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A worker is captured on the rubber processing line, one of Myanmar's key export commodities.

## Myanmar foreign trade plunges nearly US\$4B in FY 2023-2024

**M**YANMAR'S international trade with foreign trade partners crossed US\$30 billion in the past financial year 2023-2024 (April-March), indicating a significant drop of four billion dollars compared with that of the FY 2022-2023. The total trade balance was \$3.39 billion in the year-ago period,

the Ministry of Commerce's statistics showed.

Myanmar's exports hit over \$14 billion, and its imports were valued at over \$15 billion. Maritime trade is the backbone of international trade. Myanmar's seaborne trade value was estimated at \$22.36 billion, while border trade value

was \$7.7 billion in the past FY.

Myanmar exports agricultural produce, animal products, minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods and brings in capital goods, intermediate goods, raw materials imported by the CMP enterprises and consumer goods. — TWA/KK

## Myanmar agri-produce exports exceed US\$3.8B in FY 2023-2024

MYANMAR'S agricultural exports totalled US\$3.83 billion in the past financial year 2023-2024 (April-March), according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The figures reflected a drop of \$167.7 million compared with that of the FY2022-2023.

Myanmar exports agricultural produce, animal products, minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods through maritime and border trade channels. At the same time, it imports capital goods, intermediate goods, raw materials

imported by the CMP enterprises and consumer goods.

Myanmar has been implementing the National Export Strategy (NES) 2020-2025 in order to boost exports. The priority sectors of the NES include agricultural production, garment and apparel, industrial and electronic device, fishery business, forest product, digital manufacturing and service, logistic service, quality management, trade information service, innovation and entrepreneurship sectors. — NN/KK



A stretch of freshly harvested coffee beans, representing Myanmar's agricultural export industry.

# NATIONAL

## Palin Kanthaya elephant camp expected to receive more guests this Thingyan

THE Palin Kanthaya elephant camp is expected to receive more visitors during this Thingyan festival, according to a camp official.

The Palin Kanthaya elephant camp, a well-known destination, is located near the west Palin village beside the Myingyan-Pakokku Road in NyaungU Township, Mandalay Region.

"Throughout the year, there are usually more visitors in April. As our elephant camp is situated on the Ayeyawady river bank, we arrange palm-leaf huts and detached huts for those who want to evade the heat. We have also expanded our services to include photo taking places, sales of local products from Anyar (Upper Myanmar) areas and water foun-



tains for morning and evening water play in the Ayeyawady river. We expect more guests to come this Thingyan than last year," said an official.

People can enjoy elephant rides along the riverbank while learning general knowledge about elephants. There will be a playground for children and an elephant museum displaying interesting facts such as elephant skeletons, ivories and other elephant-related items.

"You can watch the elephants being sent into the river and the young elephants taking a bath. We send them into the river at 7:30-8:00 am and 4:30-5:00 pm. We can arrange if you would like to donate a buffet for young elephants. It will cost about K 50,000-K100,000," the camp posted on its Facebook page.

Admission to the Palin Kanthaya elephant camp is K 1,000 per person for locals and K 10,000 for foreigners, and it is free for the children under 10. — Thit Taw/ZN



## Yaychanzins along Yenangyoung-Magway-Chauk Road require more water to refill pots



A member of the charity group is refilling the water pots at a roadside drinking water stand.

THE Yenangyoung-Magway-Chauk Road has public water stands that traditionally provide free drinking water pots (Yaychanzin). Now, the number of people consuming water has increased due to high temperatures. Hence, the water pots need to be refilled more frequently, according to the Yenantha Dingar Brothers Parahita group, a charity organization which takes charge of donating drinking water pots.

At present, the temperature has been extremely high in Magway, Yenangyoung and Chauk townships, and the Parahita group is also donating water to villages in Chauk where water is scarce.

"We do water donation in particular. Due to extreme heat, we have to refill drinking water pots

all the time. We also donate water to villages that suffer from annual water scarcity. We can't grow plants at present. We need to focus more on water donation, especially in the Yenangyoung and Chauk townships. The temperature is gradually increasing here, so we refill drinking water pots once in four days previously. Now, we do so every alternate day," said an official from the group.

The group has planned to complete a project of growing shady trees along 70-mile Yenangyoung-Magway-Chauk Road on both sides in seven years.

"We have been growing shady trees along 70-mile Yenangyoung-Magway-Chauk Road, and it is expected to be completed in seven years. We began it in the 2023 monsoon. Starting from Daungthay bridge in northern Magway, we have now completed in three sections — at the entrance to Deikkon village in northern Magway, at Yenangyoung bypass and at Kyaungshataw village in Chauk, aiming to water them easily," he said.

In addition to growing trees with the aim of providing shade for travellers, the group has also provided drinking water stands and public rest-houses. Currently, it has provided more than 100 drinking water stands. — Thit Taw/ZS

## Alternate daily newspaper publishing planned for New Year holiday

DAILY newspapers of the News and Periodicals Enterprise under the Ministry of Information will be in alternate circulation during the holidays of the Myanmar New Year. The Myanma Alinn Daily will be published from 13 to 16 April, whereas the Kyemon and the Global New Light of Myanmar dailies will take holidays. The Kyemon and the Global New Light of Myanmar dailies will be in circulation from 17 to 21 April, while the Myanma Alinn daily will take a break.

The Ethnic Sector in the Shan Language by the Sub-Printing House (Taunggyi), published every Thursday, will take a holiday on 18 April; the Ethnic Sector in Mon, Skaw Kayin, Poe Kayin and Pa-O languages published every Sunday by the Sub-Printing House (Mawlamyine) will take holidays on 14 and 21 April; the Ethnic Sector in the Kachin Language by the Sub-Printing House (Myitkyina) published twice a week will take a holiday on 20 April. After the Thingyan holidays, all dailies will be published regularly. However, advertisements will be accepted throughout the holidays.

News and Periodicals Enterprise

# NATIONAL

## National Security Adviser SAC Chairman Office 4 Union Minister receives Chinese Ambassador

NATIONAL Security Adviser and Union Minister at the State Administration Council Chairman Office Ministry 4 Admiral Moe Aung received Ambassador of China to Myanmar Mr Chen Hai at the SAC Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

They cordially discussed cooperation and security measures in friendly relations between the two countries.

Also present at the meeting were officials of the SAC Office and the Chinese Embassy in Myanmar. — MNA/TTA



The Chinese Ambassador calls on Union Minister Admiral Moe Aung yesterday.

## Engineers collaborate to overcome challenges at No 1 Steel Mill (Myingyan)



Union Minister Dr Charlie Than inspects the No 1 Steel Mill (Myingyan) yesterday.

ALL staff and engineers have to strive to operate the steel mill producing iron and steel wares, not to halt production, said Union Minister for Industry Dr Charlie Than on his inspection tour of all sections at No 1 Steel Mill (Myingyan) yesterday morning.

In a meeting with staff and engineers, the Union minister urged them to collect machines

and machine parts to resume operation of the mill if it halts operation for various reasons.

He instructed officials to purchase machines, machinery, and raw materials systematically, according to the working procedures.

He urged officials to supervise efficient spending of the allocated budget on the mill, adding that individuals have

to take special care of security measures for staff, machinery, mill, documents, and information.

During the visit, the Union minister inspected the water treatment plant, oxygen plant, direct reduction plant, foundry, industrial maintenance plant, asbestos bricks, machinery and raw materials of the plant.

— MNA/TTA

## Film censor approvals to be issued 60 days for movies, 30 days for series after filming

VICE-CHAIRMAN U Aye Kyu Lay of the Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization (MMPO) announced that the censor approvals are going to be issued only after 60 days of filming for movies and 30 days for series starting from 1 May.

Currently, if a submission for censor approval of movies and series is applied, the approval is made only after 90 days of shooting. This rule will be changed starting from 1 May.

U Aye Kyu Lay stated, "If a movie or series is filmed without

prior approval of the script, action will be taken in accordance with the regulations. Recently, some movie producers have begun filming before obtaining script approval. Therefore, we must summon and notify those producers that they may face punishment according to the rules set by the censorship board."

Before COVID-19, film shooting permissions were granted if the application included approval of the script. — ASH/TRKM



The general view of the MMPO office in Bahan township, Yangon.

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

# NATIONAL

## MoI Union Minister inspects rehearsal for opening of Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan

CHAIRMAN of the Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan Activity Organizing Committee Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn yesterday morning inspected the rehearsal for opening the Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan activities from the Maha Thingyan pavilion of Nay Pyi Taw Mayor to Sipin guest house junction on Pynmana-Taungnyo road and zonal preparations.

He viewed the process of launching the festival and entertainment on the dancing of choral dance troupes from relevant ministries.

Korean K-pop singers Rejen, Henny and 7Kids Dream Group, Astel Dance Group, and DJ-Saemi, who will perform cultural exchange between Myanmar and Korea and present entertainment to Myanmar people at the central pavilion of walking Thingyan activities called on the Union Minister, and they joined the dances of



The rehearsal of Myanmar's traditional Yein (coral dance) in action – one of the programmes prepared for the Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan.

the choral dance troupes in the rehearsal process.

The Union minister inspected preparations for staff and people to enjoy water-throwing activities at the pavilions of ministries, national races, the central pavilion of walking Thingyan

activities, the pavilion of Russia-Myanmar Friendly Relations Association and pavilions of China-Myanmar-India friendly relations, serving refreshments, Thingyan festival activities of national race, Satuditha (charity feast), ministries and youths,

rehearsal performance of choral dance troupes from ministries, and water-throwing activities. The Union minister instructed officials to manage no shortage of water in the walking Thingyan activities, readiness to provide healthcare services, and take

security measures without weakness.

At this year's Nay Pyi Taw walking Thingyan activities, local artistes, Korean actors, and K-pop singers will perform song entertainment in the accompaniment of a band and DJ performers. Nyanatheikdi family water-throwing pavilion of the Ministry of Construction will perform entertainment of famous artistes and serve refreshments to the people.

Moreover, Russian youth artistes will present songs at the pavilion, whereas the Myanmar-India friendship pavilion will serve refreshments to visitors.

The Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan Festival 2024 aims to create joyfulness for staff and families in Nay Pyi Taw as well as the general people and show off the unity of staff, solidarity and oneness of the people and the government, lasting from 13 to 16 April. — MNA/TTA

## Myanmar attends 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of Myanmar-Russia Joint Anti-Terrorism Committee

THE second meeting of the Myanmar-Russia Joint Anti-Terrorism Committee was held yesterday at the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation in Moscow.

The meeting was attended by Lt-Gen Kyaw Swa Lin of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army), senior military officers who are members of the committee, Lieutenant General Matovnikov Alexander Anatolyevich of Russian Armed Forces and committee members.

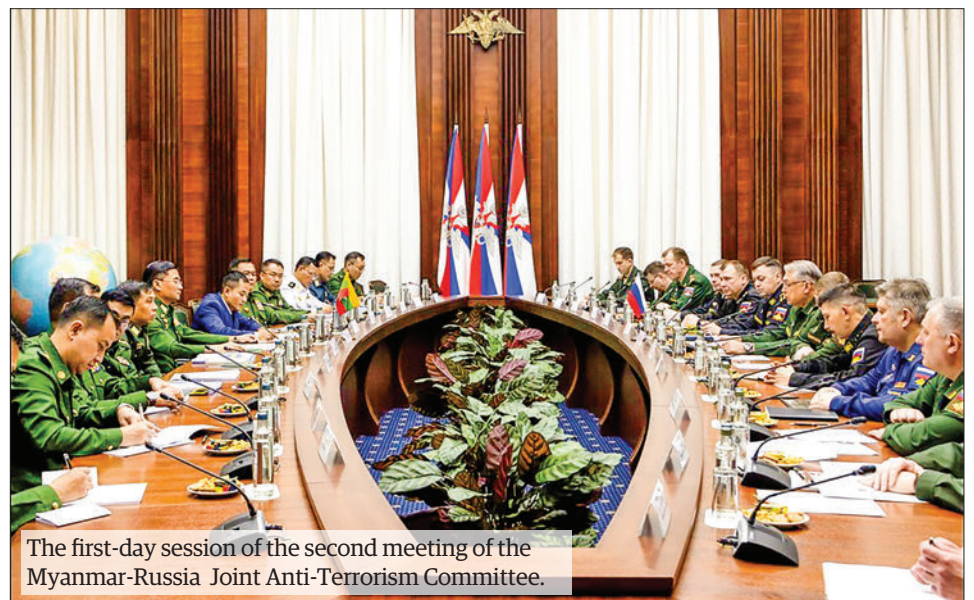
Lieutenant General Matovnikov Alexander Anatolyevich made an honorary speech for the 79<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Myanmar Armed Forces Day and Thingyan Festival, which will take place soon, and

expressed gratitude for the cooperation between the two militaries.

Then, Lt-Gen Kaw Swa Lin extended thanks for welcoming the delegation of Myanmar Armed Forces and highlighted the sector-wise cooperation between the two militaries and rapid response to terrorist attacks through collaboration.

The parties also discussed the anti-terrorism measures in detail and the enhancement of bilateral ties and cooperation between the two militaries through strategic cooperative partnership.

The Myanmar delegation joined the lunch hosted by Lieutenant General Matovnikov Alexander Anatolyevich. — MNA/KTZH



The first-day session of the second meeting of the Myanmar-Russia Joint Anti-Terrorism Committee.

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# NATIONAL

## K-pop artistes prepare for Thingyan festival cultural exchange programme



Photos depict the rehearsal for the Friday Night Live Show of Korean artistes in progress yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

THE first group of K-pop artistes participating in the Thingyan festival as part of a cultural exchange programme conducted a rehearsal for the festival's

opening ceremony yesterday morning.

Later in the afternoon, they visited the Myanma Radio and Television in Nay Pyi Taw-Tat-

kon, where they rehearsed for the Friday Night Live Show in the rehearsal room and auditorium.

The first group comprises 24 artistes, including actor Baek

Eun Hee, renowned for roles in various series and movies, as well as K-pop singers Rejen and Henny, the 7 Kids Dream Group, Astel Dance Group, and DJ-Sae-

mi. Additionally, two more groups of K-pop artistes are reportedly expected to arrive in Yangon on 11 and 14 April respectively. — MNA/TRKM

## Korean artistes arrive in Yangon for Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan



Korean artistes seen being warmly welcomed on their arrival at the Yangon International Airport yesterday.

REPORTS indicate that the second contingent of Korean artistes, slated to participate in the Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan event, arrived in Yangon yesterday evening. Their visit aims to foster cultural exchange and feature performances at the traditional Myanmar Thingyan Festival.

Comprising five Korean artistes led by DJ/Performer Lee Saemi, the group landed at Yangon International Airport and received a warm welcome from officials of Myanma Radio and Television. Welcoming staff waved the flags of both countries and held placards bearing the photos and names of the

artistes. The artistes will be accommodated at Thamada Hotel before their departure for Nay Pyi Taw on 12 April. Another group of 19 K-pop artistes is scheduled to arrive in Yangon on 14 April, with plans to perform at the Friday Night Live Show on 12 April. — MNA/TRKM

## MMPO hosts gathering party of film course trainees (1956-2019)

A gathering for trainees from film courses spanning 1956 to 2019 took place at the Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization in Bahan Township, Yangon Region, at 10 am on 9<sup>th</sup> April, according to Patron U Aung Lwin of the Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization.

The gathering was attended by U Kyi Soe Tun, Chairman of the Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization, Vice-Chairman U Aye Kyu Lay, director Academy Zinyaw Maung Maung, Academy Swe Zin Hitke, Academy Khant Si Thu, Academy Khaing Khin Oo, and other actors, scriptwriters, and directors.

Speaking at the event, U

Aung Lwin highlighted its significance in the history of film. He noted that while some have passed away, many former trainees have become prominent figures in the film industry. He emphasized the organization's commitment to preserving the film heritage as it evolves.

The Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization has been conducting film courses for actors, actresses, scriptwriters, directors, editors, and industrial workers for 78 years, aiming to nurture new talent over generations. The gathering party brought together participants from film courses held between 1956 and 2019. —

ASH/MKKS



The photo shows attendees of the gathering party celebration.

# NATIONAL



Thiri Mingala Mart in Hline Township, Yangon.

## Thiri Mingala market to open during Thingyan Festival

DURING the Thingyan Festival, Thiri Mingala market in Hline Township, Yangon Region, will remain open from 4 am to 7 pm from 13 to 17 April without closing.

Green products, such as fruits, flowers, and vegetables from all parts of Myanmar, enter the market and these are redistributed

to markets in Yangon, Ayeyawady, and Bago Regions, as well as Mon State and other regions and states through this market.

Currently, there are 2,098 registered shops and over 2,400 unregistered vendor shops in the market. — TWA/TKO

## MoSWRR reports 1,857 natural disasters, including strong winds causing extensive damage

ACCORDING to the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, 1,857 natural disasters were recorded nationwide during the last financial year.

In the financial year 2023-24, there were 1,857 natural disasters, with 653 instances of strong winds causing damage to over 1,000 religious schools, more than 24,000 homes, and over 68,000 households. The ministry allocated over K3.289 billion to

assist the victims. Activities for disaster prevention and awareness are also ongoing in areas susceptible to natural disasters.

Furthermore, eighteen houses were toppled by strong winds in various states and regions, including Sagaing, Taninthayi, Bago, Mandalay, Shan, and Nay Pyi Taw, resulting in partial destruction of 174 dwellings and affecting 721 individuals. — TWA/MKKS



The photo shows clearing works being carried out after trees fell due to strong winds on Maha Bandoola road in Shwepyitha township on 10 April night.

## Potato prices decline amid supply surge, expected to persist next month

DUE to an influx of supply, potato prices have fallen, and they are expected to continue staying low next month.

Including the fact that Chinese potatoes entered the domestic market, locally-grown potato production has been surplus in the market, resulting in a decline in price.

“At the beginning of harvest season, big-sized potato prices increased to K2,800 from K2,600 a viss. Now the price of the above-mentioned big potato is just K2,000. The price has been declining for more than two weeks. This is because potatoes produced from Mandalay and Myitkyina are available now. Chinese-imported potatoes, which are cheap, have entered the domestic market. It is expected to



continue like that in next month,” said a potato trader from Hopong township.

At present, the price of medium-sized potatoes, which are the most consumed in the market, averages K1,800 a viss, down from K2,600 in previous months.

“Both locally-produced and imported potatoes are now available on the market. That is why the price has fallen. There are many potato consumers in Myanmar. But the price will be better again sometime in the future. The potato sale has been active this year,” said an official from a vegetable wholesale shop in Yangon. — Thit Taw/ZS

Potato bags at a wholesale trading centre in Aungban.

### Daily newspapers available online

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

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## Discussions underway for Myanmar's mango export to China

OFFICIALS of the Mandalay Region Chambers of Commerce and Industry (MRCCI) and the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Dehong Prefecture discussed matters to facilitate Myanmar's mango export to China on 11 April at the MRCCI's office in the presence of mango growers.

They highlighted the fast delivery of Myanmar's mango to China through possible road channels, smooth customs clearance, and exploration of potential trade channels. Moreover, they coordinated on matters regarding trade barriers that exporters experienced on the Kengtung-Mongla-Dalo road channels, including tax and freight shipping time.

Fruit traders faced a series of challenges while exporting mangoes to China, such as watermelon export.

At present, extreme weather and transportation on rough



Fruit traders and a worker are seen sorting freshly harvested mangoes.

roads are contributing factors to the physical damage of the fruits. Therefore, Muse Post, which was the previous trade channel, is the only option for mango exports, fruit department owners stressed.

Myanmar's mango traders might face significant challenges to grasp a market share depending on trade route and mango quality.

Myanmar's popular Seintalone mango fetched 120-180

yuan per 16-kilogramme basket in early April 2023. They were worth about K50,000 per 16-kg basket (40-55 pieces).

The growers are battered by the high cost of cultivation input and export market risks

every year. Low use of cultivation input brought down quality, causing postharvest diseases such as stem end rot and black spots in fruit in 2022.

As a result of this, some traders did not even cover the cultivation cost due to the degrading quality of Seintalone mango.

Of about 200 mango varieties that originated in Myanmar, Seintalone, Shwehintha, Padamyar Ngamauk, Yinkwe, and Machitsu varieties are primarily grown. The foreign market prefers Seintalone varieties.

Ayeyawady Region possesses the most extensive mango plantation acres, having about 46,000 acres. Bago Region is the second largest producer, with 43,000 acres, and Mandalay has 29,000 acres of mango. There are over 24,000 acres in Kayin State, over 20,400 acres in Shan State and over 20,000 acres in Sagaing Region, according to the association. — NN/EM

## High production cost drives sugar prices up

SUGAR prices exceeded K4,500 per viss in the second week of April 2024 as sugar millers raised sugar prices upon high production costs, sugar traders said.

The price surged from K4,170 per viss on 12 March. The figures showed an increase of K390 per viss within four weeks.

Meanwhile, the global sugar price

is stable at around US\$620 per tonne.

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

Sugarcane is commonly found in the upper Sagaing Region, followed

by northern Shan State. It is also found in the western and eastern Bago Region, Yangon Region and Mandalay Region.

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

## FDA flags 30 unregistered cosmetics for potential safety risks

THE Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Department issued a warning against the 30 unregistered cosmetics that are considered to be unsafe for use.

Under the directive of the Ministry of Health, the FDA has been supervising the market systematically to ensure the quality of cosmetics that are considered safe for use. According to the Post-Marketing Alert System (PMAS) Report, the 30 cosmetics made in the regional countries were found unregistered and containing hazardous substances and prohibited chemicals that are harmful to health and unsafe for use.

Those prohibited chemicals can cause skin irritation, swelling, rash, numbness, muscle cramps, fatigue, headaches, dizziness and depression. Long-term exposure to those substances can also result in kidney failure and other chronic diseases.

Thus, cosmetic importing companies, distributors, wholesalers and retailers should not ethically distribute unregistered cosmetics that are declared unsafe for use. The relevant authorities will take legal action against them under Sub-Section 3(d) of Section 3, of the Public Health Law for non-compliance. — NN/EM

## Myanmar earns over US\$8,000 mln from exporting industrial products in 2023-24 FY

ACCORDING to Daw Cho Thet Mu, Deputy Director of the Trade Policy Division within the Trade Department under the Ministry of Commerce, Myanmar earned a total of more than US\$8,000 million from exporting finished products from the industrial sector in the 2023-24 Financial Year.

Between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, the country exported industrial products worth over US\$3,000 million from the government sector and more than US\$5,000 million from the private sector.

Daw Cho Thet Mu said, "A total



Shipment containers that carry export products are seen at the port.

of over US\$14.6 billion was earned from exporting products from agri-

cultural, livestock, aquatic, mining, forestry, industrial, and other sectors. Among these, more than US\$8 billion was earned from exporting finished industrial products. The majority of exported products in the industrial sector are CMP garments."

CMP garment products stand at the top of Myanmar's export items, followed by natural gas, while the top import items are petroleum-related products, followed by textiles, she said.

Garments, clothing, sugar, and jewellery are the primary export items. — ASH/TMT

# OPINION

## Grasp a chance to keep peace and stability in minds

AS Myanmar gears up to celebrate the traditional Maha Thingyan festival, citizens are reminded to remain mindful of the prevailing climatic conditions exacerbated by the severe impacts of El Nino. Amidst the festivities, it is vital to uphold peace and stability in all areas of the nation while cherishing tangible and intangible cultural heritages of Myanmar.

With daily temperatures soaring based on extreme hotness in summer, the risk of heat-related illnesses such as heatwaves, hypertension, and heart attacks looms large. In addition, the proliferation of misinformation poses a challenge that must be navigated with caution and discernment, ensuring that no one is unduly agitated.

In the spirit of the season, engaging in meritorious deeds remains a focal point, serving to foster both personal and nationwide peace and stability. Observing periods of reflection through meditation, offering alms, and practising forgiveness are integral aspects of this tradition, alongside the symbolic acts of releasing fish and various animals.

Following the principles of the Five Precepts or even the more stringent Eight or Nine Precepts, Buddhists are encouraged to seize the opportunity presented by the Thingyan holidays to prioritize selflessness over self-interest. By cultivating and spreading loving-kindness, the collective can reap the rewards of peace and stability, transcending the challenges posed by the scorching heat.

By harnessing the power of collective goodwill, individuals can mitigate the adverse effects of El Nino, reshaping their environment for the better. Through concerted efforts to cultivate mental resilience, they can effectively navigate the trials they face, fostering conditions conducive to the well-being of all.

The significance of the Maha Thingyan festival extends beyond national borders, resonating with people across the globe who celebrate similar festivities. Therefore, as Myanmar citizens partake in this cherished tradition, they must imbue it with the essence of peace and stability, recognizing its universal appeal.

By prioritizing activities that promote both physical and mental well-being, the society at large stands to benefit, ushering in an era of peace, prosperity, and progress. Embracing a spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation, individuals can seize this opportunity to foster lasting peace and stability within their communities.

In essence, as Myanmar prepares to immerse itself in the joy of the Maha Thingyan festival, let everybody collectively strive to keep peace and stability at the forefront of minds, ensuring that the celebrations are not only joyful but also conducive to the greater good of all.

### Introduction

After the Cold War, the global landscape experienced a significant transformation, transitioning from a bipolar structure characterized by the dominance of two superpowers to a multipolar arrangement marked by the presence of several major powers. This shift in the distribution of power has the potential to influence regional organizations and their composition. Additionally, it is noteworthy that the regional institutions established during the initial stages of the Cold War were heavily influenced by the strategic interests and agendas of the superpowers (Buzdugan 2017). The rise of the regional framework coincided with the conclusion of the Cold War and the expanding global economic interdependence. As a consequence, regional organizations have progressively embraced a more trade-oriented approach. Furthermore, these organizations are increasingly influenced by the interests of regional actors participating in their activities, as exemplified by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, the European Union (EU), and other comparable entities.

During its establishment in 1967, ASEAN served as the sole regional organization in East Asia aimed at providing support to smaller Southeast Asian nations in mitigating the impact of more dominant powers. However, starting in the late 1990s, this scenario began to undergo a transformation. Asian countries commenced experimenting with novel regional mechanisms and processes, and ASEAN itself adopted a broader perspective regarding its regional role. This article seeks to examine the covert intentions of external partners, particularly superpower countries, within ASEAN-led mechanisms such as ASEAN Plus Three (APT), East Asia Summit (EAS), and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

### East Asia Economic Caucus (EAEC) or East Asia Economic Group (EAEG)

The establishment of ASEAN-led mechanisms within ASEAN, notably the East Asia Summit (EAS) and ASEAN Plus Three (APT), has marked a significant turning point for ASEAN. This transformation can be traced back to the proposal made by former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad in 1990, advocating for the formation of the East Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC) or East Asian Economic Group (EAEG). Initially, the EAEG was envisioned to comprise ASEAN member states and three Northeast Asian countries: Japan, the Republic of Korea (ROK), and China. Malaysia aimed for Japan to assume leadership of this group, which would serve as a regional counterbalance to Western European and North American regional blocs (Malik, 2006). Malaysia's proposal reflected an exclusive East Asian regional concept and sought to offset the increasing influence of the

United States within the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the broader Asian region as a whole.

However, a debate arose among member states of ASEAN regarding the inclusion of countries beyond ASEAN in these mechanisms. Certain stakeholders advocated for a more restricted interpretation of East Asia, while others advocated for the inclusion of non-ASEAN countries (Dent, 2016). As a result, substantial diplomatic debates have taken place among ASEAN member states on this matter.

Malaysia advocated for restricted membership within the EAEC/EAEG, while Japan put forth a proposal to include India, New Zealand, and Australia. One of the primary concerns raised regarding the narrow membership approach was the potential for China to dominate the group eventually. Conversely, the proposed EAEG encountered strong resistance from the United States and Australia. China, in particular, strongly opposed the inclusion of India and Australia in the Envisioned East Asia Summit (EAS) (Dent, 2016). Most of the ASEAN Member States conveyed their endorsement of India's involvement in the East Asia Summit (EAS), perceiving the inclusion of an additional global power as a strategy to outweigh the growing sway of China.

Mahathir's proposition for the establishment of the EAEC/EAEG involved the creation of an East Asian Economic Bloc that deliberately omitted the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and all other countries classified as 'non-Asian' nation-states (Berger 1999). Nonetheless, these contests for regional power constituted the initial phases in the development of ASEAN-led mechanisms like the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) and the East Asia Summit (EAS).

### ASEAN Plus Three (APT)

Although Malaysia's attempt to exclude India, Australia, and New Zealand from participation in the EAS was unsuccessful, China subsequently introduced an alternative proposal for establishing a separate mechanism that would exclude these countries. China additionally put forth the notion of the present-day ASEAN Plus Three (APT) framework, which encompasses only Korea and Japan, and recommended that the APT mechanism take a leading role in the forthcoming com-

munity-building process (Malik 2006). This exemplifies how the genesis of the "ASEAN Plus Three" configuration was ultimately initiated in the region.

At the same time, Mahathir's East Asian ideas resonated with the Asian financial crisis of 1997-1998. Regional dissatisfaction with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the United States' lacklustre handling of the crisis has fueled interest in the East Asian bloc that forms the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) framework. Although the APT framework started before the Asian financial crisis, there are conspiracy theorists who believe that the APT framework goes by another name, EAEG (Ba 2016). The EAEG is regarded as an early indication of the rise of new regionalism in East Asia.

The ASEAN Plus Three (APT) cooperation process began in December 1997 with the convening of an Informal Summit among the Leaders of ASEAN and China, Japan and the ROK at the sidelines of the Second ASEAN Informal Summit in Malaysia. The APT Summit was institutionalized in 1999 when the Leaders issued a Joint Statement on East Asia Cooperation at the Third APT Summit in Manila (ASEAN Secretariat 2018). Given that the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) comprises a counter-hegemonic power (China) along with two allies of the United States (Japan and the Republic of Korea), ASEAN member states assumed that the APT would not evolve into a group primarily centred around China, ultimately strengthening ASEAN's position.

### East Asia Summit (EAS)

As delineated in the preceding section, the genesis of the East Asia Summit (EAS) can be traced back to the initial proposal articulated by Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad in 1991. Subsequently, during the 10th ASEAN Summit convened in 2004 in Vientiane, it was decided to convene the inaugural EAS Summit in 2005 in Malaysia. The composition of the East Asia Summit encompassed 16 participating countries, comprising the ten ASEAN Member States, Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, and the Republic of Korea. The United States and the Russian Federation became members in 2011 following the ratification of their respective membership proposals in 2010 (Camroux 2012). In light of China's reluctance to endorse membership

# ASEAN-led Mechanisms: Balancing Power Dynamics and Upholding ASEAN Centrality

By Dr Hsu Yadanar Aung Min<sup>1</sup>

expansion, the United States' hesitancy to actively participate in regional affairs, and Japan's reservations about assuming a regional leadership role, the formation of the East Asia Summit constitutes a pivotal turning point in the dynamics of the Asia-Pacific region.

The East Asia Summit (EAS) constitutes a premier Leaders-led forum for dialogue and cooperation, with a primary focus on addressing the political, security, and economic dimensions in the Indo-Pacific region. It assumes a crucial role in advancing regional collaboration as it stands as the exclusive forum wherein all major Indo-Pacific nations convene for candid and inclusive deliberations. This platform provides leaders with a unique opportunity to engage in open discourse concerning matters impacting the East Asia region and chart a pragmatic course for regional cooperation.

The East Asia Summit has identified six priority areas of cooperation, namely environment and energy, education, finance, global health issues and pandemic diseases, natural disaster management, and ASEAN Connectivity. It also expanded the scope of discussion in the other areas of cooperation, such as food security, trade and economics, maritime security and collaboration, and traditional and non-traditional security issues.

The highest-level meeting on the EAS calendar is the EAS Leaders' Summit, convened during the fourth quarter of each year, concurrently with the ASEAN Leaders' Meetings. During these meetings, in addition to their deliberations, the leaders issue both Chairman's Statements and Joint Statements delineating policy responses and subjects for collaborative endeavours, thereby laying the groundwork for practical cooperation.

Apart from the EAS Leaders' Summit, the EAS encompasses a range of distinct mechanisms designed to facilitate dialogue and cooperation. These mechanisms are divided into various meetings, beginning with the foremost leaders-level gathering known as the East Asia Summit itself. Additionally, the EAS features a series of Ministerial Meetings, including the EAS Foreign Minister's Meeting, EAS Environment Minister's Meeting, EAS Energy Ministers' Meeting, EAS Education Ministers' Meeting, Informal EAS Finance Ministers' Meeting, and EAS Economic Ministers' Meeting.

Additional support for EAS Summits and

EAS Foreign Ministers' Meetings is provided by the EAS Senior Officials' Meetings (SOM) and the EAS Ambassadors' Meetings in Jakarta (EAMJ). EAS SOM leaders in EAS Participating Countries (EPCs) also have regular SOM meetings before the EAS Foreign Ministers Meetings and Summits. Moreover, the EAS Ambassadors Meeting in Jakarta (EAMJ) is a meeting at the ambassadorial level convened to engage in comprehensive discussions pertaining to strategic, political, and economic matters of shared interest and significance. The overarching objective of these deliberations is to advance the principles of peace, stability, and economic well-being within the East Asian region. The EAMJ meetings bring together ambassadors representing the 18 participating countries in the EAS, facilitating their active involvement in addressing issues of mutual concern. Typically, multiple sessions of these meetings are conducted annually.<sup>2</sup> They hold discussions on emerging issues and prepare for EAS meetings to seek further guidance and directions from EAS SOM, EAS Foreign Ministers and EAS leaders.

Furthermore, subsidiary mechanisms exist that support the leaders of the East Asia Summit (EAS). These include the EAS Senior Officials' Meeting on Environment (EAS-OM), the EAS Energy Cooperation Task Force, the EAS Senior Officials' Meeting on Education, and the EAS Senior Economic Officials Meeting (SEOM-EAS Consultation). These mechanisms collectively serve as integral components of the East Asia Summit's structure for diplomatic engagement and collaboration.

The inception of the EAS Unit within the ASEAN Secretariat in 2016 aligns with the directives outlined in the 2015 Kuala Lumpur Declaration commemorating the 10th Anniversary of the East Asia Summit. This organizational entity was established with the primary aim of enhancing interdepartmental coordination and streamlining cross-sectoral cooperation within the East Asia Summit (EAS). Additionally, the EAS Unit assumes a critical role in assisting the mechanisms associated with the East Asia Summit and monitoring the implementation of EAS Leaders' deliberations and initiatives.

### ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)

Another ASEAN mechanism that includes non-ASEAN member states is the ASEAN

Regional Forum (ARF). The establishment of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) was endorsed during the twenty-sixth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, and the Post Ministerial Conference was convened in Singapore from 23 to 25 July 1993. Subsequently, the inaugural session of the ARF convened in Bangkok on 25 July 1994.

The ARF is an important region-wide platform for security dialogue in the Indo-Pacific region. It opens a venue to promote constructive dialogue and negotiation on political and security issues of common interest, confidence-building and preventive diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region. The ARF has the potential to function as a highly effective consultative forum within the Asia-Pacific region, facilitating open dialogues concerning political and security cooperation in the area.<sup>3</sup>

The current members in the ARF include 27 countries, which are Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Canada, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, European Union, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Russia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, the United States, and Viet Nam.

Another distinctive feature of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), setting it apart from other ASEAN-led mechanisms, lies in its utilization of both "Track-One" (official) and "Track-Two" (non-official) diplomacy. In Track-One diplomatic engagements, government officials convene to deliberate on security-related issues. Conversely, Track-Two meetings within the ARF involve non-state actors, including academic scholars, private think tanks, as well as various individuals and organizations. Even when government officials participate in Track-Two ARF sessions, they attend as regular individuals rather than in their official government roles. This makes these meetings different from the official ones.

The ARF operates as a ministerial-level forum, in contrast to the APT and EAS, which are gatherings of Heads of State (HOS) and Heads of Government (HOG). Consequently, ARF meetings are convened with the participation of foreign ministers and are typically conducted in conjunction with the annual ASEAN Post Ministers' Conference (PMC) held in July. Similar to the APT and EAS mechanisms, the leadership of the ARF rotates on an annual basis, and an official declaration known as the Chairman's Statement is released after the ASEAN Regional Forums. Furthermore, akin to the APT and EAS frameworks, the ARF Senior Officials Meeting (ARFSOM) convenes with the attendance of senior officials from foreign ministries across all ARF member countries in order to provide support to the ARF Foreign Ministers Meetings.

SEE PAGE-12

1. The analysis and conclusions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the official policies or position of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Myanmar. The conclusions made within this analysis are not representative of the positions of any Myanmar government entity. This disclaimer is meant to inform readers that the views, thoughts and opinions expressed in this text belong solely to the author.

2. Indian Mission to ASEAN. (2023). EAS Ambassadors Meeting in Jakarta (EAMJ). <https://www.indmissionasean.gov.in/pages/Mzg>.

3. 27<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Ministerial Meeting. (23 July 1994). Joint Communique of the 27<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Ministerial Meeting. <https://cil.nus.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/27th-ASEAN-Ministerial-Meeting.pdf>.



# NATIONAL



The Thameehla Island, where sea turtle species come to lay their eggs every month, regardless of the season.

## Green Turtle lays most eggs along Myanmar's coast

THE Green Turtle is the predominant species laying eggs along the coast of Myanmar, although the country operates three sea turtle conservation sites aimed at protecting five species of these animals along its coast, where the turtles come every year to lay their eggs, U Phone Maw, the head of the Thameehla Island Sea Turtle

Conservation camp in Ngaputaw Township, Ayeyawady Region, told the Global New Light of Myanmar on 8 May.

In Myanmar, sea turtle conservation centres are located in Kadonkani of Bokale Township, Thameehla Island of Ngaputaw Township in Ayeyawady Region, as well as on Launglon Island in the Taninthayi Region.

Among them, Thameehla Island remains one of the few islands in the world where sea turtles, considered rare globally, come to lay their eggs every month, regardless of the season.

There are seven species of sea turtles worldwide, with six species found in ASEAN waters and five species in the waters of Myanmar. — ASH/TH

## CHID bank offers qualified depositors long-term, low-interest mortgages for residential units until Dec

PEOPLE who have saved the specified amount in housing savings accounts at the Construction, Housing & Infrastructure Development Bank (CHID) by 31 December 2023 will be eligible to buy 104 apartments in the Aung Myint Mo housing to be sold by the Department of Urban and Housing Development with a mortgage at a low-interest rate and for an extended period.

Those interested in buying housing units can register their names on the "DUHD Sale Housing" Facebook Page Messenger of the DUHD.

The seniority list of candi-

dates who have saved the specified amount in CHID's housing savings accounts by 31 December 2023 is described on that Facebook page. Following the registration, the DUHD will announce the list of the customers who will be allowed to buy the units in order of the seniority list.

If there are any difficulties with the registration, people can contact the DUHD on 067 340 7527, 09 795 824 722, the CHID Bank on 01 837 0124, 01 837 0125, and call centre on 09 401 010 810 and 09 401 010 820 during office hours, it said. — MT/ZN



Aung Myint Mo housing units between Yoma Yeiktha and Aung Myint Mo street, Ward 144, Dagon Myothit (South), Yangon Region.

## Yangon-Mawlamyine Up & Down trains temporarily suspended, tickets refunded

UP-TRAIN and Down-train services on the Yangon-Mawlamyine railway line have been temporarily suspended, and tickets that have been sold are being refunded, according to an official at Mawlamyine railway station.

As No 686 Down train carrying gravel was hit by a mine planted by terrorists between Theinseik and Donwun stations, the railway line has been blocked, and officials are working to reopen the line as quickly as possible after clearing the way, it said.

Temporarily suspended services include No 82 Mawlamyine-Yangon Down train and Thingyan special Down train, and No 81 Yangon-Mawlamyine Up train and Thingyan special Up train departing from Yangon Station, which were scheduled to run on 11 April.

Refunds for upper-class and ordinary-class tickets for 11 April will be given from 6 am to 10 am at the daily ticket counter at Mawlamyine Railway Station.



The front view of the Mawlamyine railway station.

"For cancelled journeys, refunds will be given today for trips cancelled today. If it is a trip for tomorrow, it will be refunded tomorrow. We don't know the exact date until which trip cancellations will continue. Once the railway repair is completed and in good condition, these services will be resumed on the same day," said a rail-

way official from Mawlamyine.

Myanma Railways personnel are striving to clear the blockade and resume services as soon as possible, and the station will inform the public about the resumption date of train services in due course, the Mawlamyine railway station said. — MT/ZN

## 150 Myanmar workers to fly to Thailand on 29 April under MoU

AS of 29 April, Myanmar MoU workers will be sent to Thailand by air, and initially, it is planned to send 150 workers, according to an official from Myanmar Overseas Employment Agencies Federation (MOEAF).

He added that MOEAF will

likely continue using aviation transport for the next rounds of despatch.

"At present, we have compiled a list of around 150 for a planeload, and it is likely to increase later. It is likely to send them on a daily basis because

we had a negotiation with the airline for years, and now it has succeeded. It begins on 29 April. Currently, we can use Myawady and Kawthoung roads only, so we have planned to send more and more workers by air later," he said.

Air travel costs a little more than road transport, he said.

"Sending them by air may cost a little more than road transport. It is usual. The road transport was not much expensive before, but now it may cost more," he said.

Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos have sent workers across land borders. Still, their journey has no difficulty as their border area is narrow, while the border with Myanmar is vast, which is why the use of air transport will shorten journey time. — MT/ZS

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

ON 8 April, combined inspection teams led by the Ayeyawady Region Illegal Trade Eradication Special Task Force confiscated two fishing boats, valued at approximately K190 million, carrying five types of goods worth K116.3 million, including 729 jerrycans of A Shrimp branded palm oil (18 litres each), near Kangyi village in Chaungtha. The operation was carried out in accordance with Customs procedures.

The following day, on 9 April, the combined teams seized 600 sets of ZOJE sewing machines worth K252 million from China, which were different from the Import Declaration (ID), from a container at the Myanmar Industrial Port. Additionally, seven types of goods valued at K143,397,051, including 3,673 kilogrammes of stainless-steel pipe not declared in the ID, were impounded at the Thilawa Port Terminal container checkpoint. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

On 9 and 10 April, teams under the Yangon Region Illegal Trade Eradication Special Task Force intercepted a Hino Ranger truck (estimated value of K40 million) en route to Yangon from Myawady. The car was found to be carrying 4,800 bottles of Cook & Lobster fish sauce from Thailand, which were not declared in the ID, at the Ywathagyi Dry Port. Additionally, an unregistered Toyota Mark II (estimated value of K3 million) was apprehended at the junction of Aungzeya Road and Moekaung Road in Yankin township. The action was conducted under Customs procedures and the Export and Import Law.

On the same day, the combined teams detained a Higer bus (estimated value of K30 million) travelling to Yangon from Mawlamyine at the Nyaungkhashay x-ray station. The bus was found to be carrying three types of goods valued at K8.7 million, including 1,200 bottles of Queen juice without official documents. Additionally, illegal teak weighing 7.88 tonnes, illegal hardwoods weighing 0.399 tonne, and illegal other timbers weighing 0.2 tonne, valued at K3,026,720, were seized in Toungoo, Pyay, and Thayawady districts. The action was carried out under Customs procedures and the Forest Law.

On 10 April, the combined teams confiscated two unregistered vehicles, valued at approximately K44 million, at the Yadanabon combined checkpoint in Sagaing township and an unregistered SKAT Sower car (estimated value of K7.5 million) at the MaU combined checkpoint in Monywa township. The operation was conducted under the Export and Import Law.

The Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee reported 20 arrests over three consecutive days, from 8 to 10 April, with an estimated value of K847 million. — MNA/MKKS



Seized illegally imported ZOJE sewing machine at Myanmar Industrial Port.

## Electric vehicles arrive at Yangon Port



Officials inspect newly arrived battery electric vehicles at Yangon Port yesterday.

WITH the approval of the National Electric Vehicle and Related Industries Development Steering Committee, HongQ and EQM5 electric vehicles of China imported by UV Au-

tomotive Co Ltd, China-made Dongfeng Nissan electric vehicles imported by Asia Pacific Automaker Corporation Co Ltd, BYD Seagull type electric vehicles and BYD E2

electric vehicles imported by Chindwin Shan Construction Co Ltd arrived at the Yangon Port and they were allowed to be claimed according to the procedure. — MNA/KZL

## Tapioca powder sales surge amid high Chinese demand despite steady prices

TAPIOCA powder price has been steady, though its sales have been good due to high demand from China, according to the yam growers.

Tapioca is harvested in winter every year, so there is no harvesting time in summer, though it has been sold in powder form, and its sale is good at present.

“The wholesale price of tapioca powder is around K3,000 a viss. It has been steady. Now, the trade of yam tubers is over, and it is time for powder to be used for all purposes. It can be substituted for wheat and can be made into sago seeds. For farmers, they hope for a high price. It was previously K2,800-K3,000. Most of the buyers are from China. They buy powder and produce finished products. Farmers earn from it,” said a yam grower.

Sago seed, which is one of Myanmar’s foods, is produced from sago plants as well as tapioca plants, and most of the sago seeds available in the market are made from tapioca. It has a high content of carbohydrates and sago produced from the sago plant and tapioca are no different.

China and India are the biggest buyers of tapioca powder, and Myanmar lies between the



Bags of tapioca powder are well organized at the warehouse.

two countries. Therefore, tapioca is a crop which can seek foreign earnings for Myanmar.

In the past, tapioca was grown traditionally, but it has switched to the framing method, which can help increase yield. Yam tubers can be dug in eight months, and production of finished products may decline if it is dug after 15 months. For making seedlings, they can be dug after ten months, and a chance of reaching the plant stage may be low if it is dug after 15 months. — Thit Taw/ZS

# ARTICLE/AD

## ASEAN-led Mechanisms: Balancing Power Dynamics ...

### FROM PAGE-9

The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) can be interpreted as an endeavour to extend the broader cooperative security strategy in the ASEAN region. However, it is worth noting that the composition of the ARF also raises considerations related to the balance of power. Scholars argue that the ARF serves as a means to ensure the ongoing involvement of the United States in the region, as articulated by Ralf in 2001 (Ralf 2001). Consequently, the concept of the balance of power becomes a salient factor within the institution's functions. Thus, China, for its part, seeks to utilize the ARF as a platform for advancing multilateralism in the Asia-Pacific region, positioning itself as a counter-hegemonic power in the post-Cold War global landscape.

### ASEAN Centrality and its Role in Shaping ASEAN-led Mechanisms

Regional specifications are now more fluid and more competitive. However, it is also linked to fundamental tensions that arise when ASEAN tries to shape regional cooperation processes with non-ASEAN members (Bisley 2017). The creation of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 1994, ASEAN Plus Three (APT) in 1997 and the East Asia Summit (EAS) in 2005 are significant external engagements beyond ASEAN.

As for the external partners, the hidden agenda in those ASEAN-led Mechanisms is the disguised balance of power factors, especially for the superpower countries. As for ASEAN, it becomes imperative to exercise prudence in dealing with the influence and dominance exerted by major powers to safeguard the core principle of ASEAN, which is 'ASEAN Centrality'. In the interconnected East Asian region, the Association realizes that events outside the immediate vicinity, particularly a rising China, would influence the interests of its Southeast Asian members. This recognition has prompted a strengthened emphasis on the concept of 'ASEAN Centrality' in engagement with external partners.

The challenges to ASEAN-led mechanisms involving other powers are not a new phenomenon (Ha 2022). When ASEAN was founded in 1967, it was established to resist the influence of powerful countries by small countries. The intensity of today's geopolitical tensions, not exclusively between the US and China, have forced the Indo-Pacific countries to invest more in regional cooperation in ASEAN than in unilateral

alliance to achieve their strategic goals.

Concurrently, it is imperative for ASEAN member states to maintain their unwavering commitment to safeguarding the fundamental tenets of "ASEAN Centrality" and the traditional framework encapsulated in the "ASEAN Way". This dedication is essential for ASEAN to fulfil its role as a rule-based regional organization, fostering enhanced regional resilience through the promotion of deeper political, security, economic, and socio-cultural cooperation, as articulated within the provisions of the "ASEAN Charter".

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the post-Cold War era witnessed a growing emphasis on international cooperation and the pivotal role of regional organizations in addressing global challenges. This shift has led to a transformation in the landscape of international relations, characterized by dynamism and constant fluctuations. Thus, this global transition, marked by globalization and the ascent of radical nationalist and religious movements, has introduced significant instability to the global arena.

Furthermore, the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated ideological disparities and geopolitical rivalries, particularly evident in the relations between the United States and China. At this critical juncture, ASEAN faces the risk of becoming entangled in the ongoing superpower competition, underscoring the ongoing examination of its role in balancing these rivalries and steering regional cooperation.

Additionally, Russia's involvement can be viewed as part of its hedging strategy, as it seeks to actively participate in its regional component within ASEAN-led mechanisms, such as the EAS and ARF. As demonstrated, these actors operate multifaceted strategies within the ASEAN regional context to advance their national interests and recalibrate regional power dynamics.

In navigating these evolving international and regional dynamics, we diplomats find ourselves confronting unforeseen circumstances that are not readily addressed by conventional diplomatic protocols and manuals. Therefore, this underscores the author's call to young diplomats from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to remain attuned to the rapidly shifting "diplomatic kaleidoscope" and to analyze it diligently. This approach is indispensable for the effective application of diplomacy to serve as the "first line of

defence" when protecting national interests on the international stage.

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### In the Matter of Voluntary Winding Up of the Company under Myanmar Insolvency Law

#### Canaan Myanmar Company Ltd ("The Company")

In accordance with the proceedings of the General Meeting of Canaan Myanmar Company Limited, held via Virtual Meeting on 11 April 2024, it has been resolved as follows:

1. Canaan Myanmar Company Ltd shall proceed the voluntary winding up process accordance with the Insolvency Law.
  2. The appointment of U Aung Nay Myo, Advocate (No. 17955), as the official liquidator of the Company, granting him the authority to execute all necessary procedures pertaining to the voluntary winding up and asset liquidation of the Company, adherence to the Law.
- Hence, it is hereby declared that all assets and liabilities of Canaan Myanmar Company Ltd shall be settled or claimed through the aforementioned liquidator before the date of 10 May 2024.
- By the instruction of Canaan Myanmar Company Ltd,

U Aung Nay Myo  
Advocate (No. 17955)  
Liquidator  
Ph No. - 09952211180

Daw Shar Le San Ni  
Higher Grade Pleader (No.55615)  
Ph No. - 09794604711

### Changing Distributor for Registered Pesticide

Distribution of pesticide registered by SAIGON PLANT PROTECTION JOINT STOCK Co., Ltd is changing from Akari Min Trading Co.,Ltd to RAINBOW AGROSCIENCES CO., LTD. Any objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Co-Secretary, Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, West Gyogone, Insein within 2 weeks.

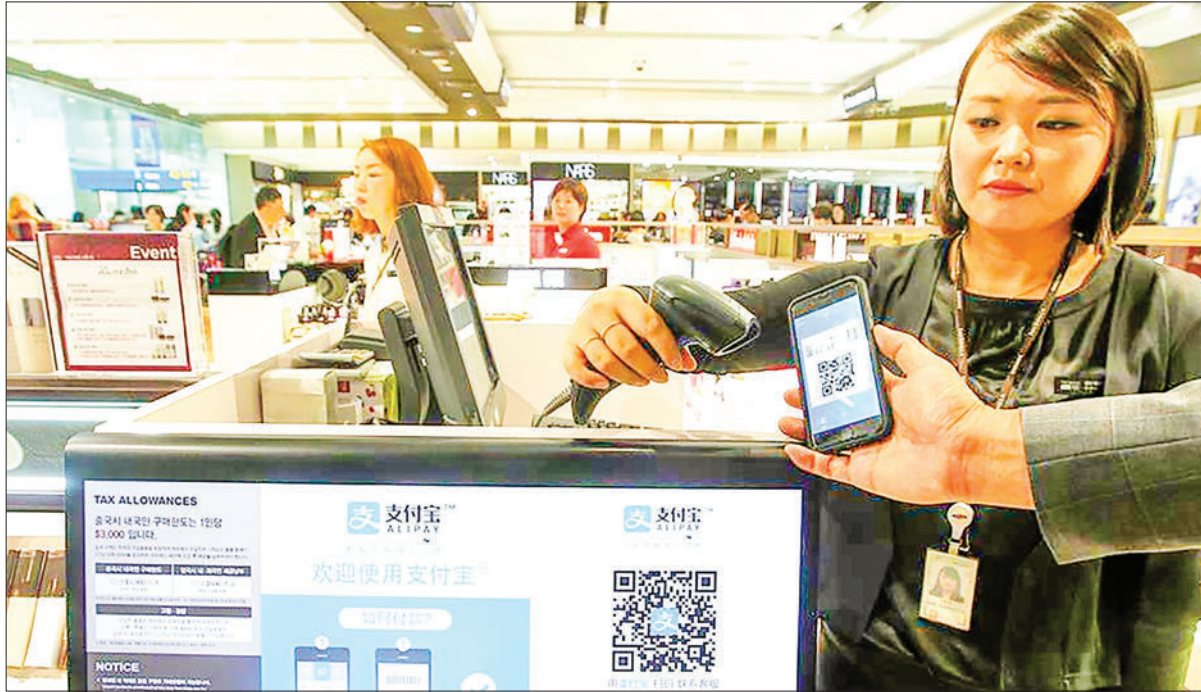
No.	Name	Active Ingredient	Registration Type and No.
1.	Lyphoxim 48 SL	Glyphosate 480g/l SL	Full 2021-3082

RAINBOW AGROSCIENCES CO., LTD  
09456060160, 09441170170

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# Payment service guide for overseas visitors to China

*This initiative aligns with China's broader efforts to streamline payment services, promote cashless transactions, and encourage mobile payment adoption, as outlined in a guideline released by the State Council in March.*



A cashier demonstrates how to use Alipay at a store in Incheon Airport in Seoul, South Korea, 6 October 2016. **PHOTO: YAO QILIN/XINHUA/FILE**

IN its latest efforts to facilitate ease of payments for overseas travellers, Chinese authorities earlier this week introduced measures to make payments more accessible for foreigners visiting the country's major tourist attractions.

A circular, jointly issued by several government organs including the People's Bank of China (PBOC), stipulates that domestic and over-

seas bank cards should be accepted in all three-star and above tourist hotels, 5A-level and 4A-level national tourist attractions, national and provincial tourist resorts, as well as national tourism and leisure districts.

Major cultural and tourism attractions should retain ticket booths and ticketing staff, and actively set up foreign currency exchange outlets in venues with a

large number of foreign tourists, the circular said.

The move represents part of China's push to facilitate payments for foreigners. In early March, the country's State Council released a guideline aimed at continuing to optimize payment services of bank cards, promoting cash use and facilitating mobile payment.

Over the past month, Chinese authorities have taken intensive steps to

smooth payments for foreign travellers. Major payment service providers, including Alipay and WeChat Pay, have also enhanced payment operations and introduced foreigner-friendly functions.

What are the payment options available for foreign visitors? How to make digital payments? The following are some policy highlights and payment tips. — Xinhua

# Top French court upholds 'veggie burger' label

FRANCE'S top administrative court Wednesday waded back into a battle over the labelling of veggie burgers, suspending a decree banning plant-based products from being described as meat.

The French government in February issued a decree to ban the term "steak" on the label of vegetarian products from 1 May, saying it was reserved for meat alone.

A veggie burger is called a veggie "steak" in French.

The decree listed 21 terms usually used by butchers — including "escalope", "ham", "filet" and "prime rib" — that it said were not allowed for plant-

based products.

The ruling was a response to a long-standing complaint by the meat industry that terms like "vegetarian ham" or "vegan sausage" were confusing for consumers.

It was based on a 2020 law before the nation's top administrative court — called the State Council — suspended application of the decree in 2022 after a complaint from French companies selling plant-based food. The State Council on Wednesday suspended a second decree to implement the same labelling law, saying there existed "a serious doubt over the legality of such a ban". — AFP

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MSC ANDREA F VOY.NO. (SB413A)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MSC ANDREA F VOY.NO. (SB413A)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **12-4-2024** 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 MEDITERRANEAN SHIPPING COMPANY S.A**

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SITC CHUNMING VOY.NO. (2404S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SITC CHUNMING VOY.NO. (2404S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **12-4-2024** 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 SITC CONTAINER LINE CO., LTD**

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ISEACO WISDOM VOY.NO. (V.115N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ISEACO WISDOM VOY.NO. (V.115N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **12-4-2024** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

**Shipping Agency Department  
Myanma Port Authority**

Agent For:

**M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES**

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V METHI BHUM VOY.NO. (421N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V METHI BHUM VOY.NO. (421N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **12-4-2024** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

**Shipping Agency Department  
Myanma Port Authority**

Agent For:

**M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES**

# ROLLING UPDATES

## WORLD

## Massive turnout at BJP rallies signifies people's faith in PM Modi: Tripura CM

Speaking at a large rally in Rajnagar, South District, in support of BJP candidate Biplab Kumar Deb, the Chief Minister commended the BJP workers' dedication and emphasized PM Modi's commitment to socioeconomic development, welfare programmes for farmers, youth, and various other sectors.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi. PHOTO: ANI

TRIPUR Chief Minister Manik Saha said that people want Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led BJP government again, as evidenced by the massive turnout at election rallies, showcasing people's faith in the BJP and PM Modi.

While addressing a massive election rally on Wednesday in Rajnagar in the South District in support of BJP candidate Biplab Kumar

Deb, the Chief Minister stated that BJP workers are tirelessly working and seeking blessings for Prime Minister Narendra Modi who has been dedicatedly working for socio-economic development, the welfare of farmers, youth, and various other sectors.

"We have witnessed overwhelming support for the BJP during the filing of nomination papers for BJP

candidates. BJP leaders visiting Tripura have said that the crowd signifies the outcome of 4 June. People want the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led BJP government to continue its developmental trajectory, as seen in the massive turnout at election rallies, which underscores people's faith in the BJP and PM Modi," he said. — ANI

## Switzerland to host Ukraine peace conference in June

Emphasizing Switzerland's commitment to peace and humanitarian values, Cassis highlighted the nation's tradition of playing a pivotal role in such endeavours.



Swiss President and Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis announced plans for Switzerland to host a high-level international conference in June, inviting over 100 countries to collaborate on forging a path to peace in Ukraine following more than two years of conflict. PHOTO: ANI

SWISS President and Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis said on Thursday that Switzerland will host a high-level international conference in the month of June with more than 100 countries invited to help chart a path towards peace in Ukraine after more than two years of war.

"Peace is at the heart of the Swiss spirit. Its humanitarian tradition plays a key role in this quest. Peace is not an abstraction, but a call to action that reflects our values and our responsibilities on the world stage," Ignazio Cassis said.

Further, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs said in the press release that, Switzerland is organizing a

high-level conference on peace in Ukraine, which is expected to take place in June 2024 at the Burgenstock.

The aim of the heads of state and government meetings is to develop a common understanding of a path towards a just and lasting peace in Ukraine.

"The conference aims to provide a platform for a high-level dialogue on ways to reach a comprehensive, just and lasting peace for Ukraine based on international law and the UN Charter.

It aims to create a common understanding of the framework conducive to this goal and a concrete roadmap for the peace process," the release added. — ANI

## Panama plans dry alternative to drought-hit canal

PANAMA on Wednesday unveiled plans for a "dry canal" to move cargo between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans due to low water levels in its century-old maritime channel.

The Panama Canal usually handles about six percent of global maritime trade, but a drought caused by climate change and the El Nino phenomenon has forced authorities to limit the number of ships passing through.

The Multimodal Dry Canal project will use existing roads,

railways, port facilities, airports and duty-free zones in a new "special customs jurisdiction," said Rodolfo Samuda, director of logistics at the ministry of the presidency.

It will not require any investment thanks to its use of existing infrastructure, he said at the presentation of the project.

A decree simplifying procedures for transporting cargo by land across the isthmus has already been declared by President Laurentino Cortizo.



A cargo ship passes through the Panama Canal. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

The project aims "to complement the Panama Canal" and resolve the problems facing its users, said Guillermo Salazar, director of the country's state development planning institute.

Now 27 ships navigate the Panama Canal each day, compared with 39 previously.

Unlike the Suez Canal, it uses fresh water provided by previously abundant tropical rains stored in two artificial lakes, which are also a crucial source of drinking water. — AFP

# SPORTS

## TV pundit apologizes for 'classist' comment about Barca starlet Yamal

The comment was criticized by Spanish media as "classist," leading to both teams boycotting post-match interviews with the broadcaster in protest.

FORMER Atletico Madrid assistant manager German Burgos has apologized for an offensive comment aimed at Barcelona winger Lamine Yamal when he was working as a TV pundit.

Burgos was commentating for Spanish television channel Movistar on Barcelona's 3-2 win at Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League quarter-final first leg.

After seeing footage of Yamal juggling a football, Burgos said the 16-year-old would "end up at a traffic light" if his career failed, seemingly suggesting he would beg

for money by performing tricks.

Spanish media labelled the comment "classist" and Burgos, who was previously Diego Simeone's former assistant coach at Atletico, was forced to apologise after both sides boycotted post-match interviews with the broadcaster after the game in protest.

"It was a comment not trying to hurt anyone, if anyone felt offended, I apologize publicly," Burgos said on Movistar.

"In these times you have to adapt to everything and that is what we are doing." Later Burgos published a statement on his Instagram account reiterating his apologies. — AFP



Barcelona forward Lamine Yamal (L) has burst into the limelight this season with dynamic performances on the right wing. PHOTO: AFP



Players of the Myanmar national futsal team celebrate victory in a warm-up match. PHOTO: MFF

## Myanmar faces Viet Nam in Asian Cup Futsal opener 2024

MYANMAR national futsal team will play against the Vietnamese team in the first group match in the Asian Cup futsal tournament 2024, in which Thailand will host in the final stage.

The tournament will last from 17 to 28 April, with the participation of four groups of four teams. Group A comprises Thailand, Viet Nam, China and Myanmar, whereas Group B consists of Uzbekistan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Australia. Japan, Tajikistan, South Korea, and Kirgizstan fall under Group

C, while Group D is formed with Iran, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Afghanistan. Myanmar will play with Viet Nam on 17 April, host Thailand on 19 April and China on 21 April.

Myanmar prepared to compete in the tournament in early 2024. It also made preparations for the first time from 20 January to 10 February. Since 18 March, the national team has been making second preparations for the tournament.

As part of the first preparation, the Myanmar national

futsal team made a trip to Indonesia and played three warm-up matches with Indonesian clubs. In the second preparation, Myanmar held two warm-up matches with the Afghanistan team and one each with the Kuwaiti and Kyrgyzstan teams.

Myanmar lost to Afghanistan 1-6 in the first match but won over the opponent with a 4-2 result. In Thailand, Myanmar beat the Kuwaiti team 4-2 in the warm-up game but lost to the Kirgizstan team 1-3. — Ko Nyi Lay/TTA

## 2025 Asian Winter Games to highlight environmental protection, technology

The Harbin Ice Hockey Arena, a prominent venue from past games, is undergoing renovation with a focus on sustainability.

WITH just over 300 days until the opening of the 9th Asian Winter Games in 2025, preparations in Harbin, northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, are proceeding in an orderly manner, with a focus on environmental protection and technology, according to the Games' organizing committee.

Harbin Ice Hockey Arena, once a venue for the 3rd Asian Winter Games, will once again take center stage at the 9th Asian Winter Games.

In recent days, renovation work at the arena has been proceeding in an orderly and intense manner.

"We have selected environmentally friendly decoration materials such as paints and boards, all of which must pass environmental testing before use. Sports lighting fixtures and equipment will all be energy-efficient, low-consumption devices, and temporary buildings will adopt recyclable modular structures," said Qin Xulin, Director



"Binbin" and "Nini", the adorable Siberian tiger mascots for the 9th Asian Winter Games in 2025, greet visitors at Harbin Songhua River Ice and Snow Carnival in northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, on 13 January 2024. PHOTO: CFP

of the Engineering Department of Harbin Urban Development Investment Group, pointing to

the construction underway in the Arena.

Liu Qinghui, head of the En-

vironmental Protection Team of the Athlete Services Department of the organizing committee, revealed that, since last year, the committee has been intensively preparing a plan for low-carbon hosting. It has been decided that green energy will be used for venue heating, and ultra-low energy consumption technology will be employed for electricity supply to achieve environmental protection effects.

The Harbin International Conference, Exhibition and Sports Centre, the venue for the opening and closing ceremonies of the 9th Asian Winter Games, also embodies green concepts in its design phase. — Xinhua

Massive turnout at BJP rallies signifies people's faith in PM Modi: Tripura CM

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## S Korean PM, senior secretaries offer to resign over parliamentary elections defeat



**S**OUTH Korean Prime Minister Han Duck-soo and almost all senior presidential secretaries on Thursday offered to resign over the ruling People Power Party's crushing defeat in parliamentary elections, local media reported citing the presidential office.

Han verbally tendered his resignation to President Yoon Suk-yeol and all the senior presidential secretaries, including chief of staff and chief secretary for policy, offered to step down except aides in the national security office.

President Yoon said he will humbly accept the will of people, shown in the elections, and will make his best efforts to reform state affairs and stabilize the economy and the people's livelihoods, according to the presidential office.

The quadrennial polls for

300 members of the National Assembly were carried out across the country on Wednesday to let voters cast ballots for 254 constituency seats and 46 proportional representation (PR) slots.

The liberal opposition bloc has won more than three-fifths of seats in the parliamentary elections, widely seen as a mid-term referendum to evaluate Yoon's management of state affairs.

The main liberal opposition

People Power Party leader Han Dong-hoon said after the exit poll results were announced that the party was "disappointed" but would continue watching until official tallies are released. **PHOTO: VIA SPUTNIK**

*South Korean Prime Minister Han Duck-soo and nearly all senior presidential secretaries have tendered their resignations following the ruling People Power Party's significant defeat in parliamentary elections, as reported by local media citing the presidential office.*

Democratic Party took 161 directly-contested constituency seats, while its satellite parties

secured 14 PR slots.

The minor liberal Rebuilding Korea Party earned 12 PR

seats, while the minor centre-left New Future Party and the minor leftist Progressive Party gained

one respective seat in electoral districts. The number of parliamentary seats, snatched by the broader liberal bloc, totalled 189.

The governing conservative People Power Party and its sister party obtained 90 constituency seats and 18 PR seats each.

The minor centre-right New Reform Party garnered one constituency seat and two PR seats. — Xinhua

A LUCKY Japanese astronaut will become the first non-American to set foot on the Moon during one of NASA's upcoming Artemis missions, US President Joe Biden announced Wednesday.

The offer to Japan — an opportunity many nations have long dreamed of — came as part of Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's state visit, and as Washington seeks to strengthen ties with its key Asian ally.

"Two Japanese astronauts will join future American missions, and one will become the first non-American ever to land on the Moon," Biden said in a press conference with Kishida.

Kishida hailed the announcement as a "huge achievement" and announced that Japan would in return supply a rover for the programme. — AFP

## Japanese astronaut to be first non-American to set foot on Moon



A rendering of the new space suit that NASA is designing for the Artemis astronauts. The suit is called the xEMU, or Exploration Extravehicular Mobility Unit. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ NASA**

## Israel opens new high-tech desert climate innovation centre in Negev

ISRAEL'S Ministry of Environmental Protection launched an innovation centre for DeserTech in the field of the desert climate, which it said will bring new employment opportunities in the high-tech field to residents of the Negev, the southern part of the country. While constituting most of Israel's territory, the Negev is a desert and is sparsely populated. The new centre, located in Be'er Sheva, will focus on promoting employment in the Negev in knowledge-intensive professions and creating technological solutions in the fields of climate, agriculture and desert. — ANI