

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR



The photo shows the workplace of making lacquerware, crafted with horse-tail hair weaving, in East Phwasaw Village in Bagan of NyaungU Township. **PHOTO: DIPA LINN**

Myanmar lacquerware craft faces extinction due to declining horse-tail hair weaving

The traditional art of Myanmar lacquerware, crafted with horse-tail hair weaving, is facing extinction, with only a handful of practising artists remaining, according to U Ba Nyein Lacquerware Industry.

A lacquerware business owner from East Phwasaw Village in Bagan of NyaungU Township mentioned that their family has practised the craft for generations in Bagan and NyaungU. While bamboo-strip lacquer art remains robust, the technique involving horse-tail hair is rapidly declining.

The rising costs of horse-tail hair, intricate process, and dwindling demand

are primarily responsible for the decline of this craft.

In its heyday, horse-tail hair lacquerware artists were abundant across many villages in Bagan. However, today, only one artist operating horse-tail hair lacquerware remains in West Phwasaw Village, while U Ba Nyein Lacquerware Industry has a handful of practitioners left in new Bagan City.

Traditional lacquerware art encompasses three disciplines: bamboo, wood, and horse-tail hair. The horse-tail hair technique is particularly challenging as each horse-tail hair must be meticulously woven into thin bamboo strips. Crafting

a four-inch cup using this method takes about an hour and a half.

This discipline is primarily employed in weaving round objects rather than angular ones. Lacquerware produced through this intricate process is renowned for its exceptional quality and soft texture.

A viss of horse-tail hair is priced at K70,000. Daw San San Aye, the artist specializing in this discipline from West Phwasaw Village, voiced her concerns about the declining nature of the craft, highlighting the challenges posed by high production costs and the inherent difficulty of the process. — Dipa Linn/NT

Thuwunnabhumi Laterite Cultural Museum opened within Kyaikhtisaung Pagoda precinct in Mon State

The Thuwunnabhumi Laterite Cultural Museum is opened at the precinct of Kyaikhtisaung Pagoda located in Zokthok Smart Village, Bilin Township, Mon State, according to nun Daw Kundala, the Secretary of the Museum Management Committee of the Kyaikhtisaung Pagoda.

At the museum, visitors can view ornamental items made of laterite that the Kyaikhtisaung Sayadaw discovered during his residency in the area. These showcased items include ancient umbrella, throne, statues and reliefs all crafted from laterite. Additionally, there are ancient Buddha statues made of Premna Pyramidata, as well as various other laterite artefacts on display.

“The museum was originally established in the 1950s. Today, it functions as an arts centre but has been recently renovated to meet museum standards and reopened as such. People frequently donate ancient materials crafted from laterite and other related items to the museum. While some of the Buddha statues showcased here are not made of laterite, they are donated due to their historical significance in ancient Mon artwork. Many students and researchers

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Specialists offer medical treatments to residents in Hinthada on 2nd field trip

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School for the Blind to train playing musical instruments

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Singapore-Myanmar Vocational Training Institute admits applications for new trainees

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.



Some artworks made of laterite are seen at the Thuwunnabhumi Laterite Cultural Museum.

Thuwunnabhumi Laterite Cultural Museum opened within Kyaikhtisaung Pagoda precinct in Mon State

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visit the Kyaikhtisaung Pagoda to study laterite for their papers, utilizing the museum's collection of laterite tablets and statues. The museum boasts 15 exhibition rooms, some of which exclusively showcase laterite-related displays. The laterite cultures in the region have been established for over 2,000 years, with laterite being naturally abundant in the

land surrounding the Kyaikhtisaung Pagoda," the nun said.

The Thuwunnabhumi Laterite Cultural Museum is open from 8 am to 12 noon and 1 pm to 5 pm daily except Monday and Tuesday. People can visit the museum free of charge.

Laterites are abundant in Myanmar, especially in Yangon Region, Taninthayi Region, Mon State and Rakhine State. — ASH/ TMT

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News and Periodicals Enterprise

Specialists offer medical treatments to residents in Hinthada on 2nd field trip



A patient receives medical treatment by a specialist medical team in Hinthada in Ayeyawady Region.

THE specialist medical teams including professors and physicians from Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw are offering the medical treatments in the States and Regions. Specialist medical teams from Yangon General Hospital, Yangon Children's Hospital, Yangon Specialist Hospital (500-bed) and Yangon Eye Hospital travelled to Hinthada in Ayeyawady Region on 2 and 3 March for the second time and gave the medical treatment to local people.

Over the course of these medical trips, a total of 1,284 patients, including individuals from Hinthada Township and 10 other townships from Ayeyawady Region and two another townships

of Yangon and Bago regions, received treatment for a range of medical conditions. These conditions encompassed cardiac diseases, gastrointestinal issues, neurological ailments, orthopaedic and dermatological problems, cleft lip and palate surgeries, among others.

The medical check-ups included various procedures such as Echocardiography, Oesophago-Gastro-Duodenoscopy (OGD) Scope, Colonoscopy, CT scans, glycated haemoglobin (HbA1c) tests, X-ray examinations, laboratory tests, ultrasound scans, and electrocardiograms (ECG). Patients requiring further treatment were referred to hospitals concerned in Yan-

gon. In addition to, osteopathic physician who specializes in eye and vision care will continue their treatments for patients with eye problem at the hospital until 11 March.

Officials from Hinthada District Administration Body comforted patients and presented local gifts to the specialist teams.

These specialist medical teams conducted field trips every Saturday and Sunday in 2024. Similar efforts have been made in Taunggyi, Pyay, Thandwe, Patheingyi, Mawlamyine, Magway, Myeik, NyaungU, Myittha and now in Hinthada in 2024, with plans for continuous implementation in the future. — MNA/ KZL

NATIONAL

SAC member inspects agricultural activities in Labutta, Myaungmya districts

MEMBER of the State Administration Council Mahn Nyein Maung, along with Regional Chief Minister U Tin Maung Win and officials, inspected agricultural activities in Labutta and Myaungmya districts yesterday.

The SAC member inspected the hemp seed plantation

and 100 acres of model mechanized paddy farm in Ohnpinsu Village in Mawlamyinegyun Township.

He watched harvesting of 250 acres of New Ayeyar-1 hybrid paddy field and observed the yield per acre of 242 baskets of paddy. The SAC member



Member of the State Administration Council Mahn Nyein Maung provides Urea fertilizer to local farmers in Mayeohnpinsu Village, Mawlamyinegyun Township in Ayeyawady Region yesterday.



Member of the State Administration Council Mahn Nyein Maung observes thriving super sun-41 sunflower at a farm in Ayeyawady Region yesterday.

and party visited cultivation of super sun-41 sunflower in five acres in Wedaunt Village and Sinshwekyia-2 sunflower plantation in Kala Village of Wakema Township.

Furthermore, the SAC member observed broadcasting

of fertilizers, solar water irrigation, and making EM Bokashi natural fertilizers in Madawpin Village, Myaungmya Township.

They attended a workshop to achieve the target yield of 10 major crops in Wahdu Village, Kangyidaunt Township.

Then, the SAC member and party viewed successful thriving of Strip Cropping (sunflower super sun-41, seedless corn, black-eyed pea), super sun-41 and Sinshwekyia-1 sunflower plantations in Kangyidaunt and Pathein townships.—MNA/TKO

ASEAN cooperation workshop emphasizes science and technology capacity building in Myanmar and Viet Nam

MANDALAY Technological University oversaw the project titled “Enhancing Capacity Building in Science and Technology through Close Collaboration between Mandalay Technological University and Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology”, funded by the ASEAN Cooperation Fund (ASEAN India Fund). As part of this initiative, a workshop aimed at improving undergraduate courses in technological universities in Myanmar and Viet Nam was held yesterday morning at the Mingala Mandalay Hotel in Mandalay.

Union Minister for Science and Technology Dr Myo Thein Kyaw, the Chief Minister of Mandalay Region, representatives from the Consulate General of India in Mandalay, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Science and Technology, officials and associate officers



Workshop on the Development of the Capacity Building Action Plan for Undergraduate programme of Technological Universities in Myanmar and Viet Nam in progress in Mandalay yesterday.

from the Initiative for ASEAN Integration and Narrowing Development Gap (IAI & NDG) of the ASEAN Secretariat, as well as Vice Presidents, Vice Deans, young scientists, teachers, and students from Dalak University and Ho Chi Minh City Institute of Technology in Viet Nam, and teachers and students from Yangoon Technological University, Mandalay Technological Uni-

versity, and Kyaukse Technological University attended the workshop.

In his speech, the Union Minister said that the ASEAN Cooperation Project could enhance the educational infrastructure and activities of both countries and facilitate the planning of projects to develop undergraduate programmes in technological universities in

Myanmar and Viet Nam through discussions, assessments, and sharing of experiences. He highlighted the potential of leveraging the transformative power of science and technology to nurture the youth and create a better ASEAN community.

In the afternoon session, the workshop continued with clarification on measures by the Pro-Rector of Mandalay Tech-

nological University and Vice Director Dr By Vu Anh Quang of Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology. Project Manager Dr Wunna Swe submitted the information about the project.

Dr Vu Anh Quang presented a quality assessment report for undergraduate courses at universities in Viet Nam. Additionally, faculty members from technological universities in Myanmar discussed the results of their analyses in the areas of Desk Survey and Staff Student HR Research, based on data collected from technological universities to enhance the quality of undergraduate courses.

Moreover, faculty members from Myanmar and Viet Nam, along with young professionals and students, engaged in discussions on their learning needs. The workshop lasts till 4 March. — MNA/TRKM

NATIONAL

Illegal commodities, food, jades, vehicles seized



Confiscated illegal Mond cigarettes cartons in Mandalay Region and foodstuffs in Bago Region.

A combined team under the management of the Customs Department confiscated three items not declared in the import

form at Myanmar Industrial Port in Yangon on 1 March, including 648 kilogrammes of tapper rod, worth K2.907 million.

In Yangon, inspections by the Illegal Trade Eradication Special Task Force found six undeclared items in a ware-

house and 11 rooms at Samanea Market. These included 215,000 chargers of Vivo, Oppo, and Mi phones valued at approximately K251.9 million. Additionally, 1,000 pieces of Izumi and HM Piston automobile accessories were found, along with a bus carrying these items, worth approximately K335.59 million, seized at Ywathagyi Dry Port.

In Mandalay, inspection teams found 916 kilogrammes of raw jade bracelets, 200 large boxes of Mond cigarettes, and 960 kilogrammes of goat viscera, worth K48.832 million. A King Long Bus carrying these illegal items was also seized, with a to-

tal value of K93.832 million.

In Bago, inspections revealed four items, including 11 used Japan-made refrigerators, worth K3.62 million, and 450 balloon sweets and 1,000 grammes of Yacht bread sheet valued at approximately K10.155 million. Two vehicles were seized, a Nissan Caravan and a Toyota Hiace, worth approximately K40 million, altogether valued at around K88.775 million.

In total, 14 cases worth approximately K521.104 million were captured on 1 March, as announced by the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/ TMT

Counter-argument to false information

Misinformation alleges security forces of arresting youths for various reasons to recruit



Screenshots of Than Lwin Times media which validates their fake news.

THE misinformation is spreading on social media, stating that the security forces arrested the youths at night for various reasons to recruit them as new military servants.

The relevant security official reported that the inspections are carried out from time to time by the combined security teams for the citizens to be able to live peacefully and there were no recruitment and forcible abduction and the news is just a fake one.

Regarding the People's Military Service Law, the presentations of necessary information for the public are continuously broadcasted by the various kinds of media including State-owned media and the terrorists are just misleading the public with timely fake news against the knowledge sharing activities of the relevant departments. — MNA/TRKM

Royal Thai naval ship concludes friendship trip

SENIOR naval officers, officers and other ranks of Tatmadaw (Navy), and the Naval Attaché of the Royal Thai Armed Forces to Myanmar saw off the Royal Thai Navy's warship HTMS Prachuap Khiri Khan (OPV-552) at Thilawa Port of Yangon yesterday evening.

Those from Royal Thai naval warship, led by Chief of Staff from 3rd Naval Area Command of the Royal Thai Navy Rear Admiral Pongmit Narongkul visited the landmarks of Yangon during a three-day friendship visit from 1 to 3 March and it is reported that the two navies held the friendly sports competitions. — MNA/ TRKM

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.

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NATIONAL

Century-old teak monastery, ancient Makhaya City to become new tourist destinations



The ancient city of Makhaya in Singaing Township, Mandalay Region.



THE century-old teak monastery situated in the precinct of the Dhammikārama Shwegyin monastery in Aungmyethazan Township, and the ancient Makhaya City in Singaing Township are slated for development as new tourist destinations in the Mandalay Region,

according to U Min Maung Soe, Deputy Director of the Mandalay Region Directorate of Hotels and Tourism.

“The teak monastery holds significance for Thai tourists due to its embodiment of Konbaung period Myanmar-Thai ancient architecture, featuring

a statue of the Thai architect responsible for its construction.

Following a large-scale renovation this year in collaboration between Myanmar and Thai architects, including significant contributions donated through a merit-sharing cer-

emony by Thai teams, we are poised to establish it as a new tourist destination. Similarly, the old city of Makhaya, still attracting tourists, will also receive designation as a new destination,” U Min Maung Soe said.

The Mandalay Region Di-

rectorate of Hotels and Tourism preserves the ancient city of Makhaya in Singaing Township, Mandalay Region, as it offers visitors the opportunity to witness the architectural wonders dating back to the Nyaungyan period, earlier than the Konbaung era. — ASH/TH

Department, businessmen collaborate for fishery sector development and promoting export

DEPUTY Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Aung Gyi visited the TMT Port at the Bo Aung Kyaw Port in Botahtaung Township, Yangon Region on 2 March and inspected working processes of preparing to export the aquatic products and inspecting at X-Ray inspection.

At the meeting with the president of the Myanmar Fisheries Federation, officials from Myanmar Fishery Products Processors & Exporters Association, its affiliated organizations, he urged all to collaborate between the departments and businesses to restore the reduction of fish resources in natural water areas, to provide enough stock of nutritious and qualified fishes and to increase exporting the fish, prawns and marine products.

The Deputy Minister observed the 500-tonne capacity high-tech cold storage of High



The meeting between Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Aung Gyi and president of the Myanmar Fisheries Federation, officials from Myanmar Fishery Products Processors & Exporters Association, its affiliated organizations, in progress on 2 March 2024 in Yangon.

Win International Co Ltd and fish processing at Tun Thawdar Manufacturing Co Ltd in Shwepyitha Industrial Zone.

He also urged all to emphasize the quality and safety of the foods and products, to export the best quality products

to the international market and to have the qualified staff.

Last, the Deputy Minister visited the showroom of Malarmyaing Public Holding Ltd located in Myepadetha Island, Bahan Township. — MNA/TMT

State Public Scientific and Technical Library of Russia to open Myanmar Book Corner

ONE of the largest libraries in the world, the State Public Scientific and Technical Library located in Novosibirsk, Russia, is planning to open a Myanmar Book Corner at their establishment, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

For this purpose, Myanmar Consul-General U Pyae Phyo Wai met with Mrs Irina Vladimirovna Lizunova, Director of the State Scientific and Technical Library of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, in Novosibirsk on 29 February.

The director mentioned that their library houses both science and technology books along with literary works. Establishing a Myanmar Book Corner symbolizes the friendship and spirit of sharing between the two nations.

The consul-general emphasized the significance of literature for humanity and conveyed his pride and delight in establishing a Myanmar Book Corner at the library, following the example of other countries. He also pledged his continued assistance and support and presented his gifts. — ASH/NT



The Myanmar consulate-general arrives at the library and convenes a meeting with the officials.

NATIONAL

Ngahtetgyi Pagoda Board of Trustees preserves historic iron prayer hall, Yadanabon-era artworks

THE Ngahtetgyi Pagoda Board of Trustees preserves the original designs of the early colonial-era iron prayer hall and late Yadanabon-era Myanmar architectural works at the pagoda located in Bahan Township, Yangon Region.

U Tin Myint, a member of the Board of Trustees, stated, "The Ngahtetgyi Pagoda is the oldest among the pagodas in Yangon, surpassing others like Koehtetgyi and Chaukhtetgyi. Its construction dates back to 1901, making it 121 years old."

The iron prayer hall, which houses the Buddha image, was one of the few iron structures in Yangon during its construction period. Historical records suggest that the iron and steel rods used were imported from the UK via steamship. As local architects faced challenges in constructing such a complex structure, Chinese professionals were enlisted to aid in the



The iron prayer hall at the Ngahtetgyi Pagoda.

project.

The trustee added, "Myanmar traditional paintings and relief sculptures adorn

the inner linings of the prayer hall. They depict the stories of Buddha's past lives, found on the ceiling, columns, and barge

boards."

Artists from Mandalay were commissioned to design the decorations, while local ar-

chitects and experts from the Department of Archaeology and National Museum conduct maintenance every four years.

The pagoda is located one mile east of Shwedagon Pagoda. Its design was inspired by the Ngahtetgyi Pagoda in Sagaing Region, hence its name. The official name of the pagoda is Maha Setkya Atula Manaung.

Architects from Thailand visited and observed the iron prayer hall of the Ngahtetgyi Pagoda and Yadanabon-era paintings and relief sculptures adorning the columns and ceiling.

The reliefs depict various aspects, including the Buddha's past 10 lives, the Dokhtagamani Play, the 31 abodes, existence in Buddhist cosmology, and zodiac signs. They were crafted by famous artists such as Mandalay Saya Tint, U Shwe Aung, and Photmyay Saya Nyunt. — ASH/NT



The Region Chief Minister and party view the solar system water pumping equipment.

Yangon Region implements solar-powered water pumping station for agricultural land

THE Yangon Region Government recently announced that a total of 1,016 acres of farmland near Siphon village in Hlegu Township can now be supplied with water using solar electricity.

The Chief Minister of Yangon Region and his party inaugurated the solar power system water pumping station in honour of the 62nd Peasants'

Day on 1 March. A 110kW water pumping station was installed with funding from the regional government.

With water supplied by solar power for seven hours a day, 770 kWh of electricity can be saved daily, amounting to 77,000 kWh for a 100-day summer paddy season. This translates to savings of K11.55 million on the electricity bill. — TWA/ TRKM

School for the Blind to train playing musical instruments

UNION Minister Dr Soe Win recently gave a speech that efforts should be made on teaching students to play musical instruments for Myanmar traditional bands and international bands.

During a visit to the Kyimyindine School for the Blind and the Shwegondine Nursery on 29 February, the Union minister made a speech of training plans.

He also urged officials of schools to provide more types of vocational courses for students including playing musical instruments to operate Myanmar bands and international bands and contact the Myanmar Paralympic Sports Federation so as to emerge new generation blind athletes and.

A total of 111 blind students between aged 6 and 18 are under training at the school at primary education level with



UM Dr Soe Win's inspection to Kyimyindine School for the Blind.

braille letters as in-school education, and secondary and university studies are continuing to teach at the relevant schools opened by the Ministry of Education through the Inclusive

Education.

In addition, in cooperation with the Japan Heart group, a one-year physiotherapy course is being conducted for the students. — TWA/TKO

NATIONAL

Singapore-Myanmar Vocational Training Institute admits applications for new trainees

THE Singapore-Myanmar Vocational Training Institute (SMVTI) admits applications of new trainees, as announced by the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Department under the Ministry of Science and Technology.

The course is scheduled to commence on 2 May at the Singapore-Myanmar Vocational Training Institute in Bahan Township. It will encompass both theoretical and practical teaching, and utilizing modern laboratory equipment. The primary objective of this course is to equip trainees with practical skills for employment in the hospitality, tourism, engineering, and technology sectors.

The hospitality and tourism courses (12th Batch) will cover front office operations, housekeeping operations, and restaurant operations. Similar-



The aerial view of the Singapore-Myanmar Vocational Training Institute (SMVTI).

ly, engineering and technology courses (11th Batch) will include electrical technology, electronics, residential air-conditioning,

mechatronics (basic servicing), and general welding.

Prospective candidates must have passed the matric-

ulation examination and be at least 16 years old. Selected candidates are required to attend the 6-month course in

its entirety and will receive a certificate upon completion.

Priority will be given to applicants who are in good health and capable of performing practical tasks, preparing them for entry into relevant workplaces upon course completion.

Applicants must submit their applications during office hours from 13 February to 15 March, along with copies of their matriculation certificate and mark sheet, a passport-sized photo, and endorsements of ward administration office and police station.

During the application process, applicants must present the original certificate and mark sheet of the matriculation examination. Additionally, all applicants are required to undergo an interview. — TWA/KZL

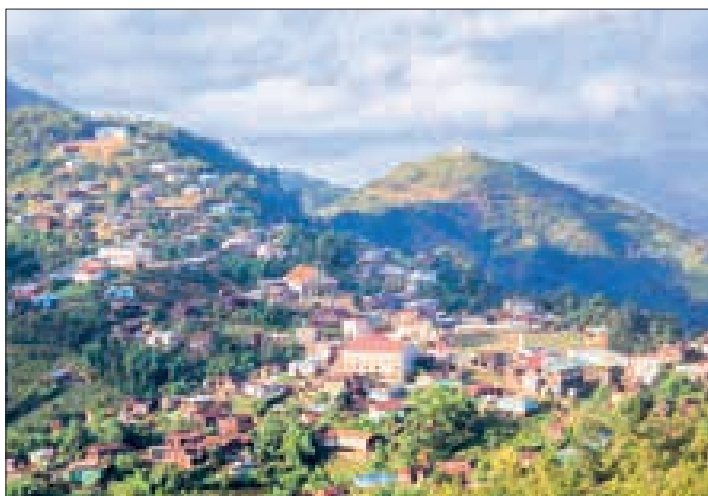
Over K3.2 bln earmarked for loans to farmers in Chin State in financial year 2024-25

ACCORDING to the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development, more than K3.2 billion loan will be disbursed to farmers in Chin State through the State economic promotion fund in the financial year 2024-25.

With the State economic promotion fund, K1.2 billion loans will be provided to farmers for purchase of inputs to cultivate konjac, corn, and avocados, K500 million for breeding pig and mython, and K300 million for production of wine, coffee, and dried mython beef.

Similarly, K100 million will be earmarked for the fish farming activities to be carried out in Tonzang Township and K1,153.235 million for the production of value-added dried konjac in Haka Township.

Needs of farmers are verified by the relevant village



A distant aerial view of Tonzang Township, Chin State.

committees submission of reports to the township, district, state and region etc., and the committees are formed to verify the loans, to ensure the effective cultivation and breeding businesses, especially to support the food security in Chin State without losing

loans.

According to the Chin State Cooperative Department, K10 billion has been allocated to Chin State from the State Economic Promotion Fund, and more than K1.7 billion has been spent this financial year. — TWA/TKO

Myanmar exports aquatic products worth over US\$624M in 2023-24 financial year

BETWEEN April 2023 and February 2024 of the 2023-24 Financial Year, Myanmar exported more than 300 aquatic products to 45 countries, generating over US\$624.473 million, as reported by U Nyunt Win, the director of the Fisheries Department (Nay Pyi Taw).

The report highlights regular exports to Japan, Middle East countries, European Union nations, Malaysia, Chinese Taipei, and Australia.

It also notes close coordination between the Myanmar Fisheries Federation and the Fisheries Department to promote marine product exports.

U Nyunt Win stated, "From April to February of the 2023-24 FY, a total of

435,000 tonnes of marine products were exported via shipment, aviation transport, and land borders, earning over US\$624.473 million. However, due to the suspension of some border trade routes for various reasons, this year's earnings are US\$52 million less than the previous year's total of US\$676.528 million."

The department and exporters are collaborating to meet the requirements of individual countries purchasing marine products from Myanmar, ensuring regular and continuous exports in line with market demands. For example, China has stringent criteria for importing aquatic products, particularly concerning Covid-free status. — ASH/TMT

OPINION

Raise legal trade awareness of assigned staff and traders

Fostering awareness of legal trade practices among assigned staff and traders is essential to combat illegal trade effectively. The eradication of illicit trade demands the implementation of standardized operating procedures to rectify weaknesses in inspecting smuggled goods. This strategy aligns with protectionism, safeguarding the rights and entitlements of manufacturers and small to medium-sized enterprises domestically.

Service personnel and officials stationed at checkpoints, security posts, and tollgates must conscientiously fulfil their duties with the understanding that they are contributing to the public's well-being. Their vigilance regarding daily commodity prices and the challenges posed by high prices underscores the importance of eradicating illegal trade and unscrupulous traders. The economic sector of the nation will thrive only when the trade sector develops legally, allowing the populace to enjoy authentic commodities without compromising safety.

Presently, the government is vigorously combating illegal trade through various means. Permanent checkpoints, tollgates, and security posts are being equipped with the necessary machinery, exemplified by the Nyaungkhayshe permanent checkpoint's installation of an X-ray machine to inspect export vehicles efficiently. This technological advancement ensures officials can inspect commodities accurately and swiftly.

Hence, authorities need to manage an educative period for both assigned personnel and illegal traders so that they do not violate prescribed laws, rules, and regulations in trading measures. Only when both inspectors and traders do not breach laws, rules and regulations will the trade sector improve, benefiting the nation and the nationals as well as the economic objectives of the government be successfully implemented.

In addition to modern technology, conventional methods play a crucial role in checking smuggled goods. Therefore, service personnel need to be adept at applying both conventional and information communication technology methods. Authorities must enhance the capacity of assigned staff to effectively participate in the process of eradicating illegal trade.

Simultaneously, strict supervision is imperative to

prevent personnel from engaging in criminal activities and corruption during their duties. Challenges arise from illegal traders attempting to bribe their way past checkpoints and security posts. Some unscrupulous traders may influence assigned personnel to violate laws and regulations by facilitating the passage of containers carrying smuggled goods through ports and marine trade routes.

To address these challenges, authorities should conduct educational programs for both assigned personnel and illegal traders, emphasizing compliance with laws and regulations governing trade measures. The collective commitment to upholding legal frameworks will fortify the trade sector, benefiting the nation and enabling the successful realization of the government's economic objectives.

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National Defence Objectives of National Leaders Throughout Different Eras

The State Administration Council (SAC) on 10 February issued an announcement declaring the enforcement of the People's Military Service Law. No sooner had the announcement been made than the media practising black journalism, as well as the terrorist groups, started to spread disinformation to incite the people into going against the law.

As a matter of fact, this People's Military Service Law is not newly enacted. First promulgated in 1959, this law was amended in 2010 by the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), which promulgated the amended law under its Law 27/2010. The national leaders of all periods have held that only when Tatmadaw is strong will the nation be strong. This belief has been upheld since the period of independence struggle.

General Aung San, the founder of Myanmar Tatmadaw and the national hero, in his speech delivered to the opening ceremony of the 1st intake of the Mingaladon Officers Training Course during the Japanese Occupation held on 1 September 1943, said, "The cadets shall be possessed with good combat skills. Without a strong army, independence cannot be wrestled back. Even if the independence can be regained, we won't be able to preserve the national independence. Therefore, perseverance, skills, and a great love for the country, fellow citizens and Tatmadaw are indispensable. So, you ought to stick to them, not being bent on other matters, ignoring the outside criticism whatsoever."

Again, General Aung San, delivering his address to the nation through the Yangon City Hall on 13 July 1947, i.e. just a week before his assassination, said concerning the national defence objective as follows: "Tatmadaw we have now is just enough to suppress the disturbances in our country of Myanmar. But it is not strong enough to defend the nation. The army

is not sizeable enough, with no armoured battalion. Under such a situation, our army will not be able to withstand the attacks by big rival armies for a long time. We can lose a battle against an army equipped with better arms in an hour's time. And our navy is a mere existence, lacking the combat skills far from defending the nation.

"When thinking of the Air Force, it is just at its nascent stage of development. When we talk about an air force, we should be referring to an air force that has at least 500 aircraft, which must have been made ready for fighting. Even that number cannot be said to be sufficient. We ought to have at least one million troops to be able to wage the big battles. We are only 20,000 strong now. That is the size of our army, not to count the strength of the navy and the air force."

He added, saying, "When we regain the independence, it will be the duty of Myanmar to defend the nation. We cannot stay outside of the national defence duty. In that case, we'll need the soldiers. At that time, all those who have come of age and are healthy will be required to perform military service. Regardless of their wish, they have to fight to be able to preserve the national independence."

General Ne Win also said, "In 1948/49, we had ten regiments only, which is our strength since its foundation. We had arms only for those regiments. The number of arms is rather few. When speaking of the Navy and the Air Force, we have the Tiger mouth, the Chipmunk, and MV May Yu. There are also eight or ten smaller ones called ML. We have no budget to enlarge the Navy and the Air Force. We fight with what is available to us, not minding the strength."

He said so at the conference of the military commanders held in September 1968.

In another conference held on 3 November 1969, General Ne Win, the Commander-in-Chief of

Defence Services, said, "Our Tatmadaw was born not for the individual interest, individual growth, individual prosperity or not even for the prosperity of the entire Tatmadaw. You must bear in mind that our Tatmadaw was born to wrestle back the national independence, taking up whatever arms available."

It is worth recalling that Tatmadaw was born from among the people. This being

“Obviously, our national leaders of different eras are found to have formulated the national defence objectives and arrangements to suit our national context as they are done in all nations around the world.

The history of a nation is the history of its army. And it is worth noting that the strength of a nation is nothing but the strength of its army. The same happens in our country of Myanmar.

so, Tatmadaw is owned by the people. In this regard, General Aung San once said, "Comrades, you exist for the sake of the people. The country is not for your own sake." General Ne Win also stated, "Our Tatmadaw is not composed of mercenaries. As we were born of the people, we have to serve them."

Brigadier-General San Yu, the then Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, in his address to the military commanders' conference held on 3 November 1969, said, "Army, Navy and Air Force are required to increase the quantity and promote the quality to keep youthful and strong in order that they are ready to fight all destructive enemies."

"In carrying out the national defence duties, it is of sheer necessity for the entire mass of the people across the nation to take well-arranged, systematic measures in order that success

can be achieved. Realizing this, you have to prepare in advance for mobilization, organization and training of the people to make them ready for the performance of the national defence duties. Then only will you be able to have a well-organized army which can defend the nation in times of need." That is, in fact, a manifestation of the strategy of the people's militia.

Obviously, our national

National Army (BNA) in 1943, which was changed into the Patriotic Burmese Forces (PBF) in July 1945. This PBF ultimately became the Burma Army in September of the same year. PBF was able to drive the Japanese fascists out of the country in cooperation with the people. Thus, despite changes in name, it is the army which has freed the country from alien domination. In a nutshell, our army,

By Zarni Bwa

what is occurring so that we can take preparatory measures for our survival. For our nation to be able to promote the defence sector, we are taking necessary measures to turn our Tatmadaw into a standard army capable of waging conventional wars. In building up of a standard army, the regiments and units are being modernized."

Additionally, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing said, "Unity is strength, it is said. That is the reason why emphasis is being laid upon building Unity between and among the ranks and files of the Tatmadaw as well as between the military personnel and the people, who are the sons and daughters of the national races. As the strength of a nation lies only within, the ardent cooperation and participation on the part of the people are of utmost importance.

"The nations around the world have formulated a political system that suits the geographical locations, cultural mores and customs. Irrespective of whatever political system is being pursued, a nation will grow and develop only when peace and stability prevail. As democracy involves the great majority of the people, it is of utmost necessity for all nationalities to cooperate and participate in the national development efforts."

In conclusion, it is worth recalling that if the nation develops, its Tatmadaw will grow and vice versa. Only when Tatmadaw is strong will the nation be strong, too. If Tatmadaw disintegrates, will the nation degrade. Keeping this in mind, the political leaders of all periods have formulated national defence objectives. May I conclude by urging the readers to participate in the performance of the national defence duties regardless of wherever they are assigned.

Translated.

Experts hail China's role in green mobility at UNEA-6

The transition to green mobility, which promotes ecosystem and human health in urban centers, has accelerated, thanks to the greater availability of Chinese-manufactured new energy vehicles.

The transition to green mobility, which promotes ecosystem and human health in urban centers, has accelerated, thanks to the greater availability of Chinese-manufactured new energy vehicles, said experts at the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6), which concluded Friday in Nairobi, the Kenyan capital.

China has played an immense role in helping developing countries, the majority in Africa, to adopt electric mobility in cities and reduce their carbon footprint, said Ali Mohamed, Kenya's special climate envoy based at the President's office, Thursday.

According to Mohamed, China is the source of nearly all electric vehicles plying Kenyan roads, aiding the quest for the transition to carbon-free mobility alongside boosting air quality. "We seek partnership to help achieve our e-mobility aspirations, and China has come on board as a crucial partner. We are importing both the new energy vehicles from China and vital parts like charging batteries," Mohamed said.

He said that Kenya has enacted a supportive policy and regulatory framework to spur the growth of electric mobility besides investing in local assembling plants for new energy vehicles such as buses, and two- and

three-wheelers. Data from the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers shows that exports of China's new energy vehicles (NEVs), including both pure electric and hybrid vehicles, soared 77.6 per cent to more than 1.2 million units in 2023.

Additionally, BYD, a Chinese electric vehicle brand, became the world's largest pure electric vehicle manufacturer in the fourth quarter of 2023.

Moses Nderitu, the managing director of BasiGo, a Kenyan early-stage e-mobility start-up, believes that the East African country's leap to green mobility has a promising future, thanks to the partnership with China.

"I think China is making an immense global contribution to green mobility, and here in Kenya, we are feeling the impact. Nearly all the new energy models we have on our roads are imported from China," Nderitu said.

China's new energy industry has seen robust growth in recent years, becoming a new bright spot in the wide economic picture. Amid the surge in the number of electric vehicles cruising the roads worldwide, China has ranked first globally in NEV sales for the past nine consecutive years, with a share of the global market at more than 60 per cent.

Source : Xinhua



An electric bus is seen in Nairobi, capital of Kenya, on 19 October 2022. PHOTO: CHARLES ONYANGO/XINHUA

TECH/ENVIRON: WORLD

Japan city to require multilingual trash rules posted for foreigners



The city of Kawaguchi in Saitama Prefecture, Japan. **PHOTO: KAWAGUCHI CITY OFFICIAL SITE**

Kawaguchi City in Saitama Prefecture, with a large foreign population, expands language options for waste disposal guidelines.

A city near Tokyo will require owners of new single-room apartment complexes to post basic garbage sorting and disposal rules in seven languages from April in a bid to help its increasingly multinational inhabitants avoid making mistakes that can cause conflict with their neighbours.

The city of Kawaguchi in Saitama Prefecture, which government data showed had the largest foreign population of any Japanese city as of June, currently requires rules to be made available in Japanese, English and Chinese but has decided to add Vietnamese, Tagalog, Turkish and Korean by revising an ordinance.

The city was home to 43,128 foreigners as of 1 January, comprising roughly seven per cent of its total population, according to the city government. The number rose from 39,553 last year and 38,090 in 2022. Japan's garbage and recycling sorting rules are considered by many to be complex and confusing, particularly to those who have a limited grasp of the language or are recent arrivals.

Unlike in some countries, refuse of different types is collected on specific days of the week and many areas require it to be washed, sorted and prepared to certain standards that are well understood by the local population. — Kyodo

New Zealand court orders millions in fines, compensation for 2019 deadly volcanic eruption

A New Zealand district court on Friday ordered tour operators and the company that owns the New Zealand island where a volcanic eruption killed 22 people, to pay a fine

of USD 1.6 million (NZ\$2.6 million) and to pay compensation of USD 6.2 million (NZ\$10.2 million), CNN reported.

The District Court in Auckland handed down its sentence

on Friday, ending a criminal prosecution brought by WorkSafe, New Zealand's health and safety regulators, to seek justice for 47 tourists who were on Whakaari or White Island

on 9 December, 2019.

White Island, a volcanic island, 48 kilometres (30 miles) off New Zealand's North Island, is a famous tourist attraction for those wanting to trek up the slopes of an active volcano, as reported by CNN.

The weeks-long trial held last year revisited horrifying testimony of how the island

turned into "an oven" for the holidaymakers on that fateful day as the volcano erupted.

The survivors, scarred by severe burns, testified against various companies, including Whakaari Management Ltd., which owned the island, accusing them of failing to warn them about the risks. — ANI

Advertorial

Dapein (1) Hydropower Company Limited Held the Opening Ceremony for Chinese Language Competence Training (Session I) of Myanmar Employees

RECENTLY, Dapein (1) Hydropower Company Limited launched the Chinese language competence training (Session I) for Myanmar employees. The meeting was held with simultaneous interpretation in Chinese and Myanmar and four venues in Kunming, power station, Myanmar, etc.

Department of the Company introduced the Myanmar employees involved in training, course schedules and training assessments, respectively. The representative of Myanmar employees delivered a speech on their stands. Leaders of the

Company raised the expectations on the training and learning of Myanmar employees, as well as the instructions for training management personnel of the Company. Focusing on the concept of "letting professionals do professional things", scientific and systematic training through professional agencies is promoted, to explore a transferable and replicable Chinese language teaching model that can be spread easily to serve Chinese enterprises in Myanmar and contribute to the construction of the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor.

The training programme in-

volves 12 Myanmar employees, with a duration of 109 days. In line with the principle of "examination and teaching integration", efforts will be made so that trainees obtain the HSK (Level 3) certificates issued by the Centre for Language Education and Cooperation before 30 June. In addition, the Company plans to set up a Chinese competence test (HSK) centre for overseas power station.

This training session is not only a part of local employee development after the completion of the "closed power station", but also a major measure to reduce Chinese technical personnel in



the operation of overseas markets. It will facilitate the construction of the Company's overseas talent system and provide sup-

port for high-quality development of overseas enterprises, thus ushering in a brilliant chapter of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Years removed from war, Iraqis seek new desert escapades

FAR from the hustle and bustle of major cities, young Iraqis are increasingly taking advantage of a renewed sense of safety to explore the country's serene desert getaways.

Sheltering amidst the golden dunes, Ghadanfar Abdallah and his friends gather around

a flickering campfire in the Samawah desert south of the capital, humming tunes, laughing and eating.

"When we post pictures, people do not believe that there are such places like the dunes in Iraq," the 35-year-old oil sector worker said. — AFP

Vaping can enhance vulnerability to infection with SARS-CoV-2: Study

Researchers found that ingredients commonly found in e-liquids, such as propylene glycol and vegetable glycerin, can increase susceptibility to the virus, especially when combined with nicotine.

ACCORDING to a study, vapers are susceptible to infection by SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 and continues to infect people all over the world.

The liquid used in electronic cigarettes, known as e-liquid, often contains nicotine, propylene glycol, vegetable glycerin, and flavour compounds. The researchers discovered that propylene glycol/vegetable glycerin, either alone or in combination with nicotine, increased COVID-19 infection via various routes.

The results of the study are published in the American Journal of Physiology.

The researchers also found

that the addition of benzoic acid to e-liquids prevents the infection caused by propylene glycol, vegetable glycerin, and nicotine.

"Users who vape aerosols produced from propylene glycol/vegetable glycerin alone or e-liquids with a neutral to basic pH are more likely to be infected by the virus, while users who vape aerosols made from e-liquids with benzoic acid — an acidic pH — will have the same viral susceptibility as individuals who do not vape," said Rattapol Phandthong, a postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Molecular, Cell and Systems Biology and the research paper's first author. — ANI



Demonstrators protest a proposed vaping flavour ban in Washington on 9 November 2019. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

World Youth Festival kicks off in Russia



More than 20,000 young Russians and foreigners from 180 countries who excel in science, business, sports, politics, charity, media and other important social spheres are taking part in the event. PHOTO: SPUTNIK

The World Youth Festival kicks off in the Russian territory of Sirius, hosting over 20,000 young leaders and experts from 180 countries. Russian President Vladimir Putin highlighted the importance of youth in his annual address, launching the national project "Youth of Russia".

THE event provides a platform for young leaders and experts from 180 countries to seek solutions to the most pressing issues on the international agenda. Sputnik comes to you live from the Russian federal territory of Sirius, where the

World Youth Festival has begun.

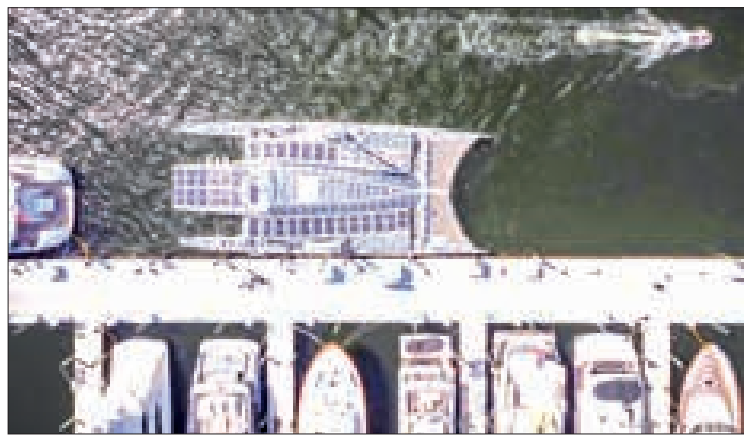
More than 20,000 young Russians and foreigners from 180 countries who excel in science, business, sports, politics, charity, media and other important social spheres are taking part in the event. Earli-

er, Russian President Vladimir Putin in his annual address to the country's legislature emphasized that young people are "Russia's future" and announced the launch of the national project "Youth of Russia". — SPUTNIK

Zero-emission ship nears finish of round-the-world voyage

A ship powered by renewable energy, including hydrogen produced onboard, is docked in the southeastern US state of Florida this week as it prepares to finish the last leg of a voyage around the world.

The 100-foot catamaran, dubbed the Energy Observer, has logged 63,040 nautical miles without using fossil fuels since it first started sailing in 2017. This particular trip around the world started in 2020. The mission has tested renewable energy — including by using solar panels and advanced sails called "oceanwings" — as a power source in multiple climates off the coasts of Africa, Asia and Ant-



An aerial view of the Energy Observer, the first hydrogen-powered, zero-emission vessel to be self-sufficient in energy, while moored at Pier Sixty Six Marina in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on 27 February 2024. PHOTO: MARCO BELLO / AFP

arctica.

The automated 12-metre wings boost the ship's speed and reduce energy consumption.

"We learned a lot along this journey," captain Marin Jarry told AFP in Fort Lauderdale, just north of Miami. — AFP

ECONOMY WORLD

Israel adopting 'European' standards on food imports



Prime Minister Netanyahu while Israel committee approves EU import reform. **PHOTO: KOBI GIDON/ GOVERNMENT PRESS OFFICE**

Importers will be equipped with tools for quality processes, risk management, and quality control.

ISRAEL'S Ministry of Health announced the opening of food and tobacco import routes that comply with European regulations and based on a declaration of legal marketing in Europe. The move, said the ministry, was made out of a desire to "harmonize and fully integrate the European regulation with the Israeli one". The ministry will publish legal memoranda on the matter as early as next week.

The leading principle in the opening of the new routes is the transfer of responsibility for the integrity and safety of the products to the importer in accordance with what is customary in Europe and giving the importer tools to car-

ry out quality processes for risk management and quality control of the products imported to Israel.

In the field of food, the ministry said it continues to adopt additional European regulations beyond those it has already adopted in the past. This, it expects, will create optimal conditions for importing food into Israel and will allow regulatory certainty for Israeli industry as well.

The obligation of the importer's direct contact with the manufacturer will be cancelled for a proper importer, and on the other hand, the obligation to carry out risk management and quality control processes by the importer and the marketer will be imposed. — ANI

World resource extraction could surge 60% by 2060, UN warns

EXTRACTION of Earth's natural resources could surge 60 per cent by 2060, imperilling climate goals and economic prosperity, the UN said Friday, calling for dramatic changes in energy, food, transport and housing.

Enormous expansion of infrastructure, energy demand and consumer consumption over the last half century, particularly in wealthier countries, has driven a tripling of the world's use of materials, according to the 2024 Global Resource Outlook by the UN Environment Programme's International Resource Panel.

And the hunger for natural

resources — everything from food to fossil fuels — keeps growing by an average of more than 2.3 per cent per year, it said.

People in wealthy countries drive most of that demand, using six times more materials and responsible for ten times more climate impacts than those in low-income countries, according to the analysis.

Extraction and processing of the huge amount of resources accounts for over 60 per cent of planet-warming emissions, the report said, as well as devastating ecosystems and harming human health. — AFP



Materials use is growing by an average of more than 2.3 per cent per year. **PHOTO: ROBERTO CISNEROS / AFP**

India-Nepal enhance financial cooperation; digital payment to be inaugurated soon



The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) is a real-time payment system that allows users to instantly transfer funds between bank accounts using their smartphones. **PHOTO: ANI**

ON Saturday, Nepal's Ambassador to India, Shankar Sharma, expressed appreciation for the Reserve Bank of India's new guidelines, anticipating that they will enhance the financial connectivity between India and Nepal, foster-

ing even greater prosperity.

He mentioned that Nepali citizens can now send up to Rs 2 lakh per transaction to Nepal, while walk-in customers can remit Rs 50,000 per transaction. Additionally, he highlighted that the upcoming

Unified Payment Interface-Nepal Clearing House Ltd will further alleviate the inconvenience of carrying cash. "RBI's updated regulation allows Nepali account holders to send Rs 2 lakhs per transaction (without any limit) to Walk-in customers can remit Rs 50,000 per transaction (12 per yr). The soon-to-be-inaugurated UPI/NCHL mechanism will eliminate inconvenience of carrying cash," Sharma posted on X on Saturday.

In December last year, Naveen Srivastava, the Indian Ambassador to Nepal, announced the anticipated launch of a digital payment gateway between India and Nepal. The first phase is slated to commence by the end of February 2024. — ANI

EU queries Meta about ad-free subscriptions, 'shadow banning'

THE EU on Friday used new regulatory powers to query Meta about ad-free subscriptions to Facebook and Instagram as well as claims some voices are suppressed online in a phenomenon known as "shadow banning".

The European Commis-

sion made a request for information under the mammoth content moderation law known as the Digital Services Act (DSA), which came into force last August for online giants like Meta. The EU's executive arm has launched a wave of probes under the DSA to quiz plat-

forms on how they are addressing concerns from consumer protection to children's activity online. The latest request is a first step in a possible compliance procedure, but does not itself suggest there have been breaches of the law or a move towards punishment. — AFP

Japan gov't might announce official end to deflation: media

The government will closely monitor labour-management wage negotiations and inflation outlook to assess if conditions warrant declaring a complete break with deflation.

THE Japanese government is weighing the possibility of declaring an end to deflation, marking a potential shift after nearly two decades of battling moderate price declines, local media reported on Saturday.

Recent inflation and the prospect of sustained wage growth offered hope for a departure from deflation. While Japanese officials may publicly announce this change, uncertainties linger regarding economic conditions, including a recent technical recession.

The government will carefully examine the outcome of labour-management wage negotiations this spring and the outlook for inflation in determining whether conditions have fallen into place for Japan to declare a complete break with deflation, national news agency Kyodo reported, citing sources.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and cabinet members may publicly declare this change, possibly in the government's monthly economic report, the report noted. Japan's economy has long



People shop in the Tanga market in Kitakyushu, Fukuoka Prefecture, on 19 April 2023. **PHOTO: KYODO/FILE**

been caught in a cycle where falling prices suppress corporate profits and hinder wage growth, leading to stagnation in private consumption.

Efforts to combat deflation have been ongoing for years, with the Bank

of Japan's measures, including aiming for 2 per cent inflation, shaping the potential milestone. However, caution prevails due to lingering doubts about the price outlook and broader economic stability. — Xinhua

Apple's new EU measures draw complaint from 34 digital organizations

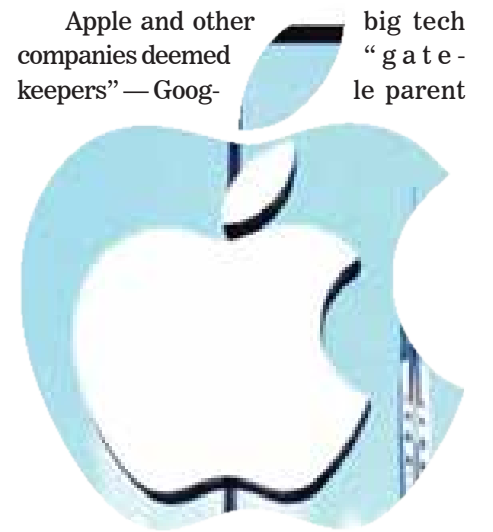
CHANGES Apple is making to its services in the European Union "make a mockery" of new antitrust rules in the bloc, 34 digital organizations complained to the European Commission this week.

They include app makers Epic Games and Spotify.

"We are very concerned that Apple's proposed scheme for compliance with the Digital Markets Act (DMA)... will not meet the law's requirements, therefore inhibiting our ability to deliver the benefits of the DMA to consumers as soon as possible," they said in a letter to the EU executive dated Friday. Apple in January announced it was modifying how its iOS operating system, Safari browser and App Store operate in the 27-nation EU.

It said it was doing so to comply with the DMA, which clamps down on anti-competitive practices online in the bloc.

Apple and other big tech companies deemed "gatekeepers" — Google, Apple parent



Apple in January announced it was modifying how its iOS operating system, Safari browser and App Store operate in the 27-nation EU. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Alphabet, Amazon, Meta, Microsoft and TikTok owner ByteDance — have until March 7 to come into line with the DMA.

The EU law threatens fines of up to 10 per cent of global revenue for non-compliance or 20 per cent for repeat offenders.

Apple notably announced it was, for the first time, opening its App Store to rival apps and allowing payment services beyond Apple Pay on its iPhones.

Many app developers — among them Epic Games, maker of the massively popular Fortnite game — say that is a huge cost for them.

They say it will simply line Apple's pockets and cement its gatekeeper status. — AFP

Cargo ship sunk by Huthi strike poses environmental risk: US military

A fertilizer-laden cargo ship, which sank in the Gulf of Aden after it was damaged by missiles from Yemen's Huthi rebels, poses an environmental risk, the US military warned Saturday.

The Huthis claimed the 18 February attack against the Rubymar, a cargo ship flying a Belizean flag and operated by a Lebanese firm, which transported combustible fertilizers. The US Central Command (CENTCOM) confirmed late Saturday that the vessel "sank in the Red Sea after being struck" by an anti-ship ballistic missile last month.

"The approximately 21,000 metric tons of ammonium phosphate sulfate fertilizer that the vessel was carrying presents an environmental risk in the Red Sea," CENTCOM said in a statement. — AFP

China's lottery ticket sales up in January



The winner of a roughly \$21.2 million lottery jackpot claimed a prize dressed as cartoon character "GG Bond" on 11 September 2019 in Taiyuan, Shanxi Province of China. It is traditional in China for lottery winners to claim their prizes in costume so they can remain anonymous. **PHOTO: WEI LIANG/CHINA NEWS SERVICE/FILE**

CHINA'S lottery ticket sales showed a year-on-year increase of 73.3 per cent in January, topping 57.56 billion yuan (about 8.1 billion US dollars), data from the Ministry of Finance showed.

Sales of lottery tickets to support the welfare system came in at 19.69 billion yuan in January, marking a surge of 81.6 per cent year-on-year.

Lottery tickets sold to support the sports sector rose by 15.49 billion yuan, or 69.2 per cent year on year, to 37.87 billion yuan.

Under China's lottery management rules, funds raised from ticket sales are used for administrative expenses, public welfare projects and to fund prizes. — Xinhua

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD



Tourists visit the Angkor Wat in the Angkor Archaeological Park in Siem Reap province, Cambodia, 17 December 2022. **PHOTO: VAN POV/XINHUA**

CAMBODIA'S famed Angkor Archaeological Park attracted 235,850 foreign visitors in the first two months of 2024, up 50 per cent from 156,951 in the same period last year, said a news release on Saturday.

The ancient site made 11.2 million US dollars in revenue

from ticket sales during the January-February period this year; also up 52 per cent from 7.38 million dollars in the same period last year, said the news release from the state-owned Angkor Enterprise.

Located in northwest Siem Reap province, the 401-square-

km Angkor Archaeological Park is home to 91 ancient temples, which had been built from the 9th to the 13th centuries.

The park, inscribed on the World Heritage List of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1992, is the most

Cambodia's famed Angkor sees 50% rise in int'l tourists in first 2 months

Revenue from ticket sales also saw a significant increase, totalling \$11.2 million, up 52 per cent from \$7.38 million last year.

popular tourist destination in the Southeast Asian country.

Officials believe that the 2024 Cambodia-China People-to-People Exchange Year, which was launched in January, would be a magnet for Chinese tourists to Cambodia, especially to the Angkor park. "I'm strongly confident

that the 2024 Cambodia-China People-to-People Exchange Year will become a new driving force to attract more Chinese tourists and investors to Cambodia," Cambodian Tourism Minister Sok Soken said at the launching event held at the Terrace of the Elephants in the Angkor park. — Xinhua

Hong Kong balloon artist and his world's biggest balloon loong

With glittering scales on it, the record-breaking loong, made up of 38,000 balloons, looked plated with a layer of golden light, showing a sense of power and elegance.



A man takes photos of a balloon loong at a shopping mall in Tuen Mun, Hong Kong, south China, 20 February 2024. **PHOTO: WANG SHEN/XINHUA**

DURING Chinese New Year, a balloon loong measuring over 40 metres long glided through a three-story atrium of a shopping mall in Tuen Mun, Hong Kong.

On 24 January, the artwork was confirmed breaking the Guinness World Record for being the world's largest

balloon loong.

The loong, also known as the Chinese dragon, epitomizes resilience, dynamism, and vitality within Chinese culture.

With glittering scales on it, the record-breaking loong, made up of 38,000 balloons, looked plated with a layer of golden light, showing a sense

of power and elegance.

Balloon artist Wilson Pang, with over a decade of experience in the craft, harbored a long-standing aspiration to craft a loong-shaped balloon.

"According to legend, the loong is in charge of rain. Only good weather can produce good crops, so the Chinese people have been in special awe of the dragon since ancient times," Pang said, adding that many Chinese idioms about loong are particularly good blessings.

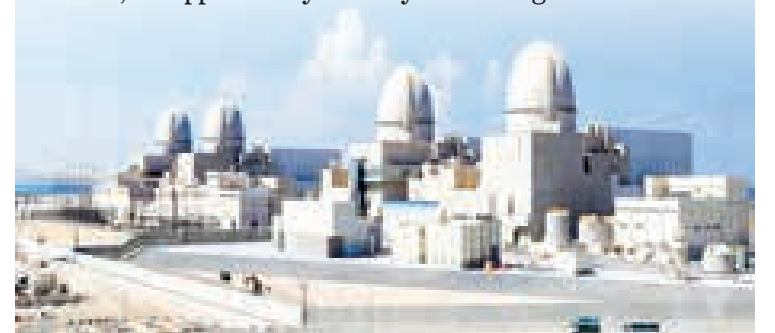
As this year is the Year of the Loong, Pang quickly finalized cooperation with the shopping mall and decided to make a gigantic balloon loong. He invited his counterparts and students from the City University of Hong Kong and a secondary school to form a 60-member team. — Xinhua

UAE's nuclear energy sector sets international model for energy security

SHEIKH Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Ruler's Representative in the Al Dhafra Region, has expressed his pride in UAE national talents leading the UAE Peaceful Nuclear Energy Programme, and their continued efforts in implementing the vision of leadership to drive the nation towards a sustainable, prosperous future.

The UAE has made significant progress in bringing the four units of the Barakah Nuclear Energy Plant online and is now leading the world globally in new nuclear energy deployment, placing the UAE at the forefront of international efforts to achieve Net Zero by 2050.

Commenting on the start-up of Unit 4, the fourth of its four APR1400 units at the Barakah Nuclear Energy Plant in Al Dhafra, Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed highlighted that the successive achievements in the nuclear energy sector in the UAE, starting up a unit annually since 2020, within an ambitious, safety-driven timetable, build on the nation's scientific knowledge, boosting the nation's progress in high-tech sectors to drive decarbonization of the UAE's power sector, as well as new green energy sources, such as clean hydrogen and ammonia, to support heavy industry in reducing emissions. — ANI



The Barakah nuclear power plant is the United Arab Emirates' first nuclear power station, the first nuclear power station in the Arabian Peninsula, the second in the Persian Gulf region and the first commercial nuclear power station in the Arab World. **PHOTO: EMIRATES NUCLEAR ENERGY CORPORATION**

SPORTS

Seven months jail for thief who stole bag with Paris Olympics 'notes'

A man has been jailed for seven months for stealing a bag containing Olympics notes from an employee of the Paris city hall, a judicial source confirmed on Saturday.

The man, born in 2001, appeared before a court in the French capital on Friday after the theft late on Monday from a train at the capital's Gare du Nord station.

The bag belonged to an engineer from Paris city hall, who had put it in the luggage compartment above his seat.

The crime raised concerns when a police source specified that the bag contained a computer and two USB keys with security plans for the Paris Olympics.

However, the Paris prosecutors' office later said the USB key "contained only notes about road transport in Paris during

the Olympics, and not sensitive security information".

The suspect was "already known" to police for thefts on public transport, particularly at the beginning of January, the judicial source said.

In addition to the theft as a repeat offender, the defendant was also on trial for refusing to hand over his telephone code to authorities.

The city employee is set to be investigated to see if he broke any internal security rules by travelling with the USB key, a statement from Paris city hall said.

Around 35,000 security personnel are expected to be on duty each day for the Olympics from 26 July-11 August, including around two thousand municipal police officers from the capital. — AFP

Cuban team draws Russia 9-9 in first Future Games opener



Despite their limited familiarity with the digital game controls and the unique synthetic grass field setup at the Kazan Expo, the Cuban team, led by Freddy Herrera, put up a commendable performance. **PHOTO: GO FUTURE GAMES**

IN the opening match of the B league at the First Future Games, the Cuban national digital soccer team drew with Russia, with both teams scoring 9 goals each.

Despite their limited familiarity with the digital game

controls and the unique synthetic grass field setup at the Kazan Expo, the Cuban team, led by Freddy Herrera, put up a commendable performance.

The match began on computers, with each Cuban pair scoring four goals (3-3, 1-4),

narrowly losing by two goals to the home team.

The physical aspect of the game followed, characterized by intensity, skillful ball control, high pressure, and a relentless pursuit of goals.

"Understanding the field", experiencing the rules of the game and deciphering the opponents took a few minutes, tense at times, as a goal was scored by a "missile" from the middle of the field and a penalty kick (which became a goal) was awarded for an erroneous clearance by the goalkeeper. Despite trailing behind the Russians, the Cuban national team displayed their attacking prowess by scoring five goals, with Jonathan Hernandez netting three, and Dayan Cotilla and Iduan Martinez contributing one each. — GO FUTURE GAMES

Real Madrid held in Valencia with controversy, Sevilla continue to recover in La Liga

REAL Madrid dropped two points in Valencia in a game that ended in controversy when referee Gil Manzano blew the final whistle moments before Jude Bellingham headed in what would have been a 3-2 winner for the league leaders.

The referee had told the players that a Real Madrid corner would be the last action of the game. But after Valencia half-cleared the ball, he ended the game as the ball was swung back into the Valencia box.

Gil Manzano then showed Bellingham a red card for his protests as he was surrounded by Madrid players claiming a goal.

Valencia had led 2-0 with Hugo Duro's header on 27 minutes and Roman Yaremchuk doubling their lead three minutes later after a dreadful Dani Carvajal backpass.

Vinicius Jr pulled Madrid back into the game from close



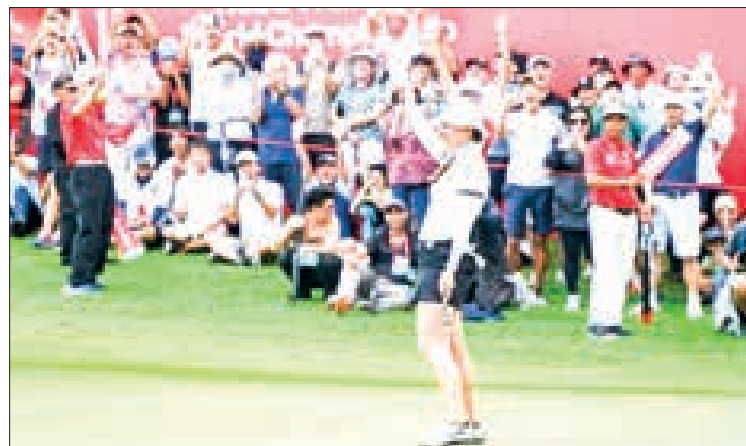
Referee Jesus Gil Manzano talks with Real Madrid players after their draw with Valencia. **PHOTO: AFP**

range in the first half injury time and he scored the equalizer in the 76th minute to set up an intense end to the game which also saw Valencia defender Mouctar Diakhaby suffer a bad-looking knee injury.

Sevilla continued to climb away from the danger zone towards mid-table with a 3-2 win at home to Real Sociedad, who had a bad week after losing in

the Copa del Rey on Tuesday.

Youssef En-Nesyri scored for Sevilla in the 11th and 13th minutes. Although Andre Silva cut the deficit in the 45th minute with a penalty kick after a Sergio Ramos handball, Ramos assured the win with a 65th minute header. Brais Mendez's 92nd minute free kick meant a nervous end for the home fans. — Xinhua



Hannah Green celebrates after a dramatic birdie putt at the final hole secured her the HSBC Women's World Championship. **PHOTO: ROSLAN RAHMAN / AFP**

Green snatches World Championship with dramatic birdie on 18

AUSTRALIA'S Hannah Green drained a remarkable 30-foot birdie putt at the final hole to edge Celine Boutier of France and win the HSBC Women's World Championship by a stroke in Singapore on Sunday.

The US LPGA Tour's flagship event in Asia had looked like it was heading for a playoff after Boutier's five-under 67 put her in the clubhouse at 12-under par and for Green to draw level with birdies at the 16th and 17th.

But the Australian completed a hat-trick of birdies over the

closing holes to snatch victory when her snaking putt on the 18th green curled into the cup to a huge ovation.

"I knew I needed to at least birdie the last to win by one," said world number 29 Green, who was drenched in champagne by her fellow Australian competitors in celebration after finishing the tournament on 13-under 275.

"As soon as that putt went in, I was like, 'Oh, my God, I've won!'" said the 27-year-old, who lifted her fourth LPGA Tour title. — AFP

Cambodia's famed Angkor sees 50% rise in int'l tourists in first 2 months

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WORLD

Shehbaz Sharif voted in as Pakistan's prime minister for second time



Newly-elected lawmakers arrive before the start of the electoral process to appoint Pakistan's next prime minister at the Parliament House in Islamabad on 3 March 2024. **PHOTO: AAMIR QURESHI / AFP**

Newly sworn-in lawmakers in the National Assembly endorsed Sharif with 201 votes, following contentious elections marked by rigging claims.

SHEHBAZ Sharif was voted in on Sunday as Pakistan's prime minister for a second time, presiding over a shaky alliance that has shut out followers of jailed opposition leader Imran Khan.

Newly sworn-in lawmakers in Pakistan's National Assembly elected Sharif by 201 votes, three weeks after national elections marred by widespread allegations of rigging.

"Shehbaz Sharif has been declared to have been elected as prime minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan," said

newly appointed speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq.

Omar Ayub Khan stood against Sharif as the candidate of choice for MPs loyal to Khan, gaining 92 votes.

The Sharif family's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party allied with their historic rivals the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), as well as several smaller factions, to keep Khan's candidates out.

In return, the PPP — a dynastic party ruled by the family of slain ex-premier Benazir Bhutto — have been promised

the office of president for Bhutto's widow, Asif Ali Zardari.

Ex-prime minister Khan was jailed in the run-up to the February 8 polls and barred from contesting, while his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party was targeted by a crackdown of arrests and censorship.

PTI candidates were forced to run as independents, but nonetheless secured more seats than any other party.

They fell short, however, of the figures needed to form a government, paving the way for Sharif's return. — AFP

GAZA STRIP CEASEFIRE POSSIBLE

Qatar, US, Hamas delegations arrive in Cairo for new round of truce talks in Gaza: Reports

THE delegations of Qatar, the United States and the Palestinian movement Hamas have arrived in the Egyptian capital of Cairo for a new round of talks on a possible truce in the Gaza Strip, Al Qahera News channel reported on Sunday.

On Saturday, the broadcaster reported that the truce talks would be resumed in Cairo on Sunday with all parties in attendance.

On 7 October, 2023, Palestinian movement Hamas launched a large-scale rocket attack against Israel from Gaza and breached the border, killing 1,200 people and abducting around 240 others.

Israel launched retaliatory strikes, ordered a complete blockade of Gaza, and started a ground incursion into the Palestinian enclave with the declared goal of eliminating Hamas fighters and rescuing the hostages. At least 30,000 people have been killed so far in the Gaza Strip, local authorities said.

On 24 November, Qatar mediated a deal between Israel and Hamas on a temporary truce and the exchange of some of the prisoners and hostages, as well as the delivery of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip. — SPUTNIK

Japan plans rules for firms to disclose greenhouse gas emissions

The Financial Services Agency aims to establish a panel to outline the policy, aligning with global decarbonization efforts.

JAPAN'S financial watchdog is considering obliging companies listed on the top-tier section of the Tokyo Stock Exchange to disclose information on greenhouse gas emissions throughout their supply chains.

The Financial Services Agency will set up a panel this month to work out the details of the envisioned policy in support of global efforts to accelerate decarbonization, according to its plan proposed at a meeting of the Financial

System Council.

One option would be to first target major firms facing increasing scrutiny by global institutional investors, rather than applying the envisaged rule to all of the roughly 1,600 companies listed on the Prime Market at once, according to the government plan.

Japan is seeking to develop sustainability disclosure standards based on those unveiled in 2023 by the International Sustainability Standards Board, a

global body that sets financial reporting rules. The country's draft standards are expected to be released by the end of March.

Since the start of the business year through March 2023, Japanese companies have been required to include information in their financial statements on how they are tackling sustainability issues, in addition to such information as wage disparities between men and women. — Kyodo



File photo taken in May 2007 shows an industrial zone in Ichihara, Chiba Prefecture. **PHOTO: KYODO**