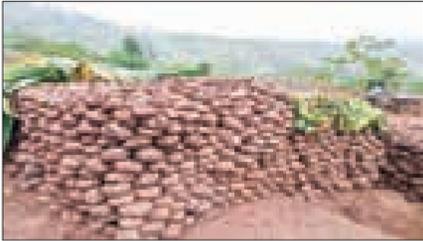


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Post-Thingyan sales for gold kick off with K4.8 mln per tical



Myanmar artistes perform the Myanmar traditional 'Thangetaw' Dance at the event in China on 12 April 2024.

Cultural Heritage Week held in Nanning

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Myanmar Consul-General Daw Khine Hsu Lin attended the opening ceremony of the Second China-ASEAN (Nanning) Intangible Cultural Heritage Week held in Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, in China on 12 April.

The event, taking place at the People's Theatre from 12 to 18 April, showcased cultural performance arts of different regional countries.

Eight Myanmar theatrical performers led by U Phoe Chit, chairperson of the Myanmar Theatrical Association, performed the Myanmar traditional

'Thangetaw' Dance, Bagan Dance and Thingyan Dance.

Over 100 officials and distinguished guests were in attendance, including Mr Wu Yujun, Director-General of the Guangxi Culture and Tourism Department. — ASH/NT

Thilawa SEZ records US\$6.2M surge in investments for FY2023-24



THE Thilawa Special Economic Zone saw a US\$6.2 million increase in investment in the 2023-2024 financial year compared to the previous year's amount, according to the zone's management committee.

The zone imports raw materials and manufactures import-replacement and export products.

The zone's export accounts for two per cent of the country's total export volume. It began solar-powered electricity generation in December 2022, with five companies currently involved in this initiative. The Ministry of Electric Power aims to produce 14 megawatts of solar power in the zone.

Chairman of the Central Committee on Myanmar Special Economic Zones Vice-Senior General Soe Win encouraged solar-powered electricity generation in the zone since the surplus can be used elsewhere. A total of 114 companies from 21 countries have invested in the Thilawa SEZ, spanning 667.2 hectares (approximately 1,650.139 acres). It is one of the three economic zones in Myanmar and is reportedly successful. — TWA/NT

The general façade view of the Thilawa Special Economic Zone.

NATIONAL

Myanmar Medical Council

Statement

19 April 2024

MYANMAR Medical Council provides high-quality, effective, and safe healthcare services to all people residing across the nation under the Myanmar Medical Council Law.

Shells of rockets launched by terrorists exploded on the orthopaedic ward of PyinOoLwin People's Hospital on the evening of 14 April 2024, leaving patients, including children, receiving medical treatments and hospital staff wounded and hospital buildings damaged. On the evening of 16 April 2024, terrorists attacked the child ward of Palauk People's Hospital in Palaw Township of Taninthayi Region with the use of drop bombs. In the incident, a child receiving medical treatment and relatives of the patient were wounded.

We were sorrowful to hear these incidents that hospital buildings, where healthcare services are being provided for the people, were damaged and patients, including innocent children receiving medical treatment, were wounded. We are unable to absolutely accept terror acts of terrorists for any reason, and the Myanmar Medical Council, formed with medical professionals who are performing medical treatment measures in Myanmar, condemns and opposes such terror acts.

Myanmar Private Hospitals Association

Statement

19 April 2024

INDIVIDUALS have the right to enjoy safe and secure healthcare services at any time and any place.

The association totally opposes armed attacks on hospitals and clinics which give healthcare services to the people and casualties to patients and health staff.

We know that rocket attacks on PyinOoLwin People's Hospital on 14 April 2024, fall of drop bombs on Palauk People's Hospital in Palaw Township of Taninthayi Region on 16 April 2024 and injuries of patients and health staff in these incidents, thus, the Myanmar Private Hospitals Association strongly condemns these terror acts.

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the highest level in Thingyan, especially. Tour companies can sell tour packages. So we can say, throughout the tour season, the travel sector reached its highest in Thingyan," said U Naung Naung Han.

In this year's Thingyan, people flocked to Chaungtha Beach and Ngwehsaung Beach, and hotels could provide rooms only for those who reserved them. People who couldn't find rooms at the two famous beaches went to newly developed beaches, and some people took pilgrimage tours.

"Travelling quite escalated in Thingyan holidays. Some other destinations are limited in the current situation, so most people visit Chaungtha, Ngwehsaung, and other beaches,

as well as Bagan, Mandalay, Inlay, and Kalaw, where they can go on pilgrimage. But it is assumed that the visitor arrival was greater than last year," he said.

"Many people flocked to Ngwehsaung and Chaungtha in Thingyan, but rooms were available only to those who reserved, so people who didn't get rooms took day trips to new beaches. We could also explore new destinations that are safe for travel in the current situation," he added.

However, the country's tourism sector has yet to regain the state it was before COVID-19, but it seems to have improved again after COVID-19, he said. — MT/ZS

IN this year's tour season, traveling reached its highest during Thingyan, and the tourism sector has improved more than last year, according to the Myanmar Tourism Entrepreneurs Association.

There is a likelihood that the travel industry will be booming this year compared to last year, and it reached its highest during Thingyan, said the association Chair U Naung Naung Han.

"When we looked back to this year's tour season, which begins from 2023's open season, October to this year's Thingyan, we had a good start, and a slight decline in around November and December but continuously increased back as from December new year festive period. It reached

Travel surges during this year's Thingyan Festival



Vacationers at Chaungtha Beach during the Thingyan Festival.

Kachin State Chief Minister meets IDPs

KACHIN State Chief Minister U Khet Htein Nan and his wife, accompanied by other state government officials, met internally displaced people (IDPs) fleeing the ongoing conflict at the Waingmaw township general administration department on 18 April.

The chief minister reassured the IDPs that they understood the challenges facing them and would provide support, including food and accommodation.

Then, they donated K11.9

million worth of rice bags, instant noodles and snacks to about 100 families sheltering at the Lhaovo Literature and Culture Committee office and KBC camp.

The state chief minister and party have also coordinated efforts to provide shelter for the IDPs, ensuring protection from the weather conditions. Additionally, they are overseeing the digging of wells to secure a safe drinking water source and the construction of additional latrines to improve sanitation



Kachin State Chief Minister U Khet Htein Nan and officials inspect supporting activities for IDPs in Waingmaw Township.

conditions.

They also inspected the construction of bamboo hous-

es for the IDPs, whose houses burnt down due to the ongoing conflict, at the Lisu Baptist

Church and coordinated efforts to dig wells and provide electricity. — Kachin State IPRD/NT



The Western Command commander provides cash assistance and foodstuffs to a patient.

Commander comforts patients at military hospital in Sittway

WESTERN Command Commander Brig-Gen Kyaw Swa Oo and officials comforted and supported cash assistance and nutritious foods for soldiers and family members and the members of the Myanmar Police Force who are receiving

medical treatment at the military Hospital in Sittway, Rakhine State.

Afterwards, the commander and officials inspected the hospital, and they coordinated the necessary arrangements. — MNA/TRKM

Government pushes for export growth

THE government is focusing on measures to promote export growth for the development of the country's economy. The Ministry of Commerce and the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) are collaborating as part of a government-private partnership. On 19 April, 6,600 tonnes of corn seeds were exported from the Ahlon International Port Terminal (AIPT 3). Additionally, aquatic products, rice, and beans are being exported through the Asia World Port Terminal (AWPT 3).

Moreover, 12,700 tonnes of corn seeds and 2,700 tonnes are going to be exported continuously from The Myanmar Terminal (TMT) and Min Htet Min Port (MHM) on 20 and 22 April, respectively. — MNA/TRKM



A bird's eye view of Yangon Port along the Yangon River.

DICA report: 1,650 companies fail to file AR in March 2024

A total of 1,650 companies were struck off the register in March 2024 as they failed to submit annual returns (AR) on the online registry system, MyCO, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

DICA notified any registered company that fails to file its AR on the MyCO that it is to be struck off the register from the date of the directive, under 430 (F) of Myanmar Companies Law, according to the DICA's notification.

DICA's statistics showed that 750 companies in January 2024 and 600 in February did not file the AR. A total of 6,400 companies also failed to submit the AR in 2023.

The registration and re-registration of companies on the MyCO website commenced on 1 August 2018, in

keeping with the Myanmar Companies Law 2017.

All registered companies need to submit AR on the MyCO registry system within two months of incorporation and at least once every year (not later than one month after the anniversary of the incorporation), according to Section 97 of the law.

Under Section 266 (A) of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017, public companies must submit annual returns and financial statements (G-5) simultaneously. All overseas corporations must submit ARs in the prescribed format on MyCO within 28 days of the financial year ending under Section 53 (A-1) of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017. As per DICA's report, thousands of companies were suspended for failing to submit AR forms before the

due date. Newly established companies are required to submit ARs within two months of incorporation or face a fine of K100,000 for filing late returns.

DICA has notified that any company which fails to submit its AR within 13 months will be notified of its suspension (I-9A). If it fails to submit the AR within 28 days of receiving the notice, the system will show the company's status as suspended. Companies can restore their status only after shelling out a fine of K50,000 for the AR fee, K100,000 for restoration of the company on the register, and K100,000 for late filing of documents, totalling K250,000. If a company fails to restore its status within six months of suspension, the registrar will strike its name off the register, according to the DICA notice. — NN/EM

NATIONAL



Pagodas and stupas made of lacquerware. PHOTO- BAGAN YE AYATHA ART GALLERY PAGE

Buyers drawn to lacquered pagoda, stupa models

PAGODA and stupa models created by lacquer in own designs have caught the public attention and there are enthusiastic buyers, said an entrepreneur U Thein Naing.

He initially aimed to create lacquered models of famous pagodas and temples in Bagan for Buddhist devotees all around the country, fortunately his creations drew many attentions that led

him to continue creating similar models of pagodas and stupas in some other famous destinations.

At present, he has created about 30 lacquered models of famous pagodas, including Shwedagon Pagoda, Dhammayangyi Temple, Thatbyinnyu Temple, Ananda Temple, Kyauk Myat Hmaw Pagoda, Gupyaunggyi Temple (Myinkaba) and Shwe-sandaw Pagoda.

“My creations are divided into two categories: Manyun (the creation of Buddha images or stupa with dry lacquer applied layer upon layer) and bamboo-strip pagoda. All of them are lacquered products but differ in a base layer. If it is a piece of wood, it is a wooden lacquerware. Making with pieces of bamboo strip is called a bamboo-lacquered pagoda. Manyun is made of fabric and

lacquer. They have gained the public attention, and there are also buyers,” said U Thein Naing.

Making a Hnee (bamboo strip) pagoda requires layering small bamboo strips like piling bricks. It takes about four months, and a pagoda or stupa is worth around K2 million. Making a Manyun pagoda takes about a month, and the price is around K1 million.

“Most of the models I’ve made currently are one and a half feet and 19 inches or 20 inches and two feet in height. Because these sizes are perfect for worship in either shrine or Dhammayon. Buyers need to make an order in advance if they want to make it gold,” he said.

Both the Manyun pagoda and bamboo-strip pagoda are strong and magnificent. Manyun is an ancient lacquered technique, while bamboo-strip pagoda is also a traditional Myanmar handiwork, and customers can make any customized size according to their preference. — MT/ZS

Efforts underway to promote domestic konjac consumption

THE Myanmar Konjac (elephant foot yam) Producer and Exporter Association will develop a project to encourage the consumption of konjac in the domestic market while the konjac is exported abroad.

The Myanmar konjac is produced in Myanmar and mainly exported to China. Its consumption in Asian countries, including China, Japan, and South Korea, is high. However, the consumption in Myanmar is low.

“Domestic konjac consumption is lower than in China and Japan. South Korea’s consumption is very high. The Myanmar konjac is a healthy



The photo shows the konjac from Myanmar.

food both in terms of nutritional value and health. In Myanmar, konjac consumption and kon-

jac-related food production are still low. As an association, we are carrying out activities to

promote consumption in Myanmar and reach the domestic market,” said Ko Pyae Tha

San, the Secretary of the Myanmar Konjac (elephant foot yam) Producer and Exporter Association.

Besides konjac-based foods produced in Myanmar, such as konjac noodles and salad, konjac is consumed in a few other ways, but compared to countries in the Asian region, consumption remains relatively low.

In addition to this, the association is currently working with relevant departments to obtain a certificate from the General Administration of Customs of China (GACC) to encourage the export of konjac to China. — ASH/MKKS

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CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION

(+95) (01) 8604532,
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ADVERTISING & MARKETING

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

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gnlmnews@gmail.com
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NATIONAL

New PutaO-Khaunglanphu transport boosts tourism sector

IN 2020, the government constructed a 56-mile transport passage between the ice-covered town of PutaO and Khaunglanphu, which is located in the northeast of Myanmar, to facilitate the education, health and economic aspects of the local people. The development of the tourism sector will improve the socio-economic life of the local people by allowing domestic and foreign tourists to visit the mountain area, which is covered with snow all the time.

Among the ASEAN countries, mountain climbers frequently visit the Phonkanrazi and Khakaborazi ice-capped mountains located in PutaO, which is characterized by its snowy landscapes.

A road has been constructed from PutaO to Hsanhlutchet Hill of Khaunglanphu, spanning a distance of 76 miles. The remaining 56 miles of road have been completed by the Ministry of Border Affairs, enabling travellers to journey freely day and night.

“The mountain road that once posed various difficulties for travellers from Khaunglanphu, Nagmon to PutaO is now accessible. Bridges have also been constructed. Landslides occur during the rainy seasons and in severe weather conditions.

“However, after recent repairs following a landslide that blocked the road a few days ago, goods began flowing to PutaO on 17 April. Since there is no border gate, PutaO remains the primary destination for commodity flows. Some goods are redistributed to other regions and states after being transported from PutaO.

“Due to the lack of flat lands or plains, it is challenging to engage in other agricultural activities. Many locals on the hills and mountains survive themselves from growing spices. With the development of the tourism sector, employ-

ment opportunities for locals will increase.

Opening up the tourism sector in the Khaunglanphu region, which is abundant in natural beauty, will raise awareness of Myanmar’s tourism potential worldwide,” U Than Tun, Deputy Director of PutaO District Administration Body, explained.

Khaunglanphu Township, situated at an altitude of 4,680 feet, is a hilly town. Locally grown produce such as rice, corn, and spices, including small fruits found in the roots of plants like ginger, are often sold at the PutaO local market and exported to China. The PutaO region is primarily known for grapefruit cultivation, along with the production

of medicinal plants, tubers, iced fish, and vegetables.

Renowned as a destination for snow-capped mountain travel areas, if Khaunglanphu flourishes as a tourist region, it will significantly enhance Myanmar’s tourism sector by attracting both local and foreign visitors.

Khaunglanphu experiences cold weather and snow throughout the year. At the foot of the hill in Khaunglanphu,

where the Maykha River and Archankha River converge, locals refer to it as the confluence. From November to March, temperatures annually drop below freezing, while foggy conditions characterize the remaining months.

Mount Shengkhong, Mount Zeitung, Mount Gitok, and Mount Urein, all towering above 9,000 and 10,000 feet, are often cloaked in ice.

The People’s Republic of China borders the town to the east and north, Nagmon and Machanbaw to the west, and Sumprabum and Sawlaw to the south. Established in the colonial era, Khaunglanphu boasts a rich historical background and natural beauty.

It is also crucial for national border security, and nature-based tourism flourishes in the Khaunglanphu region, which is constantly surrounded by clouds, lakes, and mist. — Nyein Thu(MNA)/TKO



PHOTOS: KML

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News and Periodicals Enterprise



NATIONAL

Senior actor U Tin Tun passes away at 87

SENIOR actor U Tin Tun passed away on 18 April at the age of 87.

The Anupyinya Seesaryeik Home for the Aged made a social media post of condolences on the demise of senior actor U Tin Tun.

It is described that U Tin Tun was the most adorable, gentle, and peaceful grandfather who had been living at the home since 14 May 2017. He was a happy person and was loved by everyone. He had dementia, a type of Alzheimer's disease. Apart from the impaired ability to remember, Grandpa U Tin Tun did not have any other severe diseases.

Senior actor U Tin Tun entered the film industry at age 17. He starred in numerous films alongside contemporary actresses such as Kyi Kyi Htay, Myint Myint Khin, Wah Wah Win Shwe, San Shar Tin, and others. U Tin Tun left behind four sons, three daughters, and grandchildren at the time of his death. — TWA/TRKM



The photo of senior actor U Tin Tun.

Post-Thingyan sales at Bayintnaung Wholesale Centre indicate stable onion prices

DESPITE the supply of over 100,000 visses of onions from various regions to the Bayintnaung Wholesale Centre on 18 April, the market prices remain unchanged at K1,600-K3,000 per viss, traders said.

The figures showed the flat rate of the pre-and-post-Thingyan deals.

Prior to the Thingyan holidays (on 12 April), 30,000 visses of onions flowed into some warehouses in the Bayintnaung area. Additionally, 360,000 visses of onions on 8 April, 240,000 on 9 April, 120,000 on 10 April and 30,000 on 11 April entered the Bayintnaung Wholesale Centre, respectively.

The onion-producing areas increased supply to Yangon's market in early April. As summer onions fetched a good price in early 2024, the majority of the growers harvested them.

The wage at the harvest



A pile of onion bags flowing into a warehouse in the Bayintnaung market area.

time was equivalent to the value of seven visses of onions in the previous years.

It is worth only five-viss onion market rate upon higher price this year, Ko Khin Maung Myint, an onion grower from Nyaungpintha village, Pale Township, told The Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM).

Production per acre costs

K3 million while the yield per acre is estimated at 4,000-6,000 visses.

This year, summer onion growers are expected to earn greater profits compared with those of the previous years, he added.

The new monsoon onions were valued at K3,000 per viss in late 2023 and 2,000 in early January 2024. — TWA/KK

THE Department of Meteorology and Hydrology (DMH) has issued a notice that there may be untimely rain in some regions and states, including Yangon Region.

According to a statement released by the DMH, untimely rains may occur between 17 and 23 April due to the swift movement of whirlwinds from the west, the eastward motion of clouds, and the vigorous formation of thermal clouds.

Until 9:30 am on 19 April, according to weather gauges, in the past 24 hours, there were scattered thundershowers in Chin State, Nay Pyi Taw, upper Sagaing Region, Kachin State and Shan State, and scattered thundershowers in lower Sagaing Region, Mandalay Region, Magway Region, and Bago Region.

DMH has informed the public to be aware of weather phenomena such as untimely

DMH predicts potential unseasonal rain in certain States & Regions



On 16 April, a local posted on social media that hail was falling in Pindaya Township in southern Shan State.

rain, thunder, lightning, hail, and strong winds in areas with convective cloud formation.

In addition, there will be scattered thundershowers in upper Sagaing Region, Kachin

State and Shan State (North and East) and in Nay Pyi Taw, lower Sagaing Region, Man-

dalay Region, Bago Region, Yangon Region, Shan State (South), Chin State, Rakhine State and Mon State in the next two days.

The announcement further stated that moderate convective cloud formation will occur in the rest of the regions and states. — TWA/TKO



Post-Thingyan sales for gold kick off with K4.8 mln per tical



Seven big gold shops in Yangon issue daily market rates three times a day. Gold jewellery seen being displayed for sales.

THE domestic gold market price was opened at over K4.82 million per tical (0.578 ounce or 0.016 kilogramme) on 19 April despite the closing price of around K4.71 million per tical on 11 April before Thingyan holidays.

The peak in the opening price was attributed to the spot gold price rally and kyat depreciation against the US dollar.

The spot gold price climbed to US\$2,380 per ounce on 19 April, while the kyat-US dollar exchange rate was K3,890.

Prior to the Myanmar New Year (Thingyan holidays), gold prices hit a record high of K4.84 million per tical on 10 April.

YGEA notified on 30

March that inspections were underway against those allegedly manipulating the market through a verbal deal.

Seven big gold shops in Yangon issue daily market rates three times a day. Nonetheless, those price speculators are attempting to raise the price by misleading price information that is not an actual transaction rate in the market. YGEA condemned those unscrupulous traders and their dishonest acts. YGEA asked its members to inform law enforcement agencies of the news regarding those manipulators.

The market exchange rates are officially announced on the online trading platform of the foreign exchange mar-

ket. Additionally, CBM lets authorized money changers sell foreign currency as petty cash to those studying abroad, going on a pilgrimage, and working abroad, according to CBM's notification on 30 March.

Some unscrupulous individuals are attempting to manipulate the gold and currency market by spreading misinformation from the verbal deal or sparking public concerns with malicious news about the volatile exchange rate. Some are also engaged in transactions without a valid licence, violating the existing laws.

They will face legal action under the Foreign Exchange Management Law. The CBM also informed the people of assessing accurate information and data released by the departments concerned and authorized money changers.

CBM constantly states that it is essential to dispel false news. Upon tips off, the authorities inspect the price speculators, and legal proceedings against them are officially declared, according to its notification released on 30 March. — NN/EM

Petrol prices slightly increase, diesel prices dip

PETROL prices showed an uptick, while diesel prices moved down in the domestic fuel market on 19 April.

The fuel oil prices stood at K2,850 per litre of Octane 92, K2,960 for Octane 95, K2,435 for diesel and K2,480 for premium diesel on that day.

The petrol prices were set at K2,820 for Octane 92 and K2,930 for Octane 95, whereas the diesel prices were registered at K2,485 for diesel and K2,530 for premium diesel on 18 April. Domestic fuel prices are closely tied to the price index set by Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS), the pricing basis for many refined products in southeast Asia, according to the Supervisory Committee on Oil Import, Storage and Distribution of Fuel Oil. The diesel oil prices hit the highest of K3,245 for premium diesel and K3,330 for diesel in August 2023.

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

The committee is inspecting the fuel stations to see whether they are overcharging. The authorities are taking action against those retailers of fuel stations under the Petroleum and Petroleum Products Law 2017 if they are found overcharging rather than the set reference rate. As per the statement, 90 per cent of fuel oil in Myanmar is imported, while the remaining 10 per cent is produced locally. Domestic fuel prices are highly correlated with international prices. The State is steering the market to mitigate the losses experienced by importers, sellers, and energy consumers. Consequently, the government is trying to distribute the oil at a reasonable price compared to those of regional countries.

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

Higher domestic wheat yield reduces imports

THERE is enough domestic wheat without importing from abroad because of the increase in wheat acreage and improved yields in this year's wheat season, said U Soe Win Myint, the owner of Soe Win Myint Warehouse in Mandalay.

Even wheat flour or wheat seed has to be bought and imported from abroad at the expense of foreign currency. While domestic wheat consumption has been rising annually, wheat cultivation has been modest in the past years. This year, wheat, which is the second most consumed millet crop after paddy in Myanmar, has expanded its acreage and improved yields. As a result, there is no need to import from abroad, and there is enough wheat produced locally. "Wheat from all across the

nation is entering the Mandalay market this year. Both flatlands and mountains are suitable for wheat cultivation, with primary farming areas located in the Sagaing region, Shan State (North), and Shan State (South). While there are several wheat varieties, the highest grade is found in wheat produced at Budalin and Myaung townships in Sagaing Region. Previously, we relied on importing wheat flour and seeds. By 2024, our domestic wheat production will satisfy our needs, eliminating foreign exchange wastage. Additionally, wheat factories are operating smoothly. The price of wheat is set at K150,000 per bag," he said.

The wheat crop is a winter crop that can only be grown once a year. It is cultivated in



A thriving grain plantation in the upcountry.

mountainous areas such as the Sagaing Region, Shan State (South), Shan State (North), and Kayah State. Additionally, it is grown in Chin State and the

upper regions of the Chindwin River. Mainly, cultivation occurs in Shwebo, Monywa, Wetlet, YeU, KhinU, Myaung, and Myinmu townships of the Sagaing

Region and Thedaw, Wundwin, and Myittha townships of the Mandalay Region. — Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)/MKKS

OPINION

Choose the best options leading to goal of Myanmar

IF INDIVIDUALS wish to experience the essence of peace and stability fully, they must adhere to certain principles, cleansing their souls of hate, grudges, and hostilities. It is essential for fostering internal peace and tranquillity not only for themselves but also for their families, societies, and nations.

Currently, a significant portion of the population bears the weight of numerous hardships, including instability and a lack of peace of mind. Those residing in rural and far-flung areas often experience the constant fear of threats to their lives, bullying, and intimidation without the support of reliable individuals or organizations. These challenges greatly impede their ability to meet their basic needs on a daily basis.

Although some residents of urban areas also experience the repercussions of lacking peace and stability, it is evident that everyone

advocating for the well-being of the populace must prioritize easing tensions in these areas. Failing to do so necessitates fulfilling the needs of these individuals. Therefore, all parties and organizations must acknowledge their responsibility in addressing the grievances of these communities and alleviating their suffering.

As Myanmar welcomes the New Year, it is imperative for everyone to let go of feelings of hate and animosity. Only through collective efforts to discard these negative emotions can the nation truly achieve peace and stability, transcending barriers of religion and ethnicity. It's crucial to remember that every country is composed of both its people and its rulers; without the support and cooperation of the populace, rulers cannot effectively govern.

Therefore, any groups aspiring to govern the country must synchronize their actions and work together towards common goals, taking into consideration the well-being of the people. Hate, grudges, and hostilities have no place in nation-building. Similarly, conflict and violence cannot lay

the foundation for a peaceful and stable country. Thus, all relevant organizations have the freedom to choose the most suitable options to advance their visions and missions.

It is essential for everyone to embrace the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation, paving the way for a future where peace and harmony prevail. Individuals must actively work towards fostering lasting peace and stability by ending conflicts among all parties, easing tensions, and empathizing with those affected by the loss of life and property in conflict-affected areas. By doing so, the nation can revitalize its strength and implement effective nation-building plans, alleviating the terrible plights, sufferings, frets, and miseries faced by its people.

IF SOMEONE were to ask what it would take for Myanmar to grow like neighbouring countries, most people outside of the country would say 'political stability'. Those educated and peace-loving groups would say 'law and order', or rather, the enforcement of it. In contrast, the terrorist-loving group would repeat 'we want democracy' without giving any thought to the meaning of it. I have decried the absence of law and order in many of my previous articles. At the same time, although the rules and regulations may be there in limited aspects of the commercial world, the absence of acceptable standards across the board becomes a major contributing factor and a self-fulfilling downward spiral on the development front.

There is no enforcement due to a lack of regulations or details, e.g., condominium law. Then why do we need standards or rules if there is no enforcement after all? There are no standards to enforce; hence, there is no enforcement. If there is no enforcement, then why spend time even coming up with standards in the first place?

Why standards are so important

Without having standards of behaviour, expectations, or otherwise, there is no way to see what improvements need to be made to improve performance or see the impact of changes that have been made. It's hard to improve on a base of chaos. Just think of a simple application or complaint made to YCDC or a letter written to the government. Or, think of changing the land title names at the land registration office.

Taiichi Ohno, father of the famous Toyota Production System, once said the primary reason for creating standards is to develop and maintain standard work. Improvements cannot be made and refined without a standard baseline. If some departments or individuals do not complete work the same way, it will be nearly impossible to improve their processes. Standard work will lead to better quality and happier customers.

When it comes to standardizing work and service levels, there is a lot to lose by doing nothing.

Adherence to best practices: There are many ways to get



Lack of standards affects various sectors, leading to costly consequences. ILLUSTRATION: IMAGE USED FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSE/DREAMSTIME

The High Cost of Having Low or No Standards

from A to B, just like Myanmar can move forward. Or how the government department should respond to applications, requests and complaints. However, the most efficient way or the best way is based on data currently available. Standard work ensures that each person who performs a task is using the best currently known method. Imagine paying bills at EPC, for example. It said you can pay by cheque on the bill, but actually you cannot!

A shorter path to improvement, as stated above by Ohno. It is impossible to improve on a process that is not documented, inconsistently applied and not universally understood (i.e., if there are no standards or SOPs). Only by mapping out the current state of work can you analyze its opportunities for improvement and know if the improvement actually worked. Just imagine policies being

altered at a whim based on the mood from above.

More engagement and less stress: Imagine dealing with government offices. Without standard response time, the public is stressed out wanting to find out the outcomes of their correspondence; hence, they call up, break up, or bribe, stressing out civil service and eventually running away from engaging the people. Most government departments are working in this fashion.

Reduces defects and wastes; Standard Work is a way of integrating error proofing into the process. Defects and low quality are often the results of deviating from the best practice. Standard Work seeks to eliminate these exceptions. Do you ever wonder why almost no government departments published standard waiting times, processing times, etc., here?

Increased customer satisfaction: Customers are happy when they get quality products on time. That is probably the last thing on the minds of most civil servants.

Better pricing: having standards ensures that products sold here can be compared directly with similar items in the neighbouring countries; thus, consumers do not get ripped off. Buyers beware, especially in online shops. Ability to grow rapidly: We can have the smartest, most experienced, and most qualified employees on the planet, and we can trust them to use their individual judgement. Unfortunately, that is not growth. As countries grow, they need to rely more heavily on great processes and less on extraordinary people. The collapse or abandonment of most standards set during President Thein Sein's time probably caused the downfall of economic growth during

the Suu Kyi era.

More focus on strategic objectives; if the government does not have to worry about every little product error or service complaint, the leaders can focus on strategic priorities, good governance and other value-added activities.

Reduce corruption: Having standards to comply with means that there is little room for negotiation or under-the-table arrangements to achieve better performance. A lack of standards simply encourages corruption. Do we really need examples here?

What products are costing Myanmar dear

Do you always wonder why everyone wants to open a goldsmith shop in Myanmar? Because even by buying pure gold from the shop (1 tical), the seller can make

also paying high costs for low standards. The majority of doctors and specialist consultants have little respect for the patients by showing up always late at hospitals and clinics. Fake antibiotics and other medicines are available in many pharmacies. There are no standards and enforcement either. As a result, the rich ended up in Thailand and Singapore for medical appointments, depriving the country of hard-earned US dollars, and the poor ended up suffering in a lifelong hell of paying for lousy services and fake products.

Lack of standards in construction also means more injuries and unsatisfied customers. Myanmar contractors are infamous for being short on two things at least: waterproofing and keeping the work site clean during and after the construction period. The former leads to reworks through water leakages through the walls or the roof, especially during the raining season, whereas the latter leads to an unsightly environment that reflects the poor standards within the industry.

As mentioned above, the lack of standards in civil service is also causing a major loss for the country, wasting everyone's time and contributing towards corrupt practices across the board.

Lack of standards also has led to a lack of discipline among the population and fraudulent activities in every area of trade. Think of people spitting their nice-looking and hygienic betel nut leftover juice after chewing on online frauds and scams that happened out of border areas within Myanmar. Cheating on CVs and getting fake educational certificates have become commonplace, too. Employees all now have to be tested for competencies before actually hiring, adding to business costs.

Until standards start to be in place in all areas of trade and work, accompanied by strict enforcement of these standards, Myanmar will continue to be a backwater of ASEAN. One infamous leader of yesteryears once said that Myanmar would overtake Singapore in 20 years, and there are things that Singapore can learn from Myanmar, too. After you read this article, you definitely know that this last statement is all but nonsense!

In the areas of medicine and medical services, Myanmar is

World Bank aims to expand health services to 1.5 billion people by 2030

Key strategies include reaching remote and underserved regions, as well as collaborating with governments to eliminate financial barriers to healthcare access. World Bank Group President Ajay Banga stressed the importance of this endeavour for overall development, highlighting the necessity of a collective effort involving public and private sector partnerships.

THE World Bank Group has announced an ambitious plan to support countries in delivering quality, affordable health services to 1.5 billion people by 2030.

The strategy to reach 1.5 billion people is focused on three core elements: Expanding focus from maternal and child health to include coverage throughout a person's lifetime, including non-communicable diseases.

The other two are expanding operations to hard-to-reach areas, including remote villages, cities, and countries; and working with governments to cut unnecessary fees and other financial barriers to health care.

"Providing a basic standard of care for people throughout their lives is critical for development," said Ajay Banga, World Bank Group President.

"This ambition won't be realized with a solo effort. It will require partners, a coalition of public and private sector, working together to expand access

to healthcare services," Banga said.

Severe financial hardship Today, around two billion people face severe financial hardship when paying for health services.

Intertwined challenges, such as climate change, pandemics, conflicts, societal ageing, and a projected shortfall of 10 million healthcare workers by 2030, exacerbate the cycle of poverty and inequality, World Bank said.

The World Bank Group said it will combine financing, knowledge, and partnerships to address this challenge.

The goal to deliver quality, affordable health services to 1.5 billion people by 2030 is one of the more recent examples of the World Bank Group's commitment to become more impact-oriented and is the by-product of a concerted effort to build a better bank.

SOURCE: ANI



This initiative emphasizes broadening healthcare coverage across all stages of life, encompassing non-communicable diseases alongside maternal and child health. ILLUSTRATION: PIXABAY

NATIONAL



The Popa langur at the Popa Mountain National Park.

Park official spots Popa langur recovery signals

THE Popa langur, an endangered species of monkey distinguished by its long tail, has shown signs of recovery, according to Forester Daw Khin Myo Htwe of the Popa Mountain National Park.

The monkeys are endemic to Myanmar and found chiefly in the Popa Mountain in Mandalay Region, Bago Range, and Panlong, Padalin Caves and Yathaepyan Cave in Shan State.

The forester explained: “We have two endemic monkey species in the park. The Popa langur lives mainly in the volcanic valley. At the Taung Kalat (the site on the volcanic plug), you may find rhesus monkeys. The park officials monitor the langur’s nature and habitat to keep track of their population. The volcanic valley is home to three groups of monkeys, each with more than 50

members. We noticed an increase in the number of infants each year, with a total of 250. So, it’s good news, given their endangered status.”

Officials also conduct knowledge-sharing sessions in 44 adjacent villages to conserve the biodiversity of the region.

The Popa langur primarily feeds on leaves, and their population is estimated to range from 200 to 250 individuals. This species faces significant vulnerability due to hunting pressures and habitat loss.

The Gottingen-based German Primate Centre and Fauna and Flora International have studied the genetics and morphology of the Popa langur and published their findings annually. — ASH/NT

Shwe Padauk Fish Market: Hub of fish and prawn distribution in Myanmar

EVERY day, over 300,000 visses of fish and prawns arrive at the Shwe Padauk Fish Market in Hlaing Township, Yangon Region, accounting for 70 per cent of the country’s total fish market distribution, according to U Wai Lin, who oversees the market.

The Shwe Padauk Fish Market reportedly receives not only saltwater fish and prawns from Rakhine State, Ayeyawady Region, Mon State, and Taninthayi Region but also freshwater fish and prawns from Yangon Region, Bago Region, and Ayeyawady Region on a daily basis.

“The market distributes fish and prawns to Mandalay Region, Shan State, and Kachin State

in Upper Myanmar. It also redistributes saltwater fish and prawns to Rakhine State, Taninthayi Region, and Ayeyawady Region. Additionally, the market exports them to Bangladesh via Rakhine State and to China via Shan State and Kachin State. China mainly imports hilsa, while Bangladesh primarily imports rohu and sturgeon,” elaborated U Wai Lin.

The Shwe Padauk Fish Market comprises nine sheds housing over 400 shops. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the market saw a daily influx of more than 400,000 visses of freshwater and saltwater fish and prawns. — ASH/TKO



Inner views of the Shwe Padauk Fish Market.

Confiscations of illegal items: Timbers, foodstuffs and vehicles

DURING inspections on 17 and 18 April, the combined on-duty teams seized illegal teak weighing 9.583 tonnes, illegal hardwoods weighing 2.396 tonnes and other timbers weighing 0.128 tonne valued at K9,532,896 in Bago, Toungoo and Pyay districts. Officials also impounded an unregistered Toyota Mark II (approximately K15 million) carrying 1,609 baskets of orange worth K16.09 million without official documents at the Yadanabon bridge combined checkpoint and a total of illegal timbers weighing 1.104 tonnes valued at K165,638 in Shwebo township. The action was taken



Officials seen examining the seized illegal timbers.

under the Forest Law and the Export and Import Law.

The Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee reported that six arrests were made on 18 and 19 April, with an estimated value of K40,788,534. — MNA/MKKS



Number of S Korea's farming households falls below 1 mln for 1st time

The decrease in farming households is attributed to the aging population, prompting more farmers to leave the profession in recent years.

THE number of farming households in South Korea fell below 1 million for the first time last year, statistical office data showed Thursday.

The number of farming families slipped 2.3 per cent from a year earlier to 999,000 in December 2023, according to Statistics Korea.

The figure declined below 1 million for the first time since relevant data began to be compiled in 1949. It had about 10,000 households in margin of error.

The farming households had been on the decline in recent years as the rapidly aging population encouraged more farmers

to quit farming.

The proportion of farming households to the country's total households stood at 4.6 per cent in December last year, down 0.2 percentage points from a year earlier.

The population of farming families retreated 3.5 per cent to 2,089,000 in the cited period, accounting for 4.0 per cent of the total population.

Of the total farming family members, the highest share of 36.7 per cent was those in their 70s or older, followed by those in their 60s with 30.7 per cent and those in their 50s with 14.9 per cent each. — Xinhua



In South Korea, the number of farming households dropped below 1 million for the first time in 2023, declining by 2.3 per cent to 999,000, according to Statistics Korea. A view of Gyeongju, North Gyeongsang province, South Korea. **PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS**

Colorado law protects brain data captured by gadgets



Headbands designed to improve sleep often incorporate various technologies and features aimed at promoting relaxation and optimizing sleep quality. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ SLEEPLOOP/ ETH ZURICH**

COLORADO on Wednesday expanded its privacy law to include brain data gathered by the booming array of gadgets people use for feedback about sleep, fitness, sports, and lifestyle.

Nonprofit Neurorights Foundation said it worked with the state on the unprecedented legal protection for neurological data gathered by devices not governed by privacy laws applied to medical information.

A bill signed into law by the

Colorado governor expands a 2021 privacy act to include protection of neural data, defined as "measurement of the activity of an individual's central or peripheral nervous systems and that can be processed by or with the assistance of a device". The foundation strives to warn authorities to risks posed by devices, such as headbands for improving sleep, earpieces to aid meditation, sensors for improving golf swings and the like. — AFP

Taylor Swift fans in frenzy over alleged 'Tortured Poets Department' album leak

TAYLOR Swift fans are in a frenzy over alleged leaks from her upcoming album, 'The Tortured Poets Department', set to be released this Friday.

According to Page Six, snippets of the album's tracks surfaced online, purportedly originating from a Google Drive link containing 17 songs. Swift previously confirmed that her 11th studio album would indeed feature 11 tracks.

The leaked snippets have sparked a divide among fans, with some questioning their authenticity, speculating whether they were generated by artificial intelligence. While some urged fellow fans to refrain from listening to the leaks and report them, others expressed frustration, labelling the leak spreaders as "fake Swifties".

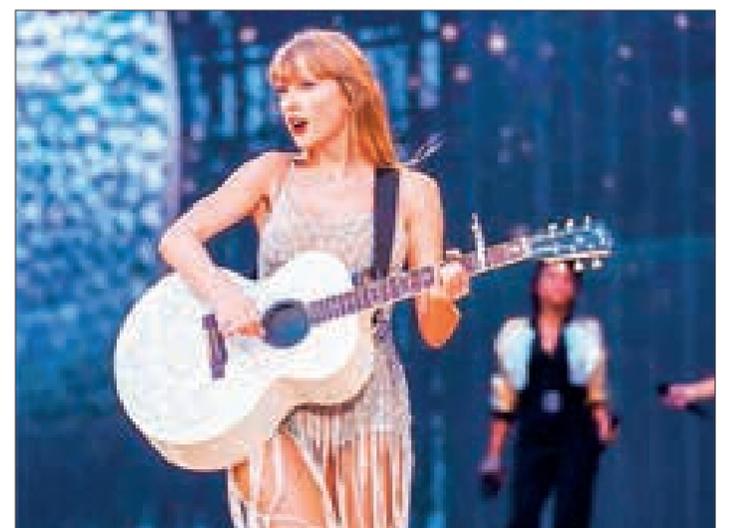
"In the midst of Device's Volume COMPLETELY OFF on Twitter for the NEXT 24 HRS and REPORT EVERY POST spamming about album leaks! We got this!" posted one devoted fan on X.

Meanwhile, ahead of the album's highly anticipated release, Swift collaborated with Spotify for a special "library installation" at The Grove in Los Angeles.

As per Page Six, Swift's dedicated fans took to social media platforms to discourage the dissemination of leaked content. The album's title, 'The

Tortured Poets Department,' was first revealed by Swift herself during the 2024 Grammy Awards ceremony.

Swifties speculate that the title could be a subtle reference to a group chat involving Swift's ex, Joe Alwyn, and his friends, Paul Mescal and Andrew Scott, dubbed 'The Tortured Man Club'. — ANI



Some fans urge others to avoid listening to leaks and report them, while others express frustration, labelling leak spreaders as "fake Swifties". **PHOTO: INSTAGRAM/TAYLORSWIFT/ANI**

ECONOMY WORLD

World economy faces massive income reduction due to climate change: study



Even with immediate reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, the global economy could face a 19 per cent income loss by 2050 due to climate change. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ FAO**

Estimated global annual damages by 2050 are approximately \$38 trillion, primarily attributed to rising temperatures, changes in rainfall, and temperature variability.

THE global economy faces an income loss of 19 per cent by 2050 due to climate change, even if greenhouse gas emissions are drastically reduced immediately, according to a new study published on Wednesday.

The study, published in the scientific journal *Nature* by the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), shows that these losses are six times larger than the cost of the mitigation measures required to limit global warming to two degrees.

Global annual damages are

estimated to be around 38 trillion US dollars in 2050, with a likely range of 19 to 59 trillion US dollars. "These damages mainly result from rising temperatures but also from changes in rainfall and temperature variability," said the study. The researchers analyzed data from the past 40 years, from more than 1,600 regions, on how weather extremes and changes have influenced economic growth. Next, they calculated how these are likely to affect global economic activity over the next 26 years. — Xinhua

India's tariff removal on several US products benefiting farmers: Katherine Tai

US Trade Representative Katherine Tai said on Tuesday that India's decision to remove retaliatory tariffs on several US products has improved access to chickpeas, lentils, almonds, walnuts, and apples and is benefiting farmers across the country.

In her testimony before the House Ways and Means Committee Hearing on the President's 2024 Trade Policy

Agenda, Tai mentioned that India and the US resolved the final outstanding WTO dispute in September last year, and India agreed to reduce tariffs on several US products.

"Last June, India and the United States terminated six WTO disputes, and India agreed to remove retaliatory tariffs on several US products. This means improved access for chickpeas, lentils, almonds,

walnuts, and apples, benefiting farmers across the country, including in Michigan, Oregon, and Washington," Katherine Tai said.

"Additionally, in September, India and the United States resolved our final outstanding WTO dispute, and India agreed to reduce tariffs on several US products. This means more market access for turkey, duck, blueberries, and cranberries, benefiting farmers in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Wisconsin," she added.

Earlier in September, Katherine Tai announced that India and the US had agreed to resolve their last outstanding dispute at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and lower tariffs on certain US agricultural products, including frozen turkey, frozen duck, fresh blueberries, and cranberries, frozen blueberries, and cranberries, dried blueberries, and cranberries, and processed blueberries and cranberries. — ANI



Tariffs on various US agricultural products, such as frozen turkey, duck, fresh and frozen blueberries, cranberries, and processed blueberries, have been reduced. **PHOTO: IMAGE USED FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSE/ ANDREW WELCH/UNSPLASH**

African countries urged to harness opportunities in battery, EV sector



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

THE United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) has called on African countries to harness the opportunities presented in recent developments in the global battery and electric vehicle (EV) industry.

The UNECA made the call as it held a technical review meeting on the implementation of a cross-border special economic zone for the battery and EV industry, which will be established in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Zambia, with the support of the UNECA and the African Export-Import Bank,

according to a statement issued late Monday. Eunice Kamwendo, director of the UNECA Sub-Regional Office for Southern Africa, emphasized the benefits of the battery and EV initiative in the two countries for its contribution to socioeconomic development and structural transformation.

She said the initiative will add value to the minerals crucial to manufacturing EVs, attract domestic and foreign direct investment in the sector, create sustainable jobs, and contribute to overall economic transformation. — Xinhua

Chinese police launch targeted campaign against counterfeit alcohol

Law enforcement agencies across the country will target all aspects of the counterfeit alcohol trade, including production, sale, transport, and storage, in order to dismantle the criminal network involved.



China's Ministry of Public Security has launched a focused campaign to tackle criminal activities related to the production and distribution of counterfeit alcohol. **PHOTO: XINHUA/FILE**

CHINA'S Ministry of Public Security has initiated a targeted campaign to combat criminal activities associated with the production and sale of counterfeit alcohol masquerading as "specially supplied" goods for the Party, government, or

military entities.

This operation aims to curb the unlawful production and sale of these counterfeit products, safeguarding the reputation of the Party, government, and military, while also ensuring the legitimate rights and interests of

consumers are protected.

Law enforcement agencies nationwide will concentrate their efforts on every stage of the counterfeit alcohol trade, from production to sale, transportation, and storage, thereby disrupting the criminal network.

Special attention will be given to cracking down on offenses related to the production and sale of counterfeit alcohol packaging materials, and dismantling illegal operations involved in the unauthorized printing of trademarks and logos belonging to the Party, government, and military organizations.

Additionally, the ministry emphasizes the need to bolster patrols in crucial online spaces, such as e-commerce platforms, live-streaming channels, and social media platforms, to gather clues leading to such offences. — Xinhua

Etihad Airways resumes scheduled operations



The airline acknowledged delays in some flights on 16 and 17 April due to rainy weather in Abu Dhabi. **PHOTO: ANI**

ETIHAD Airways has announced the resumption of scheduled operations following recent challenging weather conditions in the country. The airline said

that some flights experienced delays on 16th and 17th April due to the rainy weather conditions in Abu Dhabi. Etihad Airways advises passengers to check

their flight schedules on the airline's website, noting that the safety of its guests and crew will remain its top priority. — ANI

Netflix beats expectations on profit and subscribers

NETFLIX topped expectations Thursday as it reported 9.3 million new subscribers and profits of \$2.3 billion in the first three months of the year.

Silicon Valley-based Netflix had bet heavily on its content lineup to win fans, with subscribers now totalling 269.6 million. "With more than two

people per household on average, we have an audience of over half a billion people," Netflix said in a letter to investors.

"No entertainment company has ever programmed at this scale and with this ambition before." Netflix shares slipped more than three per cent to \$589.64 in

after-market trades, apparently due to the company saying sales in the current quarter might be less than market expectations.

Netflix took in \$1 billion more in profit in the quarter than it did in the same period a year earlier, according to earnings figures. — AFP

Nissan lowers FY 2023 net profit forecast on weak sales volume

NISSAN Motor Co on Friday lowered its net profit forecast for fiscal 2023 to 370 billion yen (\$2.4 billion) from an initial 390 billion yen, citing a larger-than-expected fall in sales volume and cost relief measures. The automaker also revised downward its operating profit estimate for the year ending March 2024 to 530 billion yen from the 620 billion yen forecast in Febru-



The company lowered its operating profit estimate for the year ending March 2024 to 530 billion yen from 620 billion yen previously forecasted in February. **PHOTO: KYODO** ary. Nissan CEO Makoto Uchida said at an online

press conference that the company had "decided it was necessary to provide further support" to suppliers struggling with rising costs. It expects sales of 12.6 trillion yen, down from 13 trillion yen. The revision comes after the company said last month that it plans to increase its annual sales by 1 million units by fiscal 2026 compared to fiscal 2023 under a new business plan. — Kyodo

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V BBC CITRINE VOY.NO. (1119041)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V BBC CITRINE VOY.NO. (1119041) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 20-4-2024 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT 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: 2301928

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S BEN LINE AGENCIES (S'PORE) PTE LTD

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

US votes against Palestinian request for full UN membership at Security Council

This marks the Palestinian mission's second unsuccessful attempt for full UN member state status, following their initial effort in 2011, which also fell short of the required support.



US Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Robert Wood (L, front) votes against a draft resolution that recommends to the 193-member UN General Assembly that "the State of Palestine be admitted to membership of the United Nations", at the UN headquarters in New York, on 18 April 2024. **PHOTO: XIE E/XINHUA**

THE United States on Thursday voted against a Palestinian request for full UN membership at the Security Council.

The 15-member council voted on a draft resolution that recommends to the 193-member UN General Assembly that

"the State of Palestine be admitted to membership of the United Nations."

The draft resolution received 12 votes in favour, two abstentions, and one vote against.

A council resolution needs

at least nine votes in favour and no vetoes by the United States, Britain, France, Russia or China to pass. The United States was compelled to use its veto power after the draft secured 12 votes in favour.

— Xinhua

Commercial ships not targeted by Israeli strike against Iran

COMMERCIAL ships transiting the Arabian Gulf and Western Indian Ocean were not the "intended target" of Israel's attack against Iran on Friday, the UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) said.

Earlier in the day, US media reported that Israel had carried out an airstrike on the Iranian province of Isfahan in response to Tehran's missile and drone attack against the Jewish state over the weekend.

"UKMTO are aware of media reports of an Israeli military strike against Iran. Vessels transiting the Arabian Gulf and Western Indian Ocean

may observe increased UAS activity in the region. There are currently no indications commercial maritime vessels are the intended target," UK-

MTO said in a statement.

Ship masters are required to report "any suspicious activity" in the region, the statement read. — SPUTNIK



A general view of Mombasa Port on Kenya's Indian Ocean coast. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS**

Dubai Airports urges passengers not to arrive at the airport unless flights are confirmed

DUBAI Airports urged passengers not to come to the airport unless their flight has been confirmed and recommended arriving only two hours before their scheduled departure.

Emirates has also decided to suspend check-in for all customers across its network travelling with onward connections through Dubai, until 23:59 GMT on 19 April. This is to support operations recovery from the recent bad weather at its Dubai hub.

In a statement, Emirates said that passengers already in

Dubai and in transit will continue to be processed for their flights. Customers travelling to Dubai as their final destination may check-in and travel as usual.

Emirates advised all customers to check the latest flight schedules on its website, as delays to departures and arrivals are expected. The carrier advised impacted customers to contact their booking agent or Emirates Office for rebooking options, acknowledging the current high call volume and apologizing for any delays in response. — ANI



Emirates announced the suspension of check-in for all customers with onward connections through Dubai until 19 April, 23:59 GMT, in order to facilitate recovery operations following recent adverse weather conditions at its Dubai hub. **PHOTO: ANI**

EU Summit concludes with calls for strengthened competitiveness

THE European Council's special two-day summit wrapped up here on Thursday, vowing to enhance the European Union's (EU) competitiveness amid the drastic global shifts, and touched upon the situation in Ukraine and the Middle East.

European Council President Charles Michel emphasized the bloc's over-reliance on external economic and security bases, which he argued undermines the EU's competitiveness and global influence.

Affected by factors such as intensified geopolitical tensions, continued monetary tightening,

and weak global demand, the European economy continues to be sluggish in 2024, particularly evident in manufacturing and energy-intensive industries.

Preliminary statistical data released by Eurostat at the end of January showed that the economies of the Eurozone and the EU experienced zero growth in the fourth quarter of last year compared with the previous quarter. The European Trade Union Confederation reported last month that nearly one million manufacturing jobs had been lost in the EU over the past four years. — Xinhua

SPORTS

Myanmar loses to host Thailand in AFC Futsal Asian Cup group match

MYANMAR lost to host Thailand 0-5 in the third group match of the AFC Futsal Asian Cup held in Bangkok, Thailand, yesterday.

Myanmar allowed many conceding goals to the powerhouse Thai team in the second half. Myanmar conceded one goal to the Thai team in the first half but let four more goals from its opponent in the second half.

In other matches of Group A, Viet Nam won over China 1-0. Currently, host Thailand is sure to sail into the next stage with six points in two wins in Group A, whereas Viet Nam has secured four points and Myanmar has one point. The Chinese team did



Myanmar and Thai players are trying to control the ball in a group match of the AFC Futsal Asian Cup on 19 April. PHOTO: MFF

not score any points in the two losses.

On 21 April, Myanmar is scheduled to play

against China in the last group match. Only when Myanmar wins China with a large margin of

goal difference will the former have to advance to the next stage. — Ko Nyi Lay/TTA

Sports federations condemn Olympic prize money for athletics

AN organization of Olympic sports federations on Friday said the decision by World Athletics to award prize money to gold medallists in its events “undermines the values of Olympism”.

The Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF) released a statement which made clear how unhappy it was at the announcement by World Athletics president Sebastian Coe that track and field gold medallists at the Paris Games will receive \$50,000 (47,000



The countdown clock to the opening ceremony of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games ticks over to 100 days to go on Tuesday, in Paris. PHOTO: XINHUA

euros).

World Athletics’ move, announced last

week, was for a first for a federation at an Olympics. It said it would ex-

tend prize money to all medallists in Los Angeles in four years’ time.

ASOIF, which has 30 full members and two associate members, said: “This move undermines the values of Olympism and the uniqueness of the Games. One cannot and should not put a price on an Olympic gold medal.

“This disregards the less privileged athletes lower down the final standings.”

It said other Olympics ports cannot afford to offer prize money. — AFP

OBITUARY

U Hla Pe Than

B.A. (Hist.), P.H.G, R.L, D.B.L, JPO (UN, NY)
Director/Minister Counsellor (Rtd.)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

No. (145/B), First Floor, 46th street, Botahtaung Township, Yangon, Beloved Husband of Daw Kyu Kyu, beloved father of Ma Khine Khine Nyein, Ko Khine Zin Hla and Ma Aye Mon Than (Temporarily UK) U Hla Pe Than died at home at 11 PM, 18th of April 2024 Thursday. On Monday, 17 PM we would like to inform relatives and friends that the cremation will be held at Yayway Cemetery. Cars will be leave the house at 15:15 PM.

Surviving Family

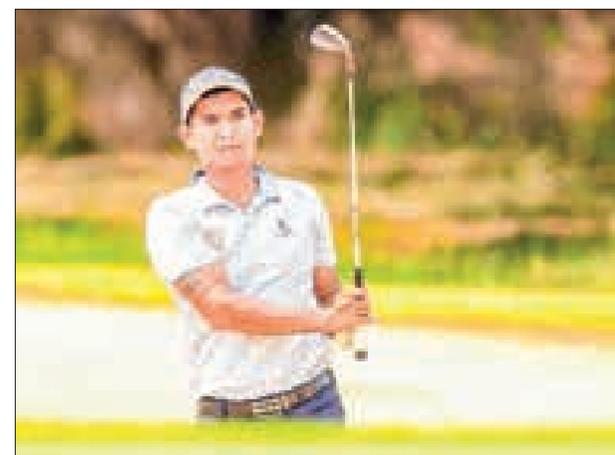
Aung San Myo stands second in SINGHA-SAT TDT Cha-am 2024

MYANMAR professional Aung San Myo secured the second prize in the SINGHA-SAT TDT Cha-am 2024 held at Lake View Resort & Golf Club (AB) in Thailand on 18 and 19 April.

He stood second with a six-under-par 136 in two rounds, winning 44,000 baht as the cash award.

Thailand’s Supravee Phatam clinched the title with an eight-under-par 134 with a 100,000-baht cash award. A total of 117 professional golfers took part in the SINGHA-SAT TDT Cha-am 2024.

With the contributions of Burmese Golf-BG and Dagon Golf City, Aung San Myo continuously competes in the Thailand PGA Tour and the All-Thailand Golf Tour. Myanmar professional golfers achieve success in golf tournaments held in Thailand. — Ko Nyi Lay/TTA



Myanmar professional Aung San Myo is seen in action at SINGHA-SAT TDT Cha-am 2024. PHOTO: THAILAND PGA

World athletic champions aiming to new records in Xiamen

WITH the 2024 Diamond League just two days away, high jumper Hamish Kerr and discus thrower Laulau-ga Tausaga visited a Wanda

Plaza in Xiamen on Thursday to engage with fans and discuss their preparations and aspirations for the upcoming event.

Kerr, the New Zealander who clinched his first gold medal last month at the World Indoor Championships in Glasgow with

a jump of 2.36 metres, has shown consistent improvement nearly every year since 2016, with 2022 being the sole exception. At the

fan meet, Kerr expressed his enjoyment of the energy from the crowd before his jumps. This sentiment was palpable as fans prompt-

ly clapped in rhythm, enhancing the atmosphere and showcasing the unique allure of athletics. — Xinhua



Voting begins in India for first phase of general elections

VOTING for the first phase of India's general elections began Friday, kicking off a seven-phased process lasting until 1 June.

India's general elections commenced with the first phase of voting on Friday, initiating a seven-phased process extending until 1 June. Citizens queued up with their Election Identity Cards to cast their votes, with polling continuing until 18:00 hours local time.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeting the gathering during a roadshow for the Lok Sabha Elections 2024, in Dausa, a city in the state of Rajasthan, India. **PHOTO: ANI**

People were seen standing in queues holding their Election Identity Cards, waiting for their turn to cast a vote. Polling of votes will continue till 18:00 hours (local time).

As per the schedule announced by the Election

Commission of India, the second phase of the elections is scheduled for 26 April, the third phase on 7 May, the fourth phase on 13 May, the fifth phase on 20 May, the sixth phase on 25 May and the last phase on 1 June. The counting of votes will be held on 4 June. — Xinhua

Russia's role in global trade grows despite Western sanctions

WHILE the United States and its allies keep making futile attempts to ruin Russia through rounds upon rounds of economic sanctions, the Russian economy continues to thrive in no small part due to shifting focus to

trade with Asia and the Middle East.

Russia's focus on developing two major trade routes linking Europe and Asia may put the country "at the heart of much of international trade", as

Bloomberg put it.

The two routes in question are the International North-South Transport Corridor – a network of railways, roads and shipping lanes that links Europe and India via Russia, Azerbaijan and Iran – and the Northern Sea Route, which connects Europe and Asia via Russia's Arctic waters.

Both of these transportation arteries bypass the Suez Canal and are thus unaffected by the current volatile situation in the region, not to mention that using them could drastically reduce transit times and costs as compared to the Suez Canal route.

Though the United States and its Western allies have so far refrained from using these trade routes, "major Asian and Gulf economies" have already displayed interest, the media outlet notes. — SPUTNIK



The launching ceremony for the Lead Project Arktika nuclear icebreaker at Baltiysky Zavod Shipyard in St. Petersburg. In the Arctic Ocean, the icebreaker can reach any point during any season of the year. The Northern Sea Route facilitates the connection between Europe and Asia through Russia's Arctic waters. **PHOTO: SVIATOSLAV AKIMOV / SPUTNIK/FILE**

RETALIATORY STRIKES

IAEA confirms no damage to Iran's nuclear sites amid Israel attack

IRAN'S nuclear sites are unharmed, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said on Friday after Israel allegedly launched retaliatory strikes overnight.

In a statement released today, the United Nations Atomic Watchdog said it is monitoring the situation very closely. It further said that IAEA Director-General, Rafael Mariano Grossi has emphasized the ongoing need for utmost restraint from all parties, adding that nuclear facilities should never be a target in military conflicts. An US official confirmed to ABC News outlet that Israel carried out airstrikes against Israel. Al Jazeera cited Mehr news agency reporting that "sounds were heard over the city" in Isfahan early today adding that "several miniature UAVs were shot down." However, the official could not confirm whether Syria and Iraq sites were hit as well. The report came shortly after local sources reported blasts in Isfahan region in central Iran.

Following this, Iran fired air defence batteries and shut down flight operations in several cities including Tehran, Shiraz and Isfahan that was later lifted.

The latest development comes after Iran on 13 April fired a barrage of over 300 missiles and drones against Israel, which Tehran said was in retaliation for a presumed Israeli strike on its consulate in Syria on April 1 in which 13 people were killed. — ANI