

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR



A worker transfers export rice bags at a warehouse in Yangon, Myanmar. **PHOTO:XINHUA**

Myanmar bags US\$845 mln from rice exports in FY 2023-2024

THE value of Myanmar's rice and broken rice exports exceeded US\$845 million from over 1.68 million tonnes in the financial year 2023-2024 (April-March), comprising 1.59 million tonnes by seaborne trade and over 89,000 tonnes at the border, statistics released by Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF) showed.

The export volumes were registered at 87,648 tonnes worth \$36 million in April 2023, 110,706 tonnes worth \$48 million in May, 62,725 tonnes worth

\$28 million in June, 58,334 tonnes worth \$26 million in July, 59,971 tonnes worth \$28 million in August, 84,773 tonnes worth \$42 million in September, 119,526 tonnes worth \$63 million in October, 175,990 tonnes worth \$90 million in November, 195,829 tonnes worth \$99 million in December, 213,605 tonnes worth \$111 million in January 2024, 262,116 tonnes worth \$139 million in February and 257,037 tonnes worth \$133 million in March respectively.

Therefore, the rice export volume recorded the highest in February,

followed by March and January. The figures showed a drop in June, July and August.

The federation aims to achieve 2.5 million tonnes of rice export in the FY 2023-2024, generating earnings of US\$1 billion. However, rice exports fell short of the target.

The Central Bank of Myanmar's monetary policy to control export earnings impeded rice exports, hurting exporters financially. The El Nino weather condition also hampered rice export, the chairperson of the Myanmar Rice Federation affirmed.

Myanmar exported 2,261,203 tonnes of rice and broken rice to foreign trade partners in the past 2022-2023 FY (April-March), with an estimated value of \$853.472 million.

Myanmar bagged over \$809.135 million from approximately 2.164 million tonnes of rice export in the 2021-2022 FY (April-March). — NN/EM

Agri Dept plans expansion of coffee plantations nationwide in 5 years

THE Coffee and Seasonal Crops Division of the Department of Agriculture plans to expand coffee plantations to 300,000 acres over the next five years, beginning in the financial year 2023-24.

U Myint Swe, Director of the division, outlined the strategy: "We aim to cultivate Arabica on 200,000 acres across four zones and Robusta on 100,000 acres across three zones."

Arabica cultivation will cover 75,000 acres in PyinOoLwin, Nawnghkio, and Mogok; 35,000 acres in Ywangan, Pindaya, and Naungtaya; 37,000 acres in the mountain ranges of Hopong, Heho, Pinlaung, and Melne; and 53,000 acres in Kengtung, Tachilek, and eastern Shan State.

Conversely, Robusta will be cultivated across 50,000 acres in Taninthayi Region, 25,000 acres in Ayeyawady Region, and 25,000 acres in Kayin State within the specified timeframe.

Arabica thrives at higher altitudes in cooler climates, whereas Robusta is more tolerant of warmer temperatures.

The Department of Agriculture is sharing expertise, knowledge, and marketable coffee seedlings and tools to support this initiative. — ASH/NT



A coffee plantation.

NATIONAL

PAGE-2



Kawthoung expected to draw more visitors than Myeik Archipelago during Thingyan

NATIONAL

PAGE-4



Central Body for Summoning People's Military Servants holds 3rd coord meeting

BUSINESS

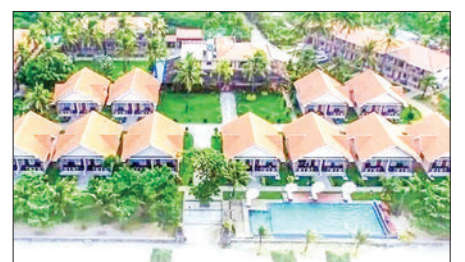
PAGE-7



Domestic gold price falls after hitting historic peak

NATIONAL

PAGE-10

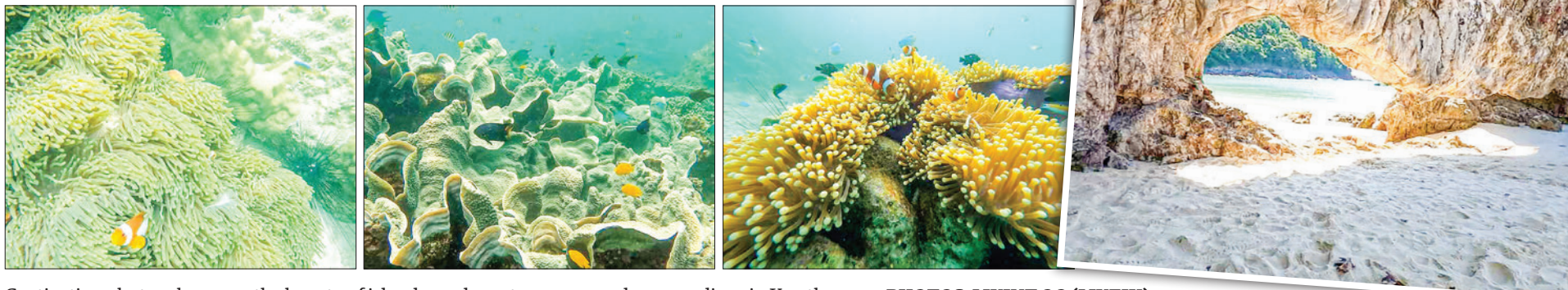


Changtha, Ngwehsaung hotels fully booked for Thingyan Festival

NATIONAL



Kawthoung expected to draw more visitors than Myeik Archipelago during Thingyan



Captivating photos showcase the beauty of islands, underwater scenes and surroundings in Kawthoung. **PHOTOS: MYINT OO (MYEIK)**

ACCORDING to travel agencies, the number of visitors to the islands of Kawthoung is likely to be higher than the number of visitors to the Myeik Archipelago during this Thingyan period.

Moreover, the public interest is also high in major trips to Kawthoung Township, and the tours are fully booked.

“It is learnt that the visitors to Kawthoung will be high this year. The location is peaceful

and provides the best services on private islands, aiming at attracting visitors rather than profits. The travel agents make bookings for air tickets in advance and arrange the two-way tickets and tours around the islands. It costs K2.5 million per head to NyaungOoPhee Island and Macleod Island, but the arrivals of visitors are on the rise,” said a travel agent.

The travel agencies offer tours to islands from Yangon

during the Thingyan period K1.5million (Hotel, round ticket, food) per head for a two-night trip, K5million for a 10-people private night-stay trip from Myeik to Bailey island and Sparkling Bay.

“There is no one who makes bookings to visit the islands in Kyunsu township of Myeik District. There are only about ten people who made bookings for the Thingyan period. It can be said that tourism in the Myeik

Archipelago is at a minus. We make preparations for services. Currently, people come for business purposes, and there are no visitors who are there for pleasure. For the current fuel prices, we can send the visitors with speed boats if the number of people is less than ten. It is K1.1 million for the Marcus island tour and K2.3 million for the Bailey Sparkling Bay tour,” said an official from the Myeik District Tourism Entrepreneurs Association.

Although there were over 40 travel companies in the Myeik archipelago, there are now about ten companies.

During the first week of April, the public interest in visiting Kawthoung is higher than in the tours to Kyunsu township in Taninthayi Region. The hotel bookings for tours in Kawthoung Township are fully reserved, while the bookings for tours in Kyunsu Township are declined. — Myint Oo (Myeik)/KTZH

Myanmar National Airlines to operate Yangon-Mangshi-Yangon Cargo Flights

MYANMAR National Airlines will start operating the Yangon-Mangshi-Yangon Cargo Flight using a Boeing 737-800 aircraft on 3 April, 2024, as the airline has begun the operation of cargo flights since November 2023. The Cargo will be operated two days a week according to the schedule below. — MNA/KZL

Date	From-to	Flight No	Departure (Local Time)	Arrival (Local Time)
2 Times Per Week (Wednesday-Sunday)	Yangon-Mangshi	UB-8101	10:20	13:40
	Mangshi-Yangon	UB-8102	15:00	15:20



One aircraft of the MNA fleet.

NATIONAL



State Administration Council Vice-Chairman Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win addresses the meeting with trainees and cadets yesterday at the Tatmadaw (Army) Combat Forces Training School (Bahtoo).

People urged to avoid propaganda of armed terrorists to prevent loss of lives in jungles

VICE-SENIOR General Soe Win urged all trainees to organize the people not to follow the propaganda of armed terrorist groups and lose their lives in the jungles.

Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win met trainees from the infantry platoon training course and cadets from Bahtoo Station at Aung San Hall of Tatmadaw

(Army) Combat Forces Training School yesterday morning.

In the meeting with trainees, the Vice-Senior General explained reviewing military tactics of enemies to launch counter operations, enhancement of individual capacity to develop group-wise capacity, and harmonious deployment of combat power and combat capability.

The Vice-Senior General also underlined the need for those trainees to dutifully

serve assigned duties as they joined the Tatmadaw of their own accord.

He spotlighted the enforcement of the People's Military Service Law on 10 February and the Reserve Forces Law on 13 February 2024.

He stressed the need to raise legal awareness of those in line with the criteria of the laws described above and their families.

Moreover, the Vice-Senior General called for joining hands

with authorities to take action against some unscrupulous service personnel and organizations wishing to gain monetary and other opportunities in posing intimidation and coercion to innocent people who do not comprehensively understand the People's Military Service Law and the Rules.

The Chief of Defence Industries, the Chief of Air Defence and the Deputy Director of the Directorate of Military Engineers gave lectures on neces-

sary lessons to trainee officers, cadets and instructors who participated in discussions.

The Vice-Senior General and party had lunch together with trainees at the trainee mess hall of the Tatmadaw (Army) Combat Forces Training School (Bahtoo).

Also present at the ceremony were senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief, the commander of Eastern Command and officials. — MNA/TTA

DPM MoFA Union Minister holds briefing on humanitarian assistance

DEPUTY Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe held a briefing on humanitarian assistance to the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator ad interim and Representatives of the UN agencies in Myanmar at the Ayeyawady Hall of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

At the briefing, the Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs stressed that the Government attaches great importance to delivering humanitarian assistance to the needy population and is ready to cooperate fully with the UN agencies.

The MoFA deputy minister and senior officials also joined



The meeting between Deputy Prime Minister Union Foreign Affairs Minister U Than Swe and the delegation led by the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator ad interim underway yesterday.

the briefing, together with the UN Resident and Humanitari-

an Coordinator ad interim, as well as representatives of the

UN agencies in Myanmar. — MNA

NATIONAL

Central Body for Summoning People's Military Servants holds 3rd coord meeting

STATE Administration Council Member Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Defence Admiral Tin Aung San, in his capacity as Chairman of the Central Body for Summoning People's Military Servants, attended the 3/2024 coordination meeting of the central body in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Speaking at the meeting, the Admiral said the chairman and vice-chair have already set the proper work plans, reviewing the good points and weak points with the officials of the relevant sectors after hearing the completed activities and challenges presented by the Nay Pyi Taw Council, Region/State Security and Border Affairs Ministers and secretaries.

Moreover, the final version of the Rules (draft) was submitted to the Ministry of Legal Affairs to check in accordance with the legal ways and to seek their suggestions. After receiving the recommendations from the



SAC Member Deputy Prime Minister Union Defence Minister Admiral Tin Aung San chairs the coordination meeting 3/2024 of the Central Body for Summoning People's Military Servants yesterday.

ministry, the draft rules will be amended and submitted to the Union government meeting via the Security, Peace and Stability and Rule of Law Committee so as to release the Rules if it is approved.

The Admiral also highlighted the efforts of the central body to open the training for the first batch in April 2024, public aware-

ness programmes, sending of Short Message Service (SMS) about the People's Military Service Law by four Mobile Operators to combat rumours and false information, and announcement of telephone numbers on state-run newspaper for enquiries.

He also talked about the online training to be able to fill up the data correctly by draft-

ing the Excel Formats, ensuring the systematic inventory and the exact system as per the SOP in summoning the people's military servants, plans to conduct multiplier training and systematic recording system.

He added that it can be seen that many people voluntarily registered to do the military service, but the ward/township

level officials should supervise and ensure they are the actual volunteers.

He then underscored that the opposition organizations spread false information and disinformation on social media and threatened the ward/village-tract administrators and officials. Action is being taken against the those who spread fake news. Responsible organizations should invest in acting on information from the public to be able to take action and reduce false information and such threats.

Vice-Chairman of the central body Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Maung Maung Aye also discussed the establishment of call centres for respective regions/states, measures to receive exact figures of eligible people for conscription and conduct public awareness programmes.

Finally, the Admiral gave instructions and concluded the meeting. — MNA/KTZH

MoPF delegation departs for Laos to attend 28th ASEAN Finance Ministers' Meeting



Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Planning and Finance U Win Shein (C) is pictured before leaving for Laos.

THE delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Planning and Finance U Win Shein left for the Lao People's Democratic Republic yesterday to attend the 28th ASEAN Finance Ministers' Meeting, related meetings and seminars, which will be held

from 3 to 6 April 2024 in Luang Prabang.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic, alternate chairman of ASEAN this year, will hold the 28th ASEAN Finance Ministers Meeting, related meetings and discussions. — MNA/TS

CBM Deputy Governor attends 20th ASEAN Central Bank Deputies Meeting virtually

DR Lin Aung, Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, along with high-ranking officials, participated in the 20th ASEAN Central Bank Deputies Meeting (ACDM) and the ASEAN Finance and Central Bank Deputies Meeting (AFCDM) virtually yesterday.

The ACDM, initiated by the opening remarks of the Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, focused on financing Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the region in 2024. Subsequently, participants provided their insights to various working committees,

including Capital Account Liberalization, ASEAN Banking Integration Framework, Financial Inclusion, Payment and Settlement System, Financial Services Liberalization, as well as matters concerning the ASEAN Swap Arrangement and ASEAN Cybersecurity Resilience and Information Sharing Platform.

In the afternoon session, the ASEAN Secretary-General's Office delivered presentations on the status of ASEAN Economic Cooperation, the AEC Blueprint 2025, ASEAN Community Vision 2045, and the ASEAN Financial Integration

Monitoring Report 2024 during the AFCDM.

Following this, various working committees provided updates on the progress of the Senior Level Committee on ASEAN Financial Integration and outlined tasks for the financial year 2024-25. ASEAN Central Bank deputies offered their advice and guidance.

The meeting concluded with the confirmation of drafts for the joint statement and programme to be submitted to the 11th ASEAN Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors' Meeting. — MNA/NT



The virtual meeting of the 20th ASEAN Central Bank Deputies Meeting in progress yesterday.

NATIONAL

Coffee, agri-produce from PRC's Dehong introduced in Nay Pyi Taw

THE ceremony to introduce coffee and agricultural products from Dehong prefecture took place yesterday at the MGallery Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw. The event was organized by the CPC Dehong Dai and Jingpo Prefectural Committee of Yunnan Province, the People's Republic of China, and the Dehong Chambers of Commerce Myanmar Representative Office.

Union Ministers U Myint Naung and U Tun Ohn, along with Deputy Ministers Dr Tin Htut, Dr Myo Thant, and U Min Min, as well as the permanent secretary, departmental officials, personnel from the Chinese Embassy to Myanmar, the Secretary of CPC Dehong Dai and Jingpo Prefectural Committee of Yunnan Province, personnel from the Dehong Chambers of Commerce Myanmar Representative Office and coffee companies from Dehong attended the event.

Participating coffee companies from Dehong included Hou Gu Co Ltd, Yun Cha Wu Co Ltd, Hei Rou Co Ltd, and Yi Nuo Chun Co Ltd. These companies displayed and explained their



A debut ceremony for coffee and agricultural produce from Dehong Prefecture of Yunnan Province, the People's Republic of China, in progress yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

coffees and agricultural products to the Union Ministers and other attendees.

The Secretary of CPC Dehong Dai and Jingpo Prefectural Committee also provided information about Dehong coffee and agricultural produce.

Union Minister for Commerce U Tun Ohn announced Myanmar's ambition to enter the global coffee market and become a coffee-exporting coun-

try. He highlighted the establishment of a central body on 10 May 2022 for coffee value chain development and the formation of the Myanmar Coffee Export Promotion Task Force by relevant ministries and departments to promote Myanmar's coffee globally, expand coffee plantations, and develop the coffee value chain.

Furthermore, the Union minister discussed drafting a

roadmap and action plans for the development of the coffee industry, organizing excursion trips to ASEAN countries, proposing a project to establish a wholesale centre for coffee industry development, and the ongoing work of the working committee for promoting coffee export.

Additionally, the Union minister invited collaboration in knowledge and technique exchange with Myanmar coffee

manufacturing entrepreneurs, noting that Dehong produces 95 per cent of coffee products in the PRC. At present, Dehong prefecture grows highland coffee plantations, whereas lowland coffee plantations were primarily cultivated before.

At the event, eight companies from Dehong displayed coffee seeds, coffee powder, instant coffee mix, and dried tea leaves. Union Minister U Tun Ohn also encouraged Dehong companies to participate in exhibitions alongside Myanmar private businesses. He expressed that the Myanmar Coffee Association will study the cultivation, plantation, production, and exporting of crops, including coffee, from China and collaborate in potential economic sectors with China.

Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation Dr Tin Htut provided an overview of coffee plantations, production, and export progress in Myanmar.

Afterwards, the group photos were taken, and the attendees enjoyed the dinner. — MNA/TMT



The Secretary of CPC Dehong Dai and Jingpo Prefectural Committee of Yunnan Province meets MIFER Deputy Minister Dr Wah Wah Maung yesterday.

MIFER Deputy Minister receives Secretary of Party Committee of Dehong Prefecture, Yunnan Province

DR Wah Wah Maung, Deputy Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations, received the delegation led by Mr Jiang Shan, Secretary of CPC Dehong Dai and Jingpo Prefectural Committee of Yun-

nan Province, the People's Republic of China, at Office No 1, Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday.

During the meeting, both sides discussed matters relating to bilateral economic and investment cooperation be-

tween Myanmar and Dehong Prefecture, Yunnan Province.

Senior officials from the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations also attended the meeting. — MNA

MoC Deputy Minister meets Chinese delegation

DEPUTY Minister for Commerce U Min Min received a delegation led by Mr Jiang Shan, Secretary of CPC Dehong Dai and Jingpo Prefectural Committee of Yunnan Province, at Office No 3 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed the development of trade between the two countries, the possibility of business people from the two countries participating in trade fairs, making trade

routes faster and smoother, overcoming the difficulties currently encountered in trade, and developing the entire business sector.

They also had a friendly and open discussion on the possibility of increasing cross-border cooperation in the production sector between the two countries and the possibility of increasing the number of products in the trade between the two countries. — MNA/KZL



The meeting between Deputy Minister for Commerce U Min Min and the Chinese delegation underway yesterday.

NATIONAL

Seeder use in rice cultivation advocated in Yangon Region

ON 31st March, the Chief Minister of the Yangon Region and his entourage observed the harvesting of 90-day rice from three acres of paddies belonging to a farmer, using a combine harvester.

U Khin Maung Aye, a farmer from Wakauktaw village in Kungyangon township of Yangon Region, sowed the rice using a seeder instead of manual sowing. It was discovered that the rice yield increased from 70 or 80 baskets to 123 baskets. Consequently, U Khin Maung Aye en-

couraged other farmers to adopt the practice of using seeders for rice cultivation.

The chief minister also urged farmers to switch to seeders, highlighting that traditional sowing methods result in loss, wastage, inefficiency, and high costs. The Department of Agriculture in Kungyangon township pledged to provide educational support to farmers on the use of seeders for rice cultivation in the upcoming monsoon season. — TWA/MKKS



The photo shows farmer U Khin Maung Aye explaining the benefits of growing by seeders.

Myanmar Trade Centre (Kunming) unveiled in Yunnan Province



The opening ceremony of the Myanmar Trade Centre (Kunming) in action on 31 March 2024.

THE Myanmar Trade Centre (Kunming City) was opened at China (Yunnan) Pilot Free Trade Zone in Kunming City, Yunnan Province of the People's Republic of China, on 31 March, according to the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization under the Ministry of Commerce.

The establishment of the centre is the result of collaboration between the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization and the Consulate-General of Myanmar in Kunming, including relevant Chinese author-

ities from Yunnan Province.

The Myanmar Trade Centre (Kunming) is operated by a joint venture between AJ Myanmar Co Ltd from Myanmar and Kunming Aosidi International Trade Co Ltd from China, with the aim of facilitating investment exchange between the two nations.

Through this centre, the operators will facilitate the growth of exports from Myanmar to China, the flow of investments from China to Myanmar, the introduction of Myanmar products, and the

invitation of investments by showcasing economic opportunities in Myanmar.

Nearly 150 participants, including Consul-General U Thaw Ta Aung, Commercial Attaché U Lian Sian Mung, Director-General Daw Naw Muta Kapaw of the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization, Chinese government officials from Yunnan Province, and traders, attended the opening ceremony of the Myanmar Trade Centre (Kunming) in Kunming City, China. — ASH/ TH

High influx of onions brings down onion prices

WITH an abundant supply of onions in the markets of Yangon and other regions, the prices are on a downward trend.

New summer onions are also flooding the markets. Those who keep the inventory are also waiting for the price decline.

A total of 333,600 visses of onions from various regions entered three main depots, with 105,000 visses to Pakokku depot, 148,600 to Myingyan and 80,000 to Seikphyu.

The prices moved in the range between K1,600 and K3,000 per viss depending on the producing areas, with 1.3 million viss of onions flowing into the Bayintnaung commodity wholesale centre between 28

March and 2 April.

Domestic onion cultivation covers about 100,000 acres, with a production rate of 600 million visses. The market saw high exports in 2022 and 2023.

Those traders who kept the stocks in hands reaped losses in late 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020 and 2021. They made a significant profit in 2015, 2019, 2022 and 2023. The traders store the onions so that they can last longer. The prices are expected to reach K1,500 per viss.

The onion yield is K4,000-K6,000 viss per acre. The growers receive K6-K9 million per acre. Onion cultivation costs K3 million per acre. Therefore, they earn a handsome profit. — TWA/KK



The photo shows the Ministry of Commerce in Nay Pyi Taw.

Trade Dept issues import licence warning for medicines, medical devices

THE Department of Trade has urged importers to obtain import licences before loading medications and medical equipment onto vessels, cautioning that appropriate action will be taken if imports

arrive at the port without these licences.

Furthermore, the Department of Trade has granted approval for 138 import licences from 28 companies covering medicines and medical

equipment valued at US\$10.62 million, which were already stored in bonded warehouses.

Importers have been cautioned against repeating this action in the future. — TWA/ MKKS

2024 Myanmar Business, Investment Forum & CETC Think Tank News Media Seminar held in Beijing

THE Ministry of Foreign Affairs has reported that the 2024 Myanmar Business and Investment Forum & CETC Think Tank News Media Seminar, organized by the CETC, took place at the Myanmar Embassy in Beijing, People's Republic of China, on 31 March.

The purpose of the event was to foster bilateral economic collaboration and investment, given the friendly neighbour status of the two countries. Myanmar Ambassador U Tin Maung Swe highlighted numerous investment opportunities in Myanmar due to its geographical position and the favourable environment it offers to investors, extending an invitation to Chinese investors to explore business prospects in Myanmar.

Daw Thin Thin Aung, Myanmar Commercial Attaché, outlined Myanmar's investment policy, priority sectors for investment, government initiatives to facilitate favourable conditions for investors, the e-commerce platform, and other relevant conditions related to foreign investment.

Mr Liu Wei from the Myanmar-Chi-



2024 Myanmar Business and Investment Forum & CETC Think Tank News Media Seminar and the attendees pose the group documentary photo.

na Culture and Tourism Promotion Society spoke about the friendly nature and cultural richness of the Myanmar people. He also addressed misinformation circulating on Chinese social media about Myanmar, emphasizing the safety of tour destinations in the country.

Key figures in attendance at the event included Myanmar Ambassador to the People's Republic of China U Tin Maung Swe, CETC Patron Mr Xu Liangqing, CETC Chairperson and General Secretary Yu Yanzhong, and potential Chinese investors interested in investing in Myanmar. — ASH/TMT

MGMA to open Basic Sewing Machine Operator Training Course Batch 236

MYANMAR Garment Manufacturers Association (MGMA) will offer a Basic Sewing Machine Operator Training Course (Batch 236) from 22 April to 10 May 2024 at Myanmar Garment Human Resources Development Training Centre (MGHRDC).

The course will provide practical and technical approaches to sewing machines, different sewing methods, labour laws and practices.

This training will also help those hunting jobs from regions outside Yangon connect with the garment factories with a view to creating job opportunities.

Those who wish to attend the training can enrol through phone numbers: 09 940858350, 09 450723262, 09 9403912570, 09 784085794 and 09 969865024. — NN/EM

Domestic gold price falls after hitting historic peak

THE domestic gold price declined to K4.4 million per tical (0.578 ounce or 0.016 kilogramme) on 2 April after hitting an all-time high of K4.535 million per tical on 30 March 2024, reflecting a drop of over K100,000 per tical in the past three days.

The spot gold price hit over US\$2,250 per ounce on 2 April, and the kyat-US dollar exchange rate is K3,880.

The domestic gold price is on the high side on account of the spot gold price rally and kyat depreciation against the dollar. The Yangon Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA) set



Premium gold of the Academy emblem with rising price on the market.

the reference price at K3.8743 million per tical, showing a large gap of over K520,000 per tical with

the actual market value.

The YGEA was notified on 30 March that an inspection was

being undertaken against those allegedly manipulating the market with 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. The YGEA condemned those unscrupulous traders and their dishonest acts. The 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. The YGEA also requested their members to follow the YGEA's reference price and warned them not to be involved in those verbal deals of the brokers.

Additionally, the YGEA notified gold shop owners of seeking a gem trading certificate and gold trading licence for gold ingot issued by the Yangon City Development Committee. Despite the YGEA's reference price, spot gold price rally and kyat depreciation in the forex market pushed up the gold price to a record high of over K4.5 million per tical. — NN/EM

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OPINION

Prepare to counteract the impact of El Niño

THE global impact of El Niño is steadily worsening, ushering in high temperatures and consequential phenomena like droughts and erratic rainfall, particularly during the summer months. Meteorologists have recently warned that within the next ten days, the effects of El Niño will manifest in the form of heat waves across various regions worldwide.

Countries in Southeast Asia, including Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand, are bracing themselves for severe heat waves, with temperatures expected to soar to 40-45 degrees Celsius. Neighbouring nations are also likely to experience the ripple effects of these extreme weather conditions. Therefore, Myanmar must take proactive measures to address the challenges posed by the impending heat waves this summer. To this end, relevant organizations and governmental bodies must prepare comprehensive strategies to mitigate the impact on the population, ensuring adequate provisions of food, clothing, and shelter during emergencies.

Mitigating the impact of El Niño is not solely the responsibility of the government; it requires collective action from all members of society. By fostering unity and collectively adopting responsible behaviours, individuals of Myanmar can significantly contribute to preserving lives, property, and the overall well-being of humanity amidst the challenges posed by the possible high temperature of evil El Niño.

movements in extreme heat. Special attention should be given to elderly individuals and those with chronic illnesses, who are more vulnerable to heat-related complications.

Furthermore, the general public must remain vigilant against dehydration and prioritize rehydration with salt solutions and prescribed medications. Dietary habits should be carefully monitored, and precautions should be taken even during sporadic rainfall, such as refraining from bathing outdoors. Everyone must be diligent in navigating through the challenges posed by the impending heat waves.

Mitigating the impact of El Niño is not solely the responsibility of the government; it requires collective action from all members of society. By fostering unity and collectively adopting responsible behaviours, individuals of Myanmar can significantly contribute to preserving lives, property, and the overall well-being of humanity amidst the challenges posed by the possible high temperature of evil El Niño.

Regional authorities must also prioritize the management of electricity distribution, ensuring that power supply is efficiently allocated as people increase their usage during periods of extreme heat. Contingency plans should be devised to safeguard both lives and property in the event of power shortages.

Additionally, health officials must launch public awareness campaigns to educate citizens on how to cope with the challenges posed by El Niño. High temperatures can lead to health issues such as cardiovascular problems, strokes, and even fatalities. Therefore, it is imperative that authorities disseminate health guidelines to be issued by the Ministry of Health, advising individuals to refrain from consuming icy beverages, excessively using air-conditioning, engaging in strenuous physical activity, or making sudden

“MYANMAR is the largest inland area within the South-east Asia region, with 56 million people. It offers an incredible cultural variety and its diverse beauty ranges from snow-capped Himalayan mountaintops to vast underwater reefs.

I would like to extend my invitation to the people of Czechia to visit Myanmar,” says Mr Htuann Naung, Chargé d’Affaires of Myanmar, adding: “I am certain that in the future we can further strengthen the friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries.”

Can you tell us a bit about yourself?

I am currently taking responsibility as the Head of Mission of the Embassy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in Prague in the capacity of Chargé d’Affaires. Although I graduated in Veterinary Medicine, I decided in the end to serve my country and our people as a diplomat since I have always been interested in this field. That is also why I studied International Relations and Diplomacy at the Australian National University in Canberra. This is my second time in Europe, as I had previously attended the Federal Foreign Service Academy of Germany in 2010 for diplomatic training. I came to Prague together with my beloved wife.

You have been in the Czech Republic for about a year now. What are some of your impressions?

I arrived in this glorious city, Prague, on 7th August 2023. Since then, I have been enjoying life in this passionate country while learning about its history, culture, lifestyle, legendary traditional cuisine, well-preserved countryside with beautiful national parks, vast fields and gorges, as well as the heritage values of the Czech people. I am also impressed by the preservation of historical monuments, castles, and chateaus in this central European country, as well as its prestigious production of beer, crystals, and so on. Indeed, I have much respect for the technological advancements and innovative creativity here. Living in Prague is amazing! Its flowing river, famed bridges, and narrow cobbled streets are breathtaking and charming. The views of iconic sights such as Charles Bridge, Prague Castle, and elegant Wenceslas Square are an integral part of my daily working life now.

Myanmar is still rather an exotic and little-known country for Czechs. Would you like to give us some basic facts?

My country is famous for its rich history, culture, and lovely smiling people, as well as its natural resources such as oil, natural gas, teak, jade, gems, and other minerals. It is the largest inland area within the Southeast Asia region with 56 million people, neighbouring Bangladesh, India, China, Lao PDR, and Thailand.

Being a diplomat is the greatest adventure of my life

Interview with Mr Htuann Naung, Chargé d’Affaires of Myanmar

Myanmar is also known as “the golden land”, radiant with a crown of shimmering gold. It offers an incredible cultural variety and its diverse beauty ranges from snow-capped Himalayan mountaintops to vast underwater reefs. In 1948, we gained independence from Britain. Afterwards, peace, union spirit, and solidarity played vital roles in the interests of the state and its people. Under the 2008 Constitution of Myanmar, the country practices a parliamentary-based multiparty democratic system. Ancient cities and historical sites across the country provide proof of the development of past civilizations and king dynasties. The country is recognized for having many colourful and exciting festivals throughout the year.

Myanmar is also a member of the ASEAN group. What activities does this organization engage in?

Of course, Myanmar is one of the members of ASEAN, sharing our belief in creating a peaceful and prosperous place together for our people. Myanmar has been actively participating and contributing to ASEAN in our efforts to reach our common goals successfully and build one fine community to closely collaborate with other regional partners and multilateral institutions, including the European Union.

Here, we have the ASEAN-Prague Committee of the six embassies of ASEAN member countries in order to promote the image of ASEAN, share common views between ASEAN and EU, and enhance culture, food, and public diplomacy with the government of the Czech Republic. Last year, our committee conducted several events such as ASEAN Day, the ASEAN+3 Film Festival, a donation to the Czech Food Bank Federation, several engagements with both central and local Czech governments, a series of seminars and roundtable discussions in universities, and culture and food promotion and awareness activities across the country.

Does your personal lifestyle fit your diplomatic role well?

I can definitely say that there is an excellent match between my career and my dream lifestyle. A few years after my graduation, I made the best choice ever and decided to join the Foreign Service

– after realizing what my assumptions and perceptions were. Being a diplomat motivates me to put all my energy into my daily work and take joy in performing diplomacy. There are different approaches to a diplomat’s life, but I am sure that the way I execute my duties is in line with my motivation and dreams.

What is the best adventure your diplomatic career has brought you?

A diplomat’s life itself has been the greatest adventure of my life. I have some great memories of taking part in peace negotiations, conference diplomacy, and multilateral engagements, as well as diplomacy in hard times. I believe that learning from every single experience makes every little piece unforgettable for all diplomats.

How do you spend your free time?

Exploring my nearest surroundings is one of my favourite activities to do in my spare time. It always allows me to learn something new about the host country and to travel in order to observe the nature, history, and beautiful hearts of the local people. Reading also helps me think outside the box and use my imagination.

Keeping myself fit and active by attending the gym is also an option.

Do you promote your country as a holiday destination?

Concerning tourism, Myanmar is surely a destination country for world travellers. There are so many charming places to be explored. I would like to extend my invitation to the people of Czechia to visit Myanmar. Enjoying every experience in my country in the most authentic way will be a lifetime memory for everybody. Myanmar — be enchanted! We offer a really unique Asian culture that differs from many other destinations, with towering mountains and untouched islands scattered with sparkling pagodas, British colonial architectural heritage sites, and much more to delve into.

What is the current status of Czech-Myanmar relations?

Our countries established diplomatic relations on 3rd January 1956, and it will be the 70th anniversary soon. With Czechoslovakia at the time, we had established



Chargé d’affaires of Myanmar U Htuann Naung’s interview from the Czech & Slovak Leaders www.czechleaders.com.

extensive economic relations.

There are factories producing tyres, tractors, and fuel injection systems for engines, as well as a sugar mill, a brewery, and a hydropower station in Myanmar, all built by Czech companies. Both countries have great opportunities to cooperate, especially in agriculture, science and technology, the health sector, education, tourism, environmental conservation, and heritage site preservation. Nowadays, hundreds of Myanmar students are currently studying in the Czech Republic at different universities, ranging from engineering to economics, international relations to the sciences. We have been maintaining and promoting cooperation in all possible areas for the benefit of both countries and citizens. I believe there are many matters we could work out together in order to promote bilateral relations and harmonious development.

This interview is done on the occasion of your national day. What do you wish for your country? And for the Czech Republic?

Our Independence Day, or National Day, commemorates the importance of the territory, sovereignty, and national identity of our country. This year, we are celebrating the 78th anniversary of gaining our own independent status and rights. I wish peace and well-being to all the citizens of Myanmar and urge them to work together to shape a Union based on truthfulness, democracy, and federalism in order to forge the strength of our national unity. Although the country encountered different terrible dangers that posed threats to the disintegration of the Union and sovereignty, our Union spirit and solidarity will always be essential to us and to the new generations. As far as the Czech Republic is concerned, I am certain that in the future, we can further strengthen the friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries, as well as construct bilateral cooperation in various areas for the benefit of our peoples and in the interests of strengthening stability and security in the Indo-Pacific region.

PM Modi’s initiative, International Year of Millets comes to a close

The hybrid event, conducted at FAO headquarters in Rome, welcomed global dignitaries both in-person and virtually.

THE Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) organized the closing ceremony of the International Year of Millets (IYM) 2023 on Friday to take stock of the accomplishments of, and lessons learned from, IYM 2023 and identify priorities for future investments, particularly to address identified constraints and strengthen millets value chains, the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare said in an official release.

The closing ceremony was held at FAO headquarters in the Italian capital, Rome, in a hybrid set-up that allowed many dignitaries from across the world to join both in-person and virtually.

Representing the Indian side, the event was attended by Additional Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Maninder Kaur Dwivedi.

Adoption of millets

At the event, the Additional Secretary, Maninder Kaur Dwivedi, underscored the significance of India’s thriving millet ecosystem, comprising various start-ups, industries, and Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), in increasing the promotion and adoption of millets.

Additionally, Director-General, FAO, QU Dongyu in his opening remarks at the official closing ceremony, commended the international community for their commitment to advancing millet-related initiatives and emphasized the crucial role of millets in achieving food security and nutrition for all.

Minister and Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to FAO, Yaya Adisa Olaitan Olaniran shed light on the significance of millets and outlined strategies for integrating millet cultivation into sustainable agricultural practices in Nigeria.

Further in the ceremony, attendees were treated to a captivating video showcasing the diverse range of activities and events organized under the International Year of Millets 2023 across different regions, fostering the global reach and impact of the initiative.

The ceremony came to a close with the concluding remarks of Deputy Director-General FAO Ms Beth Bechdol, who expressed gratitude to all participants for their unwavering commitment and dedication to the success of the International Year of Millets 2023 and highlighted the importance of sustaining momentum in promoting millets beyond the designated year.

SOURCE: ANI



Millets are a group of small-seeded grains that are cultivated as cereal crops for human consumption. They are highly nutritious and are often used in various cuisines around the world. PHOTO: ANI

NATIONAL

Labour Attaché Office aids Myanmar crane collapse victims in accessing social security benefits

MYANMAR Labour Attaché office in Bangkok, Thailand, said it would assist six Myanmar nationals who died in a crane collapse at the steel manufacturing factory of Sin Ker Yuan Co Ltd, located in Pluak Daeng, Rayong district, to entitle to the right of Thailand social security law.

A crane collapse on 29 March killed six Myanmar workers and a Chinese worker.

The statement by the labour attaché office said the team led by Labour Attaché U Myo Aung went to the factory and met families of victims as well as respective administrative organizations, regional Department of Employment (DoE), authorities and social and rescue organiza-

tions on 30 March and the labour attaché office would help families of victims to gain access to benefits in accordance with Thailand social security law for each worker. A person who advocates for Myanmar worker affairs said that for six Myanmar workers and one Chinese worker, initial compensation was paid, and a commitment was reached to pay the rest of the compensation in the next three months.

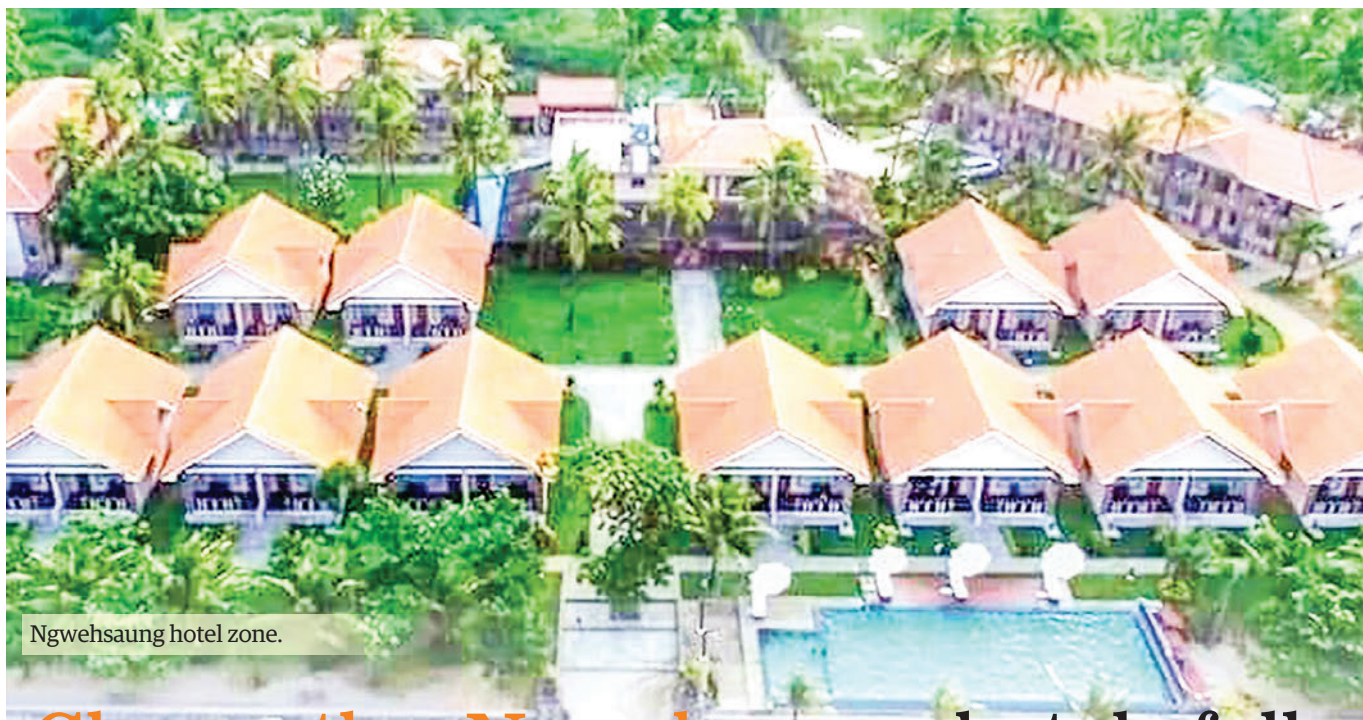
Concerning that they wouldn't receive total compensation, factory workers blocked the car carrying workers' bodies.

"The factory said employers don't pay in full in such previous accidents. That is why workers blocked the car. But we reached



Officials from the Myanmar Labour Attaché office met families of victims.

a final agreement at nearly midnight. They paid 500,000 Thai baht to each family of the victim and agreed to pay the remaining 1.1 million baht in the next three months," he explained. — MT/ZS



Ngwehsaung hotel zone.

Chaungtha, Ngwehsaung hotels fully booked for Thingyan Festival

MOST of the hotel rooms at Chaungtha and Ngwehsaung beaches were packed with bookings for the Thingyan holidays, according to some hotels.

Hotel rooms for the period from 13 to 16 April have been booked, and there are only a few rooms left, some hotels said.

Popular destinations include beaches like Chaungtha and Ngwehsaung, recently trending Ngwetaung beach, Kyaukkalath beach, and famous attractive sites such as Bagan, Inlay and Taunggyi, while there are some

outbound travels.

"No room is available for 13-14 April. Some are available for 15 and 16. It is a two-minute walk from the room to the beach. A double room with aircon costs K120,000 and can accommodate three people. A triple room at K150,000 can accommodate four people," said a service provider for renting hotels in Ngwehsaung.

Public interest in visiting Chaungtha and Ngwehsaung beaches together with other trips during Thingyan has been increasing.

"Demand for Chaungtha and Ngwehsaung in Thingyan is rising a lot. We are selling many tour packages to these places, and people are going. There are some arrangements for other trips to Mandalay and Bagan. Interest in buying tickets is growing. So, popular places for local visits include Bagan, Mandalay, Kalaw, Pindaya, and Inlay in Shan State. We expect local tourism of these areas to be well-developed with many tourists," said Myanmar Tourism Entrepreneurs Association chair U Naung Naung Han. — MT/ZN

Hlawga Park to host music concert and more for Thingyan celebration

HLAWGA Park will organize a walking Thingyan, which will be celebrated for two days and feature a music concert and other exciting activities, according to the park.

Along with a green forest in Yangon Region, Hlawga Park is a place where people can explore wild animals and other activities for relaxation are also provided.

The park's walking Thingyan will include a water-splashing pandal, music band entertainment, food donations, photo booths, and water activities such as standup paddleboarding, as well as stalls that will sell consumer products and foods.

Hlawga Park has invited the public to come to join its walking Thingyan along with family and friends on the occasion of the Thingyan Festival. For more information about stalls, enquiries can be addressed to the park's page messenger or phone numbers 09 421055343 and 09 450037909 during office hours. — MT/ZS

NATIONAL

Veteran actress Khin Lay Swe donates K3 mln to actress mothers' group

ACCORDING to group member senior actress Academy Nwe Nwe San, Khine Lay Swe, another senior actress, donated K3 million to the Group of Actress Mothers as a Myanmar New Year donation. The donation ceremony took place at the

donor's house on 1 April. Senior actress Khin Lay Swe invited members of the Group of Actress Mothers to her home in Bahan township, where the group performed Thingyan songs to welcome the Myanmar New Year.



Actress mothers are performing at senior actress Khin Lay Swe's home.

Academy Nwe Nwe San stated, "Daw Khin Lay Swe is in her 90s, and we're also in our 80s. Usually, we perform Thingyan songs and dances and receive donations during these days. Now, Daw Khin Lay Swe invited us and donated K3 million to us. We performed Thingyan songs and dances for her. Despite having a knee problem, she still wants to join in singing and dancing. She was also a member of our group when she was able to dance."

The group consists of about 15 members, led by Academy Nwe Nwe San, Ma Too, Si Si Thein, Htay Htay Sein, and other senior artistes. — ASH/TRKM

Authorities take action against individuals for social media propaganda

ON 1 April, authorities took action against two individuals for allegedly inciting and circulating propaganda on social media, which could disrupt law and order.

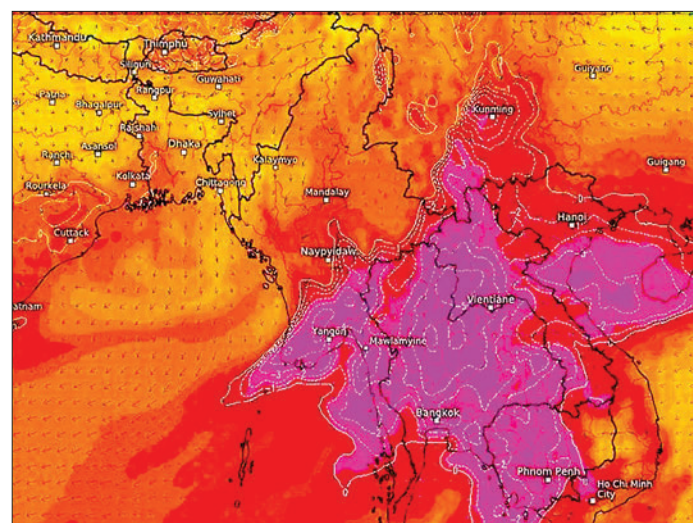
Suspects are Yadana Hmwe, the purported owner of the Facebook accounts "Smile Smile" and "Yadanalay Yadanalay", residing in Kyaunggon Township, Ayeyawady Region, and Aung Sein Tun, an alleged user of the "Aung Zin Htun" Facebook account, living in

Thabeikkyin Township, Mandalay Region.

Terrorist groups such as CRPH and NUG, along with associated organizations and individuals, have been spreading propaganda and issuing threats that undermine the governance of the State and the safety of people.

Anyone who unwittingly or under duress propagates or involves themselves in their propaganda and incitements in any way may be subject to

prosecution under Section 52 (a) of the Counter-Terrorism Law, Sections 124 (a) and 505 (a) of the Penal Code, Section 33 (a) of the Electronic Transactions Law, and relevant criminal statutes. In accordance with the Counter-Terrorism Law, both movable and immovable property could be seized and, upon conviction, may be considered State assets. The government has announced this through State media outlets since 25 January 2022. — MNA/NT



Meteorologist Susu San posted a picture showing the high temperature in Myanmar on her social media page.

DMH issues weather warnings for April and May

THE Department of Meteorology and Hydrology has issued a warning regarding weather conditions expected during April and May. Caution is advised due to potential changes in weather patterns.

On 1 April, it was forecasted that daily temperatures may increase gradually, accompanied by strong winds and thermal clouds. These conditions may result in thunderstorms, lightning, and strong winds, particularly in areas where thermal clouds form. Additionally, hail and scattered thunderstorms are possible, with land and sea winds reaching speeds of 40 to 50 miles per hour during strong gusts.

The public, as well as operators of domestic flights and sea vessels, are urged to remain vigilant regarding these weather conditions.

In addition, several areas, including Chauk, Zaungtuu, Yay, Maubin, Dawei, and Pyapon experienced new temperature records on 30 and 31 March. Chauk recorded the highest temperature of 45.2 degrees Celsius on 31 March, surpassing the previous record of 45.0 degrees Celsius. Zaungtuu reached a new high of 40.7 degrees Celsius on 31 March, while Yay recorded 39.5 degrees Celsius.

Furthermore, Maubin recorded a high of 40 degrees Celsius, and Dawei recorded 39.7 degrees Celsius on 30 March. Pyapon also experienced its highest temperature of 38.8 degrees Celsius. — TWA/TRKM

Confiscations of illegal items: Fuel oil, jade, foodstuffs and vehicles

ON 1 April, during inspections supervised by the Magway Region Illegal Trade Eradication Special Task Force, several items were confiscated at various checkpoints.

An unregistered Honda Fit car, valued at approximately K7.3 million, was seized at the Ayeyawady Bridge checkpoint. A Canter truck, valued at approximately K20 million, was intercepted in Minhla township, carrying 500 gallons of illegal fuel oil worth K5.5 million. A Luojia 110 motorbike, with an estimated value of K650,000, was stopped



Seized illegal goods and vehicles in Mandalay Region.

in Mindon township, carrying 21 gallons of illegal diesel valued at K239,400. These actions were carried out under the Export and

Import Law and the Petroleum and Petroleum Products Law.

On the same day, further confiscations were made. A

Toyota Crown car, valued at K30 million, was apprehended at the 16th-mile Kyaukchaw checkpoint while travelling from Mandalay to Nawnghkio. The vehicle was carrying 60 kilogrammes of bracelets suspected to be made of jade, valued at K12 million, without official documents. Two vehicles with two trailers, estimated to be worth K240 million, were seized at the Sagaing Bridge. They were transporting 15,398 gallons of illegal 92 Ron petrol. These actions were taken under Customs procedures and the Petroleum and Petroleum

Products Law. Additionally, on 2 April, the combined teams confiscated various goods worth K31.796 million at the Yadanabon combined checkpoint in Sagaing township. This included 3,288 bags of chicken nuggets without official documents. The action was taken under the Export and Import Law.

The Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee reported a total of 11 arrests made on 1 and 2 April, with an estimated value of K546.635 million. — MNA/MKKS

ECONOMY WORLD

Chinese rattan crafts set sail to Latin American market

IN a factory in Bobai County of Yulin City, south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, skilled craftsmen began their day's work early in the morning, weaving intricate lamp decorations and tableware from rattan and bamboo strips, for mounting foreign orders.

Renowned for weaving crafts, with roots tracing back about a millennium, Bobai has emerged as Guangxi's primary export hub for these artisanal products.

"I witnessed Bobai's products shipped across the ocean from Guangxi to Brazil, which was rather unexpected yet inspiring for me," said Huang Lianjiang, general manager of Bobai Huangtu Arts and Crafts Co Ltd, adding that the products of her company have already been sold to over 20 countries and regions.

In 2018, Huang's company

reached a deal with a Brazilian company through Alibaba, a Chinese cross-border trade platform. Since then, the trade volume has steadily surged from about 100,000 yuan (about 14,096.82 US dollars) to more than a million yuan.

"Brazil has consistently been a robust partner for us, especially with products like lampshades enjoying significant popularity," said Huang. "During last year's Canton Fair, several Brazilian guests visited our booth and showed keen interest in the products."

To further solidify ties with overseas clients, Huang has made efforts to scale up production and enhance standards in alignment with customer preferences. Meanwhile, Huang's company has set up a live-streaming group to promote their products on e-commerce and social media

platforms, using English, Portuguese and other languages.

"We've been conducting live-streaming sessions from time to time since 2022. I sometimes communicate with customers in Portuguese, introducing our products to them," said Liu Baiyou, the company's foreign trade manager.

The company also expedited the process of introducing new products to the market to stay abreast of evolving consumer trends. Last year, a new design of breadbasket, boasting a 21-cm diameter, unexpectedly surged in popularity overseas, prompting the company to mobilize workers for overtime shifts to meet the demand. In the past year alone, this particular product garnered over 3,000 online orders primarily from European and American countries, generating an output value of 12 million yuan. — Xinhua



Huang Lianjiang, general manager of Bobai Huangtu Arts and Crafts Co Ltd checks a rattan product in Bobai County of Yulin City, south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, 27 March 2024. PHOTO: XINHUA

REC's New Horizons: Additive technologies set for high demand in Middle East



The "Russian Export Centre" (REC) stand at the Yekaterinburg-hosted International Industrial exhibition "INNOPROM-2019". PHOTO: SPUTNIK

THE Russian Export Centre (VEB.RF Group) took part in the "Atomexpo-2024" International Forum.

During the session "Industry of the Future: The Composites Market and the Introduction of Additive Technologies through the Prism of International Cooperation"

at the International Forum "Atomexpo-2024," Najibullo Jabbori, the head of the Department of International Project Development at the Russian Export Centre (VEB.RF Group), stated that Middle Eastern countries have started actively utilizing additive technologies, particularly in

the construction sector. This increased adoption presents an opportunity for Russian companies to offer their solutions in these markets. Jabbori emphasized that the Russian Export Centre is prepared to support developers looking to enter these export markets. — SPUTNIK

Lao govt, private sector discuss improving business environment

Representatives of the Lao government, development partners and the private sector attending the 15th annual Lao Business Forum assessed the progress of enhancing the business environment in the country.

Speaking at the opening ceremony on Tuesday, Lao Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone emphasized the volatile external environment at both global and regional levels caused by high inflation, trade fragmentation, low investment levels, and geopolitical tensions, Lao National Radio reported.

Sonexay encouraged all concerned agencies from the central to local level to collaborate with the business community, including domestic and foreign businesses, to identify and remove barriers to business entry.

The event served as a platform to review the progress made since the 14th Lao Business Forum and showcased broad support for structured dialogue to identify and address key issues affecting the private sector in the country. — Xinhua

Kiwi meat exporter's annual results reflect challenging market conditions

New Zealand's largest red meat exporter Silver Fern Farms released its 2023 annual results on Tuesday, which reflected a year of challenging market conditions impacting the whole supply chain.

"Depressed consumer confidence across our key markets has put pressure on our customers, the Operating Company, and ultimately, returns for our farmer suppliers," said Silver Fern Farms Co-operative Chair Rob Hewett.

The impact of one-off events throughout the year, such as Cyclone Gabrielle, caused damage and disrupted operations at the processing sites for a number of weeks, Hewett said. — Xinhua

Japan to give 590 bln yen more in funds to Rapidus in chip push

JAPAN'S industry minister said Tuesday it will provide up to 590 billion yen (\$3.9 billion) to Rapidus Corp in additional subsidies as the country ramps up efforts to strengthen its domestic semiconductor supply chain. Combined with the 330 billion yen already earmarked by the ministry, the amount of government finance going into the Japanese chip venture will total almost one trillion yen.

The move underscores the country's commitment to reviving the semiconductor industry as chips increasingly become important in ensuring economic security amid growing rivalry be-

tween the United States and China.

"Next-generation semiconductors will be a key factor for the future growth of the country's industry," Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Ken Saito told a news conference. "The ministry will do its utmost to ensure (Rapidus's) success."

Set up in 2022 by Toyota Motor Corp, Sony Group Corp and six other companies, Rapidus aims to start mass production in 2027 of 2-nanometre chips, a next-generation technology expected to be used for 5G communications, quantum computing, and self-driving vehicles. The company is

building a plant in Hokkaido.

"We will join forces (with various manufacturers) to make chips that can contribute to the world from Japan," Rapidus President Atsuyoshi Koike said at a press conference. "The funding is extremely important for setting up a pilot line," expected to be ready in April 2025.

Of the 590 billion yen, 536.5 billion yen will be used to purchase chip-manufacturing equipment, such as extreme ultraviolet lithography machines.

The company has said it will need roughly five trillion yen for the pro-



The construction site where Rapidus Corp is building a plant is pictured in Hokkaido's Chitose on 2 April 2024. **PHOTO: KYODO**

ject, including research and preparation for mass production.

Koike said his company is still working on the financing plan.

Demand for chips is expected to grow worldwide as digitalization accelerates. The recent artificial intelligence boom is also prompting govern-

ments and private firms to invest more in chips as more high-end semiconductors are needed to support the technology. — Kyodo

S Korea's agricultural products export hits new high in Q1

SOUTH Korea's export of agricultural and food products hit a new high in the first quarter due to higher demand from the United States and Europe, government data showed Tuesday. The outbound shipment of locally-made food and farm goods rose 3.4 per cent from a year

earlier to reach a fresh quarterly high of 2.27 billion US dollars during the January-March quarter, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Exports to the United States gained 14.2 per cent to 352 million dollars, while those to the Europe-

an Union (EU) and Britain jumped 27.4 per cent to 166 million dollars.

Shipment to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) added 3.0 per cent to 464 million dollars, but those to Japan declined 7.6 per cent to 329 million dollars.

By item, instant noodle shipment surged 30.1 per cent over the year to 270 million dollars in the first quarter, while export for processed rice food spiked 34.0 per cent to 61 million dollars.

Snack products export expanded 6.3 per cent to 165 million dollars in the cited quarter. — Xinhua

Economists see Malaysian ringgit to remain in recovery path

ECONOMISTS have projected Malaysian ringgit to stay in recovery in 2024 amid weakening US dollars (USD).

MIDF Research said in its recent report that the ringgit is on track to appreciate in 2024. "External trade has indicated improvement and is set to rebound in 2024 while domestic demand conditions

remain positive."

Commodity prices are also in favour of the ringgit appreciating as crude petroleum and crude palm oil prices broadly ascend in the two months of 2024, it said.

With the domestic economy maintaining its positive momentum, and status as a net exporter of commodities such as

crude petroleum, liquefied natural gas, and palm oil, it said the ringgit is poised to benefit from favourable global commodity prices and a continued trade surplus.

"The Federal Reserve is expected to cut the interest rate in mid-2024 at the earliest, while Bank Negara Malaysia is expected to hold the rate

steady in 2024. Hence, we foresee USDMYR to average at RM4.38 and reach RM4.20 by year-end 2024," it said

It is noted that the USD has been broadly strengthening in the first two months of 2024 which saw the ringgit slipping to a 26-year low of RM4.80 on 20 February 2024. — Xinhua

Wedding Announcement

Both parents are pleased to announce the marriage of

Mr. MANA THANG

Son of Mr.Thang kwee and Mrs. Pan Kee,
6105 Mount Ridge Rd,
Baltimore MD 21228, U.S.A .
To

Ms. HTAY HTAY KHINE

Daughter of Mr. Aung Tun Kyaw and
Mrs. Khin Saw Tin,
No. (2251/ Ka), Thitsar (2) Str, Qtr No.(Hta/16),
Shwepyithar Tsp, Yangon Region.

The couple signed the marriage certificate at the
Mingalardon District Court
on 5, February, 2024 and got married.

MYANMA Port Authority "NOTICE of High Tide"

EXCEPTIONALLY high spring from 20.14 feet to 20.21 feet high above the chart datum are expected to occur in Yangon River during the period of April 9th to April 10th, 2024. Please be noted that it is not serious level of tide because the highest tide level have reached up to 22 feet above the chart datum in year 2014 and 2015, and this notice is normally issued whenever high tide of Yangon River is expected to reach over 20 feet high above the chart datum in order to take precautionary measures to the public living near river foreshore area of Yangon City.

ROLLING UPDATES WORLD

Indian Coast Guard ship reaches Viet Nam on overseas deployment

INDIAN Coast Guard's Pollution Control Vessel (PCV) Samudra Paheredar with an integral helicopter arrived at the Ho Chi Minh port of Viet Nam on Tuesday as part of its ongoing overseas deployment to ASEAN countries, the Indian Coast Guard said in a statement.

The visit of ICG specialized vessel to ASEAN countries is in pursuance of India ASEAN Initiative for Marine Pollution, as announced by Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh in the year 2022 at Cambodia during ASEAN Defence Minister Plus Meeting.

During the three-day visit, the crew of ICGS Samudra Paheredar will engage in professional interactions focusing on Marine Pollution Response (MPR), Maritime Search and Rescue (M-SAR), and Maritime Law Enforcement. Activities include cross-deck training, Sub-



Indian Coast Guard ship in Viet Nam. PHOTO: ANI

ject Matter Expert Exchanges, sports events and Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with Viet Nam Coast Guard.

According to the statement, the visit aims not only

to strengthen ties between the Indian Coast Guard and their Vietnamese counterparts but also to showcase India's shipbuilding capabilities, supporting the concept of "Atamnirbhar Bharat"

and "Make in India".

Additionally, 25 National Cadet Corps (NCC) aboard ICGS Samudra Paheredar will participate in a Walkathon and Beach Cleanup activities in

collaboration with local youth organizations, contributing to the GoI initiative "Puneet Sagar Abhiyan".

The Indian Coast Guard and Viet Nam Coast Guard have an existing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) since 2015, which institutionalized the cooperative engagements between the two maritime agencies.

This overseas deployment is in line with the provision of MoU and thence, is a testimony to the Indian Coast Guard's commitment to bolster bilateral relationships and enhance international cooperation with Foreign Friendly Countries (FFCs).

Prior to Ho Chi Minh, ICGS Samudra Paheredar visited Manila, Philippines, demonstrating a seamless continuation of diplomatic maritime engagements in the ASEAN region. — ANI

Final survivor of USS Arizona after Pearl Harbor attack dies at 102

LOU Conter, the final survivor of the USS Arizona, the battleship that was sunk during the World War II attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, died on Monday at the age of 102.

Conter died at his home Monday morning in Grass Valley in US state of California, said Pacific Historic Parks, a leading non-profit organization that supports the USS Arizona Memorial and other Pacific historic locations, in a statement.

Conter's daughter Louann Daley said the World War II veteran was surrounded by family and passed peacefully, the statement added.

Conter was a 20-year-old quartermaster who helped rescue fellow crewmen during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor the morning of 7 December 1941. A total of 1,177 fellow Arizona crew members were killed that day, most of them still entombed on the ship with their names etched on the USS Arizona Memorial, according to the statement.

The veteran was among the 335 Arizona crew members to survive the Pearl Harbor attack, and he outlived all of them, said the statement.

Conter's military service continued after the Pearl Harbor attack, and he went on to become a VP-11 Black Cat pilot. He survived two shoot-downs in World War II, including one off the coast of New Guinea in which the crew was surrounded

by sharks.

Aileen Utterdyke, president and CEO of Pacific Historic Parks, noted in the statement that "This is a heartbreaking loss."

Utterdyke pointed out that Conter had an exemplary career in the US Navy and was steadfast in imploring the schools, parents and everyday Americans to always remember Pearl Harbor. — Xinhua



Aircraft perform "Tora, Tora, Tora" to simulate Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor during the airshow at Ellington Airport, Houston, Texas, the United States, on 14 October 2023. PHOTO: XINHUA

Netizens mock US treasury secretary's comments on Chinese clean energy products

NETIZENS aren't too pleased with US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen's recent accusation of "Chinese overcapacity" in the clean energy sector.

Yellen made her remarks during her visit to a solar plant in the US state of Georgia on Wednesday, saying China's excess capacity "distorts global prices" and "hurts American firms and workers". Criticism flooded the comment section of news websites.

"Complaining about China building more green energy technology would be like if one weightlifter stopped training to complain that another weightlifter was lifting heavier weights," Jason wrote on Yahoo News.

"Also, I keep hearing that climate change is a doomsday scenario where we have to do everything possible to prevent the destruction of the planet, and all of a sudden, having more green energy is a problem?" Jason wrote.

"So, if China is ramping up production and driving down prices ... how bad is that?" Kevin said. "I mean, I get that some manufacturers in the United States might be hurt, but if overall result is lower cost solar, wind, hybrid or EV cars, etc. ... isn't that good overall?" Kevin posted.

"I would love to see every house and building in the United States have rooftop solar," he added. "Ridiculous. First China wasn't doing enough for green energy. Now suddenly they (are) doing too much. Why doesn't America shut up and do their fair bit?" Johan Bernard wrote on the Financial Times website.

"This is quite 'amusing'. In a world trying to achieve net zero as soon as possible, due to the 'climate crisis', the western world is rejecting Chinese assistance to reach the goals, and thereby slowing down significantly the possibility of reaching those targets by the desired deadlines," Alpine Observer said. — Xinhua

SPORTS

Myanmar futsal team to play two friendly matches in Thailand

THE Myanmar national futsal team, which is preparing for the final stage of the 2024 Asian Cup futsal tournament, will travel to Thailand to play two warm-up matches.

The final stage of the 2024 Asian Cup futsal tournament, which Thailand will host, will be held from 17 to 28 April. Still, the team Myanmar will leave for Thailand on 5 April and will play a friendly match against the teams that have been allowed to

compete in the final stage of the Asian Cup.

Team Myanmar will test with Kuwait on 6 April, Kyrgyzstan on 10 April in Bangkok. Myanmar played against Afghanistan last month and faced a 1-6 defeat on 30 March and secured victory on 4-2.

The Myanmar national futsal team is training with 20 preliminary players, and 17 players will be on the line-up ahead of Thailand. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL



Myanmar National Futsal Team seen cheering up during an international match. PHOTO: MFF

China's Hou breaks world record at IWF World Cup



Hou Zhihui of China celebrates after a successful attempt in the women's 49kg competition at the IWF World Cup in Phuket, Thailand, 1 April 2024 PHOTO: XINHUA

CHINA'S Hou Zhihui set a snatch world record at the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) World Cup here on Monday, as she renews her quest for another Olympic appearance.

The Tokyo Olympic gold medallist in the women's 49kg broke the world record when she cleared 97kg on her second attempt, before Ri Song Gum of the DPRK equalled the result.

Ri came top in the clean and jerk and claimed the World Cup title in a total of 221 (97-124). Hou finished second with 217 (97-

120), ahead of compatriot Jiang Huihua.

The IWF World Cup in Phuket serves as a qualification for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

It also represents a crucial test for Chinese weightlifters to compete against each other for a ticket to Paris, as each National Olympic Committee will only be able to qualify one athlete per weight class, and three per gender across all weight categories — down from four each at Tokyo 2020. — Xinhua

No rest for Man City, Real Madrid prepares for Champions League clash

MANCHESTER City has another vital game in their efforts to retain the Premier League title on Wednesday when they entertain fourth-placed Aston Villa at the Etihad Stadium.

The match comes after City was held to a 0-0 draw at home to Arsenal last Sunday, and ahead of a trip to play Crystal Palace on Saturday lunchtime.

With Pep Guardiola's side

three points behind Liverpool, who has what should be a straightforward home game against Sheffield United on Thursday, there is no room for error, with any more dropped points perhaps meaning the end for City's title hopes.

City is still without Kyle Walker, who strained his thigh playing for England, while Nathan Ake is also unlikely to play after going off injured against

Arsenal.

Guardiola criticized the fixture calendar ahead of the Arsenal game at the weekend, pointing out that not only do his team have three vital Premier League matches in a week, but that the trip to Palace comes just four days before they visit the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium to play Real Madrid in the first leg of their Champions League quarterfinal. — Xinhua

Neymar eyeing Santos return: reports



NEYMAR could leave Al-Hilal to return to his original club Santos next year, according to media reports in Brazil.

Neymar attended Santos' 1-0 home victory over Palmeiras in the first leg of the Sao Paulo state championship final on Sunday and was a guest of honour in his former club's dressing room after the match.

The 32-year-old told Santos players that he would consider returning to the club when his existing contract with Al-Hilal expires in June 2025, the Uol sports outlet reported.

The forward has not played since suffering a rup-

tured anterior cruciate ligament and meniscus of his left knee in Brazil's 2-0 defeat to Uruguay in a World Cup qualifier on 17 October 2023. He is expected to return in July or August. Neymar would join a growing list of high profile Brazilian footballers to return to their homeland after conquering Europe. Other examples over the past 15 years include Ronaldo (Corinthians), Ronaldinho (Atletico Mineiro, Fluminense) and Kaka (Sao Paulo).

Santos president Marcelo Teixeira has spoken repeatedly of his desire for Neymar to return to the club that launched his career. — Xinhua

Brazil's Neymar controls the ball during the 2026 World Cup qualifier match against Bolivia at the Olympic Stadium of Para in Belem, Brazil on 8 September 2023. PHOTO: XINHUA

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Israeli airstrikes on Iranian consulate building in Syria kill at least 5, Iran vows to take countermeasures

AT LEAST five people, including a senior Iranian commander, were killed in Israeli airstrikes on the building of the Iranian consulate in the Syrian capital Damascus on Monday, according to the Iranian ambassador to Syria and other sources.

The Syrian Defence Ministry said the missile attack occurred at about 5:00 pm local time (1400 GMT) when Israel launched an aerial aggression from the direction of the occupied Syrian Golan Heights, targeting the building of the Iranian Consulate in Damascus.

Iranian Ambassador to Syria Hossein Akbari, speaking to reporters in front of the Iranian embassy in Damascus after the attack, said five to seven people were killed in the attack.

He added that Israel's F-35 fighter jets had launched six missiles from the occupied Golan Heights in a "criminal", targeted offence on the Iranian consulate's building. According to Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency, Mohammad-Reza Zahedi, a commander of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), and his deputy, Mohammad-Hadi Haji Rahimi, were killed in the attack.

Twelve others have been injured in the attack, the report added.

According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, the strikes resulted in the death of eight people, including a high-ranking commander of the Quds



People gather at the site of an Israeli missile attack targeting the building of the Iranian Consulate in Damascus, Syria, 1 April 2024. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Force in Syria and Lebanon, as well as two Iranian advisors and five members from the IRGC.

Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad, who arrived at the scene following the missile strike, condemned the attack and

stressed that the move would not affect Syrian-Iranian relations.

Later, in a phone call with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, Mekdad condemned in strongest terms Israel's "criminal" attacks and called

them "a flagrant violation" of international law, particularly the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961, which defines a framework for diplomatic relations between independent countries. — Xinhua

Collaboration between Indonesia and China receives high praise from experts



This photo taken on 7 March 2024 shows Indonesia's first 5G smart warehouse in Bekasi, West Java, Indonesia. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

INDONESIA aims to achieve its "Golden Indonesia 2045 Vision", which involves becoming an ad-

vanced and sustainable nation by 2045. Experts have praised China's role in helping Indonesia

accomplish its vision, with cooperation between the two countries flourishing.

For the past decade, Indonesia and China have conducted productive cooperation in a wide range of fields. China has been Indonesia's top trading partner for 10 years and a major source of investment in the country.

The China-Indonesia bilateral relationship has never been stronger. China is not only Indonesia's largest trading partner but also one of the biggest contributors of foreign direct investment, said Destry Damayanti, senior deputy governor of Bank Indonesia. — Xinhua

Chinese, Japanese experts hold dialogue on discharge of nuclear-contaminated water

FOCUSING on the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water from Fukushima, Chinese and Japanese experts had a constructive technical dialogue on 30 March in China's Dalian, a Foreign Ministry spokesperson said on Monday.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, experts from Japan and China held consultation on 30 March in China over the release of the "treated water" from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. Japan explained

the safety of the release by offering the scientific basis.

In response to a related query, spokesperson Wang Wenbin said at a daily news briefing that Chinese and Japanese experts had a constructive technical dialogue on 30 March in China's Dalian, which is linked to the several rounds of institutionalized consultations between the director-generals of the departments of Asian affairs of the foreign ministries of China and Japan. — Xinhua