

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing addresses the coordination meeting on the development of the cotton, oil crops, coffee, meat and dairy products sectors yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing highlighted that from the cultivation of crops to manufacturing finished products and supply chains, production processes will create job opportunities and productivity.

Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing discussed coordination on developing the cotton, oil crops, coffee, meat, and dairy products sectors at the SAC Chairman Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

Speaking at the meeting, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing spotlighted that although Myanmar is endowed with agricultural lands for growing oil crops, water, and human resources, the nation's inefficient cooking oil production is inappropriate.

He continued that as oil crops can be cultivated and produced within four months, farmers can grow them twice a year. So, seeking the best way to cultivate

Production processes and supply chains will create job opportunities and productivity, stresses SG

Salient points from the speech made by the Senior General at the coordination meeting on the development of cotton, oil crops, coffee and meat and dairy products sectors

- From the cultivation of crops to manufacturing finished products and supply chains, production processes will create job opportunities and productivity.
- Locally-made threads can be used in garment industries as well as CMP and MSME industries. The Ministry of Industry and Tatmadaw will be assigned to produce value-added threads.
- If Myanmar initiates the implementation of coffee cultivation projects, it will become a top country for coffee exporters worldwide.
- Cotton and oil crop cultivation must be done as a national duty.
- It is necessary to extend the opening of essential human resources for agricultural businesses with the turning out of graduates and diploma holders in the agricultural sector.

crops successfully is necessary.

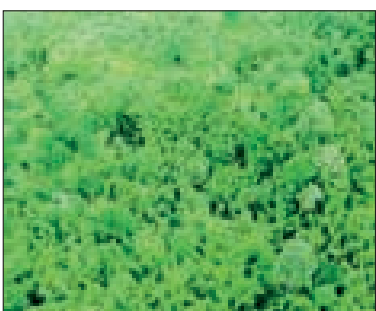
In the agriculture sector, the Senior General instructed that an emphasis is being placed on increasing the per-acre yield of crops. As the lands where paddy can be successfully grown due to favourable weather and fertile soil, suitable crops should be cultivated to increase the per-acre yield of crops, he added.

He calculated that relevant ministries need to emphasize that if the country grows 500,000 acres of cotton to meet the target production, it will help ensure the sufficiency of cotton at home and earn incomes of foreign currency in export.

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Fuel oil prices experience slight rebound

NATIONAL

Objectives of 79th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day 2024

(A) To safeguard the State with the sacrifice of life by upholding Our Three Main National Causes: Non-disintegration of the Union, Non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty as the national policy of Tatmadaw;

(B) To actively participate in implementing the processes of two national visions of the State: the

prosperity of the country and food security by Tatmadaw members together with the government and ethnic people in their respective sectors;

(C) To steadfastly implement enhancement of three capabilities in accord with the work process of Tatmadaw, such as study, practise and obey in building a modern patriotic Tatmadaw with pow-

erful strength and sharpening prowess;

(D) To provide necessary assistance to hold a free and fair multiparty democratic general election by Tatmadaw to ensure peace and stability, solidarity and development, which are actual needs of the State and to emerge a Union based on democratic and federal systems.

Political parties allowed to be established continue applying for registration

THOSE who want to establish a political party are applying to the Union Election Commission by stating the name of the party they wish to establish. To date, 15 groups have applied for the right to establish a party. Among the groups that applied for this, 11 political parties have been permitted for establishment.

Among the 11 political parties that have been approved for establishment, the Mon Development Party, led by Min Myo Tint Lwin, has applied to the commission to register as a political party under Rule 7 of the Registration of Political Parties within 30 days from the date of approval for the establishment of the party.

Of the 11 political parties that applied for registration, nine parties have already been permitted, and the Union Election Commission is verifying the registration of the remaining parties. — MNA/KZL

18th Mumbai International Film Festival invites Myanmar filmmakers

MYANMAR Motion Pictures Organization (MMPO) stated that Myanmar moviemakers are invited to the 18th Mumbai International Film Festival.

The festival, scheduled to be held from 15 to 21 June, is organized by the cooperation between the Ministry of Broadcasting and Information of India and the National Film Development Corporation.

MMPO joint secretary 3 U Chantha Kyi Soe said, "In India, the Mumbai and New Delhi Film festivals can be dubbed as international festivals. Not only Bollywood film producers in India but also film producers from Asian countries are interested in those festivals. Mumbai City is the symbol of the Indian film industry. We can display our films or can compete in the festival with short films or movies as we like."

Myanmar filmmakers who want to compete or display their movies and short films can register at the Mumbai International Film Festival Committee by 28 February. — ASH/TRKM



Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Defence Notification No 1/2024

7th Waxing of Tabodwe 1385 ME
16 February 2024

Formation of Central Body for Summoning Reserve Forces Servants

1. This notification is released to implement the Reserve Forces Law exercising the authority conferred under Section 12 of the law described above.

2. The Central Body for Summoning Reserve Forces Servants is formed with the following persons: -

(a) Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) Commander-in-Chief (Army) Office	Chairman
(b) Chairman Myanmar War Veterans Organization	Vice-Chairman (1)
(c) Adjutant-General Adjutant-General Office	Vice-Chairman (2)
(d) Chief of Staff (Army) Commander-in-Chief (Army) Office	Member
(e) Chief of Staff (Navy) Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Office	Member
(f) Chief of Staff (Air) Commander-in-Chief (Air) Office	Member
(g) Vice-Adjutant-General Adjutant-General Office	Member
(h) Vice-Quartermaster-General Quartermaster-General Office	Member
(i) Deputy Military Appointment-General Military Appointment-General Office	Member
(j) Vice-Judge Advocate-General Judge Advocate-General Office	Member
(k) Vice-Chief of Armed Forces Training Chief of Armed Forces Training Office	Member
(l) Director Directorate of Military Records	Secretary
(m) Deputy Director Directorate of Reinforcement	Joint Secretary

Union Minister
Ministry of Defence

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

Production processes and supply chains will create job opportunities and productivity, stresses SG

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The Senior General noted that as locally-made threads can be used in garment industries as well as CMP and MSME industries, the Ministry of Industry and Tatmadaw will be assigned to produce value-added threads.

In sugarcane cultivation, he stressed that it yields 26 tonnes per acre. In the 2023-24 financial year, sugarcane sufficiency scored 112 per cent in the country. It is necessary to raise the per-acre yield of sugarcane production without expansion of sown acreage. If sugarcane production increases, it will help sugar sufficiency and increase export volume.

He underscored that if Myanmar initiates the implementation of coffee cultivation

projects, it will become a top country for coffee exporters across the world in the future. Hence, an emphasis must be placed on coffee cultivation and production.

He highlighted that the country could reduce spending on foreign currencies only when efforts are made to successfully operate cow and buffalo breeding and construct a dairy product factory to produce sufficient dairy products at home.

Union ministers discussed extended cultivation of oil crops for local oil sufficiency, plans to build oil mills, production of feedstuffs from cotton seeds, expansion of quality strains of cotton, cultivation of coffee, sugarcane and wheat, breeding of dairy cows and dairy product

production, needs of inputs for agriculture and livestock breeding sectors, formation of cooperative societies, production of cotton textile, export of oil crops, coffee, sugarcane, rubber and agricultural produce and import of fuel, personal goods, agricultural inputs and machinery, and plans of farming tasks, production of quality sunflower oil. SAC member Chairman of Myanmar Economic Corporation Lt-Gen Nyo Saw and Chairman of Union of Myanmar Economic Holding Public Co Ltd Lt-Gen Hsan Oo discussed the cultivation of sugarcane in regions and states, production of dairy products, meat and fish, cultivation of sugarcane and production of sugar, and breeding of cows.

In his response, the Senior

General stressed the need to increase cotton cultivation and production with the construction of textile factories. If MSME businesses can operate cotton ginning and thread production, people will have job opportunities. Milk collection centres must be designated to purchase milk from local farmers within 24 hours. Dairy products must be produced to be advanced products, he noted.

In concluding remarks, the Senior General said that cotton and oil crop cultivation must be done as a national duty. Human resources must be turned out for operating agriculture and livestock farms. He added that it is necessary to extend the opening of essential human resources for agricultural busi-

nesses with the turning out of graduates and diploma holders in the agricultural sector.

The Senior General observed video files on the cultivation of animal feed plants, breeding dairy cows, paddy cultivation, harvesting sunflower and oil production, and using modern machinery to breed cows and feed animals.

Also present at the meeting were Union Minister at the SAC Chairman Office Ministry 2 U Aung Naing Oo, Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Min Naung, Union Minister for Cooperatives and Rural Development U Hla Moe, Union Minister for Industry Dr Charlie Than, Union Minister for Commerce U Tun Ohn and officials. — MNA/TTA

STATE Administration Council Member Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Defence Admiral Tin Aung San, in his capacity as Chairman of Central Body for Summoning People's Military Servants, attended the 1/2024 coordination meeting of the central body in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

At the meeting, the Admiral talked about the release of Notifications 27/2024 of SAC to set date for People's Military Service Law to come into force starting from 10 February 2024, formation of Central Body for Summoning People's Military Servants, Nay Pyi Taw Council and Region/State Committees for Summoning People's Military Servants, duties of committees to organize district and township level committees, tasks of township committees to summon the eligible citizens to serve military services and register them, medical checks to be conducted by Tatmadaw medical unit and to submit the applications of eligible citizens, medical results of Tatmadaw medical unit to central body through district bodies and region/state governments.

He also clarified People's Military Service Law that includes eight chapters and 33 sections, eligible ages for con-



The first coordination meeting of the Central Body for Summoning People's Military Servants in progress yesterday, chaired by Union Defence Minister Admiral Tin Aung San.

Central Body for Summoning People's Military Servants holds first coord meeting

scription including service term, extension of service term in emergency period of the country, temporary suspension of conscriptions for certain people, but they must serve later even though they are over the designated age groups, and mentioned the persons who will be exempted from military service.

He continued that it needs to submit the plans to organize the district and township committees and the tasks and rules(draft) has been already

distributed including the set up of other countries with mandatory military service.

He also said there are about 13 million people who are eligible for conscription in accordance with the People's Military Service Law, and they will not be called at the same time but depending on the region, township and population. The number of trainees for the training is under one per cent. The task forces will be also organized to meet the visions in fixed time frame.

Therefore, the members of

central body, region/state committees should focus to receive exact data lists, and should develop programming systems to link with the existing system in order to be effective, transparent and fair military service system enabling to grab trust of entire people.

He also highlighted the needs to use various potential ways including social media to disseminate the true news, construct basic infrastructure such as training station, dormitory, water, electricity and transport,

plan the management within the time frame and make systematic preparations.

Vice-Chairman of the central body Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Maung Maung Aye also discussed the release of true news regarding the People's Military Service Law via State-owned media, awareness programmes for military service, cooperation work to be systematic summoning processes and to carry out the work exactly.

The members of central body and Nay Pyi Taw, Region/State committees reported on the matters related to the military training and serving of defence services to protect the country, drafting of people's military service rule and SOP and systematic summoning processes.

The Admiral then concluded that the time frame and guide line have been already released, and the needs to carry out the work procedures within the time frame, estimate the budget, send messages regarding the announcements via telephone operators, and to work together to release the rule in detail and make efforts for the emergence of suitable laws and rules by learning the international law. — MNA/KTZH

NATIONAL

Myanmar pursues MoUs for sending workers to Middle East



The photo session at the 7th Abu Dhabi Dialogue Ministerial Consultation.

EFFORTS are underway to send Myanmar migrant workers to Middle East countries through a memorandum of understanding, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Myanmar Consul-General U Kyaw Thu Nyein in Dubai said so at the 7th Abu Dhabi Dialogue Ministerial Consultation in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, on 10 and 11 February. He attended the event at the invitation of Dr Abdulrahman Al Awar, the UAE Minister of Human Resources and Emiratization. The Myanmar Consul-General presented the ongoing plans for Myanmar migrant workers in the Middle

East and negotiations on MoUs.

This year, Pakistan chaired the dialogue hosted by the UAE. The discussions focused on workers' rights, benefits, and rules and regulations. Additionally, as guests, Canada, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Uzbekistan attended the event. In 2008, the host countries – Bahrain, Kuwait, Malaysia, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE – along with the sender countries – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Viet Nam – organized the dialogue to discuss and cooperate on labour affairs. — ASH/NT

MIFER holds 46th Friday Talk

THE 46th Friday Talk of the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations was held in the hybrid system. Directors from the region and state Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) presented and discussed the matter of the investments and conditions to be carried out in the future.

The DICA deputy director-general presented prospects for Myanmar investment and the sectors for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Myanmar citizens investment.

The deputy minister discussed the country's development to ensure the duties and responsibilities of respective staff, development ideas, and regional development concepts; overall, the staff need to understand and review departments and the nature and development activities of the ministry.

The Union minister highlighted that the practical implementation, investment, national, and regional plans need to connect each other and penetrate investors with finance, property, and technology, urging them to access the investment sector for national development.

Afterwards, the Union minister took lunch with all MIFER staff members.

With the aim to develop human re-

sources and improve staff members' capacity, with the topic "Seminar on International Development Cooperation for Developing Countries (Myanmar)" conducted, Union Minister Dr Kan Zaw attended and delivered the opening remarks.

The Union minister expressed that international aid and assistance are needed for developing countries. The People's Republic of China leads to sharing physical and practical knowledge with developing countries, and seminars and workshops are held to develop international programmes with all countries. He underscored that today's topics discussed Myanmar-China Cooperation benefits and urged all participants to participate actively in the discussions.

Daw Cho Zar Hlaing, Deputy Director of Union Minister Office presented the topic on "Seminar on International Development Cooperation for Developing Countries (Myanmar)". The deputy minister and attendees then openly discussed matters related to international cooperation for developing countries, the National Agenda and the Global Development Agenda.

The deputy minister, directors-general, officials, and staff members, totaling nearly 120 persons, actively participated in the event. — MIFER

Counter-argument to false information

Alert: Khit Thit fabricates stories

MALICIOUS media Khit Thit is spreading fake news that authorities are collecting the list of men and women nationwide who can be immediately called up for military training as well as forcing the family members of the person who are eligible for military service to sign on the pledge undertaking that they can be sentenced from three to five years in prison if their family member fails to serve in the military.

Similarly, the subversive media Khit Thit also fabricated a story that two days

after the promulgation of the People's Military Service Law, security forces conducted checks on youths and arrested at least 50 young people in Mogok Township, Mandalay Region.

The malicious media networks are spreading misinformation that security forces and administrative organizations are conscripting youths for military training and arresting passers-by. Those media platforms are also persuading young people to join terrorist organizations. — MNA/TKO

Misinformation alert: DVB accuses Tatmadaw of attacking town market

THE malicious media DVB has circulated false news on social media accusing Tatmadaw of attacking the market of Hsihseng Township with heavy weapons in Shan State (South) on 15 February.

Responsible officials clarified that the Karenni Nationalities Defence Force (KNDF), Pa-O National Liberation Army (PNLA), and PDF terrorists attacked the security forces and the Pa-O National Organization (PNO) mili-

tia with small arms and heavy weapons that day.

They also intentionally targeted the market, resulting in its destruction by fire. KNDF and PDF terrorists had reportedly attacked the Loikaw market previously.

Malicious media outlets apparently fabricated news reports to mislead the public about the security forces' efforts to maintain law and order. — MNA/NT

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MoNREC designates “Htin Mel protected public forest” in Bokpyin Township

THE Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation announced that 4,435 acres in Bokpyin Township of Bokpyin District in Taninthayi Region have been designated as “Htin Mel protected public forest” as of 15 February 2024, under Notification 12/2024 by exercising the authority conferred under Sub-section (e) of Section (6) of the Forest Law promulgated in 2018.

The ministry designates protected public forests and forest reserves to conserve the water sources and watershed areas, stabilize the ecosystem, fulfil the needs of locals, preserve biodiversity and support the agricultural

sector.

The Htin Mel protected public forest areas will conserve various kinds of wood and valuable trees such as Dipterocarpus, ficus tree, Eugenia, Uban, Shit Khaw, Swintonia floribunda, Gmelina arborea, Terminalia chebula, Mesua ferrea, Podocarpus nerifolius, Marian and Duabanga Grandiflora, and is also a habitat for endangered bird species such as Hydrornis gurneyi as well as other animals such as Tapirus, Tiger and wild elephants. It will also conserve the watershed area of Kalaung Nancho Creek.

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation



An aerial view of the Htin Mel protected public forest in Taninthayi Region.

Local Parahita group prepares for summer fire safety



Concrete tank provides drinking water for animals.

AS forest fire prevention, a local Parahita group called Yenantha Dingar Brothers has been carrying out building firebreaks and refilling water in roadside drinking water pots in Yenangyoung and Chauk townships in central Myanmar on a daily basis.

When summer nears, there is a possibility of wildfire hazard in the two townships, which is why the group have now built firebreaks, clearing grass and refilling water in clay pots for drinking water provided by the roadside for the public.

“Now the summer comes here, and forest fire is happening, so no tree has yet to be

planted. As forest fires are happening, we are making firebreaks and watering in particular. At present, we have built a congregation hall. We do refill drinking water daily in roadside water pots for travellers and a lake for animals,” said an official from the group.

In these townships, which are located in the dry zone in central Myanmar, the Parahita group has carried out repairing old lakes and building new lakes for drinking water for animals, planting shady trees by the roadside and conserving and watering them, building resting places for travellers, providing drinking water clay pots by the roadside and refilling them. -- Thit Taw/ZS

300+ Japanese companies to recruit 900+ Myanmar workers

MYANMAR Embassy in Tokyo announced on 15 February that over 300 Japanese companies would recruit over 900 Myanmar workers.

The embassy gave the data on 302 job offers between 1 and 15 February, which were sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after verification.

These offers include jobs for over 300 men, over 600 women and more than 900 Myanmar nationals in total.

The statement also said that the Myanmar Embassy in Tokyo is reviewing the demand letters sent by the Ministry of Labour via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a timely manner.

After verifying the legal establishment of labour supervising agencies and recruiting factories and companies in Japan, together with relevant documents, its findings and comments were returned to the Ministry of Labour through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Four hundred and sixteen demand letters from 16 to 31 January would recruit over 400 men, over 900 women and over 1300 Myanmar nationals in total, the embassy said.—MT/ZN

Daily newspapers available online

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News and Periodicals Enterprise

NATIONAL

Yangon Mayor meets Russian Ambassador to Myanmar to discuss cooperation promotion



The Yangon mayor holds talks with the ambassador of the Russian Federation to Myanmar on 15 February.

A delegation led by Mr Iskander Azizov, Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Myanmar, met Yangon Region Minister for Development Affairs and Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) Chairman Mayor U Bo Htay and party on 15 February to discuss issues related to the promotion of friendship and cooperation between Myanmar and Russia.

The Russian delegation discussed issues related to the promotion of friendship and cooperation between Myanmar and Russia, the implementation of sister cities between Yangon

in Myanmar and St Petersburg in Russia, the development of municipal services between the two capitals of Myanmar and Russia, and the construction of Russian Orthodox Church in Dagon Myothit (North) Township.

In addition, issues related to Russia's investment in Yangon, cultural exchange between Myanmar and Russia, tourism sector development between the two capitals of Myanmar and Russia, development of health and transport sectors, and flights between Yangon and Moscow were also discussed. — TWA/TKO

Sugar price hits record high in post-Chinese Lunar New Year

THE wholesale price of sugar hit K4,000 per viss in the post-Chinese Lunar New Year from K3,970 per viss.

Although the sugar mills have started running for three months since late 2023, the sugar price is steadily rising. When the sugar mills commenced operations in early December 2023, the price stood at K3,780 per viss.

Beyond domestic self-sufficiency, the remaining 50,000 tonnes are sent to foreign markets. The sugar mills will stop operation during the Thingyan Festival in April. At present, the traders are holding sugar stocks in their hands. Therefore, there is a high chance for them to hike up the price.

The price will likely rise over K4,000 per viss soon, Ko Kyaw Min, a trader, forecasts. The price stood at only K900 per viss in 2019, and four years later, it quadrupled.

The sugarcane fetched approximately K40,000 per tonne in 2019, and the sugar mills offered K150,000 per tonne this year, allowing the growers to increase their income. However, the sugar price is still lower than that of jaggery.

Jaggery from Yesakyo, which is whiter in appearance, costs K5,900 per viss. With the sugar and jaggery prices surging, the traditional snack prices have risen. Some makers use artificial sweeteners as sugar substitutes that pose health concerns. — TWA/KK



A sugar retail shop.

32 ships transport goods from Mandalay Port to other townships in Feb's 2nd week



The photo shows cargo ships seen at Mandalay Port.

THIRTY-TWO cargo ships used the Ayeyawady River to convey goods from Mandalay port to Yangon, Bhamo, and other townships between 5

and 12 February, according to the Department of Marine Administration.

The transported goods include 5,488.19 tonnes of ce-

ment, 6,792.55 tonnes of millet, 1,845 tonnes of coal and 8,274.8 tonnes of sugar.

The Department of Marine Administration warned not to carry overloads and to be careful with the navigation signs on the banks and in the water for safe travel.

“Vessels need to pay special attention to the navigational signs erected on the water and on the shore to ensure safe navigation,” said an official from the Mandalay Region Marine Administration Department. — TWA/MKKS

Haka to host Chin National Day

U Hang Cin Zam, economic affairs minister of Chin State government, said they will organize the 76th Chin Anniversary of National Day celebration in Haka, Chin State, on 20 February.

The ceremony will be held at the state government office, with Chin national representatives and members of the ethnic group in attendance.

The minister stated, “We will celebrate the national day as usual. Chin people from both highlands and lowlands will attend.”

On 20 February 1948, following independence, a referendum in Falam Township decided to transit from traditional princely governance to democracy.

On 9 October 1950, the 7th Chin Council Convention in Yangon designated 20 February, the day the referendum was convened, as Chin National Day based on the representatives' agreement.

Chin National Day represents the language, culture, history, and tradition of all Chin people. — ASH/NT

Fuel oil prices experience slight rebound

THE fuel oil prices increased slightly on 16 February, indicating a slight increase of K70-85 per litre.

The prices sank to K2,685 per litre of Octane 92, K2,805 for Octane 95, K2,525 for diesel and K2,570 for premium diesel on 15 February.

The prices increased to K2,770 for Octane 92 and K2,875 for Octane 95, K2,595 for diesel and K2,640 for premium diesel on 16 February.

The price index set by Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS), the pricing basis for many refined products in southeast Asia, influences the domestic fuel prices, according to the Supervisory Committee on Oil Import, Storage and Distribution of Fuel Oil.

Following the MOPS's high price index, the oil prices hit the highest of K3,245 per litre for diesel and K3,330 for premium diesel in August 2023.

The committee is steering



A petrol station attendant refuels a car in Yangon.

the market for price stability and fuel oil security in the domestic market.

Under the supervision of the committee, the Petroleum Products Regulatory Depart-

ment 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. The domestic fuel price is highly correlated with international prices. The State is steering the market to mitigate the loss between the 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 Myanmar's. Every country lays down different patterns of policy to fix the 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

CBM sells over US\$51M, 450 mln Thai baht in 15 days



THE Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) pumped over US\$51 million and 450 million Thai baht into the financial market in the past 15 days.

The CBM sold \$13 million on 1 February in the financial market, five million dollars and 50 million Thai baht on an online trading platform for the exporters/importers on 2 February, \$11 million and 200 million Thai baht on 5 February, eight million dollars on 8 February, \$5.38 million on 14 February, nine million dollars and 200 million Thai baht on 15 February, totalling \$51.38 million and 450 million Thai baht within 15 days.

The CBM sold \$68.33 million, 313.5 million Thai baht

and 4.2 million Chinese yuan in January 2024.

The reference exchange rate set by the CBM is K2,100 against a US dollar, while it was valued at approximately K3,550 at the over-the-counter market. The exchange rates are K100 per Thai baht and K490 per Chinese yuan. The CBM allowed the authorized dealers (private banks) to operate online forex trading freely as per the market rate depending on supply and demand, starting from 5 December.

Additionally, the outward remittance procedures must comply with the rules and regulations specified by the Foreign Exchange Supervisory Committee. — NN/EM

Black gram, pigeon pea prices bounce back slightly

THE prices of black gram and pigeon pea rebounded in the domestic market, reflecting an increase of K138,000 per tonne of black gram and K65,000 per tonne of pigeon pea in the past two days.

The prices rose to K3.188 million per tonne of black gram and K3.965 million per tonne of pigeon pea on 16 February from K3.05 million per tonne and K3.9 million per tonne of pigeon pea on 14 February.

India's demand weighs on Myanmar's black gram and pigeon pea prices. Robust demand by India on 5 February hit K3.5 million per tonne of black gram and K4.197 million per tonne of pigeon pea.

According to the Ministry of Commerce, Myanmar exported 1.3 million tonnes of pulses worth US\$1,123 million to foreign mar-



Assorted beans and pulses seen being neatly displayed for sale at the market.

kets in the past ten months of the current financial year 2023-2024.

Myanmar bagged over US\$ 1.47 billion from 1.9 million tonnes of pulses exports last FY 2022-2023.

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

India has growing consumption requirements for black grams and pigeon peas. According to a Memorandum of Understanding between Myanmar and India signed on 18 June 2021, India will import 250,000

tonnes of black gram and 100,000 tonnes of pigeon peas (tur) from Myanmar for five consecutive years from 2021-2022 financial year to 2025-2026 FY. This G-to-G pact will not affect the pulses' annual quota set by India. Myanmar's exporters are entitled to deliver the pulses to India under that yearly quota.

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

OPINION

Promote strong diplomatic ties of Myanmar's overseas diplomats

DIPLOMATS, including Ambassadors, Chargés d'Affaires ad interim and consuls general stationed in foreign missions, occupy the forefront of the political arena, playing a crucial role in defending the State and safeguarding the nation's sovereignty. Their primary focus lies in enhancing diplomatic relations with assigned countries, thereby advancing Our Three Main National Causes.

Myanmar, presently exercising an independent and active non-aligned foreign policy, requires diplomats serving abroad to be the embodiment of the State's foreign policy. To fulfil this duty effectively, diplomats must possess a comprehensive understanding of the functions of state foreign policy. This involves navigating the intricate landscape of diplomatic relations with counterparts and superiors from assigned countries while remaining vigilant about incidents in neighbouring and global nations.

While in assigned countries, diplomats need to lend a helping hand to Myanmar citizens abroad in solving their problems. Those diplomats must occupy Myanmar citizens' reliance and trust abroad with necessary assistance. If so, all Myanmar citizens will be a reliable strength for the nation and stand tall in the international community.

pressure resulting from political conflicts in 2020. Diplomats must act as conduits of accurate information, disseminating the actual incidents in Myanmar and providing an understanding of the exact situations in the country to relevant nations. Overcoming challenges posed by sanctions and pressures imposed by influential countries necessitates persistent efforts.

The inherent nature of diplomats and embassy staff is rooted in enhancing relations across all arenas. Applying diplomatic tactics and experiences efficiently becomes paramount in elevating political, economic, and cultural sectors with assigned countries. Strengthening personal relationships and fostering fraternity within the diplomatic corps is integral to successfully implementing their missions and realizing their visions.

Myanmar's diplomats stationed abroad are pivotal in fortifying diplomatic ties and promoting the nation's interests on the global stage. Navigating complex geopolitical landscapes and overcoming challenges play a vital role in shaping international perceptions and advancing Myanmar's standing in the international community.

While in assigned countries, diplomats need to lend a helping hand to Myanmar citizens abroad in solving their problems. Those diplomats must occupy Myanmar citizens' reliance and trust abroad with necessary assistance. If so, all Myanmar citizens will be a reliable strength for the nation and stand tall in the international community.

RR Simpson, a mining specialist, returned from Burma on 3 April 1905. Posted to the United Provinces in connection with the Kangra earthquake investigation on the 8th idem, and returned to headquarters on 7 May 1905. Deputed to the Naga Hills, Assam, and left for the field on 8 November 1905 (GSI, 1905).

The Namma, Man-Sang and Man-Se-Le Coalfields, northern Shan States, Burma.

Before conducting the Namma, Man-Sang, and Man-Se-Le coal fields, Dr Fritz Noetling reported the Lashio Coalfield, northern Shan States and published in the Records of the Geological Survey of India (Vol XXIV, pt 2, p 99) in 1891. The boundaries of the coalfield were mapped in 1903 by Mr Datta, and in the season 1904-05, Mr Simpson was engaged during part of the time in making fresh excavations. He also discovered several previously unknown outcrops. T D LaTouche and R R Simpson reported the Lashio Coalfield in the Records of Geological Survey of India (Vol XXXIII, pt 2, p 117) in 1905.

Due to space constraints, significant points from R R Simpson's report on Namma, Man-Sang, and Man-Se-Le coalfields have been extracted in this article.

THE NAMMA COALFIELD

The Namma coalfield is situated in the Hsenwi and Hsipaw divisions of the northern Shan States. It is contained between latitudes 22° 36' - 22° 55' and longitude 97° 42' - 98° 2', and extends within ten miles to the southeast of Lashio, the civil station of the northern Shan States, and the terminus of the Mandalay-Lashio Railway.

The principal axis of the coalfield follows a N-E - S-W direction and is about 15 miles in length. The average width is about 3 ½ miles, whilst the area contains some 50 square miles. A small outlier of the coal-bearing rocks is found three miles to the southwest of the main area. It is about four miles in length and probably not more than half a mile broad at the widest point. Its longer axis lies in the same direction as that of the larger area. The general elevation is from 1,500-1,800 feet above sea level. Thus, the area is sharply distinguished from the surrounding country, the average height of which is at least 1,000 feet greater, with summits exceeding 4,000 feet in height above sea level. The largest villages within the area are Manse (22° 48' - 97° 56'), on the north-east, and Namma (22° 43' - 97° 53'), on the southwest, from the latter of which the coalfield derives its name.

The coalfield was visited and reported on in 1890 by Dr Noetling, Geological Survey of India. During the field season 1902-03, Mr P N Datta, also of the Geological Survey of India, visited the coalfield. He has recorded the finding of a coal outcrop from 10 to 12 feet thick about one mile east of Namma and two or three outcrops of thin coal seams in the hilly ground about half a mile southwest of Namma.

Geology

The general geological features of a large portion of the Northern Shan States have been worked out chiefly by Mr T D LaTouche. Still, as the relations of the rocks found within the area under discussion are not yet fully established, no definite group names have been adopted throughout this paper. The rock formations found within the area under discussion are: -

The Burma Circle of the Geological Survey of India and their Contributions to the Geology of Myanmar

EPISODE: 29

By THAN HTUN (GEOSCIENCE MYANMAR)

Age	Character
4. Recent.	Clays and conglomerates.
3. Pliocene?	Clayey shales, sandstones, conglomerates and coal seams.
2. Doubtful.	Hard, purplish sandstones.
1. Earlier Palaeozoic.	Blue and white limestones.

Earlier Palaeozoic: This formation is the lowest seen within the area. It consists of hard, blue or white limestone, occasionally shaly, but, as a rule, possessing a massive character. It has been extensively folded along an axis roughly coinciding with the longer axis of the coal-bearing rocks. As a consequence of this folding, the limestone has been, in many places, severely crushed, the particles having been subsequently recemented by calcite.

Rocks of doubtful age: These rocks are only seen on the east of the coalfield, where they consist entirely of hard, thin-bedded, much-jointed sandstones, purplish in colour. They appear to be unconformable to the limestone. Their dip direction varies from north to northeast, usually at an angle of about 30°.

The Tertiary beds: It is in these rocks that the coal seams occur. They consist of soft, whitish-yellow to light-brown, clayey shales- amongst which the coal seams are interbedded-soft, white or yellow sandstones and conglomerates. The latter is made up of boulders of yellow quartz, quartzite, and crystalline rocks, including granite. The fossils that have been found within the beds correspond closely with existing species, and from this fact, it has been inferred that the rocks are of Pliocene age.

Recent deposits: These consist of clays and conglomerates. The latter are derived from the disintegration of the Tertiary conglomerates and are most prominent in the bottoms of the valleys, where they form beds up to ten feet in thickness.

Quality of the coal

The coal of the Namma coalfield is a lustrous lignite with a specific gravity of 1.37. It is a bright black, and the streak is brown. It is non-coking and appears to be free from any large intermixture of iron pyrite. It is very hard but brittle, displays little or no cleavage, and breaks with a conchoidal fracture. The coal is very low in carbon, and the percentage of moisture and volatile products is very high.

So far as is known at present, there are only two coal seams of economic importance in the Namma



R R Simpson, Source: GSI

coalfield. The Namma seam has been proved over an outcrop length of about 2,400 feet. It varies in thickness from about 7 to 17 feet and is variable also in quality.

THE MAN-SANG COALFIELD

This coalfield is situated in the neighbourhood of Man-sang (22° 26'; 97° 57'), a village lying 7 ½ miles due west of Mong Yai, the most important village in the South Hsenwi division of the northern Shan States and place of residence of the reigning Sawbwa of S Hsenwi. The northern end of the area lies sixteen miles S S E of the south-western end of the Namma coalfield.

The extent of the known area is 13 ½ square miles, but as the boundary on the south and southeast is ill-defined, the coalfield may be of greater extent than appears to be the case. The region is one of low, rolling hills with an average elevation of 2,800 feet. The same topographical features prevail for many miles to the south and southeast, but hills rising to

a height of 4,500 feet above sea level are found in the north. There are no roads within the area, but the unmetalled cart road from Lashio to Tangyan passes within three miles of the northeastern boundary of the coalfield.

During the course of his economic survey of the northern Shan States in 1890, Dr Noetling apparently passed through the coalfield. In his report, he mentions the occurrence of "a few beds of black, coal shale."

Geology

Although no fossils were discovered, the age of the coal-bearing rocks is undoubtedly the same as those of the Lashio and Namma coalfields, i.e., late Tertiary, probably Pliocene. The geological features bear considerable resemblance to those of the above-mentioned coalfields. The essential difference is the presence of dolerite, which forms lofty hills to the north and occurs irregularly within the coalfield. Its relation to the Tertiary rocks is not apparent. No distinct evidence of intrusion was observed, and the coal rocks may have been laid down on an irregular surface of dolerite, portions of which have been exposed by denudation. The basement rock is the well-known Palaeozoic limestone, exposures of which are to be found in numerous places along the western boundary.

The recent deposits are chiefly of clay, but they include a conglomerate of dolerite boulders, which is very prominent about three miles from the northern boundary. The coal-bearing rocks are chiefly composed of yellow, white or grey shales with coal seams. The shales are occasionally sandy, and a thin band of sandstone was found in one place. The dip is inconstant. In the south, it varies from northwest to northeast at an average angle of 15°. As the northern boundary approaches, it alters to the southwest and south at 30°. It is again northerly close to the boundary, at angles of 30° to 50°.

Quality of the coal

The coal from this locality is a hard, somewhat shaly lignite with a specific gravity of 1.40. It varies from brown to black in colour and, although occasionally bright and lustrous, is usually dull in appearance. In general character, the coal resembles that from the Lashio and Namma coalfields and has the same undesirable quality of disintegration after exposure

to air and sunlight.

So far as the recent explorations of the Man-sang coalfield have gone, no coal seam of a thickness greater than 4 ½ feet has been found. The continuity of the seams is uncertain, the dip very variable, and the area much broken up by dolerite intrusions. Even should this disadvantage not exist, it is unlikely that the coalfield will ever be of much economic value.

THE MAN-SE-LE COAL-FIELD

This small patch of coal-bearing rocks has hitherto escaped notice. It lies between 22° 37' - 22° 42' and 98° 13' - 98° 18', and is situated 27 miles to ESE of the Namma coal-field. It is an irregular oval shape, the northern or longer axis being 4 ½ miles long, whilst the shorter axis is about a mile less. The total area is 13 ½ square miles. Its average elevation is 3,100 feet. The Lashio-Tangyan cart road passes within six miles of the southern boundary. The only villages of importance are Man-Se-Le (22° 40' - 98° 16') and Kunglung (called Nam-hwin) (22° 39' - 98° 16').

Geology

There is no doubt that the rocks of this coalfield are of the same age as those of the other known coalfields of the northern Shan States. The only fossils found are gastropods of a species identical to those found in the Namma coalfield. The boundary of the field, on all sides, is of Palaeozoic limestone. Yellow-brown shales with occasionally a sandy character are found within the area and coal seams. These rocks vary in dip from northeast to southeast at an average angle of 22°, with the highest angle of dip recorded being 40°. Here, as elsewhere, exposures are few and far between, the rocks being covered by the usual layer of alluvial clay.

Quality and quantity of fuel

Although it is by no means certain, it is probable that there are not more than one or two coal seams of importance in the field. Pits Nos 1 to 7 are all approximately on the same line of strike and are probably on one and the same seam. The greatest coal thickness was four feet, but even in this case, the top of the seam is denuded. Without further prospecting work, however, it would be unwise to hazard an opinion as to the quantity of workable coal.

The appearance of the coal is somewhat shaly, but the following analysis of a sample from No 2 pit shows it to be about equal in quality with that from the other fields, although inferior to the best Namma coal: Moisture (14.73 per cent), Volatile matter (38.83 per cent), Fixed Carbon (34.22 per cent), Ash (12.22 per cent).

The fact that the coal seam is probably of a small average thickness and is of inferior quality to that from the Namma area, together with the comparative inaccessibility of the locality, make it unlikely that the coalfield will be of economic importance for very many years to come.

References:

1. LaTouche T D and Simpson R R 1905; *The Lashio Coalfield, northern Shan States, the Records of Geological Survey of India (Vol XXXIII, pt 2, p 117)*
2. Simpson R R, *Mining Specialist, 1905; The Namma, Man-sang and Man-se-le Coalfields, northern Shan States, Burma, Records of GSI (Vol XXXIII, Part 2, p 125)*

SCI/ENVIRON: WORLD

Seoul hopes egg freezing can help S Korea baby crisis, experts disagree

One of the latest efforts involves Seoul city authorities offering financial assistance for egg freezing procedures.

AS South Korea's birth rate hits fresh lows, Seoul city officials have a plan to help — subsidised egg freezing. But experts warn the initiative is unlikely to reverse precipitous demographic decline. At just 0.7 births per woman late last year, South Korea has one of the lowest birthrates in the world, far below the replacement rate, meaning the population is ageing — and shrinking — rapidly.

The government has poured billions of dollars into

trying to encourage more births, with one of the latest efforts involving Seoul city authorities offering to subsidise the cost of a round of egg freezing.

Jeong, who is in her 40s, decided to take them up.

"I felt the pressure to have a baby because of my age, which led me to consider getting married quickly," Jeong, who asked to be identified only by her surname, told AFP. "When I reached my mid-30s, I suggested to the men I dated that

we should get married as soon as possible. But it just didn't work out," Jeong added. So she turned to a backup plan.

While single women can freeze their eggs, in reality the scheme will only assist women who go on to marry, as clinics offering intrauterine insemination (IUI) and in vitro fertilization (IVF) typically require marriage certificates, making the procedures virtually impossible for singles or same sex couples to access. — AFP



Seoul will subsidize egg freezing in a bid to boost birthrates, though experts question the move's effectiveness. **PHOTO: YELIM LEE/AFP**

Groundwater upsurge floods homes in Libyan coastal town

MUCH of Libya is bone-dry desert but one Mediterranean coastal town is suffering the opposite problem — its houses and fields have been inundated by a mysterious upsurge of groundwater.

Stagnant water and squishy mud have flooded houses, streets and palm groves around the northwestern town of Zliten, spreading a foul smell and

creating breeding grounds for mosquitos.

Many locals have fled their homes, where walls have cracked or collapsed, amid fears of a worsening environmental crisis in the area about 160 kilometres (100 miles) east of the capital Tripoli.

"Water began coming out two months ago and still continues to rise and submerge our

wells," Mohamad Ali Dioub, owner of a farm some four kilometres from Zliten, told AFP. "All my fruit trees — apple, apricot and pomegranate trees — are dead."

The 60-year-old said he had rented water trucks to pump out the stagnant water and bought loads of sand to dump onto the soggy ground, in an effort to save some of his valuable date palms. — AFP



A banner which translates as 'fishermen = a species under threat' hangs on the side of a fishing boat in northern France. **PHOTO BY LOIC VENANCE / AFP**

Fishermen, ecologists unite in northern France against 'sea bulldozer'

The focal point of their concern was the Annelies Ilena, a massive trawler equipped with an on-board processing factory, touted as one of the world's largest vessels of its kind.

ENVIRONMENTAL activists and fishermen on Thursday joined forces to protest in northern France against a new giant fishing trawler factory, warning the vessel risked wrecking livelihoods and the environment.

Around 200 people protested in the port of the town of Saint-Malo in a show of anger against the Annelies Ilena, a massive fishing trawler with an on-board processing factory, one of the biggest such vessels in the world. "It's an aberration," said Nathan Kaufmann, a 27-year-old fisherman who travelled from his home region of South Finistere.

"I have a quota of 100 kilos of mackerel per week: the trawler can catch 400 tonnes in one day, it would take me 70 years to do the same." Flying the Polish flag and owned by a Dutch shipowner, the Annelies Ilena, 145 metres long and 24 metres wide, is to replace the Joseph Roty II, built in 1974 and which will now remain in dock. The Saint-Malo Fishing Company said at the beginning of February that it had 15 million euros of financing for the installation of a production unit for surimi — a fish paste used especially in Asian cuisine — on board the Annelies Ilena. — AFP



Many locals have fled their homes, where walls have cracked or collapsed, amid fears of a worsening environmental crisis. **PHOTO: AFP**

'You need to calm down': Swift-mania hits Australia

The "Eras Tour" spans Swift's discography and is noted as the highest-grossing musical tour in history, amassing approximately US\$1 billion in ticket sales according to Pollsta.

THOUSANDS of die-hard Taylor Swift fans flocked to a Melbourne stadium Friday, snapping up bagfuls of merchandise hours before the first Australian date of her money-raking, two-year-long "Eras" tour.

The 34-year-old megastar kicks off seven Australia

shows on Friday, with three stadium gigs in Melbourne, before heading to Sydney for four more sell-out dates.

"The Eras Tour", which takes fans through the Swift discography, is the highest-grossing musical tour of all time, netting about US\$1 billion in ticket sales, according

to Pollstar, a trade publication.

"The main thing that got me into her was probably the lyrics and how I can relate them to so many different situations," said 21-year-old Australian fan Kendra Harris, who has been waiting months to see her hero in the flesh.

"I also love how she's so communicative with fans. She posts a lot of things on her social media and will comment on people's TikToks, so it feels like she truly knows you," Harris added.

"I know she used to invite fans to her house to listen to the album early, so I feel like doing things like that just shows how much she cares."

With many fans coming from overseas or other states and tickets hard to come by, hotel groups are offering ticket-and-lodging packages that run into the thousands of dollars. — AFP



Fans of US singer Taylor Swift, also known as Swifties, queue for merchandise at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) ahead Swift's three shows in Melbourne on 16 February 2024. PHOTO: AFP

Rod Stewart banks \$100 million for song catalog: report

ROD Stewart, the singer whose hits include "Maggie May", is the latest artist to sell the rights to his music, The Wall Street Journal said Thursday.

The paper said Irving Azoff's Iconic Artists Group acquired Stewart's interests in his recorded music and publishing catalog, as well as some rights to his name as likeness, for a tidy sum of nearly \$100 million.

News of the sale comes less than a week after reports of a blockbuster deal reached by Sony to acquire half of Michael Jackson's recording and publishing catalog rights from his estate. Details of that transaction are scant, but reports from Billboard and The New York Times say it is likely the largest valuation of a single musician's assets. The Times, citing people briefed on the deal,

said it valued Jackson's assets at \$1.2 billion or more, a valuation Billboard said meant Sony was paying at least \$600 million for the stake.

Music rights in recent

years became a hot market after a flurry of sales that saw the likes of Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, Stevie Nicks and Neil Young cash in on their catalogs. — AFP



British singer and songwriter Rod Stewart, shown here performing during the Platinum Party at Buckingham Palace on 4 June 2022 as part of Queen Elizabeth II's platinum jubilee, has reportedly made a deal for his music publishing and recording rights. PHOTO: POOL/AFP/FILE



Gerards expressed delight at the event, highlighting the vibrant colours and the promise of spring. PHOTO: ANI

Netherlands envoy sees tulips as bond at Delhi fest

Netherlands Ambassador to India Marisa Gerards, joined by NDMC Chairman Amit Yadav, attended Delhi's Tulip Festival, emphasizing the blossoms as symbols of strong bilateral ties.

NETHERLANDS Ambassador to India Marisa Gerards on Friday attended the Tulip Festival at the roundabout crossing of Shanti Path and stressed that these tulips are a witness of the good relations between the two countries.

The Netherlands envoy was accompanied by the Chairman of New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) Amit Yadav as they celebrated the upcoming season of spring.

"I am here with NDMC Chairman Amit Yadav, to look at the Tulips we planted together, to celebrate spring that is coming. These tulips are a witness of the good relations between India and the Netherlands...", Gerards said.

She further expressed joy to be at the festival and said that

people who attend the Tulip festival enjoy colours and the promise of the new season.

"I can see that many people come to the Tulip Festival to enjoy the colours and enjoy the promise of the new season that's coming. I am happy to be here," she added.

Gerards further emphasised that it is a wonderful way of bonding the people of the two countries.

"I have even seen Bollywood films featuring these beautiful tulips. It is a wonderful way of bonding the people of the two countries," she said.

Earlier on Thursday, Netherlands envoy Gerards called on Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane in New Delhi and discussed areas of mutual interest for the two countries. — ANI

ECONOMY WORLD

EU cuts growth and inflation forecasts for 2024

Despite the ECB maintaining interest rates in 2024, there are expectations of future rate cuts to address slowing consumer prices and a weakening eurozone economy.



View of shops on the tree lined Kurfurstendamm in Berlin, Germany. PHOTO: AFP

THE European Commission on Thursday cut both its growth and inflation forecasts for the eurozone in 2024, as it warned geopolitical tensions spelled rising uncertainty for the single-currency area's economy.

The forecasts by the EU's executive arm demonstrate the impact of the European Central Bank's interest rate-hiking campaign last year: a welcome fall in inflation, predicted to drop to 2.7 per cent, but also worryingly sluggish growth, expected to reach just 0.8 per cent.

Although the Frankfurt-based ECB has held rates steady so far in 2024, it is widely expected to begin cutting rates

later this year in the face of slowing consumer prices and a weakening eurozone economy.

Inflation soared in the aftermath of Ukraine conflict in 2022, sending energy prices sky-high as Europe scrambled to find alternative power sources.

Reflecting lower energy prices, the commission revised its inflation forecast sharply down from 3.2 per cent — although it still remains above the ECB's two-per-cent target.

"Lower energy commodity prices, weaker economic momentum and recent inflation outturns set inflation on a lower path, lower than was anticipated last autumn," the

EU's economy commissioner, Paolo Gentiloni, told reporters in Brussels.

The commission's 2024 growth forecast for the 20-country eurozone, at 0.8 per cent, also marks a sharp downward revision from the previous forecast of 1.2 per cent.

"After narrowly avoiding a technical recession in the second half of last year, prospects for the EU economy in the first quarter of 2024 remain weak," it said.

But Gentiloni tempered the gloomy outlook by stressing that "the conditions for a gradual acceleration of economic activity this year are still in place". — AFP



Argentine President Javier Milei began his term in December by devaluing the peso by more than 50 per cent, slashing transport and fuel subsidies, and getting rid of price controls. PHOTO: AFP

Argentina's annual inflation soars above 250% in January

ARGENTINA'S monthly inflation slowed slightly in January, but the prices of key goods and services rose 254 per cent year-on-year, the statistics agency said Wednesday.

President Javier Milei had warned that the country's battle with inflation was far from over when he took office in December, riding a wave of fury over decades of economic mismanagement, and stood by his policies Wednesday. "If one takes the number alone, isolated, it is horrifying. And indeed it is, but you have to look at where we were and what the trend was," Milei told television station La Nacion Mas.

Monthly inflation stood at 20.6 per cent in January, the INDEC statistics agency said, down from the 25.5 per cent figure for December. Annual inflation in December was 211 per cent.

Latin America's third-larg-

est economy continues to face an unrelenting crisis, with Milei warning that the situation will get worse before it improves as he applies what he termed "shock" treatment.

The president initiated significant economic reforms at the start of his term, including a 50 per cent devaluation of the peso, removal of subsidies, and elimination of price controls. Consequently, transport costs rose by 26.3 per cent in January, with goods and services increasing by 44.4 per cent. The president defended these measures, stating they prevented a steeper decline in economic activity. Meanwhile, economist Milei highlighted efforts to support the most vulnerable groups through increased social allowances.

Milei remains optimistic, estimating that inflation will be curbed within two years. — AFP

IEA warns on plummeting oil stocks

Established by the OECD to address the oil crisis of the 1970s, the IEA continues to play a crucial role in helping countries manage energy challenges and mitigate economic impacts.

THE International Energy Agency warned Thursday of plummeting oil stocks even as global growth in demand loses momentum.

"Global observed oil stocks plummeted by about 60 mb (million barrels) in January, prelim-

inary data indicate, with on-land inventories falling to their lowest level since at least 2016," the IEA said in its latest monthly oil market report.

In December, global inventories had increased by 21.6 mb, due to an increase in offshore oil

storage (up 60.7 mb to 1,835 mb) which more than offset declines in onshore inventories that fell 39 mb, against a backdrop of disruptions to maritime traffic in the Red Sea, lengthening oil delivery distances and times. — AFP



Disruptions to maritime trade in the Red Sea has lengthened oil delivery distances and times, leading to a drop in stocks, according to the International Energy Agency. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Stellantis bags record annual net profits of 18.6 bln euros

AUTO group Stellantis on Thursday posted an 11 per cent annual rise in annual profits to a record 18.6 billion euros (\$20 billion) for 2023.

The French-Italian-US automaker created from a merger of Peugeot-Citroen and Fiat-Chrysler posted an annual rise of six per cent.

It listed net revenues worth 189.5 billion

euros after selling 6.4 million vehicles worldwide — up from 6.0 million in 2022 — on improved logistics flows.

The group saw European margins notably move ahead with strong sales of models including Fiat Ducato, Opel Astra, as well as SUV favourites such as Peugeot 2008, Jeep Avenger and Alfa Romeo Tonale.

In North Ameri-

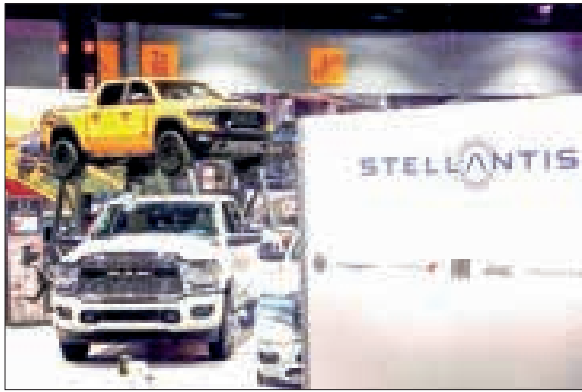
ca, where the group gets most of its profits, last year was hit by a lengthy strike by its US workforce. That cost it some \$3.2 billion in lost revenue.

But strong sales in Africa, the Middle East and South America helped offset that.

The increase in net profit is largely due to an absence of penalties on CO2 emissions or recalls on airbags which had relatively marred 2022.

Stellantis posted free cash flow of €12.9 billion last year, up 19 per cent compared to 2022, allowing the group to plan a share buyback programme of three billion euros this year.

The group is also planning a new employee shareholding programme. — AFP



Stellantis' Ram truck displayed at the Chicago Auto Show. PHOTO: SCOTT OLSON /AFP/FILE

Four Xbox exclusives heading to rivals in big shift



The head of Microsoft's Xbox team says it is not changing its 'fundamental' strategy of exclusive video games but wants to reach as many players as possible. PHOTO: AFP

MICROSOFT on Thursday shook up the video game world with word it is making some once-exclusive Xbox video games available for play on rival consoles.

Xbox head Phil Spen-

cer did not specify which titles were expanding beyond the Xbox, but the Verge, citing unnamed sources, said they will be "Hi-Fi Rush", "Pentiment", "Sea of Thieves" and "Grounded".

"Over the next five or 10 years, games that are exclusive to one piece of hardware are going to be a smaller and smaller part of the game industry," Spencer said in a podcast. — AFP

US retail sales in January log biggest fall in almost a year

RETAIL sales in the United States slipped more than anticipated last month, retreating after the holiday season and bogged down by auto sales and gas prices, government data showed Thursday.

The 0.8 per cent seasonally adjusted decline

went beyond analyst expectations of a 0.2 per cent drop, bringing total sales down to \$700.3 billion, the Commerce Department said.

The slide was the biggest in nearly a year and comes after a strong showing in general for the

consumer sector in 2023, which — helped by labour market resilience — supported economic growth.

A larger than expected slowdown in spending, if it persists, could dim hopes that consumption continues its role as a key economic driver. — AFP

Transferring Registered Pesticide

Registered pesticide distributing by Myanmar Thet Nay Min Co.,Ltd in the territory of Myanmar for the product as following are transferring from Qingdao Agro-unitek Cropscience Co.,Ltd former producer to Anhui Meiland Agricultural Development Co.,Ltd as per mutual consent from both parties. Any objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board within (14) days.

No	Trade Name	Active Ingredients	Registration Type	Registration No
1	Quick Game	Emamectin Benzoate 5% EC	Provisional	P2022-5512
2	Black Jaguar	Chlorfenapyr 24% SC	Provisional	P2022-5799

Myanmar Thet Nay Min Co., Ltd. No(90), Padamyar Hninnsi Road, 27 ward, Rose Park 3, North Dagon Township, Yangon. Tel: 09 209285

Changing Trade Name For Registered Pesticide

The pesticide manufactured by Jiangxi Zhengbang Crop Protection Co.,Ltd, Guangxi Baikal Biochemical Products Co.,Ltd and distributed by Myanmar Shwe Thein Trading Co.,Ltd is changing trade Name as follow. Any objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board within (14) days.

No	Previous Name	New Name	Registration No
1	ZB-Combine Strength 70% WP	Shwe Doctor	P2022-4795
2	ZB-Combine Power 18% SC	Say Sayar	P2022-4794
3	ZB-Delicate 30 SC	Thein Doxa	P2022-5740
4	ZB-Vanquisher 12 SC	Shwe Myar	E2022-5508
5	ZB-Flash 16 SC	Thein Poe Chi	E2022-5507
6	ZB-Defeat 30SC	Shwe Poe pyay	E2021-5303
7	ZB-Nimble 240 SC	Thein Clofen	P2021-5304
8	ZB-Punisher 10SC	Shwe Pi No	P2023-5411
9	ZB-Weed Master 12%S	Mee Myar	P2023-5247
10	ZB-Magical Gem 12% SC	Ye Kae Myar	P2023-5244

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ISEACO WISDOM VOY.NO. (110N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ISEACO WISDOM VOY.NO. (110N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 17-2-2024 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

ROLLING UPDATES: WORLD

Putin gives green light to Moscow-St Petersburg high-speed railway

The project aims to increase railway capacity, reduce airport congestion, and promote domestic tourism.

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin approved on Thursday the construction of a high-speed railway (HSR) between Moscow and St Petersburg, said Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov.

“The basic design has been agreed upon. The details of the future document will be quickly

finalized,” Peskov said.

The country needs high-speed routes to increase railway capacity, ease airport congestion and boost the domestic tourism industry, Putin said during a special meeting held on Thursday to discuss the HSR line.

At the meeting, Putin called

for a long-standing discussion on this topic and asked for prepared proposals on the sources and mechanisms of financing, the deadlines and stages of work and the conditions for attracting investors and development institutions.

Earlier, Russian Transport



The Sapsan high speed train on the way from Moscow to St Petersburg.

PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ SERGEY KOROVKIN/ WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Minister Vitaly Savelyev said that the HSR project would require over 600 billion roubles (about 6.5 billion US dollars) from the federal budget.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyannin said that Moscow, along with other interested regions, would participate in financing the HSR project. — Xinhua

Israel PM rejects international recognition of Palestinian state



This photo released by the Israeli army on 29 January 2024 shows Israeli soldiers operating in Khan Younis, in the south of the Gaza Strip. **PHOTO: ARMÉE ISRAËLIENNE/ AFP**

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said late Thursday that he rejected a plan for international recognition of a Palestinian state, saying such an initiative “would offer an enormous reward to terrorism”.

Netanyahu’s comments follow a similar rejection by influential far-right ministers Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich, who responded to reports of the plan in The Washington Post.

The newspaper report, which cited several US and Arab diplomats, said that the United States, Israel’s main

ally, was working with several Arab countries on a comprehensive plan for long-term peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

The plan included a firm timeline for the establishment of a Palestinian state, the newspaper reported.

“Israel will continue to oppose unilateral recognition of a Palestinian state,” Netanyahu said in a post in Hebrew on social media platform X.

“Such recognition, in the wake of the 7 October massacre, would offer an enormous reward to unprecedented terrorism and would prevent any

future peace agreement,” he said.

“Israel categorically rejects international diktats concerning a permanent settlement with the Palestinians,” he added, saying that a peace agreement could only result from “direct negotiations without preconditions”.

The Washington Post reported that the plan would begin with a ceasefire “expected to last at least six weeks”, with officials hoping that an agreement could be reached before the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan on 10 March. — AFP

Kim’s powerful sister says N Korea, Japan can open ‘new future’

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un’s sister, Kim Yo Jong, expressed openness to improving ties with Japan. She hinted at a possible invitation for Japan’s leader to visit Pyongyang.

NORTH Korean leader Kim Jong Un’s powerful sister said Thursday her country would be open to improving ties with Tokyo, even hinting at a possible future invitation to Pyongyang for Japan’s leader.

Kim Yo Jong’s comments came after Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said last week that he felt a “strong need” to change the current relationship between Tokyo and Pyongyang.

“I think there would be no

reason not to appreciate his recent speech as a positive one, if it was prompted by his real intention to boldly free himself from the past fetters,” Kim said in a statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency.

Kim said the two countries “can open up a new future together” depending on Tokyo’s actions, including moving on from the long-running matter of North Korea’s kidnapping of Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s. — AFP

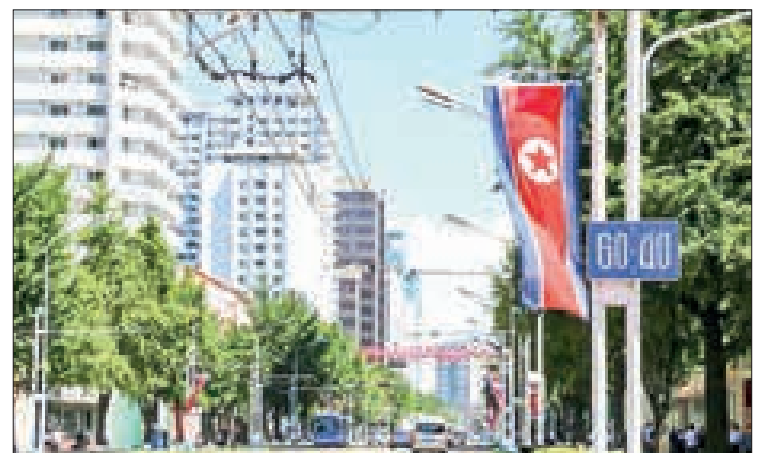


Photo taken on 8 September 2018 shows an avenue decorated with national flags in Pyongyang, capital of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK). 9 September 2018 marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the DPRK. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ JIANG YAPING/XINHUA/FILE**

SPORTS

'The fun is back' says Werner after Spurs move

Tottenham has an option to buy Werner for €20 million (£17 million) when his loan ends in the summer.



Tottenham forward Timo Werner says he has re-discovered his love for the game since his return to London. PHOTO: PAUL ELLIS / AFP

TOTTENHAM winger Timo Werner said on Friday "the fun has completely returned" as a result of his loan move from RB Leipzig in January.

Werner has two assists in five games since coming back to London, where he played with Chelsea from 2020 to 2022.

"I'm much happier. After five games you can say that the transfer was worth it," he told Sky Germany.

Tottenham, who sit fourth in the Premier League, have an option to buy Werner when his loan deal, reportedly worth 20 million euros (17 million pounds), ends in the summer.

Werner suggested however that a return to Leipzig was unlikely, saying he had "relatively few discussions" with coach Marco Rose.

"During the first half of the season it was clear what the coach thought of me and what he had planned for me. That's why it was easy to take this step".

The forward moved to Chelsea having scored 93 goals and made 40 assists in 157 appearances for Leipzig.

Despite winning the Champions League with Chelsea, he was unable to recapture his form at Stamford Bridge, with 23 goals and 21 assists in 89 appearances.

Werner moved to Tottenham in a bid to get extra game time ahead of Euro 2024, which Germany will host.

He has 24 goals in 57 games for Germany but has not played since March 2023. — AFP

Howe admits fears as Man Utd line up move for sporting director Ashworth

EDDIE Howe admitted Friday he has "concerns" over Newcastle sporting director Dan Ashworth's knowledge of the club's inner workings as speculation mounts that he is on the brink of a switch to Manchester United.

United are understood to be keen to bring in Ashworth as part of an overhaul of the club's structure following Jim Ratcliffe's deal to acquire a 25 per cent stake in the Old Trafford giants and take control of football operations.

The chairman of chemicals giant INEOS has moved quickly to strengthen United's football leadership group, with recruitment a particular area of focus.

Asked if the detailed intelligence the 52-year-old Ashworth possesses about his current employers and their blueprint was a concern, Newcastle boss Howe replied: "I think your concerns are relevant. I don't know quite how much I can say on that, but I share your feelings". — AFP

SPORTS NEWS In Brief

MNL League Cup 2024 fixtures release

THE drawing-lot event for the Myanmar National League Cup 2024 football tournament, which will see the competition of the domestic football clubs on the eve of the new MNL football season, was held on 15 February at the meeting hall of Thuwunna Stadium. With the supervision of Myanmar Football Federation and Myanmar National League, the tourney will feature four groups of five teams each.

Yangon United, University FC, Maha United, GFA and Shwepyitha United will vie for Group A while defending champion Shan United, Glory Goal, Rakhine United, Kachin United



and Rainbow FC are included in Group B. Meanwhile, Hanthawady United, Dagon Port, Dagon Star United, Ayeyawady United and Silver Star FC are competing in Group C while

Yadanabon and Rakkhapura United are placed in Group D. The tourney will run from 1 March to 19 June at Thuwunna, YUSC, University and Padonma Stadiums with the two-round system.

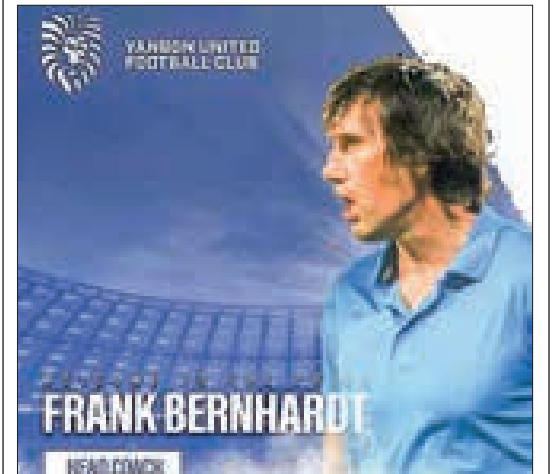
Football star Kyi Lin signs with Rakhine United



THE Myanmar football star Kyi Lin, loved by football fans, played for Bagan United (currently Yangon United) for 10 years joined the Rakhine United surprisingly on 15 February.

Kyi Lin parted away with Yangon United after getting injury in 2020. He has played for Myanmar national football team for 42 matches from 2011 to 2020 and has scored seven goals. Star strikers Kyaw Ko Ko and Kaung Sithu are joining the team as well with Kyi Lin.

Yangon United appoints Frank Bernhardt as head coach



YANGON United recently signed with German Frank Bernhardt as head coach for the 2024-2025 football season.

Frank Bernhardt, as head coach and technical director, has been responsible for the Estonian Football Federation, Azerbaijan Football Federation and Malaysian Football Federation, as well as being in charge of youth scouting for Real Madrid and the Malaysian Super League club Kelantan.

Head Coach U Bo Bo Aung to handle Ayeyawady United



U Bo Bo Aung will manage the Ayeyawady United for 2024-2025 Myanmar National League along with team manager U Myo Tun, assistant head coach U Thura Swe, fitness coach U Tun Zaw and goal coach U Phyko Ko Hlaing.

Myawady women's team prepare for new football season



MYAWADY FC, defending champion of the Myanmar Women's League is currently preparing for the new football season of the domestic league and AFC Women's Club Championship, as stated by the Myanmar Football Federation. — Htun Htun/KZL



Russia expects IAEA to point to Ukraine as only threat to Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant

Situated on the left bank of the Dnepr River, the Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant is Europe's largest. It fell under Russian control in early March 2022 and has since faced repeated shelling, prompting fears of a potential nuclear disaster.



IAEA experts have been monitoring the plant since 1 September 2022, following their initial visit by Director-General Rafael Grossi.
PHOTO: AISIJA VORONTSOVA/SPUTNIK

UKRAINE, with its recent attacks on the city of Enerhodar, has once again demonstrated its complete disregard for the safe functioning of nuclear facilities, and Russia expects the IAEA to point to Kyiv as the only source of threat to the functioning of the Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant, the Russian Foreign Ministry said.

“We hope the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) leadership will still take a responsible position and unequivocally point to Kyiv as the only source of threat to the reliable functioning of the Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant,” the ministry said. “The Kyiv regime has once again demonstrated complete disregard for issues of the safe operation of peaceful nuclear facilities and the desire to achieve its criminal goals by any means, including by creating threats to the life and health of ZNPP personnel,” it said.

Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant is located on the left bank of the Dnepr River and is the largest nuclear power plant in Europe. It came under the control of Russian forces in early March 2022 and has since been repeatedly shelled, raising international concerns over a possible nuclear accident. — SPUTNIK

THE EXTREME WINTRY WEATHER

Over 600,000 livestock die in cold winter in Mongolia

At least 611,924 heads of livestock have died across Mongolia so far this winter, due to the extreme wintry weather known as “dzud”, local media reported on Friday, citing the country’s State Emergency Commission (SEC).

The dzud is a Mongolian term to describe a severely cold winter when a large number of livestock die because the ground is frozen or covered by snow.

Among the country’s 21 provinces, Khentii, Dornod, Sukhbaatar and Dornogovi in the east, as well as Arkhangai in the central west, registered the highest rates of animal death, the SEC said in a statement. — Xinhua

South Korean scientists develop sustainable ‘meaty rice’

SCIENTISTS in South Korea have developed a new type of sustainable hybrid food — a “meaty” rice that they say could help solve food crises and climate change.

The new grain was grown in a lab by researchers at Seoul’s Yonsei University and is packed with beef muscle and fat cells.

The result is a pink rice that the team says could offer a cheaper and more environmentally sustainable meat alternative and leave a smaller carbon footprint.

“Imagine obtaining all the nutrients we need from cell-cultured protein rice,” said Park So-hyeon, who co-authored the study.

“Rice already has a high nutrient level, but adding cells from livestock can further boost it,” she said in a press release on Wednesday, when the study was published in the *Matter* journal.

The grain was coated in fish gelatine

to help beef cells latch onto the rice and then left to culture in a petri dish for up to 11 days.

The final product contained eight per cent more protein and seven per cent more fat than regular rice, the team said, and was more firm and brittle than

natural grains.

The latest creation left a significantly smaller carbon footprint since the production method eliminates the need to raise and farm animals which consume “a lot of resources and water and releases a lot of greenhouse gas”, Park said. — AFP



Scientists in South Korea have grown beef cells inside grains of rice in a bid to create food that is cheaper and more eco-friendly than real cuts of meat. **PHOTO: YONSEI UNIVERSITY**