

# The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR



Labourers and salt farmers seen in production of sun-dried salt at vast salt farms in Mon State.

## Mon State set to produce 47,000 tonnes of salt next year

**D**uring the next year's salt production season in Mon State, approximately 47,000 tonnes of salt are expected to be produced from 90 salt farms, according to the Mon State Salt Division.

The salt production season starts in December every year and if it rains in April, the production of salt is temporarily suspended. If there is no rain, people work on salt production until the end of May.

The farmers of the salt industry will benefit if there is more salt production and a firm price. At present, a viss of coarse salt is about K150.

Export of coarse salt was exported to Myeik and Dawei of Taninthayi Region

as well as Mandalay Region. Instead of coarse salt, fine salt is mostly exported to Mandalay Region.

The salt produced in Mon State is being exported, and 20 tonnes of coarse salt samples from Thanbyuzayat Township were initially exported to Japan on test, in August and preparations are being made to export 40 tonnes to South Korea.

Last year, 89 salt farms were producing sun-dried salt in Mon State, and this year, people are working to increase the production of salt from 90 farms. — Tha Nge (Mudon)/KZL

## Irrawaddy dolphin tour to be launched in February

**P**lans are underway to implement an Irrawaddy dolphin-sighting tour along the Ayeyawady River in coming February, according to the Sagaing Region Directorate of Hotels and Tourism.

The Wildlife Conservation Society and tourism entrepreneurs are collaborating to launch the programme to observe Irrawaddy dolphins in Mingun and Shwebo-Kyaukmyaung areas along the Ayeyawady River in Sagaing Region.

U Myint Sein, head of the regional directorate, said: "We're expecting an early February launch. Tourism industry can create many opportunities, generate foreign revenue and bring different cultures together. I'm confident that this renewed effort for the dolphin observation programme will be a success." The programme will be one of many attractions designed for foreign tourists. Countries hosting river dolphins generate signifi-

cant revenue through dolphin-sighting tours and exhibitions due to the rarity of these creatures.

Irrawaddy dolphins, predominantly inhabiting in the Ayeyawady River, have been a part of Myanmar's ecosystem for over 2,000 years. The term "Irrawaddy" also officially refers to the same species residing in the rivers of neighbouring countries, as well as along the Mekong River and in India. Known for their short snouts and friendly looks, these mammals reproduce between the ages of seven and nine. The pregnancy lasts 14 months, and their average life expectancy is between 30 and 50 years. The Fisheries Department is working together with relevant offices to preserve Irrawaddy dolphins often regarded them as a "jewel" of Myanmar. The nature-based tourism is a way to promote the local economy and generate foreign revenue for the country. — Nyein Thu (MNA) /NT

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Myanmar avocados to be exported at cheap logistic

# NATIONAL

## Five national objectives of 76<sup>th</sup> 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

Republic of the Union of Myanmar  
Union Election Commission  
Notification No 54/2023

2<sup>nd</sup> Waning of Nattaw 1385 ME  
29 December 2023

## Allowing the People's Party to be registered as political party

AS of 29 December 2023, the People's Party with its headquarters located at apartment No 902, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor, Building No D, No 62, Maha Bandoola Housing, Maha Bandoola Road, Pazundaung Township, Yangon Region has been allowed to register under Section 9 of the Political Parties Registration Law.

THE registration number of the People's Party is 47.

Sd/ Thein Soe  
Chairman  
Union Election Commission

## Shwedagon Pagoda's visiting hours extended



People pay homage to Buddha image in a prayer hall at Shwedagon Pagoda.

THE visiting hour to the Shwedagon Pagoda, which was originally set from 5 am to 8 pm, will be extended from 5 am to 9 pm starting from 1 January 2024 for the large number of pilgrims, according to the Shwedagon Pagoda Board of Trustees.

"Since the number of devotees worldwide is gradually increasing, the visiting time will be extended from 8 pm to 9 pm. There are not only almost 20,000 devotees daily but also about 40,000-50,000 pilgrims on weekends. From January to November 2023, there were over 1.2 million pilgrims. A total of 280 CCTV cameras have been installed at Shwedagon Pagoda," said U Bo Thin who is a member of the Shwedagon Pagoda Board of Trustees.

In November 2023, a total of over 600,000 pilgrims from local and abroad visited Shwedagon Pagoda. — ASH/MKKS



## Process of renovation Hanthawady era masterpiece of Maha Bawdi Shwe Gugyi

around 1479 AD. Now, since it has been around 500 years, the damage is being repaired. In particular, the glaze works of the Hanthawady era, which are recorded in international museums, will be seen in this pagoda, so the very early Myanmar glaze works will also be preserved in their original state," U Tin Oo said.

THE renovation processes on masterpiece of Hanthawady era works of Maha Bawdi Shwe Gugyi (Golden Cave) Pagoda which is the Hanthawady Bodh Gaya Thattahtana, are underway without losing its original works, according to Bago Region Minister of Economic Affairs U Tin Oo.

The Maha Bawdi Pagoda of Hanthawady Bodh Gaya Thattahtana is located at

Oktha 8 ward in Bago, Bago Region. It is known as the earliest Budh Gaya Pagoda that was built in Myanmar.

"Bago's Shwe Gugyi Pagoda is notable as the earliest Budh Gaya Pagoda in Myanmar. It was built in the Hanthawady era, and the king who built it was the King of Dhammazed. It was built in the same model as Budh Gaya in India, and it is estimated that it was

The Maha Bawdi Pagoda of Hanthawady Bodh Gaya Thattahtana in Bago Township in Bago Region was built in 15<sup>th</sup> Century Mon style glaze works. There is also Shwe Gugyi Pagoda stone inscription plaque chamber in the southwest corner of the Pagoda. In this chamber, ancient large Myanmar stone tablets including English, French, and Portuguese inscriptions can be observed. — ASH/TKO

# NATIONAL

All our national people always cherish and value our traditions and national characteristics. Safeguarding and promoting national Characteristics and national culture will Contribute to fostering the patriotic spirit and thereby bringing great benefits to the nation and people. Now is the crucial time to have the national spirit as we strive for peace and development and for the establishment of a Union based on democracy and federalism.

*[An excerpt from the message sent by Chairman of the State Administration Council, Prime Minister Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing to the ceremony to mark 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) of Kachin State Day on 10 January, 2023.]*



## MIFER holds 42<sup>nd</sup> Friday Talk

THE Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations (MIFER), aiming to develop human resources and improve staff member's capacity, conducted the 42<sup>nd</sup> ceremony of Friday Talk of Knowledge Sharing Program (KSP) at the Office No (1), Nay Pyi Taw. MIFER's Union Minister Dr Kan Zaw attended and delivered the opening remarks.

The Union Minister pointed out that the topic "Analysis of Agriculture, Livestock and investment potential of Ayeyawady Region" is directly related to the investment promotion and facilitation which is one of the ministry's functions. He highlighted that Ayeyawady has dense population, arable land, being a region that produces many products based on agriculture, livestock. The Region also has many beautiful beaches to visit for relaxation, and is one of the important regions for country's economic development by doing comprehensive investment activities

and tourism among 14 Regions and States. Likewise, the union minister emphasized that the good transportation, the abundant resources, the dense population and being a delta area are the opportunities of doing investment in the Ayeyawady Region. Therefore, he urged participants to actively discuss in today's talk.

U Thet Paing, Director of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration from office of Ayeyawady Region presented the topic "Analysis of Agriculture, Livestock and investment potential of Ayeyawady Region". After that, the Deputy Minister and the attendees were openly discussed the matters related to agriculture, infrastructure, tourism, local branded products and investment situation of Ayeyawady Region.

The deputy minister, director generals and senior officials totalled 120 persons of the staff joined this programme. — MIFER



Bago Region Investment committee holds meeting on 29 December 2023.

## Bago Region attracts FDI US\$0.898M, creating 200 local jobs in Dec

**T**he Bago Region receives US\$ 0.898 million worth of foreign investment that can create about 200 local job opportunities in December, according to U Ko Ko Latt, director of the Bago Region Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.

The Bago Region Investment Committee permitted one new foreign investment company, two foreign investment companies for expansions, and three companies to extend the construction period at the committee meeting 8/2023 held on 29 December. The factories will be allowed only in the industrial zone of Bago Region and it will also prioritize the

CMP business and manufacturing factories that produce consumer goods using domestic raw materials as export substitute products.

Moreover, safe food products will be produced in the region and industries that are not harmful to humans, animals, and the environment are also approved to operate following the rules and regulations of the FDA.

From 1 February 2021 to December 2023, the committee permitted \$198.015 million and K75,456.275 million worth of foreign and Myanmar citizens' investments that created 11,481 local job opportunities. — ASH/KTZH

## Myanmar businessmen invited to PLEXCONNECT 2024 India

MYANMAR businessmen have been invited to attend the PLEXCONNECT 2024, a unique business networking platform in India for export with over 500 exhibitors, according to the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI).

PLEXCONNECT 2024, to be held in Mumbai on 7-9 June, will be co-sponsored

by the Plastics Export Promotion Council (PLEXCONCIL) and Department of Commerce under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India.

It is India's only export-focused exhibition and it will create business networking and opportunities with over 900 purchasers from 100+ countries, over 25,000 trade visitors and over 500 exhibi-

tors, UMFCCI said.

Plastics buyers from Myanmar will be invited to RBSM, which will be arranged in PLEXCONNECT 2024, and the purchasers will also be invited by MAI programme. The purchasers chosen under existing norms will be provided with air ticket, two nights hotel accommodation and ground hospitality.

"Interested member associations of UMFCCI and businessmen can obtain detailed information the website: [www.plexconcil.org/plexconnect/](http://www.plexconcil.org/plexconnect/) and <https://www.plexconcil.org/plexconnect/buyer-details> and they can contact Mr Ruban Hobday, Regional Director, Email: [ruban.hobday@plexconcil.org](mailto:ruban.hobday@plexconcil.org) and make reservation. — MT/ZN

# NATIONAL

## MoHA Dy Minister attends Police Sub-Inspector Training Course No 115/2023 passing-out parade



MoHA Deputy Minister MPF Chief Lt-Gen Ni Lin Aung presents best trainee award to the winning trainee.

DEPUTY Minister for Home Affairs Chief of Myanmar Police Force Lt-Gen Ni Lin Aung attended the Police Sub-Inspector Training Course No 115/2023 passing-out parade at the Police Officer Training School in PyinOoLwin Township, Mandalay Region yesterday.

During the event, he took the salute of the police graduation cadet company during their slow and quick marches and presented excellent awards to outstanding cadets.

In his speech, the MPF Chief said the Police Sub-Inspectors are the ones who will serve duties in different units as junior leaders and should manage their fellows following the 16 characteristics of the leadership, and also need to focus on local security and state stability, rule of law, anti-drug

measures and public services.

The police members are serving security measures together with Tatmadaw, so they should be on alert regarding security.

He also highlighted the public awareness programmes on crimes, anti-drug measures in collaboration with Tatmadaw, the Myanmar Police Force, and the entire public as a national task, and active participation in social, rural development, rescue, and public service sectors.

He also stressed the need to keep studying the training policy of the Myanmar Police Force, changing procedures, tactics, and military arts, being

familiar with the arms individually, and learning opportunities in foreign languages including computers, the internet, and technology.

He then urged the female police officers to apply the knowledge and principles in real-world conditions and to keep following the knowledge and the skills acquired from the training or by themselves successively not just in training terms.

The event saw a total of 341 graduates, including 199 male in-service graduates and 142 female in-service graduates, completing the Police Sub-Inspector Training Course No 115/2023. — MNA/KTZH

### Counter-argument to false information

#### Misinformation: Security forces forcibly take K1.7M and phone belonging to monastery in Thaton Township

FAKE news is circulating on social media that security forces visited Lin Yaung Chi Monastery in Wiyaw Village-tract, Thaton Township, Mon State on 26 December and forcibly took away K1.7 million and some food items including a phone.

Regarding the news, according to a security official from the relevant area, no security forces visited the monastery on 26 December.

Illegal media intentionally fabricate false information and post it on social networking sites to create misunderstandings between the local people and the security forces, and to degrade the reputation of the security forces. — MNA/KZL

Screenshot validates false claims.



#### Malicious media outlets misreporting on Tatmadaw's airstrikes, artillery shells incidents

THE malicious media, RFA has spread false information on social media that Tatmadaw airstrike resulted in five civilian dead and 12 wounded in Myaungbwe village of MraukU Township in Rakhine State on 28 November.

Regarding that news, the AA insurgents launched attack on Myaungbwe police station using drone and the Security Force members also launched counter-attacks with Drone Guns, and so there might be explosions of drop bombs and Tatmadaw did not carry out airstrikes.

Similarly, the Khit Thit media outlet is also deliberately spreading misinformation on social media that five civilians died and two children were

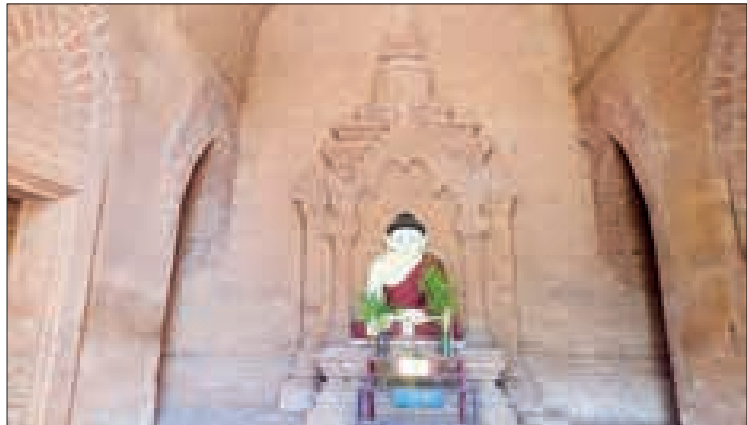
seriously wounded after an artillery shell launched by Tatmadaw exploded in two villages of Buthidaung Township of Rakhine State on 28 December.

The regional security official claimed that AA insurgents attacked the Security Force members in Buthidaung Township using heavy weapons and these artillery shells fell into the villages and exploded, and the Security Force did not open fire into the villages.

The malicious media outlets are circulating the false information to cover up the doings of AA insurgents group and defame Tatmadaw in international countries and cause disintegration between Tatmadaw and ethnic people. — MNA/KTZH

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# NATIONAL



A Buddha image seen in a temple.

## Visitors eye stunning artworks of Pyathetgyi Pagoda in Bagan

PEOPLE are keen to observe the fascinating artworks at Pyathetgyi Pagoda in Bagan, NyaungU Township, Mandalay Region, as it has sitting and

standing Buddha images with advanced architectural designs. Pyathetgyi Pagoda is an enormous and fantastic pagoda located southeast of Bagan.



The front wing of Pyathetgyi Pagoda in Bagan.

The pagoda was built and worshipped in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century by King Kyaswa. The monument has many considerable standing and sitting Buddha statues that can be studied in various postures.

By looking at the grand

rooms and wide corridors of the late-period stupas, visitors can see the improved architectural skills of the builders of the Bagan period.

To the northeast of Pyathetgyi Pagoda is Sawhlawun Pagoda, and to the north is the

Sinmyashin brick monastery complex. To the northwest of the pagoda is Culamuni Pagoda, while to the west are Dhammayangyi Pagoda, Taunggyi and Myaukguni Pagodas and to the southwest is Dhamma Razaka Pagoda. — Dipa Lin/KZL

## Myanmar mid-priced hotels in tourist attractions already full for New Year

AFFORDABLE hotel rooms in prominent tourist destinations have been occupied with reservations from New Year travellers, U Naung Naung Han, Chairman of the Myanmar Tourism Entrepreneurs Association.

Rooms costing K100,000 or less top the list of reservations and affordable hotels in Bagan, Ngwehsaung and Chaungtha are already full, he said.

“Bookings are full in affordable hotels in Bagan, Ngwehsaung and Chaungtha. Reservations are being made especially for hotel rooms at K100,000 or less for the New Year. Some hotels still have rooms available,” he added.

Ngapali beach, a major destination for New Year travellers in previous years, is receiving fewer visitors due to local instability.

Domestic tourism, which

improved in October, declined in November and early December due to local instability, but it rebounded by the end of December and if these situations continue, it is expected to have many travellers for New Year 2024, he said.

In outbound tourism, many Myanmar people may visit Thailand in January 2024 and more travellers are expected to visit Bodh Gaya in February 2024. — MT/ZN



A pleasant scene of the beach.

## Stage with Myanmar traditional floral arabesque design and electronic music to be used in Yangon New Year Countdown



Floral arabesque works have been decorated at the archway of Thuwunnabumi Event Park in Yangon.

A stage with Myanmar traditional floral arabesque design and electronic music will be used in Yangon New Year Countdown, said an official from Stage Design by Art of Nature.

Yangon New Year Countdown will be held at Thuwunnabumi Event Park in Yangon on 30 and 31 December and the stage used has a combination of electronic music and Myanmar culture.

“The main thing is floral arabesque. There are many kinds of floral arabesque in Thailand, in

China. Each country has its own tradition. But what we took is Myanmar floral arabesque. We aim to show to the public,” the official said. Local and foreign musicians will entertain at Yangon New Year Countdown.

“Most comers will be young people. Normally, they are not interested. If we show by combining floral arabesque, they will notice it. The main point is to show Myanmar traditional culture. It is quite difficult to see these two things together,” she said. — Thit Taw/ZN

# NATIONAL

## More excellent Yangon Urban Development Project workshop convened



Officials convene the workshop to amend the Strategic Urban Development Plan of the Greater Yangon.

THE Yangon City Development Committee held a workshop for amending the Strategic Ur-

ban Development Plan of the Greater Yangon at the Yangon City Hall on Wednesday.

At the meeting, a committee member Dr Zaw Win called for the upgrade of urban

railways and railway stations. He also emphasized expanding green spaces and ensuring convenience for the people in the ever-growing city.

Daw Tin Tin Kyi, head of the Urban Planning Department, said: "We plan for the financial year 2023-24 based on the priority list of projects to be finished by 2040. These projects must support making Yangon clean, green, fair and smart."

She highlighted that the projects must comply with the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan's frameworks.

Subsequently, the representatives from the Department of Urban and Housing Development of the Ministry of Construction discussed the

Central Project Yankin Mixed Use Development, Yankin Kajima Park, Yankin Housing Redevelopment, Golden City Project, HAGL-Phase II, Yankin Housing Phase I, Yankin Condominium Project Sky Suite and Yangon Southwest New City Development Project.

Additionally, Myanmar Railways officials presented the operation status of development works around the Yangon Central Railway Station, junction stations and circular railways.

Moreover, the Thilawa Special Economic Zone Management Committee was briefed the upgrade of the original economic zone, the development of Zone-B, and the status of the economic zone project. — TWA/NT

### China-ASEAN citizens exchange year logo design competition announced

ON 29 December, the Embassy of China to Myanmar stated that the logo design competition for China-ASEAN citizens exchange year is planning to be held.

The mentioned competition is held by the collaboration of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) and the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and it has been announced that friends from Myanmar can send good works of art and participate in that competition.

The works of the logo design must be submitted by 15 January 2024 as the deadline and the winners will be announced on 1 February. It is also reported that the first prize winner will be awarded yuan 30,000 and the certificate, yuan 20,000, and the certificates will be awarded as two second prizes. Moreover, they will also choose five people for the third prize and will award yuan 5,000 for each and the certificate. Furthermore, the rest of the participants will receive the certificates for participation in the competition and the contestants will have to send their works of the logo design to logodesign2024@139.com mail. If you want to know more information, you can ask at ascancenlogo2024@139.com. — TWA/ TRKM

### Tender invited for use of mobile tablets and accessories in collecting census and household registration

THE Department of Population under the Ministry of Immigration and Population, has invited tenders to purchase mobile tablets and related materials for use in the population and household census project.

The budget allotment of 2023-2024 financial year will be used, and Myanmar entrepreneurs are invited to submit accessories accurately according to the types and specifications of the department.

The details of the items to be purchased are included in the tender rules and will be sold at a rate of K10,000 per copy from 26 December to 8 January. The applications will close at 4:30 pm on 8 January.

Entrepreneurs who want to purchase and submit tenders can contact the Planning, Support and Finance Department, Department of Population, Ministry of Immigration and Population's Office No. 48 Nay Pyi Taw. — TWA/TKO



Population officials checking data of census on mobile tablets in October 2023.

### Local elephant foot yam products upgraded for export to China, Japan

IT is reported that local elephant foot yams are produced as high-value products to export to China and Japan through the seaway.

The elephant foot yam powder, dried and flesh are available in the market and the raw yams are produced as dried and exported to China and India mainly. Besides, the yam powders are exported to Japan as one tonne for US\$500-US\$600. The dried yam is sold as one viss, 63/68 kilogrammes, and 25 kilogrammes packages to foreign countries. At the current market, the dried elephant foot yams are sold at K10,000 per one viss and the yam powder is K13,000 per viss. The elephant foot yams produced in Myanmar are high in foreign demand and they are used as industrial raw materials not only in food products but also in products of pharmacy, cosmetics, paper, glue, textile, dye painting, and offshore oil exploration. — TWA/ TRKM



One of the rice retail outlets in Yangon.

## Upward trend of non-premium rice prices persists

THE prices of low-grade rice varieties are still rocketing in the domestic market, according to the Myanmar Rice Traders Association (Wahdan Rice Depot).

The low-grade rice prices stood at K60,500-K69,000 per sack depending on varieties (rice grown under the intercropping system, Ngasein, Thipu, and Aemahta) on 1 December. The prices jumped to K68,000-K74,000 per sack on 29 December, indicating a sharp rise of K2,000-K8,000 per sack within one month.

Additionally, some Pawsan rice prices showed an increase of K15,000 per sack within one month at Yangon's market.

The prices of some rice varieties remained unchanged at K100,000-K125,000 per sack of high-grade Pawsan from Pyapon, Myaungmya, Pathein, and Shwebo areas, K80,000 for Pawkywe and K72,000 for short-matured rice price (90 days), as per the wholesale prices announced by the Wahdan rice depot.

Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF) announced on 10 December reasonable market prices of rice for December. The reasonable market prices set for December are K60,000-K62,000 per 108-pound sack of Aemahta rice (25 per cent broken), K62,000-K64,000 for Aemahta rice (15 per cent broken), K64,000-K68,000 for Aemahta

(10-5 per cent broken), K68,000-K72,000 for 90-day short mature rice, Pakan, Anyatha, special Aemahta rice varieties (10-5 per cent broken), K90,000-K95,000 for Ayamin, Ayeya Padetha (10-5 broken) and K80,000-K90,000 for Ayeyawady Pawsan rice and K90,000-K95,000 Shwebo Pawsan (10-5 per cent broken).

The federation determined reasonable market prices by considering the following factors; fair profit for the farmers, millers, and distributors, reasonable prices for consumers, last year's market price, global market prices, and other commodities prices.

Consequently, MRF encouraged the affiliated associations, members of commodity depots, exporters, and rice companies to sell the rice at a reasonable market price.

Nonetheless, there might be a price difference of five to ten per cent between the retail and wholesale market and 10-20 per cent for modern trade with consumer packaging at mini marts, according to the MRF. Those reasonable market prices weigh on the new monsoon paddy produced this year only, MRF stated.

To have a smooth trade, MRF urged the buyers to contact the MRF and the relevant wholesale centers.

Moreover, the federation notified on 21 September paddy reference price for the 2023 monsoon paddy and called for its affiliated companies, millers, and traders to buy the paddy at a reasonable market price during the monsoon paddy harvest season. — NN/EM

## Trade Dept to collect e-commerce registration fees

THE Trade Department under the Ministry of Commerce released the bulletin (17/2023) on 28 December regarding mandatory e-commerce registration. The ministry allowed those online sales business operators who registered between 2 October and 31 December 2023 to be exempt from registration fees for six months.

The validity of registration granted from 1 January 2024 is two years. The registration fees are set at K70,000 for companies or commercial institutions, with a renewal fee of K70,000 and an amendment fee of K3,000. Those companies or commercial institutions holding the SME certificates have to pay K50,000 for registration, K50,000 for renewal, and K3,000 for amendment fees. Individuals will be charged K30,000 for registration, K30,000 for renewal, and K3,000 for amendment fees.

Those businesses executing online sales can be registered through the eComReg system at <https://www.ecomreg.gov.mm> from 2 October 2023. — NN/EM

## India extends free import policy for black grams, pigeon peas until March 2025

INDIA extended the quota free import policy of black gram (urad) and pigeon pea (tur) up to March 2025, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Department of Commerce of India notified on 28 December.

Earlier, the free import validity was set until March 2024. India's extension for the import period is aimed at controlling price rises. Consequently, India's government allows imports freely without quota.

Previously, India was reportedly to bring in 400,000 tonnes of pigeon pea (tur) and 1 million tonnes of black gram (urad) from Myanmar in two months (Jan-Feb) 2024 to curb rising prices in the domestic market, citing a report by Economic Times.

India is likely to face a decline in pulse output compared to that of the previous year. Subsequently, India is bound to import pulses. India's government extended the stock limit on pulses to avoid price hikes and have fair prices for the consumers until the end of December 2023 from 30 October.

Additionally, India eased the import tax on pigeon peas in March and raised imports from Africa and Myanmar, still resulting in a price rise compared to those of last year.

As pigeon pea (tur) is commonly consumed across India, with 4.5 million tonnes of annual requirements, Bimal Kothari, chairman of India Pulses and Grains Association stated.

There will be no sudden price increase upon pulses im-

port, Kothari forecast.

India is the major market for Myanmar's pulses. Myanmar's commercial attaché in Kolkata, India suggested preparations for consignment of 1.4 million tonnes of those pulses to India in January and February.

The prevailing market prices are K2.96 million per tonne of black gram (urad) and K3.28 million per tonne of pigeon pea (tur).

Myanmar's black gram and pigeon pea prices are closely tied to India's demand and the US dollar exchange rate.

Myanmar conveyed 1.1 million tonnes of various pulses worth US\$931 million in the past eight and a half months of the current financial year 2023-2024, the Ministry of Commerce stated.

Myanmar mainly exports



Various beans and pulses are displayed at a shop.

black gram, green gram, and pigeon peas to foreign markets. Of them, black gram and pigeon peas are primarily shipped to India while green grams are exported to China and Europe.

India has growing consumption requirements for black gram and pigeon peas. According to a Memorandum of Understanding between Myanmar and India signed on 18 June 2021, India will import 250,000 tonnes of black gram and 100,000 tonnes of pigeon peas (tur) from Myanmar for five consecutive years from

2021-2022 financial year to 2025-2026 FY. This G-to-G pact will not affect the pulses' annual quota set by India. Myanmar's exporters are also entitled to deliver the pulses to India under that annual quota.

Black gram which India primarily purchases is commonly found only in Myanmar, whereas pigeon pea, green gram, and chickpeas are grown in African countries and Australia, stated by the Myanmar Pulses, Beans, Maize, and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association. — NN/EM

# OPINION

## Foster economic growth: Kyaukpyu SEZ bridges Myanmar and China

**S**PECIAL Economic Zones (SEZs) stand as pivotal catalysts for a nation's economic development, providing businesspersons with the autonomy to operate under specialized laws distinct from the standard regulations. These zones encompass various sectors, including free trade, exports, industry, ports, and urban development, ultimately aiming to attract foreign investments.

Myanmar, recognizing its significance, has embarked on three SEZ projects in Thilawa of Yangon Region, Dawei of Tanintharyi Region, and Kyaukpyu of Rakhine State, with Thilawa emerging as the most successful thus far.

The Kyaukpyu SEZ, a joint venture between Myanmar and China, recently took a significant stride in advancing its deep seaport project. In November 2020, the Kyaukpyu SEZ Management Committee and Kyaukpyu SEZ Deep Seaport Co Ltd signed the Concession Agreement. On 26 December 2023, the chairman of the

Kyaukpyu SEZ Management Committee and the official representative of the Project Company inked the Addendum, as part of expediting the project's implementation. This deep seaport project is poised to attract substantial foreign investments, contributing significantly to Myanmar's economic development.

The Kyaukpyu SEZ is anticipated to elevate living standards in Rakhine State, generating employment opportunities and strengthening economic and trade ties between Myanmar and China. The project will be executed with a 30 per cent ownership stake by Myanmar and 70 per cent by China. Notably, the deep seaport, equipped with 10 jetties capable of handling seven million 20-foot containers annually, is set to become Myanmar's first international-level deep seaport. This strategic gateway is expected to connect Myanmar with Asia, Africa, and Europe, positioning it as a crucial player in global trade.

The economic benefits of the Kyaukpyu SEZ extend beyond foreign investments, encompassing tax revenue generation for the government and contributing to environmental conservation. With 85 per cent progress in environmental and social impact assessments, the project demonstrates a commitment to responsible development. Additionally, the integration of an industrial park within the SEZ framework promises direct advantages for residents.

The collaboration between Myanmar and China in developing the Kyaukpyu SEZ marks a significant stride toward economic growth for both nations. Furthermore, it positions the project as a potential business hub, fostering collaboration among countries in Asia, Africa, and Europe. The success of the Kyaukpyu SEZ is not just a bilateral achievement, and it stands as a testament to the cooperative efforts driving socioeconomic development for the people of Myanmar and China.

### Preface:

1. I hope that this article will be read and appreciated by those readers as the article is about the English language, which is fast becoming the first global language because more and more words fall out of the sky, metaphorically speaking, thanks to the wonders of electronic information and satellite technology.
2. Please consider this: It has been estimated that there are now 800,000 words in the English language. UNESCO has estimated that 1,000 million people use the language to some degree. About 300 million people use English as their native language. About 700 million people use it as a second language. Some 300 million people in China are learning English alone. That means there are more Chinese learning English than Amer-

# ENGLISH PROBLEM WORDS (1)

## Better English (Series)

U Khin Maung (A Retired Diplomat)

icans speaking it. I hope my dear reader will find this article useful and entertaining and have as much fun reading it. Thank you, sir.

3. Well, my respected reader: The following are some English problem

words.

### English Problem Words (i)

As this article is very delicate, difficult, dedicated, and long, I intend to express my ordinary, simple, basic, and layman's views. I will mention it in a series. And this is my first humble and honest attempt, as far as possible, in alphabetic order.

### 'Abdicate' and 'Abrogate'

King Edward VIII decided to 'abdicate' the throne of England. 'Abdicate' means give up management sought to. 'Abrogate' is an agreement with the Union. 'Abrogate' means to cancel, abort, and abandon. Due to a fault in a booster rocket, the space launch aborted. The word 'aborted' means terminated due to a fault. Due to a shortage of money, the space project was abandoned. The word 'abandoned' means given up. It implies a human decision.

### 'Accent' and 'Dialect'

Her French 'accent' is unbelievably

bad. 'Accent' is about the sound of words. His Yorkshire is rich in old Viking words. 'Dialect' is about the sound of words, their meaning and their strangeness.

### 'Access' and 'Excess'

Goods are delivered to the shop through the rear access. The noun 'access' beginning 'a' means approach or, in this case, door.

The value of goods sold at my shop last year was in 'excess' of \$250,000. The noun 'excess' beginning 'e' means an amount exceeding.

### 'Accessory' and 'Accessory'

His brother was suspected of being an 'accessary' to the robbing of the City Bank. The word 'accessary', ending 'ary' implies assistance or consent.

The question is whether the type of weapon is an 'accessory' to the problem of disarmament. She was wearing a blue hat and accessories. The word 'accessory' ending 'ory' implies secondary importance.

### 'Accommodate'

'Accommodate' spells with double 'c' and double 'm'.

### 'Accordingly' and 'Consequently'

The boy has pneumonia; accordingly, he must go to hospital. The word 'accordingly' is used to link ideas. It means in a suitable way.

The boy has pneumonia; 'consequently' he may die. The word 'consequently' is used to link ideas. It means as a result of.

**Reference;**  
English Problem Words, by George Jerkings, London.



According to UNESCO, approximately 1 billion people use English to some extent. **ILLUSTRATION: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ PIXABAY**

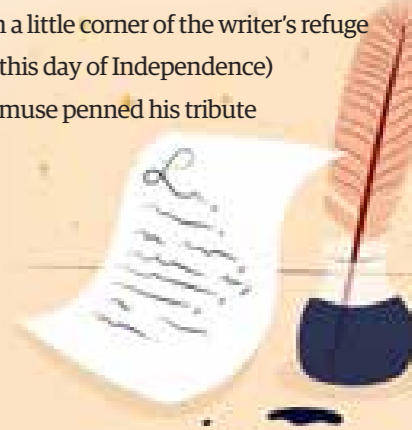
### Thoughts on the Day of Independence

By Zaw Gyi, Translated by Myint Zan

The younger brother of beloved Ma Lay (elder sister) is sorrowful this day:  
he feels a sorrowful longing  
on this day  
for 'tis in the nature of  
the human condition and its journey  
that blood has to flow, and tears have to be shed  
for the sake of the country

The younger brother of beloved Ma Lay feels pensive this day:  
pensive and pondering about  
the needs for people's livelihood  
and the inequalities evident in  
internal politics of the country  
oh, the predicament, the imbroglia  
of this world  
how (I) yearn that they be solved!

The younger brother of beloved Ma Lay  
in remembrance and in repose writes thus:  
the tears and the blood,  
that flow (in the struggle for Independence):  
from a little corner of the writer's refuge  
(on this day of Independence)  
this muse penned his tribute



*Saya Zaw Gyi (1907-1990) penned the poem on or about the day of Independence (4 January 1948). There may be other English translations of this poem by Saya Zaw Gyi, but the translator has not searched for or referred to them before attempting his translation.*

### A Fresh Start

By Chit Ko Pe

Come, twenty twenty-four  
a new year in the front row.

Gone so with the yesteryear,  
blues and glooms faded afar.

Taking lessons deep in the heart,  
let's make a fresh start.

Strive for living healthier and happier.  
Build friendships stronger and firmer.

Keep love sweeter and cosier.  
Let the resolutions come true, ever!



# WHO urges pandemic accord in 2024 after years of Covid pain

*In his end-of-year message, Tedros highlighted the turning point in 2023 regarding major health challenges, acknowledging progress but emphasizing the immense and avoidable suffering experienced.*

**THE** head of the WHO said Tuesday the world needs to properly prepare for future pandemics after finally ending three years of Covid "crisis, pain and loss".

In his end-of-year message, World Health Organization director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said 2023 had marked a turning point in fighting major health challenges but had also brought "immense and avoidable suffering".

Tedros called for ramped-up

relief efforts for the Gaza Strip and urged nations to seal a "monumental" pandemic accord to plug preparedness gaps that were exposed during the pandemic.

Tedros declared an end to Covid-19 as an international public health emergency in May.

"This marked a turning point for the world following three years of crisis, pain and loss for people everywhere," he recalled in a video message. "I'm glad to see that life has returned to normal."

After 10 months, the WHO also lifted a similar emergency on mpox in May 2023, while the UN health agency approved new vaccines for malaria, dengue and meningitis, Tedros said.

Meanwhile Azerbaijan, Belize and Tajikistan were declared malaria-free.

Tedros also noted that the health impacts of climate change featured prominently at COP28, the latest annual UN climate conference held a few weeks ago.

However, "2023 has also been a year of immense and avoidable suffering and threats to health," he added.

Tedros spoke of the "barbaric" Hamas attacks on Israel, "followed by the unleashing of a devastating attack on Gaza".

The bloodiest ever Gaza war erupted when Hamas attacked southern Israel on 7 October and killed about 1,140 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli figures.

They took 250 hostages of whom 129 remain inside Gaza.

Israel launched an extensive aerial bombardment and ground invasion. The campaign has killed 20,915 people, mostly women and children, according to Hamas-run Gaza's health ministry.

"Relief efforts are not coming close to meeting the needs of people in Gaza," Tedros said, underscoring the WHO's call for an immediate ceasefire.

SOURCE: AFP



The file photo dated 20 December 2020 shows a COVID-19 screening centre in Abu Dhabi. The UAE recorded more than 184,000 coronavirus cases, including 617 deaths. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**



# NATIONAL



## Myanmar avocados to be exported at cheap logistic

Avocado plants bearing quality fruits. PHOTO: KANU

MYANMAR ships quality avocados to foreign countries, and the Shan State government and partner organizations make efforts to transport the avocado via waterway to India following a purchase proposal made by an Indian company.

The ceremony marking the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of Myanmar-India diplomatic relations was held at the Myanmar Embassy to India on 22-23 December. On that day, the beans, pulses, and avocados produced in Myanmar were introduced at the event, and the Hass variety achieved large interest and offers. In the export sector, the shipment via waterways can save the transportation charges more than the flights, so the Shan State government, Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization, and Myanmar Avocado Producer and Exporter Association work together to establish a cold storage facility in Taunggyi.

Efforts are also being made to export avocados to China under the G-to-G agreement while melons, muskmelons, and mangoes are being exported to China. In 2018, six budding avocado species imported from California of the US

were grown as trial plants, and the plantation was successful to a certain extent. Of these six varieties, the demand for Hass avocado has gained success in the market. Currently, Hass avocados are exported to Thailand, Singapore, and Malaysia, and Bahrain negotiated to purchase Myanmar avocados, and the country transported avocados to Bahrain by flights initially, and other European countries also eye Myanmar avocados.

To create a market via exports, the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization (Taunggyi) and Myanmar Avocado Producer and Exporter Association showcased Myanmar avocados at the Nanning trade fair in China in October, and the events grabbed opportunities for market connection. The avocado season is from November and January, and the country exports about 5,000 tonnes of avocados to Thailand.

In Myanmar, there are two types of avocados - resident avocados and grafted avocados. They are mainly grown in Shan State (South), Mandalay Region, Kachin State, Chin State, and Sagaing Region (Naga Region). The avocados from Shan

State (South) are exported most. The country produces between 4,000 and 5,000 tonnes of avocados while there are 1,500-25,00 tonnes of grafted avocados. Although the grafted avocado yield is high this year, there are substandard ones due to climate change and high agrochemical costs, and entry to the local market is on the rise this year.

In the global market, the avocado fetches five US dollars per kilo at its highest, and the export charge by flight is three dollars per kilo, so the officials are working hard to ship via sea route. In 2022, the country exported about 1,500 tonnes of grafted avocados and it is also estimated to export about 2,500 tonnes in 2023.

Peru is now the leading supplier of avocados to Europe. At a trade fair, a nation that exports avocados to the global market also showed huge interest in Myanmar avocados. Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Viet Nam also export avocados. The cheap logistics, official export permit, and solid market of Myanmar avocados can earn tax for the country and the increase in plantation can earn foreign incomes. — Nyein Thu(MNA)/KTZH

## CRIME NEWS

### Illegal timbers, foodstuffs, consumer goods, industrial materials and vehicles confiscated

DURING inspections on 27 and 28 December, the on-duty teams managed by the Customs Department confiscated 17 kinds of goods valued at K41.369 million including 146 lady clothes and 262 bottles of Face Wash (made in Japan) without official documents from a container at the Thilawa Port Terminal container checkpoint, three kinds of goods worth K44.04 million including 5,000 Atom Toys that were different from the Import Declaration (ID) from a container at the Asia World Port Terminal container checkpoint, a black belt head that is suspected gold worth K60 million from a passenger at the Yangon International Airport (Import) and a Mitsubishi Fuso truck (approximately K20 million) carrying 22 kinds of goods worth K4,937,800 including 98 kilogrammes of Tolsen Safety boots that were not declared in the ID at the Mayanchaung permanent checkpoint. The action was taken under Customs procedures.

On 28 December, the combined teams impounded an unregistered Hilux Surf (approximately K9 million) at the Kantalu combined checkpoint in Sagaing township, a Fuso Canter (estimated value of K18 million) carrying 3.101 tonnes of illegal teaks worth K4,341,960 at the Milepost 25/2 on Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw expressway and a MAN tractor head with a trailer (estimated value of K95 million), heading to Yangon from Mandalay, carrying 9,268 kilogrammes of 100 per cent rayon fabric that were not declared in the ID at the Ywathagyi Dry Port. The action was conducted under Customs procedures.

A total of 1.286 tonnes of illegal teaks and 0.745 tonne of illegal other timbers worth K960,834 were captured in Toungoo district on 28 and 29 December and action was taken under the Forest Law.

Fifteen arrests were made on three consecutive days from 27 to 29 December, with an estimated value of K311,551,594, as reported by the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS

## More than 44,000 tonnes of maize worth US\$10M exported via sea and border routes in November

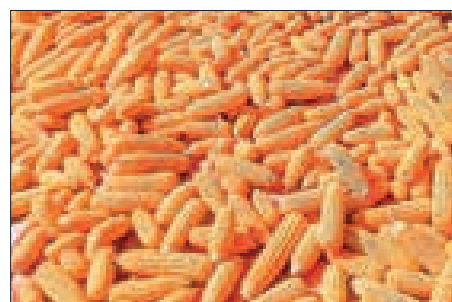
THROUGH sea and border routes, more than 44,000 tonnes of maize worth US\$10 million were exported in November, according to the Ministry of Commerce's statistics.

Of total export 31,389 tonnes by sea, 31,170 tonnes were exported to Philippines, more than 190 tonnes were exported to Chinese (Taipei) and 29 tonnes were

exported to Singapore.

Similarly, of total export 12,988 tonnes through border trade route, 12,000 tonnes were exported to China and 988 tonnes were exported to Thailand.

The country earned \$7.601 million from 31,389 tonnes export by sea and \$3.39 million from 12,988 tonnes export by border trade route.



Myanmar sells maize to Thailand, China, Viet Nam, Singapore, India and the Philippines, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Currently, Myanmar has 1.2 million acres of maize plantation which produces more than 2.6 million tonnes. Of Myanmar's export items, maize fetches the second largest export earning. — MT/ZS

## Chinese language education persists in US: report

*The demand for Mandarin immersion education reflects a growing trend among parents seeking to provide their children with a valuable skill set and a broader international outlook.*

PARENTS in several US states prefer sending kids to schools where classes are taught entirely in Mandarin Chinese, according to a recent report by the South China Morning Post.

As of now, the so-called Mandarin immersion programs can be found in 32 US states and the District of Columbia. And those that are publicly funded are spread across 31 states, the Hong Kong-based English-language newspaper said.

As for why moms and dads are eager to enroll their kids in those programs — offered in elementary, middle and high schools and totalling 407 as of December, the newspaper said it is the desire for children to get a global perspective and life opportunities that has been driving



Students at Walnut Hills Elementary School in Greenville, Michigan, where parents earlier this year successfully rallied to save a Mandarin immersion programme from a phase-out. **PHOTO: FACEBOOK/WALNUT HILLS CHINESE IMMERSIO**

the demand.

“My reasons are simple: take advantage of a unique opportunity to have our kids be more open-minded,” the newspaper quoted Sam White as saying.

White’s kids are students at Washington Yu Ying Public Charter School, which offers a Mandarin immersion program for kids from pre-kindergarten to fifth grade.

The Mandarin immersion programs flourished during the administration of former US President Barack Obama. Although the trajectory of the bilateral relationship went downward during the subsequent administrations, demand for Chinese learning opportunities continued to prove strong, said the report. — Xinhua

## Syria’s glassblowing tradition revived with new hope

IN the heart of the Syrian capital Damascus, where sunlight melts through minarets and whispers fill ancient alleyways, Muhammad Hallaq, a 63-year-old glassblower, breathes life into molten glass, carrying forward a family legacy that spans three generations.

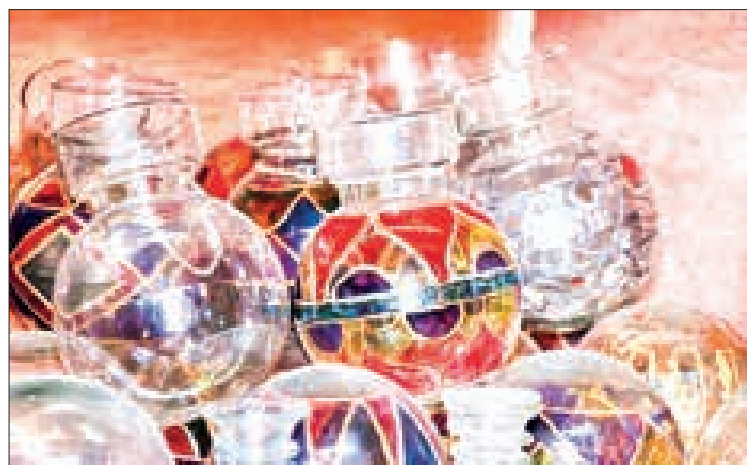
Having learned the craft at the age of nine, Hallaq is now called the “last Sheikh al-Kar”, which means the final master of a fading art.

Hallaq’s workshop in the Zablatani district, east of Damascus, stands as the lone bastion of full-scale glassblowing in the

war-torn country.

For a long time, Hallaq and his six relatives have been working in the workshop, keeping alive the family tradition and a cultural heritage that is in danger of disappearing amid the country’s turmoil and the lack of foreign demand.

But he has a new reason for hope: UNESCO recently added the Syrian glassblowing to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding. “I am proud that it’s a Syrian industry that has been inscribed on the list by UNESCO,” he told Xinhua. — Xinhua



This photo shows handmade glassware in Damascus, Syria, 21 December, 2023. **PHOTO: AMMAR SAFARJALANI/XINHUA**

## Mums at work: S Korean company’s pro-parent, office-free policies

*Erin Lim, a 38-year-old businesswoman, introduced the concept of office-free work ahead of the pandemic, aiming to support working mothers in South Korea.*

EARLY starts to workdays and late finishes are routine in South Korea, a country notorious for its hard-driving corporate culture, but Erin Lim knew she wanted to do things differently at her business.

The 38-year-old entrepreneur pioneered office-free work to help working mums like her in 2017 — well before work-from-home flexibility became a happy side effect of the pandemic, including for many parents. After the birth of her first son, Lim, who describes herself as an “overwhelmingly picky customer”, could not find a baby carrier she liked. So, with her six-month-old son in tow, she headed to Seoul’s main fabric market.

Soon, she had a prototype of the baby wrap she wanted and, despite having no manufacturing or entrepreneurial experience, launched a business making and selling the carriers



This picture taken on 29 November 2023 shows Erin Lim, CEO of baby products company Konny, posing with baby goods after an interview with AFP at her company’s new office in Seoul. **PHOTO: JUNG YEON-JE / AFP**

out of her front room. “I’m a person who doesn’t take anything for granted. So, for example, when I started the company, I asked myself: why would I need an office?” Now, Lim’s company has 55 staff members — 92 percent women, the majority working parents — and they all still

work almost exclusively from home, offering flexible hours and keeping in-person meetings to the bare minimum. “The reason: I wanted to watch my children grow up,” Lim told AFP, adding that family life should take priority over a rigid, inflexible work schedule. — AFP

# ECONOMY WORLD



Iraqi labourers work at an oil refinery in the southern town Nassiriya. Production operations at the oil field were stopped after protesters closed roads leading toward the site. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

## Iran, Iraq sign MoU on training cooperation in oil sector

*The agreement includes joint research efforts, online meetings, and training for staff within the next few weeks.*

IRAN and Iraq on Wednesday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on providing training courses for workers in the oil sector, Shana News Agency affiliated with the Iranian Oil Ministry reported.

The MoU was signed between Mehdi Ali-Madadi, Iran's deputy oil minister for management and human resources development, and Bassim Mohammed Khudair, Iraqi deputy oil minister for extraction affairs, in the Iranian capital of Tehran, the report said.

Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji and his Iraqi counterpart Hayan Abdel-Ghani also attended the signing ceremony, it added.

Under the MoU, which is set to be implemented within the next few weeks, the two sides agreed to provide training courses for the two countries' oil ministry staff, start research cooperation, and hold online meetings.

At a meeting between the two countries' delegations on the same day, Owji said Iran

and Iraq could implement numerous joint projects based on the two states' huge hydrocarbon reserves for bilateral interests.

Abdel-Ghani, for his part, encouraged Iranian companies to "have a share" in his country's different projects, including the development of the joint oilfields.

The Iraqi minister listed the joint investments in gas production and oil refinery construction as potential areas for bilateral cooperation. — Xinhua

## UK lifts Brexit obstacles for French students

*Britain has lifted post-Brexit barriers for school trips from France, allowing French and EU nationals to use a simple identity card for language-learning holidays, following talks between Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and French President Emmanuel Macron.*

BRITAIN on Thursday lifted some costly obstacles placed on school trips post Brexit — but only for students from France as campaigners called for all EU countries to benefit.

The U-turn follows talks earlier this year over the issue between Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and French President Emmanuel Macron.

French and EU nationals at schools in France who cross the Channel for a language-learning holiday will now need to carry only a simple identity card, as was the case before the UK formally departed the European Union in 2021.

While non-EU nationals at-

tending French schools will still need a passport to enter the UK on a language-learning holiday, London has scrapped the need for them to have a visa costing £115 (\$147).

British Educational Travel Association, which has seen demand for school trips tumble since Brexit, described Thursday's changes as "a positive step ahead", while urging the UK government to expand them for the entire European Union.

BETA is pushing also for a new scheme that would allow groups of EU nationals and residents aged under 18 to travel to the UK for up to six weeks for educational visits. — AFP



British Educational Travel Association, which has seen demand for school trips tumble since Brexit, described the changes as 'a positive step ahead'. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

## Argentine unions members, activists march against Milei's economic reforms



A supporter of Argentina's President-elect Javier Milei displays a one hundred dollar bill placard with an image of the future president as he waits outside the Congress before his inauguration ceremony in Buenos Aires on 10 December 2023. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ LUIS ROBAYO/AFP/FILE**

ARGENTINE unions and social organizations took to the streets here on Wednesday to protest against President Javier Milei's recent economic reforms.

The march, which began at the square in front of the Palace of Justice, ended with at least six people arrested and a police officer injured.

The General Confederation of Labor (CGT), a national trade union federation in Argentina, and other organizations called for the protest to reject the De-

creed of Necessity and Urgency signed by Milei to "deregulate" the country's economy.

"The decree goes against the workers and the country," said CGT leader Pablo Moyano of the truckers' union.

Speaking to local media, Hector Daer, a leader of the CGT, said that political, legal and street-level tactics are needed to overturn the decree.

During the protest, activists read aloud a document that warned of the decree's "fierce regressive labor reform," say-

ing it included measures that were "arbitrary, unconstitutional and harmful to a vast number of civil, commercial and social rights".

The march mobilized people from various sectors, with construction and metallurgy union members marching alongside truck drivers, bank employees, healthcare workers and public-sector employees.

A day earlier, Milei said "good Argentines" were willing to face his administration's austerity measures. — Xinhua

## Chile's state-owned mining giant forms lithium extraction alliance

CHILE'S state-owned Codelco mining company, the world's top copper producer, on Wednesday announced an "unprecedented" alliance with private mining giant SQM, aiming to nearly double lithium extraction in the Atacama desert.

The companies will partner from 2025 to 2060, working in the desert to extract 300,000 tonnes per year of lithium, used to manufacture electric car batteries, as well as those in cell phones and other electronics.

In 2022, SQM extract-

ed 168,000 tonnes of lithium there. "This is an unprecedented milestone in the Chilean mining industry and a concrete advance to achieve fair and sustainable development," Chilean President Gabriel Boric said on national television.

— AFP



Aerial view of brine ponds and processing areas of the lithium mine of the Chilean company SQM (Sociedad Quimica Minera) in the Atacama Desert, Calama, Chile. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

## Business confidence dips in Malta: central bank

BUSINESS confidence in Malta dipped in November, according to the latest economic update published by the country's central bank on Wednesday.

The report revealed that Malta's economic sentiment in November dropped below its long-term average, from 102.8 in October to just 96.4 in November. Nevertheless, Malta's Economic Sentiment Indicator (ESI) is still higher than the euro-zone average of 93.8.

The ESI is an index used by the European Commission to calculate confidence across several economic sectors, including industry, services, construction, retail and consumers.



A man walks past a shop with an advert of Black Friday offers on the window in Sliema, Malta, 24 November 2023. PHOTO: JONATHAN BORG/XINHUA

The decrease in November was attributed to falling confidence in the services and retail sectors, both of which registered significantly lower scores than in previous months. Unlike in the previous month, companies' assessment of demand in

recent months was negative. At the same time, the share of respondents with positive expectations of demand over the next three months, and a positive assessment of sales over the past three months, both decreased. — Xinhua

## Venezuela oil giant says 80 per cent of oil spill cleaned up

VENEZUELA'S state oil company said Thursday that an oil spill at a refinery on the country's western coastline was no longer "active" and that more than 80 per cent of the affected area had been cleaned up.

Wednesday's spill at the El Palito facility in the northwestern state of Carabobo occurred when

heavy rainfall caused fluids to overflow from lagoons at the site, PDVSA said on social media platform X. "It is important to clarify that it is not heavy crude oil, but a discharge of hydrocarbons, wastewater or effluents that were directed to the coastal marine environment," the company said. — AFP



Volunteers and workers of the Venezuelan state oil company PDVSA wear protective equipment during a cleaning operation after an oil spill at the El Palito refinery in Puerto Cabello, Carabobo state, Venezuela on 27 December 2023. PHOTO: AFP

## Quebec reaches tentative deal with public workers

AN alliance of unions representing several hundred thousand civil servants in Canada's Quebec province said Thursday it reached a tentative deal with the government, possibly averting a general strike.

The Common Front,

which represents 420,000 public workers in education, health and social services, said in a statement the two sides — after weeks of labor unrest — reached "a proposed agreement in principle" that will be voted on in

January. This comes after the teachers' union in Quebec, which represents 66,000 workers at 800 schools, said late Wednesday it reached a tentative deal with the government on salaries and working conditions. The teachers

have been on strike for over a month.

Another union that has been negotiating with the Quebec government on behalf of 80,000 nurses and other health workers, however, is still pressing for an agreement. — AFP

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V CLIPPER HONG KONG VOY.NO. (027)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V CLIPPER HONG KONG VOY.NO. (027) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 1-1-2024 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT-5 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301928

Shipping Agency Department  
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S WILHELMSSEN PORT SERVICE(S) PTE LTD

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SEOUL GLOW VOY.NO. (349W)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SEOUL GLOW VOY.NO. (349W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 30-12-2023 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/MIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department  
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD

## ROLLING UPDATES: WORLD

### In Colombia, illegally felled timber repurposed to help bees

The project, initiated in 2021, has transformed 200 cubic metres of illegal wood into 1,000 bee hives, with plans for an additional 10,000 in the next phase.



Beekeeper Maria Acevedo says 'without bees there are no humans'. **PHOTO: AFP**

IN northeast Colombia, police guard warehouses stacked high with confiscated timber with a noble new destiny: transformation into homes for bees beleaguered by pesticides and

climate change.

The illegally harvested wood is used in the Santander department's "Timber Returns Home" initiative, building hives since 2021 to house the little pollinators so critical to human survival.

So far, the project has seen about 200 cubic metres (7,060 cubic feet) of wood transformed into 1,000 bee hives, with another 10,000 planned for the next phase, according to the Santander environmental authority.

Previously, confiscated timber was turned into sawdust, donated to municipalities for projects... and sometimes just left to rot.

Now it is being repurposed to help address the "extremely serious problem" of possible bee extinction, said biologist German Perilla, director of the Honey Bee Impact Foundation.

About three quarters of crops producing fruits or seeds for human consumption depend on pollination, but the UN has warned that 40 per cent of invertebrate pollinators — particularly bees and butterflies — risk global extinction. —AFP

### Court orders New Caledonia to stop culling sharks

A court in New Caledonia on Thursday ordered the authorities to stop hunting sharks, saying multiple culls were a "disproportionate" response to any danger to swimmers.

The French Pacific terri-

tory has been scrambling to protect its busy beaches from sharks after two attacks earlier this year, one of them causing the death of an Australian tourist.

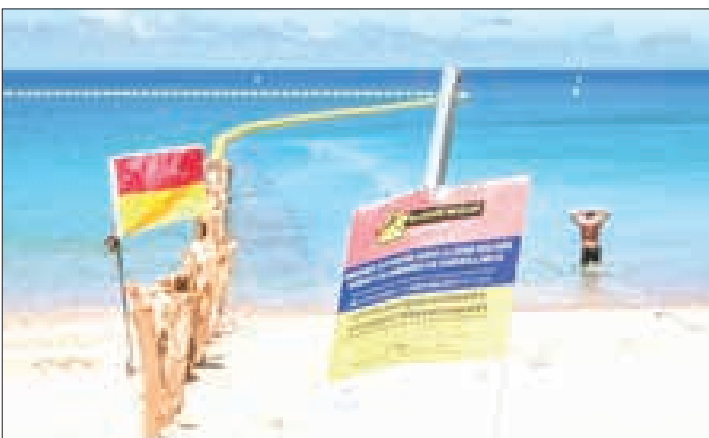
For a while it banned sea

bathing outright, and recently installed a controversial net to keep sharks out.

Since the start of the year, the capital Noumea has also declared open season on sharks, running several campaigns of "preventative" shark hunting in the hope of making beaches safe again.

A total of 127 sharks have been killed this year—83 tiger sharks and 44 bulldog sharks—according to the ocean-protection NGO Longitude 181.

Another NGO, "Ensemble pour la Planete" (United for the Planet) filed a legal challenge to the policy with the territory's administrative court which handles cases involving the government. — AFP



The authorities regularly warn bathers of the shark threat. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

### German authorities prepare for potential riots on New Year's Eve

Following the 2023 New Year's Eve riots and attacks on emergency services, Germany's emergency services are gearing up for a significant presence during this year's year-end festivities, emphasizing public safety.



People take part in the New Year's Run in Berlin, Germany, 1 January 2023. **PHOTO: REN PENGFEI/XINHUA/FILE**

DRAWING lessons from the riots and attacks on emergency services that occurred on New Year's Eve 2023, Germany's emergency services are preparing to be present in large numbers during the year-end festivities across the country, appealing to the public to be peaceful as the sale of fireworks started on Thursday.

"We are going into action together so that you can celebrate New Year's Eve safely and

to help you if you need us," the police and fire departments in Berlin said in a joint video published on the platform X, formerly known as Twitter. "Don't attack us." In the German capital Berlin, which was a hotspot for violence last year, the police are planning a major operation. "It is the largest police operation on New Year's Eve in recent decades," Berlin's Police Commissioner Barbara Slowik said earlier this week.— Xinhua

### Israel's Netanyahu cancels cabinet meeting on post-war governance in Gaza Strip – reports

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has canceled a war cabinet meeting that was expected to discuss Israel's plan for the Gaza Strip's post-war governance, The Times of Israel newspaper reported.

The war cabinet was expected to meet on Thursday. The fact that it has consistently ignored the issue of the Gaza Strip's post-war governance at its meetings has reportedly caused concerns in the United States, where officials believe that Israel's failure to clearly map out the Hamas-controlled Palestinian enclave's political

future risks resulting in the indefinite prolonging of hostilities.

Netanyahu's decision to cancel the meeting could have been influenced by his far-right coalition partners, who have rejected any possibility of the Gaza Strip going under the control of the Palestinian Authority, the newspaper wrote.

On 7 October, Palestinian movement Hamas launched a large-scale rocket attack against Israel from the Gaza Strip, while its fighters breached the border, opening fire on the military and civilians. — SPUTNIK

# SPORTS

## Klopp expects Liverpool to maintain title bid without Salah



Liverpool's Egyptian striker Mohamed Salah controls the ball during the English Premier League football match between Liverpool and Arsenal at Anfield in Liverpool, north west England on 23 December 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

*Despite Mohamed Salah's imminent departure for the African Cup of Nations, Liverpool's manager, Jurgen Klopp, is confident that the team can continue their Premier League title pursuit.*

JURGEN Klopp is adamant Liverpool will be able to maintain their Premier League title charge despite the imminent loss of Mohamed Salah to African Cup of Nations duty.

Salah will leave to play for Egypt at the African Cup of Nations after Liverpool host Newcastle in the Premier League on Monday. Liverpool sit two points clear of Arsenal at the top as they chase a first title since 2020.

They also take on Arsenal in the FA Cup third round and Fulham in the League Cup

semi-finals in January, meaning Salah's absence could not come at a worse time.

He is Liverpool's top scorer with 16 goals this term and his absence in the Ivory Coast, for potentially over a month if Egypt go deep into the tournament, leaves Klopp with a major void to fill. "It is not the first time, it is a really at least very average situation that you lose your goalscorer but we had it even worse in the past when Sadio (Mane) and Mo left," Klopp told reporters on Friday. — AFP

## Myanmar Chinlone Federation Cup Championship concludes

THE final match of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Myanmar Chinlone Federation Cup Championship was held at Thuwunna Indoor Stadium-I in Yangon yesterday.

Tawwin Htay Yadana Team won over Zabu Yadana Aye Team by 1353:1242 points in

the final match of the 10-Men-Show.

Similarly, the Defence Team trounced the Thurein Min Team by 1098:1030 points in the 6-Men-Show Final while the Sar Oo Team beat the Ksetra Shwe Pyi Team by 590:519

points in the 4-Women-Show Final Game.

An awarding ceremony was held after the final matches and officials presented the winning teams with medals. A total of 200 athletes competed in the tourney. — Bala Soe/KZL



The Tawwin Htay Yadana Team seen competing in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Myanmar Chinlone Federation Cup Championship. **PHOTO: BALA SOE**

## Man City's Grealish burgled during match

MANCHESTER City winger Jack Grealish was burgled while the England star was playing in his club's Premier League match at Everton on Wednesday.

Grealish's Cheshire mansion in north-west England was

targeted by thieves as he was in action for the Premier League champions during their 3-1 victory on Merseyside. Members of Grealish's family and his fiancée Sasha Atwood were watching the televised match at the house when they heard a disturbance,

according to reports on Friday. An alarm was raised and an emergency response was launched with a helicopter, police dogs and a number of officers sent to the property, but no suspects were detected. — AFP

## Spain edge Brazil 2-1 to begin United Cup

WORLD number 11 Beatriz Haddad Maia got her season off to a winning start Friday, but it was not enough to prevent Brazil crashing 2-1 to Spain as the mixed teams United Cup kicked off in Perth.

The tie came down to a deciding doubles rubber, with Alejandro Davidovich Fokina and Sara Sorribes Tormo defeating Haddad Maia and two-time Grand Slam winner Marcelo Melo 6-4, 7-5.

Davidovich Fokina got Spain off to a winning start as he dispatched Thiago Seyboth Wild 6-4, 6-0, requiring four match points to earn the first



Spain's Sara Sorribes Tormo (L) and Alejandro Davidovich Fokina won a crucial doubles rubber to beat Brazil at the United Cup. **PHOTO: AFP**

victory of the tournament.

Haddad Maia then prevailed in the first WTA Tour

match of the season by defeating Sorribes Tormo 7-6 (7/1), 6-2 to level the tie at 1-1. — AFP

## Ancelotti extends Real Madrid contract until 2026: club

CARLO Ancelotti extended his contract with Real Madrid to June 2026 on Friday which would rule him out of becoming Brazil national coach.

"Real Madrid and Carlo Ancelotti have reached agreement on the extension of his contract till 30 June 2026," Real said in a statement. It had been reported in July this year that 64-year-old Ancelotti would become the first foreigner to coach Brazil in almost 60 years once he saw out his present Real contract next year.

The Brazil Football Confederation had named Fernando Di-

niz as the temporary manager before they anticipated Ancelotti taking control for the 2024 Copa America. Ednaldo Rodriguez, the then president of the CBF, held months of negotiations with Ancelotti, who had previously stated the Real job would be his last in football. However, it appeared one of the most glamorous and challenging jobs in football had brought a change of mind.

"We went after him not only due to his record, but also because he is a decent person," Rodrigues told beIN Sports earlier this year. — AFP

In Colombia, illegally felled timber repurposed to help bees

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# WORLD

## Delhi: Rehearsals for 75<sup>th</sup> Republic Day parade kick off

*In preparation for Republic Day, Delhi Police and security agencies are conducting mock drills at vital installations and market areas to enhance anti-terrorism measures and raise awareness among the general public.*



Despite challenging weather conditions, security forces actively participated in Republic Day parade rehearsals, showcasing their dedication to ensuring a successful event in the run-up to the 75<sup>th</sup> Republic Day celebrations. **PHOTO: ANI**

**R**EHEARSALS for the 75<sup>th</sup> Republic Day parade kicked off here in the national capital on Friday.

Security forces carried out the Republic Day parade rehearsals amid winter chill and foggy conditions this morning near India Gate and Kartavya Path.

Meanwhile, in the run-up to forthcoming Republic Day celebrations, Delhi Police and security agencies are organising mock drills at important vital installations as well as in market areas in order to augment anti-terrorism measures and sensitise the general public to remain alert.

Earlier on Thursday, Delhi Police East District executed a mock drill at V3S Mall Nirman Vihar for security preparedness.

Teams of Delhi Fire Service, Delhi Traffic Police, Bomb Squad, Dog Squad, Cats Ambulance, and SWAT Cammandos were also present there.

India will celebrate its 75<sup>th</sup> Republic Day on 26 January 2024, honouring the historic date when the country completed its transition towards becoming an independent republic after the Constitution came into effect. — ANI

### US Maine disqualifies Trump from presidential primary ballot

US Maine Secretary of State Shenna Bellows on Thursday decided that former President Donald Trump was disqualified from the state ballot in next year's US presidential primary election for his role in the 2021 attack on the US Capitol.

The Trump campaign said it would appeal Bellows' decision to Maine's state courts, and Bellows suspended her ruling until that court system ruled on the case. Ultimately, the nation's highest court will likely have the final say on whether Trump appears on the ballot in Maine and the other states.

As for Colorado, the state's Secretary of State Jena Griswold confirmed Thursday that Donald Trump's name will remain on the state's 2024 presidential primary ballot unless the nation's highest court upholds the Colorado Supreme Court's previous ruling against Trump. — Xinhua

## World's largest ethanol production equipment starts trial in east China

*This cutting-edge equipment, developed through collaboration between the Dalian Institute of Chemical Physics (DICP) and Shaanxi Yanchang Petroleum (Group) Co., Ltd., and constructed by Tanxin Technology Co., LTD. under the Huaibei Mining Group, has the capability to convert coke oven gas into ethanol.*

**THE** world's largest ethanol production equipment, with an annual output of 600,000 tonnes, went into trial on Thursday in Huaibei City, east China's Anhui Province.

The equipment can convert coke oven gas into ethanol, which will massively increase the added value of coal and provide a feasible way for the low-carbon development of steel and petrochemical industries.

Adopting the advanced technology jointly developed by the Dalian Institute of Chemical Physics (DICP) under the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Shaanxi Yanchang Petroleum (Group) Co., Ltd., the equipment was constructed by Tanxin Technology Co., LTD. under the Huaibei Mining Group.— Xinhua



A staff member checks the ethanol production equipment with an annual output of 600,000 tonnes at Tanxin Technology Co., LTD. under the Huaibei Mining Group in Huaibei, east China's Anhui Province, 28 December 2023. **PHOTO: JIN LIWANG/XINHUA**