

ban and rural areas, promoting harmonious development, and addressing poverty alleviation. He also outlined the ministry's efforts to align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan, and National Comprehensive Development Plan.

The ministry successfully implemented four development projects using special funds from the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation in 2022. Notable achievements include the establishment of a model village in Bago Region, aimed at alleviating poverty within Mekong-Lancang member states, and the implementation of community-based water sanitization and supply systems in three villages in Ayeyawady

Region from October 2022 to October 2024. These projects directly benefited approximately 4,270 rural residents across 954 households.

Following this, Mr Wang and the deputy chairperson of the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation Negotiation Team Myanmar each delivered their remarks. They also watched a documentary video showcasing project implementation. Subsequently, the deputy minister and attendees toured photo exhibitions.

The workshop continued with presentations and discussions involving project directors, attendees, and speakers providing insights on each project, aiming to raise public awareness about the initiative. — MNA/NT

# NATIONAL

## Weekly market update of dry groceries at Bayintnaung Wholesale Centre

FOR a week from 13 to 19 March 2024, the price of sugar soared at the Bayintnaung wholesale market, whereas the prices of Shan garlic, Kyukok garlic, potato, chilli pepper, Myittha onion, black gram, pigeon pea and chick pea declined. The palm oil reference price moved up slightly.

### Onion

Bayint Naung Wholesale market saw the supply of 180,000 visses of onions on 19 March 2024. The wholesale prices stood at K1,900-3,200 per viss on 19 March 2024, depending on the quality, size and producing areas (Seikphyu and Monywa) that day.

The Pakokku market witnessed an inflow of 75,000 visses of new monsoon onions on 18 March. The highest price was K1,650-2,150 per viss there. The highest price in the Myingyan market was K2,200 per viss, with a supply of 32,000 viss on that day.

### Garlic

The prices of Kyukok garlic hit K10,100 per viss, while the garlic from Aungban, Shan State, fetched K5,500-6,500 per viss depending on the variety and quality.

### Potato

Shan potatoes were priced at K1,300-1,500 per viss on 19 March. The price of Sinphyukyun potato was K1,200 per viss. Potatoes from the Pakokku area are K200 per viss higher than Shan potato.

### Chilli pepper

The wholesale prices of chilli peppers were registered at K68,000-K8,300 per viss for long chilli pepper and Moehtaung variety on 19 March. The prices of bell peppers from the Sinphyukyun and Belin areas were K10,000-14,500 per viss that day.

### Rice

The prices hit K86,000-90,000 per sack of non-premium monsoon rice and K100,000 per sack of Pawkywe variety on 13 March. Meanwhile, the new Pawsan rice of premium quality were worth K135,000-160,000 per sack depending on producing areas (Ayeyawady, Pyapon, Myaungmya, Shwebo).

### Palm oil

For a week from 18 to 24 March 2024, the wholesale reference price of Yangon Region was set a bit higher to K5,250 per viss like that of last week.

### Pulses

The prices of various pulses stood at K2,990,000 per tonne of black gram (Fair Average Quality/RC), K3,200,000 per tonne of black gram (Special Quality/RC), K3,810,000 per tonne of pigeon pea (red gram) RC, K3,965 per viss of green gram (Shwe Wah) and K5,900-6,200 per viss of chickpea in Yangon's wholesale markets on 12 March 2024. — TWA/KK

## Myanmar's Representative attends ASEAN-UN Interface Meeting



Delegates pose for a group photo at the ASEAN-UN Interface.

MYANMAR'S representative participated in the interface meeting between the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR) and the

United Nations, held at the ASEAN Secretary-General's Office on 15 March, as confirmed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

U Aung Myo Myint, the Permanent Representative of Myanmar to ASEAN, represented the country at the interface.

The annual event, led by Bovonethat Douangchak, the Permanent Representative of Laos to ASEAN, provided a platform for CPR members and UN delegates to review the ASEAN-UN Plan of Action.

During the meeting, ASEAN permanent representatives shared their insights on regional and international developments, while also discussing strategies for aligning the implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Furthermore, UN delegates offered their perspectives on their engagements in Southeast Asia. — ASH/NT

## GLMS introduced in licensed guesthouses in YCDC area

THE Guest List Management System (GLMS) has been introduced to all licensed guesthouses under the jurisdiction of the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC). This system enables the simultaneous retrieval of lodging data for both foreign and domestic guests, enhancing traveller safety and promoting tourism development.

Currently, the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism has begun implementing the GLMS in hotels and guesthouses licensed by the ministry, with plans to extend its use to all licensed lodgings within the YCDC.

According to data from the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, there are guesthouses distributed as follows: 43 in Kachin State, 24 in Kayah State, 48 in Kayin State, nine in Chin State, 50 in Mon State, eight in Rakhine State, 93 in southern Shan State, 76 in northern



Yangon hotel zone sees resurgence as small hotels reopen amid domestic tourism hikes.

Shan State, 107 in Eastern Shan State, 52 in Nay Pyi Taw, 272 in Yangon Region, 362 in Mandalay Region, 50 in Sagaing

Region, 43 in Magway Region, three in Bago Region, and 41 in Ayeyawady Region. — TWA/MKKS

## Feeding packages available for animals at Yangon Zoo



The photo shows visitors feeding animals in Yangon Zoo. PHOTO: XINHUA

THE Yangon Zoo offers feeding packages for over 1,360 animals, comprising 43 types of mammals, 19 types of reptiles, and 69 types of bird species.

Individuals interested in donating or commemorating special events, such as birthdays, by feeding the animals can make arrangements according to their preferences.

The cost of feeding all the animals in the zoo is K1,500,000 per day, while feeding only herbivores costs K600,000 per day, and feeding only carnivores costs K900,000 per day. Donors can reach out to the Yangon Zoo through its social networking page and will receive certificates of appreciation for their contributions. — TWA/MKKS

# NATIONAL

## Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Elevated to Higher Level

Chinese Ambassador Mr Chen Hai

MARCH 18 marks the unveiling of the 7<sup>th</sup> Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) Week. The thousand-mile-long Lancang-Mekong River originates from the Tanggula Mountains on the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau in China, closely connecting China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam as pearls on a string. In 2016, leaders of the six countries jointly launched the LMC as a new type of sub-regional cooperation mechanism in the spirit of a “shared river, shared future”. Over the past eight years, the six countries have treated each other equally, sincerely assisted each other, and become as close as family. The LMC has progressed from scratch, upgraded with quality improvement, and achieved fruitful results, continuously deepening and solidifying the construction of the Lancang-Mekong community with a shared future, bringing tangible benefits to the people of the member countries.

My colleagues at the Embassy of China in Myanmar and I are honoured to be involved in promoting the development of China-Myanmar cooperation under LMC. The “efficiency of LMC” has been fully demonstrated in Myanmar with progress every day, achievements every month, and continuous advancement every year. Over the past year, the Embassy has attended LMC project activities more than 40 times. During LMC Week each year, we exchange views on LMC through articles, TV interviews, and other means. We have witnessed the fruitful results of LMC in Myanmar and personally felt its vitality and potential. Currently, the LMC Special Fund set up by China has supported Myanmar in implementing 106 projects, ranking at the forefront in terms of both quantity and

amount of funds among LMC countries. With its remarkable progress and achievements, LMC has become a highlight of China-Myanmar cooperation.

The LMC Special Fund supports the development of locally suitable and high-value-added new agricultural industries in Myanmar, including the breeding and promotion of improved rice varieties, cultivation and processing of coffee, nuts, fruits, vegetables, and aquatic products, as well as innovative weaving of bamboo and rattan. Additionally, China has assisted Myanmar in strengthening capacity building, supporting youth and women entrepreneurship, promoting tourism development, enhancing vocational training centres, etc., thereby improving Myanmar’s independent development capabilities. At the same time, support has been provided for the development of emerging industries and new formats, as well as for conducting research in emerging industries, such as information communication technology and solar photovoltaic power generation, and implementing green development projects such as transboundary haze pollution management and waste recycling laboratories. All of these movements have made significant contributions to Myanmar’s sustainable economic and social

development and improvement of people’s livelihoods.

The LMC has become a golden example of regional cooperation, and the construction of an LMC community with a shared future has made positive progress. China has reached a consensus with Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam to build bilateral communities with a shared future. The LMC countries have jointly created a powerful engine for development, built a strong shield for common security, and tightened emotional bonds of mutual understanding. The interconnectivity of the China-Laos-Thailand Railway has been achieved, and the Kyaukpyu Deep-Sea Port project is in steady progress. The closer regional connectivity has accelerated regional economic and trade activities and personnel exchanges. China’s annual trade volume with LMC countries has doubled in the past seven years.

The LMC Special Fund has supported over 700 livelihood projects. Over a hundred “LMC Harvest” projects in Myanmar and other countries have helped local farmers increase production and income. The “Lancang-Mekong Sweet Spring Action Plan” has helped improve rural water supply in Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos. The “Green Lancang-Mekong Plan” promotes

local environmental governance and low-carbon development, effectively benefiting regional people’s livelihoods. LMC countries have closely cooperated in addressing non-traditional security areas such as terrorism, online fraud, and human trafficking. China, Myanmar, and Thailand have jointly conducted an anti-tele fraud combat with positive results, effectively safeguarding the safety of people’s lives and property in the region. We have jointly held a variety of brilliant activities, such as the Lancang-Mekong TV Week, Film Week, traditional dance festivals, and the Sepak Takraw Open Competition, further tightening our cultural bonds. At present, LMC countries are working together to build a high-quality demonstration area for the joint construction of the “Belt and Road”, a pilot area for the Global Development Initiative, an experimental area for the Global Security Initiative, and a model area for the Global Civilization Initiative, setting an example in building a community with a shared future for humankind.

The Two Sessions of China recently successfully concluded, during which President Xi Jinping emphasized the need to firmly focus on the primary task of high-quality development and develop new quality productive

forces based on local conditions. Last year, China’s economy contributed one-third of global growth at a rate of 5.2 per cent, and the engine-driving growth remains robust. This includes not only reasonable quantitative growth but also effective quality improvements. Emerging industries are flourishing, green transformation is yielding results, and new productive forces are accelerating. China’s modernization will bring new opportunities for the development of Myanmar and other countries in the Mekong River region and will also add greater impetus to LMC.

LMC has undergone an extraordinary eight-year journey. There is considerable potential and possibility in the LMC and China-Myanmar relations. China will continue to practice the Principles of Amity, Sincerity, Mutual Benefit and Inclusiveness in Neighborhood Diplomacy and promote the Lancang-Mekong spirit of “development first, equal consultation, practicality and high efficiency, and openness and inclusiveness” with member countries. In addition, China will deepen integrated development, promote green cooperation, strengthen security governance, and enhance cultural and people-to-people exchanges with partners. We are willing to encourage the China-Myanmar cooperation under LMC to a higher level while pursuing our own high-quality development, allowing the Pauk-Phaw friendship between our peoples to shine brightly in the new era and jointly composing a new chapter in promoting the building of a community with a shared future for China and Myanmar, the Lancang-Mekong countries, and all the humanity.

*(The opinions and views expressed in the article belong solely to the author).*

## Tomato price surge anticipated following sharp decline

CURRENTLY, tomato prices have dropped, but it is expected to rise again in the coming month, according to the tomato market.

“Tomato price has declined now. Wholesale centres give a viss free when you buy three visses. It is usual that the price of tomatoes decreases during this period. Farmers who could

catch the opening market could make a profit, or they have to give free if they miss. But we can say the market collapsed this year, too. The tomato market usually collapses every year during this period. Tomatoes are mainly produced in Monywa and southern Shan State. This is a transitional time, so farmers from southern Shan State sell at

a discount, so the price plunges down severely,” said a tomato farmer from Lashio.

At present, the wholesale price of tomatoes is just K200-K300 per viss, and the tomato market is likely to be good again in April and May.

“The price is just K200 a viss at farms and K300-K400 a viss at wholesale centres. Around April

and May, tomato prices usually go up for a while. The price may rise again in the next two weeks. In Mandalay, the price normally goes up slightly when it gets close to Thingyan. Price usually goes up when the supply is going to be short in Monywa and Kyaukse,” said a tomato trader in Mandalay.

Due to a decline in toma-

to prices, farmers in Pinlaung, southern Shan State, have suffered losses. The tomato price has drastically fallen this year compared to last year. Last year, tomato price per viss was between K2,000 and K3,000, but it is now just around K300, K400 and K600 to the maximum, according to farmers. — Thit Taw/ZS

## OPINION

### Prioritize unity among national brethren

**M**ON ethnics resided in Myanmar at the earliest time, preserving language, religion, literature, culture, and fine arts, which flourished in that state. These good historical events and intangible cultural properties are honourable for the State.

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

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 Burma, 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.

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 destruction of resources of the State.

Not only Mon ethnics but all other ethnic people are residing in the Union of Myanmar through thick and thin in sharing the same future.

As such, they have to firmly join hands in initiating all measures and solving a variety of challenges and problems in unison. It is because disunity among the ethnic people of Myanmar will be designed to invite foreign enemies, which will destroy and disintegrate the Union.

Now is the time for all ethnic people to negotiate among themselves to see the future, learn how to improve the country, and mitigate the burden of the people. Any 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), participating in peace and stability of the whole country.

## Finally, ASEAN Sees the Light

By U AC

**F**IRST, just like the US and the West, they refused to believe in the voters' fraud.

Second, following the West, they boycotted Myanmar, forcing foreign companies to leave town and increasing joblessness among people with low incomes.

Third, taking a pinch of imperialism, they wanted to impose their 4/5 points of nonsense on the Myanmar people.

Some countries tried to close the bank accounts of Myanmar citizens and Myanmar companies.

Some tried to cower Myanmar into following their instructions. Some even openly recognized the NNCP terrorist group as an alternative legitimate government!

Finally, they realize the foundations and meanings of the ASEAN Charter and that being a Western lap dog would lead them nowhere.

For the first time in nearly three years, one representative from Myanmar was invited to be at the ASEAN foreign ministers meeting held on 29 January. A

female director general was present during the meeting. A small step for the Myanmar public, a giant step in putting NNCP terrorist groups where they belong.

Last but not least, the more important and concrete step was what has been mentioned in para 23 of the communique issued afterwards: "ASEAN would help people of Myanmar, find a Myanmar-owned and led solution towards a peaceful, stable and unified Myanmar contributing to peace and prosperity of the

region".

As MLK said, "The arch of the moral universe is long, but in the end, it bends towards justice."

Having been free from the shackles of unnecessary pressures from ASEAN, the burden is now on the Myanmar government to show that it can bring the country progress and much-needed development while improving by leaps and bounds on law and order, reducing corruption and ceasing never-ending presidential pardons!

## Study finds that men have a greater risk of fractures from falls than women

*Douglas P Kiel, MD, MPH, director of the Musculoskeletal Research Centre, emphasized the importance of considering falls as a significant risk factor for fractures, especially in men.*

**A** RECENT research titled "A meta-analysis of previous falls and subsequent fracture risk in cohort studies" discovered correlations between self-reported falls and increased fracture risk, as well as a slightly higher risk of fracture in men than in women.

Published in Osteoporosis International, this international

meta-analysis of data pooled from 46 prospective cohorts comprising over 900,000 individuals also recommended that previous falls are a factor that should be included in patients' histories used by fracture risk assessment tools like the FRAX (Fracture Risk Assessment) Tool to calculate a person's likelihood of getting a fracture over the next

decade. FRAX is the most commonly used assessment to predict fracture risk.

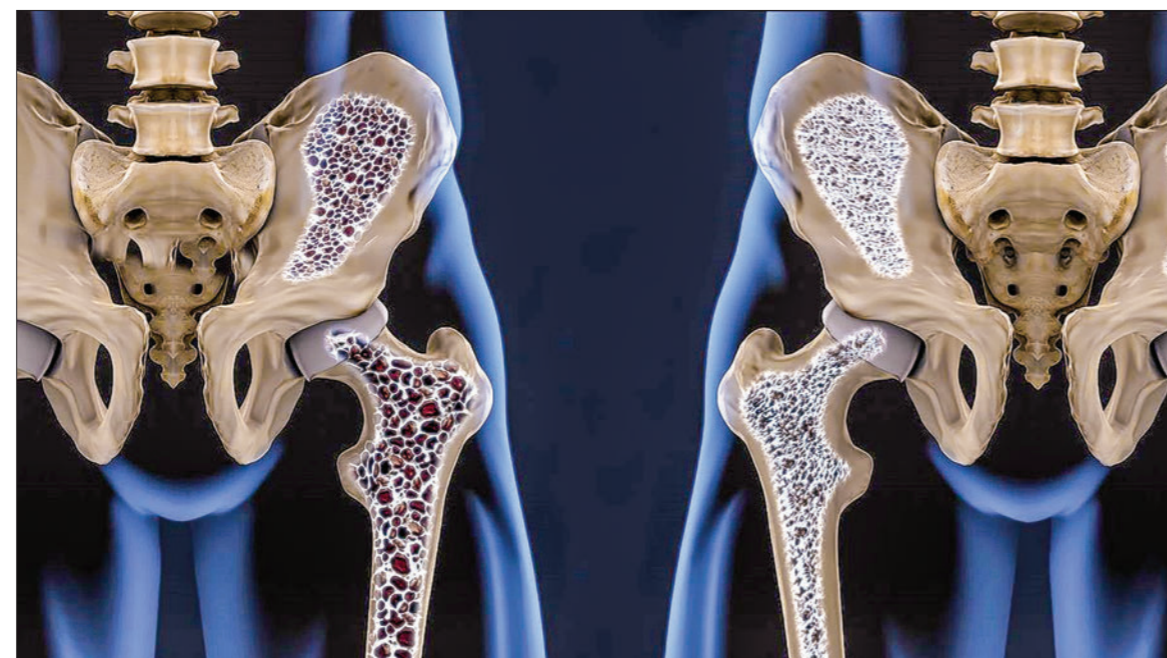
"FRAX was developed using longitudinal data from studies around the world. Although previous falls have long been recognized as a significant risk factor for fractures, until now, they have not been factored into the FRAX algorithm," said Doug-

las P Kiel, MD, MPH, director of the Musculoskeletal Research Center and senior scientist at the Hinda and Arthur Marcus Institute for Aging Research at Hebrew SeniorLife, a nonprofit, Harvard Medical School affiliated institution. "In this newly updated FRAX dataset, previous falls were included as a risk factor and were found to increase the risk for fracture. These findings underscore that falls are an important contributor to fracture in both men and women, but interestingly, slightly more in men."

**Increased Fracture Risk:** Individuals with a history of falls within the past year were found to have a significantly higher risk of any clinical fracture, osteoporotic fracture, major osteoporotic fracture, and hip fracture. One or more previous falls were significantly associated with an increased risk of death among women and men.

**Sex Disparities:** The association between previous falls and fracture risk was observed to vary by sex, with men exhibiting higher predictive values compared to women.

SOURCE: ANI



A meta-analysis published in Osteoporosis International analyzed data from 46 prospective cohorts with over 900,000 individuals. ILLUSTRATION: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/SHUTTERSTOCK

## Well-being starts early: Travellers share benefits of rising with the sun

*The Swedish tradition of Gokotta, meaning "getting up early to hear birdsong", offers a solution.*



Practiced from early spring to midsummer, Gokotta involves waking at dawn to enjoy nature's tranquility. ILLUSTRATION: FREEPIK

**I**N the northern hemisphere, the number of hours of daylight are finally increasing, but in many zones the lack of light combined with winter temperatures can make it difficult to face the daily grind with panache.

You've probably already heard that getting up late every day is a bad habit that can have harmful effects on both mental and physical health.

Stress, irritability, increased risk of illness – the list goes on. The Swedish Gokotta ritual, which could be translated as "getting up early to hear birdsong", involves rising at dawn to enjoy a quiet, peaceful moment in nature.

Gokotta is traditionally practised on the first day of Ascension (in May) through

midsummer, but there's no reason why it can't inspire us for mornings during other seasons. Travellers, too, can benefit from this practice.

The concept is simple. Ideally, you get up with the birds at the crack of dawn, between 4am and 6am. Gokotta can be practised in a variety of ways, depending on individual tastes.

For example, a 10-minute walk in a park, or a jog along a forest path, or meditation at sunrise, or sitting in your garden with a cup of coffee in hand.

There are several good ways to connect with nature, in a calm environment, in order to absorb its benefits before a day's work.

So what are these benefits? In an interview with Passion Santé, Johan Verbraecken,

sleep specialist at Antwerp Hospital, Belgium, explained: "Being active early in the morning has many benefits as the day progresses. Your blood pressure rises and your fat burning begins. What's more, your cortisol levels peak in the morning and you have more energy for the rest of the day."

Gokotta has many scientifically proven benefits. Outdoor sounds and natural light are known to stimulate well-being and promote a positive mood.

For example, researchers have shown that morning light helps us to concentrate better in the morning and sleep better at night.

Furthermore, natural light is a vector for the production of serotonin, an important mood-regulating hormone. Plus,

visiting green spaces – an essential part of gokotta – also helps improve cognitive abilities.

If you're a night owl, you can still incorporate some form of gokotta into your daily routine.

For example, you can spend some time meditating in nature. No birdsong in your environment? You can always fall back on the sounds of nature via apps on your smartphone.

You can also practice the Swedish ritual at work by taking advantage of breaks to go for a walk in a nearby park.

Today, more and more places are dedicated to the sounds of nature, such as quiet parks in cities, or initiatives in tourist areas like the Alpine resort of Courmayeur in Italy.

SOURCE: AFP



# NATIONAL BUSINESS

## Positive outlook for jaggery market as prices rise

### FROM PAGE-1

When the jaggery price was a mere K1,500 per viss, it did not cover the general cost, including the wages of the palm tree climbers in production. As the business is physically demanding but less secure financially, the locals migrate to foreign countries for jobs. Ko Aung Tun, who used to be a palm tree

climber in Thalukan village, Yenanchaung Township and who is now working as a vendor in Yangon, told the GNLN.

The shortage of workers and low prices prompted some palm tree owners to cut down the trees for commercial purposes. Consequently, it was hard to find organic jaggery in the market then.

It takes about a decade

from farming to marketable jaggery production. Nonetheless, the palm tree climbing business seems to have developed following the jaggery price hitting a record high.

The palm trees are primarily found in Kyaukpadaung, NyaungU, Yenanchaung, Pakokku, Yesakyo, Mahlaing and Taungtha areas. — TWA/EM

## CBM suspends two money changer licences for three months



The photo depicts Yangon branch of Central Bank of Myanmar.

TWO money changers (Update Forever and Ngwe Boom) got their licence suspended for up to three months as they failed to comply with the rules and directives issued by the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM), as per its notification dated 18 March.

Additionally, Sint Oh Dan Co., Ltd, which was granted a money changer licence (CBM FEMD -499/ 2020) on 12 March 2020, was found to violate Section 22 of the Foreign Exchange Management Law. Subsequently, the licence of that company was revoked for six months under Section 35 (B) of the Law starting from 18 March 2024.

Furthermore, five money changers got their licences removed, and seven got suspended licences for non-compliance with the rules and directives of the CBM this month.

The CBM will conduct surprise inspections at money changers in a bid to stabilize foreign exchange rates in line with the existing laws, the CBM announced on 11 March.

The CBM initiated an online trading market in which exporters/importers and private banks are engaged, with a view to developing the FX market. Additionally, the authorized money changers sell the foreign currency as petty

cash to those going abroad, according to the CBM's notification.

Moreover, the surprise visits are being undertaken at money changers to ensure they abide by the directive issued by the Foreign Exchange Management Law.

A combined team led by the Monitoring and Steering Committee on Gold and Currency Market, comprising competent authorities from the CBM, Yangon City Development Committee, the Department of General Administration and law enforcement agencies, has been conducting the surprise inspections. — NN/EM

## Black gram, pigeon pea prices head for two-day retreat

THE prices of black grams and pigeon peas have fallen again, indicating a significant drop of K92,000 per tonne of black gram and 113,000 per tonne of pigeon pea.

The prices were registered at K3.02 million per tonne of black grams and K3.863 million per tonne of pigeon peas on 16 March and then plunged to K2.928 million per tonne of black grams and K3.75 million per tonne of pigeon peas on 19 March.

The price fluctuation is closely tied to the demand of the main buyer, India and the kyat-dollar exchange rate.

The price hit a new peak of K3.5 million per tonne of black gram and K4.197 million per tonne of pigeon pea on 5 February 2024.

India also imports the black gram (urad) from Brazil and other countries. Yet, they prefer Myanmar's black grams on account of better quality and higher availability of supply. India extended the free import policy of black grams (urad) and pigeon peas (tur) up to March 2025.

Myanmar conveyed over 1.48 million tonnes of various pulses worth US\$1.256 billion in the past 11 months of the current financial

year 2023-2024, the Ministry of Commerce stated.

Myanmar mainly exports black gram, green grams, and pigeon peas to foreign markets. Of them, black grams and pigeon peas are primarily shipped to India, while green grams are exported to China and Europe.

India has growing consumption requirements for black grams and pigeon peas. According to a Memorandum of Understanding between Myanmar and India signed on 18 June 2021, India will import 250,000 tonnes of black gram and 100,000 tonnes of pigeon peas (tur) from Myanmar for five consecutive years from 2021-2022 financial year to 2025-2026 FY. This G-to-G pact will not affect the pulses' annual quota set by India. Myanmar's exporters are also entitled to deliver the pulses to India under that yearly quota.

The Myanmar Pulses, Beans, Maize and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association stated that black grams, which India primarily purchases, are commonly found only in Myanmar, whereas pigeon peas, green gram and chickpeas are grown in African countries and Australia. — NN/EM

## New tamarind prices fetch higher price than old stocks

THE new tamarind (flesh) prices are K2,000 per viss higher than old ones, reaching K3,300-4,600 per viss depending on different qualities on 18 March. The old tamarinds were worth K1,900-2,500 per viss.

The new ones have more sour flavour than the old ones, while the old ones give more pulp.

The new tamarind supply to Yangon's market is about one month late. Normally, new tamarind entered the Yangon market in December in previous years. They flowed into the market on 22 January 2024, with the price of K3,100 per viss, said a trader engaged in tamarind depot on Kayay Street.

The market sees high demand for the old one on account of its cheaper prices, a seller from Seinpan Street in the Bayintnaung area told the GNLN.

The traders forecast low output of tamarind this year. Yet, the yields in tamarind-producing areas turned out good after two months of harvest, Mandalay's market figures showed.

Tamarinds from Pyay, Thaeikon and Padigon areas started to enter the Yangon market. Then, the large supply of tamarind from the Yamethin, Pyawbwe and Tatkon areas flowed into the market. There is an abundant production of tamarind in Pakokku, Myaing, Kyaukpadaung, Popa, Mahlaing, Taungtha, Nyaung U, Dawei and southern Shan State areas.

The domestic market did not see a price rise in tamarind in 2022 and 2023 amid the lack of exports.

U Zaw, a seller in Seinpan Street, guessed that exports might weigh on domestic tamarind prices in 2024. — TWA/KK

# NATIONAL

## Myanmar Theatrical Association condemns dress concept for Miss Universe 2024



Image of the contestant.

THE Myanmar Theatrical Association (Central) has strongly criticized the decision to pair the traditional dancer turban, a traditional head wrap worn by male dancers in theatrical performances, with the gown intended for the Myanmar representative at the Miss Universe 2024 pageant in Mexico.

The controversy arose when images of the proposed dress concept emerged on the “FAE: Fashion & Artistry Exhibition Page” on Facebook on 16 March. These images showcased conceptual designs of the dress, reportedly created by designer Khin Su Su Aung and presented by contestant Cindy Myat.

The association argued that combining the traditional turban of male dancers with a gown, particularly one featuring a low-cut design, is inappropriate. This is especially so since it was stated that the dress drew inspiration from the attire of Myanmar traditional drama actors. The association’s statement further asserted that such actions are disrespectful to Myanmar’s theatrical culture.

The statement strongly condemned the dress concept and prohibited any further display or use of it, including its presentation at the beauty pageant. The association warned that failure to comply with this directive would result in action taken in accordance with theatrical rules and Myanmar cultural regulations. — TWA/NT

## Scorching weather boosts rush mat sales

RUSH mat manufacturers from TadaU Township, Mandalay Region, have reported a surge in sales turnover for mats, attributed to the increasingly hot weather.

“The prices are also rising due to the hot weather, and mats of various sizes are in high demand. The months of Tabaung and Tagoo are the best seasons to sell mats, with the highest sales turnover during this time. The current prices are K2,000 higher than usual, depending on the size of the mats. Since mat-making can be done at home as a small-scale business, almost all villagers engage in it as a traditional business,” a mat producer Ko Aung Aung from TadaU said.

Current mat wholesale prices are K45,000 for the family size, K35,000 for the king size, K30,000 for the queen size, K23,000 for the single size (big), K20,000 for the single size (small), and K17,000 for the smallest size.

Almost all villagers from Latsaungyu Village in TadaU Township, Mandalay



Female artisans skillfully craft mats with meticulous attention to detail.

Region, make rush mats as a traditional business, which can generate a lot of money for them, especially in the sum-

mer. Both retail and wholesale orders are available from Latsaungyu Village. — Maung Aye Chan/TMT

## Myanmar Embassy in Japan invites researchers for 2024 fellowship

MYANMAR Embassy in Japan said in a statement on 19 March that JSPS (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science) has invited applications for International Fellowship for Researcher in Japan 2024.

Available programmes include Postdoctoral Fellowships for Research in Japan Standard Programme

for Postdoctoral (12-24 months), Invitational Fellowships for Research in Japan Long-Term for Mid-career to Professor (2-10 months), Short-Term for Mid-career to Professor (14-60 days) and Bridge Fellowship Programme for JSPS Alumni members (14 to 30 days).

Depending on the programme,

eligible criteria vary – a doctorate degree holder within the past six years or a prospective doctorate degree holder before completing the Fellowship for Standard Programme for Postdoctoral (12-24 months), and Professors, Associate Professors, or Assistant Professor in Japan, or Researchers for a term equivalent to 6 years and above before completing a doctorate degree for Long-Term for Mid-career to Professor (2-10 months) and Short-Term for Mid-career to Professor (14-60 days), it stated.

The JSPS-Bridge Fellowship Programme is open to JSPS alumni members and researchers currently working in a research department. Applicants can apply at <http://www.jpsps.go.jp/English/e-alumni/bridge/index.html> after contacting <http://www.jpsps.go.jp/English/e-fellow/index.html> for Postdoctoral Fellowships, <http://www.jpsps.go.jp/english/e-inv/> for Invitational Fellowships, and <http://www.jpsps.go.jp/english/e-alumni/bridge/index.html> for Bridge Fellowship Programme.

A round-trip air ticket, overseas travel insurance, monthly maintenance allowance and research support allowance will be provided to successful candidates, it said. — MT/ZN

**JSPS INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIPS FOR RESEARCH IN JAPAN 2024**

The Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) is an independent administrative institution that performs the following main functions:

- Create Knowledge in Science and Professional Fields
- Foster Next Generation of Researchers who Challenge the Creation of New Sources of Knowledge
- Strengthen Research Bases in Universities
- Strengthen of International Research Network
- Strengthen of Support Base for Science Promotion

**JSPS Fellows Plaza**

JSPS Fellows Plaza supports JSPS fellows during their research tenure in Japan and after they have returned to their country through the alumni associations.

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**JSPS Researchers Network (JSPS-Net)**

JSPS has launched the JSPS-Net, a social networking service, to support the formation of networks and research communities for both Japanese and international researchers to contribute to strengthening and expanding human networks derived from long years of research exchange between Japan and other countries.

<https://www.jpsps-net.jpsps.go.jp/>

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**Application Flow (open calls)**

Programs	Notice Period	2023	2024	2025
Postdoctoral Short-term (2-12)	Postdoctoral	10/1	1/1, 2/1, 3/1, 4/1, 5/1, 6/1, 7/1, 8/1, 9/1, 10/1, 11/1, 12/1	1/1, 2/1, 3/1, 4/1, 5/1, 6/1, 7/1, 8/1, 9/1, 10/1, 11/1, 12/1
Postdoctoral Standard (12-24)	Postdoctoral	10/1	1/1, 2/1, 3/1, 4/1, 5/1, 6/1, 7/1, 8/1, 9/1, 10/1, 11/1, 12/1	1/1, 2/1, 3/1, 4/1, 5/1, 6/1, 7/1, 8/1, 9/1, 10/1, 11/1, 12/1
Invitational Long-term (2-10)	Invitational	10/1	1/1, 2/1, 3/1, 4/1, 5/1, 6/1, 7/1, 8/1, 9/1, 10/1, 11/1, 12/1	1/1, 2/1, 3/1, 4/1, 5/1, 6/1, 7/1, 8/1, 9/1, 10/1, 11/1, 12/1
Invitational Short-term (14-60)	Invitational	10/1	1/1, 2/1, 3/1, 4/1, 5/1, 6/1, 7/1, 8/1, 9/1, 10/1, 11/1, 12/1	1/1, 2/1, 3/1, 4/1, 5/1, 6/1, 7/1, 8/1, 9/1, 10/1, 11/1, 12/1

**Features**

- We value the pursuit of knowledge above all else. The program is open to all, regardless of nationality or academic field.
- Tailored to a full spectrum of researchers from early-career researchers to eminent scientists.
- Flexible durations ranging from short to long terms.

**Science Dialogue**

Science Dialogue offers JSPS fellows the unique opportunity to volunteer to give lectures in English on their research work at Japanese high schools in the vicinity of their host institutions.

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**RINP/ALU (Observation Ph.D.) Program**

The RINP/ALU (Observation Ph.D.) Program supports promising researchers in countries of Asia and Africa or other specified countries among all those listed as Japanese COA recipients who wish to obtain a Ph.D. degree from a Japanese university through the submission of a dissertation without matriculating a doctoral course.

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Some brochures of International Fellowship for Researcher in Japan 2024

# NATIONAL

## Confiscations of illegal items: Timbers, fuel oil, foodstuffs, industrial materials and vehicles



Photos show seized commodities in Bago and Yangon regions.

THE on-duty team under the Magway Illegal Trade Eradication Special Task Force confiscated illegal goods in various locations over several days.

On 15 March, the team seized illegal timbers weighing 4.690 tonnes valued at K124,650 in Kanma township and 15 gallons of illegal petrol worth K165,000 in Ngaphe township. This enforcement was carried out under the Forest Law and the Petroleum and Petroleum Products Law.

Subsequent inspections on 16, 17, and 18 March led to further confiscations. A Mitsubishi Fuso truck and a Hyundai bus, estimated to be worth K60 million, were intercepted carrying goods worth K14.32 million, including 28 bottles of

Motul engine oil without official documents. Additionally, illegal hardwood weighing 1.685 tonnes and illegal timbers weighing 5.224 tonnes, valued at K645,264, were seized in Toungoo district. These actions were conducted under Customs procedures and the Forest Law.

Further seizures on 16 and 18 March included goods and medications valued at K109.715 million, such as 12,000 boxes of Vita milk soymilk and 19,535 boxes of Lactasoy soy milk without official documents. Unregistered vehicles were also confiscated in various townships. These actions were taken under Customs procedures and the Export and Import Law.

During inspections on 17 and 18 March, the combined

teams seized various goods worth K246.028 million, including 220 bags of seafood without official documents, at the Yadanabon bridge combined checkpoint in Sagaing township. Additionally, in Kanbalu township, goods valued at K8.514 million, including 20 cartons of ABC beer (small cans) and illegal timbers weighing 0.489 tonnes worth K244,700, were seized. These actions were taken under the Export and Import Law, the Myanmar Liquor Law, and the Forest Law. The Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee reported 25 arrests over the four consecutive days from 15 to 18 March, with an estimated value of K447.756 million. — MNA/MKKS

## 26.25 tonnes of restricted chemicals seized in Mohnyin Township

THE Myanmar Police Force reported the seizure of 26.25 tonnes of prohibited chemical (ammonium nitrate) in Mohnyin Township of Kachin State.

Following a tip-off, a combined team comprising members of the security force intercepted and searched two Yangfond vehicles. The first vehicle, driven by Than Soe Aung (also known as La Pyae) with Thet Naing Oo (also known as Phoe Pain) as the passenger, and the second vehicle, driven by Phyo Thu Kyaw with Win Hein as the passenger, was stopped near Kyagyi Kwin



Arrestees seen alongside restricted chemicals and vehicles.

village in Mohnyin township at 2 pm on 16 March. During the search, the security force discovered 26.25 tonnes of prohibited chemicals. Legal action

has been initiated against the offenders, and an ongoing investigation is underway to apprehend other individuals involved in the case. — MNA/MKKS

### Counter-argument to false information

## Misinformation circulated that Tatmadaw security forces destroy funeral service vehicles in Madaya

SUBVERSIVE media outlets are intentionally spreading false information, alleging that Tatmadaw security forces destroyed vehicles belonging to a funeral service organization in Ywaysu Village, Madaya Township, Mandalay Region on 18 March.

In response to these claims, a security officer in Madaya Township has refuted them, confirming that no security forces damaged the vehicles of the funeral service organization and no shootings took place. In reality, Tatmadaw personnel are working alongside locals to maintain stability in Madaya Township and prevent any People's Defence Force (PDF) terrorists from entering the town. On



18 March, Tatmadaw security forces successfully neutralized landmines planted by PDF terrorists along the road between Ywaysu Village and Latkaunggyi Village.

The circulation of such misinformation by malicious media outlets aims to deceive the public and create misunderstandings about Tatmadaw. — MNA/TMT

## Misleading reports accuse security forces of arson in Sagaing Region

RECENT reports from malicious media outlets allege that security forces were responsible for setting fire to several houses in Htomar and Zinkalin villages near the Kalay Technological University in Sagaing Region on 17 March.

However, a member of the security forces has refuted these claims, explaining that on the same day, PDF terrorists launched an assault on the university using heavy artillery. When met with a response from security forces, the attackers fled, leaving behind the burning houses near the university.

The attacks, reportedly carried out by PDF terrorists, involved artillery and drone bombings, resulting in fires and civilian casualties. Addi-



The screenshot validates false claims.

tionally, there are suspicions that the PDF terrorists threatened and kidnapped students and teachers to use them as human shields.

It is evident that these malicious media outlets are spreading misinformation with the aim of distorting the public's perception of the security forces. — MNA/NT

# Major African solar energy expo kicks off in South Africa

SOLAR & Storage Live Africa 2024, a major renewable energy exhibition on the African continent, opened on Monday in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Held at the Gallagher Convention Center, the three-day event attracted more than 350 domestic and international exhibitors, according to Terrapinn, a global events company.

“We are absolutely thrilled to be back this year,

with this edition set to be bigger than ever before. In these critical times, it’s paramount for the energy and solar industries to come together and drive toward a more sustainable future while exploring innovative solutions,” said Gina Bester, an official with Terrapinn.

He said exhibitors from both home and abroad showcased a range of energy products and solutions, including photovoltaic

modules and components, renewable energy storage and inverters, power generation equipment, and smart technologies in the solar energy sector.

During the show, there will also be forums and conferences with attendees from governments and leading players in the energy sector across the region to focus on the most pressing issues in Africa’s energy sector, according to Bester. — Xinhua



Visitors are seen at the booth of LONGi Green Energy Technology during the Solar & Storage Live Africa 2024 in Johannesburg, South Africa, 18 March 2024. PHOTO: XINHUA

## Viet Nam attaches importance to FDI enterprises’ policy advice: PM

Viet Nam attaches great importance to the policy advisory work made by Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) enterprises as they play an important role in improving the Vietnamese economy’s quality, said Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh while chairing a meeting with FDI enterprises in capital Hanoi on Tuesday.

He called on foreign investors and FDI enterprises to collaborate with Viet Nam to achieve the green growth strategy and advance in an environmentally responsible and sustainable manner.

FDI businesses were also urged to play a leading role in transferring technology and advancing innovation and research.

The prime minister asked development partners to step up their support for Vietnamese human resource development and training, especially high-quality labor force serving key economic sectors and important emerging fields. — Xinhua

# BOJ ends negative rate policy in shift from bold monetary easing



Photo taken on 19 March 2024, shows the Bank of Japan headquarters in Tokyo. PHOTO: KYODO

THE Bank of Japan on Tuesday ended unorthodox monetary easing steps of the past decade, scrapping its negative interest rate policy and yield cap program, convinced by robust wage growth leading towards its long-elusive two per cent inflation goal.

In its first rate hike since February 2007, the BOJ decided to guide short-term interest rates within a range of zero per cent and

0.1 per cent, but said financial conditions will remain “accommodative”. The decision made the BOJ the last among major central banks to terminate the negative rate policy.

The Policy Board said the Japanese central bank will dismantle its programme to keep long-term interest rates at rock-bottom levels, allowing them to be determined by market forces unless they

spike. The bank will also discontinue buying exchange-traded funds.

The symbolic move signals that the dovish BOJ is gravitating toward policy normalization, which analysts still expect to be slow at best.

“Unprecedented monetary easing is now over,” BOJ chief Kazuo Ueda told a press conference after a two-day monetary policy meeting. — Kyodo

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V IAL 001 VOY.NO. (W171)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V IAL 001 VOY. NO. (W171)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **20-3-2024** 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 INTER ASIA LINES**

## Transferring Registered Pesticides

Registered pesticides distributing by **Myanmar Golden Byter Co.,Ltd.** in the territory of Myanmar for the product as following are transferring to **Myanmar Kete Co.,Ltd.** as per mutual consent from both parties. Any objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board within (14) days.

No	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration No.
1	Byter Dinga Plus	Emamectin Benzoate 5% WDG	F2023-4065

Myanmar Kete Co.,Ltd.

No.125-127, Kha 11st, Myoe Thit (A+B) Quarter, Inn Sein Township, Yangon.

## Notice for change of manufacturer

Notice is hereby given that the official manufacturer— Arysta LifeScience Corporation, Japan to UPL Vietnam Co.,Ltd. has been changed for the following pesticide distributed by Myanmar Arysta LifeScience Co.,Ltd.

Myanmar Arysta LifeScience Co.,Ltd. invites objections to Co-secretary, Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, West Gyogone, Insein township, Yangon from all parties within a period of fourteen (14) days from the publication of this notice. If no objections are received within the period prescribed, parties mentioned above shall proceed with the completion of formalities recorded with the Pesticide Registration Board.

No.	Brand Name	Active Ingredients	Registration No.
1.	Mitac 20% EC	Amitraz 20% EC	FF 2023 - 508

Myanmar Arysta LifeScience Co.,Ltd. Suite # 09 – 02, Crystal Tower, Kyun Taw Road, Kamayut Township, Yangon. 01 – 933 93 59, 933 93 60

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# ROLLING UPDATES

## WORLD



This picture taken on 18 March 2024 and released from North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on 19 March 2024 shows North Korea's Western Region Artillery Unit's ultra-large rocket salvo firing drill, at an unconfirmed location in North Korea. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un oversaw a series of firing drills by artillery units in the west of the country, the country's state-run news agency said on 19 March. **PHOTO: STR / KCNA VIA KNS / AFP**

## DPRK top leader guides super-large multiple rocket launcher battery firing drill

THE top leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) guided a firing drill by the country's super-large multiple rocket launcher battery on Monday, the first company-level salvo firing demonstration of the powerful weapon, the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported Tuesday.

The drill was designed to verify the might and the real

war capabilities of the 600 millimetres multiple rocket launchers through sudden maneuvers and salvo firing and check and enhance the readiness posture of the artillery force, the report said.

The firing practice was followed by a test to simulate an air explosion of a super-large rocket shell at a preset altitude above the target, KCNA said.

Calling the weapon system

a deterrent to completely remove the possibility of armed conflict and war, Kim Jong Un, general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea and president of the State Affairs of the DPRK, stressed its important role in war preparations and instructed the country's artillery forces to expedite modernization process with the powerful weapon as the core, the report said. — Xinhua

## US-flagged vessels in Middle East advised to turn off transponders amid Houthi threat

THE US Maritime Administration (MARAD) has advised vessels under the US flag to turn off automatic identification systems (AIS) transponders while crossing the southern part of the Red Sea, the Bab al-Mandab Strait and the Gulf of Aden amid attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels.

"US-flagged commercial vessels transiting the southern Red Sea, Bab el Mandeb Strait,

and Gulf of Aden with AIS transponders on are at increased risk of targeting by adversarial actors. US-flagged commercial vessels operating in these areas are strongly advised to turn off their AIS transponders, unless vessel Masters believe that doing so would compromise the safety of the vessel," the agency said in an advisory late on Monday.

Since November 2023, there



This handout photograph released on 18 January 2024 by the Indian Ministry of Defence shows the Marshall Island flagged MV Genco Picardy vessel following a drone attack in the Gulf of Aden. **PHOTO: INDIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENCE / AFP**

have been at least 47 separate Houthi attacks on commercial vessels and one ship was seized, the authority estimated.

Turning off AIS transponders complicates tracking a vessel and accurately targeting it, the agency said, advising US-flagged commercial ships to remain "as far as possible from Yemen's coastline without compromising navigational safety."

The Ansar Allah movement, also known as the Houthis, which controls large parts of northern and western Yemen, vowed in November 2023 to attack any ships associated with Israel until it halts military actions in the Gaza Strip. — Sputnik

## Qatar 'cautiously optimistic' as Gaza truce talks progress

NEGOTIATIONS for a Gaza ceasefire and hostage release are progressing in Doha and a counter-proposal could soon be presented to Hamas, Qatar said on Tuesday.

Israel's spy chief has left the Qatari capital but technical teams are now discussing details of a potential deal, foreign ministry spokesperson Majed al-Ansari said.

Mossad head David Barnea had flown in for talks with the Qatari premier and Egyptian officials on Monday, the first since mediators failed to secure a truce before the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which began last week.

"We are at the point now where we are expecting that the counter-proposal would be presented to Hamas, but this is not the final step in the process," Ansari said.

"I don't think we are at a moment where we can say we are close to a deal. We are cautiously optimistic because talks have resumed, but it's too early to announce any successes," he added.

On Monday, a Hamas official said the Palestinian militants would accept a partial Israeli withdrawal before exchanging prisoners, easing previous demands for a complete pullout from Gaza. — AFP

## African Union mulls follow-on mission in Somalia in 2025

THE African Union is considering a follow-on mission after the official exit of the current mission in December, a senior envoy in the country said.

The African Union Special Representative for Somalia Mohamed El-Amine Souef confirmed in a statement issued Tuesday in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, that the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) will exit the country in December but a new follow-on mission is being planned following a formal

request by Somalia.

"Somalia's formal request for a follow-on mission underscores the need for continued international support in stabilizing the region," Souef said in a statement issued in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia.

The AU envoy's remarks follow a visit to Dhobley, in Jubaland State, Monday to reinforce ongoing peace support operations and uplift the spirits of the African Union troops stationed in southern Somalia. — Xinhua

# SPORTS

## Raducanu pulls out of Miami Open with back injury

BRITAIN'S Emma Raducanu has withdrawn from the Miami Open with a lower back injury, tournament organizers said on Tuesday, the latest setback for the 21-year-old.

Raducanu spent eight months out with wrist and ankle problems last year but returned to action in January and had an encouraging performance at Indian Wells last week where she reached the third round.

"I have been experiencing lower back pain and at this stage of my return to competition I don't

want to risk anything happening," said Raducanu.

"I really tried my best to be ready and I'm sad to be pulling out of Miami as it's a cool tournament but wish the event all the best."

The 2021 US Open winner, a wildcard entry at Miami, was scheduled to play China's Wang Xiyu in the first round on Tuesday. Raducanu had surgeries on her ankle and both wrists during last year. She was beaten in the Indian Wells third round by world number two Aryna Sabalenka. — AFP

## Messi to miss Argentina friendlies due to hamstring injury

ARGENTINA captain Lionel Messi has been ruled out of friendlies against El Salvador and Costa Rica due to a hamstring strain, the South American country's football association said on Monday.

The 36-year-old suffered the injury while playing for Inter Miami in the team's 3-1 home victory over Nashville in the CONCACAF Champions Cup last Wednesday.

"Lionel Messi will not be in the squad for the friendlies in the United States due to a minor

right hamstring injury sustained in the Inter Miami game against Nashville," the association said in a social media post.

Confirmation of Messi's absence comes after Roma forward Paulo Dybala, Bayer Leverkusen midfielder Exequiel Palacios and Bournemouth defender Marcos Senesi were forced to withdraw from the Albiceleste squad because of injuries.

Argentina will meet El Salvador in Philadelphia on Friday and Costa Rica in Los Angeles four days later. — Xinhua



(FILES) Argentina's forward Lionel Messi lies on the field during the 2026 FIFA World Cup South American qualification football match between Argentina and Uruguay at La Bombonera stadium in Buenos Aires on 16 November 2023. PHOTO: AFP



Real Madrid's English midfielder (5) Jude Bellingham controls the ball by the touchline during the UEFA Champions League last 16 second leg football match between Real Madrid CF and RB Leipzig at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid on 6 March 2024. PHOTO: AFP

## Man Utd won't sign marquee stars like Bellingham, says Ratcliffe

MANCHESTER United co-owner Jim Ratcliffe has revealed he will not target marquee stars like Jude Bellingham as he bids to revive his club's fortunes.

Ratcliffe has taken control of football operations at United following his recent £1 billion (\$1.2 billion) purchase of a 25 per cent stake in the Premier League side.

With United struggling in Erik ten Hag's second season as manager, British billionaire Ratcliffe had been expected to

make big-money signings in the close-season.

United have not won the Premier League since 2013 and currently sit in sixth place, although they are through to the FA Cup semi-finals after beating Liverpool on Sunday.

Appearing as a guest on Geraint Thomas' Cycling Club podcast, the 71-year-old was asked whether he would try to sign England midfielder Bellingham from Real Madrid.

"He is a great footballer. It's

not where our focus is, the solution isn't spending a lot of money on a couple of great players," Ratcliffe said.

"They have done that, if you look at the last 10 years, they have spent a lot of money on a couple of great players.

"The first thing we need to do is get the right people in the right boxes who are managing and organizing the club.

"And make sure we get recruitment right, it is such a vital part of football today." — AFP

## Ghana beat Senegal to reach African Games women's football final

GHANA beat Senegal 3-1 at the Cape Coast Stadium on Monday to reach the 13<sup>th</sup> African Games women's football final.

Looking to secure victory on home soil, Ghana started strongly, and their efforts paid off when Tracey Twum scored the opener in the 18<sup>th</sup> minute.

The Black Princesses kept up the pressure and Ophelia Amponsah scored Ghana's second in the 45<sup>th</sup> minute to end the first half 2-0.

Senegal lifted their game in the second half and pulled a goal back through a penalty in the 54<sup>th</sup> minute.

However, Amponsah's second goal just one minute later saw Ghana restore a two-goal lead that they would keep to the final whistle.

Ghana now face Nigeria in the final, while Senegal will play Uganda in the bronze medal match. — Xinhua

## Olympic champion Jacobs to compete in relay worlds

OLYMPIC 100-metre champion Lamont Marcell Jacobs will compete in his first race of the year next month and in May's world relay championships, the Italian told the Gazzetta Dello Sport on Tuesday.

"I think I will begin my season around mid-April with one or two 100m races, although nothing is definite yet," said Jacobs, who has been based in Jacksonville, Florida where he is trained by American Rana Reider.

Jacobs has as training partners American Trayvon Bromell, Olympic 200m champion Andre De Grasse and Japanese sprinter Abdul Hakim Sani Brown.

"Since coming to Florida, everything has changed in five

months in terms of strength, technique and execution... I'm happy with my choice," added Jacobs.

"Having champions by my side when I train is useful... I appreciate what I'm experiencing, I'm not under pressure and I have

a good feeling, but if that doesn't translate to performances at the Olympics then I won't be happy."

At the relay worlds Jacobs will compete in the 4x100m in which he is also Olympic champion. — AFP



## UN chief calls on nuke weapon states to champion disarmament



The United Nations Security Council holds a meeting on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation at the UN headquarters in New York on 18 March 2024. PHOTO: XINHUA

**UN** Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Monday called on nuclear weapon states to lead the way toward nuclear disarmament, including an agreement on no first use.

Nuclear weapons are the most destructive weapons ever invented, capable of eliminating all life on Earth. Today, these weapons are growing in power, range and stealth, he told a Security Council meeting on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

An accidental launch is one mistake, one miscalculation, one rash act away. And ultimately, all of humanity will pay the price. A nuclear war must never be waged because a nuclear war can never be won, he said. "There is one path, and one path only, that will vanquish this senseless and suicidal shadow, once and for all. We need disarmament now."

Guterres asked nuclear weapon states to lead the way in six areas.

First, nuclear weapon states must

re-engage to develop transparency and confidence-building measures to prevent any use of a nuclear weapon.

Second, nuclear saber-rattling must stop. Threats to use nuclear weapons in any capacity are unacceptable.

Third, nuclear weapon states must reaffirm moratoria on nuclear testing. This means pledging to avoid taking any actions that would undermine the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. — Xinhua

## UN warns 'planet on the brink' after warmest decade on record

GLOBAL heat records were "smashed" last year, the UN confirmed Tuesday, with 2023 rounding out the hottest decade on record, as heatwaves stalked oceans and glaciers suffered record ice loss.

The United Nations' World Meteorological Organization issued its annual State of the Climate report, confirming preliminary data indicating that 2023 was by far the hottest year ever recorded.

And it came at the end of "the warmest 10-year period on record", the WMO report said.

UN chief Antonio Guterres said the report showed "a planet on the brink".

"Earth's issuing a distress call," he said, pointing out that "fossil fuel pollution is sending climate chaos off the charts", and warning that "changes are speeding up".

The WMO said the average near-surface temperature was 1.45 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels last year – dangerously close to the critical 1.5-degree threshold that countries agreed to avoid passing in the 2015 Paris climate accords.

"Never have we been so close... to the 1.5C lower limit of the Paris Agreement," WMO chief Andrea Celeste Saulo warned in a statement.

The report, she said, should be seen as a "red alert to the world". — AFP

## Israeli army says takes over Gaza's Al-Shifa Hospital, kills 20 militants

THE Israeli military said on Monday that it had taken over the Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, claiming it had killed at least 20 militants.

Israeli troops have been continuing the military operation since overnight into Monday afternoon.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has expressed concern about the developments in the hospital. "Hospitals should

never be battlegrounds. We are terribly worried about the situation at Al-Shifa Hospital in northern Gaza, which is endangering health workers, patients and civilians," Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the WHO director-general, said on social media platform X. Heavy gunfire could be heard in videos circulating on social media, and Palestinian health authorities confirmed that Israeli troops had utilized heavy

weaponry to attack the hospital, causing multiple casualties.

Israel Defence Forces Spokesman Daniel Hagari announced the raid in a video statement in the morning, claiming that Hamas militants were regrouping in the Al-Shifa complex.

A total of 20 militants were killed and dozens of "suspects" were arrested and are undergoing interrogation, according to the military. — Xinhua



Displaced Palestinians fleeing from the area in the vicinity of Gaza City's al-Shifa hospital arrive via the coastal highway at the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip on 18 March 2024 amid the ongoing battles between Israel and the militant group Hamas. PHOTO: AFP