

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

Forging solidarity and Union spirit of ethnic people will be the strength for nation-building endeavours

Solidarity and Union spirit of ethnic people such as Rakhine, Kaman, Khami, Daingnet, Maragyi, Mro and Thet residing in Rakhine State contribute to peace, stability and development of the state, which becomes the strength for the nation-building endeavours, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing mentioned.

Chairman of the State Administration Council

Prime Minister Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudamma Min Aung Hlaing sent a message of felicitation to national brethren residing in Rakhine State in commemoration of the 49th Anniversary of Rakhine State Day which falls on 15 December 2023.

In his message, the Senior General pointed out that as the State Administration Council has adopted

the political visions and national visions to be implemented in the present and in the future, all national brethren residing throughout the Union have to build mutual respect, understanding and trust in sharing the future for marching towards the peaceful, prosperous, modern and developed democratic nation the entire people aspire to.

SEE PAGE-2



Truckloads passing through the Chinshwehaw Trade Post on the Myanmar-China border on 16 January 2023.

Myanmar-China border trade surpasses US\$2.4 bln in 8 months

The border trade value between Myanmar and China tremendously grew to over US\$2.419 billion in the past eight months of the current financial year 2023-2024, beginning 1 April, showing an increase of \$597.445 million year on year, the Ministry of Commerce's statistics showed.

Myanmar registered \$1.82 billion of trade with China at the border in the corresponding period last FY 2022-2023.

Myanmar conducts cross-border trade with neighbouring China via Muse, Lweje, Chinshwehaw, Kampaiti, and Kengtung. The Muse border saw a majority of the trade worth \$1.58 billion. The

Myanmar has been carrying out border trade through land borders with the four neighbouring countries - China, Thailand, Bangladesh and India.

trade value stood at \$703.063 million via Chinshwehaw, \$71.946 million via Kampaiti, \$51.075 million via Lweje and \$10.772 million via Kengtung, respectively.

Myanmar has been carrying out border trade through land borders with the four neighbouring countries - China,

Thailand, Bangladesh and India.

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

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Artworks of Bagan's Letputkan Temple attract visitors

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Myanmar expats in Thailand facing 2% income tax levy

BUSINESS PAGE-7



Pheegyan banana fetches good prices in NyaungU Tsp

NATIONAL



Captivating images (above and below) showcase architectural and cultural splendour of Bagan's Letputkan Temple.

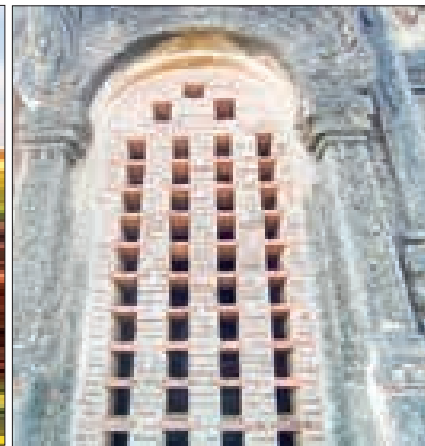
ARTWORKS of Letputkan Temple in NyaungU Township, Mandalay Region, Bagan Archeological Zone drew the interest of visitors, according to officials from the Department of Archeology and National Museum (Bagan branch).

Letputkan Temple is situated northwest of Maloneyhit Temple, which is not far away from Shin Ijjagona Pagoda, and the junction of Bagan-NyaungU Airport.

The Letputkan temple is located on a large plinth within the quadrangular wall, which is very little damaged.

In Letputkan Temple, there is a pagoda facing east, and the entrance to the wall

Artworks of Bagan's Letputkan Temple attract visitors



can be found with an east gate and a wall entrance to the west.

Inside the temple, visitors can find stone inscriptions and Buddha's footprints from the years 603 ME and 604 ME, as colourful artworks featuring red and yellow colour can be seen on the ceiling.

Visitors can also tour broken brick buildings, Malonyhit Temple, Malapyit Temple, Thinganyon Temple and other ancient pagodas near the Letputkan Pagoda. — Dipa Lin/KZL

Matriculation Exams to start on 11 March 2024

DEPARTMENT of Myanmar Examinations under the Ministry of Education announced the timetables of the 2024 matriculation examinations.

The 2024 matriculation examinations will take place from 11 to 19 March 2024.

Candidates must take Myanmar, English and Mathematics exams on 11, 12 and 13 March, respectively. Then, they will have to sit for Chemistry/Geography on 14 March and Physics/History subjects for exams on 15 March and Biology/Economics on 16 March. Social Science and Optional Myanmar subjects will be examined on 18 and 19 March, respectively. — MNA/MKKS

The Global New Light of Myanmar

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Forging solidarity and Union spirit of ethnic people will be the strength for nation-building endeavours

FROM PAGE-1

The message highlighted that now is a State of Emergency when the State Administration Council takes responsibility for the State under the Constitution. Since its establishment, the State Administration Council has adopted and implemented the five-point roadmap and nine objectives.

The Senior General recounted that everybody knows Rakhine State had faced difficulties in transport and other sectors for many years. As Tatmadaw government has been emphasizing the development of Rakhine State, all state conditions have been changed with development undertakings, he added.

With regard to the agricultural sector, the Senior General said that the government provided more than 73,000 baskets of quality paddy seeds to eight townships of Rakhine State in the aftermath of cyclonic storm Mocha. As such, local farmers could exceed the cultivation of more than 3,000 acres of monsoon paddy despite suffering the impacts of the storm.

The Senior General stressed the need to empha-

size the enhancement of the people's socioeconomic life and the state's development by encouraging MSME businesses.

However, he spotlighted that Rakhine State sees the deterioration of peace and stability due to acts of ethnic armed organizations and interference of external elements in internal affairs, and ethnic people are suffering meaningless disturbances and conflicts.

The Senior General underscored that whenever peace and stability cannot be restored, the entire people will miss chances to enjoy socioeconomic development, individual rights and opportunities.

Regarding the development of Rakhine State, he noted that the government showed the family spirit of national brethren, genuine patriotic spirit and the Union spirit to Rakhine State and residents that in the aftermath of cyclonic storm Mocha, rescue, relief and rehabilitation measures for the people in Rakhine State were taken under the leadership of the government, supervision of Tatmadaw and local authorities and contributions of well-wishers at home and abroad

to be able to restore the situation of Rakhine State into the ordinary conditions in a short time.

The Senior General unveiled that the government, Tatmadaw and people are joining hands in oneness to accomplish the adopted missions and visions, roadmaps and objectives as the government has adopted national visions: the prosperity of the State and food security, and the national visions: strengthening the genuine, disciplined multiparty democratic system and building a Union based on the democratic system and federalism.

In conclusion, the message clearly pointed out that only when the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement-NCA is implemented to forge peace in the Union will the entire people be able to build a peaceful, prosperous State as they aspire. In restoring peace without foreign interference and conspiracy at home, seeking the solution among national brethren in political means based on the Union spirit will achieve success. — GNLM/TTA

NATIONAL

Vice-Senior General Soe Win stressed the need for the soonest awarding of informants as information availability is vital in eradicating illegal trade, and officials need to build an information network so as to efficiently apply the information in taking action against offenders.

The Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee held a coordination meeting 6/2023 at the Ministry of Commerce in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon, with an address by Chairman of the Steering Committee Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win.

In his speech, the Vice-Senior General explained that illegal trade could cause disadvantages such as loss of revenue for the State, mistakes in accounts and data in trading, harming the banking system and monetary circulation system of the nation, instability of foreign currency market, decline of domestic production due to illegally imported goods, reduction of foreign investment, loss of job opportunities, and sufferings of the people in using imitations of unlawfully imported medicines and medications, expired foodstuffs and cosmetics in addition to harming manufacturing and trade which play a crucial role in the economic development of the State.

He continued that, after forming the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee, smuggled and illegal commodities worth K65.056 billion were seized in 4,232 cases from January to December 2022 and K127.447 billion in 5,753 cases from January to November 2023. Hence, the smuggled and illegal commodities, approximately worth K192.503 billion, were seized in 9,985 cases during 23 months.

The Vice-Senior General stressed the need to earn increased incomes from promoting manufacturing at MSMEs and industrial zones and exporting value-added products from the supply chain.

The Vice-Senior General underscored that if the finished industrial goods of Myanmar face some weakness in manufacturing and



The coordination meeting 6/2023 of the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee in progress yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw, chaired by SAC Vice-Chair Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win.

Information about illegal trade needs to be exchanged among departments, foreign countries

restrictions, their cost will be high, and they will have high prices. So, domestic products cannot compete with illegally imported products in the market, causing loss to products of

MyCo system has been set up to establish companies, Myanmar Trade Net 2.0 system for registration of export and import and application of licence, MACCS for applying

government departments have to verify the advice of merchants and relevant organizations and amend necessary measures.

The Vice-Senior General pointed out that action is taken against some companies, especially cooking oil and fuel importer companies, which take inappropriate profits from their goods against the State and the people.

He noted that chairpersons of regional and state illegal trade eradication special task forces, directors-general of OSS departments, and assigned service personnel have been instructed not to be involved in illegal trade and to be free from bribery cases.

However, the Vice-Senior General stressed that information had been received that some assigned personnel were related to illegal trade and took bribes to check illicit commodities by all means. Hence, officials need to take action against the offenders strictly.

He emphasized that confiscated commodities must be procured under the procedures to bring the deserved revenue to the State. Perishable goods must be auctioned off in time, and seized vehicles and ma-

chinery must be handed over to the relevant organizations as quickly as possible.

State service personnel assigned in relevant areas must be aware of the danger of terrorists and serve their duties with security awareness and knowledge. The Vice-Senior General stressed the need to implement an e-lock system nationwide, adding that departments must exchange information to eradicate illegal trade.

Secretary of the Steering Committee Deputy Minister for Commerce U Min Min reported on the accomplishment of the decisions of the previous meeting and the work process of the steering committee.

Union ministers and officials discussed seizures of narcotic drugs, prohibited precursor chemicals, illegal vehicles, foodstuffs, medicines and cosmetics, e-lock system process, import of fuel, unlawful sale of goods online, and application for legal registration in addition to eradication of illegal commodities.

The leader of the steering committee office task force read the draft decisions of the meeting 6/2023.

The meeting was also attended by Union ministers U Win Shein, Lt-Gen Yar Pyae and U Tun Ohn, deputy ministers and officials together with chairpersons of region and state illegal trade eradication special task forces online. — MNA/TTA

Thanks to information from the Customs Department of India, the Vice-Senior General recounted that narcotic drugs were seized at the Yangon International Airport two times. So, countries and departments have to exchange information to expose and capture the illegal trade, especially narcotic drugs and arms

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the export and import declaration, and online matching system for accepting money from abroad. He added that governments contact each other for businesspersons to operate the trade process online to eradicate illegal trade and ensure a smooth trade process as part of efforts to initiate the national single windows.

He continued that gov-

NATIONAL



The fourth meeting of the Coastal Resources Management Central Committee in progress yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw, presided over by SAC Member Deputy Prime Minister MoTC Union Minister General Mya Tun Oo.

SAC Member DPM MoTC Union Minister addresses 4th Coastal Resources Management Central Committee

THE Coastal Resources Management Central Committee held its fourth meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Speaking at the meeting, State Administration Council

Member Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Transport and Communications General Mya Tun Oo, in his capacity as Chairman of the central committee, said that the central committee

has drafted the Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) as per the assigned duties, and also highlighted the establishment of Myanmar coast guard, finalization of Marine Pollution Control

Law, designation of no-fishing zones in certain areas that are rich in ecosystem and biodiversity and cooperation of departments concerned in reserved forests and protected public forests.

He also elaborated that Myanmar has a 2,800-kilometre-long coastal line and the potential for fishing and extracting offshore oil and natural gas, developing international ports, and creating an exclusive economic zone and renewable energy. The country also boasts unspoiled beaches and islands, so such possessions can benefit the tourism industry and conservation of ethnic people living in coastal regions.

Despite such opportunities to develop the country, it should need to solve the significant decline in biodiversity, coral reefs, mangroves, seagrass and fishery resources, food security and vocations.

As the country experienced Nargis in 2008 and Mocha on 14 May 2023, the preventative measures are being taken effectively in case of storms.

He then talked about the Blue Economy, “ASEAN Leader’s Declaration on Blue Economy”, released in 2021 and the draft of “ASEAN Blue Economy Framework”.

He also urged all those present meeting attendees to work together in drafting balanced policies and procedures to conserve the coastal and marine ecosystems without focusing on the business-related opportunities in implementing the policies and procedures for the Blue Economy sector.

Then, the secretary of the central committee, the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation briefed the committee on the accomplishment of assignments and tasks. The General gave a supplementary advice and attended to the needs of the Union ministers, region and state chief ministers and officials, the deputy chief of staff (Navy), permanent secretaries, and directors-general, and made a concluding remark. — MNA/KTZH

Counter-argument to false information

Fake news: Khit Thit Media says Tatmadaw raid Nyninmaw Village for K50 mln worth of public property

A media outlet, Khit Thit Media, is spreading misinformation on social networking sites that the Tatmadaw raided Nyninmaw Village, Launglon Township, Taninthayi Region, and robbed public property worth K50 million.

Regarding the news, according to the response of a security official in the relevant area, Tatmadaw did not serve security duties in the village on 13 December and the surrounding region, and the information was wrong.

Therefore, malicious media



Screenshot validates misinformation.

only write and spread false news in a timely manner to create a misunderstanding between Tatmadaw and the public. — MNA/KZL

Misinformation spreads on social media: Alleged resignations of 45 ward administrators denied

MISINFORMATION is being written and distributed on social networking sites that ward administrators from Hinthada Township, Ayeyawady Region, have been informed to undergo military training at the local battalion in Hinthada starting from 6 December and will be sent to the front line of the army.

According to information sources within the military

and Hinthada Township’s ward administrators, the news is not true.

The malicious media is using fake news as a weapon of terrorism and is publishing misinformation to undermine national stability and discredit the military. — MNA/KZL

Screenshot validates false claims.



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NATIONAL

Real estate prices double in new satellite townships of suburban areas

By TWA

THE real estate sales price in new satellite townships on Yangon City's outskirts jumped two-fold compared to those of suburban areas, realtors from new satellite townships told The Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM).

The property prices in the new four townships (Dagon Myothit (North, South, East, and Seikkan) doubled amidst Kyat depreciation in the forex market. The buyers prefer new vibrant townships with good transport, industrial parks, and a bustling market.

Why are house prices in satellite townships skyrocketing?

"The real estate values in those four townships are rocketing compared to those in South Okkalapa, North Okkalapa, Thingangyun, Thakayta, and Thuwunna because of vibrant neighbourhoods, better transportation, and bustling markets. The property market in those townships boomed this year as some investors eyed the location, and Kyat weakened against the hard currencies. Both the rent and sale prices doubled in H2 this year," Daw Thet Mar Win, a realtor, told the GNLM.

The market values in the suburban areas are weak, she elaborated.

"During the establishment of a new township (North Dagon), a two-storey wooden house in a 40 by 60 feet plot in Ward 35 was worth only K400,000-K500,000. Now, the value has surged to more than K400 million. Bustling townships with development and good transport boosted sales prices. However, the real estate value in South Okkalapa township on the other side of Ngamoeyeik Creek is still lower than that of the new township. The 30x60 feet house in community housing is not priced higher than K500 million. With this price, we can only buy a 20 by 60 feet house in North Dagon," U Aung Naing



A cadastral map of Dagon Myothit (East, North, South & Seikkan) townships.

Win, a realtor, said.

The mass movement to urban from rural areas and relocation of posh regions (Bahan, Shwetaunggya, Sangyoung, and Mayangon) to new townships to take a profit from property made the market thrive in the previous years.

The property prices in those new satellite townships doubled in a few years.

New township property market booming

"Of four townships, North Dagon has a good neighbourhood. The developers bought a plot of land worth K70 million and built a house with creative exterior and interior designs by spending K50-K100 million. That new design house is put for sale at K300-K400 million. Amidst the shaky currency market, the value rose to over K500 million.

Low-income people and blue-collar workers are primarily seen in Dagon Myothit (South) and Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) townships, where industrial zones are located. Dagon (South) also drew the attention of the investors this year, U Aung Naing Win said.

Yangon Benchmark Report for property is released every year by an institution concerned. However, the transaction price is higher than the benchmark rates. Following the property market shaking up in new townships, the townships connected to those areas also see bustling trade this year.

Weakening Kyat, soaring real estate prices

"There are many vacant plots of land beside the road next to one new township. Those land plots are also highly demanded, even without having an ownership grant landslip. The land in the Sitpin area was valued at K8 million to K10 million per plot. This year, the price doubled. The buyers put the fence around the land. Some investors build so-called houses on those land," Ko Thein Soe, a realtor, told the GNLM.

The population density, better infrastructure, and development of industrial zones significantly elevated the real estate prices in those four Dagon townships this year.

"The investors eye hard assets like property while the Kyat value falters in the forex market. Before April this year, a 20x60-foot plot of land at Ward 18 in South Dagon Township climbed to K130-K150 million in late 2023. When investors eyed the property market in new townships in late May, the price rise persisted. Most people like to keep haven assets like real estate during times of market turbulence," the GNLM quoted Ko Thurein from Ward 18 of Dagon Myothit (South) Township as saying.

Translated by EM

Daily newspapers available online

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NATIONAL



The picture shows some Myanmar workers going to work in Thailand at Kawthoung port.

Myanmar expats in Thailand facing 2% income tax levy

ON 13 December, the Myanmar Embassy to Thailand announced that Myanmar citizens residing and working in Thailand are required to pay a two per cent income tax.

As per the statement, blue-collar workers from Myanmar in Thailand with a monthly income set at Thai Baht (THB)7,500 will be subject to a monthly income tax of 150. Paying this monthly income tax of THB150 will categorize Myanmar kyats equivalent to THB7,500

as white money. The accumulated white money can be used to enjoy income tax relief when returning to Myanmar, allowing for purchasing houses, land, apartments, and vehicles.

Additionally, white-collar employees paying income tax in Thailand must also fulfil their tax obligations to the Myanmar Government based on the remaining portion of their income.

When white-collar employees visit the Myanmar embassy to pay taxes, they

are required to bring their pay slip or salary certificate along with the tax slip. The embassy will issue a tax payment certificate with a QR code, which taxpayers must keep without losing or damaging it. Myanmar workers in Thailand are instructed to pay the three-month income tax for the period of October to December 2023. Furthermore, they can pay taxes every three months, six months, or nine months after December 2023. — TWA/TRKM

MoL warns overseas employment agencies for non-compliance

THE Ministry of Labour (MoL) issued a notice on 12 December, stating that overseas employment agencies failing to submit the monthly worker-sending report three times or more will face revocation of their agency licences. The MoL has published a list of 30 overseas employment agencies that did not submit the worker-sending report for November 2023, with six failing to report for the third time.

This notice serves as the initial warning for non-compliance, and the identified agencies must sign a confession letter acknowledging the lapse. The MoL emphasizes that repeated failure to submit the report will lead to the cancellation of agency licences.

Overseas employment agencies are instructed to submit monthly worker-sending statistics to the department via email or office letter within the first five days of each month, even if no workers were sent.

As of November, there are 506 companies holding overseas employment agency licences in Myanmar. — TWA/TMT

YESC takes action to remove illegal cables from lamp posts in Yangon



A glimpse of illegally connected fibres and Wi-Fi cables.

THE Yangon Electricity Supply Corporation (YESC) has issued an advance notice for removing illegal fibre cables and Wi-Fi cables attached to lamp posts under its ownership.

On 11 December, township electrical engineers and staff from Hlaing Township, along with employees from officially authorized telecommunications companies, conducted removing unauthorized fibre cables and Wi-Fi cables that had been improperly installed on lamp-posts along Okkyin Station Road in Hlaing Township. YESC had initially announced the removal of unauthorized Wi-Fi cables from lamp-posts by 30 November 2021 at the latest. However, due to non-compliance, the corporation had to carry out the removal of these cables. — TWA/TKO

Over 70 YBS accidents result in 29 passenger deaths within 11 months

AS reported by the Yangon Region Public Transport Committee-YRTC, there have been over 70 traffic accidents involving the Yangon Bus Service (YBS) in the past 11 months, leading to the unfortunate death of 29 passengers.

These accidents are not solely attributed to factors like buses competing with each other, disregarding traffic signals, and speeding. The consequences extend to causing injuries and fatalities among passengers, including pedestrians crossing the road.



The photo shows a YBS traffic accident.

Urging YBS bus drivers to refrain from undisciplined actions, YRTC Joint Secretary U Lyan Cin Mang emphasized the need for responsible behaviours. He highlighted the profound impact of traffic accidents on the lives of passengers and

their families, emphasizing the importance of ensuring safety and delivering quality services.

Statistically, 65 traffic accidents involving YBS occurred during the first 11 months of 2022, resulting in 86 injuries and 31 fatalities. — TWA/MKKS

600 companies fail to file AR in Oct, says DICA



The front general view of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.

A total of 600 companies failed to submit annual returns (AR) on the online registry system MyCO in November 2023, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

According to the DICA's notification, the DICA notified any registered company that fails to file its AR on MyCO is to be struck off the Register from the date of the directive, under 430 (F) of Myanmar Companies Law.

This year, 500 companies in January, 400 each in February and March, 200 in April, 550 in May, 750 in June, 600

in July, 750 in August, 450 in September and 750 in October did not file the AR on the MyCO, totalling 5,950 in past 11 months, according to the DICA.

Additionally, the DICA stated that 5,000 companies failed to submit AR in 2022.

The registration and re-registration of companies on the MyCO website commenced on 1 August 2018 under the Myanmar Companies Law 2017.

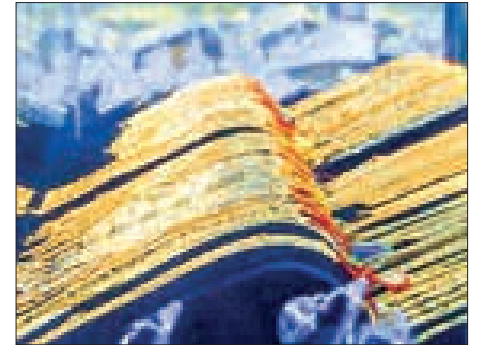
All registered companies must submit AR on the MyCO registry system within two months of incorporation and at least once every year (not later than

one month after the anniversary of the incorporation) under Section 97 of the law.

Under Section 266 (A) of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017, public companies must submit annual returns and financial statements (G-5) simultaneously. All overseas corporations must submit ARs in the prescribed format on MyCO within 28 days after the end of the financial year under Section 53 (A-1) of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017.

As per DICA's report, thousands of companies were suspended for failing to submit AR forms before the due date. Newly established companies are required to submit ARs within two months of incorporation or face a fine of K100,000 for filing late returns.

The DICA has notified that any company which fails to submit its AR within 13 months will be notified of its suspension (I-9A). If it fails to submit the AR within 28 days of receiving the notice, the system will show the company's status as suspended. Companies can restore their status only after shelling out a fine of K50,000 for the AR fee, K100,000 for restoration of the company on the Register, and K100,000 for late filing of documents, totalling K250,000. If a company fails to restore its status within six months of suspension, the registrar will strike its name off the Register, according to the DICA notice. — NN/EM



Gold ornaments are displayed at the gold outlet in Yangon.

Spot gold price hits above US\$2,000 per ounce

AS spot gold price rose to \$2,033 per ounce on 14 December, the Yangon Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA) set the pure gold price higher at K3.697 million per tical (0.578 ounce or 0.016 kilogramme).

The spot gold price on 13 December dropped to US\$1,979 per ounce.

Yet, the market value of the pure gold hit K3.72 million per tical. There is only a slight price difference of over K20,000 per tical between YGEA's set price and the market value.

A US dollar is currently exchanged at K3,540 at the over-the-counter market.

With the Kyat depreciating to K4,000 against the greenback in the forex market, the gold price peaked at K4 million per tical in late August 2023. — NN/EM

Pheegyan banana fetches good prices in NyaungU Tsp

ACCORDING to banana farmers, local growers are happy to earn income from growing Pheegyan bananas with an underground water tapping system in Latpanchaypaw village-tract in NyaungU township, NyaungU District.

Banana growers in NyaungU Township begin growing bananas in Tabaung and Tagu of Myanmar calendar. The locals of Latpanchaypaw village-tract grow only Pheegyan banana as its demand is high in the banana season. In contrast, very few people grow Rakhine bananas (*Musa sapientum*), said U Tin Soe Ko, a banana farmer.

The Pheegyans are grown in

pits like one banana plant or two banana plants per hole and in plots. Those who grow one plant per pit restart their cultivation without waiting for the old plants to bear new sprouts. But those who grow two plants per pit leave one plant for bearing fresh sprouts.

It takes banana plants about 10 or 11 months to bear their first fruits. Banana is sold to merchants from NyaungU, Pakokku, and Kyaukpadaung townships. Currently, Latpanchaypaw village-tract residents grow banana plants with the underground water. The banana fetches between K2,000 and K2,500 per bunch. — Dipa Lin /KTZH



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OPINION

Preserve Myanmar's rich cultural heritage: A collective national duty

THROUGHOUT its extensive history, the people of Myanmar have meticulously safeguarded their unique national culture, comprising linguistic diversity, elevated cultural customs, and intricate fine arts that reflect a sense of national pride and integrity. This commitment to cultural preservation is evident in historical and literary records and in the contemporary histories of neighbouring nations.

Recognizing the significance of tangible and intangible cultural heritages, every citizen of Myanmar bears the responsibility of preserving these assets as a national duty. These heritages serve as a testament to Myanmar's cultural standards, which have evolved over

thousands of years. Notably, the ancient city-states of Hanlin, Beikthano, Sri Ksetra, and the Bagan cultural zone have achieved global recognition as world heritage sites. Ongoing efforts are also directed towards securing world heritage status for the MraukU cultural heritage area.

Laws protect 48 ancient cultural heritage sites across the nation, with special emphasis on effectively safeguarding tangible and intangible monuments, artefacts, and areas housing multiple cultural treasures. To further promote cultural awareness and understanding, the government is actively working on enacting the Myanmar Museums Law, paving the way for establishing and enhancing museums that play a crucial role in educating future generations about the nation's history, culture, and cultural standards.

A comprehensive inventory identifies 2,289 intangible cultural heritages spread across various regions and states.

In support of the flourishing of traditional culture, the government has organized the Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions 24 times, aiming to nurture talented artists capable of preserving the country's cultural fine arts for posterity.

The present moment demands a united effort from all Myanmar citizens to safeguard valuable and rare cultural heritages for sustained existence. It is imperative that, based on these tangible and intangible cultural assets, citizens contribute to the building of a modern and developed nation without compromising their own national culture and strength.

Failure to do so could result in the encroachment of alien cultures on the sovereignty and cultural immunity of the people. Hence, collective striving is essential to cultivate a society rich in its own national culture of the country, capable of standing tall among other nations.

TIME was, with most of us, when Christmas Day encircling all our limited world like a magic ring, left nothing out for us to miss or seek; bound together all our home enjoyments, affections, and hopes; grouped everything and everyone around the Christmas fire; and made the little picture shining in our bright young eyes, complete.

A time came, perhaps, all so soon, when our thoughts overleapt that narrow boundary; when there was someone (very dear, we thought then, very beautiful, and absolutely perfect) wanting to the fullness of our happiness; when we wanted too (or we thought so, which did just as well) at the Christmas hearth by which that someone sat; and when we intertwined with every wreath and garland of our life that some one's name.

That was the time for the bright visionary Christmases that have long arisen from us to show faintly, after summer rain, in the palest edges of the rainbow! That was the time for the beatified enjoyment of the things that were to be and never were, and yet the things that were so real in our resolute hope that it would be hard to say what realities achieved since have been stronger!

What! Did that Christmas never really come when we and the priceless pearl who was our young choice were received, after the happiest of totally impossible marriages, by the two united families previously at daggers — drawn on our account? When brothers and sisters-in-law, who had always been relatively calm to us before our relationship was affected, perfectly doted on us, and when fathers and mothers overwhelmed us with unlimited incomes? Was that Christmas dinner never really eaten, after which we arose and generously and eloquently rendered honour to our late rival, present in the company, then and there exchanging friendship and forgiveness, and founding an attachment, not to be surpassed in Greek or Roman story, which subsisted until death? Has that same rival long ceased caring for that same priceless pearl, married for money, and become usurious? Above all, do we know now that we should probably have been miserable if we had won and worn the pearl and that we are better without her?

That Christmas when we had recently achieved so much

fame, when we had been carried in triumph somewhere for doing something great and good when we had won an honoured and ennobled name and arrived and were received at home in a shower of tears of joy, is it possible that that Christmas has not come yet?

And is our life here, at best, so constituted that, pausing as we advance at such a noticeable milestone in the track as this great birthday, we look back on the things that never were, as naturally and full as gravely as on the things that have been and are gone, or have been and still are? If it be so, and so it seems to be, must we conclude that life is little better than a dream and little worth the loves and strivings that we crowd into it?

No! Far be such miscalled philosophy from us, dear Reader, on Christmas Day! Nearer and closer to our hearts be the Christmas spirit, which is the spirit of active usefulness, perseverance, cheerful discharge of duty, kindness, and forbearance! It is in the last virtues especially that we are, or should be, strengthened by the unaccomplished visions of our youth; for, who shall say that they are not our teachers to deal gently even with the impalpable nothings of the earth!

Therefore, as we grow older, let us be more thankful that our Christmas associations' circle and the lessons they bring expand! Let us welcome every one of them and summon them to take their places by the Christmas hearth.

Welcome, old aspirations, glittering creatures of an ardent fancy, to your shelter underneath the holly! We know you and have not outlived you yet. Welcome, old projects and old loves, however fleeting, to your nooks among the steadier lights that burn around us. Welcome, all that was ever real to our hearts, and for the earnestness that made you real, thanks to our late rival, present in the company, then and there exchanging friendship and forgiveness, and founding an attachment, not to be surpassed in Greek or Roman story, which subsisted until death? Has that same rival long ceased caring for that same priceless pearl, married for money, and become usurious? Above all, do we know now that we should probably have been miserable if we had won and worn the pearl and that we are better without her?

That Christmas when we had recently achieved so much

around this little head on which the sunny curls lie heaped, the graces sport, as prettily, as airily, as when there was no scythe within reach of time to shear away the curls of our first love. Upon another girl's face near it — placid



What Christmas Is As We Grow Older

By Min Zan

but smiling bright — a quiet and contented little face, we see home fairly written. Shining from the word, as rays shine from a star, we see how, when our graves are old, other hopes than ours are young, other hearts than ours are moved; how other ways are smoothed; how other happiness blooms, ripens, and decays — no, not decays, for other homes and other bands of children, not yet in being nor for ages yet to be, arise, and bloom and ripen to the end of all!

Welcome, everything! Welcome, alike what has been, and what never was, and what we hope may be, to your shelter underneath the holly, to your places round the Christmas fire, where what is sitting open-hearted! In yonder shadow, do we see obtruding furtively upon the blaze, an enemy's face? By Christmas Day, do we forgive him! If the injury he has done us may admit of such companionship, let him come here and take his place. If otherwise, unhappily, let him go hence, assured that we will never injure nor accuse him.

On this day, we shut out Noth-

ing! "Pause," says a low voice. "Nothing? Think!"

"On Christmas Day, we will shut out from our fireside, Nothing."

"Not the shadow of a vast City where the withered leaves are lying deep?" the voice replies. "Not the shadow that darkens the whole globe? Not the shadow of the City of the Dead?"

Not even that. Of all days in the year, we will turn our faces towards that City upon Christmas Day and, from its silent hosts, bring those we love among us. City of the Dead, in the blessed name wherein we are gathered together at this time, and in the Presence that is here among us according to the promise, we will receive, and not dismiss, thy people who are dear to us!

Yes. We can look upon these children angels that alight, so solemnly, so beautifully among the living children by the fire and can bear to think how they departed from us. Entertaining angels unaware, as the Patriarchs did, the playful children are unconscious

of their guests, but we can see them — can see a radiant arm around one favourite neck, as if there were a tempting of that child away. Among the celestial figures, there is one, a poor misshapen boy on earth, of a glorious beauty now, of whom his dying mother said it grieved her much to leave him here, alone, for so many years as it was likely would elapse before he came to her — being such a little child. But he went quickly and was laid upon her breast, and in her hand she leads him.

There was a gallant boy who fell, far away, upon a burning sand beneath a burning sun and said, "Tell them at home, with my last love, how much I could have wished to kiss them once, but that I died contented and had done my duty!" Or there was another, over whom they read the words, "Therefore we commit his body to the deep," and so consigned him to the lonely ocean and sailed on. Or there was another, who lay down to his rest in the dark shadow of great forests and, on earth, awoke no more. O shall they not, from sand, sea, and forest,

be brought home at such a time!

A dear girl — almost a woman — never to be one — made a mourning Christmas in a house of joy and went her trackless way to the silent City. Do we recollect her, worn out, faintly whispering what could not be heard, and falling into that last sleep for weariness? O look upon her now! O look upon her beauty, her serenity, her changeless youth, her happiness! The daughter of Jairus was recalled to life, to die, but she, more blest, has heard the same voice, saying unto her, "Arise forever!"

We had a friend who was our friend from our early days, with whom we often pictured the changes that were to come upon our lives and merrily imagined how we would speak, walk, think, and talk when we came to be old. His destined habitation in the City of the Dead received him in his prime. Shall he be shut out from our Christmas remembrance? Would his love have so excluded us? Lost friend, lost child, lost parent, sister, brother, husband, wife, we will not discard you! You shall hold your cherished places in our Christmas hearts, and by our Christmas fires; and in the season of immortal hope, and on the birthday of immortal mercy, we will shut out Nothing!

The winter sun goes down over town and village; on the sea, it makes a rosy path as if the Sacred tread were fresh upon the water. A few more moments, and it sinks; night comes on, and lights sparkle in the prospect. On the hill-side beyond the shapelessly diffused town, and in the quiet keeping of the trees that gird the village steeple, remembrances are cut in stone, planted in common flowers, growing in grass, entwined with lowly brambles around many a mound of earth. In town and village, there are doors and windows closed against the weather, flaming logs heaped high, joyful faces, and healthy music of voices. Be all ungentleness and harm excluded from the temples of the Household Gods, but be those remembrances admitted with tender encouragement! They are of the time and all its comforting and peaceful reassurances, the history that re-united even upon earth the living and the dead, and the broad beneficence and goodness that too many men have tried to tear to narrow shreds.

Reference: Retold by S Be Sai, my intimate friend from The US

PIXABAY

Diabetes medicine may lower risk for colorectal cancer: Study

Medications used to treat type 2 diabetes may lower the risk of colorectal cancer, highlighting the need for clinical trials to determine their potential for preventing other cancers.

AREVOLUTIONARY study by Case Western Reserve University researchers reveals that a class of diabetes medications used to treat type 2 diabetes may also lower the risk of colorectal cancer (CRC).

The findings, published in the journal JAMA Oncology, support the need for clinical trials to determine whether these medications could prevent one of the deadliest types of cancers.

Eventually, the medications may also show promise in warding off other types of cancer associated with obesity and diabetes.

"Our results clearly demonstrate that GLP-1 RAs are significantly more effective than popular anti-diabetic drugs, such as Metformin or insulin, at preventing the development of CRC," said Nathan Berger, the Hanna-Payne Professor of Experimental Medicine at the Case Western Reserve School of Medicine and the study's co-lead researcher.

Glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonists, or GLP-1 RAs, are medications to treat type 2 diabetes. Usually given by injection, they can lower blood-sugar levels, improve insulin sensitivity and help manage weight.

They've also been shown to reduce the rates of major cardiovascular ailments.

Importantly the protective effect of GLP-1 RAs are noted in patients with or without overweight/obesity.

"To our knowledge," said co-lead researcher Rong Xu, a professor at the School of Medicine, "this is the first indication this popular weight-loss and anti-diabetic class of drugs reduces incidence of CRC, relative to other anti-diabetic agents."

Berger and Xu are members of the Case Comprehensive Cancer Centre.

National health problem Being overweight or obese or having diabetes are risk factors for increasing incidence of CRC and for making its prognosis worse.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) defines being overweight and obese as an increase in size and amount of fat cells in the body above certain levels. These conditions are common nationally and are caused by several factors — among them diet, lack of sleep or physical activity, genetics and family history.

SOURCE: ANI



Being overweight or obese or having diabetes are risk factors for increasing incidence of CRC and for making its prognosis worse. PIXABAY

NATIONAL

DPM MoFA Union Minister receives UNHCR Representative



UNHCR Representative Ms Noriko Takagi calls on Union Minister U Than Swe yesterday.

U Than Swe, Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs, received Ms Noriko Takagi, United Nations High Commissioner for

Refugees (UNHCR) Representative to Myanmar, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they

exchanged views on existing cooperation and ways of further cooperation between the Government of Myanmar and the UNHCR. — MNA

Union Government Office 2 Union Minister receives UNHCR Representative

U Ko Ko Hlaing, Union Minister at the Union Government Office 2, received Ms Noriko Takagi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Representative to Myanmar, at the Ministry of the Union Government Office 2 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the courtesy call, they cordially exchanged views on the way forward of collaboration to provide humanitarian assistance for the people of Myanmar and the repatriation process of the displaced persons and communities from Rakhine State in Myanmar. — MNA



The UNHCR Representative calls on Union Minister U Ko Ko Hlaing yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

Confiscated illegal items: Timbers, fuel oil, machinery, motorbikes and vehicles

THE Customs on-duty teams managed by the Customs Department confiscated an unregistered Vigo Ford Ranger vehicle (estimated value of K1.5 million) and an unregistered Honda Fit car (approximately K3.5 million) in Yephyu township of Dawei district, three unregistered backhoes (about K260 million) in Kyunsu township of Myeik district, an unregistered motorbike (estimated value of K700,000) in Myeik township, an unregistered motorbike (estimated value of K1 million) in Bokpyin township and 3.099 tonnes of illegal timbers worth K464,970 in Myeik township on 13 December. The action was taken under the Export and Import Law and the Forest Law.

On the same day, the combined teams captured 278 gallons of illegal diesel worth K2,485,240 in Htantabin township, 21 gallons of unlawful fuel oil, 41 gallons of illegal diesel and 2,400 gallons of lubricant (used) valued at K9,468,565 in Hlinethaya township. The action was taken under the Petroleum and Petroleum Products Law.

Thirteen arrests were made on 13 December, with an estimated value of K279,118,775, as reported by the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS

Newborn's head pus lump, comparable to apple, successfully removed at Kyaikto Hospital



(L&R) Photos show the condition of the wound before operation and medical professionals at Kyaikto Hospital are diligently engaged in the surgical procedure. **PHOTOS: KYAIKTO PUBLIC HOSPITAL**

KYAIKTO Public Hospital on 13 December successfully operated on a month-old child's apple-sized pus lump on the head from infection sustained after shaving.

The child who was born in Taungkalay village was accidentally cut on the head when shaving, and the parents tried to stop bleeding by chewing herbal

leaves and turmeric powder and covering the wound. The infected wound got worse, and the child couldn't take breastfeeding, according to the hospital.

The tradition that newborn's hair must be shaved to make their hair grow healthy is a common belief but unnecessary for health, said the hospital.

According to the hospital,

children can easily suffer from cough, runny nose, and nasal congestion when shaving as their head controls their body temperature.

The hospital suggested that shaving is risky for newborn babies who can't hold their heads themselves, and shaving should be done, if necessary, when they can sit up. — MT/ZS

Street food creating appetite for the future in fading Osaka market

Osaka's revival, fuelled by the return of tourists post-pandemic, sees a run-down shopping street experimenting with food stalls for nostalgic urban renewal. The district aims to seize this opportunity to reinvent itself in the historically significant city.

THE introduction of food stalls to a run-down shopping street in Osaka may prove to be just a temporary, nostalgia-driven attempt at urban renewal.

But with tourists flocking back to the country in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic and locals back on the streets, the once-thriving commercial district is hoping to cash in on an opportunity to reinvent the area in the western Japan city, famous for its history as a mercantile center.

The operators of the stalls have enlivened the narrow Shinsekai Market downtown shopping arcade that stretches out from the foot of the landmark Tsutenkaku Tower.

Boasting a history of more than 100 years, the market, located next to an old neighbourhood that shares the same name, at one point hosted some 50 stores, including butchers and produce grocers.

But with the ageing of shopkeepers in Shinsekai, which translates to “New World”, one business after another has been pulling down their metal shutters for the final time.

Redevelopment efforts have failed to stem the decline of the popular entertainment district, with the area's heyday of some 50 years ago now feeling like the very distant past.

A ray of hope for revival emerged in the 1990s when



Photo taken on 21 October 2023, shows Shinsekai Market in Osaka bustling with tourists and other customers. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Shinsekai's cityscape and atmosphere, reminiscent of the late Showa era (1926-1989), began to attract visitors whose interest in turn brought movie and TV drama productions who used it as a shooting location.

Shinsekai, once quiet, now sees closed stores and hopes for revival through increased tourism.

A food stall street, led by Haruki Kumagai, offers affordable meals, creating a lively atmosphere reminiscent of Bangkok's Khaosan Road. Akiomi Tagaya, who started a seafood stall, observes a growing customer base, signalling positive response amid the district's transformation. — Kyodo

Table Mountain attacks highlight crime threat to S Africa tourism

HIKERS hit the trail before dawn at South Africa's natural jewel Table Mountain, but instead of simply trekking its rugged landscape they were also demonstrating against a surge in attacks on walkers and tourists.

Pensioner Mary Lloyd, among the roughly 50 gathered to sound the alarm at one of Africa's most visited landmarks, had only weeks prior become

one of the victims.

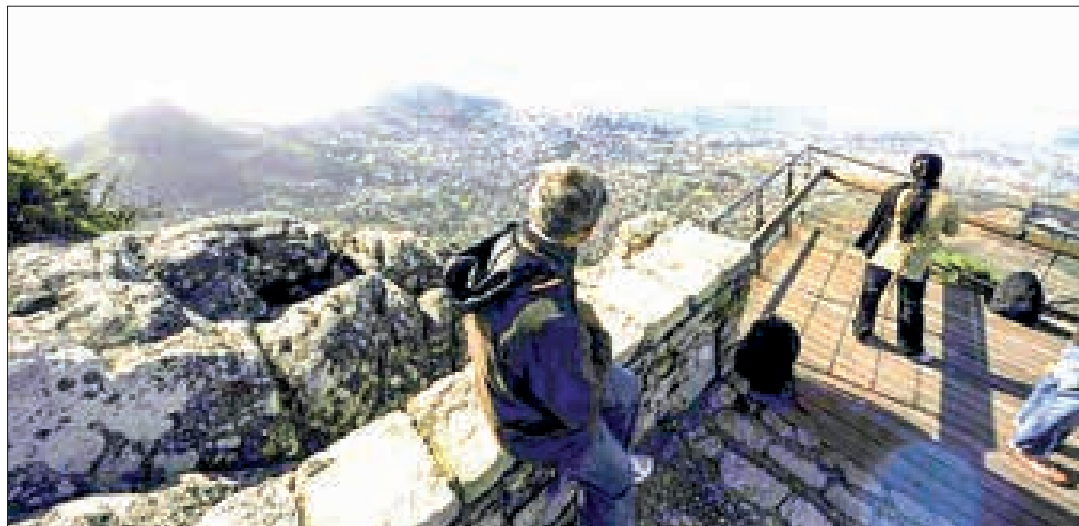
The 75-year-old was on her daily walk along the massif's footpaths when two men pounced on her — grabbing her phone and threatening to cut off her fingers off when she couldn't remove her rings fast enough.

“Mostly I feel absolutely angry because it has taken away my freedom on the mountain. I don't feel safe as I walk,”

said Lloyd at the protest near Cape Town.

With South Africa's tourist season near its peak, guides worry about taking hikers onto one of Africa's major draws at dawn and dusk because of the risk.

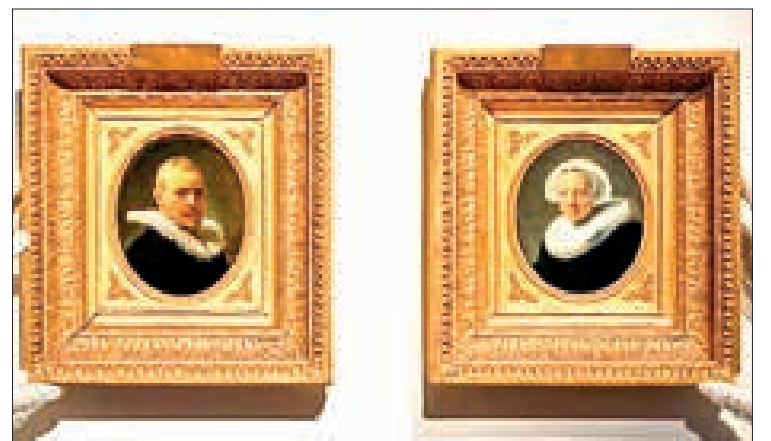
Cape Town authorities say there have been more than 80 attacks on the mountain paths this year, most since August. — AFP



Tourists look down from the plateau of Cape Town's Table Mountain where dozens of people have been attacked in recent weeks. **PHOTO: AFP**

Smallest Rembrandt portraits shown in Amsterdam museum

Painted in an unusually intimate style, the 20-centimetre high oval portraits represent the smallest known works by the 17th-century Dutch master.



The Rembrandt paintings — signed and dated 1635 — are 20-centimetre high oval portraits, which depict an elderly plumber named Jan Willemsz van der Pluym and his wife Jaapgen Carels. **PHOTO: CHRISTIE'S**

TWO tiny portraits by Rembrandt that had been lost to the world for 200 years and sold recently at auction for \$14 million made their debut Wednesday at Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum.

The 20-centimetre high (eight-inch) oval portraits depict an elderly plumber named Jan Willemsz van der Pluym and his wife Jaapgen Carels.

The couple, painted in an unusually intimate style for Rembrandt, were friends of the artist's family and came from his hometown of Leiden in the Netherlands.

The paintings are the smallest known portraits by the 17th-century Dutch master, who was better known for much larger works commissioned by wealthy families. — AFP

ECONOMY WORLD

Panel urges Japan to prep for digital yen that coexists with cash

Japan is exploring the possibility of introducing a digital yen through a pilot programme initiated by the Bank of Japan.

JAPAN should make preparations to issue a digital yen “without delay” and treat it as legal tender that would coexist with cash, a government panel of experts said Wednesday.

The nine-member panel under the Finance Ministry said any central bank digital currency, or a digital yen, should be usable “by anyone, anytime and anywhere” and compatible with other private companies’ digital payment services.

Currently, Japan does not have specific plans to introduce a digital yen. However, the Bank of Japan has launched a pilot programme to study the feasibility of implementing such a currency.

The European Central Bank has begun a two-year



Japan is still known as a cash-loving nation. **PHOTO: KYODO**

“preparation phase” but has yet to decide whether to issue a digital euro. The US Federal Reserve has also not decided on issuing its CBDC, though it is examining the pros and cons.

“The basic stance should

be that CBDC will complement, rather than replace, cash,” the latest report by the panel on CBDC said, calling for closer coordination between the government and the BOJ. — Kyodo

US hails ‘record’ year for trade with Africa

THE United States has struck hundreds of deals worth \$14.2 billion with African nations over the past year, government officials said on Wednesday.

The 547 new trade and investment agreements represent a 67 per cent increase on 2022 in the number and value of closed deals, said British Robinson, coordinator for the US

administration’s Prosper Africa trade and business initiative.

“We have had a record-setting year for US-African relations,” added Judd Devermont, President Joe Biden’s top Africa advisor.

Devermont and Robinson were speaking at a virtual media briefing marking the first anniversary of a summit with

African leaders, where Biden pledged to go “all in” on the continent. Devermont said the US has already delivered more than 40 per cent of a commitment made last December to invest \$55 billion in Africa over three years. “By the end of year two, we anticipate surpassing 70 per cent of our goal, if not more,” he said. — AFP



British Robinson, coordinator for the US administration’s Prosper Africa trade and business initiative, reported a 67 per cent increase in the number and value of closed deals in 2022. **PHOTO: AFP**

WTO ‘that works’ can counter protectionism: French trade minister

The next WTO ministers’ conference is scheduled for February in Abu Dhabi. The discussions also covered steel and aluminum tariffs between the US and the European Union, with Becht expressing optimism for progress, hoping for an extension and a permanent deal.

FRENCH foreign trade minister Olivier Becht raised the possibility of reforming the World Trade Organization with his US counterparts on Monday, he told AFP, saying an effective WTO was necessary in the face of rising protectionism.

“The question is whether we, Europeans and Americans, are capable of restoring a multilateral system that works at the commercial level, whether we can reform the WTO,” he said.

It’s an “important” question among rising geopolitical tensions worldwide, as well as protectionist moves and rhetoric recently embraced by a number of nations.

“We have an interest in having a multilateral system that works,” Becht said, though he added that “it’s important to be prepared in case it’s not possible to save the system, and it was important for me to know where the United States stands today.”

In a statement, US Trade Representative Katherine Tai said that “the ministers discussed the World Trade Organization, the importance of reform, and the need to improve all of the organization’s functions, including the dispute settlement system.” The next ministers’ conference of the WTO is scheduled for the end of February in Abu Dhabi. — AFP



The World Trade Organization (WTO) headquarters are seen in Geneva on 12 April 2018. **PHOTO: FABRICE COFFRINI/AFP/FILE**

Germany to reinstate constitutional debt rule in 2024: Scholz

GERMANY will reimpose its constitutional limit on public debt in 2024, Chancellor Olaf Scholz said Wednesday, announcing a deal on next year’s budget after a court ruling forced a revision of his coalition’s spending plans

at the last minute.

“We will keep to the debt rule... in budget 2024,” said Scholz, referring to a regulation limiting borrowings to 0.35 per cent of gross domestic product. — AFP

Tesla files recall on 2 mln vehicles to fix autopilot software

ELECTRIC car maker Tesla has initiated a recall of over two million vehicles in the United States due to a risk linked to its autopilot software, the US traffic safety regulator said Wednesday.

The recall affects models across Tesla's portfolio and will be addressed by an "over-the-air software remedy" typically performed remotely and not involving a trip to a repair shop.

"While not concurring with the agency's analysis," Tesla agreed to "voluntarily administer a recall," to resolve the matter; said an official notice by

the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Tesla Chief Executive Elon Musk has spoken bullishly over the years of the potential for autos to reach full autonomy, but the company's official guidelines says drivers must remain at the wheel while using Autopilot.

After a two-year probe, NHTSA found that Autopilot "can provide inadequate driver engagement and usage controls that can lead to foreseeable misuse of the system."

If autopilot is used incorrectly or if the driver fails to recognize that the function is activated, the

risk of an accident could be higher, a NHTSA spokesperson said.

"NHTSA's investigation remains open as we monitor the efficacy of Tesla's remedies and continue to work with the automaker to ensure the highest level of safety," the spokesperson said.

"Automated technology holds great promise for improving safety but only when it is deployed responsibly; today's action is an example of improving automated systems by prioritizing safety.

Tesla did not respond to an AFP request for comment. — AFP



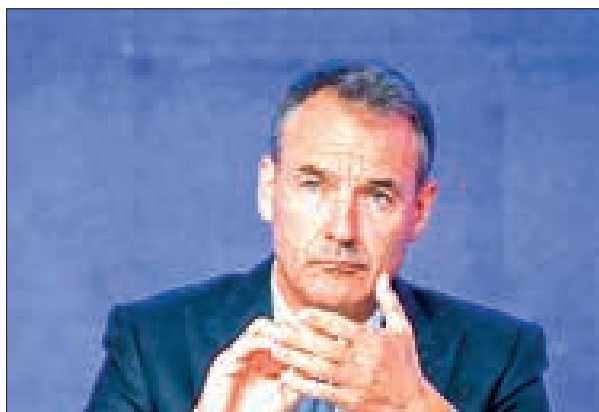
Electric car maker Tesla has initiated a recall of over two million vehicles in the United States due to a risk linked to its autopilot software, the US traffic safety regulator said Wednesday. PHOTO: JOHN THYS/AFP

BP sacks former CEO for 'serious misconduct'

BP on Wednesday denied its former chief executive of more than £32-million (\$40-million) payout because of his failure to disclose past personal relationships with colleagues.

Bernard Looney resigned unexpectedly as the head of the British energy major in September after admitting he had not been "fully transparent" about the issue.

The company said in a statement that it had sought assurances from the 53-year-old Irishman



Bernard Looney resigned as BP chief executive after less than four years in the job. PHOTO: AFP

in July 2022 but now concluded they were "inaccurate and incomplete".

In doing so, "Mr Looney knowingly misled the board", it added.

"The board has determined that this amounts to serious misconduct," the statement read.

"As such, Mr Looney has been dismissed without notice" with immediate effect, ending his 12-month notice period.

He will now forfeit £32,426,000 in future salary, pension, bonus payments and shares. He will also have to repay 50 per cent of the cash part of his bonus for the 2022 financial year. — AFP

French winemakers adopt US-style marketing to halt falling sales

FRANCE'S wine makers, are predicting the downward trend will continue. Fewer French people still consider a glass of wine with food essential. Younger generations often find wine culture complex and intimidating, preferring simpler fare such as beer and spirits.

Once an unassailable ingredient of the French art of living, traditional bottled wine is on the decline.

Over the past six decades, 70 per cent of per capita consumption has evaporated, and experts

are predicting the downward trend will continue. Fewer French people still consider a glass of wine with food essential. Younger generations often find wine culture complex and intimidating, preferring simpler fare such as beer and spirits. So the wine industry is striking back with a marketing and branding drive worthy of Madison Avenue. — AFP

<p>CLAIMS DAY NOTICE M.V MSC SUPARNA F VOY.NO. (SB345A)</p> <p>Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MSC SUPARNA F VOY.NO. (SB345A) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 15-12-2023 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AWPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.</p> <p>Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.</p> <p>No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day. Phone No: 2301185</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Shipping Agency Department Myanma Port Authority</p> <p>Agent For:</p> <p>M/S MEDITERRANEAN SHIPPING COMPANY S.A</p>	<p>CLAIMS DAY NOTICE M.V SITC CHANGMING VOY.NO. (2318S)</p> <p>Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SITC CHANGMING VOY.NO. (2318S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 15-12-2023 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AWPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.</p> <p>Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.</p> <p>No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day. Phone No: 2301185</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Shipping Agency Department Myanma Port Authority</p> <p>Agent For:</p> <p>M/S SITC CONTAINER LINE CO., LTD</p>	<p>CLAIMS DAY NOTICE M.V T12 APPLE VOY.NO. (2302E)</p> <p>Consignees of cargo carried on M.V T12 APPLE VOY.NO. (2302E) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 15-12-2023 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AWPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.</p> <p>Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.</p> <p>No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day. Phone No: 2301185</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Shipping Agency Department Myanma Port Authority</p> <p>Agent For:</p> <p>M/S T12 LOGISTICS PTE LTD</p>
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ROLLING UPDATES: WORLD

UN chief welcomes high-level Guyana-Venezuela border controversy talks

The discussions are being conducted under the regional auspices of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).



Debate in Venezuela's National Assembly featuring new map showing the accession of Guyana Essequiba. **PHOTO: PEDRO RANCES MATTEY/AFP**

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Wednesday welcomed the announcement of talks between the presidents of

Guyana and Venezuela over their border controversy. The meeting between President Irfaan Ali of Guyana and Venezuela's

President Nicolas Maduro is to take place on Thursday in St Vincent and the Grenadines, said Stephane Dujarric, chief spokesman for the UN chief.

Dujarric said that Guterres, who was invited to the summit, is dispatching two envoys from the world body to represent him at the talks, held under the regional auspices of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

The spokesman said the UN chief designated his chef de cabinet, Courtenay Rattray, accompanied by Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas Miroslav Jenca to participate in the meeting as observers. — Xinhua

TOP NEWS

Japan, Britain, Italy agree to set up fighter jet plan liaison body

THE defence ministers of Japan, Britain and Italy on Thursday agreed to establish a coordinating body to proceed with their plan to jointly develop a next-generation fighter jet, a key step in putting the project into practice.

Japanese Defence Minister Minoru Kihara and his British and Italian counterparts, Grant Shapps and Guido Crosetto, signed the treaty as they held talks in Tokyo to reaffirm the schedule for the warplane's deployment in 2035.

The Global Combat Air Program fighter project was unveiled in December last year as the three countries face increasingly severe security challenges. — Kyodo

Australian disaster crews tally damage from Cyclone Jasper

DISASTER-RESPONSE teams fanned out across northeastern Australia on Thursday, counting the cost of a tropical cyclone that flooded major highways, uprooted trees, and left 40,000 without power.

Coastal regions were battered by damaging winds and swamped by flooded rivers as Tropical Cyclone Jasper barreled in off the Coral Sea on Wednesday evening.

Although the storm was running out of steam by Thursday morning, government meteorologists warned it was still whipping up "intense rainfall and damaging wind gusts".

"This is an evolving situation because the rainfall has not stopped yet and is likely to continue well into today and this evening," forecaster Laura Boekel told reporters.

"If we see this fall in a short period... that's when we can see that dangerous and very life-threatening flash flooding." — AFP

At least 75% of French support referendum on migration issues – poll

AT least 75 per cent of the French support a referendum on migration issues after French lawmakers rejected the "asylum and immigration" bill, a fresh poll of the Elabe polling agency showed Wednesday.

Some 57 per cent of the polled French believe that the new bill's provision allowing the legalization of migrants employed

in sectors lacking a labor force will attract even more migrants to the country. At the same time, 42 per cent of the French said the law stigmatizes foreigners, who are presented either as a threat or as wanting to benefit from the existing system. They agree with the Socialists' position that the law "betrays the fundamental values of the republic." — Sputnik



Refugees and migrants arrive in port aboard a Border Force vessel after being intercepted while crossing the English Channel from France in small boats on 11 August 2020 in Dover, England. **PHOTO: LEON NEAL/AFP/FILE**

S Korea's population expected to fall sharply in 50 years

South Korea is projected to experience a significant decline in its total population over the next 50 years, primarily attributed to a persistently low birth rate and a rapidly aging demographic.

SOUTH Korea's total population was expected to fall sharply for the next 50 years due to a chronically low birth rate and a rapidly aging population, statistical office data showed Thursday. The total population was estimated to decline from 51.67 million in 2022 to 50.06 million in 2040, 42.30 million in 2060 and 36.22 million in 2072, according to Statistics Korea.

The population was forecast to record an annual falling rate of 0.16 per cent for a decade starting in 2025, eventually leading to an annual fall of 1.31 per cent in 2072.

The number of newborns was forecast to slide from 250,000 in 2022 to 220,000 in



People walk past street stalls at Namdaemun Market in Seoul, South Korea, on 20 June 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

2025 and 160,000 in 2072, while the number of deaths was projected to increase from 360,000 in 2022 to 690,000 in 2072. The proportion of the working-age

population aged 15-64 to the total population was expected to drop from 71.1 per cent in 2022 to 45.8 per cent in 2072. — Xinhua

SPORTS

Man City go for full house of trophies at Club World Cup

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola aims to complete his trophy haul at the Club World Cup in Saudi Arabia, aiming to add a first Club World Cup to their treble of Champions League, Premier League, and FA Cup wins.



Pep Guardiola is hoping to complete with trophy haul at Manchester City by winning the Club World Cup. **PHOTO: AFP**

PEP Guardiola is hoping to complete his trophy haul as Manchester City manager at the Club World Cup in Saudi Arabia as the Gulf Kingdom shows off its wares in hosting a major international football tournament for the first time.

City travel to Jeddah, the host for all seven matches in the tournament, looking to add a first Club World Cup to the

treble of Champions League, Premier League and FA Cup they won last season.

“We miss just one trophy to finish the circle and win all the titles City can have,” said Guardiola, who has already won the competition three times during his spells at Barcelona and Bayern Munich. “We will go there and prepare because for us it is a dream.”

Despite a recent four-game winless streak in the Premier League, City are strong favourites to lift more silverware.

Not since Corinthians beat Chelsea in 2012 have the Champions League winners failed to lift the Club World Cup.

No matter who emerges victorious from the final on 23 December, there will be a new name on the trophy. — AFP

Porto eliminate Shakhtar to secure Champions League knockout place

PORTO reached the Champions League last 16 on Wednesday as Galeno netted a double and veteran Pepe scored in a 5-3 victory in their winner-takes-all clash with Ukraine’s Shakhtar Donetsk.

The hosts only needed to avoid defeat at the Estadio do Dragao to progress from Group H with Barcelona, while Shakhtar needed a win to pip them to a top-two finish.

Antwerp beat Barcelona 3-2 in the other group game as Porto finished level with the Catalan giants on points but ended behind

them on head-to-head.

Shakhtar had to settle for third place in the group and a spot in the draw for the Europa League knock-out round play-offs.

Galeno forced the ball home from close range to give Porto a ninth-minute lead after Evanilson did well to stretch and pull the ball across for his fellow Brazilian. But Shakhtar gave themselves hope of a comeback as Danylo Sikan tapped in Oleksandr Zubkov’s pass to finish off a sweeping move just before the half-hour mark. — AFP

Newcastle squad ‘exposed’ in Champions League exit - Howe

NEWCASTLE manager Eddie Howe said his side’s lack of strength in depth was exposed after bowing out of the Champions League in the group stage on Wednesday.

A 2-1 home defeat by AC Milan sealed the Magpies’ fate as they even missed out on dropping into the Europa League next year.

Newcastle’s first experience of Europe’s elite club competition for 20 years got off to a flying start as they beat Paris Saint-Germain 4-1 at home and drew 0-0 away to Milan.

But they took just one point



Newcastle bowed out of the Champions League after a 2-1 home defeat to AC Milan on Wednesday. **PHOTO: AFP**

from their final four games in a devilishly difficult Group F as an injury crisis took its toll. — AFP

PSG, Porto into Champions League last 16 as Newcastle exit

PARIS Saint-Germain and Porto qualified for the Champions League last 16 on Wednesday as Newcastle bowed out of Europe after losing 2-1 at home to AC Milan.

PSG drew 1-1 away to Group F winners Borussia Dortmund to go through as runners-up after Milan came from behind to beat Newcastle at St James’ Park and eliminate Eddie Howe’s side.

Newcastle, who needed to win and for PSG to drop points to keep their first Champions

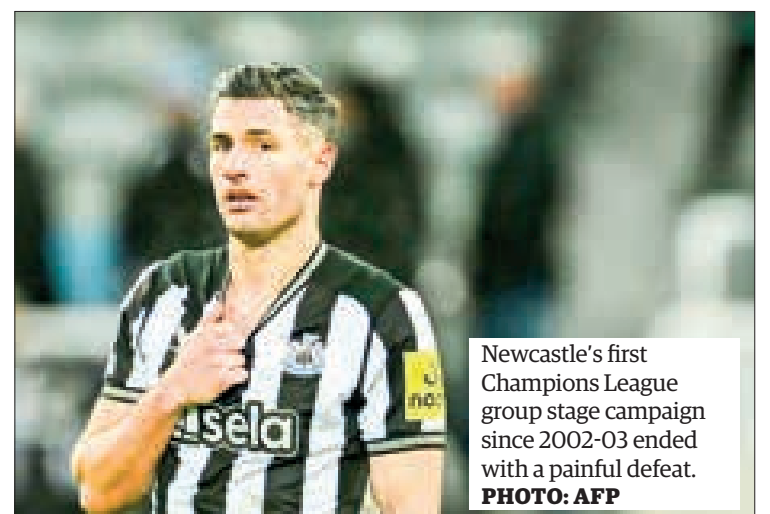
League campaign in 20 years alive, took the lead through a brilliant Joelinton strike in the first half. But Christian Pulisic equalised on the hour and substitute Samuel Chukwueze broke Newcastle hearts with an 84th-minute winner, although it wasn’t enough for Milan to overhaul PSG.

“We gave everything to the match. I can’t ask for anything more (in terms of) commitment, effort, physical exertion. Unfortunately for us it wasn’t to be,”

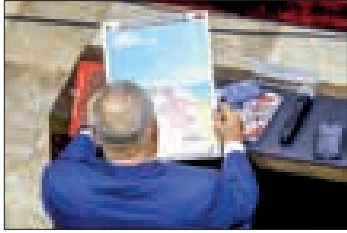
said Howe.

The French champions, in danger of a first group stage exit since the Qatari takeover in 2011, fell behind when Karim Adeyemi scored early in the second half in Germany.

Warren Zaire-Emery came to the rescue for PSG five minutes later after Kylian Mbappe weaved into the box, his pass deflected out to the teenager who advanced towards goal before slamming home a powerful shot. — AFP



Newcastle’s first Champions League group stage campaign since 2002-03 ended with a painful defeat. **PHOTO: AFP**



US House Republicans vote to authorize impeachment enquiry into Joe Biden

Republicans in the House voted to start looking into whether to remove President Biden. They voted 221-212 along party lines. This decision has caused a big debate about the Constitution.



The US Capitol building can be seen in Washington, US. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

US House Republicans on Wednesday voted to authorize impeachment enquiry into President Joe Biden, in a 221-212 vote along party lines.

“The impeachment power resides solely with the House of Representatives,” Judiciary Committee Chairman Jim Jor-

dan, a hardliner within the Republican party, told reporters.

“If a majority of the House now says we’re in an official impeachment enquiry as part of our constitutional duty to do oversight, that carries weight. That’s going to help us get these witnesses in,” said

the Ohio Republican, one of the leaders of the impeachment push.

Republicans hope that the impeachment enquiry vote would give them better legal standing to hold the president’s son Hunter Biden in contempt of Congress should he fail to show. — Xinhua

COLD WAVE SET TO GRIP THE CAPITAL

Snow continues in Beijing with cold wave to come

BEIJING Municipality is seeing more snow on Thursday, with a cold wave expected to sweep the Chinese capital on Friday.

According to the Beijing Meteorological Observatory, the average precipitation in the city from 5 am to midnight Wednesday was 2.7 millimetres, with an average of 3.1 mm in the urban area.

On Thursday, moderate to heavy snow was forecast in the daytime and light snow at night.

The weather forecast also noted that the highest temperature in the city on Thursday would be only minus 2 degrees Celsius and the lowest would be minus 5 degrees.

Following this round of snow, which is expected to end on Friday, the city will be hit by a cold wave, with minimum temperatures expected to drop below minus 10 degrees at night.

The city is still on an orange alert for heavy snow, a yellow alert for icy roads and a blue alert for cold waves.

China has a four-tier weather warning system, with red representing the most severe alert, followed by orange, yellow and blue. — Xinhua

Russia ready to open hospital in Gaza, Israel says it’s yet unsafe – Putin

President Vladimir Putin announced that, in response to Israel’s request, Russia will boost the provision of medical equipment and medicines to those affected in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict zone.

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin said Russia will increase supplies of medical equipment and medicines to victims in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict zone at Israel’s request.

“We also have an agreement with the Israelis, and they have asked us to do this, that we will increase the number of deliveries of medical equipment and medicines. We will definitely do this,” Putin said during the joint “Direct Line” Q&A session and annual press conference.

Putin added that the Emirati side had set up a field hospital in Gaza near the Rafah crossing.

“We talked about the possibility of

Russia opening its own hospital there, at the stadium,” the Russian president said.

The Russian president stressed the need to ensure the lives of people in the Gaza Strip and urged a massive delivery of humanitarian aid to the conflict-torn enclave.

He added that this would require the consent of Egypt and Israel.

“I spoke with the Egyptian president, he is in favour of it, supports it. I talked to Prime Minister Netanyahu, there are consultations between the various security agencies. The Israeli side believes that it is not safe to open a Russian hospital in Gaza,” Putin said. — SPUTNIK



This picture taken on 18 October 2023 shows an aerial view of the complex housing the Ahli Arab hospital in Gaza City in the aftermath of an overnight blast. PHOTO: AFP/FILE