

# The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

## Ngwetaung Beach welcomes 36,555 domestic visitors in February



The bustling Ngwetaung Beach. The beach's proximity to the Myat Mawtinsun Pagoda attracts both domestic and foreign visitors, making it a popular destination year-round.

**N**GWETAUNG Beach in Haingyi, Ngaputaw Township, Ayeyawady Region, saw a significant increase in local tourism during February 2024, with 36,555 visitors being recorded. This figure represents a notable rise compared to the previous month.

The beach's proximity to the Myat Mawtinsun Pagoda attracts both domestic and foreign visitors, making it a popular destination year-round. The majority of visitors in February hailed from Yangon Region and Nay Pyi Taw. Daw Ni Ni Mar, an Executive Officer

of the Myanmar Tourism Federation (Ngwetaung Beach), commented: "The beach welcomed around 1,000 more visitors in February compared to January — a positive trend indeed. As the summer holidays have commenced and the Myat Mawtinsun Pagoda festival approach-

es, we anticipate a further increase in the number of visitors over the coming months".

Visitors to the beach can rent bicycles, motorboats, and horses, enjoy locally produced food, and purchase souvenirs. — ASH/NT

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MIC approves seven investment projects on 6 March

### NATIONAL PAGE-10



Pawsan prices surge amid high demand in Ayeyawady Region

## Manufacturing sector exports cross US\$8.12 billion in 11 months

THE export value from the manufacturing sector surpassed US\$8.12 billion in the past 11 months of the current

financial year 2023-2024, the Ministry of Commerce's statistics showed.

The figures reflected a drop of \$1.96

billion compared to that of the year-ago period.

The manufacturing exports from the private sector exceeded \$5.1 billion, and those from the public sector hit \$3.01 billion.

Garments manufactured on a Cutting, Making and Packaging basis, sugar, natural gas and other industrial raw materials compose manufacturing exports.

The manufacturing sector bagged the most considerable earnings among the export groups, including agricultural produce, livestock, fisheries, minerals, forest products and other goods.

Garment export ranks first among the top ten export items, including natural gas and minerals. — TWA/KK



The photo taken on 12 May 2023 shows workers at a garment workplace in Yangon.



# NATIONAL

## Objectives of 79<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Armed Forces Day 2024

- (A) To safeguard the State with the sacrifice of life by upholding Our Three Main National Causes: Non-disintegration of the Union, Non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty as the national policy of Tatmadaw;
- (B) To actively participate in implementing the processes of two national visions of the State: the prosperity of the country and food security by Tatmadaw members together with the government and ethnic people in their respective sectors;
- (C) To steadfastly implement enhancement of three capabilities in accord with the work process of Tatmadaw, such as study, practise and obey in building a modern patriotic Tatmadaw with powerful strength and sharpening prowess;
- (D) To provide necessary assistance to hold a free and fair multiparty democratic general election by Tatmadaw to ensure peace and stability, solidarity and development, which are actual needs of the State and to emerge a Union based on democratic and federal systems.



Shwedagon Pagoda's 2,611<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Buddha Pujaniya Festival on 5 March 2023.

## Shwedagon Pagoda to celebrate 2,612<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Buddha Pujaniya Festival

THE Shwedagon Pagoda will celebrate its 2,612<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the Buddha Pujaniya Festival in full swing from 15 to 24 March 2024, according to

the pagoda's board of trustees. During the festival, the board of trustees will hold ceremonies dedicated to worshipping the Buddha, the Dhamma

and the Sangha. These ceremonies will include chanting Pali scriptures (Pathtana) and offering alms rice to over 100 monks. — ASH/TKO

## Hsinphyushin naval vessel returns from MILAN-2024, 6<sup>th</sup> IMNEX led by Indian Navy

THE warship Hsinphyushin, led by Captain Zaw Oo, which left for Visakhapatnam, India, to attend the Multilateral Naval Exercise (MILAN-2024) and 6<sup>th</sup> IMNEX, arrived back at No 3 Naval Jetty (Thilawa) yesterday.

The warship and naval officials were welcomed back by Commodore Tun Lu from Naval Training Command Headquarters, as well as officers and other ranks from the Navy and their families.

The MILAN-2024 was held

from 19 to 27 February, and 13 warships, including Hsinphyushin of Myanmar and one reconnaissance aircraft, from 14 countries participated in the operation.

Myanmar took part in the International Maritime Seminar with 47 other countries, the Subject Matter Expert Exchange Programme, MILAN Young Officer Interaction, harbour-based exercises, International City Parade, and displayed traditional food and Myanmar's handicrafts at

MILAN Village, visited Bodh Gaya and Taj Mahal in addition to the naval exercises with international warships.

Moreover, Myanmar participated in the 6<sup>th</sup> IMNEX held from 28 February to 2 March in the field of harbour-based exercises, bilateral naval exchange, and naval exercises with INS Kamorta (P28) of India.

The naval ship Sinphyushin sailed a total of 2,650 nautical miles during the voyage. — MNA/KTZH



The warship Hsinphyushin, which left for Visakhapatnam, India, to attend the MILAN-2024 and 6<sup>th</sup> IMNEX, arrives back at No 3 Naval Jetty (Thilawa) yesterday.

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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

## MIC approves seven investment projects on 6 March

MYANMAR Investment Commission (MIC) greenlit seven new projects to invest in manufacturing, electricity, and service sectors and allowed the capital expansion of certain existing businesses at the meeting 3/2024 held yesterday at Office No 18 in Nay Pyi Taw.

Those projects are to pump in US\$18.222 million and K99.683 billion into the country and create nearly 1,369 jobs for locals. Deputy Prime Minister General Mya Tun Oo, who is also Chair of the Myanmar Investment Commission, and commission members attended the meeting.

As of the end of February 2024, among the 52 foreign



MIC Chair Deputy Prime Minister MoTC Union Minister General Mya Tun Oo chairs the meeting 3/2024 of the Myanmar Investment Commission yesterday.

countries, Singapore, China, and Thailand are the leading countries with the largest foreign investments in the country. Of 12 sectors, the power sector accounts for 28.49 per cent by drawing the most significant investments, followed by the oil and natural gas sector (24.45 per cent) and the manufacturing sector (14.40 per cent).

The Myanmar Investment Commission oversees and approves investment project proposals from locals and overseas, as well as serving existing investors in accordance with the Myanmar Investment Law. — MNA/TH

## Seminar for Developing Supporting Industries in Myanmar Agricultural & Food Sector and Electric Vehicle Sector: Learning from Experiences of Japan held

THE “Seminar for Developing the Supporting Industries in Myanmar Agricultural and Food Sector and the Electric Vehicle Sector: Learning from the Experiences of Japan”, organized by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) under the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations (MIFER) and funded by the ASEAN-Japan Centre as a Trade and Investment Project, was held in a hybrid format at Grand Amara Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

MIFER Union Minister Dr Kan Zaw delivered an opening speech, setting the stage for an enriching and engaging seminar ahead. Dr Nguyen Tuan Anh, Programme Coordinator of the ASEAN-Japan Centre on Trade, Investment and Tourism, then gave an opening speech on behalf of the Secretary-General of the ASEAN-Japan Centre.

The seminar is instrumental in promoting foreign and domestic investment in these two sectors, ensuring

prosperity for people, food safety and security, and energy efficiency with the support of environmentally friendly and sustainable development. That also led to the contribution of Japanese supporting industries’ experiences and lessons learnt in the agricultural and food sectors as well as the electric vehicle sector to give a clear picture of Myanmar’s initiatives.

After the opening ceremony, the seminar was executed in two parts, and the session on the “Agricultural and Food Sector” was conducted first. Experts from the DICA and Japan contributed to the presentation session. The panel discussion on “Smart Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems” was organized after the presentation session.

During the presentation session of “Electric Vehicle Sector” as the second part of the seminar, experts from the DICA, Japan and Thailand made the presentations respectively. The panel discussion on “Understanding the

business opportunities in the field of EVs and EV-support equipment” proceeded after the presentation session.

The seminar mainly reflected on the further development and future collaboration in the food and agricultural sector as well as the electric vehicle sector in Myanmar through the constructive partnership and engagement of public and private stakeholders between Myanmar and Japan.

The seminar was attended by a total of 150 persons, led by Union Minister Dr Kan Zaw, including MIFER Deputy Minister Dr Wah Wah Maung, permanent secretaries, directors-general, high-ranking officials and participants from line agencies, representatives from the ASEAN-Japan Centre, resource persons and business partners, particularly representatives from Japan External Trade Organization, Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Thailand Board of Investment and UMFCCI and its affiliated associations. — MIFER

## Sri Lankan Ambassador calls on MoH Union Minister



Union Minister Dr Thet Khaing Win receives Sri Lanka’s ambassador yesterday.

UNION Health Minister Dr Thet Khaing Win received Sri Lankan Ambassador to Myanmar Mr J M J P Bandara, who had completed his tour of duties in Myanmar, at the Union Minister’s office yesterday.

The ambassador of Sri Lanka to Myanmar thanked the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Health for providing US\$1.5 million worth of medicines and medical supplies to Sri Lanka during its time of need. He also ex-

pressed his gratitude to all the people of Myanmar.

Both sides exchanged views on the promotion of cooperation in the health sector between the two countries, especially in the public health sector and the traditional medicine sector, further cooperation in the private health sector, mutual exchange of knowledge and experiences in health sciences, and continued collaboration in the future. — MNA/TS



# NATIONAL

## 8<sup>th</sup> 47-member State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee holds 2<sup>nd</sup>-day session of sixteenth plenary meeting

THE second-day session of the sixteenth plenary meeting of the Eighth 47-member State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee was held at the Wizaya Mingala Dhamma Thabin of Thiri Mingala Kaba Aye Hill in Yangon yesterday.

Present at the occasion were members of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee led by Presiding Nayaka Sayadaw of Thanlyin Min Kyaung Pahtamapyan Monastery Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Dr Bhaddanta Candima Bhivamsa, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Tin Oo Lwin and other relevant officials.

Secretary of State Sang-



The second-day session of the sixteenth plenary meeting of the Eighth 47-member State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee in progress at the Wizaya Mingala Dhamma Thabin of Thiri Mingala Kaba Aye Hill in Yangon yesterday.

ha Maha Nayaka Committee Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Dr Bhaddanta Candima Bhivamsa presided over

the meeting. Joint Secretary Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Siha Nada acted as the master of ceremonies. At the meeting, the Sayad-

aws discussed Vinicchaya, religious affairs and educational matters and made decisions. The donors offered alms for the whole day to the State

Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee member Sayadaws, who attended the ceremony yesterday. — MNA/KTZH

## Myanmar Ambassador attends CPPCC and NPC annual meeting in Beijing



The photo shows the annual plenary session of CPPCC and NPC.

ACCORDING to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), the Myanmar ambassador participated in the 14<sup>th</sup> annual plenary meeting of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and National People's Congress

(NPC) held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, People's Republic of China, from 5 to 10 March.

More than 2,900 representatives, including the PRC President Xi Jinping, Prime Minister Li Qiang, officials

from CPPCC and NPC, senior government officials, political and economic experts from all over China, ambassadors to China, and officials from international organizations attended the opening ceremony. — ASH/TMT

## Course for junior staff on basic office skills 2/2024 opens

THE opening ceremony of the Course for Junior Staff on Basic Office Skills 2/2024, conducted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was held at the Lawkanat Hall of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday with an opening remark delivered by U Lwin Oo, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs. Responsible ministry officials also attended it.

Trainees attend the four-

week-long theoretical and practical course. It will cover subjects related to the functions of the Union Minister's Office and respective departments under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including diplomacy, bilateral relations, international and regional organizations, ASEAN affairs, consular affairs, basic office skills, administrative and financial matters and computer skills development. — MNA



Officials and trainees from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs pose for a documentary group photo at the opening ceremony of the Course for Junior Staff on Basic Office Skills in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

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

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# NATIONAL

## Preservation efforts unearth ancient treasures near Twantay Shwesandaw Pagoda

THE historic sites of Dala's old town, including the palace hill, ancient pagodas, and over 2,000 ancient glaze kilns, have been designated and preserved near the Shwesandaw Pagoda in Twantay Township of Yangon Region. U Hla Myo, a member of the Twantay Township Ancient Cultural Heritage Preservation Committee, confirmed this.

To facilitate observation by historians, glaze chemistry experts, and enthusiasts, a terracotta research museum has been established in Nyaungtaga village. The museum displays excavated glazed pots and fragments. The Glaze Research Museum is a collaborative effort between the Department of Archaeology and the National Museum in partnership with the Myanmar Ceramic Society and with support from the Japanese government.

"Many of the glazed artefacts discovered in the ancient kilns bear distinctive markings, while some do not. The museum exhibits pipes and bowls crafted from glazed materials. Along Twantay Tawkyeetan, formerly known as the old town of

Dala, one can find palace mounds where ancient kings once resided, ancient stupas, and glaze kilns. The design of the ancient stupas resembles those found in Bagan. Historians speculate that the unearthed bricks and brick tiles date back to the Bagan era. They believe that more ancient pagodas, stupas, city walls, old cities, moats, and glaze kilns may still be discovered in Twantay," explained U Hla Myo.

Several ancient glaze kilns remain undiscovered in villages like Zawti, Ay-oetaung, and Hngetpyawsan in Twantay, as well as Thabyusan and Hngetawsan in Kawhmu and Kungyangon. Collaborating with local departments from Twantay, Kawhmu, and Kungyangon, as well as Japanese groups, the Myanmar Ceramic Society conducted field research trips in 2010. These trips revealed the presence of over 2,000 unexplored ancient glaze kilns. — ASH/MKKS

Photo showcase some ancient terracotta kilns and pieces of brick in Twantay Township.



## 75<sup>th</sup> Pa-O National Day, Tabaung festival to be held



The photo shows the celebration of Pa-O National Day in the previous year.

THE 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pa-O National Day will be celebrated alongside the traditional Tabaung festival in areas predominantly inhabited by the Pa-O ethnic people, according to U Khun Sai Pha, Chair of

the Pa-O Ethnic Literature and Culture Association of Shan State (South).

"The festivities will take place on 24 March, coinciding with the full moon day of Tabaung, in the Pa-O Self-Ad-

ministered Zone and townships across Shan State (South)," explained U Khun Sai Pha. "The Tabaung festival will also be celebrated with offerings at pagodas within each township". — ASH/MKKS

## 112 baby sea turtles released in Hainggyikyun



THE Thameehla Island Sea Turtle Conservation Camp of Hainggyikyun and relevant township-level departmental officials jointly organized an Olive Ridley hatchlings release event in Kyakan Village on 5 March.

First, the group comprising of departmental officials, staff, students and locals led by U Phone Maw, head of the Thameehla Island Sea Turtle Conservation Camp of the Fisheries Department, made way to the ocean for the sea turtle hatchlings systematically, and they released 112 sea turtle hatchlings.

The public awareness campaign regarding the nature of sea turtles, the importance of the natural environment and climate for the growth of sea turtles and

freeing the sea turtles if they are caught in the nets.

U Phone Maw then presented awards to those informing officials about the holes where sea turtles lay eggs.

He also talked about sea turtle conservation activities and the establishment of an incubator at Kyakan Beach, the second release of Olive Ridley that was threatened with extinction. Currently, 112 sea turtles hatched from 117 eggs.

The female Olive Ridley lays 60 to 120 eggs, and 85 per cent of eggs hatch into baby turtles. The Fisheries Department also releases orders and notifications to prevent sea turtles from extinction. — Hlaing Myo Aung (Hainggyikyun/IPRD)/KTZH

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# NATIONAL

## Shan's fresh garlic price dramatically falls in Yangon market

ON 6 March, Shan's new garlic prices were falling in the Yangon market, at K4,000 per viss. The price was over K12,000 per viss in the last few days, and it is gradually falling to K7,500-K8,000-K8,500.

Sellers reduce prices by K500 for every viss on purchasing many. A garlic seller from Bayintnaung Yetama Street, Ko Thein Myint, said that garlic prices in Yangon are dropping since traders bought it from garlic-growing hill sites at lower prices.

Kyukok garlic's price is higher than that of Shan garlic since the former is K9,600 per viss. On 1 March, before the weekends, Shan's new garlic price ranged from K11,500 to K12,000-K12,500, and Kyukok was K9,700 per viss.

The price of Shan new garlic has not declined that

much in the last few years as it arrived in the market, a garlic seller told The Global New Light of Myanmar. On 15 February 2023, Shan's fresh garlic was priced at K5,500 per viss, and on 4 March 2023, it was K4,800 per viss. Before that day, Shan old garlic was K5,800 per viss for big size, and Kyukok was K3,750 per viss.

In the middle of February 2024, Shan's old garlic was priced at K17,800 per viss for big size, and new garlic arrived in the market at K14,000-K14,500 per viss. In those days, Kyukok was K9,200-K9,400 per viss.

Since the Shan garlic price has fallen dramatically, the Kyukok garlic price is getting higher than that of Shan garlic. Not only garlic but also onion prices are noticeably falling in the Yangon market. — TWA/TMT



A seller seen showing Shan's new garlic that has arrived in the market.

## Non-programmable calculators allowed in five matriculation exam subjects

THE Department of Myanmar Examinations announced on 4 March that non-programmable scientific calculators will be permitted in five subjects — Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Geography, and Economics — during the matriculation examination.

The announcement clarifies that any non-programmable scientific calculator is allowed, while programmable calculators are strictly prohibited. Additionally, in remote and hard-to-reach areas, examination centres will provide calculators in the examination rooms.



The photo shows a non-programmable scientific calculator.

The department's statement further clarifies that students can bring their own calculators. Still, any unauthorized or suspicious content found on the device will lead to disciplinary action according to examination rules and regulations.

A total of 145,200 students have registered for the matriculation examination, which will be held from 11 to 19 March without breaks. — TWA/TRKM

## MCB launches unlimited foreign money transfer service at all branches

THE Myanmar Citizens Bank (MCB) now offers an unlimited foreign money transfer service across all its branches. That allows clients to easily send and receive foreign currency through international money transfer companies.

The service is available at any MCB branch and allows clients to send money to loved ones at home from over 220 countries worldwide. MCB is partnered with international money transfer companies like MoneyGram, Ria, Merchantrade,

Queenbee, Myanmar Remit, Thunes, and Dollar Smart. For further information about the international money transfer service, contact can be made through MCB Bank's social media channels or by visiting any nearby MCB branch. — TWA/MKKS

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

FOR the week from 28 February to 6 March 2024, the prices of black grams and pigeon peas rebounded in the Bayintnaung wholesale market. The price of chickpeas dipped. The onion price is on a downward trend. The palm oil reference price is set a bit higher this week compared with that of last week.

### Onion

The Bayintnaung Wholesale market saw the supply of 150,000 visses of onions on 5 March. The wholesale prices moved in the range of K1,800 and K3,700 per viss depending

on the quality, size and producing areas (Seikphyu and Monywa) that day.

The Pakokku market witnessed an inflow of 24,000 visses of new monsoon onions on 6 March. The highest price was K2,350 per viss there.

### Garlic

The prices of Kyukok garlic hit K9,500-K9,600 per viss, whereas the garlic from Aungban, Shan State, fetched K8,000-K10,000 per viss depending on varieties and qualities. New Shan garlic entered the market at K7,500-K8,500 per viss.

### Potato

Shan potatoes were priced at K1,400-K2,200 per viss on 6 March. Meanwhile, the inflow of Chinese potatoes is pretty low. Potatoes supplied from the Sinphyukyung area are of inferior quality. Subsequently, they fail to draw consumers' attention. Potatoes from the Pakokku area are of better quality than the Sinphyukyung potato.

### Chilli pepper

The wholesale prices of chilli peppers were registered at K68,000-K92,000 per viss for long chilli pepper and Mohtaung va-

riety on 5 March. The cost of bell peppers from Sinphyukyung was K10,000-K13,500 per viss.

### Rice

The prices hit K86,000-K90,000 per sack of non-premium monsoon rice and K100,000-K105,000 per sack of Pawkywe variety on 6 March. Meanwhile, the new Pawsan rice of premium quality was worth K140,000-K165,000 per sack, depending on the producing areas (Pyapon, Myaungmya, Shwebo).

### Palm oil

For the week from 4 to 10 March 2024, the wholesale ref-

erence price of Yangon Region is set higher at K5,215 per viss compared with that of the previous week.

### Pulses

The prices of various pulses stood at K3,005,000 per tonne of black grams (Fair Average Quality/RC), K3,215,000 per tonne of black grams (Special Quality/RC), K3,947,000 per tonne of pigeon peas (red grams) RC, K4,250 per viss of green grams (Shwewah) and K5,900-K6,200 per viss of chick pea in Yangon's wholesale markets on 6 March 2024. — TWA/KK



## Mango exporters brace for disruption this year

FRUIT traders are facing a series of challenges while exporting mangoes to China this year, like watermelon export.

At present, Myanmar's watermelons and muskmelons are exported to China through the Bhamo-Mongla road channel. The traders are bracing for transport hurdles, such as rough roads and extreme weather conditions, affecting the quality of the fruits. Therefore, there seems to be no other option than Muse Road during the coming mango season, the Khwanyo Fruit Depot stated.

As a result of this, exporters face big challenges depending on the export channel and fruit quality, according to the Khwanyo Fruit Depot.

"Myanmar's mango export to China has risen since 1990. The negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic shut down some borders, and fruit exporters were forced to explore new road access, which have long distances and bumpy roads. As they barely make a profit, wa-



The photo captures neatly arranged mangoes on display for sale at the fruit outlet.

termelon exporters are contemplating market conditions amid market hurdles, said an official of the Khwanyo Fruit Depot.

He continued that some growers try their luck against risks. There do not seem to be any other road channels for a

smooth flow of trade except for Muse. If there is transport facilitation, there is market potential for Seintalone, Shwehintha and other mango varieties in the competitive market of China despite some unexpected challenges. He wished the best for the stakehold-

ers in the supply chain, including mango growers, freight forwarders, brokers and exporters.

The price of Seintalone mango hit 120-180 yuan per 16 kg in early April 2023. They fetched approximately K50,000 per 16-kilogramme basket in the domestic

market.

The high cost of cultivation input batters growers. Last year, low use of cultivation input affected quality, causing postharvest diseases such as stem end rot and black spots in fruit.

Some traders did not even cover the cultivation cost due to the inferior quality of Seintalone mango.

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

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

## Peanut prices cooling off on weak demand



Peanuts are pictured in the market.

WITH foreign and domestic demand faltering, the trading activity of Mandalay commodity depot slowed down.

New peanuts from the Aunglan and Myinmu areas are flowing into the Mandalay market at present.

The prevailing prices move in the range between K6,550 and K8,000 per viss in the domestic market, depending on varieties.

The prices hit a high of K7,550-11,000 per viss on the back of strong foreign and domestic demand on 18 August 2023.

Myanmar has been exporting oil seeds (sesame seeds and

peanuts) to foreign countries. In April 2022, the world's top palm oil exporter, Indonesia, which is one of the leading oil suppliers to Myanmar, declared an export ban on cooking oil export to reduce domestic shortage. Consequently, Myanmar's Trade Department under the Ministry of Commerce temporarily suspended exports of oil crops (peanut and sesame) from 9 May 2022 in order to have oil self-sufficiency.

Exports of Myanmar's edible oil crops resumed as the world's top palm oil exporters returned to normalcy, according to a notification dated 5 July 2022 released by the Trade Department.

The country exported over 14,900 kilogrammes of peanuts worth US\$21.066 million to foreign markets through seaborne and land borders over the past ten months of the current financial year 2023-2024. — NN/EM

## Domestic sugar market sees price hike despite global price fall

THE price of sugar rose again to K4,200 per viss in the domestic market, although global sugar prices declined.

The price stood at only K3,930 per viss in early February. Then, it jumped to K4,170 per viss on 6 March, indicating an increase of K240 per viss.

Even though the operations of sugar mills are in full swing, the production cost has risen, and the millers have hiked up the price of sugar. Consequently, the price rocketed in the domestic market,

traders said.

The global sugar price is US\$580 per tonne at present.

The sugar mills notified sugarcane growers again that they raised the price of sugarcane to K150,000 per tonne for the 2023-2024 sugarcane season.

The company set the sugarcane floor price at K90,000-K100,000 per tonne last season. Sugarcane and sugar traders emphasized that the rise in the offering price is aimed at covering the high input cost of the growers amid the

price rise in sugar.

Additionally, sugar mills are pushing the growers to ramp up per-acre yield and expand the cultivation acres.

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

Sugarcane is commonly grown in the upper Sagaing Region, followed by northern Shan State. It is also cultivated in the western and eastern Bago Region, Yangon Region and Mandalay Region.

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



The photo displays two types of sugar that are sold in the market.



## OPINION

### Show sincerity to travellers for booming tourism industry

**B**OOSTING the tourism industry requires genuine efforts and sincerity towards travellers, serving as a catalyst for economic growth in the state. Key destinations aiming to captivate both local and foreign tourists must boast ancient cultural heritages, architectural marvels, and captivating designs alongside tangible and intangible cultural properties.

For tourist hotspots blessed with natural resources or scenic beauty, ensuring traveller convenience is paramount. This involves establishing proper transport facilities, reliable food and water supply, safety measures, and suitable accommodations for observation. By doing so, both established and emerging destinations can allure a significant number of travellers, thereby becoming lucrative sources of income for businesses and contributing revenue to the state. It is imperative for authorities to devise long-term plans to develop and sustain these destinations.

Globally, most countries are vying to enhance their tourism sectors by showcasing cultural heritages, historical events, ethnic traditions, food styles, and the hospitality of their residents. To stand out, both authorities and residents must collaboratively demonstrate honesty, sincerity, and a strong national spirit to attract both domestic and foreign tourists. By doing so, they contribute not only to the growth of the tourism industry but also to the overall development and reputation of the state on the global stage.

occasional festivals, ceremonies, and unexpected events may lead to a shortage of accommodation. Local authorities must proactively address potential accommodation issues, devising plans in advance to ensure seamless travel experiences for tourists. Hence, authorities should consider master plans concerning the tourism industry to prevent unnecessary hindrances based on delay processes for the journeys and legal and office processes to the travellers' journeys.

Globally, most countries are vying to enhance their tourism sectors by showcasing cultural heritages, historical events, ethnic traditions, food styles, and the hospitality of their residents. To stand out, both authorities and residents must collaboratively demonstrate honesty, sincerity, and a strong national spirit to attract both domestic and foreign tourists. By doing so, they contribute not only to the growth of the tourism industry but also to the overall development and reputation of the state on the global stage.

**L**ET'S talk about wrinkles – those lines on our skin that show up as we get older. Graham Lawton has found that wrinkles might not just be about looks; they could actually make our bodies and brains age faster.

Take Jeanne Calment, for example. On her 120th birthday, she joked about having only one wrinkle, but in reality, she was quite wrinkled. She might not have been as old as she claimed, but she was at least 97, and by that age, most people have wrinkles. In some cultures, wrinkles are seen as not looking good or as a sign of getting old, leading to a long history of trying to hide or fix them.

But now, people are realizing that wrinkles might be more than just a cosmetic issue. Ageing skin doesn't do as good a job of keeping us healthy as young skin does. There's even evidence that as our skin gets older, it releases chemicals that could make other organs age faster, too. Cláudia Cavadas from the University of Coimbra in Portugal warns that if your skin is ageing, you might be ageing inside too. So, the question is, can we slow down ageing both on the outside and inside by fighting against wrinkles?

Our skin is the biggest organ in our body. Its main job is to protect us from the outside world, but it also does many other things. It helps with our immune system, produces vitamin D, controls our body temperature, and responds quickly to small injuries. The skin has two main layers: the outer one, called the epidermis, and the dermis beneath it. Between them is the dermal-epidermal junction, which holds the layers together and keeps the skin strong.

The epidermis is like a shield against the world, made up of a layer of dead cells that are replaced continuously. It contains hyaluronic acid, which fights harmful compounds generated by our cells. The dermis is mostly connective tissue, with proteins like collagen and elastin that make our tissues strong. It also plays a role in healing wounds, and our hair follicles and blood supply are in this layer, too. Wrinkles may be a sign that our skin isn't as healthy as it used to be, but by understanding more about our skin, we might find ways to stay healthier and maybe even look a bit younger.

As our skin gets older, it undergoes significant changes. In the top layer, called the epidermis, the growth of stem cells slows down. This leads to the layer becoming thinner over time, and its surface becomes rougher. We lose up to half of this layer during our lives. The glue holding the cells together weakens, and the water and fat content decreases. This causes the folds from the nose to the mouth to deepen, the cheeks to appear deflated, and hollow areas around the eyes with heaviness in the jowls. The lower layer, the dermis, also experiences a decline in fibroblasts, which affects the production of collagen, elastin, and hyaluronic acid. This layer becomes noticeably thinner. Additionally, the connection between the epidermis and dermis weakens, further reducing the skin's strength. All of these changes contribute to more wrinkles

and sagging.

Another issue that arises as skin ages is the presence of "zombie cells." These cells enter a state called senescence, where they are alive and metabolically active but no longer divide. Initially, senescence is a protective mechanism to prevent damaged cells from turning into cancer. However, as time goes on, the body's ability to clear these senescent cells declines, and they start to accumulate in tissues. These cells release harmful inflammatory proteins that damage nearby cells and connective tissues. The build-up of senescent cells is linked to various age-related conditions such as cataracts, cancer, clogged blood vessels, type 2 diabetes, osteoarthritis, Parkinson's disease, and Alzheimer's disease. It also correlates with defects in elastin and increased wrinkling.

These problems associated with senescent cells are a natural part of ageing, but external factors like pollution, smoking, poor diet, and especially sunlight can worsen them. Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays in sunlight accelerates the natural ageing process, causing a phenomenon known as skin photoaging. There are two types of UV rays: UVA and UVB. UVA penetrates both the epidermis and dermis, damaging both layers, while UVB only reaches the epidermis. Both types degrade collagen and elastin, causing deep wrinkles and sagging. Photoaged skin appears thickened, even though natural ageing makes the skin thinner. UV rays also cause DNA damage, speeding up the process of cells becoming senescent.

An example of photoaging is seen in a photograph of a 66-year-old truck driver, William McElligott, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 2012. The side of his face exposed to the sun while driving showed more wrinkles, sagging, and thickening compared to the less exposed side. This highlights the importance of protecting the skin from the sun.

Taking care of your skin is not just about looking good or avoiding skin cancer. There's growing evidence that the "age" of your skin is connected to your overall health, how long you might live, and your risk of death.

Research from Unilever and several universities in 2013 showed that the amount of facial ageing in people in their 60s was linked to the risk of cardiovascular disease, a common health issue as people get older. Another study in 2015 discovered that how old people looked in photographs taken in 2001 predicted their chances of dying over the next 12 years. A more recent study found that older individuals who appear younger than their actual age were less likely to have conditions like cataracts, osteoporosis, age-related hearing loss, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. They also had better overall cognitive functioning.

We know that people age differently, and sometimes, our bodies age faster or slower than the number of years we've lived. Dr

## From Wrinkles to the Skin-Brain Axis

By Min Zan



PHOTO CREDIT: NEW SCIENTIST

Cláudia Cavadas and her colleagues believe that skin ageing plays a big role in the ageing process of the whole body. They focus on senescent cells, which are cells that have stopped dividing and release harmful substances known as the SASP (senescence-associated secretory phenotype). These substances include inflammatory proteins, compounds affecting the immune system, and enzymes that break down proteins. Senescent cells in one part of the body can harm healthy cells elsewhere, leading to "inflammaging" – a chronic, low-level inflammation linked to various health problems.

Cavadas believes that aged skin, especially when prematurely aged by sunlight, carries a lot of senescent cells. These cells release harmful substances into the blood vessels in the dermis, which can then spread throughout the body. To understand if premature skin

ageing affects the overall ageing process, Cavadas is investigating potential connections between the skin and parts of the brain, such as the hypothalamus and hippocampus. The hypothalamus controls essential life functions like metabolism, sleep, hunger, growth, reproduction, and homeostasis. It receives signals from various parts of the body, including the skin. Understanding these connections might help us find ways to slow down the ageing process and stay healthier for longer.

The hippocampus helps us remember things and is one of the first parts of the brain affected by dementia. Dr Cavadas believes that the hypothalamus is crucial in the ageing process. It performs important functions that may not work properly as we age. Studies with mice show that those with fewer stem cells in the hypothalamus age faster, while middle-aged mice given young, healthy hypo-

thalamus stem cells live longer. Aging hypothalamuses also produce less gonadotropin-releasing hormone, which is related to sex hormones. When this decline is stopped in older mice, their skin condition improves.

The hippocampus gets messages from the skin, too. In mice exposed to a lot of UVB radiation, the hippocampus makes fewer new cells, and the mice show behaviour similar to depression. This suggests a close link between the skin and the brain, known as the skin-brain axis. However, Dr Cavadas emphasizes that the idea of ageing skin causing problems in the hippocampus and hypothalamus through the SASP, leading to overall ageing, is just a hypothesis.

Dr Janet Lord from the University of Birmingham supports the idea that ageing skin can affect the rest of the body, but she believes more evidence is needed to establish a direct link.

Dr Cavadas is hopeful that experimental drugs called senolytics, which remove senescent cells, and senomodulators, which stop these cells from releasing harmful substances, could support her idea. These drugs, known as senotherapeutics, are already being tested for various age-related conditions and might be available as skin creams in about three years. Studies using senomodulators like rapamycin and metformin have shown positive effects on ageing skin, increasing collagen and improving appearance.

To test her theory about wrinkles influencing overall ageing, Dr Cavadas plans to use senolytics on animal models with aged skin and study their impact on brain health markers in the hypothalamus and hippocampus. While the evidence is still developing, she

believes experimental data will be available within a year.

Dr Paul Robbins from the University of Minnesota sees great potential in senotherapeutic treatments for skin ageing, but Dr Cavadas reminds us that they must undergo clinical trials, and we shouldn't expect miracles. She suggests that stopping senescent cells in the skin might at least slow down the ageing process, though she doesn't promise complete rejuvenation.

Whether reversing skin ageing can reverse overall ageing remains to be seen. However, there's a good reason to slow it down. David Zargaran, a plastic surgeon, explains that aged skin performs worse than young skin in many ways. Its barrier weakens, wounds heal slower, sensitivity declines and immune defences are compromised. Aged skin is also more prone to cancer.

While waiting for advanced treatments, many use expensive anti-wrinkle creams, but their anti-ageing effectiveness is limited. According to Hend Al-Atif from King Khalid University, collagen is a proven cosmetic solution. Research shows that both topical and oral collagen supplements help delay wrinkling by plugging up connective tissue. However, they don't address senescent cells.

One method we already have in our cupboards to prevent skin ageing is sunscreen, which absorbs UV rays before causing damage. It's never too early to start using it. Visible signs of ageing usually appear in the mid-20s, but the underlying processes begin earlier. Research on Asian women aged 18 to 24 found subtle signs of facial ageing, emphasizing the importance of wrinkle treatment for staying biologically young and healthy. It's not just about vanity; it's about everyone's biological well-being.

Reference: *New Scientist* April 2023



### Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Wednesday 6 March 2024)

**BAY INFERENCE:** Weather is a few cloud over the North Bay of Bengal and partly cloudy to cloudy over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 7 March 2024:** Light rain or thunder-showers are likely to be isolated in Yangon and Taninthayi regions and Kayin and Mon states. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Bago and Ayeyawady regions and Kachin State and generally fair in the remaining regions and states.

**STATE OF THE SEA:** Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4-7) feet in off and along Myanmar Coasts.

**OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS:** Slight increase of day temperatures in Nay Pyi Taw, Magway, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions.

**FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 7 March 2024:** Generally fair weather.

**FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 7 March 2024:** Partly cloudy.

**FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 7 March 2024:** Generally fair weather.



# NATIONAL

## Pawsan prices surge amid high demand in Ayeyawady Region

PAWSAN paddy is priced up to K4 million for 100 baskets as a result of high demand in Ayeyawady Region, according to the Ayeyawady Region Rice Millers Association.

In the region, the price of ordinary paddy was around K2.2 million, and high-quality paddy was K3.7 million for 100 baskets in January. The price of high-quality pawsan paddy climbs higher than K300,000 for 100 baskets this month.

“Now, the price of rice and paddy can’t be predicted. We could make predictions before. The price goes down when a new supply is available, goes up in the transition from one season to another, and declines back when a new crop is harvested. After that, the price stays on the rise

continuously and declines again when monsoon paddy is harvested. This is a formula. Right now, the supply has become low

in some areas, so the Pawsan price will be on the increase, with no likelihood of a decrease. The market price for Pawsan

is between K3.8 million and up to K4 million. It is the nature that demand is high when the supply is low. It has also resulted

from those who stocked for the purpose of making profits,” said an official from the association.

In this year, the remaining rice and paddy stocks are larger than last year’s. However, some traders are found to keep holding their stock due to high prices. Therefore, the Myanmar Rice Federation has made efforts to bring the remaining paddy to the market from traders, said MRF President U Ye Min Aung.

“Both remaining rice and paddy stocks are much larger than last year. But, even some farmers don’t sell much because the price is pretty good now. Traders also have remaining rice and paddy stocks. We have plans to bring remaining rice and paddy stocks from traders to the market,” he had said. — MT/ZS



Two female farmhands seen harvesting paddy in a field in Ayeyawady Region.

## Fewer charcoal burners, higher sales in Madaya, Mandalay

WITH farmers busy preparing for planting, there are fewer charcoal burners in Madaya, one of the main charcoal-producing areas, but sales are up, according to the charcoal market.

“Demand and supply for charcoal is good at the moment. Some, affordable or unaffordable, are buying and stockpiling charcoal for fear that its price will rise. Stockpiling is

one factor contributing to increased sales. However, farmers in Myingyan, Tagaung and Kyaukse used to burn charcoal when it was not the growing season. Now, it is the time to prepare for planting, and they no longer burn charcoal. As there are fewer charcoal-producing areas, consumers have to share the existing supplies. So, charcoal sales are increasing,” said a salesperson from

the Ko Aung Charcoal Trading.

At present, the price of charcoal is falling slightly in Madaya, Mandalay Region, with a maximum of K13,000 for 1.5 baskets of charcoal, and it may vary in other regions where truck access is difficult.

Charcoal prices may recover with a higher trend in the pre-Thingyan period, according to some predictions in the market. — Thit Taw/ZN



Charcoal made in Madaya, one of the chief charcoal-producing areas.

## Mawlamyine hospital to offer 3-day govt-funded surgery for cleft lip, palate repair

WITH government funding, patients with cleft lip and cleft palate, a congenital disability that causes both physical and mental distress, will be operated on for three days from 16 to 18 March at Mawlamyine General Hospital, announced Kyaikto People’s Hospital.

The condition is not rare, but it is a problem that causes physical discomfort and loss of self-confidence.

“We would like to deliver special good news for parents living in Rahmonnya Land. Mawlamyine Hospital will provide cleft lip and cleft palate repair surgery for three days from 16 to 18 March with government funding,” Kyaikto People’s Hospital posted on its Facebook page.

The opportunity to cure

the problem is coming now, and that is why parents should not miss it. They should report to the township hospital or nearest health department as soon as possible, urged the hospital.

“Every parent doesn’t want to have a child with cleft lip and cleft palate. All parents want their child to be born without any defect. So, the opportunity to cure the cleft lip and cleft palate problem is coming to you now. Parents should not miss this opportunity and report to the township hospital or nearest health department as quickly as possible,” it said.

The hospital has also requested those who know about this news to share it in their close community. — MT/ZS



A child with cleft lip and cleft palate.

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# NATIONAL

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

THE Nay Pyi Taw Council Illegal Trade Eradication Special Task Force seized a total of 0.728 tonne of illegal teak and 38.033 tonnes of illegal timbers worth K1,685,919 in Pynmana, Lewe and Ottara Districts on 1 March. This enforcement was carried out under the Forest Law.

On 4 March, the combined teams supervised by the Magway Region Illegal Trade Eradication Special Task Force nabbed six unregistered motorbikes (estimated value of K2.5 million) carrying 52 gallons of illegal fuel oil and 32 gallons of illicit diesel premium valued at K1,176,160 in Kuphyu village and Pyaungpya village in Mindon Township, an unregistered Lifan Faw vehicles worth K11 million near Panpingon village in Mindon Township and a total of 1,808 tonnes of illegal teak worth K147,222 in Sedoktara Township in Minbu District. The action was conducted under the Petroleum and Petroleum Products Law, the Export and Import Law and the Forest Law.

On the same day, the combined team captured two vehicles, travelling from Hpa-an to Yangon, carrying 12 kinds of goods worth K28.648 million, including 144 Pangolin safety helmets without official documents, at the Ywathagyi Dry Port. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

Additionally, on the same day, the combined teams impounded 163 kilogrammes of illegal

lead, 12 Chanchai two-piston engines together with five related accessories valued at K9.45 million in Bokpyin Township, a wooden boat (estimated value of K19.15 million) carrying illegal timbers weighing 7.177 tonnes worth K1,076,640 in the Samongalat water in Kyunsu Township and six unregistered motorbikes valued at K4.8 million in Kyunsu and Myeik Townships. The action was taken under the Myanmar Mines Law, the Forest Law and the Export and Import Law.

Similarly, the joint teams confiscated an Isuzu truck (approximately worth K30 million) heading to Bago from Thaton, carrying four kinds of goods worth K7.9 million, including 200 bottles of Two-Shrimp brand palm oil without official documents near the Shwethanlwin Tollgate in Phayagyi. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

On the same day, the combined Customs teams captured 17,000 kilogrammes of Xingfa aluminium profiles valued at K92.82 million that were different from the Import Declaration (ID) and a Fuyin winding machine worth K3.108 million without Import Licence from two containers at the Myanmar Industrial Port, 5,000 sets of LKB NH3 oil filters worth K5.586 million that exceeded the Import Declaration (ID) at the Asia World Port Terminal container checkpoint and a Higer bus (approximately K35 million), heading to Yangon from Hpa-an, carrying two kinds of goods worth K4.5 million including 4,860 boxes of Lactasoy soy milk without official documents at the Mayanchaung permanent checkpoint. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

Illegal jade weighing 909.50 kilogrammes was seized at the Nantsiaung combined checkpoint in Mohnyin Township on 5 March, and the action was taken under the Myanmar Gemstone Law.

The Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee reported that 23 arrests were made on 1,4 and 5 March, with an estimated value of K368.286 million. — MNA/MKKS



Illegal goods seized in Yangon Region.



Fire fighters killing fire on the oil tanker vehicle.

## Oil bowser catches fire in Pyawbwe township on Yangon-Mandalay Road

AN oil bowser reportedly caught fire near Yintaw village in Pyawbwe Township, on the Yangon-Mandalay Road at approximately 6:35 am on 6 March 2024. Ten fire engines from Pyawbwe, Meiktila, and Yintaw fire stations rushed to the scene and extinguished the blaze by around 7:30 am. The cause of the fire is still under investigation. — TWA/TKO

## Counter-argument to false information

### Misinformation: Tatmadaw attacked Kani using chemical bombs

MALICIOUS news media are spreading false news on social media that Tatmadaw is attacking Kani Township, Sagaing Region, with chemical bombs on 5 March.

Regarding the news, according to a security official from the relevant area, Kani was not attacked by Tatmadaw using chemical bombs. Through such malicious news media, terrorists are spreading false news that Tatmadaw used chemical bombs and poison gas bombs in previous battles when they suffered many casualties. — MNA/KZL



The screenshot validates fabricated stories.

### Fake news: Kothan Village set on fire for second time, destroying nearly 100 houses



MALICIOUS news media are spreading misinformation that security forces are burning about 100 houses in Kothan Village, Monywa Township, Sagaing Region, from 1 to 5 March.

The security forces did not even visit the area in those days, and according to reports from some residents, PDF terrorist groups arrived in the village on 4 March.

The security forces protect the lives and property of the people, and they also work together with the local people to ensure the security of the area and the peace of the community. Therefore, the false information circulated by the malicious news media is only purposefully written to scare the people and cause misunderstanding towards the security forces. — MNA/KZL

The screenshot validates false reports.



# ECONOMY WORLD

## Sri Lanka's economy shows signs of recovery: president

Wickremesinghe noted positive indicators such as the registration of 1,995 new companies in January 2024 and a significant drop in inflation from 70 per cent in September 2022 to 5.9 per cent by February 2024.

SRI Lanka's economy, which experienced consecutive contractions for six quarters from 2022 to the second quarter of 2023, began to show signs of recovery from the third quarter of 2023 onwards and international financial organizations forecast that the country is poised to achieve a growth rate of two per cent to three per cent in 2024, said President Ranil Wickremesinghe on Wednesday.

Wickremesinghe told parlia-

ment that in January 2024, 1,995 new companies were registered and inflation dropped from 70 per cent in September 2022 to 5.9 per cent by February 2024.

Interest rates have undergone a significant reduction, dropping from over 30 per cent in 2022 to less than 10 per cent in 2023, he said, adding that the decrease has brought relief to small and medium-sized enterprises and consumers, particularly as

inflationary pressures ease.

Wickremesinghe said the usable foreign exchange reserves, which stood at less than 20 million dollars in mid-April 2022, have surged to surpass three billion dollars. He said that in 2023 the balance of payments achieved a surplus in the current account for the first time since 1977 and this has led to a depreciation of the dollar from 363 rupees to 308 as of 5 March. — Xinhua



This photo taken on 6 June 2022 shows vehicles on a street in Colombo, Sri Lanka. **PHOTO: TANG LU/XINHUA**

## Australian economy stalls as consumers rein in spending

The Australian Bureau of Statistics reported a modest 1.5 per cent growth for the calendar year, primarily driven by government spending.



Sydney Airport is an international airport located in Sydney, Australia. It is the busiest airport in Australia and serves as a major hub for both domestic and international flights. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

AUSTRALIA'S economy grew just 0.2 per cent in the last quarter of 2023, official data

showed Wednesday, as cost of living pressures weighed on Australian households.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics said growth had hit 1.5 per cent during the calendar year, buoyed only by government spending.

Household spending increased just 0.1 per cent in the December quarter as spending on food and utilities stalled, amid a sustained cost of living crisis.

"The key story remains the weakness in household consumption", said economists at National Australia Bank, adding that the country was seeing the slowest annual growth in household spending "in almost 40 years", not including the Covid pandemic years and the 2008 financial crisis. — AFP

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Chile excludes Israeli firms from LatAm's top aerospace fair

CHILE said Tuesday it will exclude Israeli firms from Latin America's biggest aerospace fair, to be held in Santiago in April.

"By decision of the Government of Chile, the 2024 version of the International Air and Space Fair (FIDAE), to be held between 9 and 14 April, will not have the participation of Israeli companies," a defence ministry statement said.

It did not give a reason, but the government of leftist President Gabriel Boric has been critical of what he has called Israel's "disproportionate" response to the 7 October attack by Hamas that resulted in about 1,160 deaths, mainly of civilians, according to an AFP tally based on official Israeli figures.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed 30,534 people, mostly women and children, according to the health ministry in the Hamas-ruled territory. — AFP

#### Dubai WoodShow 2024 unveils latest industry trends

MOHAMMAD Ali Rashed Lootah, President and CEO of Dubai Chambers, inaugurated the 20<sup>th</sup> edition of the Dubai International Wood and Wood Machinery Exhibition (Dubai WoodShow), which will continue for 3 days until 7 March, with the participation of 682 local and international exhibitors from 52 countries, to exchange experiences and showcase industry trends and the most promising investment opportunities offered by the wood sector. — ANI

## Toyota to invest US\$2.2 bln in Brazil hybrid production

JAPANESE auto giant Toyota said Wednesday that it plans to invest 11 billion reais (US\$2.2 billion) in beefing up production of hybrid vehicles in Brazil through 2030.

Despite the boom in electric cars, Japan's automakers have long banked on hybrid vehicles that combine internal combustion

engines and batteries.

Toyota plans to make two "flex hybrid" models in Brazil — using either petrol or ethanol as well as batteries — creating around 2,000 jobs, a statement said. Dressed in traditional Japanese garb, Brazilian Vice-President Geraldo Alckmin posted a thank you message on social

media platform X that featured Mount Fuji and Japanese characters from Pokemon and manga comics.

"Another important step in the Brazilian economy. Private companies are back investing in Brazil's future," President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva added on X. — AFP



The Japanese automaker aims to manufacture two "flex hybrid" models in Brazil, utilizing either petrol or ethanol alongside batteries, with the initiative expected to create approximately 2,000 jobs. **PHOTO: TOYOTA**



## Passenger trips on Jakarta-Bandung high-speed railway hit 2 mln

Currently, the High-Speed Rail (HSR) has boosted its daily train trips from 14 to 40, increasing passenger seats from 8,400 to over 24,000.

THE Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway (HSR), the first of its kind in Indonesia and South-east Asia, has transported more than two million passengers in total, said China Railway International Limited on Sunday.

According to the company, the HSR has been safely operating for 139 days, carrying a total of 2,008,387 passengers, since its official operation on 17

October 2023.

At present, the HSR's daily train trips have been increased from 14 to 40, and the number of passenger seats has tripled from 8,400 to more than 24,000. The highest number of passengers sent in a single day was 21,537, while the highest daily seat occupancy rate recorded was 99.6 per cent.

In order to better meet the needs of passengers, a

dynamic fare policy was introduced, the operation schedule was optimized, and more train trips were added on public holidays, the company said.

With a design speed of 350 kilometres per hour, the 142.3-km HSR shortens the journey between Indonesia's capital Jakarta to Bandung in West Java province from over three hours to around 40 minutes. — Xinhua



Passengers claim tickets from self-service ticketing machines at Halim Station in Jakarta, Indonesia, 3 March 2024. PHOTO: XU QIN/XINHUA

## Chemicals giant Bayer rules out break-up 'for now' after huge loss

GERMAN chemicals giant Bayer vowed Tuesday to "urgently" address key challenges after plunging deep into the red in 2023, weighed down by woes related to its glyphosate-based weedkillers.

But CEO Bill Anderson, hired last year to help steer the troubled group in a new direction, ruled out any imminent break-up of the company — despite mounting pressure from activist investors.

Bayer swung to a 2.9-billion-euro loss (\$3.1

billion) in 2023 after booking a net profit of 4.15 billion euros a year earlier, it said in a statement.

Sales fell by six percent to 47.6 billion euros, partly because of "significantly" lower prices for glyphosate-based herbicides in the group's crop science division.

Earnings were also dragged down by heavy impairment losses in the same division.

Sales of prescription medicines in the pharmaceuticals division were

flat, while the consumer health unit saw an uptick in part thanks to higher demand for dermatology products. Anderson said Bayer faced "four challenges that urgently must be addressed."

Bayer, maker of Aspirin, has to strengthen its pharmaceuticals pipeline, he said, referring to the need to launch new products to compensate for the expiration of patents on several blockbuster drugs in the coming years. — AFP

## Egypt floats pound prompting it to lose over third of value

EGYPT'S central bank announced Wednesday it will allow the exchange rate to be set by the market, causing the pound to lose more than a third of its value within minutes.

Shortly after 12:00 pm (1000 GMT), the Egyptian pound was trading at a record high of 49.15 pounds to the US dollar, after more than a year of a stabilised official exchange rate of around 30.9.

At a surprise monetary policy meeting Wednesday, the central

bank committed to "allowing the exchange rate to be determined by market forces," saying in a statement that "the unification of the exchange rate is crucial".

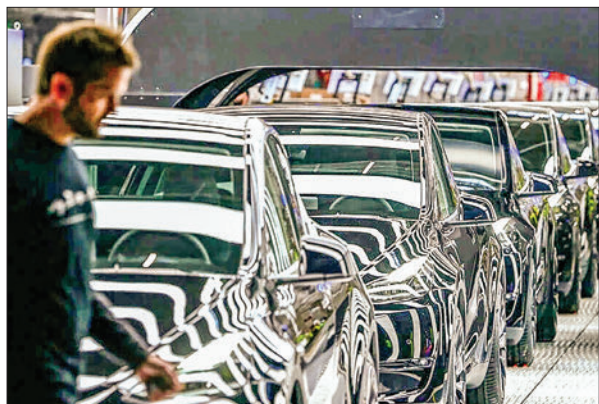
Amid dire foreign currency shortages, the parallel market rate had surged to 70 pounds to the dollar earlier this year, sending consumer prices soaring in the import-dependent country.

Since the most recent economic crisis began in early 2022, Egypt has been

buckling under rampant inflation, which reached a record high of nearly 40 per cent last August.

In an attempt to rein in inflation, the central bank also raised its key deposit rate by six points on Wednesday, to a record high of 27.25 per cent. The central bank described the move as an attempt to "accelerate the monetary tightening process in order to fast-track the disinflation path and ensure a decline in underlying inflation". — AFP

## Tesla halts production at German factory after suspected 'arson attack'



Tesla's production in its German factory was halted due to an alleged act of sabotage by a far-left group, resulting in a fire in electrical cables. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

TESLA has halted production at its German factory after electrical cables powering the plant were set on fire in an alleged act of "sabotage" by a far-left group, according to Al Jazeera. Reports of a burning electricity pylon near the Tesla plant, south-east of Berlin, prompted the early summoning of emergency personnel on Tuesday.

Although the fire

was put out, the electric car factory in the state of Brandenburg and the nearby communities lost electricity due to damage to the power cables.

According to police, they have launched an investigation into suspected arson. The Vulkan-gruppe (Volcano Group), a group of far-left activists, claimed responsibility for the act, reported Al Jazeera. — ANI

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SPLENDOR TAICHUNG VOY.NO. (2404)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SPLENDOR TAICHUNG VOY.NO. (2404)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **7-3-2024** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIPL** 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 GLOBAL MARS SHIPPING PRIVATE LTD**



# ROLLING UPDATES WORLD

## South Korean police question first doctor over walkouts

SOUTH Korean police on Wednesday called in a doctor for questioning — the first to be summoned in connection with a mass walkout by junior medics — as the government approved the use of millions of dollars to ease service disruptions.

Thousands of trainee doctors quit and stopped working some two weeks ago to protest against government plans to increase medical school admissions to help deal with Korea's fast-ageing society.

The government has repeatedly urged medics to return to work but after a 29 February deadline passed with no change, Seoul said it was moving to suspend the medical licences of striking doctors, and called for investigations into organizers. The doctors' walkouts are "illegal collective action that violates people's rights to life", President Yoon Suk Yeol said at a cabinet meeting Wednesday, adding that the government would use some 128.5 billion won (\$96 million)

of state reserves to minimize service disruptions.

The Korean Medical Association, which has been on the forefront of the protest, claiming the reforms will erode service quality, has seen its offices raided, with top members sued over medical law violations and slapped with travel bans.

The KMA's Joo Soo-ho has been accused of "aiding and abetting" the protests and appeared at the Seoul Metropolitan Police Agency for questioning Wednesday. — AFP



South Korean junior medics say medical reforms and the government's reaction to doctors' opposition will drive some of them out of the profession for good. **PHOTO: AFP**

## Explosion reported near vessel off Yemen: security firm

MARITIME security firm Ambrey on Wednesday reported an "explosion" near a Barbados-flagged, US-owned bulk carrier transiting southwest of the Yemeni port city of Aden.

"A nearby vessel reported

an explosion in the proximity of the Barbados-flagged, publicly US-owned, bulk carrier," Ambrey said, cautioning other ships to steer clear of the bulker which matches the "targeting profile" of Yemen's Iran-backed Huthi

rebels.

The Huthis started harassing ships in the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea in November, a campaign they say is intended to signal solidarity with Palestinians amid the Gaza war. — AFP



Peru's Prime Minister Alberto Otrola, seen in May of last year during a visit to Brazil. **PHOTO: SERGIO LIMA/AFP**

## Peru PM resigns amid influence-peddling claims

Otarola, a seasoned politician and lawyer, announced his resignation after discussions with President Dina Boluarte, who ordered him back from a trip to Canada.

PERU'S powerful Prime Minister Alberto Otrola resigned Tuesday amid allegations of influence-peddling to help a young woman he is said to have addressed lovingly in recordings released by news media.

Otarola told reporters in Lima that "in conversation with the President of the Republic I have announced my decision to present my resignation".

Otarola is a seasoned politician and lawyer who acted as chief of staff to President Dina Boluarte, who ordered him home from an official trip to Canada after the scandal erupted last weekend. Otrola, 57, is married and has five children.

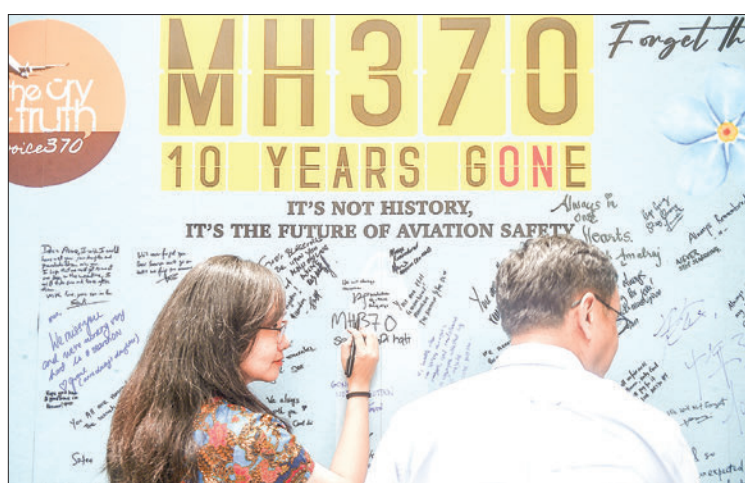
Over the weekend, the television program Panorama released what it said were recordings of

Otarola in conversation with a woman named Yazire Pinedo, 25, who landed two contracts this year worth a total of \$14,000 to do archive and administrative work for the government.

In one of the recordings a man alleged to be the prime minister says to her: "tell me, then, my love, so we can talk. You know these things are annoying, they are a pain, but you also know that I love you," apparently referring to the red tape involved in bidding for a government gig.

Otarola has denied any violation of Peruvian labor laws or other wrongdoing.

"I understand the gravity of the political circumstances but I repeat that I did not do anything illegal," he said Monday on X, the former Twitter. — AFP



## 10 years after MH370 vanished, families still in limbo

TEN years after her mother disappeared on Malaysia Airlines flight MH370, Grace Nathan still

A woman writes a message on the message board during the tenth annual remembrance event at a shopping mall, in Subang Jaya, on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 3 March 2024. **PHOTO: AFP**

struggles to accept that she is gone. Grace was 26 and at university when the plane carrying 239 people vanished from radar screens on 8 March 2014, after taking off from Kuala Lumpur bound for Beijing.

Despite the largest search in aviation history, which combed 120,000 square kilometres (46,332,

square miles) of the sea floor of the southern Indian Ocean, only a few fragments of the Boeing 777-200ER plane have been found.

"Every year that goes by that the plane is not found is only just another agonising year in wait," said Grace from Malaysia, who wanted to be known by her first name. — AFP



# SPORTS

## First ever Games of the Future conclude in Russia

*The Games of the Future are a unique, large-scale sporting event that innovatively combines traditional and e-sports.*

THE Games of the Future, a first-ever phygital tournament held in Kazan, central Russia, has been a huge inspiration to the world, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Chernyshenko told journalists as the event came to a close on Sunday. The competition lasted for almost two weeks, and wrapped up with a closing ceremony featuring popular Russian pop artists and singers.

Invented in Russia, the 'phygital' (physical + digital) format at the core of the Games of the Future combines traditional sports and cybersports in a unique mix. A total of 21 combined disciplines were part of the competition.

The games managed to attract a massive global audience, according to Chernyshenko. Viewership numbers reached around 2.2 billion, he told journalists on Saturday, although official figures have not yet been made public. The final day of the games included several finals in



Phygital soccer, phygital skateboarding, phygital racing and Standoff 2 + Laser Tag crowned their champions at the tournament's closing ceremony and put on a thrilling show. Athletes from 30 countries have made it to the podium in various competitions as part of the Games of the Future. **PHOTO: GO FUTURE GAMES**

some of the most entertaining and popular disciplines like phygital football, skateboarding, and racing.

According to the Russian media, the tournament attracted more than 270 teams, including over 2,000 athletes from 107 nations. The games featured events ranging from phygital football, hockey, and basketball to more traditional cybersports and high-tech contests such as drone racing, competitive programming, and robot battles.

Competitive programming reportedly had one of the highest individual discipline prize funds, with the winner getting 4.5 million rubles (\$49,050). — GO FUTURE GAMES

## Kane hopes Lazio win the 'turning point' in Bayern's season

BAYERN Munich striker Harry Kane hopes Wednesday's 3-0 win over Lazio, which secured progress to the Champions League last eight, will be a "turning point" in the club's season. Bayern came into Tuesday's match having won just one in five games, a run which included losing the first leg 1-0 in Rome and also caused them to fall 10 points behind league leaders Bayer Leverkusen in the Bundesliga.

The run cost manager Thomas Tuchel his job, with the

club and coach issuing a statement saying he would end his contract early in the summer.

Kane, who has scored at a remarkable rate despite Bayern's struggles, notched a brace in the win and now has 33 goals in 32 games in all competitions since arriving in the summer.

Speaking to reporters after the victory while holding the man of the match trophy and a schnitzel burger, Kane said he hoped it was "a turning point for the rest of the year".

"If we perform like

that in most games we're going to come out with a victory. It was a pleasing day," said the England international.

"It's been a good season so far in terms of the goals but as a team we know we can do better.

"I'm trying to help that situation, the team are trying to help that situation, and I hope we can use this as a turning point to push on in the Bundesliga and see if we can put pressure on Leverkusen — and see who we can get in the next round of the Champions League." — AFP



Harry Kane scores Bayern Munich's third goal against Lazio. **PHOTO: AFP**

## 326,000 tickets for Paris Olympics opening ceremony, minister says



Police on the River Seine during a test for the waterborne Olympics parade. **PHOTO: BERTRAND GUAY / AFP**

A total of 326,000 tickets are set to be sold or given away for the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics on the river Seine, Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said Tuesday, giving the exact number for the first time.

Organizers have scaled back their plans for the waterborne parade — with crowds once imagined as large as two million people — in the face of resistance from French security services and worries about terror attacks.

But it is still set to break records in terms of size, with all

previous opening ceremonies taking place in the main athletics' stadium.

"We will have 104,000 spectators on the lower bank who have paid for a ticket," Darmanin told a hearing in the Senate. "Then you have 222,000 people on the higher banks (with free tickets)."

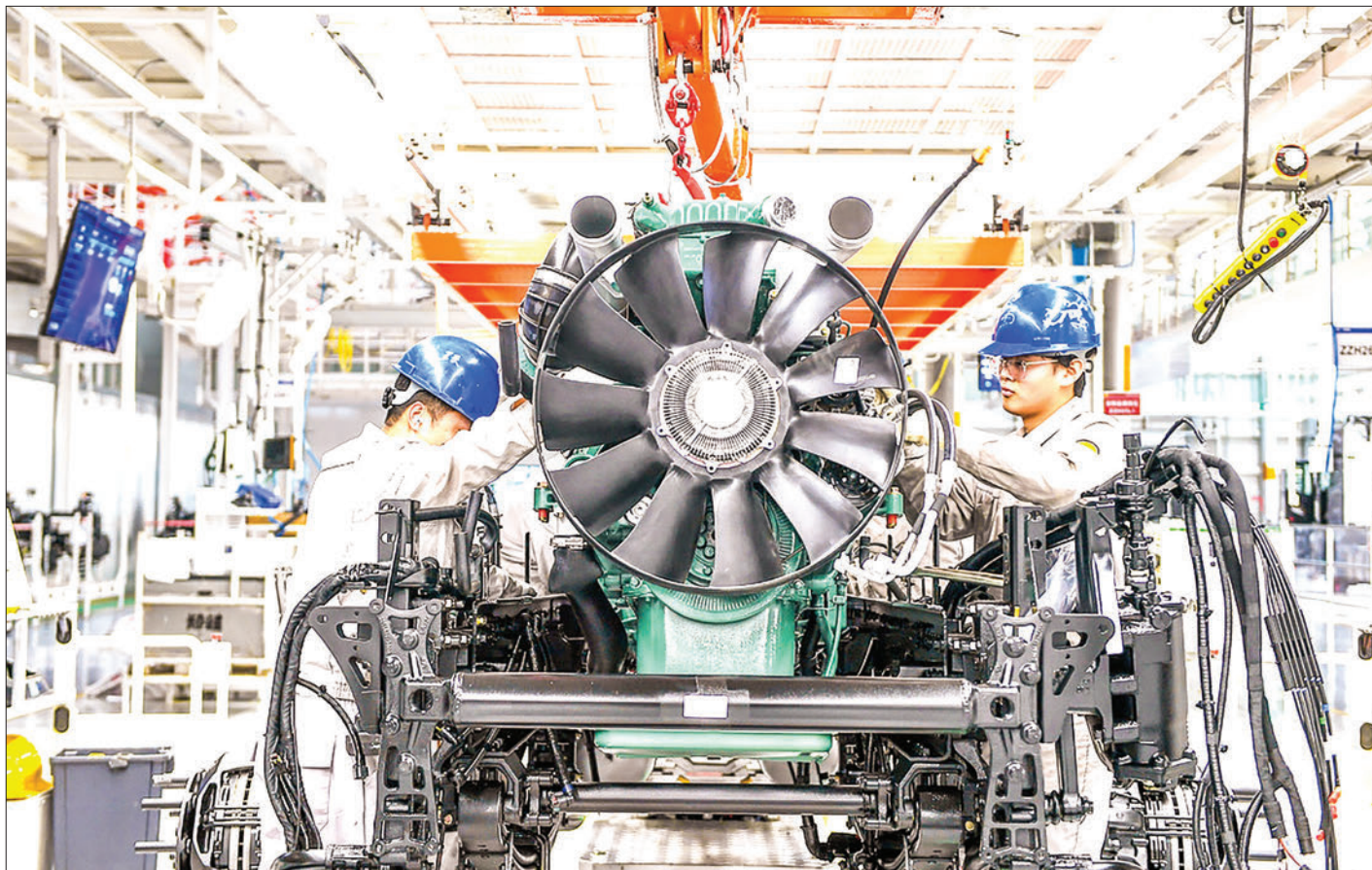
He estimated that another 200,000 people would watch the open-air parade on 26 July along the river from buildings that overlook the Seine, with an additional 50,000 in fanzones in the capital. — AFP





## Xictionary: New quality productive forces

*Xi defines new quality productive forces as advanced productivity freed from traditional growth modes, focusing on innovation, high-tech, efficiency, and quality in line with the new development philosophy.*



Employees work at an intelligent plant of truck manufacturer FAW Jiefang in Changchun, Northeast China's Jilin province, 19 February 2024. PHOTO: XINHUA

**C**HINESE President Xi Jinping has stressed developing new quality productive forces amid the country's accelerated efforts to foster new growth drivers and promote high-quality development.

First put forward by Xi in his inspection tour of northeast China's Heilongjiang Province in September 2023, the term was highlighted again at the Central Economic Work Conference in December, and became the subject of the first group study session held by the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee this year.

With innovation playing the leading role, new quality productive forces mean advanced productivity that is freed from traditional economic growth mode and productivity development paths, features high-tech, high efficiency and high quality, and comes in line with the new development philosophy, Xi, also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, said at the study session.

New quality productive forces are driven by revolutionary technological breakthroughs, innovative allocation of production factors, and deep industrial transformation and upgrading, he noted.

Xi highlighted the concept again Tuesday when participating in a deliberation at the ongoing annual national legislative session, stressing developing new quality productive forces based on local conditions.

He called for efforts to step up innovation, foster emerging industries, adopt forward-thinking plans for developing future-oriented industries and improve the modern industrial system. — Xinhua

### HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

## Australia, ASEAN call for Gaza ceasefire

LEADERS of Australia and members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza on Wednesday following a special summit held in Melbourne.

In a statement issued to mark the end of the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit, leaders reiterated their shared concern about the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza and urged for an immediate and durable ceasefire.

"We condemn attacks against all civilians and civilian infrastructure, leading to further deterioration of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza including restricted access to food, water, and other basic needs," they said in the Melbourne Declaration.

"We call for rapid, safe, unimpeded and sustained humanitarian access to all those in need, including through increased capacity at border crossings, including by sea," they said. — Xinhua

## Russia and China plan building lunar nuclear power plant on Moon

RUSSIA and China are mulling jointly building a lunar nuclear power plant, Yuri Borisov, the head of Russia's space agency Roscosmos, said on Tuesday.

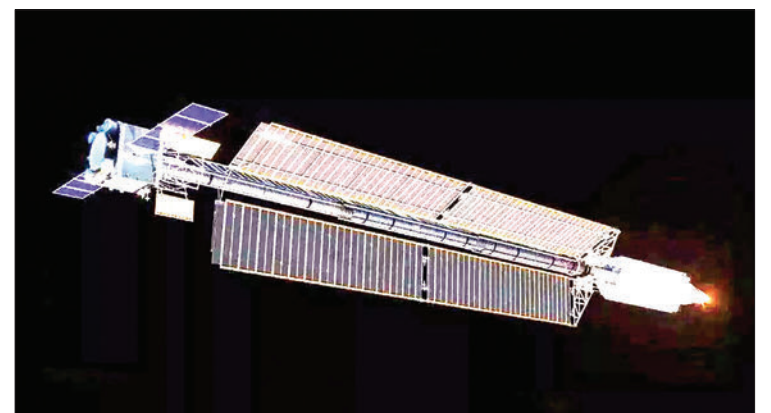
"Today we are seriously considering a project ... somewhere at the turn of 2033-2035 ... to deliver and install a power unit on the lunar surface together with our Chinese colleagues," Borisov said during a lecture at the World Youth Festival.

Harnessing the power of "nuclear space energy" could allow lunar settlements to be built, as solar panels would not be able to provide enough electricity to power such bases, he

pointed out.

"This is a very serious challenge... it should be done in an automated mode, with-

out the presence of humans," Borisov added, hoping that robots could be up to the task. — SPUTNIK



Borisov weighed in on Russia's plans to build a nuclear-powered cargo spaceship called Zevs (Zeus). PHOTO: SPUTNIK