

SAC Chairman PM Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Cambodian Ambassador to Myanmar



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Mr Chum Angvichet, Cambodian Ambassador to Myanmar yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

STATE Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received Mr Chum Angvichet, Cambodian Ambassador to Myanmar, who will return after completing his tour of duties, at the SAC Chairman's Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they had a cordial discussion on friendly and dip-

lomatic relations between Myanmar and Cambodia, mutual exchange of friendship visits, increasing cooperation in the trade sector, the tourism sector, social and cultural sectors and other sectors between the two countries, and the preparations for holding a free and fair multiparty general election in Myanmar.

After the meeting, SAC Chairman

Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and the Cambodian ambassador exchanged souvenirs.

The meeting was also attended by SAC Joint Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo, Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe and officials alongside the Cambodian ambassador and embassy officials. — MNA/TS

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Omadanti and Shwethaungyan beaches host 32,712 domestic visitors over Thingyan

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MoI Union Minister inspects preparation for ceremony of students receiving instructions from SAC Chairman

BUSSINESS PAGE-7



59th Gems Emporium to be held from 3 to 12 May in Nay Pyi Taw



A group documentary photo of the 31st Anniversary of the Investors Club in New Delhi on 21 April 2024.

Investors Club's 31st Anniversary held in New Delhi

THE Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) stated that U Moe Kyaw Aung, Myanmar's Ambassador to India, participated in the 31st Anniversary Ceremony of the Investors Club in New Delhi on 21 April.

As a distinguished guest,

he engaged in discussions regarding the enhancement of bilateral economic cooperation.

During the event, Ambassador U Moe Kyaw Aung briefed Indian business people on investment op-

portunities and the economic landscape in Myanmar. Subsequently, he exchanged views with them on strategies to advance economic collaboration and investment between Myanmar and India. — ASH/TKO

NATIONAL

Omadanti and Shwethaungyan beaches host 32,712 domestic visitors over Thingyan

OMADANTI Beach and Shwethaungyan Beach in Patheingyi Township, Ayeyawady Region, welcomed a combined total of 32,712 domestic visitors during the Maha Thingyan period, as reported by U Soe Win, Assistant Director of the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism (Ayeyawady Region).

Currently, both domestic and foreign visitors frequent the beach resorts in Ayeyawady Region daily, including Chaungtha, Ngwehsaung, Ngwetaung, Shwethaungyan, Goyangyi Island, and Mawtinsun.

“The number of visitors



A general view of Omadanti beach near Danubyu Township in Ayeyawady Region crowded with beachgoers during the Thingyan festival.

seeking relaxation at nearly all beaches in Ayeyawady Region has significantly increased during this Thingyan period compared to previous years. Omadanti Beach near Danubyu, which is relatively lesser-known, has attracted the most day-trippers from Yangon Region. In reality, it is not a beach but a sandbank in the Ayeyawady River. During the Thingyan period, 21,155 domestic travellers visited it. A total of 11,557 domestic and foreign tourists visited the well-known Shwethaungyan Beach near Patheingyi during Thingyan,” said U Soe Win. — ASH/MKKS

Yangon sees decline in property investors, rise in gold buyers

THERE are just a few people who have invested in the property sector, but there are many people who have bought gold for investment purposes in Yangon.

“Rather than buying real estate, many people have bought gold for investment purposes at present. People have enjoyed investing in gold for many years. If you call estate agents and ask about the property sale, they will reply that it’s not good. But the rental market is pretty good, and prices are quite high,” said an economist.

It is still early to predict the property sale, and the market has been entirely based on the actual situation while there is a gap between asking price and buying price, he said.

“People thought more investment would be made in the property sector as gold price and exchange rate have skyrocketed. But in reality, people don’t make much property investments; they prefer gold investments, as I heard from gold traders. In the rental market, separate house, apartment and condominium rents have been more active. People don’t want to buy estates

for investment because it takes too long to resell them. But most of the buyers bought estates for rent, not for sale. It is happening not only in South Okkalapa but in all townships of Yangon. So we can say the rental market has been better than selling and buying,” said Myanmar Real Estate Services Association (South Okkalapa township) Chair Daw Hnin Nwe Oo. Overall, in the real estate market, land plot sales have been active slightly.

“Land plot transactions have been seen because there are buyers who want to run hospitals, shopping centres and shops. That is also the case in South Okkalapa and other townships. Houses have been sold, but land plot sales have been more active,” she said.

— Thit Taw/ZS



High purity gold nuggets in the market.

Macau Special Administrative Region of China celebrates 26th Myanmar Water Festival

MYANMAR’S consul-general based in the Hong Kong Region, along with officials and their families, participated in the 26th Myanmar Traditional Thingyan Water Festival in the Macau Special Administrative Region of China on 21 April, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The festival was organized by Myanmar citizens residing in the Macau Special Administrative Region and their friends from the region to celebrate the New Year.

At the opening ceremony of the festival, U Han Win Nang, Myanmar’s Consul-General based in the Hong Kong Region, expressed his wish to continue preserving this celebration, infused with the essence of Myanmar culture, to welcome the Myanmar New Year. He also mentioned that his office shares joint responsibility for the Macau Special Administrative Region and is making every effort to safeguard the interests of Myanmar citizens working in the area. The consul-general encouraged them to live and work in accordance with the region’s regulations and wished them a comfortable



The photo depicts the opening ceremony of the traditional Thingyan water festival to mark the Myanmar New Year.

and happy New Year.

In the evening, the Myanmar consul-general attended the water festival celebration dinner and met with Myanmar students who are studying at universities in the Greater Bay Area on scholarships provided by the Chinese government. He encouraged them to endeavour to strengthen relations between Myanmar and China while pursuing advanced education.

Officials from the Liaison Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the Office of the Commissioner of the Minis-

try of Foreign Affairs of China based in the Macau Region, representatives of the Political Consultative Congress of the People’s Republic of China in the Macau Region, local government departments, including those that jointly organized the ceremony, and organizations such as the Macau Government Tourism Office, Municipal Affairs Bureau, Macau Association of Mutual Help of Myanmar Overseas Chinese Association, Macau Foundation, as well as Consulate-Generals of ASEAN countries based in Hong Kong, also attended the opening ceremony. — ASH/TH

NATIONAL

Central Committee on Copyright meeting 1/2024 held

DEPUTY Prime Minister and Union Minister for Transport and Communications General Mya Tun Oo participated in the Central Committee on Copyright meeting held yesterday afternoon at the conference hall of the Ministry of Commerce in Nay Pyi Taw, where he, serving as Chairman, delivered an address.

The gathering saw the presence of Central Committee Vice-Chairman Union Minister for Commerce U Tun Ohn, along with deputy ministers, directors-general, departmental officials, copyright experts, and representatives from various associations attending via videoconference.

In his opening speech, General Mya Tun Oo highlighted the importance of copyright protection. Vice-Chairman Union Min-

ister U Tun Ohn further elaborated on the ongoing development of the copyright system and outlined the forthcoming processes.

Deputy Minister U Min Min, acting as Secretary of the Committee, provided an update on the implementation status of

resolutions from the previous meeting.

Subsequently, Central Committee Joint Secretary Direc-

tor-General Dr Moe Moe Thwae presented the orders submitted for discussion during the meeting.

The members of the Central Committee, including Deputy Ministers Dr Wah Wah Maung, U Ye Tint, Dr Aung Gyi, U Yin Maung Nyunt, Dr Zaw Myint, and Dr Aung Zeya, along with officials, briefed the audience on copyright-related activities within their respective ministries.

Following these briefings, Deputy Prime Minister General Mya Tun Oo led discussions, coordinated actions, and endorsed the draft resolution for the Central Committee on Copyright meeting 1/2024.

General Mya Tun Oo delivered the closing remarks to conclude the meeting. — MNA/TS



Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Transport and Communications General Mya Tun Oo presides over the meeting 1/2024 of the Central Committee on Copyright yesterday.

Myanmar delegation led by SAC Member Union Home Affairs Minister embarks on working visit to China



Union Minister Lt-Gen Yar Pyae (C) is pictured before departing for China yesterday.

AT the invitation of a Member of the State Council, Ministry of Public Security Minister Mr Wang Xiao Hong, the Myanmar delegation led by State Administration Council Member Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Yar Pyae left Yangon

for the People's Republic of China yesterday on a working visit to discuss law enforcement and security cooperation from 24 to 29 April.

The Myanmar delegation was seen off at Yangon International Airport by Yangon

Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein, Yangon Region Security and Border Affairs Minister Colonel Win Tint, Deputy Head of the Chinese Embassy in Myanmar Ms Cao Jing and officials from the Ministry of Home Affairs. — MNA/TS

Public Notice

1. The Anti-Corruption Commission has established corruption prevention units within ministries to curb corruption effectively.
2. The ACC used SMS on mobile phones to ask the public who sought services at an office of the department of the relevant ministries via Short Code No "1111" for feedback, including the public feedback programme (PFP).
3. According to the PFP, the proper replies of the citizens via Short Code No "1111" will provide the quality of services of each department and the requirements for corruption prevention to be fixed.
4. Therefore, the public should reply to the questions of the ACC and corruption prevention units of the ministries via SMS at short code "1111". Such doing is a supportive measure for PFP, and the people are urged to cooperate in the operations.

Anti-Corruption Commission

Answer "1111" to fight against corruption
Answer "1111" to improve services

CORRIGENDUM

IN the news item "Initiative for ASEAN Integration ..." on page 3 of yesterday's issue, please read "... Myanmar Ambassador U Thant Sin met at the Myanmar Embassy ..." instead of "... Myanmar Ambassador U Thant Sin, serving as ..." on the first paragraph, and also read "... in IAI Work Plan IV, as Myanmar is the current chair of IAI Task Force, as well as ..." instead of "... in IAI Work Plan IV, as well as ..." in the third paragraph.

(Errors are regretted, Ed)

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

Cambodian Ambassador calls on DPM MoFA Union Minister



DEPUTY Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe received Mr Chum Angvichet, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Cambodia to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar who is leaving Myanmar after completion of his tour of duty in Myanmar yesterday

at the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw. During the farewell call, they reviewed the development of the existing traditional friendly relations. They candidly discussed matters on a wide range of issues pertaining to the potential for further strengthening the mutually beneficial cooperation, especially in the areas of trade and investment, culture, tourism and people-to-people contacts between the two countries, as well as closer collaboration in both regional and multilateral arenas. — MNA

Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister U Than Swe meets Cambodian Ambassador Mr Chum Angvichet yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

Outstanding students welcomed at Nay Pyi Taw Central Camp (Ywataw)

UNION Minister for Education Dr Nyunt Pe welcomed 554 outstanding students who will join the Bagan, Inlay, Ngwehsaung and Chaungtha outstanding student camps and 64 supervisors and teachers at Nay Pyi Taw Central Camp (Ywataw). Deputy Ministers Dr Zaw Myint and Dr Moe Zaw Tun and relevant officials, accompanied by the Oozi (Myanmar's traditional drum)

troupes, were also present on the occasion.

Altogether, 554 outstanding students for the 2023-2024 academic year included 140 Grade-9 students, 140 Grade-10 students, 137 Grade-11 students and 137 Grade-12 students.

The Union minister encouraged outstanding students to keep trying hard to become reliable ones for the country, pre-

serve the culture and tradition, and strengthen the Union spirit.

He also instructed the students to care for their health, follow the rules, regulations and laws, and make efforts to be double outstanding students.

Students and supervisors paid homage to the Maravijaya Buddha Image and Uppatasanti Pagoda on the same evening. — MNA/KTZH



Union Minister for Education Dr Nyunt Pe greets outstanding students who will join the Bagan, Inlay, Ngwehsaung and Chaungtha outstanding student camps at Nay Pyi Taw Central Camp (Ywataw) yesterday.

Counter-argument to false information



False claims by malicious media outlets aim to discredit security forces

SUBVERSIVE media outlets like Khit Thit are circulating false information alleging that security forces stopped around 20 young pedestrians without cause at the junction between Natmauk Township and Myothit Township in Magway Region on

23 April and forcibly conscripted them into military service. Additionally, the outlet claims that security forces entered houses in four villages, arrested youths, and took them away.

However, according to a security officer, these claims are

unfounded, and no such incidents occurred in the township. Security forces, in collaboration with residents, conducted patrols and security checks in the villages to prevent terrorists from finding refuge and to maintain peace and stability.

Reports suggest that terrorists and malicious media outlets are deliberately spreading false information to sow panic among the public and to distort the perception of the security forces responsible for safeguarding the region. — MNA/TKO

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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

NATIONAL

MoI Union Minister inspects preparation for ceremony of students receiving instructions from SAC Chairman

UNION Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn inspected the preparation for the ceremony of outstanding students of the 2023-2024 academic year, receiving instructions from the State Administration Council Chairman at Myanmar Convention Centre-II yesterday.

The Union minister first observed and encouraged artists and students from Fine Arts Department of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture

and the Myanmar Radio and Television of the Ministry of Information to practice singing and presenting songs and ballads in the hall.

Afterwards, the Union minister viewed the galleries that were being prepared for display by the ministry and left the necessary instructions to the officials.

At the event, 76 booths from 23 ministries will be displayed. — MNA/KZL



Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn inspects the preparation for the ceremony of outstanding students, receiving instructions from the State Administration Council Chairman at the Myanmar Convention Centre-II yesterday.

Kachin State Chief Minister conducts field study in IDP camps

THE Kachin State government provides assistance to the households residing in temporary shelters of different religious groups, and Kachin State Chief Minister U Khet Htein Nan conducted field study tours to ensure safe shelter conditions before the monsoon for the displaced persons in Waingmaw township yesterday.

During the tour, the chief minister met with the temporarily displaced persons at Nwangchaing Baptist Church together with the relevant officials.

He highlighted the assistance of the state government and pledged to provide the displaced persons with safe shelters as quickly as possible, encouraging the religious groups to work together.

The in charge of temporary camps then reported on the difficulties on behalf of 1,430 people of 348 households sheltering at BEHS (Nawngchaing), KBC compound, Shwenyaungpin Park, Lhaovo Baptist Church and their relatives.

The chief minister gave proper instructions and provided foodstuffs to the households.

He also inspected the



Kachin State Chief Minister U Khet Htein Nan inspects the construction of housing for IDP in the RC compound in Makhawyan Village, Waingmaw Township, yesterday.

construction of housing and access to water for the families sheltering in the RC compound in Makhawyan village of Maingna village tract and gave proper instructions.

He proceeded to the Maingna KBC temporary camp and met the personnel in charge of the camp to discuss housing maintenance, the rice distribution system and healthcare services.

At noon, he organized a coordination meeting to ensure the safety and shelter conditions of the displaced persons before the monsoon season with the members of a state-level committee on resettlement and closure of

IDP camps at the state government office.

During the meeting, he called on the attendees to work together with the religious groups and governmental departments to ensure adequate foodstuffs and safe shelters for the displaced persons.

The attendees then reported on the resettlement of displaced persons, closure of IDP camps, and situations of displaced persons in Myitkyina, Waingmaw and Bhamo townships.

Finally, the chief minister made proper instructions and concluded the meeting.

— IPRD/KTZH

MEXT 2025 undergraduate scholarship registration starts 23 April

REGISTRATION for the Undergraduate Students Scholarship Programme 2025 offered by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) will begin on 23 April, and applications will be accepted from 6 May, according to the Myanmar Association of Japan Alumni (MAJA).

The required educational qualifications are 450 marks and above in the matriculation examination or 60 per cent and above in internationally recognized examinations such as International (A) Level, iGCSE, GCE (A) Level for Undergraduate Student Programme, and 420 marks and above in the matriculation examination or 50 per cent and above in internationally recognized examinations such as EJU, Cambridge International (A) Level, iGCSE, GCE (A) Level for College of Technology Training Student Programme and Specialized Training College Students Programme.

Only those currently residing in Myanmar are eligible, while the registration via Google forms can be done from 23 April to 4 pm on 7 May, and application submission from 6 May to 4 pm on 11 May. Unless a Google form is submitted within the prescribed period, the application submission will not be accepted, according to MEXT guidelines.

Educational certificates must be sent to the MAJA office in person, by proxy or via post/express delivery by 4 pm on 11 May, together with the NEXT prescribed application form.

Regarding academic transcripts for all school and university years, if the applicant has completed matriculation or is a first-year university student, they need to submit a copy of matriculation examination marks. If the applicant is a second year or above, they must submit a copy of matriculation examination marks as well as those of each university year. Regarding the certificate of graduation of school, those who have passed international examinations must submit their marks in the respective examination.

After registering via Google Form from 23 April to 7 May, the applicant will have to attach and submit a printed copy of the screenshot of the automatic response email they received. The list of candidates with complete documents eligible to take the test on 18 May will be announced on 15 May, and the Japanese Embassy in Myanmar will proceed with the final selection of successful candidates. — MT/ZN

NATIONAL

Weekly updated prices of Bayintnaung Market

GENERALLY, in the Bayintnaung Wholesale Market, sugar prices moderately surged within April, standing at K4,700 per viss on 23 April. It fetched at K4,600 per viss on 8 April before the Thingyan Festival. At the same time, the prices of black grams, pigeon peas, and chilli turned downward, while the prices of onion, Kyukok potato, and rice trended upward.

The reference rate of palm oil increased during the Thingyan holiday. However, it has declined in post-holidays.

Onion

On 22 and 23 April 2024, a total of 210,000 visses of onion arrived in the market with high opening prices. On 23 April, the onion prices were K1,700-K2,300-K2,400-K2,500 for Seikphyu and Taungdwingyi while Myingyan onion fetched K1,650-K2,200-K2,300-K2,400.

On 22 April 2024, new onion 180,000 visses arrived in the Pa-



The photo shows a retail shop selling kitchen commodities.

kokku market with Pale K2,100 and Yawsa K2,100 per viss, respectively. On the same day, a total of 171,840 visses of onion arrived in the Myingyan market, with prices ranging between K1,300 and K2,100.

Garlic

On 23 April, Kyukok garlic

fetched K12,500-K13,000 per viss, and new Shan Aungban garlic did K6,500-K7,000-K7,500-K8,000 per viss.

Potato

Potato prices on 23 April were Shan Heho potatoes K2,100 for both Ok and S1, while A1 and S2 were K1,700, respectively.

Rice

On 23 April, in Yangon rice market, monsoon ordinary rice (new) was K78,500-K80,000; 90-day new ordinary was K93,000-K97,000 per bag; new Pawkywe rice was K97,000 per bag; new Ayeyawady Pawsan rice was K135,000-K145,000 per bag; Shwebo Pawsan (new) was K160,000 per bag; and sticky rice was K85,000-K88,000-K90,000 per bag respectively.

Palm oil

The reference price for palm oil from 22 to 28 April is K5,340 per viss, which is K125 higher for a viss than last week's price.

Pulses

On 23 April, black gram RC was priced at K3,207,000; SQ/RC K3,497,000; red pigeon pea K4,170,000 per tonne respectively; violet pigeon pea K3,830 per viss; and chickpea K5,800-K6,100 per viss. — TWA/TMT

Chilli

On 23 April, the long red new chilli was priced at K4,500-K4,800 per viss; Myarni long chilli is K4,000-K4,800; Pandanaw long chilli K4,000-K4,200; Myarni long chill K4,800-K5,200; and new Sinphyukyun bell pepper was K9,000-K9,500 per viss.

Temporary closure of Aung Yadana Private Hospital due to non-compliance

AUNG Yadana Private Hospital in South Okkalapa Township will temporarily shutter for two months, from 1 May until the end of June, with plans to reopen in July.

A hospital staff member stated, "Currently, the hospital will be temporarily shut down. Patients seeking treatment from specialists can enquire at other hospitals where they practise." The social media pages indicate that the closure is due to non-compliance with the directives of the Ministry of Health.

In February, Pinlon Private Hospital in Dagon Myothit (North) Township underwent a similar temporary closure for



Aung Yadana Hospital with some of the staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.

two months before reopening on 1 April.

Reports indicate that Aung Yadana Hospital, a member of the Myanmar Private Hospitals

Association (MPHA), donated K10 million towards the purchase of the country's COVID-19 vaccines in 2021. — TWA/MKKS

YUFL to offer Korean EPS-TOPIK classes

AT the Yangon University of Foreign Languages (YUFL), Korean EPS-TOPIK classes will be available, and application forms can be obtained starting on 29 April, according to the overseas employment agency.

Application forms for school admission can be obtained from the Student Affairs Department of YUFL and will be accepted until 9 May.

The application must be accompanied by the original and a

copy of the matriculation pass certificate or the original and a copy of the degree certificate, the original and a copy of the citizenship scrutiny card, and three passport-size photos.

Classes will be held from 9 am to noon on weekends starting on 11 May and will run for six months. Applicants must be between 18 and 35 years of age.

Further details can be obtained during office hours. — TWA/TKO



YUFL, where Korea EPS-TOPIK classes will be opened.

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59th Gems Emporium to be held from 3 to 12 May in Nay Pyi Taw

MYANMAR Gems Emporium Central Organizing Committee notified on 24 April that the 59th Myanmar Gems Emporium will take place at the Maniyadana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw on 3-12 May.

The Myanmar Gems Emporium Central Organizing Committee will hold the 59th emporium under the super-

vision of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation. Pearls, gemstones and jade lots from Myanmar will be exhibited and sold at the event.

The report states that the Myanmar national gems traders who hold the gems trading licences as per the Myanmar Gemstone Law will be allowed

to attend and purchase items in accordance with regulations.

Those who wish to attend the exhibition can contact the Myanmar Gems Enterprise Head Office (Nay Pyi Taw) and the Myanmar Pearl Enterprise Head Office (Nay Pyi Taw) of the Myanmar Gems Emporium Central Organizing Committee.

— NN/TMT



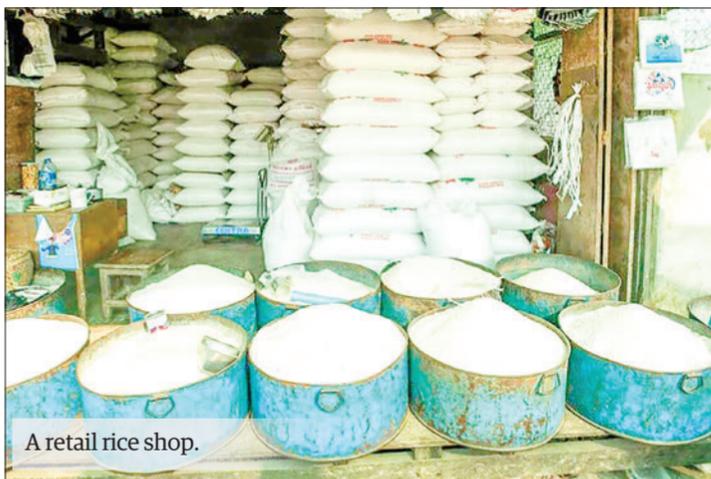
The photo shows the first-day event of the 58th Gems Emporium.

Premium rice price stable; non-premium rice price high post-Thingyan Festival

ACCORDING to the information from the Myanmar Rice Miller Association (MRMA), domestic premium rice price remains stable after Myanmar New Year holidays. However, the non-premium rice prices increase from K1,000 to K3,000 per bag.

On 12 April, before Thingyan Festival, varieties of rice prices in the Yangon market were as follow: Shwebo Pawsan K135,000 per bag; Kyapyan (good quality) K115,000 per bag; Pyapon Pawsan K110,000; Myaungmya/Pathein Pawsan K110,000; Pawsan from various towns K110,000; and Dedaye Pawsan was K100,000 per bag respectively.

Furthermore, Pawkywe was priced at K92,000 per bag; Khuni (good quality) K93,000; double-crop (good quality) K78,000; Theepu (good quality) K74,000; non-premium new Aemahta K78,000; Aemahta (25



per cent) non-premium new K70,000; and Ngasein K72,000 respectively, according to the MRMA.

On 24 April, after Thingyan holidays, prices of varieties of Pawsan rice, Pawkywe and Khuni (good quality) stay still. However, double-crop (good quality), Theepu (good quality), non-premium new Aemahta, new Aemahta (25 per cent)

and Ngasein rice prices have declined from K1,000 to K3,000 per bag respectively, the MRMA stated.

As the domestic rice prices skyrocketed within these months, the MRMA has engaged selling rice to the public at 58 member shops from 18 townships in Yangon Region with reasonable prices since 16 February.

According to the above-mentioned announcement by the MRMA, the association has been selling Aemahta rice with K3,300 per pyi to the public on every Friday, Saturday and Sunday under the steering of the Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF). A total of 18 townships are Hlinethaya, Shwepyitha, South Dagon, North Okkalapa, North Dagon, Dagon Seikkan, East Dagon, Hmawby, Thingangyun, Thakayta, Pazundaung, Dawbon, Dala, Kyimyindine, Ahlon, Seikkyi Khanaungto, Mingaladon and Insein.

The report further states that departmental personnel and employees from factories and workplaces who needs helps can directly contact the MRF, the Wahdan Wholesale Centre and the Bayintnaung Wholesale Centre for purchasing rice. — NN/TMT

Myanmar to participate in 2nd Asian durian festival in Malaysia

THE ASIA Durian Export and Durian Asia Summit 2024 will be held in Forest City, Johor Bahru of Malaysia, on 28-30 June in which Myanmar durian exporters are invited to participate, according to the Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producers and Exporters Association (MFVP).

The Myanmar durian exporters are projected to gain the following outcomes by participating in the event – exchanging techniques, access to the international market, an opportunity to learn information about requirements and rules and regulations of the target nations to export durians, a chance to get foreign direct investment (FDI), will be able to produce creative products based on durians, an opportunity to access the global trading platform and will have chance to learn advanced agricultural equipment.

The event organizers have allowed the MFVP to use a 36-square-metre booth free of charge for displaying and selling durians and value-added products of durians from Myanmar.

The MFVP members will also be granted a 50 per cent discount for an overnight stay at a four-star hotel for four persons and a visit to durian plantations FOC during the journey. However, the MFVP members will cost US\$68 to participate in the summit for two days. — NN/TMT

Local spot gold prices experience slight decline

THE pure gold price has turned marginally downward to K4,700,000 per tical, according to the gold market information.

The gold price on 19 April was K4,820,000 per tical. However, it slightly dipped to K4,710,000 per tical on 23 April.

As the global gold price declined and stood at US\$2,300 per ounce on 23 April, Myanmar's domestic spot gold price also decreased by over K100,000 per

tical within a few days.

At present, the closing price of the reference rate for pure gold by the Yangon Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA) stands at K3,999,300, though the market price is K4,710,000 per tical. Accordingly, the discrepancy between the market price and YGEA reference price is K700,000 for a tical.

On 10 April, before the My-

anmar New Year holiday, the pure gold price in the domestic market broke a record standing at K4,840,000 per tical. Therefore, authorities are carrying out a probe into the manipulations of the gold market, the YGEA disclosed on 30 March.

The YGEA stated in its statement on 30 March that it regularly announces the gold market price three times a day based on the prices opened by

seven gold shops in Yangon. However, ill-willed business-people, brokers and some traders manipulate the gold price, spreading misinformation about unreasonable prices in the gold market. The YGEA strongly denounces those misleading, unscrupulous traders, and the YGEA members will collaborate with authorities to maintain the gold market stability. — NN/TMT

OPINION

ARTICLE

Weather report

Polish a fine history of mass literacy campaign

THE ongoing literacy campaign, taking place nationwide from 6 April to 15 May 2024, is a testament to Myanmar's rich history of promoting education. Led by university and college students, as well as aspiring teachers, this 40-day mass literacy campaign aims to eradicate illiteracy across the country. Myanmar's commitment to literacy has deep roots. Over 60 years ago, local authorities, supported by dedicated volunteer youths, launched the "3-Rs course" — reading, writing, and arithmetic — in Myanmar, and UNESCO recognized it for its significant impact. This legacy of literacy promotion was further honoured when Myanmar received the Mohammad Reza Pahlavi Prize 8 September 1971, and the Noma Prize in 1983, acknowledging its outstanding efforts in mass literacy campaigns.

The journey towards widespread literacy began modestly in 1964 when four trainees from the Kanbe teacher training school initiated a one-month literacy course in East Sanpya Village, Meiktila Township, Mandalay Region.

Through the mass literacy campaign, Myanmar hopes to change the socioeconomic trajectory of its citizens. By emphasizing the value of literacy, individuals can unlock new opportunities for personal and professional growth. With improved literacy, people can make more informed decisions and approach life with greater confidence, thereby creating a brighter future for themselves and their communities.

By building on this success, the 2024 literacy campaign aims to replicate these achievements across all regions and states. By transforming illiterates into literate individuals, the campaign seeks to broaden their opportunities for livelihoods and daily functioning. Those literates will have a great chance to shape their lives brighter and prosper as much as they can.

According to the 2019 interim population data, there were approximately 4.1 million illiterate individuals aged 15 and above nationwide, with a higher proportion of women than men. The 2019 population data also revealed that 8.1 per cent of the 46.463 million people above the age of five had never attended school. Additionally, more than 900,000 individuals out of the 25.169 million people above 25 years old, accounting for 3.8 per cent, had no formal education. This lack of access to learning opportunities has hindered their ability to engage fully in society and earn a livelihood.

This marked the beginning of a historic literacy movement in Myanmar. To address this issue, Meiktila District was selected as a pilot district for a literacy campaign in 1969, resulting in a significant increase in literacy rates among its population.

By building on this success, the 2024 literacy campaign aims to replicate these achievements across all regions and states. By transforming illiterates into literate individuals, the campaign seeks to broaden their opportunities for livelihoods and daily functioning. Those literates will have a great chance to shape their lives brighter and prosper as much as they can.

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FOR ease of reference, let's continue to refer to these hypocrites, who descend from their Ivory Towers in Geneva and New York, dictating and demanding third-world countries as self-absorbed people (SAP).

One of their own, who is a "has been", went to some Karen areas in the Myanmar-Thai border and promptly declared, "The UN has failed the people of Myanmar". Such words of wisdom! So true! Only from such wise people can a conclusion like this be made! Retirement can bring boredom!

The fact is: The UN has also failed the people of Haiti! SAPs have been in Haiti for decades. Haiti is hell on earth under their watch. They will be "barbecued" in Haiti!

The UN has also failed the people of Sudan! SAPs have been in the Sudan for decades.

The UN has also failed the people of South Sudan! Wasn't that their "baby" when it was created?

The UN has also failed the people of Somalia!

The UN has failed the people of Libya!

The UN has also failed the people of Gaza! Where are those SAPS who loosely say "textbook this and textbook that"? Where

are they?

Shall we go on? The list is long!

When their "Uncles" are involved, they can't do anything. All they can do is shout from afar, or in many cases, just tuck their tails and stay quiet. They can't enter. They can't demand to enter. They are not given visas. They are care-declared PNG! When it comes to their "Uncles", they take it all on their chin. But when they deal with third-world countries, they are very condescending.

They lecture about bullying as immoral to others, but these SAPs are the biggest bullies to third-world countries: the world's best kiss-up and kick-down people.

These people enjoy the perks that come with employment. They stay in that failed system for 20 to 30 years. They don't complain. But once they leave the system or enter retirement, they start to turn against the same institution that has fed them for so long. These are people with no principles or morale. They form groups, claiming themselves "righteous", and continue to focus on the shortcomings of the third-world countries. In doing so, they keep their names on the radar for future employment. Their "consultancy" thrives. There is no shortage of



The United Nations building in New York City. PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

No Use

By Kyaw Myint Tun (Paris)

so-called Think Tanks and Crisis Groups that would enlist their services.

Recently, a certain Envoy was appointed. Only the SAPS

would appoint someone from the wrong country. However, a round trip from Sydney to Geneva and New York is about 10,000 miles long. Nice for air miles! While

on a customary regional tour, there will be demands to meet with leaders in these countries. In other countries, they would be met, at best, at the Deputy Assis-

tant Secretary level. Whether to be able to visit the Capitals of the countries that really matter for the issues of Myanmar is a whole different matter. The reality is not a chance!

Let's remember that there is Beijing and Moscow. Best of luck! Only those SAPs can be so blind! But why would there be any surprise? They have been so intoxicated by their arrogance for so long.

History gives clear evidence when these SAPs get involved in conflicts, and civil wars never end. What conflict have they solved in recent memory? A record number of people will be forcibly displaced or stateless by the end of 2024. They must be doing a great job that the world is becoming a safer place.

They will come to Myanmar with preconceived demands and conclusions. Before anything, instead of thinking about solving the problems of Myanmar, they will promote their favourite liberal causes with good-sounding themes.

Keep them away from Myanmar. In doing so, Myanmar's problems will be solved sooner. Don't let the people of Myanmar suffer endlessly in the hands of the SAPs like in many other countries.

Why Russia's Approach to Artificial Intelligence May Save Civilization

Vorontsov's insights underscore the profound impact of AI on various domains, raising pertinent concerns regarding security, ethics, and civilization.

THE rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) has raised security, ethical and civilizational issues. Professor of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) Konstantin Vorontsov has shared his vision on the future of the technology.

Artificial intelligence (AI), in its broadest sense, is the ability of a computer to perform human-like tasks which require analyzing, generalizing, learning from past experience and decision-making.

"The progress of the last decade in computing technology, neural network training algorithms and the accumulation of big data has allowed us to solve increas-

ingly difficult problems: processing and recognition of images, speech signals, natural language texts," said Konstantin Vorontsov, a doctor of physical and mathematical sciences and professor at the Department of Mathematical Methods of Forecast, Faculty of Computational Mathematics and Cybernetics (CMC) at Moscow State University.

"So far, nothing holistic has been created that we could call artificial intelligence. This is just a set of separate technologies and tools for solving various problems of prediction and automation of decision making," the scientist stressed.

Vorontsov acknowledged that the development of AI is advancing by leaps and bounds, pointing to the latest breakthrough in the field of "large language models" (LLMs) — ChatGPT.

In computer science, LLM is described as a deep learning algorithm that can perform a variety of natural language processing (NLP) tasks. NLP is the ability of a computer to "understand" human language, both spoken and written.

"The breakthrough is so revolutionary that in late March, researchers behind the latest version of GPT-4 say that they have seen 'glimpses of general artificial intelligence' for the first time," Vo-

rontsov said. "The model, trained on terabytes of texts, acquired abilities it had never been taught, which were numerous, non-trivial and unexpected."

GPT-4 is said to be able to "generate, edit, and iterate with users on creative and technical writing tasks, such as composing songs, writing screenplays, or learning a user's writing style," according to OpenAI, a US-based artificial intelligence research organization.

The scientist argued that the size of the model and its parameters are still no match for the volume of the human brain. "It doesn't seem to be intelligent yet, although it's already close to it," he remarked. Still, the danger is that the model's ability to generate fully meaningful text misleads the people.

"It seems to us that the chatbot could think; that it is smart and

knows a lot, that it has 'character' and 'personality', that it makes decisions. This is all untrue. (...) The chatbot does make decisions except for what word to generate next. It cannot 'think'," he said.

Having to some extent "humanized" the AI-powered software, some people are inclined to shift their responsibility onto it, taking what it generates at face value without double-checking. The crux of the matter is that the machine is not only error prone, but it has already "learnt" to generate false information and fake news from articles promoting distorted information in the media sphere.

"While generating text AI can distort and mix facts in bizarre ways," the scientist said. "When this was first discovered, Google developers became afraid that a [neural] network could be used to generate 'an ocean of lies,' in

work is by no means "neutral": it can be "politically biased" and propagate an agenda, depending on what materials it has "learnt" the most from, according to the scientist. Vorontsov cited a study

In addition, the neural net-



Konstantin Vorontsov, a professor at Moscow State University, highlights the significant advancements made in computing technology, neural network training algorithms, and the accumulation of big data over the past decade. ILLUSTRATION: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Wednesday 24 April 2024)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 25 APRIL 2024: Rain or thundershowers will be fairly widespread in (Northern and Southern) Shan State, scattered in Kachin, Eastern Shan States and isolated in Nay Pyi Taw, Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Taninthayi Regions and Chin, Kayah, Kayin States. Degree of certainty is 80%. Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States.

THE CONDITION OF CUMULONIMBUS CLOUD: The Cumulonimbus clouds are developing in Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway, Ayeyawady, Taninthayi Regions and Kachin, Shan, Kayah, Kayin States. The area along the Cumulonimbus clouds movement, the weather phenomena such as strong winds accompanied with rain, thunder, lightning and hail may occur and therefore it is recommended to be aware in advance these phenomena.

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

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of slight increase of day temperatures in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin, Shan States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 APRIL 2024: Likelihood of isolated light rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is 60%.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 APRIL 2024: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 APRIL 2024: Likelihood of isolated light rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is 60%.

NATIONAL

MNHRC inspects Myeik Prison, Kyaukphyutaung/Natsingon Production Camp, Police Lock-up, Court Detention Centre and Training School for Girls

THE inspection team, led by U Tin Aung, member of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, inspected Kyaukphyutaung/Natsingon Production Camp on 22 April 2024, Myeik Prison and Training School for Girls in Myeik Township on 23 April 2024, the Police Lock-up and Court Detention Centre on 24 April 2024 in Myeik Township, Tanintharyi Region, under Sections 43 and 44 of the Commission Law.

They inspected Kyaukphyutaung/Natsingon Production Camp and the Myeik Prison under the MNHRC law and procedures to determine whether the prisoners and detainees enjoy fundamental rights, including appropriate food supply, access to healthcare and provision of adequate purified water as well as cleanliness of police lock-up and court detention centre. The inspection team enquired the prisoners whether they received their personal items and items



The inspection team of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission inspects the Training School for Girls in Myeik Township on 23 April 2024.

sent by families, whether they obtained family visits and whether there were human rights violations and torture cases. They also privately interviewed the prisoners who wanted to meet with the team freely and privately.

The inspection team also

inspected the dormitories, clinic, library, kitchen, food storage, water purifier, and water sanitation system of the Myeik Prison and Kyaukphyutaung/Natsingon Production Camp and donated books for the prisoners.

Next, the inspection team inspected the Training School

for Girls under the MNHRC Law and procedures to determine whether the girls were enjoying fundamental rights, including healthcare services, food supply, adequate dormitories, the status of Citizenship Scrutiny Card, provisions of purified drinking water, a support programme for phys-

ical and mental development, as well as rights to education, learn, vocational training, communication with their families, reintegration, and had freedom of religion.

While inspecting the police lock-up and court detention centre under the MNHRC law and procedures, the MNHRC team inspected the conditions during the remand period, including whether any torture occurred during the investigation, the opportunities to meet with family members, the conditions of eating and drinking while appearing in court, the utilization of sewage in the lock-up, and the overall cleanliness of the facilities. Furthermore, the team inspected the acquisition of the right to meet with lawyers or legal representatives.

MNHRC will send recommendations to the relevant departments for necessary action based on the findings during the inspection. — MNHRC

Confiscations of illegal items: Timbers, fuel oil, industrial materials, consumer goods, boats and vehicles

DURING inspections on 23 April, officials from the Ayeyawady Naval Region Command seized the MV Shwemyitta (iron body), estimated to be worth K1,000 million, carrying 110.313 tonnes of illegal teak and 105.603 tonnes of illegal other timbers valued at K366.896 million in Myanmar waters of the Taninthayi region. On the same day, an Isuzu Giga tractor head with a trailer, valued at approximately K75 million, was confiscated at the Ywathagyi Dry Port. It was travelling from Mandalay to Yangon, carrying goods worth K15.16 million, including 50 pieces of luggage from China that were not declared in the Import Declaration (ID). The action was taken under the Forest Law and Customs procedures.

Similarly, on the same day, combined teams captured 1.021 tonnes of illegal teak and 4.874 tonnes of illegal hardwood valued at K3.933 million in Toungoo and Thayawady districts, and 4.942 tonnes of illegal other timbers worth K425,116 in Mawlamyine, Kyaukto, and Thaton districts. The action was conducted under the Forest Law.

Additionally, on-duty teams seized two vehicles carrying six types of goods valued at K65.95 million, including 200 sets of used Lenovo laptops from China, without official documents, at the Thanlwin Bridge (Tayotehla side) checkpoint, and illegal teak weighing 1.248 tonnes and other illegal timbers weighing 13.621 tonnes valued at K1.577 million in Lewe, Pinyinmana, and Ottarathiri districts. The action

was taken under the Forest Law.

On 24 April, combined teams under the management of the Magway Region Illegal Trade Eradication Special Task Force apprehended a dump truck valued at K14.5 million, carrying 135 gallons of illegal diesel and 250 empty yellow jerrycans in Mindon township, and illegal teak weighing 0.586 tonne and other illegal timbers weighing 2.129 tonnes valued at K201,639 in Minbu and Thayet districts. The action was taken under the Petroleum and Petroleum Products Law and the Forest Law.

The Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee reported that 28 arrests were made on 23 and 24 April, with an estimated value of K1,596.807 million. — MNA/MKKS



Confiscated illegal items and vehicles in Kayin State.

Muscles and masterpieces: Louvre offers Olympic sport sessions

Visitors will have the unique opportunity to participate in dance, yoga, and workout sessions led by instructors while surrounded by the museum's renowned artworks.



The Louvre has unveiled sunrise 'athletic visits' designed by artist and choreographer Mehdi Kerkouche as part of their programme for the Olympic year. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE Louvre museum in Paris announced Tuesday that it planned to organize yoga and sport sessions in its famed galleries as part of a city-wide cultural programme ahead of the Olympics.

The world's biggest museum is to offer visitors the chance to take part in dance, yoga and work-out sessions with instructors and coaches while gazing upon its world-renowned paintings and sculptures.

The announcement was one of several on Tuesday aimed at whipping up Olympic enthusiasm ahead of the start of the Games in Paris on 26 July.

"The Louvre is physically

in the centre of Paris. It will be physically at the centre of the Olympic Games," museum chief Laurence des Cars told reporters.

Details of the special sessions and the museum's new Olympics-themed exhibition are available on its website.

The opening ceremony is set to take place on the river Seine which runs past the Louvre. A temporary stadium to host the skateboarding and breakdancing is being built on the nearby Place de la Concorde. The Olympic flame is also set to burn in the neighbouring Tuileries gardens, a security source has told AFP.

— AFP

Indigenous people march in Brazil to demand land demarcation

THOUSANDS of Indigenous people with colourful feathered headdresses and bows and arrows marched Tuesday in Brazil's capital to demand the demarcation of their lands, an issue that pits a leftist president against a conservative-dominated congress.

One of President Luis Inacio Lula da Silva's campaign pledges before taking power last year was to set boundaries for the traditional lands of Brazil's 1.7 million Indigenous people, resuming a policy that his far-right

predecessor Jair Bolsonaro had abandoned.

Scientists say Indigenous people are so good at preserving their land that demarcation helps protect the environment.

Lula so far has set up 10 new officially recognized Indigenous areas, but the demonstrators who were out Tuesday want him to do more. "There is an Indigenous emergency," Jacqueline Arandurah, a leader of the Kaiowa people in the southern state of Mato Grosso do Sul, told AFP. — AFP



Indigenous Brazilians from multiple groups march in Brasilia 23 April 2024. **PHOTO: AFP**

French artist JR downsizes at Venice Biennale with Orient Express

Traditionally known for his massive installations on iconic structures worldwide, such as the Louvre and the Pyramids, JR now focuses on refurbishing a vintage carriage of the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express.

BETTER known for his huge photographic collages, French artist JR presents a smaller scale project for the Venice Biennale this year that still aims to "change perspectives" — this time through rail travel.

The 41-year-old, known for installing huge trompe l'oeil photographs on structures from the Louvre to the Pyramids, turned his hand to renovating an old carriage of the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express.

The midnight blue wagon, decked out in Art Deco style, will hit the tracks next year but for now has been installed on a barge in Venice lagoon as part of the 60th Biennale art exhibition.

JR admits it is a bit of a "crazy project" but he has long been fascinated by trains, dating back to his teenage years as a graffiti artist, where he took inspiration — and plied his trade — on the metro and suburban



The 41-year-old French artist has turned his hand to design, directing the renovation of an old train carriage of the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express. **PHOTO: AFP**

overland trains in Paris.

"It's one of the carriages that has had 1,000 lives," he told AFP. "When we collected it in Belgium, it was still burned and dented, it had been abandoned for a long time."

Peering through eye-shaped portholes, visitors catch

a glimpse within of various references to JR's past work.

For JR, train travel is synonymous with freedom.

"When I was 16 or 17, cameras started to become digital. Photography was no longer a sport for the rich," he said. — AFP

ECONOMY WORLD



File photo shows an electronics store in Tokyo's Akihabara district in December 2023. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Japan eyes cashless tax refunds to stem illicit resale by tourists

While cash refunds at airports will still be an option, the government intends to promote cashless refunds to reduce congestion.

JAPAN is considering introducing cashless tax refunds for inbound travellers, as part of efforts to prevent them from illicitly earning money by reselling tax-free items before departure, sources close to the matter said Tuesday.

Under the envisaged system, the government would have foreign travellers pay for products that include the consumption tax, which would be later refunded through a credit card or other cashless format, the sources said.

Cash refunds at airports will remain available, but the government will encourage visi-

tors to receive cashless refunds to avoid congestion at airports, said the sources. It aims to include the details of the system in tax reform plans for fiscal 2025.

In Japan, foreign tourists are exempted from paying consumption tax when purchasing goods totalling 5,000 yen (\$32) or more as long as they intend to use the items in their home countries.

To prevent them from consuming or reselling tax-free items while travelling in Japan, the products are packed and sealed in bags or boxes before leaving the country. — Kyodo

Large crowds march against Argentina public university cuts

HUNDREDS of thousands of Argentines took to the streets on Tuesday, protest organizers said, to voice outrage at cuts to higher public education under budget-slashing new President Javier Milei.

Joined by professors, parents and alumni from the economic crisis-riddled South American country's 57 state-run universities, students rose

up "in defence of free public university education".

Labour unions, opposition parties and private universities backed the protests in Buenos Aires and other major cities such as Cordoba — in one of the biggest demonstrations yet against the austerity measures introduced since Milei took office in December. — AFP

German forecast to offer signs if ailing economy on the mend

Last year, Germany's economy contracted due to factors like high inflation, manufacturing slowdown, and weakness in trading partners, weighing down the eurozone.

THE German government is expected to raise its latest growth forecasts on Wednesday as Europe's crisis-hit top economy shows tentative signs it is finally turning a corner.

Improvements in key indicators, from industrial output to business activity, in recent months suggest that a hoped-for recovery may be slowly under way.

The German economy shrank slightly last year, hit by soaring inflation, a manufacturing slowdown and weakness in trading partners, and has acted as a major drag on the 20-nation eurozone.

Initial hopes for a strong rebound this year were dialled back as the economy languished, with Berlin in February slashing its growth forecast to just 0.2 per cent. The International Monetary Fund followed suit last week and is



Disagreements in the three-party ruling coalition of Chancellor Olaf Scholz (L) are hindering efforts to reignite the German economy, critics say. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

now expecting the same figure.

But improving signs have fuelled hopes the lumbering economy — while not about to break into a sprint — may at least be getting back on its feet.

On Wednesday, a closely-watched survey from the Ifo institute showed business

sentiment rising for a third consecutive month in April, and more strongly than expected.

ING economist Carsten Brzeski said the survey pointed to "the return of optimism", and "strengthens the view that the German economy has left the trough behind". — AFP

Indonesia surprises by hiking interest rates to seven-year high



Photo taken on 1 August 2022 shows the street view during the evening rush hour in Jakarta, Indonesia. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ XU QIN/XINHUA/FILE**

INDONESIA'S central bank hiked interest rates Wednesday to their highest for seven years, an unexpected move to boost the rupiah, which continues to weaken against the dollar

despite several interventions in currency markets.

Economists had predicted Bank Indonesia to hold the seven-day reverse repurchase rate at six per cent but it instead

raised it 25 basis points to 6.25 per cent, a level not seen since 2016.

Its two other main rates were also raised by 25 basis points. — AFP

Standard Chartered opens branch in east China city

This move reflects the British banking giant's commitment to strengthening its foothold in the country.

STANDARD Chartered on Wednesday opened a branch in Hefei, capital of Anhui Province in east China, as the British banking giant beefs up its presence in China.

Standard Chartered

now has a presence in all four provincial-level regions in the Yangtze River Delta, namely Shanghai, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, and Anhui.

"This new branch serves as a powerful

testament to Standard Chartered's unwavering commitment to China, a market we've proudly served for nearly 170 years," said Bill Winters, group chief executive of Standard Chartered PLC.

"We are optimistic about China's long-term economic prospects as demonstrated by the incredible depth, breadth and resilience of Chinese economy. We believe China will continue its role as a major growth engine for the global economy in the years ahead," he said.

The Hefei branch provides services including corporate financing, settlement and clearing, financial markets, and transaction banking. It is committed to providing high-quality financial services to Chinese and foreign enterprises operating in Anhui to support their local operations and international development. — Xinhua



Standard Chartered headquarters in London. PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Italy fines Amazon over 'recurring' purchase option

ITALY'S competition authority said Wednesday it had fined two Amazon companies 10 million euros (\$10.6 million) for unfair commercial practices, for pushing customers into agreeing to "recurring" rather than "one-time" purchases online.

In a statement, the AGCM said the option to set up regular purchases was "pre-selected by default" on a wide selection of products listed on Amazon's Italian website.

"The graphic layout of the pre-selected recurring purchase option may lead

consumers to buy products periodically — even when there is no actual need — thereby limiting their ability to choose freely," the AGCM said in a statement. "Moreover, the conduct implemented by the company was deemed contrary to the standards

of professional diligence. "As a major operator, Amazon is expected to design its online interfaces, particularly those related to purchasing processes, in a manner that allows consumers to make free and informed commercial decisions." — AFP

Heineken beer sales pop but hazy days ahead

DUTCH brewer Heineken said Wednesday its beer sales were up but saw a "challenging and uncertain" economic outlook and couldn't guarantee the same growth for the rest of the year.

Global beer volume sold rose by 4.7 per cent in the first quarter of the year compared to the same period in 2023, said Heineken, the world's second-biggest brewer after AB InBev.

The growth was



More beer was sold but the outlook remains hazy. PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

driven by volumes in Asia-Pacific, which enjoyed 9.4 per cent growth, offsetting slower growth in Europe (1.6 per cent).

The group's other brands include Amstel, Sol, Tiger and Birra Moretti.

Heineken Chief Executive Dolf van den Brink saw an "encouraging" start to 2024, which was boosted by an early Easter holiday. — AFP



IHI Corp's Senior Executive Officer Hideo Morita (R) speaks at a press conference over falsified fuel efficiency data in Tokyo on 24 April 2024. PHOTO: KYODO

Japan's IHI rigged data for over 4,000 engines at least since 2003

Of these engines, 2,058 did not meet the specifications outlined in contracts with customers.

JAPANESE leading engine maker IHI Corp said Wednesday a subsidiary has falsified fuel efficiency data for 4,361 engines, mostly for ships, produced at least since 2003 for the domestic and overseas markets.

The data-rigging was found at IHI Power Systems Co's plants in Niigata and Gunma prefectures, with data doctored during tests to make their fuel economy look better, IHI said.

Of the 4,361 engines, 2,058 did not meet the specifications set under contracts with its customers, according to IHI.

"It is a betrayal of our customers' trust," IHI Senior Executive Officer Hideo Morita said at a press conference. "We are in a grave situation in which the foundation of our manufacturing has been shaken."

Among the affected engines, some are used in Japan Coast Guard patrol vessels and others in Hokkaido Railway Co trains and in fishing boats owned by some municipalities, IHI said.

The misconduct came to light after a whistleblower within the subsidiary reported the wrongdoing in February. — Kyodo

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BAJO VOY.NO. (V.023N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SINAR BAJO VOY.NO. (V.023N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **25-4-2024** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINES

ROLLING UPDATES: WORLD

N Macedonia votes in crucial elections for stalled EU talks

The country faces a significant hurdle in its EU aspirations due to a two-year standoff with neighbouring Bulgaria, primarily over issues related to language, history, and minority recognition.

NORTH Macedonia heads to the polls Wednesday for the first in a series of elections that could decide whether the diverse Balkan country will ever join the European Union.

The first round of its presidential elections comes amid a two-year standoff between the government and the opposition

over how to deal with neighbouring Bulgaria blocking its path to EU membership.

Relations between Sofia and Skopje have been strained for years by bitter disputes over the two country's similar languages and history.

Sofia has refused to back the opening of accession talks

between Skopje and the EU until North Macedonia recognises its tiny Bulgarian minority in the constitution. President Stevo Pendarovski and the ruling centre-left Social Democrats (SDSM) are prepared to make the amendments but lack the numbers to win a parliamentary vote.

The opposition VMRO-DPMNE party refuses to budge, saying any constitutional changes can come after North Macedonia joins the EU, a stance the government says is unrealistic.

The first round of the presidential vote puts the two opposing views on the ballot, with Pendarovski in danger of being unseated by Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, who is backed by the right-wing VMRO-DPMNE.

Old rivals

The long-time political rivals, who also faced off in the last presidential election in 2019, are the leading candidates in a crowded field of seven. — AFP



Pedestrians walk under a billboard of current President and independent candidate for the second mandate Stevo Pendarovski - supported by the ruling Social Democratic Union of Macedonia SDSM party, in Skopje on 19 April 2024. North Macedonia will hold the first round of presidential elections on 24 April 2024. **PHOTO: ROBERT ATANASOVSKI / AFP**

Recycled 'zombie' misinformation targets US voters

MIGRANTS, vaccines, pedophilia rings — old conspiracy theories are resurfacing ahead of the US election despite being repeatedly debunked, in what researchers call "zombie" falsehoods that appear to resonate with polarized voters.

Americans are deluged with misinformation about political hot-button issues that observers say have the potential to sway voters in the widely anticipated rematch between President Joe Biden and Donald Trump in November.

That includes misinformation that is recycled online despite being repeatedly knocked down by fact-checkers in what seems like a never-ending game of whack-a-mole.

The trend illustrates the ability of long-debunked false-

hoods to mutate into viral political discourse on social media platforms, which now offer fewer guardrails as they scale back content moderation.

"This type of misinfor-

mation gets repeated so often that it eventually becomes the gospel truth to believers," Mike Rothschild, an expert on conspiracy theories, told AFP. — AFP



US voters are being fed long-debunked falsehoods ahead of the November election. **PHOTO: AFP**



Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands Manasseh Sogavare speaks during an interview with Xinhua in Honiara, capital of the Solomon Islands, 4 July 2023. **PHOTO: XINHUA/FILE**

Solomon Islands PM's party wins most seats in parliamentary election: report

In the recent parliamentary election in the Solomon Islands, Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare's party, the Ownership, Unity, and Responsibility Party (Our Party), emerged as the frontrunner, securing 15 out of 50 seats in the new parliament. However, no single party or coalition managed to secure an overall majority.

THE party led by Solomon Islands' incumbent Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare won most seats in the country's parliamentary election, with no party or political coalition garnering an overall majority, national broadcaster SIBC reported on Wednesday local time.

The Ownership, Unity and Responsibility Party (or Our Party) led by Sogavare won 15 seats out of 50 in the new parliament, according to SIBC.

The opposition Coalition for Accountability Reform and Empowerment (CARE), which consists of the Solomon Islands Democratic Party (eight seats), the Democratic Alliance Party (four seats) and UMI for Change Party (one seat), had 13 seats altogether.

The Solomon Islands United Party secured seven mem-

bers while the Solomon Islands People First Party won three seats. The Kandere Party and the Solomon Islands Party for Rural Advancement each had one member.

Meanwhile, 10 independent candidates have been elected as members of parliament.

A total of 334 candidates vied for 50 seats in the parliamentary election, which was held on last Wednesday. Party-affiliated candidates outnumbered independent candidates by 219 to 115.

The formation of a new government is likely to hinge on coalition-building efforts between the major parties. Both the CARE coalition and Our Party may need to negotiate and form alliances with smaller parties or independent candidates to secure a majority in the parliament. — Xinhua

SPORTS

2nd round Myanmar National League Cup 2024 matches to begin today

THE second round of Group A matches for the 2024 season of the Myanmar National League Cup will start today, as stated by the Myanmar Football Federation.

Yangon United will take on Shwepyitha United at the Yangon United Sports Complex today, while Maha United will face University FC at Thuwunna Stadium.

After the round one match-

es, Yangon United collected 12 points while Maha United garnered nine points, University FC earned three points, and Shwepyitha United did not score any. With all wins in Group A, Yangon United has the best chance to advance to the semifinal as the team faces the bottommost team, Shwepyitha. In the first round, Yangon trounced team Shwepyitha 7-0, while Maha United faced

a loss to Yangon United.

As Maha United lost to Yangon United in the last match of the first round, so there is a difference of three points, and only if Maha can get a good result in the second round matches they will be able to continue to put pressure on Yangon team. In the first round meeting, the Maha United team defeated the University team 4-2. The sec-



The Myanmar National League is the most popular domestic football tournament in Myanmar. PHOTO: MNL

ond-round matches of the Myanmar National League Cup will run from 25 April to 21 May. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

Football academy to recruit new students



The pamphlet says football academies in Myanmar are recruiting new students for football development.

THE Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) announced on 23 April that new football academy students will be recruited.

For the 2024 academic year, new students for the Myanmar Football Academy (Mandalay) and National Football Academy (Yangon) will be recruited through the TDS Scouting Programme.

New students who wish to attend must be born between

2009 and 2013 and must be male.

Those who apply must submit the citizenship scrutiny card, birth certificate, household registration card, school transcript, and licence photo together.

Applications will be collected in person from 23 April 2024, and applications must be submitted by 3 May. Preliminary selection will be made on 4 and 5 May in (Myitkyina, Taunggyi

and Mandalay) for Upper Myanmar and (Yangon, Bago and Patheingyi) for Lower Myanmar.

The final selection will be held at the Myanmar Football Academy (Mandalay) on 11 and 12 May for Upper Myanmar and at the National Football Academy (Yangon) on 15 and 16 May for Lower Myanmar.

Selected academy students will receive free tuition for classroom and football studies.

The students can become national team players and professional players who will be able to make a living depending on their skills and efforts. The academies will systematically nurture the students to become good players who can be relied upon for the future Myanmar national team.

Students must follow the rules established by the academy and learn to study in class and football. In the selection of these new students, under the leadership of Japanese coach Mr Mita, the director of youth football, selection teams will be formed, and the preliminary and final selections will be made step by step. — TWA/KZL

Olympic rings unveiled at Paris' main airport

Tony Estanguet, president of the organizing committee for the games, emphasized the symbolic significance of the rings, highlighting Paris as a crucial location for the event.

A set of giant Olympic rings was unveiled at Terminal 1 of Paris Charles de Gaulle airport Tuesday, with the opening of the Olympics less than 100 days away. "Today it's a very symbolic step for Paris 2024," said Tony Estanguet, president of the games' organiz-

ing committee. "Those rings are probably the most efficient message to tell that it will be a very important location of the games." "We are ready, we are looking forward to welcoming you." The Paris Olympics start on 26 July and run for 17 days. — Kyodo



The unveiling ceremony of the Olympic rings is held at Paris Charles de Gaulle airport on 23 April 2024. PHOTO: KYODO

Haaland ruled out of Man City's crucial trip to Brighton

MANCHESTER City's Premier League title bid suffered a blow after Norway striker Erling Haaland was ruled out of Thursday's crucial clash at Brighton.

Haaland missed City's 1-0 win over Chelsea in the FA Cup semi-fi-

nal at Wembley on Saturday due to a muscle injury sustained in the Champions League quarter-final exit against Real Madrid last week.

City's leading scorer, who has 20 Premier League goals this season, is yet to recover and will not

make the trip to the Amex Stadium as the champions look to close the gap on leaders Arsenal. City boss Pep Guardiola insisted Haaland's injury was not serious and he could come back into contention in time for Sunday's game against Nottingham

Forest. While Haaland is sidelined, Guardiola was boosted by England internationals Phil Foden and John Stones getting the green light to face Brighton after their own fitness concerns. — AFP

Manchester City striker Erling Haaland. PHOTO: AFP/FILE





RISK OF SAILING

Philippines bans deployment of Filipino seafarers on ships transiting Red Sea, Gulf of Aden

THE Philippine government Wednesday banned the deployment of Filipino seafarers on passenger and cruise ships transiting the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden due to the risk of sailing in those regions. The Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) issued the order after 23 Filipino sailors were either killed or taken hostage in recent months.

"The move comes after recent amendments to the International Transport Workers' Federation and International Bargaining Forum list of 'high-risk areas' and 'war-like zones' to include the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden," the order said.

The DMW added that the order also results from collective discussions between its office and the Philippine Maritime Industry Tripartite Council, in which they "underscore the urgent need for stricter protocols to ensure the safety of Filipino seafarers navigating the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden."

The DMW requires licensed manning agencies to sign an "affirmation letter" guaranteeing that the vessels their seafarers board will not navigate the Red Sea or the Gulf of Aden. "The stringent measure ensures a transparent process, fostering accountability and compliance with the new safety protocols," the DMW added. — Xinhua



Kaspersky Lab is a Russian multinational cybersecurity and anti-virus provider headquartered in Moscow, Russia. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS**

Saint Petersburg hosts expo showcasing cybersecurity export products

For the first time, the event features leading Russian companies showcasing export products and information security (IS) technologies. Organized by the Security Council of the Russian Federation (SCRF), the meeting focuses on addressing IS challenges in a new multipolar world.

ON 23-25 April, Russia's Saint Petersburg is hosting the 12th International Meeting of High-Ranking Officials Responsible for Security Matters. This is the first time that the event has welcomed leading Russian companies demonstrating export products and information security (IS) technologies.

The event is organized under the aus-

pices of the Security Council of the Russian Federation (SCRF) and is aimed to tackle issues around upholding IS within a new multipolar world.

In recent years, Russian companies have acquired unique experience in countering massive cyberattacks. Even under harsh sanctions and restrictions they have managed to protect Russia's federal, in-

dustrial, and financial infrastructure, the SCRF noted. All this happened "amid a sharply escalated geopolitical confrontation, a clear desire of major Western nations to maintain their economic and technological dominance, as well as against the backdrop of an unprecedented spike in aggressive cyber threats", the SCRF emphasized. — SPUTNIK



This photo, taken on 12 August 2023, shows a view of Victoria & Alfred Waterfront and Table Mountain in Cape Town, South Africa. **PHOTO: DONG JIANGHUI/XINHUA**

South Africa's Cape Town to become Africa's wealthiest city by 2030: report

CAPE Town, the legislative capital of South Africa, is on track to overtake Johannesburg, the country's largest city, to become Africa's wealthiest city by 2030, according to the 2024 Africa Wealth Report.

The latest report, published by international wealth advisory

firm Henley & Partners in collaboration with global wealth intelligence partner New World Wealth, estimates that the total investable wealth currently held on the African continent amounts to 2.5 trillion US dollars, and its millionaire population is set to increase by 65 per cent over the next 10

years. It reveals that there are currently 135,200 high-net-worth individuals (HNWIs) with liquid investable wealth of 1 million US dollars or more living in Africa, along with 342 centi-millionaires worth 100 million US dollars or more, and 21 dollar billionaires. — Xinhua