

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR



A poignant scene captures the container yard amidst the bustling activity of working cranes along the Yangon River at Yangon Port.

Manufacturing sector exports surpass US\$8.8 bln in FY2023-2024

THE export value from the manufacturing sector crossed US\$8.8 billion in the financial year 2023-2024, indicating a drop of \$2.09 billion compared with that of the FY 2022-2023, the Ministry of Commerce's statistics showed.

The finished industrial goods export amounted to \$10.9 billion in the FY 2022-2023.

By two modes of transport (sea and

land border), Myanmar delivers manufacturing goods to foreign markets.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, livestock products, fisheries, minerals, forest products, finished industrial goods, and other goods, while it imports capital goods, intermediate goods, raw materials from CMP garment factories, and consumer goods.

Myanmar has been implementing the National Export Strategy

(NES) 2020-2025 in order to bolster exports. The priority sectors of the NES comprise agricultural production, garment and apparel, industrial and electronic device, fishery business, forest product, digital manufacturing and service, logistic service, quality management, trade information service, innovation and entrepreneurship sectors. — NN/EM

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Joint Working Group on Cooperation between Myanmar-EEC for MoC holds 1st session in Nay Pyi Taw

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K-pop artistes arrive in Yangon for Thingyan cultural exchange

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CBM suspends one forex licence for six months upon non-compliance

Visitors flock to Mawlamyine Taungwine Lake ahead of public opening

THE bank of Taungwine Lake, which is going to open to the public soon and is located in Mawlamyine in Mon State, has already caught the public attention before it opens, according to residents.

Located at the foot of Mount Taungwine, the lake is a beautiful place for photo taking and can give fresh air, according to a local social welfare association.

For a pilgrimage to pagodas on Mount Taungwine and a walk on the lake bank, Taungwine Lake will be opened to the public soon, according to the Thathananwe Foundation. "It is still under construction, but it already has visitors. In Mawlamyine, when there is a new place, there are always crowds of people.

SEE PAGE-3



People visit the bank of Taungwine Lake, which is going to open to the public. **PHOTO: THATHANANWE FOUNDATION**

NATIONAL



THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
THE SUPREME COURT
Of THE UNION

News Release

Court Annual Report 2023

THE Court Annual Report 2023 (both English and Myanmar Versions) was published by the Supreme Court of the Union on 10 April 2024. The Report is also uploaded and accessible on the website of the Supreme Court of the Union: www.unionsupremecourt.gov.mm.

Court Annual Report has been issued annually since 2016 to enlighten the performance of the Supreme Court of the Union and the Courts at different levels.

The objectives of issuing the Court Annual Report are to be transparent and accountable for the process of the judiciary, to have a realistic assessment of the activities of the Court, to have a better performance of the Court and to raise public awareness about the judicial reform processes.

The Court Annual Report 2023 is arranged with four chapters: Overview of the Court System and Administration; Significant Performances of the Supreme Court of the Union in 2023; Judicial Performances; Implementation of Year One Strategic Action Plan (2023) and Actions to be Implemented in Year Two Action Plan (2024) including the appendices and highlights so as to be easily comprehensible not only by the legal practitioners, court users but also by the public. Any comment and recommendation relating to the Report can be sent to the Court Annual Reporting Team by emailing annualreport@usc.gov.mm.

Myanmar-China Media Tea Party held in Yangon to foster business relations



The Myanmar-China Media Tea Party is in session on 8 April 2024.

ON 8 April, the Myanmar-China Media Tea Party took place at the China Enterprises Chamber of Commerce in Myanmar (CECC) headquarters, situated in the Time City Complex in Kamayut Township, Yangon Region.

Attendees included Minister Counsellor Mr Zheng Zhihong, staff from the Chinese Embassy to Myanmar, CECC Chairman Mr Liu Ming, Chinese business figures, and representatives from both Chinese and Myanmar media outlets.

Following opening remarks from the Minister Counsellor, CECC entrepreneurs elaborated on their business ventures in Myanmar, covering diverse sectors such as garment manufacturing, electricity production, and automobile assembly, including electric vehicles.

Representatives from Yangon Media Group, Eleven Media Group, and CCTV posed queries regarding the investments made in Myanmar by Chinese entrepreneurs. The CECC chairman, Mr Sui Xigang and

Mr Liu Younghoung, officials responsible for the garment and automobile sectors, and the Minister Counsellor fielded the questions and provided insights during the session.

The Minister Counsellor underscored the Chinese entrepreneurs' commitment to adhering to laws and prioritizing the creation of opportunities and technological assistance for Myanmar citizens over profits. Additionally, he reiterated China's support for the country's peace and prosperity. — ASH/NT

Alternate daily newspaper publishing planned for New Year holiday

DAILY newspapers of the News and Periodicals Enterprise under the Ministry of Information will be in alternate circulation during the holidays of the Myanmar New Year. The Myanmar Alinn Daily will be published from 13 to 16 April, whereas the Kyemon and the Global New Light of Myanmar dailies will take holidays. The Kyemon and the Global New Light of Myanmar dailies will be in circulation from 17 to 21 April, while the Myanmar Alinn daily will take a break.

The Ethnic Sector in the Shan Language by the Sub-Printing House (Taunggyi), published every Thursday, will take a holiday on 18 April; the Ethnic Sector in Mon, Skaw Kayin, Poe Kayin and Pa-O languages published every Sunday by the Sub-Printing House (Mawlamyine) will take holidays on 14 and 21 April; the Ethnic Sector in the Kachin Language by the Sub-Printing House (Myitkyina) published twice a week will take a holiday on 20 April. After the Thingyan holidays, all dailies will be published regularly. However, advertisements will be accepted throughout the holidays.

News and Periodicals Enterprise

Myanmar Gazette

Duty Assignment of Permanent Secretary/Director-General

THE State Administration Council has concurrently assigned Brig-Gen Myo Min from the Union Minister's Office of the Ministry of Defence to the duties of Permanent Secretary/Director-General at the same organization.

COVID-19 report, 8 April 2024

NEW TESTS	27,094
NEW CASES	39
NEW TESTS	NIL

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.

Joint Working Group on Cooperation between Myanmar-EEC for MoC holds 1st session in Nay Pyi Taw

THE first Session of the Joint Working Group on Cooperation between Myanmar and the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) for the memorandum of cooperation signed on 15 June 2023 was held at Horizon Lake View Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations Dr Kan Zaw and Chargé d'affaires ai Mr Klabukov Pavel of the Russian Embassy in Myanmar first made opening speeches.

Mr Sergey Glazyev, Minister for Integration of Macroeconomics of the EEC, then discussed the integration measures of EEC, technology, economics, cooperation and finance, and the business people from EAEU member states introduced their companies.

During the first session of the Joint Working Group on cooperation between Myanmar and EEC held on the same afternoon, Joint Working Group Union Minister Co-Chairs Dr Kan Zaw and



The first Session of the Joint Working Group on Cooperation between Myanmar and the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) underway yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

Mr Sergey Glazyev, welcomed the holding of the first session.

Speaking at the event, the Union minister highlighted the holding of the first session to enhance the cooperation between Myanmar and EEC and create economic cooperation for a win-

win situation.

He continued that the country is making efforts to collaborate and connect to overcome the regional economic cooperation challenges. At the same time, it operates direct flights between Myanmar and Russia, which is

also an EAEU member, aiming at bolstering the trade and tourism sectors.

He further said that the promising economic circles and investments, in addition to the bilateral relationships between the EAEU members and Myan-

mar, can be achieved through sector-wise dialogues.

He then talked about the government's activities to promote the SME sector, setting priorities to lure more investments.

Mr Sergey Glazyev also mentioned the constructive relationship between EEC and Myanmar after signing the memorandum of cooperation, appreciated the promising areas for trade and economic cooperation between EEC members and Myanmar, and invited the representatives of the government, experts and business people to collaborate.

Afterwards, the representatives of EEC, relevant ministries and organizations discussed areas of industry and agro-industrial complex, finance, transport and logistics, energy tourism, digitalization and enhancement of business cooperation.

The Co-Chairs then agreed on a joint statement of first session and the venue of the second session of the Joint Working Group. — MNA/KTZH

Efforts made to sustain upward momentum in export

THE Ministry of Commerce and UMFCCI (Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry) jointly exported 2,700 tonnes of corn seeds by MV MCL-8 ship and another 2,700 tonnes of corn seeds by MV MCL-7 ship via MHM jetty to Thailand yesterday under the public-private partnership system.

Moreover, the MV Contrivia vessel will leave AWPT 1 jetty for Singapore, while the MV Iseaco Fortune vessel to Malaysia from AWPT 3 jetty carrying marine products, rice, beans, garments, forest products, sugar, sesame, corn, rubber and general items.

Similarly, the country will ship 25,000 tonnes of corn seed to the Philippines by MV Manta Hatice vessel via SPW 6 jetty on 10 April, while 12,700 tonnes to Thailand by MV Tay Son 4 from

TMT jetty, 27,500 tonnes to India by MV Seiyo Harmony vessel from MIP 2 jetty and 2,700 tonnes to Thailand by MV.MCL.20 vessel from MHM jetty. — MNA/KTZH

On 15 April, 14,500 tonnes of corn seeds will be exported to Thailand by MV DDS Marina ship via YIGT jetty. — MNA/KTZH



Cargo loading and unloading activities at Yangon Port.



Visitors flock to Mawlamyine Taungwine Lake ahead of public opening

FROM PAGE-1

The lake is a good place to take photos and get fresh air in the evening. The construction of paths was completed, but finishing touches, planting flowers and decorating measures have yet to be finished. But people have already come to visit there. I think all the work are expected to be completed in the next five days," said an official from a local social welfare association.

The best time to relax in summer is from 5:30 pm to 8 pm when a fresh breeze comes from the forest at the front of

the lake.

A free parking lot for 160 motorcycles has been provided in order to prevent stealing and prevent traffic congestion, said Thathananwe Foundation. Moreover, a free car parking lot with a capacity of more than 50 cars has also been provided.

Taungwine trekking season was open from December last year to January and February. During the three-month trekking season, not only residents but also people in the locality came, and the number of hikers increased during the holidays. — MT/ZS

NATIONAL

MoI UM inspects preparations for Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan

UNION Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn, accompanied by Deputy Minister U Ye Tint and departmental officials, inspected the preparations for Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan yesterday.

Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan will be organized on a grand scale from 13 to 16 April near the Nay Pyi Taw Mayor Maha Thingyan Pavilion on Pynmana-Taungnyo Road to the intersection of Sipin guesthouse Road.

During the inspection tour, the Union minister looked into the construction of Thingyan pandals, including Thingyan pandals of various nationalities, preparations for free food donations and other proper recreational sites for Ethnic Thingyan, Saduthida Thingyan, Ministries' Thingyan and Youths' Thingyan.

He then instructed the staff



Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn views round preparatory work for the Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan yesterday.

to take precautions against fire and water shortage, and provide healthcare in a timely manner and work together with the respective committees to complete the work on time.

This year, the Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan will feature huge Thingyan pavilions and entertainment programmes of local artistes, and K-pop artistes.

The Ministry of Construction

constructed the Nyana Theikdhi Family Thingyan Pavilion and will offer food to the visitors.

Similarly, there will be a Russia-Myanmar Friendship Association Pavilion, and Russian youth

artistes will entertain during the festival. Moreover, the international standard China-Myanmar-India Friendship Pavilion is being constructed, and the food donation event will be included. There will be 26 Thingyan pavilions for Nay Pyi Taw Walking Thingyan consisting of Ethnic Thingyan, Saduthitha Thingyan, Ministries' Thingyan and Youths' Thingyan. Zone 1 and Zone 2 will be there. Zone 1 offers ethnic food donation Thingyan at the Zone 1 main entrance, and there will be designated places to play water based on the culture of ethnic people and a photo booth representing ethnic people to take photos for fun. Zone 2 mainly focuses on young people and children and consists of an international water slide, foam party, inflatable tanks, slide, and DJ performance. — MNA/KTZH

Counter-argument to false information

Misinformation: Security forces shot 3 people dead, set houses on fire

KHIT Thit, a malicious news media, is spreading misinformation on social media that joint security forces entered Yatha village, Myingyan township, Mandalay Region, on 8 April, shot three people dead and burned more than 250 houses.

Due to a report from a local citizen who did not want violence, joint security forces were conducting security operations in the area on 8 April. When they reached Yatha village, PDF terrorists started shooting with hand-made guns and exchanged fire, said a security official from Myingyan Township.

Afterwards, due to the effective firing of joint security forces, terrorists retreated, ran away and burned the houses along the way. They retreated and fled, so some houses in Yatha village were destroyed by fire, and two terrorists were killed, he continued.

In Myingyan Township, these terrorists forcibly collect money and recruit manpower, arresting and torturing the local people, and the local people, who do not accept the terrorist acts, cooperate with the security forces. However, malicious news media are spreading falsehoods. — MNA/KZL

K-pop artistes arrive in Yangon for Thingyan cultural exchange

A group of Korean K-pop artistes arrived in Yangon yesterday evening to participate in cultural exchange activities during the traditional Thingyan.

The first batch consists of 24 artistes, including actor Baek Eun Hee, known for roles in various series and movies, as well as K-pop singers Rejen and Henny, the 7 Kids Doll Group, Astel Dance Group, and Dj-Saemi. Upon their arrival at Yangon International Airport, the Korean artistes were warmly welcomed by officials from Myanma Radio and Television, along with Korean language students from Yangon University of Foreign Languages. They greeted the guests by waving



Welcoming to K-pop artistes at the Yangon International Airport.

flags of both countries and holding placards with the artistes' names and photos. Additionally, students from the School of Fine Arts welcomed the guests with traditional Myanmar drum performances.

The artistes will be accommodated at Thamada Hotel be-

fore heading to Nay Pyi Taw on 10 April. Two more groups of K-pop artistes are expected to arrive in Yangon on 11 and 14 April, respectively. They will be performing at the Friday Night Live Show of Myanma Radio and Television on 12 April. — MNA/TRKM

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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

Well-wishers donated food for fasting Muslims in some townships of Yangon Region

WELL-WISHERS are donating food for fasting Muslims in certain townships of Yangon Region, and youths from the upper block of 30th Street donated strawberry milkshakes worth K6 million to nearly 3,000 fasting Muslims. — Aung Myint (IPRD)/TH



Food donations are underway in Yangon yesterday.



Donations of nutritional supplements progress in yesterday in Mandalay.

Mandalay Region govt donates nutritional supplements to fasting Muslims

ACCORDING to Islamic tradition, Muslims in the mosques of Mandalay have been fasting since 11 March, with nutritional supplements being donated to them every year.

Mandalay Region Chief Minister U Myo Aung, Central

Command Commander Maj-Gen Kyi Khaing, and officials donated nutritional supplements to the fasting Muslims individually at Joon Mosque, located at 27 Street, between 81st and 82nd Roads in Chan Aye Tha San Township, yes-

terday.

Fasting began at Joon Mosque on 11 March and will continue until 10 April. The Mandalay Region government donates nutritional supplements to fasting Muslims every year. — MNA/TH

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

ON 6 April, combined inspection teams managed by the Yangon Region Illegal Trade Eradication Special Task Force intercepted a Fuso tractor head with a trailer valued at approximately K120 million en route from Hpa-an to Yangon. The vehicle was found to be carrying three types of goods, including 6,000 kilogrammes of Golda Shortening, with a total value of

K24.25 million, without proper documentation. The action was carried out in accordance with Customs procedures.

Similarly, on 8 April, combined teams conducted inspections at the Myanmar Industrial Port. They confiscated 2,808 square metres of ceramic tiles from China, valued at K32,432,400, which were not declared in the Import Declaration

(ID) from two containers. Again, the action was taken under Customs procedures.

On the same day, combined teams seized two motor launches carrying illegal fuel oil and petrol, valued at approximately K80.696 million, at the jetty in Myitkyina township. Additionally, an unregistered Nissan AD van, worth approximately K8 million, was apprehended near

Pyidaungsu road in Mokaung township. The action was carried out under the Petroleum and Petroleum Products Law and the Export and Import Law.

Furthermore, teams supervised by the Sagaing Region Illegal Trade Eradication Special Task Force seized an unregistered Landcruiser Prado car, estimated at K26 million, and 1,110 cartons of Superior Soy

brand soy sauce from China, worth K9.324 million, at the Yadanabon bridge combined checkpoint in Sagaing township. Another unregistered Ford Everest, valued at approximately K15 million, was confiscated in Shwebo township. These actions were taken under the Export and Import Law.

On the same day, combined teams seized illegal teak weighing 6.189 tonnes, valued at K4.652 million, in Bago, Pyay, and Thayawady districts. Additionally, a Hyundai KMFP bowser, estimated at K30 million, carrying 3,200 gallons of diesel valued at K32 million, was intercepted at the Shwegyin combined checkpoint. These actions were conducted under the Forest Law and the Petroleum and Petroleum Products Law.

The Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee reported 15 arrests made on 6 and 8 April, with an estimated value of K397.354 million. — MNA/MKKS



Confiscated motor launches and illegal goods.

NATIONAL

Yangon onion market trends, forecast before Thingyan

DESPITE the arrival of 360,000 visses of onions in the Yangon market from various towns and cities on 8 April, the opening prices at the wholesale onion depot have not declined. However, some traders are offering onions at lower prices based on quality.

On 8 April, the opening prices for onions were as follows: Seikphyu at K1,600-K2,000-K2,100-K2,100 per viss; Taungdwin at K1,600-K2,100-K2,100-K2,100; and Myittha at K2,300-K2,800-K3,000-K3,000. However, the market price is K200 lower than the opening price. Most traders are ordering onions from other towns and cities to be transported to Yangon by 9 April, according to market information.

As demand from other towns

and cities for onions from Yangon decreases and trucks cease operations during the Thingyan Festival, the Yangon market may need to lower onion prices before the holiday if there is an excess supply.

Compared with last year's figures, only 120,000 visses of onions arrived in Yangon on 8 April. However, this year, a total of 1,860,000 visses of onions have arrived in the Yangon market within seven days, and a total of 4,692,000 visses of onions arrived in March within 24 days. Last year, by 8 April, 1,215,000 visses of onions arrived, and 5,400,000 visses of onions arrived in March, according to previous statistics.

In other towns and cities, onion prices have remained steady for traders since the early April

surge in Yangon. In these areas, the minimum price for onions is standing at K1,500. Approximately 300,000 visses of onions have arrived in Seikphyu, Myingyan, and Pakokku markets in recent days.

Due to the high onion prices in other towns and cities, traders are purchasing onions at a minimum price of K1,500 per viss. It is also forecasted that prices will rise further after the Thingyan Festival due to external demands.

Myanmar's onion demand is influenced by India's policy of prohibiting onion exports. The onion price in India has decreased from rupee 4,500 per 100 kilogrammes in December 2023 to rupee 1,200 (approximately US\$14) in early April.

This year, onion growers in



An onion truck is coming to the Bayintnaung market in Yangon.

Myanmar are earning more than last year, with growers receiving an additional K1,000 for Seikphyu

and K1,100 for Myittha per viss compared to last year. — TWA/TMT

Illegal overseas job recruiters target industrial workers

SOME labour advocates warned that industrial workers were being targeted to go overseas as illegal workers.

Taking advantage of the growing popularity of TikTok among young people, there has been an increase in the use of TikTok to recruit workers for factories in China and Thailand, and some have gotten into trouble in foreign countries for entering illegally, she said.

"Some have recently gone abroad via illegal channels. They don't have passports. I don't know how they are recruited from China. These recruiters target the industrial zones. Some are scammers. Some go abroad with official passports after getting in touch with official agencies. No matter how much we explained, it was of little avail. They replied that some of their close friends from the village had gone to which country, with the contact information of whom, and so on. As the number of TikTok users rises, they organize from TikTok. There are many cases related to Dubai. Some went to Dubai on loans. When they arrived there, they didn't get a job, were tortured by the hosts, sold them to others and so on," she added.

During this Thingyan, some are preparing to leave for jobs in factories abroad after resigning from their current jobs, and some are going back to their hometowns.

"Some quit their jobs to go abroad, especially to China or Thailand. As they received their salary on 5 April, they might be on the way now. Most of them usually hire a private car to return home during Thingyan. Some towns in Ayeyawady, Magway and Monywa send cars to bring them back. Only a few have bought bus tickets. If there are only three or four workers from a village, they go back by bus after buying tickets. We have to wait and see whether they migrate or go back home when Thingyan is near," she said. — MT/ZN

Tender invitation for catering services on Yangon-Mandalay trains



The interior part of an express train on the Yangon-Mandalay railway.

ACCORDING to Myanma Railways, under the Ministry of Transport and Communications, tenders will be invited for catering services for a one-year contract (from 1 May 2024 to 30 April 2025) for the restaurant cars on trains running between Yangon and Mandalay.

Tender proposal forms and terms and conditions can be obtained from the business manager's office in Mandalay (Region 3) and Yangon (Region 7) from 4 to 26 April.

An open tender will be held at the meeting hall of the Myanmar Railways head office, located on the first floor of the Nay Pyi Taw Railways Station, at 1 pm on 29 April. — TWA/TRKM

YGH prepares special treatment for heatstroke during Thingyan

ACCORDING to Specialist Dr Cho Thazin Phoo of Yangon General Hospital, special treatment for heatstroke will be provided during the Maha Thingyan Festival in Yangon Region. Every year, the emergency treatment department of YGH prepares for emergencies during the Myanmar New Year festival.

"Yangon General Hospital has readied treatment methods,

medications, and special rooms for heat-related illnesses. Heatstroke is common during the Thingyan Festival, particularly among children, older people, and individuals using drugs or alcohol. Additionally, arrangements have been made, including accommodation for the treatment of regular patients since private clinics are typically closed during the water festival," said Dr Cho Thazin Phoo.

As the water festival coincides with a period of high temperatures, the Ministry of Health advises the public to seek shade under trees, in parks, pavilions, and well-sheltered buildings from 11 am to 4 pm to avoid harmful ultraviolet rays. Furthermore, they recommend controlling alcohol consumption, as high alcohol levels in the body can pose risks. — ASH/MKKS

Weekly market update of dry groceries at Bayintnaung Wholesale Centre

FOR a week from 3 to 9 April 2024, the prices of black grams and pigeon peas rebounded. The prices of most commodities were relatively stable in the pre-Thingyan period. The palm oil reference price remained unchanged this week.

Onion

The Bayintnaung Wholesale market saw a supply of 360,000 visses of onions on 8 April and 240,000 visses on 9 April. The wholesale prices stood at K1,600-K3,000 per viss on 9 April 2024, depending on the quality, size and producing areas (Seikphyu and Monywa) that day.

Garlic

The prices of Kyukok garlic hit K11,000 per viss on 9 April while the garlic from Aungban, Shan State, fetched K6,000-K6,500 per viss depending on varieties and qualities.

Potato

Shan potatoes were priced at K1,600-K2,100 per viss on 9 April.

Chilli pepper

The wholesale prices of chilli peppers were registered at K4,000-K8,000 per viss for long chilli pepper and Moe-



Branded cooking oil and rice on shelves at a shopping centre.

htaung variety on 9 April. The price of bell peppers from the Sinphyukyun area were K9,000 per viss that day.

Palm oil

The wholesale reference price of Yangon Region was flat at K5,250 per viss for four consecutive weeks.

Rice

The prices hit K76,000-K110,000 per sack of non-premium new monsoon rice and K100,000 per sack of Pawkywe variety on 9 April. Meanwhile, the new premium quality Pawsan rice was worth

K125,000-K160,000 per sack depending on the producing areas (Ayeyawady, Pyapon, Myaungmya, Shwebo). The stick rice prices hit K85,000-95,000 per viss.

Pulses

The prices of various pulses stood at K3,141,000 per tonne of black grams (Fair Average Quality/RC), K3,411,000 per tonne of black grams (Special Quality/RC), K3,976,000 per tonne of pigeon peas (red gram) RC, K3,830 per viss of green grams (Shwewah) and K5,650-K6,000 per viss of chickpeas in Yangon's wholesale markets on 9 April 2024. — TWA/KK

Domestic gold price ticks up as spot gold reaches record high

THE domestic gold price hit a new peak of K4.63 million per tical (0.578 ounce or 0.016 kilogramme) on 9 April after spot gold price rallied to over US\$2,340 per ounce on 9 April.

Despite the record high of gold price, the Yangon Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA) set the reference price at K3,997,900 per tical, indicating a large gap of over K630,000 per tical with the actual market value.

YGEA notified on 30 March that inspections were underway against those allegedly manipulating the market through a verbal deal.

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

The authorities are inspecting those alleged price speculators with the verbal deal in the market.

CBM initiated an online trading market in which exporters, importers and private banks are engaged, with a view to developing the foreign exchange market and stopping price manipulation. The market exchange rates are officially announced on the currency exchange market online trading platform. Additionally, CBM lets authorized money changers sell foreign currency as petty cash to those studying abroad, going on a pilgrimage, and working abroad, according to CBM's notification on 30 March.

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

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

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

CBM suspends one forex licence for six months upon non-compliance

THE Central Bank of Myanmar suspended the licence of one money changer company, Myanmar Sunflower, on 8 April as it failed to comply with the rules, guidelines and directives issued by the CBM.

That company, granted a money changer licence (CBM FEMD 156/ 2013) on 7 October 2013, was found to violate Section 22 of the Foreign Exchange Management Law. Therefore, the licence was subject to a six-month cancellation.

CBM also revoked licences of six forex companies starting from 5 April 2024 for non-compliance.

CBM notified revocation of 14 money changer licences

and suspension of 11 in March 2024 for non-compliance with the CBM's rules and directives.

CBM vowed to conduct surprise inspections at money changers in order to stabilize foreign exchange rates in line with the provisions stipulated in the existing laws, CBM announced on 11 March.

CBM initiated an online trading market in which exporters, importers, and private banks are engaged, with a view to developing the market. Additionally, the authorized money changers sell the foreign currency as petty cash to those going abroad, according to CBM's notification.



The Central Bank of Myanmar (Yangon Branch).

Moreover, the surprise visits are being undertaken at money changers to ensure they abide by the directives issued under the Foreign Exchange Management Law.

A combined team led by the Monitoring and Steering Committee on Gold and

Currency Market, comprising competent authorities from CBM, Yangon City Development Committee, the Department of General Administration and law enforcement agencies, has been conducting the surprise inspections. — NN/EM

OPINION

Enhance essence of Maha Thingyan festival

THE anticipation for the Maha Thingyan festival reverberates across all corners of Myanmar, cutting through barriers of nationality, religion, language, and politics. This cherished tradition unites people from diverse backgrounds in celebration, embodying the rich cultural tapestry of the nation.

For years, the Maha Thingyan festival has been a cornerstone of Myanmar's cultural heritage, transcending individual interests or affiliations. It stands as a communal celebration, belonging to all, and should never fall prey to monopolization or alteration. Preserving its authenticity is paramount, as it reflects the essence of Myanmar's national identity.

In this spirit of inclusivity, efforts to embellish or tamper with the festival's traditions are unwarranted. From the simple act of water-throwing to the exchange of traditional gifts, each aspect holds significance in preserving the festival's innocence and beauty. Any attempts to defile its imagery are not only condemned but also etched as scars in Myanmar's history, leaving a lasting trauma on its people.

In Buddhism, everybody needs to standardize their acts and concepts based on the ways to the enlightenment of Nibbana. Good things will go to heaven, while bad things will go down to hell. Both heaven and hell are waiting for all human actions. So, they should consider where their acts in daily routines lead and how to save themselves.

By embracing the festival's theme of joy and camaraderie, smiles can be brought to the faces and hearts of all.

The festival, rooted in Buddhist principles, serves as a reminder of the moral imperative to choose virtuous actions over harmful ones. It beckons individuals to reflect on their conduct and its implications, guiding them towards paths of enlightenment and salvation.

Ultimately, the value of the Maha Thingyan festival lies not merely in its festivities but in the unity and harmony it fosters among Myanmar's people. By upholding its traditions and promoting peace, the festival becomes a testament to the nation's enduring spirit and cultural heritage.

In Buddhism, everybody needs to standardize their acts and concepts based on the ways to the enlightenment of Nibbana. Good things will go to heaven, while bad things will go down to hell. Both heaven and hell are waiting for all human actions. So, they should consider where their acts in daily routines lead and how to save themselves.

ARE you ready to discover what lies beyond your comfort zone? Life is full of changes, and one thing we know for sure is that time never stops moving forward. Every day brings new opportunities and challenges. Some people feel comfortable with this idea, while others may find it a bit scary. It's natural to crave stability and routine in our lives. We find comfort in knowing what to expect each day, but could there be something exciting waiting for us if we dare to step outside of our comfort zones?

Many of us lead lives that are predictable to some extent. We have responsibilities and commitments that keep us in familiar routines. Whether it's taking care of family, managing finances, or staying healthy, these obligations keep us within our comfort zones. However, could there be benefits to occasionally pushing ourselves beyond these boundaries? Research suggests that stepping outside of our comfort zones can lead to valuable learning experiences. In a study published in 2023, researchers found that participants who faced challenges outside of their comfort zones experienced significant growth and learning. Could this be the key to unlocking our full potential?

Consider the story of Charlotte Rooney, a woman who has embraced the unknown throughout her life. From moving to different countries at a young age to embarking on various career paths, Charlotte's journey has been one of constant exploration and adaptation. Reflecting on her experiences, Charlotte emphasizes the transformative power of embracing discomfort. She believes that pushing ourselves to do things that feel uncomfortable can lead to personal growth and happiness.

Despite Myanmar's diverse population comprising over a hundred ethnic groups, there exists a shared ethos of unity and resilience. During the Maha Thingyan period, it becomes paramount for individuals to set aside animosities and negative behaviours. Whether you find this idea a comfort or a concern will depend on your outlook, but something that many of us fall into is a level of predictability. It's not necessarily a bad thing. When we feel safe

and secure, taking our time and falling into patterns, banking on the idea that 'someday' will happen, someday is natural. In fact, to some degree, it's necessary. Many of us live lives that have to be predictable in some sense. We have to be in certain places at certain times. Caring responsibilities, financial commitments, health, and countless other demands can play a role in why we remain in our comfort zones. But could there be a benefit to pushing those boundaries every now and then?

In a 2023 study published in *Frontiers in Psychology*, researchers analyzed the experiences of 198 students from six courses in five different countries as they were encouraged to leave their comfort zones with a series of eight to ten challenges. The researchers found that learning occurred when the participants left their comfort zones and that the key to learning was an element of surprise. The paper on the research starts with a quote from the Roman playwright Terentius: *Fortes fortuna adiuvat*: fortune favours the bold.

Beyond Comfort Zone

By Yin Nwe Ko

In a 2023 study published in *Frontiers in Psychology*, researchers analyzed the experiences of 198 students from six courses in five different countries as they were encouraged to leave their comfort zones with a series of eight to ten challenges. The researchers found that learning occurred when the participants left their comfort zones and that the key to learning was an element of surprise. The paper on the research starts with a quote from the Roman playwright Terentius: *Fortes fortuna adiuvat*: fortune favours the bold.

It's a proverb that suits Charlotte Rooney. At the age of seven, Charlotte moved from the UK to Canada to begin school in a brand new country. At age 15, she moved to France to finish high school. At 18, she moved to the Netherlands for university, and at 23, she was off to Peru to run a volunteer project. Four years later, Charlotte arrived in Bolivia to set up an agricultural business school in a rural village before becoming a humanitarian aid worker in a war zone in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). She later joined a management firm before leaving it all behind in 2022 to begin her coaching and mentoring business.

When she reflects on what this experience has taught her, she shares how living in many countries, meeting new people, and speaking multiple languages has transformed her ability to connect

with others.

"In a general sense, pushing yourself to do things that feel uncomfortable causes you to grow and learn new things (as long as you are open to it). You will find out that you have talents you didn't know about and strengths that you love using, which means you can use them more and give yourself more chances to be happy."

But, as Charlotte explains, 'achievements' in whatever form that may be for you aren't the only reward for stepping out of your comfort zone.

"Challenges teach you how to ask for and accept help and how to recognize when you've gone too far to manage alone," she explains. "Sometimes that can be as small as needing to ask for a translation, and other times it can be much more consequential, like when you realize that you have agreed to do one more project than you can handle without burning out, and you need to have an awkward conversation with the people you have overcommitted yourself to. Or, it can show you what you don't want - like when a crisis in the DRC taught me that I no longer wanted to be an adventurer chasing danger."

It's also important to recognize that precisely what pushing yourself out of your comfort zone looks like will be different for each of us. Take Adela Mei, for example, who experienced a pivotal moment in her life when she was 50, and she learned to ride a motorbike.

"Last year, I was suffering from social media burnout from working online for long hours and leading a life plugged into my computer as all my coaching work was online," Adela explains. "I celebrated my 50th birthday and decided to push myself out of my comfort zone and do something I had wanted to do since I was a teenager: learn to ride a motorbike!"

Adela recalls having to overcome a lot of fear and doubt as



she began her lessons, but with perseverance and practice, she passed her test to get her full bike license.

"I was drawn to learning to ride a bike as I needed something drastic to shift in my life," she says. "This experience changed me completely; I felt freedom and confidence knowing now that I can do anything that I put my mind to."

In a study published in *Psychological Science*, researchers found that seeking discomfort can lead us to feel motivated because those tangible feelings of discomfort can be seen as progress towards our goals. Other studies have similarly linked it to inspiration, personal growth, and overall happiness.

Perhaps this is the year you start saying 'yes' more, or maybe open yourself up to new challeng-

es and set goals that you always thought were beyond your reach. Whatever it may be, Charlotte has some insider tips.

"First, think about what it is that you really want to do but are feeling nervous or afraid to do. When we do hard things, having a really compelling reason to do them makes it easier because you can remind yourself when it gets hard, and you're tempted to quit; you can remind yourself why you're doing it and get re-motivated. It's going to feel uncomfortable at times - and that is normal.

"I would also plan for your recovery. Imagine it's like you are inside a bubble, and what you want to do is gently stretch the bubble a bit (not explode it!), and then you let it come back to its normal size, recover, and remind your brain and nervous system that you are safe.

That is what grows your self-trust. And what feels more manageable," Charlotte continues.

There is a lot to gain from stepping out of our comfort zones every now and then, whether that's in big or small ways, further afield or on your doorstep, in meaningful or playful ways. So, with all that to consider, what will you do next?

In addition, stepping beyond our comfort zones can open doors to new experiences and opportunities. While it's natural to crave stability and routine, pushing ourselves to try new things can lead to personal growth and fulfilment. Whether it's embarking on a new adventure or facing a challenge head-on, the rewards of stepping outside our comfort zones can be profound.

As we've seen through the stories of Charlotte Rooney and Adela Mei, embracing discomfort can lead to transformative experiences. From learning new skills to gaining confidence and self-awareness, the journey outside our comfort zones can be both challenging and rewarding. It's not just about achieving goals; it's about discovering our strengths, building resilience, and expanding our horizons.

In sum, as we move forward into the unknown, let's remember Charlotte's words of encouragement: embrace discomfort, seek out new challenges, and believe in your ability to overcome obstacles. Whether it's saying "yes" to new opportunities or setting ambitious goals, let's take a step outside our comfort zones and see where it leads us. After all, the possibilities are endless when we dare to explore beyond what is familiar.

Here are extra scripts of ten small ways to step out of your comfort zone right now:

- Start a conversation with a stranger.
- Sign up to learn a new sport.
- Make a meal with ingredients you haven't tried before.
- Set yourself a goal to complete this time next week, next month, or next year.
- Go alone to something you usually do with others.
- Read a genre you don't usually pick up.
- Learn a new professional skill.
- Challenge a deep-rooted belief you hold.
- Face a fear.
- Explore a new area.

Reference: *Happiful Magazine* March 2024

China accelerates AI development to build AI innovation centre

CHINA has attached great importance to artificial intelligence (AI) development in recent years to build itself into a major global AI innovation centre.

Technologies such as face recognition, voice recognition, intelligent robots, virtual reality, and driverless vehicles, have been widely used in the country, covering fields like education, medical care, science and technology, logistics, agriculture, and entertainment.

According to a development planning for new-generation AI, China aims to become the world's major AI innovation centre by 2030, with the scale of its AI core industry exceeding 1 trillion yuan (about 140.9 billion US dollars), and the scale of related industries exceeding 10 trillion yuan.

Introducing policies

China has introduced policies in terms of scientific and technological research and development (R&D), application promotion, and industrial development, to solve major application and industrialization problems of artificial intelligence.

Many local governments are also accelerating the integration of innovation resources to promote the development of AI technology and related industries. Beijing boasts rich AI talent resources, strong R&D and innovation capabilities, and active product iteration in the field of AI development.

According to a report on the development of China's AI industry in 2023, Beijing has about 28 per cent of the country's 2,200 AI enterprises, ranking first in the country.

Last year, Beijing released a detailed plan to promote the development of AI. According to the plan, by 2025, the scale of its AI core industry is scheduled to reach 300 billion yuan.

At present, Beijing is speeding up the layout of frontier AI basic theory and key core technologies. Other Chinese regions such as Guangdong, Shanghai, Jiangsu, Anhui, Sichuan are also seizing AI opportunities.

A national pilot zone

The city of Shenzhen in Guangdong plans to build a national pilot zone for AI innovation and a national demonstration zone for AI application. AI will be among key technologies to receive the support of the municipal government.

Shanghai is also promoting the high-quality development of the AI industry and fostering an ecology for large-model innovation. Over 20 AI large models have passed the audit and record of local government, said Zhang Ying, head of the Shanghai Municipal Commission of Economy and Informatization. The city's innovation centre for large model industrial application has attracted nearly 60 enterprises in less than half a year after its operation, Zhang said.

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SOURCE: Xinhua



Researchers adjust a humanoid robot at an AI laboratory on 31 January 2024. PHOTO: JIN LIWANG/XINHUA

SCI/ENVIRON WORLD

Russia advances space exploration with Rosatom's plasma rocket engine

IN 2023, a scientific research programme saw Russian scientists breaking new ground by constructing small-scale atomic reactors and achieving plasma confinement in tokamak nuclear fusion chambers

Specialists from Russia's State Atomic Energy Corporation Rosatom have developed a plasma accelerator for a prototype plasma rocket engine.

The design boasts improved thrust of about 6 Newtons and specific impulse roughly 100 km/s, according to the press service of the state corporation's scientific division.

The engine, operating in pulse-periodic mode with a power of up to 300 kilowatts (kW), opens up new prospects for

space exploration.

In 2023, Rosatom scientists achieved several notable milestones as part of the "Development of Technology, Techniques, and Scientific Research in the Field of the Use of Atomic Energy in the Russian Federation" (RTTN) programme.

They range from developing a plasma engine for interplanetary missions to building a small-scale atomic power station in Yakutia and achieving plasma retention in a tokamak chamber.

Other significant accomplishments include the construction of the first Russian small-scale atomic power station in Yakutia and the installation of the multi-purpose fast neutron research reactor (MBIR) vessel



Russia Energomash Plant. PHOTO: SPUTNIK

at JSC "SSC RIAR" in Dimitrovgrad, Ulyanovsk region.

Plasma with thermonuclear electron temperature was confined in the T-15MD tokamak for

over two seconds at the National Research Centre "Kurchatov Institute."

These feats demonstrate a record for Russian installations

and have set a record in world practice for reaching such indicators since the installation's power start-up.

Work has been done on a new methodology for accelerated material testing, which will significantly reduce the time required to develop innovative materials for reactor installations.

This opens up opportunities for rapid implementation of new technologies and increases the efficiency of nuclear power.

In total, more than 80 scientific research and experimental design projects were carried out within the framework of the RTTN programme in 2023, highlighting the industry and innovative potential of Rosatom's scientific division. — Sputnik

Greek valley that became a lake stirs drought debate

GRACEFULLY rising above a din of croaking frogs as the sun sets, a pelican flies over Lake Karla, one the largest inland expanses of water in Greece.

Drained in 1962 to combat malaria and restored again from valley to wetland in 2018 to remedy drought, the lake is now triple its normal size after deadly floods last year.

How to deal with the aftermath of the disaster has morphed into a debate about the future of farming in the Thessaly region as a whole.

The farmers around Karla — many the descendants of lake people who had transitioned to land only two generations earlier — saw their holdings and flocks decimated by last year's floods.

"A great field stood here," said Yiannis Tsiantos, the son of a fisherman and one of the few people in the lakeside village of Kanalia who still own a boat. "We used to ride tractors here to collect almonds," the 57-year-old said, steering his boat past half-sunken animal pens and groves. "Now it's under water."

Riding along is his friend



This photograph taken near the village of Kanalia, on 28 March 2024 shows a submerged road in the newly formed Karla lake which used to be farmland, after the region was flooded last September. PHOTO: AFP

Apostolos Polymerou, a 32-year-old sheep farmer.

"This used to be pastureland for four to five thousand cattle," he recalled.

In September, Storm Daniel, a Mediterranean cyclone of unprecedented intensity, unleashed months' worth of rain in just hours on Thessaly, Greece's most fertile plain.

The deluge, which left 17 people dead, destroyed roads and bridges and drowned tens of thousands of farm animals. **'Worst floods' in history**

Daniel, which arrived on the heels of a major wildfire wave, was followed just weeks later by Storm Elias.

Combined, they triggered what Prime Minister Kyriakos

Mitsotakis later called "the worst floods" in Greek history.

Polymerou's sheep are still traumatized by nearly drowning last year, and being cooped up in their pens for six months caused them further stress.

"They develop deformities in their lungs and liver. Had we known where this would end up, it would have been better to let

them drown," he said.

The lakeside village of Sotirio, once bordered by fields of corn and cotton, now lies at the edge of a swamp.

Dark green water buzzing with insects covers the fields. Even where the flood has receded, only silt and withered stems remain.

Angelos Yamalis, a third-generation farmer, said his family lost 50 hectares (120 acres) of cotton, 30 hectares of wheat and 15 hectares of pistachio trees.

"It was a complete disaster... Even after the water recedes, we don't know if the fields will be productive," the 25-year-old told AFP beside the swamp.

"We based our entire future on this area, on these crops," Yamalis said, adding that new trees would need at least seven years to bear fruit.

Greek authorities have not provided a timeframe for recovery and there are conflicting views on how to move forward.

Authorities in Thessaly favour digging a large canal that would let the water drain into the Aegean Sea. — AFP

Surging popularity of Chinese books at Bangkok Intl Book Fair

GRABBING a book on Chinese culture, 52-year-old Akkrapol Mungnirandr was eager to read the characters he knew at a Chinese book exhibition booth at the Bangkok International Book Fair 2024.

"I'm interested in the Chinese language and have learned some Chinese words. I'd like to learn more about the country's splendid culture via reading," Akkrapol said.

The Bangkok resident was among flocks of readers coming for more than 700 Chinese books at the book fair, which gathered six Chinese publishing houses aiming to open a window to understand China for international publishers and Thai readers.

China Renmin University Press, one of the six Chinese

publishing houses, highlighted its series on Chinese modernization research and books reflecting China's contemporary society, politics and economy, which quickly won the attention of many publishers and readers.

The press also held copyright trade talks with more than 20 publishers from Thailand, Viet Nam, India and other countries, paving the way for broader copyright cooperation in the future.

Southeast Asian countries are inclined to learn from China's development experience amid the complex international and regional environment, said Wirun Phichaiwongphakdee, director of the Thailand-China Research Centre of the Belt and Road Initiative, who has cooperated with several Chinese

publishers to translate many Chinese books. The Thai scholar added that he would like to see more Chinese books being translated and published in Thailand, thus providing Thai readers with references to a more comprehensive understanding of Chinese modernization.

The 12-day book fair, which ended on Monday, marked the third participation of Charassri Jiraphasthe with the Chinese publishing delegation.

"Chinese publishing delegation only had one booth in the first year of participation," recalled Charassri, a Thai professor with Beijing Foreign Studies University. "But there are three booths this year!" She owed this expansion to the Thai people's enthusiasm to learn Chinese.



Photo taken on 28 March 2024 shows a visitor at the Chinese books stall at the Bangkok International Book Fair 2024 in Bangkok, Thailand. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

The Thai professor also brought her book introducing the changes in Chinese people's lives, which she had witnessed over the past 20 years. She would like to build a bridge for Thai people to better understand contemporary China.

Higher Education Press, another Chinese publishing house, focused on promoting vocational education textbooks

at the book fair, including those for the Luban Workshop and those featured "Chinese plus vocational skills."

"We hope these textbooks can promote the cultivation of skilled talents in the Belt and Road Initiative partner countries and contribute to local social and economic development," said Long Jie, the press' deputy editor-in-chief. — Xinhua

Kenya's night comes alive as Chinese-sponsored concert ignites revellers' spirits



A singer interacts with his audience during a Chinese-sponsored music festival in Nairobi, Kenya, 6 April 2024. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

BRAVING chilly weather, a young crowd of revellers filled the giant Agricultural Society of Kenya (ASK) dome in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi, Saturday evening to attend the Boomfest, a musical concert sponsored by Boomplay, a popular music streaming platform in Africa.

One by one, popular artists joined the well-lit stage of the ASK dome, belting out lyrics that lightened the mood of the

audience.

Sylvia Saru, a female rap artist who headlined the show had a powerful stage presence, winning the hearts of fans with songs whose message captured popular social themes.

"Basically, this Boomfest show is here to unite us, to celebrate Kenyan music and give visibility to our own artistes," Saru said on the sidelines of the well-attended festival.

Among the Chinese firms that sponsored the festival was Transsion, the parent company of the Infinix, Tecno, and Itel brands of smartphones that are popular in Kenya, as well as Oramo, a maker of wearables and music-listening devices.

Africa's largest music streaming platform, Boomplay, founded by a young Chinese entrepreneur together with Kenyan innovators, convened the Boomfest, which attracted over ten local artists.

Martha Huro, the managing director for East Africa at Boomplay, said the festival was aimed at celebrating the rapid evolution of indigenous music while honouring the resilience and agility of local artists. "We need to celebrate African music in Africa, which does not happen often. As a number one music streaming app in Africa, we decided to organize a festival for the African market," Huro said. — Xinhua

Man in Kanagawa Pref near Tokyo becomes Japan's oldest man at 110

TOMISABURO Wakui, a 110-year-old resident of Atsugi, Kanagawa Prefecture, near Tokyo, has been recognized as Japan's oldest man after the previous titleholder died in late March, the local government said Tuesday.

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare announced that Wakui, born on 28 November 1913, has succeeded Gisaburo Sonobe of nearby Chiba Prefecture, who died at age 112, according to the Atsugi city government.

Atsugi Mayor Takahiro Yamaguchi said in a statement, "I express my sincere respect (for Wakui) for going through the tumultuous eras of Taisho, Showa, Heisei and Reiwa," referring to the names of periods, which mark the respective reigns of emperors.

As Wakui was born in the Taisho Era, which started in 1912, his taking of the title means there is no longer a man in Japan born in the preceding Meiji Era from 1868. — Kyodo

Spanish fashion house Puig announces IPO

SPANISH fashion group Puig, which owns the Nina Ricci, Paco Rabanne and has a controlling interest in Jean Paul Gaultier labels, on Monday said it was planning to float its shares on the local stock market.

Puig "announces its intention to proceed with the initial public offering (IPO)" with a view to being listed on the Madrid

stock exchange, said a statement from the Barcelona-based family-owned group that specializes in perfumes and cosmetics.

The aim was to raise an initial 1.25 billion euros through newly-issued shares after which it would make a "larger secondary offering" of existing shares held by its holding company Exea. — AFP

ECONOMY WORLD

Cash-strapped Argentines queue for eyeball scans

ARGENTINES eyeing a financial boost are lining up by the thousands to have their irises scanned in exchange for a few crypto tokens as part of an online biometrics project under scrutiny in several countries.

Some three million people worldwide have so far provided their iris data to Worldcoin, an initiative of OpenAI chief Sam Altman, but few have embraced the project more fervently than Argentines.

Half-a-million people in the South American nation have participated since Worldcoin launched last July, and queues for scans have grown longer in recent months of fast-shrinking disposable income.

"I did it because I don't have any money, for no other reason," 64-year-old martial arts teacher Juan Sosa told AFP after staring for a few seconds into a silver iris-scanning orb roughly the



A man has his iris scanned with an orb, a biometric data scanning device, in exchange for the Worldcoin cryptocurrency in Buenos Aires on 22 March 2024. **PHOTO: AFP**

size of a bowling ball at one of 250 Worldcoin locations across

Argentina.

The project seeks to use

these iris specs — unique to each person on Earth — to develop a

digital identification system, a sort of passport that will guarantee the holder is a real human being and not a bot, thus securing online transactions.

Volunteers do not provide any other information such as their name, address or phone number.

The personal iris data is encrypted and, according to Worldcoin, safe.

Yet Kenya, Spain and Portugal have ordered it to pause collecting biometric data on their territories pending investigations by numerous countries into possible privacy concerns.

Argentina's own Agency for Access to Public Information has said it is verifying Worldcoin's "security measures" with a view to "protecting the privacy of the users".

It has yet to make a ruling and has not suspended data collection. — AFP

Second-hand shopping on the rise among Chinese consumers

FROM old clothes and books to furniture and bags, young people in China are embracing the trend of trading second-hand goods, allowing the once-discarded items to be circulated and shared.

A Beijing resident surnamed Zhang, who lives in Haidian District, decided to move as her rental contract neared its end. She recently put up large appliances such as refrigerators and washing machines for sale on second-hand e-commerce platforms, as she couldn't take them to her next destination.

"Buying and selling second-hand products is a thrifty, environmentally friendly lifestyle," Zhang said. "These products are of good quality, relatively inexpensive, and better suit my needs."

Zhang represents a growing number of young people in China who view eco-friendly consumption as a favourable choice.

According to a report on China's e-commerce green development, people born in the 1990s and 2000s exhibit a notably

higher understanding of "green consumption" compared to other age groups, with rates reaching 70 per cent and 79 per cent, respectively.

On Xianyu, one of China's largest second-hand goods trading platforms, its daily transaction volume has exceeded 1 billion yuan (140.9 million US dollars), with over 100 million users listing their idle items on the platform last year.

According to the company, post-95s account for 43 per cent of its users, while post-00s account for 22 per cent, and post-95 users on Xianyu earned an average of 2,700 yuan each in 2023. In an e-commerce industrial park specializing in second-hand goods in north China's Tianjin Municipality, whenever events are held, the park is always crowded with people coming to "treasure hunt".

"Since its opening, the place has attracted 213 companies, and last year, the park's revenue reached about 420 million yuan," said Chen Wenlong, the person in charge of the park. — Xinhua

BOJ to cut monetary stimulus if inflation trend nears 2%: Ueda

BANK of Japan chief Kazuo Ueda said Tuesday the central bank will further reduce monetary stimulus if the country's basic inflation rate nears two per cent as expected, keeping market expectations alive for an additional interest rate hike.

Ueda told a parliamentary session that the BOJ will examine upcoming data to confirm the strength of wage growth in line with the outcomes of labour-management negotiations this spring, and whether services prices will rise to achieve stable inflation. He also said the BOJ's monetary policy is not designed to "control" foreign exchange rates, yet cautioned that a policy response would not be ruled out if the impact of



Bank of Japan Governor Kazuo Ueda speaks at a House of Councillors committee session in Tokyo on 9 April 2024. **PHOTO: KYODO**

currency moves on the economy cannot be ignored. The BOJ's shift away from years of unorthodox monetary easing steps has so far failed to reverse the yen's

weakness against the US dollar, prompting a series of verbal warnings by Japanese monetary authorities of possible currency market intervention. — Kyodo

New Zealand business confidence waning in face of weak demand: survey

New Zealand Institute of Economic Research's latest Quarterly Survey of Business Opinion (QSBO) indicated Tuesday the post-election bounce in business confidence and activity seen in the final quarter of last year was short-lived.

A net 24 per cent of businesses in the March

quarter expected a deterioration in the general economic outlook over the coming months on a seasonally adjusted basis.

Firms' own trading activity was similarly sobering, with a net 23 per cent of firms reporting a decline in activity over the March quarter. — Xinhua

South Korea to invest \$7 bln in AI by 2027

SOUTH Korea will invest almost \$7 billion in artificial intelligence by 2027 in an effort to become a global leader in cutting-edge semiconductors, President Yoon Suk Yeol said Tuesday.

The country is home to Samsung and SK Hynix — the world's top two makers of memory chips, including the premium high-bandwidth memory (HBM) used in the hardware that powers AI.

The semiconductor industry is a crucial pillar of South Korea's export-driven economy, and Yoon told a high-powered meeting of officials and tech sector executives that his administration wants the country to lead the world in AI chips.

"It is no exaggeration to say that the future of the semiconductor industry depends on AI," Yoon said, according to

his office.

"We will invest 9.4 trillion won (\$6.94 billion) in the AI and AI semiconductor fields by 2027," and set up a separate 1.4 trillion won (\$1 billion) fund "to help the growth of innovative AI semiconductor companies", he added.

Representatives from Samsung, SK Hynix, tech giant Naver and AI chip startup SAPEON attended the meeting, Yoon's office said.

Semiconductors are the lifeblood of the global economy, used in everything from kitchen appliances and mobile phones to cars and weapons.

And demand for the advanced chips that power AI systems has skyrocketed thanks to the success of ChatGPT and other generative AI products. — AFP

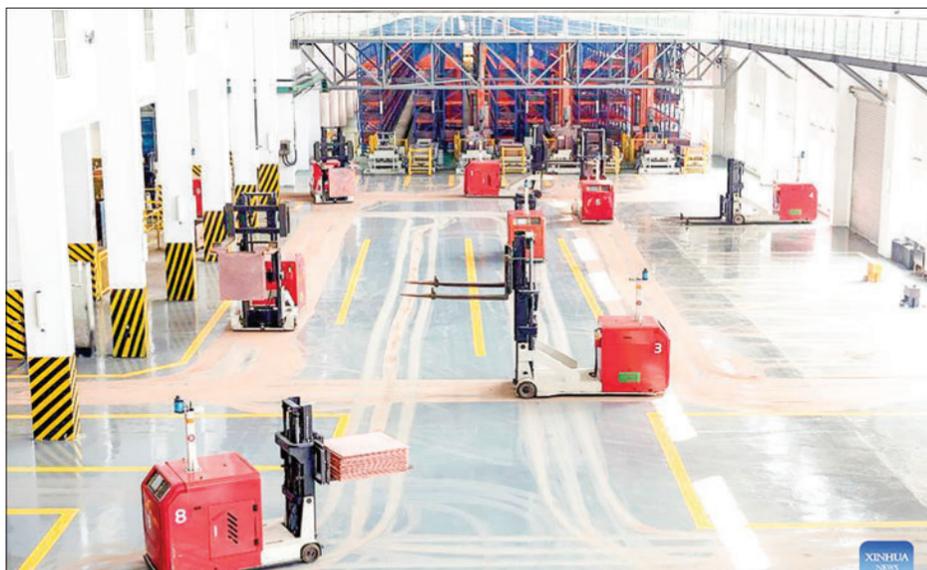
Development of new quality productive forces drives industrial growth

IN a knitting company in east China's Jiangxi Province, a giant screen has demonstrated order conditions, daily output, and energy-dissipating conditions.

Gao Wengen, manager of Jiangxi Huayuan Knitting Co Ltd, said the upgraded digital production project with a total investment of over 10 million yuan (about 1.4 million US dollars) has greatly avoided production waste resulting from the extensive production mode in the past.

To make one kilogramme of samples, the company previously had to produce at least 200 kg of products with the machine running, but now, the upgrade has enabled the precise control of machines, which can produce any amount of samples as needed.

"Now, we can produce two grams of cloth at the



This photo taken on 17 February 2023 shows an interior view of a plant of Jiangxi Copper Co Ltd (Jiangxi Copper) in Guixi City, east China's Jiangxi Province. PHOTO: XINHUA

same unit cost as producing two tonnes," Gao said.

In a move to map out the development of strategic emerging industries and future industries, China has recently made developing new quality productive forces a catchphrase in its policymaking.

By underscoring this concept, China aims to foster advanced productivity through revolutionary technology breakthroughs, innovative allocation of production factors, and deepened industrial upgrading.

In Jiangxi, where traditional industries take up

70 per cent of the province's industrial structure, the provincial authorities issued a manufacturing digital transformation action plan, striving to realize the digital transformation of more than 10,000 enterprises in about two years. — Xinhua

Geneva watch fair ticks to slower rhythm after three boom years

THE 2024 Geneva watch fair opens on Tuesday amid slower demand in China for fancy Swiss timepieces and more timid consumer spending across the board on luxury items.

The Watches and Wonders salon, which runs until 15 April, will see 54 major watch brands show off their latest creations, including Rolex, Patek Philippe, Cartier, Chopard, Hermes and Chanel.

Formerly reserved for industry players, Swiss watchmaking's landmark event is trying to seduce a new generation of buyers by opening up to the public for three days.

Visitors during previous open days were aged 35 on average, "which is



A photo shows a general view with the stand of Swiss watch designer and manufacturer Rolex on the opening day of the "Watches and Wonders Geneva" luxury watch fair, in Geneva, on 8 April 2024. PHOTO: FABRICE COFFRINI / AFP

extremely encouraging", said Matthieu Humair, chief executive of the foundation that runs the salon.

Last year, Swiss watch exports broke records for the third straight year, hitting 26.7 billion Swiss francs (\$29.5 bil-

lion).

The 2020 downturn caused by the Covid-19 pandemic was quickly reversed by what financial analysts called revenge buying, with consumers using the savings accumulated during lockdowns to splash out. — AFP

No objection advertisement

The following (2) pesticides registering by Hangzhou Xinlong Industrial Co., Ltd. is changing the name of distributor from Myanmar A.T Nagar to A.T Phone Myint Kyaw Co., Ltd. Any objection regarding to this changing can notify at Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board within 14 days.

No.	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration Type	Registration No.
1.	Herbia QB Four	Bensulfuron -methyl 2% + Quinclorac 29% EA	Provisional	P2021-5277
2.	Intera EM-Three	Emamectin Benzoate 1% EC	Provisional	P2020-5198

A.T Phone Myint Kyaw Co., Ltd.

The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Central Committee for Holding Myanmar Gems Emporium The Information about 59th Myanmar Gems Emporium 2024

- The significant 59th Myanmar Gems Emporium 2024, under the supervision of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, will be held from May 3 to 12, 2024 at Maniyadana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw. Genuine Myanmar pearl, gems and rough jade lots will be sold at the Emporium.
- The local gems entrepreneurs who got the permit and the local gems merchants who got the license to operate in the finished gemstone making and dealing under the Myanmar Gem Law, will be allowed to attend and purchase the Lots at 59th Myanmar Gems Emporium, 2024 according to the terms and conditions.
- For further information in detail about granted admission to purchase Lots at 59th Myanmar Gems Emporium, 2024, any merchants can inquire and keep contact with Emporium Central Committee, Myanmar Gems Enterprise (Head Office), Myanmar Pearl Enterprise (Head Office) in Nay Pyi Taw.

Emporium Central Committee

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

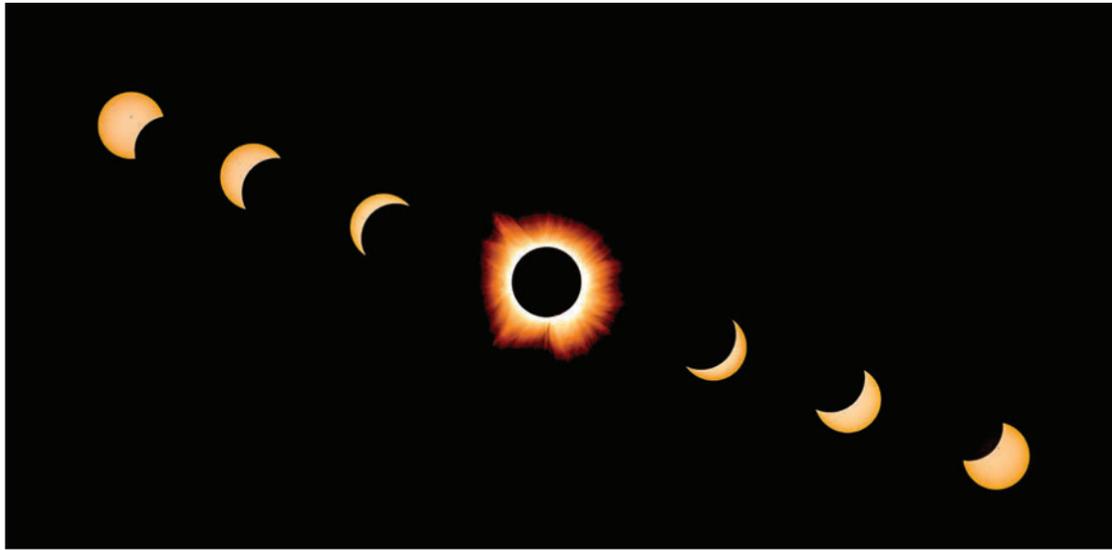
‘Spectacular’ total eclipse leaves North Americans spellbound

ECLIPSE mania gripped North America on Monday as a breathtaking celestial spectacle captivated tens of millions of people, offering a rare blend of scientific interest, commercial opportunity and daytime partying.

The Moon’s shadow plunged the Pacific coast of Mexico into total darkness at 11:07 am local time (1807 GMT) then swept across the United States at supersonic speed, returning to the ocean over Canada’s Atlantic coast just under an hour-and-a-half after landfall.

Festivals, viewing parties and even mass weddings took place along the eclipse’s “path of totality”, where the Sun’s corona glowed from behind the Moon in a display that left crowds awestruck.

“It was spectacular. I had never witnessed anything like it,” said Paulina Nava, a 36-year-old resident of the beachside Mexican city of Mazatlan.



In this composite of seven photographs, the moon passes by the sun during a total solar eclipse in Bloomington, Indiana, on 8 April 2024. This year’s path of totality is 115 miles (185 kilometres) wide and home to nearly 32 million Americans, with an additional 150 million living less than 200 miles from the strip. The next total solar eclipse that can be seen from a large part of North America won’t come around until 2044.

PHOTO: JOSH EDELSON / AFP

People “screamed, they applauded, some were taking photos, others were kissing,” she added. President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, who travelled to the city, called the event a “very

beautiful, unforgettable day.” Thousands of miles away in downtown Montreal, Canada, office workers spilled out of skyscrapers to snap pictures with their eclipse glasses held to their

phones. “My heart was beating really fast,” said 26-year-old Erica Park. The path of totality was 115 miles (185 kilometres) wide

and home to nearly 32 million Americans, with an additional 150 million living less than 200 miles from the strip, according to NASA, which ran a live webcast throughout.

School closures, mass weddings

Hotels and short-term rentals in prime viewing locations were booked solid for months in advance across states including Texas, Arkansas, Ohio and Maine.

In Ingram, Texas, at the Stonehenge II park — a replica of the prehistoric monument in England — eclipse watchers gathered from around the world, undeterred by overcast conditions.

Jeni Lyn Hunter, 57, and her husband Charles Guillory, 60, had travelled from Floresville, Texas. The couple identified as “pagans” and wore Merlin hats. — AFP

Japan to ink deal with NASA on cooperation for Moon exploration plan

JAPAN’S science minister Masahito Moriyama said Tuesday he will travel to the United States to sign a deal later this week with NASA affirming Tokyo’s cooperation on a US-led lunar exploration programme.

The Artemis programme aims to send US astronauts to the lunar surface in 2026 for the first time in over half a century, and Moriyama and Bill Nelson, administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, are expected to agree on a deal that also includes two Japanese astronauts travelling to the Moon.

Their meeting comes as Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and US President Joe Biden are scheduled to hold a summit in Washington on Wednesday. — Kyodo

New York judge rejects Trump’s request to delay hush money trial

A judge from the New York Court of Appeals on Monday rejected former US President Donald Trump’s emergency request to delay a criminal trial on his hush money payments to an adult film star during the 2016 presidential campaign, according to media reports.

Associate Justice Lizbeth Gonzalez from an appellate court in Manhattan denied Trump’s bid to delay the criminal trial scheduled for 15 April following a hearing.

Trump’s legal team asked the judge to postpone the trial indefinitely as efforts are made to change the venue of the trial.

Seen as the first of this kind facing an ex-US president, the criminal trial against Trump regarding election interference would begin on 15 April with jury selection, another New York judge, Juan Merchan said earlier. — Xinhua

WHO chief calls for protection of healthcare facilities in conflicts



Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (C), director-general of the World Health Organization (WHO), speaks at a panel discussion in Geneva, Switzerland on 8 April 2024. PHOTO: XINHUA

THE head of the World Health Organization (WHO) on Monday called for health care facilities and personnel to be protected from targeted violence during conflicts.

Speaking at a panel discussion at WHO’s headquarters in Geneva, Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that damage to health care facilities and their staff has become the

norm, as seen in Gaza, Sudan and Ethiopia.

Tedros’ remarks came in the wake of deadly attacks on aid workers by Israel, which have sparked international outrage and condemnation. The violence puts an added strain on health systems which are already overwhelmed, and leads to psychological trauma for vulnerable patients, the WHO chief said.

More than 1,400 attacks on healthcare centres have been documented in the last year, leaving 742 people dead and causing over a thousand injuries, according to statistics provided by the United Nations’ (UN) health agency.

Hospitals and medical personnel should be sacrosanct during conflicts, in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, emphasized UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk at Monday’s talks.

Meanwhile, in areas free of conflict, global warming has exacerbated droughts and floods, damaging health and livelihoods, Turk warned.

“One of the unfortunate things of war is that it’s always about crisis management, which doesn’t leave much room to actually deal with the big challenges of our time,” the UN human rights chief said. “The climate crisis is clearly one of them.” — Xinhua

SPORTS



China's Liu Huanhua refreshes men's 102kg world records at IWF World Cup

Liu Huanhua of China competes during the men's 102kg category at the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) World Cup in Phuket, Thailand, 8 April 2024. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

CHINA'S Liu Huanhua dominated the men's 102 kilogrammes category at the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) World Cup here on Monday, setting new world records in the clean and jerk and in total.

Ranking fifth in the snatch with his best attempt of 181kg, Liu lifted 225kg in the second attempt to secure the gold medals in the clean and jerk and in total, before going on to lift 232kg for a total of 413kg to set new world records in both categories — the first time since the men's 102kg category was set in

2018. "I performed my best and even went beyond my training level, achieving my goal to set new world records in the clean and jerk and in total," Liu said, with his sights on the Paris Olympics. "China has not won an Olympic gold medal in the 100-plus-kg category. I hope that I can continue our predecessors' efforts and become the first Chinese weightlifter to win an Olympic gold medal in this category," he added.

The IWF World Cup in Phuket runs until 11 April and serves as a qualifying event for Paris 2024. — Xinhua

Myanmar U-19 team aims high for international tournaments



Myanmar U-19 team players (blue) are seen in action during the friendly match against Shan United. **PHOTO: MFF**

A total of 32 Myanmar U-19 footballers are currently conducting camping training for the upcoming international matches, as stated by the Myanmar Football Federation.

Head coach U Aung Nang is managing the team, which was built with talented players from local clubs and various states and regions, starting from the year's start.

Team Myanmar has been trying to build capacity for a long time. As a result, they won two friendlies and lost one against top local clubs, Shan United, Yangon United and Hanthawady United, in March.

The young Myanmar squad will also compete in the 2024 ASEAN U-19 Championship, which will be held in

Indonesia from 20 June to 3 July, so that they will take special training during the Thingyan period. The team will also set a target for the upcoming U-20 Asian Cup Qualifiers. The Myanmar Football Federation is arranging international friendly matches for the young team in preparation for the ASEAN tourney. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

Frattesi's late winner helps Inter turn around Udinese

INTER Milan marched another step towards their 20th Serie A title as they rallied to beat Udinese 2-1 away on Monday, with Davide Frattesi scoring a last-gasp winner.

The Nerazzurri dominated the game from the very beginning but it was the home side that broke the deadlock in the 40th minute with a stroke of luck when Lazar Samardzic's strike took a slight deflection and went into the net, leaving Yann Sommer rooted to the ground.

Carlos Augusto thought he had grabbed the equalizer for Inter straight after the break, but it was wiped out due to Lautaro Martinez's offside position when flicking the ball.



FC Inter Milan's Davide Frattesi (C) celebrates his goal during a Serie A football match between Udinese and FC Inter Milan in Udine, Italy, 8 April 2024. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

But Inter eventually got back on level terms in the 55th minute when Marcus Thuram

earned a spot-kick, and Hakan Calhanoglu stepped up to convert it. — Xinhua

Serie A asks for Rome derby racism probe

SERIE A asked on Tuesday for further investigation into alleged racist chanting from fans during the weekend's stormy Rome derby, won 1-0 by Roma.

In a statement Italy's top flight requested that football federation (FIGC) prosecutors probe chants from both sets of supporters directed at Roma striker Romelu Lukaku and Lazio midfielder Matteo Guendouzi.

Serie A also said it wanted prosecutors to look into "religiously discriminatory" chants from Lazio fans at their Roma counterparts.

The league did not specify the nature of the abuse, but Lazio's "ultras" have a long history of referring to Roma fans as

Jewish as an insult. Lazio have a reputation for having fascist fans but both sets of supporters in the Italian capital have hardcore groups with longstanding ties to extreme right politics.

Serie A also asked for further probes into Roma's match-winner Gianluca Mancini, who after the match celebrated with fans in the stands and waved a flag depicting Lazio supporters as rats.

Italy international Mancini headed the only goal of a tense clash to end Roma's two-year winless run against their local rivals. In the wild celebrations that followed the final whistle both he and Paulo Dybala, who supplied the cross from which Mancini scored the winner, joined in with chants and waving flags. — AFP



War-left US aerial bomb safely removed in Cambodia's coastal province: official

A Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC)'s expert team has safely removed a war-left US-made MK-82 aerial bomb from a sea area in Preah Sihanouk province's Prey Nob district, a mine clearance chief said on Tuesday.

CMAC Director-General Heng Ratana said the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) expert team discovered the unexploded bomb and safely transported it to the CMAC's disposal centre on Monday.

"This bomb has lasted in the ocean area for more than 50 years, but it's still in good shape and quality," he said in a Facebook post.

Ratana said the discovered MK-82 aerial bomb weighed around 230 kilograms.

According to the official, in early March, the EOD expert team had also unearthed and safely removed three MK-82 aerial bombs in Kampong Speu and Kandal provinces.

Cambodia is one of the countries that suffered most from mines and unexploded ordnances as the result of three decades of war and internal conflicts from the mid-1960s until 1998. An estimated four to six million land mines and other munitions left over from the conflicts. — Xinhua



The shells of war-left US bombs and other munitions are displayed at an event in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 20 July 2018. PHOTO: XINHUA

China exercises veto power in UN Security Council to uphold international justice: envoy

A Chinese envoy on Monday shared China's resolute stance on the use of veto power in the UN Security Council, par-

ticularly regarding a draft resolution on 22 March, emphasizing the imperative to uphold international justice.

Addressing the UN General Assembly meeting debating the use of veto power in the Security Council, Dai Bing, the charge d'affaires of China's permanent mission to the United Nations, explained why China, together with Algeria and Russia, firmly opposed on 22 March a US-proposed draft resolution on Gaza. He highlighted the necessity of "upholding international justice, the purposes and dignity of the UN Charter, and the responsibility and authority of the Security Council."

Dai conveyed the collective aspiration for peace that had been echoing across the international community since the onset of the Gaza conflict.

"Since the outbreak of the Gaza conflict, the international community has been calling overwhelmingly for a ceasefire and an end to the fighting, urgently expecting the Security Council to take concrete actions," he said. — Xinhua

Russia, China to continue cooperation in fight against terrorism - Lavrov

RUSSIA and China will continue cooperation in the fight against terrorism, including through multilateral mechanisms, after the terrorist attack at the Crocus City Hall concert venue near Moscow, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Tuesday. Lavrov also noted that the Russian presidential election held in March took place under conditions of "severe external pressure from the West and a surge in terrorist attacks by the Kyiv regime".

"As you know, shelling of Russian cities has become more frequent, leading to civilian casualties, and numerous attempts by hackers to hack our electoral system have been detected," the Russian diplomat added. — SPUTNIK



Representatives vote on a draft resolution during a UN Security Council meeting at the UN headquarters in New York, on 22 March 2024. PHOTO: ESKINDER DEBEBE/UN PHOTO/HANDOUT VIA XINHUA