

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing speaks on the Thanksgiving occasion in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing attends thanksgiving ceremony for Christmas

Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and his wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla paid a visit to the thanksgiving ceremony for Christmas that was held at Saint Michael Cathedral located in No 1 Yanaung Ward, Pyinmana Township, Nay Pyi Taw Council Territory yesterday afternoon, according to the Myanmar News

Agency.

Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council of Churches Rev Dr Tin Maung Aye, Bishop of Saint Michael Cathedral Father Soe Lin Aung, bishops, and other relevant personnel welcomed the arrival of the Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla at the St Michael Cathedral.

The ceremony was opened by sing-

ing choirs for the Christian worship sung by Bishop Soe Lin Aung of Saint Michael Cathedral and Christian youths.

When Nay Pyi Taw Churches Council Chairman Rev Dr Tin Maung Aye made an auspicious speech, saying that he and his fellows were glad and thanked the Senior General for his presence at the ceremony, despite his hand-ful schedules, as his love and kindness

to the ethnicities and the people have been shown; strong desire for peace and tranquillity of the State has also been witnessed; and also his values and profound respects to the Christian believers were all observed in the visit of Senior General to the Thanksgiving ceremony.

The Senior General also made a speech.

Speaking on the occasion, the Senior General said it is a glad to hold the auspicious Christmas Festival, and a blessing is wished for all global citizens, Myanmar citizens, and all Christian people to be settled with Christ's love.

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NATIONAL

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Kayin New Year set to kick off on 11 Jan

BUSINESS

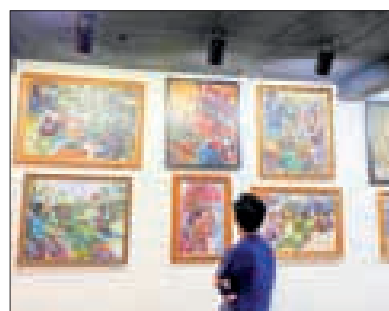
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Fisheries Federation, Mon State Fisheries Department collaborate to boost croaker fish productivity

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Unity in Canvas' Exhibition Showcases Diverse Talents at Beikthano Gallery in Yangon

NATIONAL

Putao, Mount Phonkanrazi tour package includes skiing programmes



Travellers join skiing sports in snow-capped mountains in Putao Township.

SIGHTSEEING tours in Putao Township and Mount Phonkanrazi snow-capped mountain scaling tour in Kachin State have started, and glacier skiing programmes are also included in the tour package, said Ko Min Khine from Trekking in Myanmar Company Limited.

Currently, arranged climbing tours are not for professional mountaineers but for recreational climbers and those wishing to conduct study tours. As many first-time visitors to ice-capped mountains are participating, ar-

rangements have been made to ensure safe travel so that young women can enjoy skiing during the hiking trip.

"The town of Putao in the far north of Myanmar is a huge flat valley surrounded by ice-capped mountains, but the visibility of those mountains is severely limited due to cloud cover. If the weather is fine and clear, you can see the ice-capped mountains anywhere in the town. We are planning trips to places worth visiting in Putao and Machanbaw. The climbing trips by local rec-



reational climbing groups have been made on 11 November, 22 November and 6 December, and a group will return on 26 December. These trips will last six nights and seven days in Putao. In the entire trip, five days are meant for walking, including a two-day round trip by motorcycle, three days of walking in ascending and two days of walking in descending. There are 44 miles to be walked — 22 miles uphill and 22 miles downhill," Ko Min Khaing said.

The Trekking in Myanmar company have started two-night and three-day, and three-night and four-day tour packages to Putao and a six-night and sev-

en-day trip to Mount Phonkanrazi since November 2023, and the group trips to Putao will be from November 2023 to May 2024.

In addition, the Putao-Machanbaw trip includes visits to Maha Myatmuni pagoda, Putaung village, Khakaborazi National Museum, Mulashidi village and suspension bridge, Rawang Manaw compound, Rawang cultural museum, Heart-shaped Lake of Putao, Kaunghmulon pagoda, Malikha suspension bridge, Kyauk Naga, ancient buildings and Gubar guesthouse, Natkyun, fairy inland in Malikha River, Natkyun pagoda and rocky flats. — ASH/TH

Geological map of Myanmar's groundwater situation to distribute to universities

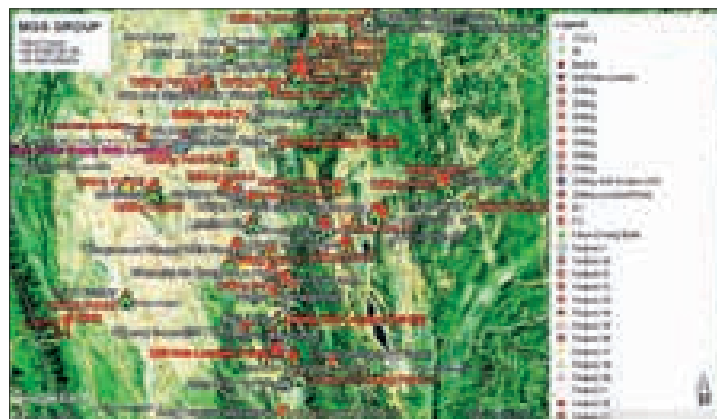
U Aung Min Thein, founder of the Myanmar Geophysical Surveying Company (MGS Group), reported that the geological map of Myanmar's groundwater situation will be distributed to all the country's technological universities and agricultural university. Over 45 per cent of this groundwater situation map project was finished at the end of 2022, and they are trying to complete the remaining 55 per cent by the end of 2023.

"We are still in process, and we could get the facts from some areas, but we will finish the rest of 55 per cent this year. The universities' faculty members and students can use this groundwater map only for educational purposes but not for commercial and personal benefits. We will distribute the map to the technological universities and agricultural university. Because of the map, we can know the volume of the groundwater we use and the water consumption of the wells.

It can describe the groundwater situation of our surroundings that is used for the economy and agriculture," U Aung Min Thein said.

The mentioned project of the geological map of the groundwater situation is led by Myanmar Geophysical Surveying Company (MGS Group) by researching the groundwater records from various states and regions of the country, which are measured by geophysical tech-

nology. Technicians from the MGS Group are doing the project by getting records with GIS mapping and Geophysics facts. In the areas where groundwater is challenging to get, as they only use the traditional system without knowing the volumes of the ground and water, they have to face many difficulties, and the geological map of the groundwater situation will solve the problem to help our citizens. — ASH/TRKM



A map shows underground water situation in Myanmar.

Five national objectives of 76th Independence Day

1. To uphold "Our Three Main National Causes" – Non-disintegration of the Union, Non-disintegration of national solidarity and Perpetuation of sovereignty, which are national interests and national politics
2. To ensure the promotion of a comprehensive education sector that produces human resources with perfect abilities like intelligence, skills, and talents in building a Union based on democracy and federalism.
3. To make efforts to hold free and fair elections under the law and ensure the right to vote across the nation
4. To foster public cooperation for state stability and strengthen the multiparty democratic system at the end of acts of terrorism
5. To promote agriculture and livestock-based MSMEs

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NATIONAL

Unity must be accomplished by common action for a common cause to serve the common interest. This kind of unity must be like an act of making a common endeavour for the achievement of common objective and benefit such as the independence and interest of the entire nation and people. A mere utterance of craving for unity will not be paid off. There must be common action, common interest and common objective. That is exactly what should be called as "unity".

[An excerpt from the speech delivered by Bogyoke Aung San at the Congress of AFPFL on 23 January 1946.]



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing attends thanksgiving ceremony for Christmas

FROM PAGE-1

The Senior General said in his speech that it is a sharing and delivering of Christ's great kindness, love, and sympathy to all human beings that hold the worship ceremony of Christmas; all people should build the true essence of Christmas by sharing kindness and love to each other; and only then, could the world be safe and stable with peaceful and prosperous human society.

In the speech of the Senior General, it was highlighted that all religions, including Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism, are all recognized together with the Buddhism that the majority of Myanmar citizens believe in and value; all faiths are allowed for all ethnic people who believe in different religions in line with the existing laws as long as those activities don't



The Senior General and his wife cordially greet the Christian community at Saint Michael Cathedral in Pyinmana Township yesterday.

tion Council always opens doors for peace, Tatmadaw is always ready for peace and invites and welcomes peace talks; every government that takes office in every administration term makes their steadfast efforts for peace as a bound by duty.

The Senior General also urged the Christian bishops, clergies, and believers to be involved in every aspect of constructing the durable peace for the region and the country they reside in by their utmost efforts.

In his speech, the Senior General encouraged all to collaborate to restore the peace, stability, and security of Myanmar soon and ensure the peaceful coexistence of all religions in the country commencing on the auspicious Christmas Day 2023.

Afterwards, Chairman of the SAC Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla were involved in singing a choir together with the Christian community.

Bishop of Saint Michael Cathedral Father Soe Lin Aung, and the nun Naw Judaic cordially provided Christmas gifts to the SAC Chairman and wife. Also, the Senior General and wife offered fruits and donations as Christmas gifts in return.

After all, the SAC Chairman, wife, and attendees had lunch with the Christian community. — MNA/ TMT

As the State Administration Council always opens doors for peace, Tatmadaw is always ready for peace and invites and welcomes peace talks; every government that takes office in every administration term makes their steadfast efforts for peace as a bound by duty.

impact on others; and all religions officially recognized are truly assisted and safeguarded as per the provision prescribed in the Constitution.

The Senior General affirmed that the ancestors of all Christians, Islams, Hindus, and other religions developed the well-being of the country with mutual respect and unity, together with the majority of Buddhists in Myanmar, without hurting and discriminating against each other.

As the State Administra-

NATIONAL



State Administration Council Vice-Chair Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win inspects the already commissioned naval vessel.

Five naval vessels commissioned into services for Tatmadaw (Navy), three vessels for Myanmar Coast Guard

Only when Tatmadaw (Navy) has naval vessels with full combat power will it be shaped as an Adjacent Force Projection Navy/ Regional Navy.

Tatmadaw (Navy) has stepped up to become a Three-Dimensional Combat Ready Navy to fully protect Myanmar's exclusive economic zone for the first phase in implementing the steps of ambitions, said Vice-Senior General Soe Win.

Honouring the 76th Anniversary of Tatmadaw (Navy) of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, naval vessels were commissioned into service in conjunction with the ceremony to hand over war vessels to Myanmar Coast Guard at No 3 Naval Jetty in Yangon yesterday afternoon with the aim of fully protecting the exclusive economic zone of Myanmar sea and maritime interests of the State, attended by Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior

General Soe Win, on behalf of the SAC Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.

Speaking on the occasion, the Vice-Senior General said that as heavy naval vessels will be built capable of protecting its strength in the region for the second phase vision, the third vision is to make Tatmadaw (Navy) become a blue water navy ambition.

As such, he continued that the naval service personnel must take training to become qualified and capable of handling the naval vessels with high combat power to implement all tactics of Tatmadaw (Navy).

In this regard, the Vice-Senior General pointed out that it is necessary to build civil cargo vessels and oil tankers in addition to powerful naval vessels to become not only the naval power but also the national maritime power of the State.

The Vice-Senior General recounted that naval vessels immediately transported foodstuffs and relief supplies to

of the State.

The Vice-Senior General urged officers and other Tatmadaw (Navy) ranks to preserve existing fine traditions as grasping a chance to take pride in joining the 76th Anniversary of Tatmadaw (Navy).

Chief of Staff (Navy) reported on matters related to the naval vessels in the commissioning ceremony. The Commander of Naval Dockyard Command handed over documents related to the war vessels to the commander of Naval Flotilla. The commander of Ayeyawady Naval Region Command handed over documents related to the war vessels to the Director-General of the Myanmar Coast Guard.

The Vice-Senior General presented a flower basket and cash awards to those who participated in building the commissioned vessels.

The Chief of Staff (Navy) commissioned the naval vessels, hoisted the State flag and rang the bell eight times on the agenda.

The Vice-Senior General and party viewed two already commissioned 33-metre coastal combatants, two 27-metre Super Dvora patrol boats and one river patrol boat, and the vessels were handed over to the Myanmar Coast Guard.

At the ceremony, two 33-metre coastal combatants, the 7th and 8th 27-metre Super Dvora patrol boats and one river

it is necessary to build civil cargo vessels and oil tankers in addition to powerful naval vessels to become not only the naval power but also the national maritime power of the State.

Sittway of Rakhine State in the aftermath of storm Mocha which hit on 14 May 2023. So far, 49 naval ships transported more than 9,000 tonnes of commodities to Rakhine State in the rehabilitation period as part of implementing the humanitarian assistance.

He highlighted that 99 per cent of rehabilitation has been completed in Rakhine State with the State fund, adding terrorists commit sabotage acts again in Rakhine State to destroy property and life of the people and peace and stability

patrol boat were commissioned into services for the Tatmadaw (Navy) while one large patrol combatant and two coastal combatants were handed over to the Myanmar Coast Guard.

Also present at the ceremony were Daw Than Than Nwe, wife of the Vice-Senior General, Union Minister for Defence Admiral Tin Aung San and wife, Union ministers, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Moe Aung and wife, the chief minister of Yangon Region and officials. — MNA/TTA

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NATIONAL

Daw Than Than Nwe, wife of Vice-Senior General Soe Win, comforts patients at local military hospital in Thanlyin Station, visits handicraft exhibition to mark 76th birthday of Tatmadaw (Navy)



DAW THAN THAN NWE, wife of Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, accompanied by wives of Union ministers and senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief and officials, yesterday morning comforted those receiving medical treatments at the local military hospital in Thanlyin Station of Yangon Region.

She asked the families of Tatmadaw members about their diseases, medical treatment and

the progress of health conditions at the maternity ward and child ward at the local military hospital and presented foodstuffs and cash assistance to them.

At the handicraft works exhibition to mark the 76th Anniversary of Tatmadaw (Navy) at Thiri Maha Zeya Kyawhtin Hall, the wife of the Vice-Senior General viewed round handiworks of families of Tatmadaw (Navy), textile arts, and dresses created by families of Tatmadaw (Navy).

Daw Than Than Nwe then presented the fund to the Maternal and Child Welfare Association through an official. — MNA/TTA

Daw Than Than Nwe, wife of Vice-Senior General Soe Win, presents foodstuffs and cash assistance to patients at the local military hospital in Yangon.

COUNTER-ARGUMENT TO FALSE INFORMATION

Misinformation Alert

ON the night of 23 December, security forces entered the village of Kyauktan village in Myaung Township, Sagaing Region, arrested more than ten residents and forced them to pay ten thousand kyats each.

Regarding the news, according to an official from the relevant area, to prevent terrorists from entering the village, the security forces entered Kyauktan village on the night of 23 December. They found some items related to vandalism, but the residents were not arrested. Security forces are carrying out the activities of national stability and law enforcement, and the terrorist-supporting media is creating and writing based on the incidents and events they want to create and distribute them to misrepresent the security forces from the local people. —MNA/TKO

MoI UM urges literati to protect people from harm of false information

UNION MINISTER for Information U Maung Maung Ohn called for doyen literati yesterday to contribute accurate news about the country's current affairs, employing their talents to protect the people from harm caused by false information.

The Union minister called at the 36th respect-paying ceremony to doyen literati marking Myanmar Literary Day, organized by the Myanmar Writers Association, at the City Hall in Kyauktada Township, Yangon. Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn, Myanmar Writers Association Chairman U Ohn Maung (Myinmu Maung Naing Moe), members, elderly literati, writers and guests attended the events. At the ceremony, Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn handed over K10 million and clothes worth over K10.3 million donated by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, to Myanmar Writers Association Chairman U Ohn Maung (Myinmu Maung Naing Moe).

The Chairman of the Myanmar Writers Association then received donations of K2.5 million from the Ministry of Information, K15 million from the Yangon Region Government, K2.78 million from the Yangon City Development Committee, K1 million from the Union Solidarity and Development Party (Headquarters), K300,000 from the Union Solidarity and Development Party (Yangon Region) and



Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn, and officials from the Myanmar Writers Association pay respect to elderly literati and writers at the 36th respect-paying ceremony in Yangon yesterday.

K300,000 from the Yangon Region Union Solidarity and Development Party Chairman U Khin Maung Soe and his family.

Afterwards, the Union minister said in his opening remark that the respect-paying ceremony led by the association reaches its 36th anniversary this year, while Myanmar Literary Day, which is the first Waxing of Nattaw, has marked its 70th anniversary. He also highlighted the Prime Minister's appreciation of literati and the State's affordable care for them.

In the afternoon, the Union Minister observed the selection process for receptionists at the 2023 Myanmar Film Academy Award ceremony at the Myanmar

Motion Pictures Organization (MMPO) in Yangon's Bahan Township and greeted the participants. A total of 253 applications for the receptionist positions were received between 1 and 15 December, and personal interviews for the applicants started on 17 December.

The first phase of the selection process ended up shortlisting 97 applicants, and the second phase is in progress. The selection process is carried out by judges who are the Academy-winning senior actors, and participants' vocal status, walking style, performance skill and outstanding talents are considered in the selection. — MNA/TH

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NATIONAL

Paper on four ages of Myanmar history compiled



The ancient Pyu city of Hanlin and archaeological findings from its site.

ACCORDING to Dr Tun Tun Oo, the director of the Department of Archaeology and National Museum (Nay Pyi Taw), the papers on records starting from the Pyu era to the present are being documented to know the true history of Myanmar and the documentation of the Bagan, Sagaing, Inwa and Nyaungyan eras have finished.

The ministry collaborated with freelance specialists and governmental experts from the Department of Archae-



ology and National Museum and the Myanmar history team. They referenced archaeological findings and literary

evidence.

Dr Tun Tun Oo said, "The Pyu era is still being written, but the works of the Bagan era, Sagaing era, Inwa era and Naungyan era have finished.

Referencing Myanmar's history is challenging due to the limited availability of local historical texts, which predominantly consist of chronicles by ancient historians and a handful of works by local experts. Foreign experts' writings often lead to accusations of misrepresentation in Myanmar's historical narratives.

The ministry works with external experts based on literary evidence, field research reports, excavation factors, and stone letters to write such kind of documentation.

The documentation aims to be able to know the true Myanmar History, to have the union spirit and patriotism and to maintain own history by knowing the cultural and historical events according to the eras. There will be a comparison of the genetics of the Pyu people who had passed through the time of the Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age with the genetics of present people. — Htun Htun/ASH/NT/TRKM



Authorities from Ranong Province and Inspection Department ordering the repatriates.

Thailand repatriates 97 Myanmar workers arrested under various cases

THAI authorities repatriated ninety-seven confined Myanmar workers who were arrested for various reasons to Myanmar on 22 December.

Those convicted in southern Thailand prisons were transported from Ranong to Kawthoung by water route.

Among the 97 repatriates, 33 females and 64 males are Myanmar nationals. U Moe Zaw, a labour attaché officer and authorities of Ranong Province, urged them to enter Ranong, Thailand, through legal means in the future.

The local authorities will check the Myanmar nationals who came to Kawthoung for COVID-19 tests and keep them in designated monitoring centres after conducting personal information checks and sharing knowledge. — TWA/TKO

Bean exports enjoy rising prices

ALTHOUGH the price of peanut kernel dropped as low as around K5,400 per viss in early December, the merchants have begun to see a rise recently.

The prices gradually rose to an average of K6,400 as of 23 December. Likewise, peanut oil sharply increased from K11,500 to K12,500 per viss.

However, the price of sesame oil remains at K12,000 at the Monywa wholesale market. While export-level black bean and pigeon peas begin to enjoy high prices in the Yangon wholesale market, the red pigeon pea price has skyrocketed in the provincial market. As of 23 December, a tonne of RC black beans was priced at K3 million, SQ/RC black beans at K3.3 million, and red pigeon peas at K3.35 million in the Yangon market. A basket of pigeon peas is K106,000 in the Magway market and K105,000 in the Yenangyoung. As of 19 December, a tonne of black beans was K2.9 million, and red pigeon peas were K2.8 million. Three days later, a tonne of black beans slightly

decreased, and the price of pigeon peas was K2.8 million. Although the advance price of pigeon peas was K90,000 per basket in the provincial market in early December, the price jumped by more than K10,000 within weeks. In the Yangon market, pigeon peas currently fetch K112,000 per basket, and the merchants are hopeful for a further price rise. Rice and bean exporters have enjoyed more profits thanks to policy relaxation. A quantity of pigeon peas was priced at 9,400 rupees on 20 December.

It increased to 9,600 rupees on 23 December. Since the beginning of the new harvest, peanut and pigeon peas have enjoyed high prices. As hoarders expect to sell at a higher price, bean merchants are set on daily fluctuations in Yangon.

Farmers in the Ayeyawady Region grow black beans and green gram as a summer crop, and their total plantation area is 1.6 million acres this year. Yangon has a high demand for black beans from Hinthada and green gram from Wake-ma. — TWA/NT

Kayin New Year set to kick off on 11 Jan

THE Kayin New Year Festival is set to kick off on 11 January at the Union National Race Village in Thakayta Township, Yangon. Mahn Than Win, Chairman of the Kayin Literature and Culture Association (Yangon Region) and a member of the festival organizing committee, provided details about the event.

The 2024 Kayin New Year Festival in Yangon Region will take place at the Arleingasint Pagoda in Insein Township and the National Race Village in Thakayta Township. The day will commence with the traditional Kayin national flag-hoisting ceremony at the Arleingasint Pagoda in the morning, which will be attended by committee members. In the ethnic village, the regional-level ceremony promises to be grand,



File photo shows the Kayin New Year Festival held in Union National Race Village in Yangon in 2022.

with fans expected to attend. beekeeping competition.

The festivities will include a flag-hoisting ceremony, a lecture, and cultural performances featuring local folk songs and dances, including Kayin traditional dances such as the Don dance, Bamboo dance, and Taungyar farming dance. Notably, this year will introduce a unique traditional sport—a

The festival will showcase traditional Kayin ethnic dance performances and host stalls selling ethnic accessories, clothing, and food. Additionally, traditional sports competitions are scheduled to take place, adding to the diverse array of activities for attendees to enjoy. — ASH/TKO

Prices of Chinese potato, Kyukok garlic, Shan garlic trend downwards in Yangon

THE information from the Bayintnaung Wholesale Market in Yangon reported that Chinese potato prices have been declining, whereas Kyukok garlic and Shan garlic are also falling.

The prices of sandy Chinese old potato and red soil Chinese new potato on 23 December in the Yangon market fell to K2,650 per viss and K2,350 per viss respectively, as the potato seller from Yetama Street at Bayintnaung Brokerage in Yangon Ko Thein Myint told The Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM).

Although other commodities imported via the border trade route increase in price in the local market, perishable goods such as Chinese potato and Kyukok garlic are halted to increase prices.

The Kyukok garlic is priced at K11,200 these days, though it peaked at K17,000 on 3 November and on 26 October at K7,000-K7,800 per viss. The prices of Shan garlic in current days range between K15,000-16,000-16,500-17,000 per viss. Therefore, it is observed that the price of Kyukok garlic is K6,000 lower than that of Shan garlic per viss.

The Shan garlic price



New onions were observed in the Pakkoku onion market on 23 December

on 4 December was running between K10,800-K11,500-K12,200-K12,700 per viss. Again, it peaked in the middle of December at K17,000 per viss. Despite the upsurge of the Shan garlic price, customers discovered that the price was decreased to K15,500 per viss for the big-sized garlic on 19 December upon purchasing three visses in the retail market. However, the price has returned to stability these days again. A buyer at the Yetama garlic warehouse, Ko Thein Soe, reported the GLNM.

Despite the fluctuation of the commodity prices, the Bayintnaung Wholesale Market is seen as less busy these days, with fewer purchasers and fewer cargo trucks, according

to some traders at the market.

It has been only a month since the Sinphyukyun new potatoes and new Shan garlic into the market. The prices are forecasted to decline upon the arrival of new stocks into the market. It is also expected that the potato price will fall up to K2,000 per viss when entering the new stock in the market.

A housewife Daw Wah Wah said to the GLNM that the price of monsoon onion (new) will be falling. However, it is currently skyrocketing in the market since thousands of vises of monsoon onions (new) are arriving in the markets in other towns and cities. Hence, it's also coming into the Yangon market soon. — TWA/TMT

Cultivation of wild almond trees to replace soil in Bogale Township

IN Bogale Township, resident U Soe Tint of Satkyun village-tract is leading the cultivation of wild almond trees as a cost-effective alternative to traditional soil. With preparations underway for a three-acre cultivation post-rainy season, U Soe Tint, who tends to 20 acres of almond trees, shared insights with The Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM).

Situated 11 miles from Bogale the area mixes fresh and saltwater, subject to seasonal changes entering the Kason month. Diesel for water-pumping tractor driving is a significant expense at K72,000 per four-gallon jerry-can.

The planting cost per acre, including fuel, amounts to approximately K150,000. The planting, initiated this month, anticipates a harvest in April, spanning four months. The project provides free seeds at a rate of two baskets per acre. One acre yields about 60 baskets, making

the endeavour economically viable at K150,000 per acre.

Bogale Township is set to witness 1,600 acres of almond tree cultivation this year, with plans to expand to 30,000 acres next year. U Soe Tint emphasized the dual benefit of fruit harvesting and using plant stalks as fertilizer, reducing reliance on costly imported fertilizers.

Almond trees planted near the village monastery lake are thriving, reaching an estimated height of five feet. According to the township-level Agriculture Department, utilizing almond trees as a natural green fertilizer alters soil properties and facilitates nitrogen transmission, impeding grass growth in crop fields.

The initiative promises economic benefits and addresses environmental concerns, showcasing the potential for sustainable agricultural practices in the region. — TWA/TKO



Almond trees and preparation processes.

Fisheries Federation, Mon State Fisheries Department collaborate to boost croaker fish productivity

MYANMAR Fisheries Federation and the Department of Fisheries, Mon State, are collaborating to surge the productivity of croaker fish for commercial purposes, according to Secretary U Kyee Ngwe of Myanmar Fisheries Federation. The croaker fish is a highly demanded product in the local fishery market.

Since the croaker fish has a solid market share among domestic consumers, the fed-

eration and the department are coordinating to proceed with research on preserving the croaker fish species and upsurging the croaker fish production.

U Kyee Ngwe said, "We will prioritize to have a safe and secure stock of the croaker fish for domestic consumption as the first step since it is highly demanded in the local market. Next, we will expand to get the regional and international market share. We are now collabo-



The photo shows croaker fish. The croaker fish is a highly demanded product in the local fishery market.

rating with the Myanmar Fisheries Federation in research on preserving the species and promoting productivity."

The croaker fish is abundantly caught mainly from October to February, the winter season. Croakers are Demersal fish that live and feed on or near the bottom of water bodies. They are primarily observed in the Ayeyawady Delta and Motama Delta areas. — ASH/TMT

OPINION

ARTICLE

Inlay Lake hosts five rare hibernated birds

IN SOUTHERN Shan State, Inlay Lake, a designated Ramsar site, emerges as a haven for 34 migratory bird species during the cold season, featuring five rare hibernated bird species. Notable among them are two seagull species, the Common Pochard and the Common Coot. These winged visitors, arriving annually in October, embark on an extensive journey from Siberia to Inlay Lake, while others from China and Russia make their way to Indawgyi Lake in Mohnyin Township of Kachin State. Departing in April, the migratory birds of various species find refuge in eight distinct habitats around Inlay Lake.

To counter the alarming decline of migratory bird populations across the world, the dedicated personnel of wildlife sanctuaries

conduct annual counts of the incoming migratory birds at Ramsar sites in Myanmar. This crucial effort aims to conserve both the Ramsar sites and the diverse bird species they harbour. The East Asian-Australasian Flyway and the Central Asian Flyway witness the passage of over 300 migratory bird species annually, including around 500 spoon-billed sandpipers and Common Pochards, which face the looming threat of extinction in the coming years.

Across the globe, birds can be categorized into domestic species, regional migratory birds, seasonal migratory birds, and hibernated birds. Myanmar boasts a rich avian diversity, hosting 1,136 bird species out of the 18,000 found throughout the world, as reported by the Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association (BANCA).

Inlay Lake's wildlife sanctuary, a sanctuary for 14 important bird species, witnesses a yearly surge in avian activity in late November and early December. Approximately 6,773 forest birds of 95 species, 9,938 water birds of 42 species, and 4,236 migratory birds representing 34 species converge on the lake during this period. Among them, five migratory bird species make the lake their temporary dwelling.

Beyond Inlay Lake, other regions in Myanmar, such as Indawgyi Lake in Kachin State, Moeyungyi Lake in Bago Region, Meinmahla Island in Ayeyawady Region, and Paleik, Pyukan, and Banaw Lakes in Mandalay Region, also attract hibernated birds annually. These natural habitats not only serve as safe havens for critically endangered bird species but also provide scenic beauty for domestic and international tourists, aligning with Myanmar's saying: "A pleasant home hosts visitors." Ramsar sites, natural parks, and wildlife sanctuaries thus become enticing destinations for nature enthusiasts to appreciate the beauty of sanctuaries and observe the fascinating behaviours of migratory birds.

THE Construction Task Force No.5 under the Department of Hydropower Implementation has been constructing the Upper Kengtawng Hydropower Plant near Kengtawng Town in Shan State (South). The power plant may fulfil both the State's and the country's electricity demand by harnessing the power of Namteng Creek.

The project has an installation capacity of 51 megawatts with three 17-MW power stations. The electricity produced from the power plant will be transmitted through the national grid by connecting the Namsam Main Power Sub-station via the 230-kV power grid.

U Toe Lwin, director of the Department of Hydropower Implementation at the Ministry of Electric Power, said: "We'd finished 80.52 per cent of the project by October 2023. We'll try to finish it by the end of the financial year 2024-25. We're trying our best since it can supply our country's much-needed electricity demand."

The department successfully constructed the 54-MW Kengtawng Hydropower Plant on 26 March 2009.

During the construction of the Kengtawng Hydropower Plant back in 2006, the department's engineers conducted an initial survey with experts from the Japan-based Kansai Co Inc to build another power plant on the Namteng Creek.

Moreover, the engineers and specialists from the Switzerland-based Colenco Power Engineering Co Ltd studied locations for hydro-powered structures, geological features and quality of construction materials for the Upper Kengtawng Hydropower project in 2009.

Similarly, the Japanese NEWJEC and the Norwegian Nor-Consult/Multi-Consult cooperated with the department in building access roads and staff accommodations by producing blueprints and conducting detailed measurements.

The director added: "We collaborated with specialists from Japan, Switzerland and Norway for the early initiative. We're working, but our homegrown engineers carry out the technical and construction works."

The dam installed in the Upper Kengtawng project is 1,800 feet long and 230 feet tall. It's a

Upper Kengtawng Hydropower Plant Project Promises a Brighter Future for Myanmar

By Lin Thit



Reinforced concrete for the power station.



The status of underground tunnel for channeling water.



Installation of the gate to the conduit.



Planned view of the Upper Kengtawng Hydropower Plant project.

zone-type pebble-filled earthen dam, and all the materials, including rocks and sand used in a barrier, underwent rigorous scrutiny to ensure the highest quality.

The main dam was finished in November 2021. To channel wa-

ter to the power station, the engineers excavated an underground tunnel with a length of 1,726 feet and a diameter of 26 feet.

So far, every component of the hydropower infrastructure has been built except the

high-pressure steel pipeline, power station and sub-station.

To deliver the necessary water volume to the power plant, a vertical conduit with a diameter of 82 feet and a length of 151 feet is being constructed in connection

with the tunnel. The civil engineering aspects are completed, and the engineers assemble the gate.

The water stored in the main dam will drive the power stations. To manage excess water during

the rainy season, a 460-foot-wide spillway, designed as a Labyrinth Type Weir and the first of its kind in Myanmar, has been constructed. The engineers are currently applying the finishing touches.

Only the high-pressure steel pipe connecting the power station and sub-station is left to be done. The department has procured essential electrical equipment through a contract with the China-based Consortium of DEIC & GF. Approximately 50 per cent of the equipment has been successfully delivered.

The department has meticulously selected projects with minimal environmental and social impacts. The Upper Kengtawng Hydropower Project, with a storage capacity of 104,000 acre-feet, has a low potential for adverse impact. The project is expected to improve the quality of life for the local population.

Resident U Sai Ponnya supported the project: "When the Upper Kengtawng Hydropower Project is done, we'll have two hydropower plants here. They'll enable us to use electricity 24 hours a day. Thanks to this, our towns have become much more

developed." Since electric power plays a crucial role in building a developed country, the department strives to finish the project by the end of the financial year 2024-25.

Upon completion, the two hydropower plants will collectively generate 267 million kilowatt-hours annually, capable of supplying electricity to about 700,000 people connected to the main grid.

The project can serve the residents of Loilem, Namhsan, and Langkho districts and supply surplus electricity to the broader public via the main grid. Undoubtedly, this initiative is poised to benefit the people through illumination.

Translated by NT

NATIONAL

Unity in Canvas' Exhibition Showcases Diverse Talents at Beikthano Gallery in Yangon



TWENTY-SEVEN artists from around the globe showcase their works at Yangon's Beikthano Gallery, presenting the captivating exhibition titled "Unity in Canvas" from 23 December 2023 to 21 January 2024.

The Beikthano Gallery is located at 113/3 B, Kaba Aye Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon. Hailing from diverse corners, these international talents represent countries such as Myanmar, North Korea, South Korea, Japan, the United States of America, Thailand, and Chinese Taipei. — GNLM

The man looks at the paintings hanging at Beikthano Gallery with interest. **PHOTO: GNLM**

MoC is striving to boost overseas exports

MYANMAR'S foreign exports from 9 to 15 December 2023 exceeded US\$254 million. This week, products such as farm rice, broken rice, sesame, watermelon, cucumber, tissue banana, fruits, rubber, perennial crops, coffee, zinc, copper, and finished industrial goods from the CMP sector and garments were exported. The total export value increased by over \$33 million compared to the previous week.

This week, rice exports amounted to \$32 million, including broken rice shipped to 20 countries—Indonesia, China, Spain, Poland, the Philippines, Viet Nam and the Netherlands (57,659 tonnes) — and 3,960 tonnes were exported through Lweje, Kampaiti and Kengtung border trade posts.

Due to the impact of El Niño weather on the global rice market, there has been an increase in the supply and demand for rice, leading rice-exporting and importing countries to implement national measures. In Myanmar, according to the statistics from the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, the estimated production of monsoon rice and spring rice combined is 13 million

tonnes of equivalent rice. Domestic consumption stands at 9.5 million tonnes, resulting in over three million tonnes of surplus. Annually, the country exports a maximum of 3.6 million tonnes, primarily comprising broken rice.

As a nation that is self-sufficient in food and primarily relies on agriculture, it plays a crucial role in exporting the surplus beyond domestic consumption to generate foreign income.

This year, there has been a global increase in demand for rice, leading to higher prices in various world rice markets. Local farmers participating in commodity flow have benefitted from these high export prices, resulting in cost-effectiveness for entrepreneurs. Conversely, the stability of domestic rice prices and the availability of sufficient rice stocks have been effectively managed under the leadership of relevant associations.

Developing a mechanized farming system with high-quality rice varieties makes it possible to significantly increase rice yields, allowing for more significant exports to various foreign

countries. To facilitate broken rice export, the Pre-Licence Cargo Inspection, which was previously mandated for 100 per cent of the export licence amount, has been reduced to 50 per cent since 1 December 2023. The state is actively encouraging small and medium-sized entrepreneurs in the rice industry.

For export licence applications involving 260 tonnes or less of broken rice, there has been a relaxation in the inspection requirements for product storage.

It is essential to focus on rice and oilseeds like sunflower, peanuts, sesame, and pulses to enhance domestic food security and boost exports. Farmers' groups and agricultural associations play a crucial role in improving agricultural production through proper methods, enabling Myanmar to increase its export capacity.

Commodity depots and trade associations are encouraged to collaborate, and business owners and relevant departments concerted efforts in this comprehensive initiative. — MNA/KZW

Myanmar seafarers' families await contact after abduction by pirates

MSF said families of those involved in the Bulgarian-owned MV Ruen, which had Myanmar crew members abducted by pirates, have yet to be contacted.

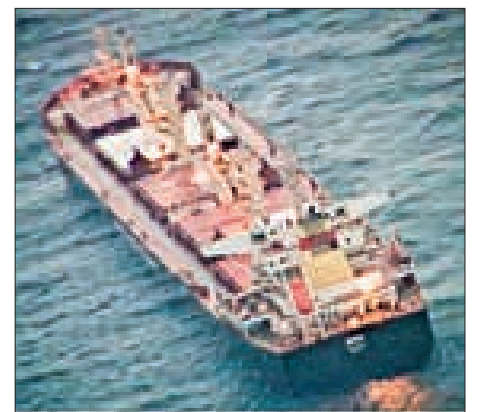
The ship belonging to the Navibulgar shipping company, with 18 Myanmar and Bulgarian crew members, was supposed to dock in Turkiye but was hijacked by pirates after communication was lost on the way.

"So far, the families of the victims themselves have not been notified. As far as I know, Myanmar people are among the victims of sea piracy. However, there are no reports yet. The family hasn't come yet, so I can't say what's going on," said MSF officials.

The Indian Navy's warship INS Kochi intercepted and dispatched a helicopter on 16 December, and thus, all the sailors had been held hostage by pirates. Negotiations were born, the Indian Navy reported.

The ship entered Somali waters on 17 December, and an injured crew member on board the vessel was able to reach an agreement with the pirates and receive medical treatment, but the other crew members were still held hostage.

"The families often do not know who is involved in the kidnapping. There must be some anxiety. Mainly, when this happens, the pirates adjust the amount of money with the owner," commented an officer-level veteran sailor. — Thit Taw/KZL



MV Ruen.

Daily newspapers available online

FOR those who would like to read the Myanma Alinn, the Kyemon and the Global New Light of Myanmar, published daily by the Ministry of Information, please visit www.moi.gov.mm/mal, www.moi.gov.mm/km, www.moi.gov.mm/nlm and www.gnlm.com.mm/e-paper

News and Periodicals Enterprise

Unique Ecuador nativity scene aims for historical accuracy

The collection, consisting of 300 pieces, includes artifacts dating back to the 18th century and represents the religious order's presence in Ecuador since 1653.

A hunchback with goiter, a child decapitated by a soldier, and a woman with a bloodied face are among the unusual figures in an Ecuador nativity scene that aims to provide a realistic depiction of historical life.

The vast creche belongs to the Discalced Carmelites, a religious order that has been present in Ecuador since 1653.

Some 300 pieces, featuring pieces dating back to the 18th century, are on display in a wing of the otherwise cloistered monastery that has been transformed into a museum in the historic center of Quito.

The figurines recount biblical stories surrounding the birth

of Jesus, such as Mary and Joseph's flight to Egypt to protect their baby or the massacre of the innocents, the tale of King Herod ordering the killing of all male children under two.

But the monastery's collection, which also includes newer pieces from the 20th century, shows people in scenes of daily life under Spanish colonial rule as well.

"It is very interesting to find pieces that show different cultures, diversity in the city. We have Indigenous people, Afro-descendants, chapetones (Spanish descendants)," museum coordinator Gabriela Mena tells AFP. — AFP



The nativity collection of the Discalced Carmelites in Quito shows people in scenes of daily life under Spanish colonial rule. **PHOTO: CRISTINA VEGA RHOR / AFP**

Hundreds of French Airbus staff fall ill after Christmas dinner

MORE THAN 700 staff working for Airbus Atlantic in France have fallen ill since their annual company Christmas dinner, health authorities said Friday.

Airbus Atlantic, a subsidiary of aerospace group Airbus, employs 15,000 people in five countries.

Staff at the company's western French site who attended the dinner event showed "clinical signs of vomiting or diarrhoea", the ARS health agency said.

It did not say what was on the menu at the dinner that took place last week.

An investigation was being launched to find the source of the mass food poisoning, it told AFP.

The Airbus group, a European consortium, is the world's largest aircraft maker ahead of Boeing. — AFP



Yurina Furukawa, who has a rare muscle condition called congenital myopathy and requires breathing assistance, playing an AI-powered piano during a Christmas concert rehearsal of Beethoven's Symphony No 9 with the Yokohama Sinfonietta orchestra in Tokyo. **PHOTO: KAZUHIRO NOGI/AFP**

AI-assisted piano allows disabled musicians to perform Beethoven

In the wood-paneled auditorium of Tokyo's prestigious concert hall, 24-year-old Kiwa Usami, who has cerebral palsy, performs Beethoven's Ode to Joy using an artificial intelligence-powered piano.

INSIDE the wood-paneled auditorium of one of Tokyo's most prestigious concert halls, 24-year-old Kiwa Usami presses just one index finger to the piano and summons the colossal swells of Beethoven's Ode to Joy, accompanied by an orchestra and choir.

Usami, who has cerebral

palsy, was one of three musicians with disabilities performing Symphony No. 9 with the Yokohama Sinfonietta at Suntory Hall on Thursday using an artificial intelligence-powered piano.

To assist players, the "Anybody's Piano" tracks the notes of the music and augments the

performance by adding whatever keys are needed but not pressed. Usami, who started playing piano while in elementary school, helped inspire the AI programme. Her dedication to practising with one finger prompted her teachers to work with Japanese music giant Yamaha. — AFP

New York's Tenement Museum embraces Black migrant history

MANHATTAN'S Tenement Museum already preserves the history of some immigrants who shaped New York City — from destitute Irish fleeing the great famine to Jewish survivors of the Holocaust — now it is also making room for the lives of African-American migrants.

Beginning next week, visitors to the museum can tour a two-room apartment that is a recreation of one once inhabited by Joseph and Rachel Moore, a Black couple who lived in the area during the US Civil War in the late 19th century.

The Moores squeezed into the unit along with three other



Installation view, "A Union of Hope: 1869" at the Tenement Museum in New York. **PHOTO: TENEMENT MUSEUM**

boarders. There is no running water. Laundry hangs in the kitchen. On a mantelpiece sits a portrait of Abraham Lincoln, the

president who abolished slavery in 1865, as the war between the US north and south drew to an end. — AFP

ECONOMY WORLD



Emirates aircraft, parked on the tarmac at Dubai International Airport, 8 July 2020. PHOTO: KARIM SAHIB / AFP

UAE ranks first among Arab economies in competitiveness

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has solidified its status as the most economically competitive nation in the Arab world, securing the top position in the Arab Economic Competitiveness Index by the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF).

THE United Arab Emirates has cemented its position as the most economically competitive nation in the Arab world, securing the top spot in the latest Arab Economic Competitiveness Index released by the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF).

This dominant performance, highlighted in the seventh edi-

tion of the AMF's Arab Economic Competitiveness Report, underscores the UAE's sustained progress across crucial sectors, including its robust overall economy, increasingly attractive investment environment, and growing allure.

The report further highlighted that the UAE secured the

top position in the government financial sector index, ranking first in the deficit/surplus to GDP ratio and second in the tax burden index. Additionally, the report mentioned that the UAE came in first place among Arab countries in terms of investment environment and attractiveness, topping the economic freedom in-

dex due to its advanced standing in all sub-indices. The UAE also topped the infrastructure sector index, leading in mobile phone subscriptions and the percentage of the population with access to electricity, while ranking second in the share of air transport and shipping to total global transport and shipping. — ANI

Zambia president blames private creditors for debt deal delays

ZAMBIA'S President Hakainde Hichilema on Friday blamed private creditors for holding up a long-sought debt restructuring deal for the first African nation to default after the Covid pandemic.

Zambia, which had \$18.6 billion in debt when it defaulted in 2020, struck an agreement in principle in October with foreign lenders.

Hichilema said about 98 per cent of official creditors have now signed a memorandum of understanding to restructure Zambia's debt which was estimated at \$32.8 billion at the end of 2022.

"That is a great milestone," he told a press conference in the capital Lusaka.

But talks with private creditors have become deadlocked, he said.

"We are still negotiating," Hichilema said.

The dispute is over a "comparability of treatment" rule under a debt restructuring framework for the poorest countries agreed by the G20 group in 2020, he said. — AFP

High taxes destroy UK's long-term economic growth prospects, economist warns

According to Professor Patrick Minford, a leading British economist, UK current government, led by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, has jeopardized the country's long-term growth prospects by significantly increasing taxes.

TAXES that have been increased significantly by the

current government of the United Kingdom (UK) have

destroyed the country's long-term growth prospects, a leading British economist told Xinhua.

"The big mistake made by the government (of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak) was raising corporation tax, which is a very critical tax for business confidence and incentives, and also panicking about the debt situation," Professor Patrick Minford, a macroeconomist at Cardiff Business School of Cardiff University, said in a recent interview. — Xinhua



This photo taken on 22 June 2023 shows a construction site in Liverpool, Britain. PHOTO BY JON SUPER/XINHUA

Nigeria economic crisis dampens Christmas spirit



Inflation exceeded 28 per cent in November. PHOTO: BENSON IBEABUCH/AFP

LINING up, they receive some rice, dried beans and other basic foodstuffs, whose soaring prices have left millions in Nigeria facing a bleak Christmas.

The temporary food distribution in the courtyard of the Church of the Assumption in the economic capital, Lagos, has drawn a big crowd — some

have travelled far.

Christana Adebaya, 58, arrived at 6:00 am after a more than two-hour bus ride.

It's hard waiting for hours in the blazing sun but she has come to get rice for Christmas and New Year because food prices are too expensive right now, she told AFP. — AFP

China's Heilongjiang sees robust trade growth in first 11 months

Heilongjiang, China's northernmost province, experienced a 13.3 per cent year-on-year growth in foreign trade, reaching 268.37 billion yuan (approximately 37.82 billion US dollars) in the first 11 months of 2023, according to local customs data.

CHINA'S northernmost province of Heilongjiang saw its foreign trade grow 13.3 per cent year on year to 268.37 billion yuan (about 37.82 billion US dollars) in the first

11 months of 2023, said local customs.

During this period, Heilongjiang's imports rose 6.3 per cent year on year to 202.13 billion yuan, while its

exports surged 41.9 per cent to 66.24 billion yuan, data from Harbin Customs showed.

The province's trade with Belt and Road partner countries reached 226.93 billion yuan, up 13 per cent year on year, accounting for 84.6 per cent of the province's total foreign trade value. Its trade with members of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership rose 16.1 per cent to 23.6 billion yuan.

Its exports of mechanical and electrical products, labour-intensive products, and agricultural products maintained strong growth during this period. The province also saw an increase in imports of agricultural products, metal ore, and ore sand. — Xinhua



Workers unload imported goods at the Heihe port in the city of Heihe, northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, 10 August 2023. PHOTO: WANG SONG/XINHUA



Dnata personnel, who reportedly handle about a quarter of the traffic through Geneva's Cointrin airport, will begin their strike at 4am on 24 December. PHOTO: AFP

Ground staff strike at Geneva airport Sunday: union

MANY Geneva airport ground staff will strike Sunday over a labour dispute with their employer, the Dubai National Air Travel Agency (Dnata), their union said, in a move expected to slow holiday traffic.

Dnata personnel, who reportedly handle about a quarter of the traffic through Geneva's Cointrin airport, will begin their strike at 4:00 am (0300 GMT) on Sunday, the SSP public sector union said on X, formerly

Twitter.

The planned work stoppage will surely slow traffic amid the busy Christmas rush, with some 60,000 passengers reportedly expected to travel through the airport on Sunday.

Dnata staff handle various ground operations, including ticketing services and baggage handling, for a number of international airlines, including British Airways, Air France and KLM. — AFP

Tanker ship off India hit by attack drone 'fired from Iran': Pentagon

A Japanese-owned chemical tanker struck Saturday off the coast of India was targeted by a drone "fired from Iran", the Pentagon said, a sign of expanding risks to commercial shipping beyond the Red Sea.

It was the first time the Pentagon has openly accused Iran of directly targeting ships since the start of Israel's war on the militant group Hamas, which is backed by Tehran.

The attack came amid a flurry of new drone and missile attacks by Yemen's Iran-backed Huthi rebels on the vital Red Sea shipping lane since the start of the Israel-Hamas war on 7 October with the group claiming to act in solidarity with Gaza. — AFP

Alcohol producers welcome Gujarat govt allowing liquor sale in GIFT City, term it progressive

THE confederation of alcohol beverage producers in India on Saturday said they welcomed the Gujarat government's decision to allow liquor sale in GIFT City.

The Confederation of Indian Alcohol Beverage Companies termed the move as "progressive", adding that it will give a major boost to the state's economy, and attract global companies.

On Friday, the Gujarat government allowed the sale and consumption of alcohol in some form in the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) area.

A Liquor Access Permit will be given to all the employees or owners working in GIFT City through which they will be able to consume liquor in hotels/restaurants/clubs offering "Wine and Dine", the official order of the state government said. — ANI

The decision, announced on Friday, allows for the sale and consumption of alcohol in some form within the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) area.



Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City). PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ YOUTUBE

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

Argentina Congress to hold special session over economic reforms

The centerpiece of these changes is Milei's mega-decree, which alters or eliminates over 350 economic regulations, challenging Argentina's traditional reliance on heavy government intervention in the market.

ARGENTINA'S government has scheduled emergency sessions of parliament beginning next week to address a package of controversial reforms by President Javier Milei, who has ordered a broad deregulation of the economy.

Milei himself issued the call late Friday for Congress to open an extraordinary session from 26 December through 31 January, following a week of protests by labour unions, tenant groups and leftist organizations against the reforms contained in a presidential decree that needs an endorsement by legislators.

The main focus is the libertarian Milei's mega-decree that changes or scraps more



Argentine President Javier Milei (C) delivered his speech to the nation from the Casa Rosada presidential palace in Buenos Aires, flanked by his cabinet. **PHOTO: HANDOUT / ARGENTINA'S PRESIDENCY PRESS OFFICE/AFP**

than 350 economic regulations in a country that has grown accustomed to heavy government intervention in the market.

Among the reforms, the text repeals the law on rents, which would abolish the established price ceiling. It also eliminates some worker protections and laws that shield consumers from abusive price increases, at a time when inflation exceeds 160 per cent per year and the poverty level has surpassed 40 per cent.

A number of civic groups on Saturday filed a judicial motion to have the mega-decree declared unconstitutional, which could end up before the Supreme Court. — AFP

Gaza war rages on Christmas Eve as Biden urges caution

Despite international concerns, Netanyahu pledged to continue the war until all goals are achieved.



This handout picture released by the Israeli army on 24 December 2023 reportedly shows Israeli soldiers from the Givati Brigade operating in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip. **PHOTO: AFP**

ISRAEL pushed on Sunday with its military campaign to destroy Hamas over the 7 October attacks, as the focus of the deadly combat shifted to southern Gaza where most displaced Palestinians are trapped.

US President Joe Biden stressed the "critical need" to protect civilians, in a call

with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who vowed Israel would "continue the war until all of its goals have been achieved", officials said.

As heavy fighting raged on, the Israeli army said it had struck another 200 targets in the past 24 hours in the besieged Palestinian territory where it is seeking to defeat

Hamas and free remaining hostages.

The army said 153 troops had died in Gaza since it launched its ground invasion on 27 October. Ten soldiers were lost in battles on Saturday, one of the deadliest days for the Israeli side.

"This is a difficult morning, after a very difficult day of fighting in Gaza," said Netanyahu. "The war is exacting a very heavy price... but we have no choice but to keep fighting."

The army said soldiers had raided a northern Gaza compound near schools, a mosque and a clinic and found "explosive belts adapted for children, dozens of mortar shells, hundreds of grenades and intelligence documents".

Hamas rejected those claims as lies meant "to justify their massacring of innocent civilians and their destructive aggression that has affected the entire infrastructure... in the already blockaded Gaza Strip". — AFP

US woman with rare double uterus gives birth to twin girls

A 32-year-old woman from Alabama who was born with two uteruses and became pregnant in both gave birth to twin girls on different days, she announced on Friday. "Our miracle babies were born!" Kelsey Hatcher, who is documenting her story on her Instagram account "doublehatchlings", wrote in a post.

She added that the girls "decided they were rare enough statistically that they should just go ahead and have their own birthdays too". The first one, named Roxi Layla, was born on Tuesday at 7:49 pm (0149 GMT).

She was joined by Rebel Laken on Wednesday at 6:09 am.

Doctors had estimated a Christmas due date, but the sisters arrived just in time to be at home for the holidays with their siblings. The mother and daughters have been discharged from the hospital, with Hatcher promising to share details about the delivery in future.

Hatcher knew from the age of 17 that she has "uterus didelphys," a rare congenital condition thought to affect about 0.3 per cent of people born female. — AFP



Kelsey Hatcher with her twin daughters Roxi Layla and Rebel Laken. **PHOTO: UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM**

SPORTS

2023 U-19 Inter School Cricket Tournament starts

THE 2023 State and Region High School Level Inter School MCF Trophy U-19 men's and women's Cricket Tournament, was held yesterday morning at the Kyaikkasan Playground of the Institute of Sports and Physical Education (Yangon) in Tamway Township, Yangon. Myanmar Cricket Federation President U Than Win and officials, coaches, teachers and competing students attended the event.

President U Than Win



PHOTO: AH KAR MAUNG

of the Myanmar Cricket Federation made an opening remark before opening the competition by giving a friendly greeting to the participating athletes. A total of 180 participants from six junior men's teams and six junior women's teams participated in the competition from 24 to 28 December, while eight senior men's teams and eight senior women's teams with a total of 240 players, will take part in competitions from 29 December to 5 January. — Ah Kar Maung/TH

Thet Win Aung wins traditional Lethwei Championship with split decision



Thet Win Aung lands the punch on Thway Thit Maung during the final bout of the Myanmar Lethwei Championship held in Yangon on 24 December 2023. PHOTO: BALA SOE

THET Win Aung (360 Sports) beat Thway Thit Maung (White Blood) in the final match of the Myanmar Lethwei Championship with a split decision. Yesterday afternoon, the championship was held at Shwe Linban Industrial Zone, Hlinethaya Township, Yangon Region.

In the first round, both fighters waited for mistakes and responded carefully. In the

second round, Thet Win Aung's fist hurt Thway Thit Maung's eyebrow. The Lethwei fighters continued to punch each other, but they could not land a knockdown until the end, and judges declared Thet Win Aung a winner via split decision.

The winner, Thet Win Aung beat Zwe Raman in the quarter-final and Elmwe in the semi-final to reach the final.

"It's only been four months

since I started competing in this tournament. Thway Thit Maung has experience in playing with points. After the win, I will continue to practice. However, no matter who the next opponent is, I will challenge him. In January 2024, I will compete with a Thai player in the Myinegyingu Kayin New Year Tournament," said winner Thet Win Aung. — Bala Soe/KZL

International Equestrian Championships to be held on 76th Independence Day

THE Myanmar Equestrian Federation has announced that the international equestrian competitions will be held on the 76th Independence Day.

The competition will be conducted on the same day as Independence Day on 4 January. The tourney will be divided into children's, junior's, and senior events, and the details of the competition will be announced by the Myanmar Equestrian Federation soon.

As a commemoration of Union Day, which falls on 12 February 2024, preliminary negotiations were held to hold the Union Cup Inter-State/Region traditional equestrian sports competition on 5 February 2024, as stated by the Myanmar Equestrian Federation's News and Information Department. — TWA/KZL



The Myanmar female rider competes in an equestrian competition. PHOTO: KANU



Heavyweight clash: New Zealand's Joseph Parker (R) won a unanimous points decision over Deontay Wilder in Riyadh. PHOTO: AFP

Joshua too strong for Wallin as Parker outpoints Wilder

FORMER world champions Anthony Joshua and Joseph Parker re-established their heavyweight title credentials with victories on the same Riyadh bill on Saturday.

British boxer Joshua produced one of his best performances of recent times by stopping Sweden's Otto Wallin, who was pulled out by his corner after the fifth round of a one-sided bout.

Earlier, Parker enjoyed a

unanimous points-decision win over fellow former world champion Deontay Wilder, the New Zealander triumphing 118-111, 118-110, 120-108 in a dominant display that appeared to scupper pre-fight talk the American would next face Joshua.

There had also been speculation that whoever triumphed in a Wilder-Joshua bout would then face the winner of February's

clash between Tyson Fury and Oleksandr Usyk, who between them currently hold all the major versions of the world heavyweight title. But Joshua said he had paid no attention to Wilder's fight, telling DAZN: "I wasn't watching. I just focused on myself...Deontay, everything that he said about me, I could rip him apart right now, but I'm going to take the higher ground". — AFP



**OPERATION
“YUKTIYA” OR
“JUSTICE”**

Sri Lanka detains nearly 15,000 in drug crackdown

SRI LANKA'S police announced Sunday the arrests of nearly 15,000 people during a week-long military-backed anti-narcotics drive, a crackdown denounced by rights activists.

Police said their operation, code-named “Yuktiya” or “Justice”, led to the seizure of almost 440 kilogrammes (970 pounds) of narcotics, including 272 kg of cannabis, 35 kg of hashish and nine kilogrammes of heroin.

Authorities believe the Indian Ocean island is being used as a drug trafficking transit point. A police statement said 13,666 suspects were arrested while nearly 1,100 addicts were detained and sent for compulsory rehabilitation at a military-run facility.

Local media showed footage of police and soldiers using sniffer dogs to search homes in the capital and elsewhere. Police said raids will pause for the Christmas holidays as officers needed to be deployed on security-related duties, but will resume after Tuesday, which is a Buddhist holiday. — AFP

China’s first homegrown large cruise ship starts trial operation

China's first domestically-built large cruise ship, the “Adora Magic City”, embarked on its trial operation from Shanghai with invitees and a global crew of nearly 1,300 members. The ship, departing from the Shanghai Wusongkou International Cruise Terminal, is expected to return on Monday after its trial voyage.

CHINA'S first domestically-built large cruise ship, the “Adora Magic City”, departed from a port in Shanghai on Sunday, starting its trial operation.

Carrying invited guests and nearly 1,300 crew members from around the world, the ship set off after noontime Sunday from the Shanghai Wusongkou International Cruise Terminal and is expected to return to the terminal on Monday.

Another trial operation is scheduled afterward to prepare for the commercial maiden voyage to Northeast Asia on 1 January 2024.

The Adora Magic City is 323.6 metres in length with a gross weight of 135,500 tonnes and can accommodate up to 5,246 passengers across a total of 2,125 guest rooms, according to its builder, the CSSC Shanghai Waigaoqiao Shipbuilding Co Ltd.

It has 16 floors and a total of 40,000 square metres of public living and recreation space. — Xinhua



This photo taken on 24 December 2023 shows an exterior view of the cruise ship “Adora Magic City” docked at the Shanghai Wusongkou International Cruise Terminal in east China’s Shanghai. **PHOTO: DING TING/XINHUA**

Japan to spend 164.7 bln yen on 2025 Expo amid public scepticism



Construction of the 2025 World Expo venue is underway on the artificial island of Yumeshima, Osaka, on 19 December 2023. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Due to escalating costs, the government plans to establish a panel with third-party experts to assess the appropriateness of continued substantial taxpayer funding for the project.

THE Japanese government is estimated to spend a higher-than-expected 164.7 billion yen (\$1.16 billion) on the 2025 World Exposition in Osaka, amid public concern about inflated costs for the global event.

In addition to the total, which includes spending on bidding activities, the central government, local authorities and the private sector are projected to pour some 9.7 trillion yen into the development of infrastructure for the event.

With costs becoming larger than initially estimated, the government will set up a panel including third-party experts to examine whether continuing to inject massive amounts of taxpayer money into

the project is appropriate.

Of the 9.7 trillion, 839 billion yen will be spent on building infrastructure for the expo in western Japan, slated for 13 April through 13 October 2025, such as the road for accessing the venue in Yumeshima, a man-made island in Osaka Bay.

The expenses also include funds secured to improve roads and rivers associated with the event in and around the area, which is expected to be joined by around 160 countries and regions.

In addition, some 3.4 trillion yen will be allocated to demonstration projects at the event such as “flying cars”, the government said. — Kyodo