

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR



The photo depicts bustling activity at a Myanmar-Thailand land border crossing, with people and vehicles from both sides in motion.

Trade Dept approves container shipping for Myanmar-Thailand border trade

The Trade Department under the Ministry of Commerce released a news bulletin 1/2024 on 11 April that it gave the go-ahead to con-

tainer shipping to and fro Yangon-Kawthoung-Ranong for Myanmar-Thailand border trade.

This move is to ensure a fast and

smooth trade flow. That border trade must be in accordance with the Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) of the departments concerned, the Trade Department

notified.

The SOPs include exports, imports and general categories. The related departments, the Trade Department, Customs Department, the mechanism One-Stop Shop (OSS) for border trade supervision, Myanma Port Authority, the Department of Immigration, exporters/importers and shipping liners have declared SOPs for each sector. — NN/KK



Lorries loaded with export cargo prepare to cross the Myanmar-China land border.

Myanmar-China border trade surges to US\$3.2B in FY2023-2024

SEE PAGE-7

NATIONAL

PAGE-4



16th EPS-TOPIK exam to be held in different categories as of 30 April

BUSINESS

PAGE-7

Mon State's sun-dried salt production reaches 40,000 tonnes in 6 months, expected to increase this year

NATIONAL



Devotees seen at Kyauktiyo Pagoda during the Thingyan Festival holidays.

Pilgrims throng Kyauktiyo Pagoda during Thingyan holidays

PILGRIMS from nationwide flocked to the eminent Kyauktiyo Pagoda during the Thingyan period, according to the board of trustees.

"The number of visitors during the COVID-19 period fell. But, it increases gradually. There were 245,982 local visitors and 1,294 foreign travellers between Thingyan Akyo and Atet days. Most of the travellers were from Thailand. There were over 400,000 visitors to the pagoda festival last year. Some registered individually, but some in groups. According to the data, the number of visitors is soaring when compared to previous figures. A total of 150 ferries

run up and down systematically, and 40 cable cars also run from the Yathedaung Main Station onto the platform daily," said U Soe Hla, chairman of the board of trustees. There is a total of 500,000 visitors to the pagoda from Thadingyut full moon day to date.

"The Thingyan New Year holiday is long, and we are coming here with my family and relatives. We visit Kyauktiyo Pagoda every year, but we didn't come here during the COVID-19 period. We can easily get there as we live near to it. Although the temperature is high in summer, it is very nice to visit as it is a 3,000-foot mountain that is cool

in the morning and evening. We get relief and can pay homage peacefully. It is hot in the afternoon, but the number of visitors is high," said Ma Nandar Linn from Yangon.

The board of trustees and officials systematically conduct security measures for the visitors.

"The security forces conduct security measures along the way. The board of trustees also cooperate with the hotels and motor vehicle associations to be perfect services for food and accommodation of the visitors," said the chairman of the board of trustees. — Thet Naing (Mawlamyine)/KTZH

Ngahtetgyi Pagoda's Tawkulay Monastery preserved for authentic architectural style

VENERABLE Sayadaw Ashin Pannajota, Presiding Patron of Tawkulay Monastery, has stated that preservation work has been undertaken on the early colonial-era Myanmar architecture of Tawkulay Monastery, located within Ngahtetgyi Pagoda precinct. This work aims to preserve the building's historical architectural value. He added that the monastery is now a popular destination for those interested in observing this architectural style.

"Prior to my tenure, there were nine presiding patron Sayadaws in this monastery. Hence, one can infer its age. It is safe to estimate that the monastery is over a century old. Although the interior of the monastery was destroyed by fire, making detailed study challenging, the exterior of the monastery remains intact, retaining its architectural value with its construction style and design. According to historians' analysis, the monastery is believed to have been constructed during the late Konbaung period and early colonial era. Regarding maintenance, we have engaged in discussions with our lay supporters and carried out preservation work to the best of our ability without compromising the ancient architectural value. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, numerous foreigners,



A general facade view of the Tawkulay Monastery.

including historians and archaeologists, visited this site. While detailed historical evidence has not been unearthed, the monastery attracts many observers due to its distinctive structural construction and architectural style," said the Sayadaw.

Tawkulay Monastery is situated within the Ngahtetgyi Pagoda compound in Bahan Township, Yangon Region, covering an area of approximately three acres. Within the Ngahtetgyi Pagoda precinct, numerous religious structures in colonial era can be found. During the construction of the Maha Thakya Atula Manaung Ngahtetgyi Pagoda around 1900, it is documented that various experts, including artists and sculptors from Mandalay, resided at the monastery. Hence, it is reasonable to infer that the monastery was built before 1900. — ASH/TMT

Saungder Weaving & Vocational Institute to offer Myanmar traditional clothing design course

SAUNGDER Weaving and Vocational Institute in Amarapura Township of Mandalay Region is drafting a work plan to conduct a basic training on Myanmar traditional clothing fashion design course in the 2024–2025 financial year, according to U Kyaw Zin Lat, Deputy Director General of the Small-Scale Industries Department under the Ministry of Cooperatives

and Rural Development.

"Weaving schools are developing fresh, intricate designs to produce garments that align with market trends, aiming to capture new markets for locally woven products. Additionally, manual weavers are creating innovative designs. In the current financial year, Saungder Weaving and Vocational Institute will introduce a

fashion design course centered on traditional floral patterns," U Kyaw Zin Lat said.

Offering the fashion design course is part of a project aimed at expanding the market for domestically woven products and conducting developmental research. Currently, the institute provides a one-year course of Diploma in Textile Technology, six months



The photo depicts some trainees of the Saungder Weaving and Vocational Institute.

of training in weaving Lunyagayaw Acheik, the sacred cloth designs of ancient Myanmar royals, another six months

training in hand-weaving, and finally, a three-month course in gold and silver embroidery. — ASH/TH

NATIONAL

Kachin State Chief Minister assists IDPs

KACHIN State Chief Minister U Khet Htein Nan met displaced people from Waingmaw Township of Myitkyina District in Kachin State who are seeking refuge in St Joseph (RC) camp on 17 April 2024.

During the meeting, the chief minister encouraged them and provided arrangements to meet their needs as soon as possible.

Then, the chief minister and officials provided K10 million for 126 households, including 517 people who temporarily fled from Shwenyaungpin, Aung-

myay 1 and 2, Naungsipaw, Kazu, Dabatyang, Gahrayang, Tarlawgyi, Khashi, Naungpatain and Wahshao villages of Waingmaw Township.

In-charge persons from the camp and people reported their needs and difficulties, and the chief minister and party made proper arrangements.

Then, the chief minister and officials inspected the construction of temporary shelters in the compound of RC church in Makhoyang village for additional households reported by the in-charges of the camps and



Kachin State Chief Minister U Khet Htein Nan meets internally displaced people in Myitkyina on 17 April 2024.

provided K15.6 million.

On arrival at the Myitkyina

Township, they viewed round the additional crop cultivation in the

Bala Min Htin Model Plantation. — Kachin State IPRD/KTZH



Export cargo seen being loaded onto the vessel at Yangon Port.

Myanmar's export sustains momentum

THE Ministry of Commerce and UMFCCI (Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry) jointly exported 17,200 tonnes of corn seeds – 14,500 tonnes via the International Bulk Terminal Thilawa (IBTT) and 2,700 tonnes via the MHM jetty yesterday.

Similarly, the marine products, rice, beans and corn were loaded onto the ship at the AWPT 3.

On 19 April, 6,600 tonnes of corn seeds will be exported via the AIPT 3, and 12,700 tonnes via The Myanmar Terminal (TMT), formerly called Bo Aung Kyaw jetty, on 20 April. — MNA/KTZH

Rakhine State Chief Minister inspects restoration work

UNDER the directive of the National Natural Disaster Management Committee and the supervision of the Transport and Communications Committee, restoration materials are being shipped to Rakhine State.

Rakhine State Chief Minister U Htein Lin and members of the state government and department officials inspected the arrival of consumer goods and construction materials from Yangon at Sittway Multipurpose Port yesterday afternoon.

First, they paid respect to the 18th Mile Monastery Sayadaw Dr Ashin Cakkavala (Indasara) and received the five precepts. Then, they donated offertories to the Sayadaw and listened to the sermons about the Vipassana work, which were followed by sharing merits.

In the afternoon, the Chief minister and party checked the arrival of the foodstuffs transported from Yangon to Sittway at the multipurpose port by ships named Shwe Theingi,

Tawwin Thiri, Aung Yadana, Shwe Lamin and Aung Yadana Thiri.

During the visit, the Rakhine the chief minister instructed that these goods should be managed in an orderly manner, that the goods would not be damaged, that they would not be hoarded, that they would not be allowed to reach places where there is no need, and that they would be able to operate safely. — Tin Htun (IPRD)/KZL



Rakhine State Chief Minister U Htein Lin, state cabinet members and officials are pictured during the inspection tours yesterday. PHOTO: WIN MIN SOE (IPRD)

Daily newspapers available online

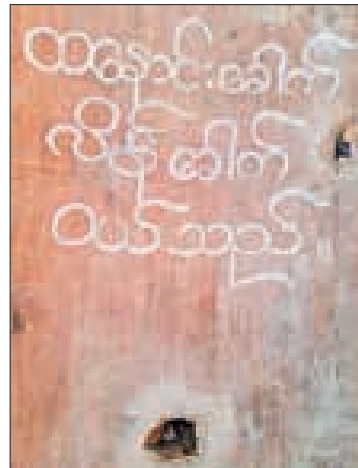
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NATIONAL



White-barked acacia (*Vachellia leucophloea*) trees whose barks are removed.

Sale of Htanaung bark threatens shade tree depletion



SELLING of white-barked acacia (*Vachellia leucophloea*), Htanaung bark in Myanmar, may cause depletion of these shade trees, an environmental activist warned.

White-barked acacia is used in making liquor, polishing gold and silver ornaments and dying fabrics. A viss of white-barked acacia is priced at K300.

Rather than being planted by humans, the majority of acacia *leucophloea* grow naturally, and a tree whose bark is removed can't die immediately, although it will get injured and dry up in a few years. If the rain level is low, the tree is more likely to die.

"There are people removing barks for sale, and there is no one to object to them. Trees will die, and no more Htanaung trees will remain later. It is like killing the trees. They won't die

immediately, but they will be injured. Htanaung trees will be depleted, and no more will be left in Anya (upcountry)," he said.

Htanaung can give shade to travellers as well as residents in summer, and the tree is very beneficial to the climate and the environment.

"The summer will be hotter if there are no more Htanaung trees. In particular, there is no place to rest if no Htanaung tree is left. The weather will be worse if the number of trees shrinks. It is best if people don't remove the bark because they can't be rich by selling them," he said. — Thit Taw/ZS

16th EPS-TOPIK exam to be held in different categories as of 30 April

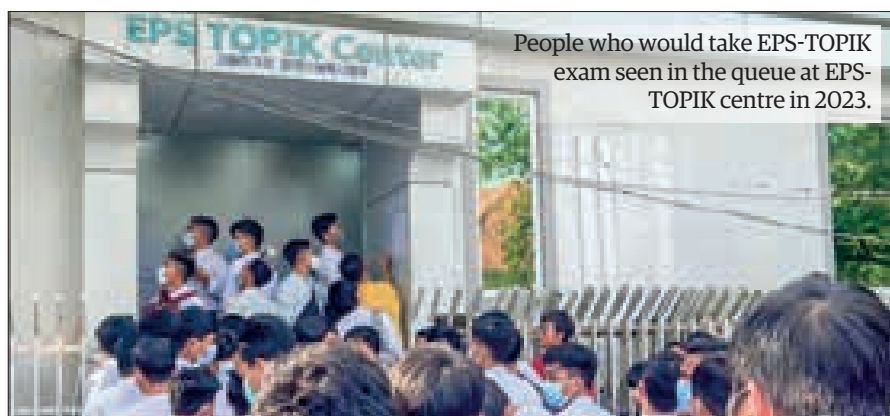
THE 16th EPS-TOPIK exam will take place on 30 April in different industries, as announced by the Public Overseas Employment Agency (POEA) on 18 April.

The exam will be held from 30 April to 10 May for agriculture, livestock and construction industries, from 10 to 29 May for service industry group 1 and group 2, and the date for the manufacturing industry will continue to be announced.

As of 18 April, the names of eligible candidates, exam date, and time for the agriculture, livestock, and construction industries categories will be released on the POEA-EPS page. Therefore, eligible candidates will need to take note of the exam date, place and time, bring their passport and original Citizenship Scrutiny card and come an hour earlier

to the exam room, POEA reminded. Those who are under the influence of alcohol are not permitted to enter the exam room, it warned.

The exam centre is located at the POEA office, Pinlon Hall, ward 43, corner of Minye Kyawswa Road and Bo Min Yaung Road in Dagon Myothit (North) Township. Male candidates have to wear shirts and sarong, and female candidates have to wear Myanmar outfits, POEA warned. In the 16th TOPIK Test, the 7th marking employment system, which will be held in 2024, recruitment of Myanmar workers will be extended in the Republic of Korea's service industry, and both males and females are eligible to join the test. Women who would take the exam for the service industry must complete basic education high school level. — MT/ZS



People who would take EPS-TOPIK exam seen in the queue at EPS-TOPIK centre in 2023.

Korea's Agro Cooperative University to offer scholarship for Myanmar students



The image captures a group photo of Ambassador U Thant Sin, University Principal Mr Son Byung Hwan and officials.

THE Ministry of Foreign Affairs has reported that a Myanmar student specializing in agricultural studies will be granted a scholarship by the Nonghyup Agricultural Cooperative University of the Republic of Korea. The decision follows a meeting between Myanmar Ambassador to Korea U Thant Sin and Principal of the Nonghyup Agricultural Cooperative University, Mr Son Byung Hwan, on 9 April in Gyeonggi Province.

The discussion covered geographical positioning, the agricultural sector, and Yezin Agricultural University of Myanmar. Also addressed was the Seamaul Undong new village movement project, formulated bilaterally by Myanmar and Korea, along

with the potential scholarship award for Myanmar students specializing in agricultural subjects to facilitate human resource development in Myanmar's agricultural sector.

The principal of the Nonghyup Agricultural Cooperative University also provided insights into the university's history, curriculum, and international collaborations and confirmed the scholarship for a Myanmar student. The Ambassador, along with military attachés (Army, Navy, and Air), and education diplomats, visited the smart farms implemented on the campus the Nonghyup Agricultural Cooperative University, as stated in the report. — ASH/TMT

NATIONAL INTERVIEW

Sagaing guitar earns a good reputation for music lover

By Nay Lin Aung



Sagaing Region is home to unique attractions, from the extinct volcano Mt Popa to the Sagaing Fault, and it is a vibrant city with socioeconomic development. It is also well-known for its traditional handicraft businesses on a manageable scale, including rattan furnishing businesses, silver crafts, Myanmar souvenir crafts, and clay pottery businesses. For micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), Sagaing's guitars have earned an excellent brand reputation.

THE following is an interview with U Zaw Min, the owner and manufacturer of a guitar business in Htonbo Ward, Sagaing City.

Q: Could you please introduce yourself and your business name?

A: I am U Zaw Min. I am running a guitar business under the name of Moe Min.

Q: When did you start this business?

A: It has been 35 years since I started running my own guitar business in 1989.

Q: Which raw material do you mainly use when making guitars?



A: The raw materials are different types of timbers, such as teak, padauk wood, Myanmar ironwood, Myanmar rare wood, pine wood and plywood.

Q: Please elaborate on raw material sourcing. Do you find it hard to buy them?

A: We purchase them from the plywood industries located in Kyaukse Township. We have built strong partnerships with suppliers and manufacturers, so we



PHOTOS BY ZAW MYINT NAING, TIN KO KO



do not face any difficulty in procuring materials.

Q: How many types of guitars do you manufacture?

A: We manufacture five types of guitars: guitars for kids, teens, beginners and adults, common guitar shapes of all sizes and expensive guitars like foreign brands.

Q: How many workers do you have?

A: There are 20. They are all locals. Some

of the skilled workers opened branches.

Q: Where do you supply those finished guitars?

A: We supply them across the country. Most of them are sent to Taunggyi City. We have also expanded our business in the region by opening an outlet in Sagaing.

Q: Would you mind explaining guitar manufacturing and market conditions?

A: We manufacture 20 to 25 guitars per day. The market condition depends on the different types of guitars. The prices range from K40,000 to over six digits. At present, we are struggling with the high cost of raw materials. We are planning to raise the price sometime. Some are willing to accept price increases. Yet, some customers are not happy with it. Anyway, we will provide a good and legitimate reason to raise the price without losing customers.

Q: Is it local sourcing only or global sourcing?

A: Some guitar parts are sourced from China. The price of turning keys increased to K700,000 from K200,000 per carton owing to shipping costs. The production cost of a guitar worth K40,000 is K38,000. So, we receive only K2,000 profit. Cheap guitars are primarily in demand here due to economic conditions.

Q: How many days do you need to manufacture a guitar? Do you need other equipment or else it is handicrafts only?

A: It takes a week to manufacture a guitar with one-person production. As we manufacture guitars with many workers, it takes one or two days to finish a guitar. Earlier, it was crafting only. Now, machines and equipment are utilized. Machines make production more accessible and more efficient. Manufacturing equipment improves quality control and production outputs. We can keep abreast with some international suppliers.

Q: Is there any loan assistance for the guitar business?

A: We have received K5 million under the COVID-19 loan fund previously. We have not paid them off. We pay one per cent annual interest according to the loan rules. We still cannot get access to MSME loans as we need to provide collateral or assets. Furthermore, only grant ownership is valid. Therefore, we would like to request the authorities to grant unsecured business loans without granting property or other assets as collateral if the business is qualified and has a good credit score during the inspection tour of the worksite. This way, we can expand our business, enhance business performance and create more job opportunities for locals with active incomes.

Translated by EM

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NATIONAL



The 2/2024 meeting by the Central Body of Private Health Services in Nay Pyi Taw on 10 April 2024.

Action taken against 37 private health businesses in 3 years

THE Central Body of Private Health Services has reported that 37 private health businesses were taken action over a period of three years.

Between 2021 and 2023, action was taken against 37 businesses found to be in violation of licensing regulations and administrative measures, as revealed during the meeting 2/2024 convened by the Central Body of Private Health Services.

According to the body, nationwide approvals have been granted to 287 private hospitals, 41 delivery rooms, 75 specialized laboratories, 18 specialized x-ray rooms, four nursing homes, eight mobile health services, 19 health agencies, and 19 general health services.

Efforts are underway to ensure that providers of healthcare services in the private health sector obtain valid licences and comply

with existing laws. To this end, the Myanmar Medical Council, Myanmar Dental Council, and Myanmar Nursing and Midwifery Council, among others, are collaborating and verifying credentials. At the same time, policies are being formulated to optimize the utilization of human resources.

Union Minister for Health Dr Thet Khaing Win has emphasized that private health businesses failing to adhere to the terms and conditions of their licences will face legal action in accordance with existing laws and regulations. Additionally, relevant authorities are actively encouraging private health businesses to apply for permits, while the Central Body of Private Health Services remains committed to the ongoing development and enforcement of regulations for the advancement of private health services. — TWA/TKO

Wholesale reference rate of palm oil reaches K5,465 per viss

THE wholesale reference rate of palm oil, which remained stable at K5,215 per viss from 4 to 17 March 2024, has risen to K5,250 between 18 March and 21 April, spanning a total of six weeks.

However, authorities set the wholesale reference rate of palm oil at K5,465 per viss from 13 to 21 April 2024. From 13 to 21 April, the wholesale reference rate of palm oil rose by K215 per viss compared to the previous price setting.

Palm oil prices were only K4,790 per viss according to price records from 10 to 23 April 2023.

While the wholesale reference rate of palm oil was set at K5,250 per viss, the retail price in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon, and Patheingyi was K5,600 and K6,050 in Mandalay.

During the period from 13 to 21 April, when the wholesale reference rate of palm oil increased by K215, there was no direct sale to consumers during public holidays. However, on 22 April 2024, the wholesale reference rate of palm oil will be publicly announced, and consumers can purchase based on this updated rate. — TWA/TMT



The photo shows a vendor arranging edible oil for sale at a retail palm oil shop.

Bayintnaung pulses market to release pulses prices on 22 April

BAYINTNAUNG pulses market will announce the prices on 22 April. The prices of black grams and pigeon peas rebounded on 12 April, showing a one-week increase of K192,000 per tonne of pigeon peas and K124,000 per tonne of black grams.

The pigeon pea price was K4.147 million per tonne on 12 April, which is close to a record high of K4.197 million per tonne on 5 February 2024. The green gram price remained unchanged then.

A total of 90 containers

(2,160 tonnes) of black grams (Fair Average Quality) were transacted on 9 April. The FOB price also increased to \$1,000-1,020 per tonne of black grams (FAQ), \$1,090-1,110 per tonne of black grams (SQ) and \$1,260-1,280 per tonne of pigeon peas on 11-12 April. They were \$860-880 per tonne of black grams (SQ) and \$950-970 per tonne of pigeon peas last year.

The green gram prices were stable at \$660-690 per tonne for those from central Myanmar regions and \$780-820



A dozen bags of various pulses seen being displayed at a grocery shop in Yangon.

for the Shwewah variety in the first two weeks of April.

The pre-Thingyan pulse prices stood at K2.07 million per tonne of black grams and K2.4 million per tonne of pigeon peas in 2023. This year, the market figures indicated an increase of K1.2 million for black grams and K1.7 million for pigeon peas compared with those of the corresponding period last year.

Kyat depreciation against the US dollar drove the FOB prices this year. — TWA/KK

Mon State's sun-dried salt production reaches 40,000 tonnes in 6 months, expected to increase this year

OVER six months of salt season, Mon State has produced about 40,000 tonnes of sun-dried salt, and it is predicted that the production will expand this year, according to Mon State Salt Farmers Association.

In the state, salt farming began in October, and about 40,000 tonnes of sun-dried salt had been produced before Thingyan.

"About 40,000 tonnes have been produced as of October, which is the beginning season, until 10 April. Depending on the current yield and weather forecast, this year's production is expected to be more than last year's," said an official from the association.

In last year's salt season,

the state produced 47,000 tonnes of sun-dried salt, he said. Mon State-produced salt is transported to Mandalay Region and Taninthayi Region in particular. The price of sun-dried coarse salt is between K140 and K150 a viss.

"It is natural for salt to decline when production is large, and the price goes up when the rain level is high. The weather is fine this year. It didn't rain in Thingyan, so the production increased, and the price dropped. The price falls to K140-K150 from around K180. It is also likely that the price will continue falling. This is why buyers now wait and see," he said.

In Myanmar, Mon State is



The photo depicts a sun-dried salt farm in Mon State.

the second largest salt producer, and sun-dried salt farming is mainly operated in Panga village,

Kayokpi village and Satse village in Thanbyuzayat township, Kyaukkhami, Htanbinchaung village

in Paung township and Palaingkee village in Ye township. — MT/ZS

Ginger prices surge due to low stocks, expected to continue rising



Harvested ginger plants.

AS this is the time of low stock, the price of ginger is high, and it is expected to rise further, according to ginger farmers.

This is the period of low production, mainly focused on preparing for new plants in the ginger growing areas, so the price is good now.

"This is the time when ginger production stops. New plants have not yet been harvested. So, this is the transitional period. The wholesale price varies from K5,500 to K6,800-K7,000 per viss, depending on the quality. When there is little stock or supply,

the price jumps. When there is a lot of supply, the price drops. Now, the price of ginger has increased by K500 to K 1,000," said an official at the Aung Pan vegetable broker's sales centre.

Ginger prices in the post-Thingyan period can only go up, said ginger farmers.

"In our opinion, production cannot decrease during the period after Thingyan. When a new batch with a very high price enters the market, there will be less buying. Now, the supply is low, and the price will continue to rise," said a farmer.

At the Danyingon retail market, a viss of ginger now costs K12,000, up from K6,000-K7,000 before Thingyan.

Ginger farmers suffered heavy losses in the summer of 2022, but with the rising price since early 2023, the number of ginger farmers has increased again.

Myanmar exports ginger to China, Thailand, India, Bangladesh, Yemen, Indonesia, Pakistan, Malaysia, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates, according to the data from the Department of Trade. — Thit Taw/ZN

Myanmar-China border trade surges to US\$3.2B in FY2023-2024

SEE FROM-1

THE border trade value between Myanmar and China surpassed US\$3.279 billion in the past financial year 2023-2024, increasing from \$3.1 billion recorded in the year-ago period, the Ministry of Commerce's statistics showed.

The figures reflected a remarkable increase of \$178.25 million in the FY 2023-2024 compared with that of the FY 2022-2023.

Myanmar conducts cross-border trade with neighbouring China via Muse, Lweje, Chinshwehaw, Kampaiti, and Kengtung. Muse border post recorded the highest trade figure of \$2.055 billion.

The trade values stood at over \$703 million at Chinshwehaw, over \$208 million at Kampaiti, \$158.568 million at Lweje and \$154.239 million at Kengtung.

Myanmar has been conducting border trade with the four neighbouring countries: China, Thailand, Bangladesh and India.

Export items are agricultural products, livestock products, fisheries products, minerals, forest products, manufacturing goods and other goods. In contrast, capital goods, intermediate goods, manufacturing goods and raw materials for CMP enterprises are imported. — NN/EM



OPINION

Adhere to weather forecasts to overcome natural challenges

AS MYANMAR grapples with soaring temperatures surpassing typical summer heat due to El Nino's influence, citizens, particularly the vulnerable, like children and the elderly, must brace themselves for the scorching weather ahead.

Myanmar's Department of Meteorology and Hydrology diligently fulfils its responsibilities by disseminating weather forecasts through various channels, including its website and State-owned newspapers. These forecasts equip the public, including fishermen, with essential information to mitigate the impact of the sweltering summer conditions.

According to the department's 10-day forecast, the South Andaman Sea and the South Bay of Bengal will experience partly cloudy to cloudy weather, while the North Andaman Sea and other areas of the Bay of Bengal may see a few clouds. This

forecast necessitates preparedness among not just the general populace but also fishermen operating offshore and inshore trawlers during the specified period starting from 11 April.

Regarding rainfall patterns, the department predicts below-normal rain or thundershowers in various regions and states, including Nay Pyi Taw, Sagaing, Mandalay, and others. Taninthayi Region and certain states like Kachin, Kayin, and Mon are expected to have three to four rainy days, while others may experience fewer rainy days during this period.

During the El Nino phase, which has global repercussions, Myanmar is expected to witness day temperatures approximately 1.5°C higher than the April average in several regions and states. However, Kachin State is anticipated to have temperatures closer to the April average.

On 15 April, the department stated that whirled winds from the west and clouds from the east can bring raining in Sagaing, Kachin, Shan, Chin and Rakhine, Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady, Taninthayi, Kayah, Kayin and Mon at different certainties from 17 to 23 April.

Staying abreast of weather forecasts and proactively preparing for potential impacts are crucial steps for mitigating the challenges posed by natural phenomena like El Nino. By adhering to these guidelines and making informed decisions, individuals can better safeguard themselves against the rigours of unpredictable weather patterns. People residing in targeted areas will really understand the possibilities of weather forecasts more than those from other regions. Their preparations should target endurance against severe impacts of climatic conditions. As such, they all have to make the best preparations to ease the burden of weather as much as possible for their survival.

AS WE are all aware, children develop cognitively when they grow into adolescents. Cognitive development generally means changes in the way by which individuals acquire and use knowledge, in other words, intellectual ability. In fact, the cognitive development that the individual brings to adolescence has arisen and improved even during infancy and childhood, and a normal adolescent is capable of moving on to more advanced levels of thinking, such as those of adults.

Intelligence is composed of many separate mental abilities that operate more or less independently. Flynn defined the term intelligence as the ability to think abstractly and to learn readily from experience. But as Thurstone suggested, intelligence is a composite of seven distinct mental abilities: spatial ability, perceptual speed, numerical ability, verbal meaning, memory, word fluency, and reasoning. He also believed that the assessment of a person's intelligence requires the measurement of all these seven abilities.

According to Cattell, intelligence comprises two major components: crystallized intelligence and fluid intelligence. Crystallized intelligence improves drawing on previously learned information to make decisions or solve problems. Classroom tests, vocabulary tests, and many other social situations involve crystallized intelligence. In contrast, fluid intelligence forms concepts and reasons and identifies similarities as new mental structures rather than making use of existing ones. Crystallized intelligence is increasing across the lifespan, while fluid intelligence is peaking in early adulthood.

According to the Triarchic Theory of Intelligence by Sternberg, there are three types of human intelligence. The first type, componential intelligence, emphasizes effectiveness in information processing. Those highly rated for this type like to think critically and analytically. Thus, they usually excel on standardized tests of academic potential that make excellent students. The second type, experiential intelligence, emphasizes insight and the ability to formulate new ideas. The persons with this high type zero in what information is crucial in a given situation and combining seemingly unrelated facts. Scientific geniuses and inventors tend to show this intelligence. The third type, contextual intelligence, is a practical, adaptive sense. The ones who are high on this type quickly recognize what factors influence success on various tasks and are competent at adapting to and shaping their environment. Successful people in many fields do extremely well in that area of intelligence.

The American Association on Mental Deficiency defines mental retardation as significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behaviour and manifested during the develop-

ment period. Mentally retarded adolescents are well below normal, with an average IQ score of 100, in intelligence. The five types of mental retardation are borderline retardation with an IQ range of 70 - 85, mild retardation in the low 50s-70s, moderate retardation in the mid-30s-low 50s, severe retardation with that of low 20s-mid-30s, and profound retardation with that of below 20. In the first type, the individual may be able to function adequately in society. In the second type, the individual is educable and can be minimally self-supporting, although requiring special help at times of unusual stress. In the third type, the individual is trainable to perform skilled work in a sheltered workshop if provided with supervision and guidance. In the fourth type, only simple tasks can be carried out under supervision. In the fifth type, the individual requires constant care and supervision.

The causes of mental retardation contain genetic disease, chromosomal abnormality, brain damage, and severe environmental deprivation. The solution to mental retardation for the majority of handicapped students who are educated within local school systems is a process called mainstreaming which certainly helps those students socialize with non-handicapped peers.

On the contrary, giftedness is thought of as precocity. A young person is able to perform tasks at the level usually observed in

older children. Gifted adolescents demonstrate their achievement and potential ability in any or combination of general intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude, creative or productive thinking, leadership ability, visual or performing arts, and psychomotor ability. Thus, these children could do with individualized educational programmes specially provided to realize their contribution to self and society. The failure to provide gifted adolescents with access to an appropriate educational environment gives rise to a costly waste of their talent and promise.

In summary, the intellectual competencies that improve during adolescence call for memory span, memorization skills, acquisition of information, concept production across verbal, perceptual and experiential modes, mental representations of physical space, and problem-solving strategies. Young adolescents who have not yet arrived at formal-operational thought may not apply formal strategies to the whole range of problems they encounter. A heightened egocentrism is thought to be reduced through peer interaction and participation in work settings, but remarkably, some degree of egocentrism remains a characteristic of adult thought. After all, cognitive development during adolescence does permit higher levels of integration, abstraction, and generalization in the use of these abilities. ■

Child Intelligence

By Hu Wo (Cuckoo's Song)



During adolescence, intellectual abilities like memory span, memorization, and information acquisition improve. Adolescents also develop concept production in verbal, perceptual, and experiential modes. ILLUSTRATION: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/LLV LIBRARY ONLINE

Climate impacts set to cut 2050 global GDP by nearly a fifth

CLIMATE change caused by CO2 emissions already in the atmosphere will shrink global GDP in 2050 by about \$38 trillion, or almost a fifth, no matter how aggressively humanity cuts carbon pollution, researchers said Wednesday.

But slashing greenhouse gas emissions as quickly as possible remains crucial to avoid even more devastating economic impacts after mid-century, they reported in the journal Nature.

Economic fallout from climate change, the study shows, could increase tens of trillions of dollars per year by 2100 if the planet were to warm significantly beyond two degrees Celsius above mid-19th century levels.

Earth's average surface temperature has already climbed 1.2°C above that benchmark, enough to amplify heatwaves, droughts, flooding and tropical storms made more destructive by rising seas.

Annual investment needed to cap global warming below 2°C — the cornerstone goal of the 2015 Paris Agreement — is a small fraction of the damages that would be avoided, the researchers found.

Staying under the 2°C threshold “could limit average re-

gional income loss to 20 per cent compared to 60 per cent” in a high-emissions scenario, lead author Max Kotz, an expert in complexity science at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), told AFP.

Economists disagree on how much should be spent to avoid climate damages. Some call for massive investment now, while others argue it would be more cost-effective to wait until societies are richer and technology more advanced.

Poor countries hit hardest

The new research sidesteps this debate, but its eye-watering estimate of economic impacts helps make the case for ambitious near-term action, the authors and other experts said.

“Our calculations are super relevant” to such cost-benefit analyses, said co-author Leonie Wenz, also a researcher at PIK.

They could also inform government strategies for adapting to climate impacts, risk assessments for business, and UN-led negotiations over compensation for developing nations that have barely contributed to global warming, she told AFP.

Mostly tropical nations — many with economies already shrinking due to climate damages — will be hit hardest, the

study found.

“Countries least responsible for climate change are predicted to suffer income loss that is 60 per cent greater than the higher-income countries and 40 per cent greater than higher-emission countries,” said senior PIK scientist Anders Levermann.

“They are also the ones with the least resources to adapt to its impacts.” Rich countries will not be spared either: Germany and the United States are forecast to see income shrivel by 11 per cent by 2050, and France by 13 per cent.

Projections are based on four decades of economic and climate data from 1,600 regions rather than country-level statistics, making it possible to include damages earlier studies ignored, such as extreme rainfall.

A likely underestimate

The researchers also looked at temperature fluctuations within each year rather than just averages, as well as the economic impact of extreme weather events beyond the year in which they occurred.

SOURCE: AFP



A wooden boat is seen on dry bed of a reservoir in Wonogiri district, Central Java, Indonesia, 10 August 2023. PHOTO: IMAGE USED FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSE/STR/XINHUA

NATIONAL

Small-Scale Industries Department to offer free training courses nationwide

DAW Khaing Khaing Zan, director of the Small-Scale Industries Department, has announced plans to conduct over 500 training courses nationwide during the 2024-2025 financial year. These courses will cover a range of topics including foodstuffs, consumer goods, and cosmetics manufacturing.

All courses will be offered free of charge and will encompass six categories, including the production of various snacks, beverages, fruit jams, dried fruits, and instant curries.



The photo shows the training course in the previous year.

Additionally, consumer product production courses will feature four different types, covering soap and shampoo production as well as various makeup and lipstick courses.

“Courses have been available since 1 April at district offices across regions and states. Currently, there are still 70 courses open nationwide, all free of charge. These courses focus on consumer goods, cosmetics, and foodstuffs. Many attendees are entrepreneurs from the regions who are self-employed at home.

They are learning to produce their products in a systematic manner,” explained Daw Khaing Khaing Zan.

Small-scale entrepreneurs can take advantage of these training courses offered by the Small-Scale Industries Department. If funding is required, the Department will collaborate with the Department of Cooperative to assist in establishing manufacturing cooperative societies by providing capital loans and selling necessary equipment. — ASH/MKKS

AA terrorists’ shelling kills civilians in Buthidaung Township on Myanmar New Year



The location map of the shelling by AA terrorists.

AA terrorists launched heavy weapon shells in Buthidaung Township, Rakhine State, at around 5:30 pm on 17 April, the first day of the Myanmar New Year, traditionally a time when Buddhist people observe the Sabbath, engage in acts of kindness, and perform charitable deeds. AA terrorists fired from the northeast of the town. Shells struck and detonated in No 2 Ward, resulting in the deaths of four civilians, including one male and three females, and injuring eight others, including a 12-year-old child. Security forces

transported the injured individuals to the local military hospital for medical treatment.

The deliberate targeting of non-military areas by AA terrorists constitutes a violation of the Geneva Convention and qualifies as a war crime.

As a result, the security forces have intensified security measures and investigations to apprehend these terrorists. It is deeply reprehensible that AA terrorists are senselessly killing innocent civilians under the guise of regional interests. — MNA/TMT

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

DURING inspections on 17 and 18 April, combined on-duty teams seized illegal teak weighing 1.569 tonnes, illegal hardwood weighing 1.051 tonnes, and other timbers weighing 3.841 tonnes valued at K3.563 million in Bago and Pyay districts. In addition, a SX 2190 (approximately worth K30 million) carrying 16,000 kilograms of ammonium nitrate valued at K16 million was discovered without official documents in Taungni village in Moekaung township. The action was taken under the Forest Law and the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

Furthermore, on 18 April,

combined teams supervised by the Sagaing Region Illegal Trade Eradication Special Task Force impounded an unregistered Toyota Crown (approximately worth K15 million) carrying 268 bags of AA brand chickpeas and 705 bags of rubber sheets from China valued at K22.632 million without official documents at the Yadabon bridge combined checkpoint in Sagaing township. The action was taken under the Export and Import Law. The Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee reported that six arrests were made on 17 and 18 April, with an estimated value of K87.169 million. — MNA/MKKS



Arrestees are seen alongside the seized illegal goods.

PDF terrorists attack monks in Taungdwingyi Township

DUE to the incitement by NUG and CRPH, PDF terrorists are threatening, killing, and robbing residents, as well as administrative officials and civil servants in certain regions, for various

reasons. They have also been involved in terrorist acts, including the killing of Buddhist monks.

At approximately 10:15 am on 18 April, residents of Htaukkyantkwin and surrounding vil-

lages in Taungdwingyi Township invited four monks to conduct a prayer ceremony at the cemetery of Htaukkyantkwin village. While the monks were praying, two PDF terrorists arrived on

a motorcycle and shot at them with small arms. As a result, two monks were wounded, and one of them succumbed to severe injuries.

The security forces are re-

portedly collaborating with residents to investigate and identify the terrorists responsible for the indiscriminate shooting of the monks. — MNA/TKO

Study finds biodiversity is key to better mental health

A study by King's College London found that spaces with a variety of natural features are associated with better mental health than spaces with less natural diversity.

Published in Scientific Reports and funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) and Wellcome, this citizen science study used the smartphone application Urban Mind to collect real-time reports on mental well-being and natural diversity from nearly 2000 participants.

Researchers discovered that environments with more natural features, such as trees, birds, plants, and streams, are related to better mental health than environments with fewer elements, and that these advantages can

continue for up to eight hours.

Further analysis found that nearly a quarter of the positive impact of nature on mental health could be explained by the diversity of features present. These findings highlight that policies and practices that support the richness of nature and species are beneficial both for the environment and for public mental health. Lead author Ryan Hammoud, Research Assistant at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience (IoPPN), King's College London, said:

"To our knowledge, this is the first study examining the mental health impact of everyday encounters with different levels of natural diversity in real-life contexts. — ANI



Researchers have found that environments rich in natural features like trees, birds, plants, and streams are linked to better mental health compared to environments with fewer natural elements. **PHOTO: PIXABAY**

Cameroon opens museum honouring oldest sub-Saharan kingdom

TO enter the Museum of the Bamoun Kings in western Cameroon, you have to pass under the fangs of a gigantic two-headed snake — the highlight of an imposing coat of arms of one of the oldest kingdoms in sub-Saharan Africa.

Thousands of Cameroonians gathered in the royal palace square in Foumban on Saturday to celebrate the opening of the Museum of the Bamoun Kings.

Sultan King Mouhammad Nabil Mforifoum Mbombo Njoya welcomed 2,000 guests to the

opening of the museum located in Foumban — the historic capital of the Bamoun Kings.

The royal family, descendants of a monarchy that dates back six centuries, attended the event dressed in traditional ceremonial attire with colourful boubous and matching fezes.

Griot narrators in multi-coloured boubous played drums and long traditional flutes while palace riflemen fired shots to punctuate the arrival of distinguished guests which included ministers and diplomats. — AFP

Classic Peking Opera films set for screening in Beijing

The 14th Beijing International Film Festival will feature a screening of 18 Peking Opera films from 16 April to 5 May at the China National Film Museum.



Artistes perform Peking Opera "Farewell My Concubine" to mark the 100th anniversary of Chinese theater legend Mei Lanfang's visit to Japan in Tokyo, capital of Japan, 2 October 2019. **PHOTO: MA CAORAN/XINHUA/FILE**

A total of 18 Peking Opera films are scheduled to be screened from 16 April to 5 May at the China National Film Museum, according to the organizers of the 14th Beijing International Film Festival.

The lineup features classic Peking Opera tales such as "Dragon and Phoenix Bringing Prosperity", "Farewell My

Concubine" and "Qin Xianglian". These productions showcase diverse roles and performance styles, exemplifying the inheritance and evolution of contemporary Peking Opera art.

Organized by the museum and the China Film Co, Ltd, the screening aims to showcase the achievements of the

Peking Opera film project over the past decade and draw more young audiences to feel the essence of Chinese culture.

Wang Xiangrong, the museum's deputy curator, pledged to harness the advantages of the museum in empowering literary classics with modern technologies and help promote Chinese culture. — Xinhua

Studio Ghibli to receive honorary Palme d'Or at Cannes

JAPANESE animation giant Studio Ghibli will receive an honorary Palme d'Or at this year's Cannes International Film Festival in France in May, according to organizers.

Co-founded by internationally renowned anime director Hayao Miyazaki and known for its masterpieces such as "My Neighbor Totoro" and "Spirited Away", the Oscar-winning production company "has unleashed a fresh wind on animated film over the past four decades", the festival's organizers said in a statement Wednesday.

It will be the first time the Cannes festival has given the award to an institution, rather than an individual.



File photo shows a display featuring Studio Ghibli characters outside an exhibition on animation giant Hayao Miyazaki in Los Angeles in March 2022. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Noting the success of Miyazaki and Ghibli co-founder Isao Takahata, "they achieved what seemed to be an impos-

sible feat: independently producing pure masterpieces and conquering the mass market," the organizers said. — Kyodo

ECONOMY WORLD

China's job market embraces increasing returned overseas students

As spring arrives in China, so does another job hunting season, particularly for freshly graduated students returning from overseas universities.

THE spring breeze brings another job hunting season in China, as well as more job hunters freshly graduated from overseas universities.

Zhu Yangjian, a Chinese student studying at Kyushu University in Fukuoka, Japan, has become a frequenter of a website of national employment service for returned overseas students under the Ministry of Education.

"I prefer to work in China.

The overall salary in Japan is not much different from that in China, but the cost of living here is higher. The attractiveness of local employment is declining. Moreover, there are more intriguing jobs in China," said Zhu.

Zhu's idea reflects the majority of Chinese overseas students. According to the "2022 Blue Paper for Chinese Overseas Students Returning to China for Employment" released by the



Students attend a job fair at Tsinghua University in Beijing, capital of China, 15 March 2024. PHOTO: JU HUANZONG/XINHUA

Chinese Service Centre for Scholarly Exchange, the number of students returning to China has significantly grown since 2012, with about 3.4 million people having returned, accounting for more

than 80 per cent of the people returning from studying abroad.

According to the "2023 Report on Chinese Students Overseas Study" released by New Oriental, a study abroad service

agency, direct employment or entrepreneurship after graduation in 2023 has become the mainstream for those who have studied abroad, accounting for 65 per cent in total. — Xinhua

Jakarta-Bandung high-speed railway marks 6-month operation with 2.56 mln passengers

Since its official commercial launch in mid-October last year, the railway has completed 7,050 train trips covering over 1.26 million kilometres.



Passengers wait to board a high-speed electrical multiple unit (EMU) train at the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway's Padalarang Station in Padalarang, Indonesia, 7 April 2024. PHOTO: SEPTIANJAR MUHARAM/XINHUA

THE Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway marked its six months of operation on

Wednesday with a total of 2.56 million passengers transported, said PT Kereta Cepat In-

donesia-China (KCIC), a joint venture consortium between Indonesian and Chinese state-owned firms that constructs and runs the HSR.

According to the KCIC, since its official commercial operation around mid-October last year, the railway has operated a total of 7,050 train trips with a mileage of over 1.26 million kilometres.

At present, the railway's daily train trips have been increased from 14 to 52, and the number of passenger seats has surged from 8,400 to more than 31,000. The highest number of passengers sent in a single day was 21,537, while the highest daily seat occupancy rate was recorded at 99.6 per cent. — Xinhua

Behind the growth, Ivory Coast's debt fuels debate

ABIDJAN'S soaring Alassane Ouattara bridge lit up at night in the colours of the national flag is Ivory Coast's jewel in the crown after years of investment. Roads, tower blocks, the installation of electricity, bridges — the economic capital today is barely recognizable from 10 years ago. Robust economic growth has again made Ivory Coast a regional heavyweight — but, with levels of debt that spark fierce debate. Named after the president, the cable-stayed bridge, inaugurated last year, was the last in a string of major construction projects. When Ouattara came to power in 2011, Ivory Coast was emerging from a post-elec-

toral crisis that had left more than 3,000 people dead.

It had to convince investors to bet on the return of what was once known as the engine of West Africa. But under the former International Monetary Fund (IMF) economist, confidence has returned and with it, growth. Since 2011, the economy of the world's leading cocoa producer has grown by more than seven per cent a year on average, driven in part by the agricultural sector made up largely of cocoa exports.

Its hosting of the Africa Cup of Nations at the beginning of the year also prompted more spending on infrastructure. — AFP

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Oracle to invest \$8 bln in Japan to respond to growing AI demand



US IT firm Oracle Corp CEO Safra Catz holds a press conference in Tokyo on 18 April 2024. She said the Japanese unit of Oracle Corp will invest \$8 billion in Japan over the next 10 years to respond to the country's growing demand for cloud computing and artificial intelligence. **PHOTO: KYODO**

THE Japanese unit of US IT firm Oracle Corp said Thursday it will invest \$8 billion in Japan over the next 10 years to respond to the country's growing demand for cloud computing and artificial intelligence.

The US technology company will strengthen the capabilities of its data centers in Tokyo and Osaka by introducing high-performance graphics processing units used for developing AI, it said.

The move will help the Japanese government and companies manage their data inside Japan, reducing the risk of it leaking outside the country, the company said. The announcement follows similar investment plans recently revealed by its US rivals. Tech giant Microsoft Corp said earlier this month it will invest \$2.9 billion in Japan to upgrade its data centres. — Kyodo

French companies explore Chinese market through Hainan expo

This year marks 60 years of France-China diplomatic ties, with the French Pavilion inaugurated as part of the celebrations.

MODELLED on the iconic Champs-Élysées and department stores of Ottoman architecture style, the French Pavilion at the ongoing fourth China International Consumer Products Expo, held in south China's Hainan Province, offers visitors an immersive Parisian shopping experience.

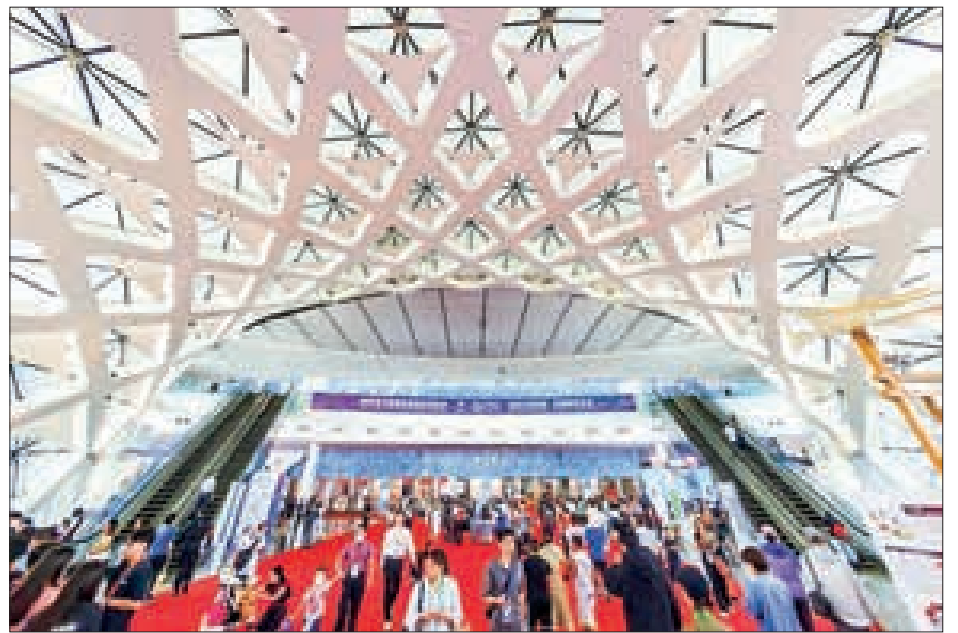
A total of 11 prestigious French enterprises are showcasing their products, ranging from fashion to food.

Sylvain Fourrière, the consul general of France in Guangzhou, said French companies had participated in the expo since the maiden event.

This year coincides with the 60th anniversary

of diplomatic relations between France and China, and part of the celebrations was the launch of the French pavilion, he said, adding that he hoped

even more French brands would participate in future expos. — Xinhua



People visit the fourth China International Consumer Products Expo in Haikou, capital city of south China's Hainan Province, 13 April 2024. **PHOTO: GUO CHENG/XINHUA**

UAE, Costa Rica seal economic partnership agreement to boost investment ties

UNITED Arab Emirates and Costa Rica have signed the UAE-Costa Rica Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) on Wednesday with

the aim of enhancing bilateral relations, Al Arabiya News reported citing Emirates News Agency.

Further, the implementation of the UAE-Costa

Rica CEPA is expected to boost trade and investment across priority sectors, propelling mutual economic growth.

The virtual signing

ceremony witnessed the participation of UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed and Costa Rican President Rodrigo Chaves Robles. — ANI

Tennessee VW workers begin voting in key test for union

VOLKSWAGEN employees in Tennessee began casting ballots Wednesday in a vote that could make theirs the first foreign carmaker to unionize in the American South, expanding gains made by organized labor in the auto heartland of Detroit.

Hopes were high among supporters of the United Auto Workers (UAW) union in the



Despite previous rejections of UAW representation at the 5,500-employee Chattanooga factory, workers remained hopeful for a positive outcome. **PHOTO: IMAGE USED FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSE/KYODO**

city of Chattanooga on the eve of the three-day vote, as the revived labor organization takes on its first target after last fall's triumphant strikes at Detroit's "Big Three" carmakers.

"We're really excited," assembly worker Isaac Meadows said as he headed to the plant to hand out flyers ahead of his 2 pm shift. — AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

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Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V IAL 001 VOY. NO. (W172)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **19-4-2024** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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ROLLING UPDATES: WORLD

Croatia's ruling party wins parliamentary elections

The centre-left Croatian Social Democratic Party (SDP) alliance followed with 42 seats, while the Homeland Movement obtained 14 seats.



Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic gestures to supporters in the election headquarters in Zagreb, Croatia, 17 April 2024. **PHOTO: IGOR SOBAN/PIXSELL VIA XINHUA**

THE ruling centre-right Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), led by Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic, won most seats in the parliamentary elections on Wednesday, but failed to obtain enough seats to form a government independently.

After over 90 per cent of the votes have been counted, the HDZ secured 60 seats, but fell short of the 76 seats required to form a government, showed preliminary results published by the State Election Commission (SEC) early Thursday morning.

Following behind is the alliance of parties led by the centre-left Croatian Social Democratic Party (SDP) with 42 seats, trailed by the Home-

land Movement with 14 seats, according to the SEC.

Meanwhile, the Bridge Party and We Can Party ranked fourth and fifth with 11 and 10 seats respectively, the SEC said.

In a statement, Plenkovic said that for the third time in a row, the HDZ has won the Croatian parliamentary elections. From Thursday, the HDZ will start negotiating with other partners to form a new government, said the statement.

However, the We Can Party has proposed that all the opposition parties get united to form a minority government and therefore oust the HDZ from power. It remains to be seen whether it can be realized. — Xinhua

China's navy to open barracks to public to mark founding anniversary

Visitors will also be able to interact with Navy personnel. These vessels have participated in significant missions such as escort missions in the Gulf of Aden, overseas port visits, and joint exercises.

THE Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy will hold open day events in multiple coastal cities including Qingdao around 23 April to mark the 75th anniversary of its founding.

From 20 to 24 April, the public in Qingdao will be able to tour the missile destroyers Guiyang, Shijiazhuang and Kaifeng, missile frigate Han-

dan, supply ship Kekexilihu, and submarine rescue vessel Hongzehu at the pier 3 and the Qingdao International Sailing Center pier. Visitors will also have the chance to interact with members of the Navy.

Most of the vessels have been involved in major missions such as escort mission in the Gulf of Aden, overseas port visits and joint exercises.

In addition to Qingdao, the navy said it would organize simultaneous open day activities at its barracks in other cities, including Dalian, Yantai, Ningbo, Wuhan, Xiamen, Guangzhou, Haikou and Sanya.

Online reservation channels have opened for the public to book visits to the naval ships during the scheduled open day events. — Xinhua



Students and faculties visit a military vessel during an open day activity in Ningbo of east China's Zhejiang Province, 23 April 2023. **PHOTO: MENG YINQI/XINHUA**



Since 10 April, there have been messages spreading across online South Korean communities, encouraging individuals to consider joining mercenary groups based in Ukraine. **PHOTO: IMAGE USED FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSE/PIXABAY**

Ukraine seeking out mercenary recruits in South Korea

UKRAINE recently attempted to recruit mercenaries in South Korea, according to materials obtained by Sputnik. However, the results of the recruits fall short of expectations.

Since 10 April, messages have been circulating throughout South Korean internet communities urging netizens to join Ukrainian mercenary groups.

The text specifies that candidates must have minimal physical training and be deemed "gen-

erally adequate", between the ages of 20 and 35. The message also states that professional training such as the ability to operate UAVs, skills in field medicine, military engineering, or sniper rifle usage will increase one's chances of being hired.

The message included a Telegram contact for potential candidates to submit their application forms and personal information, such as details about their military service, participation in

qualification courses, and past combat experience. Additionally, knowledge of foreign languages is mentioned as an optional qualification.

Along with the message was a video showcasing a Ukrainian militant group in action, demonstrating the basic physical requirements needed for modern warfare. The photos included in the message featured servicemen donning chevrons with the Ukrainian flag. — SPUTNIK

SPORTS

Tomiyasu unable to stop Arsenal's Champions League exit

Takehiro Tomiyasu, Japan defender, returned to Arsenal's starting lineup after injury but couldn't prevent their Champions League quarterfinal exit.

JAPAN defender Takehiro Tomiyasu returned to the Arsenal starting lineup following an injury layoff but could not prevent the English side's Champions League quarterfinal exit as Bayern Munich claimed a 3-2 aggregate victory with their 1-0 win in Wednesday's second leg.

Manager Mikel Arteta opted for Tomiyasu on the left of his four-man defence, and the 25-year-old kept Bayern wing-

er Leroy Sane quiet at Allianz Arena, but Joshua Kimmich's 63rd-minute header gave the German giants the decisive goal. Tomiyasu was hurt in early February while playing for Japan at the Asian Cup and had been limited to four substitute appearances in the Premier League since making his return at the end of March.

He was left on the bench when Arsenal drew 2-2 at home



Arsenal's Takehiro Tomiyasu (L) and Bayern Munich's Leroy Sane vie for the ball in the first half of a Champions League quarterfinal match on 17 April 2024, in Munich. **PHOTO: KYODO**

in the first leg against Bayern on 9 April. Arsenal were playing in this stage of the competition for the first time in 14 seasons.

A "sad and disappointed" Arteta said Arsenal's defensive lapses in the opening leg put them in a difficult position. "It was a tie of

very small margins — in the first leg, we conceded two very poor goals, and that has a big effect in the tie," he said. — Kyodo

Bayern edges Arsenal to reach UEFA Champions League semis

JOSHUA Kimmich's sole goal helped Bayern Munich progress into the UEFA Champions League last four after beating Arsenal 1-0 (3-2 on aggregate) in the second leg on Wednesday.

The German giants caught a bright start in front of the home crowd as Harry Kane's volley went just wide in the opening stages before Nonsair Mazraoui's deflected shot missed the target with 23 minutes gone.

Arsenal's goalkeeper David Raya was also busy as he had to palm away Jamal Musiala's dangerous effort moments later.

The Gunners came also close and tested goalkeeper Manuel Neuer but neither Martin Odegaard nor Kai Havertz was able to score the opener from a promising position.

Bayern started powerful into the second half and rattled the woodwork in quick succes-

sion. Leon Goretzka's header dropped off the crossbar allowing Raphael Guerreiro to hit the outside of the left post with the subsequent rebound.

The Gunners, meanwhile, lacked penetration and couldn't pose a threat to the host's well-organized defence.

The Bavarians eventually broke the deadlock and shocked the visitors at the hour mark when Guerreiro's whipped cross into the box found Germany international Kimmich, whose diving header caught Raya flatfooted.

Tuchel's men gained momentum but Leroy Sane and Kimmich got their chances denied later.

Arsenal remained uninspired as Bayern's defence was able to keep the Gunners at bay.

The visitor's best chance in the second half came from Odegaard, who rattled the side netting. — Xinhua

FA Cup: Manchester City, Chelsea gear up for semi-final showdown

Manchester City, the reigning champions, defeated Newcastle United in the quarter-finals with Bernardo Silva leading the charge.

THE oldest football competition in the world – FA Cup, is back to keep fans on the edge of their seats in what promises to be an enthralling semi-final stage.

In the first semi-final fixture, the reigning champions Manchester City FC take on London giants Chelsea FC in a clash of heavyweights. On the other hand, Championship side Coventry City face silverware hungry Manchester United. These blockbuster fixtures will be played at Wembley Stadium.

Title-holders Manchester City breezed past Newcastle United in their quarter-final clash in this competition. A solid brace from Portuguese magician Bernardo Silva, saw Pep Guardiola's men book their ticket to Wembley. The team is on an unstoppable run of form, unbeaten in their last 27

games across all competitions. Meanwhile, the London giants, Chelsea, overcame Leicester City in a thrilling encounter in the quarter-final stage. Late goals from substitutes Carney Chukwemeka and Noni Madueke in injury time sent the

Blues through to the semi-finals. Attacking sensation Cole Palmer will be in spotlight for the Blues having scored 23 goals and provided 13 assists – the most goals and assists for the club across all competitions this season. — ANI



The FA Cup, the world's oldest football competition, has returned, promising fans an exciting semi-final stage. **PHOTO: ANI**



Chinese premier holds symposium with overseas buyers at Canton Fair

CHINESE Premier Li Qiang held a symposium with overseas buyers attending the 135th session of the China Import and Export Fair (Canton Fair) in Guangzhou on Wednesday.

Overseas buyer representatives spoke about their experience in strengthening cooperation with China through the Canton Fair, noting that the fair has long played an important role in promoting trade exchanges and friendly relations between China and other countries.

The representatives said they are full of confidence in the prospects of China's economic development. They are ready to use the Canton Fair as a platform to continue expanding business in China, and to make positive contributions to the promotion of free trade and the maintenance of global supply chain stability.

They also put forward opinions and suggestions on developing the circular and green economies, on optimizing the business environment in China, and on strengthening people-to-people exchanges between China and foreign countries.

Li said he appreciates their long-term, active participation in the Canton Fair, as well as their vigorous economic and trade cooperation with China. He noted that many overseas enterprises have made connections with China through the Canton Fair, and have grown stronger along with China's development.

The history of the Canton Fair is a history of companies from all over the world sharing China's opportunities and achieving mutual benefits, and a microcosm of China's continuous opening-up and active integration into the international market, Li said. — Xinhua

Representatives of overseas buyers highlighted the fair's crucial role in fostering trade exchanges and friendly relations between China and other nations.



A visitor tries a new energy vehicle during the 135th session of the China Import and Export Fair, also known as the Canton Fair, in Guangzhou, south China's Guangdong Province, 15 April 2024. **PHOTO: LU HANXIN/XINHUA**

Over 11,000 people evacuated as volcano erupts in northern Indonesia, air travel disrupted in region

Mount Ruang erupted several times starting Tuesday evening, with the alert level raised to four by Indonesia's volcanology agency.



Officials anticipate evacuating more than 11,615 residents from the risk area to ensure their safety, according to Abdul Muhari, head of the disaster agency's data centre. **PHOTO: CENTER FOR VOLCANOLOGY AND GEOLOGICAL HAZARD MITIGATION (PVMBG)**

MORE than 11,000 people have been evacuated after a volcanic eruption in the province of North Sulawesi Indonesia, Al Jazeera reported on Thursday.

According to Al Jazeera, Mount Ruang, first erupted at 9:45 pm local time on Tuesday and then four times on Wednesday. The volcanology agency in Indonesia increased the mountain's alert level to four, the highest on the scale, which is 725 metres (2,379 feet) high. The agency also expanded the size of the exclusion zone surrounding the crater from four to six kilometres (2.5 to 3.7 miles). Initially, more than 800 residents of Ruang were evacuated to Tagulandang Island, which is close by and situated more than 100

kilometres (62 miles) north of Manado, the provincial capital, according to Al Jazeera.

Officials said on Thursday morning that more people will have to be evacuated and brought to Manado due to the expanding exclusion zone.

"At least 11,615 residents who are in the risk area must evacuate to a safe place," Abdul Muhari, the head of the disaster agency's disaster data, communications and information centre, was quoted as saying by the Kompas newspaper, according to Al Jazeera. Authorities are also concerned that, as happened during an earlier eruption in 1871, a portion of the volcano may collapse into the sea and trigger a tsunami. — ANI

New York Capitol hit by cyberattack, budget deal delayed

THE computer infrastructure of the New York State Legislature appeared to be the target of an alleged cyberattack overnight on Tuesday, delaying the already weeks-overdue state budget negotiations, reported The Hill. New York Governor Kathy Hochul stated that the cyberattack took place in the early hours of Wednesday, prompting a quick response from cybersecurity officials.

However, as of now, the exact reason behind the attack is unknown. The hardest hit, according to Gothamist, a New York City-centric blog website operated by New York Public Radio, was the legislature's bill drafting office, which is in charge of deciding on the state budget's final wording. — ANI