

# The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

## Ethnics in Kayah State mostly aspire to enjoying peace and stability

The following is a full-text message sent by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing to the ceremony to mark the 72<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of Kayah State Day, on 15 January 2024.

**Esteemed ethnic national brethren in Kayah State,**

Today, the 15<sup>th</sup> of January, is auspicious Kayah State Day for national brethren and Kayah ethnics in Kayah State.

So, I extended my warm greetings with the best wishes to Kayah ethnics

and all ethnics from the Union for enjoying physical and mental well-being on Kayah State Day, which falls in the New Year occasion.

Kayinni State was included as one of the states of the Union of Myanmar under the Constitution of 1947. Under the 1951 Constitution Amendment Act, Kayinni State was officially changed to Kayah State in accordance with public desire starting on 15 January 1952. The day the Kayah State was renamed was designated as the Kayah State Day.

**SEE PAGE-3**



Downtown area of Sittway seen in storm Mocha-hit period.

THE comprehensive upgrade of Sittway Township in Rakhine State, costing more than K3 billion, is scheduled to be completed by the end of coming March, according to a member of the Rakhine State Government and the Advocate-General of the state, U Hla Thein.

“As Sittway suffered damages when Cyclone Mocha hit it on 14 May 2023, the authorities drew up a development project and started working from the beginning of this financial year by forming seven working committees. Upgrading of the streets, bridges, water supply system, the airport and seaport are included in the

## Sittway’s K3 bln upgrade project set for March completion

project. There are also improvements to parks and famous roundabouts of Sittway, such as the Clock Tower, Water Fountain and Naval Roundabout.

“Others include restructuring the garbage collection system so that Sittway is clean and beautiful. Actions for this upgrade are still being carried out vigorously. There is little difficulty in ob-

taining construction materials from other regions and states. However, by the end of the financial year, all the works will be completed as planned,” U Hla Thein said.

The project also included drilling tubewells and constructing overhead tanks for water storage to enforce the existing water supply system through the lake to supply enough water in the summer. — ASH/TH

**NATIONAL**

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Over K2 bln allocated for summer paddy cultivation in Ayeyawady Region

**NATIONAL**

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Medical specialists conduct outreach to treat thousands in Thandwe, Rakhine State

**BUSINESS**

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MoALI reports import of over 6,900 vehicles in 8 months

# NATIONAL

## National Objectives of 77<sup>th</sup> Union Day 2024

- To protect the perpetuity of the Union by the entire ethnic people through the Union spirit
- To join hands in harmony with the government, Tatmadaw, and the entire people to ensure the state stability and rules of law
- To promote all-inclusive livestock breeding-based manufacturing industries and MSMEs, ensuring the socioeconomic development of the entire ethnic people
- To make collaborative efforts of all ethnic nationals to ensure the prosperity of the nation and food security which are the two national visions
- To strive to emerge a modern and developing country, as well as a Union based on democratic and federal systems, by all ethnic nationals

## Mottos of 77<sup>th</sup> Union Day 2024

1. Unity is strength,  
Power of Union
2. Drifting in one boat, on the same voyage we float  
Ethnic brethren of the land joining hand in hand
3. Marching towards with unity  
Ensuring the destination of the Union
4. Let's firmly join hands among ethnic national brethren  
of the Union
5. Let's go forward with unity of the ethnic nationals

## Over K2 bln allocated for summer paddy cultivation in Ayeyawady Region

THE Department of Cooperative has announced that over K2 billion from the State Economic Promotion Fund will be utilized for a loan programme to acquire fertilizers. Inputs will be formed for over 11,000 acres of summer paddy plantations in the Ayeyawady Region.

The loan programme will provide loans to farmers in 26 townships in the Ayeyawady Region.

"We plan to provide inputs and fertilizers to farmers who will plant summer paddy. This programme aims to offer loans to farmers in 26 townships in the region through cooperative

societies.

"The loans will be provided specifically for the purchase of fertilizers and inputs. Furthermore, these loans can be paid back in the form of crops once the harvest is complete. Implementing this plan will involve cooperative societies and groups, which will sign contracts with farmers through the associated companies," said U Htay Myint Aung, head of the Department of Cooperative of Ayeyawady Region.

More than 370,000 acres of summer paddy are cultivated in 26 townships in the Ayeyawady Region. — ASH/KZW



The photo depicts paddy fields in Ayeyawady Region.

## Preservation projects in Bagan Ancient Cultural Zone to complete ahead of rainy season



Officials and experts inspect preservation and maintenance works for ancient religious buildings in Bagan.

ACCORDING to the Department of Archaeology and National Museum (Bagan branch), specific preservation projects to maintain the ancient religious buildings in the Bagan Ancient Cultural Zone are scheduled to be completed before the rainy season.

Preservation work is underway at Pagoda No 534, Shin Arahan Brick Temple inside the Ngetpyittaung Pagoda precinct, Pagoda No 161, which suffered damage from heavy rain, and Lawkapwintlin Temple. These projects are planned for completion before the onset of the monsoon.

"The preservation and maintenance efforts for more than 3,000 religious buildings in the Bagan Ancient Cultural Zone are funded by the Union Budget, regional government funds, and ministry-allocated funds provided

by the ministry for each financial year. Projects to complete maintenance work before the monsoon include restoring mural paintings at Pagoda No 534 Sapwetin Pagoda. The four Buddha statues at Pagoda No 534 retain their 13<sup>th</sup>-century art.

"The cleaning work is underway inside and outside the Shin Arahan Brick Temple located within the Ngetpyittaung Pagoda precinct, with the bird statue painted in original colours. Additionally, the cave ceiling of Lawkapwintlin Temple will be fixed, and maintenance work at Pagoda No 161 will be completed before the monsoon," stated an official from the department. Furthermore, archaeologists from Myanmar and Italy are jointly researching the Bagan era's water supply and drainage system. — ASH/TMT

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09 454 237 515

## Ethnics in Kayah State mostly aspire to enjoying peace and stability

### FROM PAGE-1

Kayah State is located in the eastern hilly area of Myanmar, and it is endowed with beautiful scenes of the natural environment with an abundance of underground and above-ground natural resources in addition to traditional cultural beauties. The state enjoys favourable weather and hospitalities, and the honesty of local ethnic people is a high prestige of the state. Thanks to beautiful scenes, neat and tidy landscape, openness and honesty of ethnics and serving the interests of local ethnics for the state, Kayah State can firmly stand as a developed area.

Firmly grasping the existing sound foundations, ethnic people from the state have to strive to ensure peace and stability and the development of Kayah State in cooperation with the government. Now is an important time to forge durable peace for coming generations.

Our Myanmar has been standing tall in the international community through the unity of all ethnic people with prestige for thousands of years. However, colonialists waged the country in three aggressive wars and then occupied the whole of Myanmar under colonial rule. Everybody knows the colonialists exploited the country under its administration.

Hence, all ethnic people fight against the colonialists to regain independence with the sacrifice of life, blood and sweat with patriotic spirit. At a time when the country regained independence, the national unity disintegrated in the Union due to the devil's legacy of the colonialists in the divide and rule policy, triggering internal conflicts. Currently, local ethnic people are suffering plights and hardships due to armed fighting, unrest and destruction in many parts of residences ethnic people including Kayah State. As a spark will bring dangers to the country, I would like to inform you that all stakeholders and all ethnic people should take peace and stability as well as durable peace into consideration.

In Kayah State, terrorists deteriorate the stability of the region, attack towns and villages, and blow up roads and bridges to cause interruption of transport and commodity flows. In addition, they destroyed public vehicles, buildings, markets, monasteries, schools of children, religious schools of Christianity, offices and buildings, showing their disgusted acts and leaving plights for the people.

The consequences of such a situation will not bring good things to Kayah State and local ethnic people. So, everybody needs to be careful about their acts that are dangerous to the country and all its people.

If our ethnic people of the Union prioritize diverse wishes, disunity and conflicts will emerge among them with a lack of peace and stability as well as suffering plights.

As such, everybody needs to correctly review the existing situation in Myanmar and strive for the emergence of good results.

### Esteemed ethnic national brethren,

The genuine desire of all ethnic people is to ensure peace and prosperity, the rule of law, socioeconomic development and food security. Only when the country is peaceful and stable with the prevailing rule of law will all ethnic people emphasize

their livelihoods peacefully and have socioeconomic improvement. The primary solution for existing hardships and difficulties in the country is national reconciliation, unity and peace. Hence, I would like to urge the government, Tatmadaw and all ethnic people to firmly join hands in peace and stability and durable peace with emphasis on the issue of ethnic people.

The government is implementing prosperity of the State and food security as the national vision. Moreover, agriculture and livestock businesses, inclusive of the entire ethnic people, are being encouraged through modern techniques to have development. Focusing on the developing economic drive, micro-, small- and medium-scale enterprises are being upgraded. All ethnic people must implement the national visions in their sectors to succeed.

It is necessary to improve the capacity of youths as a primary force to join the development undertakings of the State. To build a Union based on democracy and federalism, all ethnic people, including youths, must be capable of intelligence, technology, and critical thinking. The government is now implementing a comprehensive education system to produce the human resources necessary for building a modern, developed State.

Education is basic for the development of the nation. Hence, social objectives are being implemented to initiate a comprehensive education system accessible to everyone. Moreover, efforts are being made to implement learning opportunities for all school-age children, to have at least a middle school education (KG+9), and to enable the students to pursue industrial, agriculture, and livestock vocational education at the high school level.

Development of human resources, education promotion, and unity of ethnic and national brethren can be defined as national cause as well as national interest. We must nurture the youths to become highly capable good, and able sons of the State with knowledge and technology, fostering national spirit and patriotic spirit to analyze the rights, wrongs, good, and bad by following the laws and disciplines. If so, new generations with five physical and mental strengths and high capacity can safeguard the future State.

### Esteemed ethnic national brethren,

Upholding Our Three National Causes is the nation's duty to ensure the perpetuity of the Union; it is necessary to make the national solidarity and Union spirit flourish among the ethnic people.

I send a message and sincerely urge ethnics in Kayah State with the correct attitude to unitedly participate in building the Union based on democracy and federalism with mutual respect, understanding and trust among ethnic national brethren.

**Senior General Thadde Maha Thray Sithu  
Thadde Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing  
Prime Minister  
Chairman, State Administration Council**



## Ceremony held to honour recipients of national literary awards, honorary titles

THE ceremony to honour the winners of the National lifetime Award for Literary Achievement, honorary titles, and medals was held by the Literacy and Regional Development Support Group at the Mingala Hall of Jivitadana Sangha Hospital in Yangon yesterday morning.

An official presents gifts to one of the honoured winners, professor Dr Daw Po yesterday.

Chairperson U Myo Thant of the Literary and Regional Development Support Group delivered an opening speech. Then, Sayamagyi Shwegu Nang Nwe Nwe sang the Mingala Tayhtet song in honour of the winners, and Vice-Chairperson Sayagyi U Aung Kyi and Secretary of the Myanmar Writers' Association Maung Nyein Thu (Gyopin-gauk) read the biographies of the honoured winners.

Next, Yangon Region Government's Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Zaw Win, Chairperson U Myo Thant, and other officials presented gifts to the honoured winners.

Finally, Sayamagyi Dr Daw Po and Sayamagyi Daw Mya Mya Win spoke words of advice on behalf of the honoured winners. — Ko Ko Zaw (MNA)/TRKM

# NATIONAL

## Illegal trade crackdown: Authorities seize illegal timber, vehicles, consumer goods, industrial materials



Photo shows confiscated illegal teak and other wood in Minhla Township, Bago Region.

AN on-duty team under the supervision of the Illegal Trade Eradication Special Task Force of Ayeyawady Region on 10 January seized 6.156 tonnes of illegal timber estimated at K706,120 in Kyangin Township of Myanaung District. The team also nabbed 4.284 tonnes of illegal timber

worth K299,894 in Yekyi Township of Patheingyi District on 11 January. The total worth of seizures amounted to K1,006,014 and the action was taken under the Forest Law.

An on-duty team under the supervision of the Magway Region Illegal Trade Eradication

Special Task Force on 13 January seized a unregistered Turbo Star 110 motorcycle worth K300,000, and the team also seized 0.076 tonne of illegal teak and 10.296 tonnes of other wood worth K92,072 in Myothit Township of Magway District. The total worth of seizures amounted to K392,072 and the action was taken under the Export & Import Law and Forest Law.

Similarly, combined squads under the supervision of the Bago Region Illegal Trade Eradication Special Task Force of on 13 January seized 2.455 tonnes of illegal teak valued at K1,620,300 in Bago District and the team nabbed an unregistered TOYOTA Voxy estimated at K8 million in Waw Township and the action was taken under the Export & Import Law. Authorities also seized 4.058 tonnes of illegal teak and 5.567 tonnes of other

wood estimated at K463,260 in Thayawady District on 14 January and the action was taken under the Forest Law. The total worth of seizures amounted to K10,083,560.

During the period from 10 to 14 January, value of seizures in eight arrests amounted to K11,481,646.

An on-duty team under the supervision of the Illegal Trade Eradication Special Task Force of Yangon Region on 12 January seized 2,700 bottles of Lactasoy soymilk, 2,280 bottles of Spy Wine, an estimated value of K9.354 million and six kinds of goods not declared in the chart from a vehicle which was driven from Mawlamyine to Yangon. A Mitsubishi Fuso bus, which was carrying goods worth K18 million, totalling a net worth of K27.354 million, was seized, and the action was taken under Customs

Procedures.

Similarly, a Customs team seized 7,630 kilogrammes of marble granite tiles, 200 pieces of re-chargeable insect sprayer and two kinds of goods worth K73.6 million at Asia World port on 12 January. They also inspected the air cargo garage at Yangon International Airport. They nabbed 19 kinds of goods, including three boxes of Nexlon set-up solution and 92 units of atomic absorption Spectrometer worth K72,180,017, which were not declared in the Import Declaration (ID). The total worth of seizures amounted to K145,780,017, and the action was taken under Customs Procedures.

Seven arrests at an estimated value of K173,134,017 were made on 12 January, according to the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/KZW

## Counter-argument to false information

### Khit Thit media falsely reports 12-year-old's death in alleged Tatmadaw explosion

THE 'Khit Thit' media outlet, known for its malicious intent, fabricated a false story claiming that a 12-year-old child was killed by an explosion launched by the local battalion of Tatmadaw from Kalay Township, Sagaing Region, on the morning of 13 January.

However, an officer from the security forces in the relevant station counter-argued the claim, stating that Tatmadaw did not initiate any firing. The officer confirmed that the terrorist group known as CDF (Chin Defence

Force) was responsible for firing and launching drone attacks at a police outpost located in Tiddim Township on 13 January. The drones did not land in the police station but fell in the village and exploded.

These malicious news outlets intentionally post and circulate false information to deceive the public. They aim to conceal the actions of terrorists and create a misleading image of Tatmadaw, disrupting peace, stability, and the public's trust. — MNA/TMT



The screenshot validates their false report.

### Misinformation alert: DVB intentionally spreading fake news

THE subversive media outlet DVB was spreading fake news and misinformation on social networking sites, claiming that security forces shot dead four civilians, including a pregnant woman, in Myinkya village, Karseik village, and Kyuntawgyi village located in KhinU Township, Sagaing Region, on 12 January.

Reports suggested that the security forces conducted the operation to combat PDF terrorists who were allegedly engaging in extrajudicial killings of civilians in villages within KhinU Township, Sagaing Region, as per information from the residents. However, malicious news outlets, including



DVB, are intentionally spreading false information via social media. — MNA/TKO

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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

## Medical specialists conduct outreach to treat thousands in Thandwe, Rakhine State

OVER the weekend, a group of professors and specialized medical professionals from Mandalay General Hospital, Nay Pyi Taw General Hospital (1,000-bed), North Okkalapa General Hospital, and the Otorhinolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery Specialist Hospital-Mandalay visited Thandwe District in Rakhine State to deliver medical treatments to residents.

In collaboration with local doctors, they treated 2,287 patients from Thandwe, Taungup, Gwa, and nearby villages on their trip. Additionally, the specialists conducted diagnoses for 55 patients using echocardiography, reviewed 86 x-ray results, analyzed 354 lab results, performed 63 ultrasounds, and administered 250 electrocardiograms.

The eye specialists performed eight cataract surgeries. Moreover, a patient with brain and nervous system concerns, two patients with ear, nose, and throat conditions, and one patient with bone-related issues were referred to the respective speciality hospitals in Yangon.

U Myo Chit, Chairman of the Thandwe District Administration Body, welcomed the specialists at the airport on Saturday and presented them with local produce. Sayadaw Bhaddanta Tejinda of the Theingon Monastery and well-wishers treated the patients with lunch. Specialists from Yangon, Mandalay, and Nay Pyi Taw did 15 similar tours last year, and Taunggyi, Pyay, and Thandwe are on the schedule for this year. — MNA/NT



The eye specialists examine patients in Thandwe District, Rakhine State.

## K1.8 bln worth of stimulant tablets seized in PyinOoLwin

AUTHORITIES in PyinOoLwin Township, Mandalay Region, seized 1.2 million stimulant tablets worth K1.8 billion.

Acting on a tip-off, a combined team comprising anti-narcotics police searched a Toyota HiAce driven by Sai Hla Shwe near Wetwun village on 7 January. The vehicle was travelling from Nawnghkio towards Mandalay. The search resulted in the seizure of 1.2 million stimulant pills valued at K1.8 billion.

Further investigation revealed that the confiscated stimulant pills would be transported from Shan State (South) to Mandalay Region.

Legal action has been taken, and authorities are actively investigating and identifying individuals involved in this chain of crime. — MNA/KZW



A suspect arrested by anti-narcotics police in PyinOoLwin, Mandalay Region, is seen with seized drugs and vehicle on 7 January 2024.

## Myanmar exports exceed US\$234M in early January amid high fruit demand for Chinese New Year

ACCORDING to data released by the Ministry of Commerce, Myanmar earned over US\$234 million from exports from 30 December to 5 January of the 2023-24 financial year. China's fruit demand has been rising this week as it approaches the Chinese New Year.

The report indicates that the country significantly exported agricultural produce such as corn, pigeon peas, Chick pea, butter beans, peanuts, sesame, onions, dry ginger, turmeric, watermelon, avocados, oranges, tissue-cultured bananas, and normal bananas within the week.

During this week, 35,000 tonnes of watermelon, muskmelon (cucumber), and bananas were exported to China via the Kengtung, Lweje and Kampaiti border trade posts.

Furthermore, oranges, avocados, and bananas were exported to Thailand via Tachileik and Mawtaung border trade posts. According to the report, more than US\$10 million was generated from exporting fruits.

As February approaches, when Myanmar will be granted a tax exemption for corn imports to Thailand, corn transport is expected to increase. Myanmar typically exports up to 2.6 million tonnes of corn seeds. Therefore, corn traders are collaborating with relevant departments to expand corn

export markets, including Thailand (the primary purchaser of Myanmar corn) and other countries with potential markets such as the Philippines, China, Singapore, and Viet Nam. Additionally, corn traders will attempt to resume exporting corn to Bangladesh, India, Japan, Chinese Taipei, Malaysia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the UAE markets.

This week, 3,070 tonnes of fishery products were also delivered to 20 countries via shipment and aviation transport. Furthermore, 7,780 tonnes were transported to China, Thailand, and other neighbouring countries via land borders. Therefore, a total of 10,850 tonnes of aquatic products were exported.

Fish exports involved domestically farmed fishes such as Labeo rohita, river catfish, Cirrhinus mrigala, Tilapia, Barbus, and Catla buechanani.

Myanmar has been expanding fish farming businesses as the country promotes the export of fish, prawns, and other aquatic products. Panamei shrimp produced in Myeik Archipelago, Taninthayi Region, has been increasingly exported to Chinese and Japanese markets. Also, river catfish from Pantanaw Township, is projected to be exported within this financial year. — MNA/TMT

# NATIONAL

## YBS driver training: Applications open for January 2024 in Yangon



APPLICATIONS are now accepted from individuals interested in enrolling in driver's training for operating YBS passenger vehicles in Yangon.

Due to the demand for skilled drivers, the YBS vehicle driver course will commence in the fourth week of January 2024 under the supervision of YRTC.

The YBS passenger vehicle driver course is open to individuals aged between 25 and 55 with a "B" licence with a minimum validity of five years

and who have completed the middle school level.

The YBS passenger vehicle driver training programme lasts one month, and 50 trainees will be recruited for the driving course.

Applications should be submitted to Yangon Bus Public Company Limited, No 7, Htaukkyant Detour, Bwetgyi Village, Hmawby Township, Yangon Region. Those interested can contact 09 766029280 for further details. — TWA/KZW

The photo shows a YBS driver.

## Japan Foundation (Yangon) hosts Study in Japan Fair 2024 online: Gateway to Japanese scholarships

STUDY in Japan Fair, organized annually by the Japan Foundation (Yangon), is set to take place online from 26 to 28 January.

Thirty-nine universities in Japan, including a vocational college, 44 educational institutions and four Japanese language schools, will be part of the Study in Japan Fair 2024.

Each participating school will provide an introduction and information about entrance exams and scholarships dur-

ing the fair. Additionally, the website will feature various exciting topics related to Japanese scholarships. Between 26 and 28 January, interested individuals can attend Zoom Group Consultations with the schools they are interested in and engage in direct online discussions with relevant school officials. The Study in Japan Fair 2024 is a valuable opportunity for young people interested in Japanese scholarships.

To participate in the event,



An announcement poster for the Study in Japan Fair 2024 for ASEAN.

registration can be done at [1FAIpQLSc3b0lD1ku3s5.../viewfrom](https://docs.google.com/1FAIpQLSc3b0lD1ku3s5.../viewfrom). — TWA/KZW

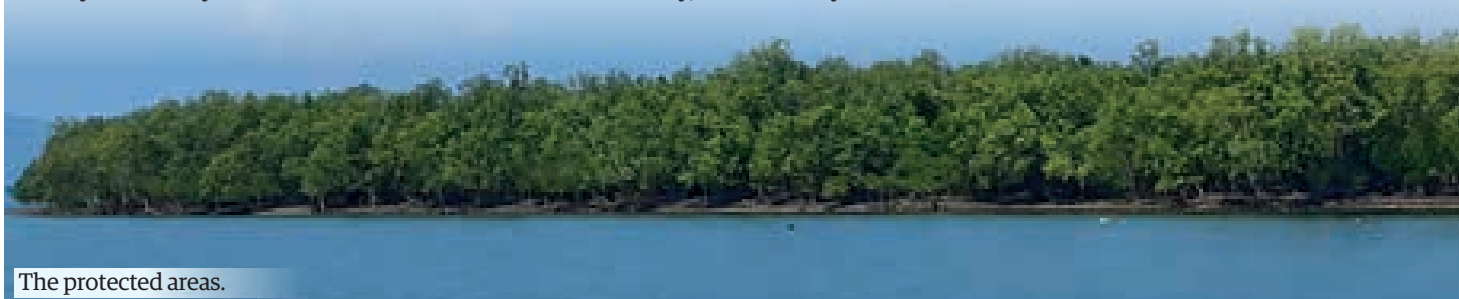
## Environmental conservation areas cover country's 6.42% with annual expansion commitment

ENVIRONMENTAL conservation areas now cover 6.42 per cent of the country's total area, and the Forest Department is dedicated to expanding these protection zones annually. The department's current objective is to increase the environmental protected areas to 10 per cent of the country's territory.

An official of the department stated, "Nationwide, we oversee more than 10 million acres distributed across 55 environmental protection areas. Remarkably, Kachin State leads with eight zones, followed by Sagaing Region and Shan State, each with seven."

Additionally, the country hosts five

wetland sites designated by the Ramsar Convention — Moeyungyi Wetland Wildlife Sanctuary, Indawgyi Lake Wildlife Sanctuary, Mainmahla Island Wildlife Sanctuary, Mottama Gulf (part of Mon State), and Inlay Lake. The department has implemented regulations to safeguard the conservation areas. — ASH/NT



The protected areas.

## MoI to take action against indecent music videos defying cultural norms

THE Ministry of Information (MoI) announced on 13 January that action would be taken against music video (MV) recordings and broadcasts containing obscene words and behaviours against Myanmar culture.

Presently, some MV recording and broadcasters, aiming to gain popularity, defy Myanmar culture by filming and broadcasting MVs on social networking sites that are inappropriate for family members to watch together.

Therefore, the MoI has notified producers, organizers, and actors that action will be taken under existing laws regarding MVs, recordings, and broadcasts that contain obscene speeches and performances against Myanmar culture, including on social networking sites.

According to the MoI, the filming and broadcasting of films and videos are supervised under the Film Law of 1996 and the Television and Video Law of 1996. — TWA/TKO

## Onion prices drop as thousands of monsoon onions arrive in markets

THE market information indicates that on 12 and 13 January, 360,000 visses of monsoon onions arrived in the Yangon market, and thousands of visses of monsoon onions also reached the markets of other towns and cities, leading to a decline in onion prices.

During the two days, a total of 360,000 visses of onions arrived in the Yangon market; 45,000 visses of onions in Pakokku; 205,600 visses of onions in Myingyan; and 60,000 visses in Seikphyu respectively.

On 12 January, onions from Myingyan and Myittha areas had just arrived. Therefore, onion prices in the Yangon market on 12 January were Seikphyu K1,550-K2,000-K2,550-K2,800 per viss; Myingyan K1,600-K2,000-K2,600-K2,800 per viss; and Myittha K3,000-K3,200-K3,400-K3,200 respectively.

Another 180,000 visses of onions arrived in the Yangon market on 13 January; therefore, onion prices declined further. On that day, the prices of various onions were set at K1,500-K2,000-K2,600-K2,700 per viss for wholesale Seikphyu onions and K2,600-K2,800-K3,100-K3,000 per viss for



A truck that carried onions entered Yangon's Bayintnaung market on 13 January 2024.

Myittha onions. On the same day, the onion prices in various towns and cities were reported as K1,000 to K2,300 per viss in the Myingyan market, K2,100 per viss in the Pakokku market, and K1,925 per viss in the Seikphyu market, respectively.

The onion prices in the Yangon market have dropped significantly after a few weeks since the large Myittha onion

was priced at K4,700 per viss, and Seikphyu was priced at K3,800 per viss in late December. However, the prices were observed at K1,700 per viss for Myittha large-sized onion and K1,100 per viss for Seikphyu onion.

Similarly, the onion prices in other towns and cities have also been falling. In the first week of January, the onion

price in the Myingyan market was K1,500 to K2,700 per viss, K2,500 per viss in Pakokku, and K2,375 per viss in Seikphyu. In fact, 150,000-200,000 visses of onions have arrived in the Myingyan market within these days, which led to a fall in onion prices in the Myingyan market.

The onion prices in the same period last year, on 13

January 2023, were K1,700-K1,900-K1,900-K1,900 per viss of Myingyan onion and K1,800-K2,100-K2,100-K2,000 per viss of Myittha onion, according to the data from last year.

Although the monsoon onion prices show a gradual fall in the market, the prices are still higher than last year (K1,000 and K800 of Myittha and Myingyan/Seikphyu, respectively, still higher than the last year prices); therefore, it can be assumed that monsoon onion growers earn more incomes.

The onions produced by Myanmar are expected to gain more market share this year, as Indian onions, which were used for the highest productivity and highest export globally, are produced less this year due to unfavourable weather. There will be more traders who will keep the onion stock in the upcoming season when summer onions are harvested.

Thus, it is forecasted that farmers who grow summer onions will earn more profit during the Thingyan Festival period, according to the report from the onion wholesale market. — TWA/TMT

## MoALI reports import of over 6,900 vehicles in 8 months



The photo shows newly arrivals of battery electric vehicles (BEVs) at Yangon Port.

THE Agribusiness and Trade Division under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation

reported that Myanmar brought in more than 6,900 vehicles, including 1,700 private vehicles, in the

past eight months in the current financial year 2023-2024 beginning 1 April.

The ministry's report

showed 1,784 private vehicles worth US\$39.04 million, 54 buses worth \$1.04 million, 865 trucks worth \$13.12 million and 4,203 machinery worth \$136.8 million between 1 April and 1 December this FY.

Additionally, imports of auto parts were estimated at \$45.02 million then. Therefore, vehicle and automobile imports swelled to \$235.02 million in the past eight months.

Myanmar imported 119 private vehicles (\$2.95 million), 126 buses (\$2.39 million), 577 trucks (\$7.22 million), 1,386 machinery (\$72.73 million) and auto

parts worth \$42.12 million in the corresponding period last FY, totaling \$127.41 million.

This FY, the import quantity is up by 4,700 vehicles compared to the year-ago period. The import value of auto parts was also up by \$107.61 million.

Under the 2024 vehicle import policy, 2019 will be the oldest model to be issued an import permit for public buses and commercial vehicles, and 2014, for machinery and ambulances, according to the Commerce Ministry. All imported vehicles except machinery must be

left-hand driven under the 2023 vehicle import policy.

For non-commercial vehicles, the model year must be 2023 or later. Public service vehicles such as minibuses, city buses, express buses, and commercial trucks manufactured in 2020 and later can be imported. Moreover, fire trucks and ambulances manufactured in 2014 or later are allowed for import. The oldest model of machinery is set for 2014.

All imported vehicles must be left-hand drive as per the 2024 vehicle import policy except for machinery. — NN/EM

# OPINION

# ARTICLE Weather Report

## Consider future life of child labourers with empathy

Myanmar is actively working towards eradicating child labour by focusing on raising awareness among both child labourers and their parents, ensuring they have a comprehensive understanding of the detrimental effects associated with child labour.

The government is currently prioritizing disseminating basic knowledge about child labour, aligning legal amendments with international standards, enhancing the capacity of Union and regional/state-level departments, establishing duties and obligations, and evaluating the progress of action plans to eliminate child labour in the long term.

Within the ASEAN framework, member states emphasize preventing violence against children and formulating policies to combat forced child labour. Civil society organizations play a crucial role in implementing comprehensive plans to ensure no child is left behind. Myanmar is urged to actively participate in the regional effort to eliminate child labour, aligning its strategies with other ASEAN countries' strategies.

Children are the future strength of the nation and contributors to nation-building endeavours. Ensuring a brighter future for them is not only crucial for their individual well-being but also for the overall development of the nation. Consequently, everyone should cultivate empathy and refrain from actions that could tarnish the future images of these children.

The holistic development of children, encompassing both physical and mental aspects, is critical for shaping the future of the State. Given the direct link between child development and economic growth, socioeconomic improvement, and educational promotion, Myanmar needs to implement a 15-year long-term plan aligned with the national action plan to eliminate child labour. Furthermore, a thorough review of the strengths and weaknesses of action plans is imperative post-2023, when the five-year short-term action plan concludes.

Children are the future strength of the nation and contributors to nation-building endeavours. Ensuring a brighter future for them is not only crucial for their individual well-being but also for the overall development of the nation. Consequently, everyone should cultivate empathy and refrain from actions that could tarnish the future images of these children.

# How to Know if Myanmar Military is Really Losing!

By U AC

The misinformed and misguided FB and YouTube posts from abroad have been elaborating on how the Myanmar military is losing, how the rebels are capturing cities, how there are strikes within the military and how the country is going to break apart any time soon!

The reality is as far away as the Alpha Centauri from our solar system!

Here are the five indicators of determining if the Myanmar

military is getting out of shape!

1. Status of Navy and Air Force: Myanmar's Navy and Air Force are ranked 13<sup>th</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> globally, respectively. With these two significant forces still intact, i.e., not affected by any of the rebels or EAO attacks, the Myanmar military still has sizeable firepower in reserve.
2. Regional Military Command Centres: 14 Regional Command Centres, each with

between 10,000 - 50,000 active personnel in strength, most with tank, artillery, and anti-aircraft divisions, currently remain intact. If the opposition wants to be a blowhard on claiming any military successes, let them capture at least one of these RMCs, please!

cated in major towns/cities in critical areas of the country. Each comprises around 5,000 active personnel, supported by artillery, armour, and other units. These divisions are strategic assets of the Myanmar Army. Have any of these LIDs been defeated, captured, or destroyed? The answer is a firm 'No'!

posts and civilian and civil servants' buildings, which major town or city has been captured? Shwebo, Sagaing, Mawlamyine, anyone? That would be a definite blow to the Myanmar military.

5. Have any active officers with colonel level and above been captured or defected? The answer is a resounding 'No'. I leave you to decide if the Myanmar military is losing based on these five factors.

# Researchers find coffee boost to make stronger concrete

The technique, developed by RMIT University's Dr Rajeev Roychand, involves turning waste coffee grounds into biochar, resulting in a 30% increase in concrete strength.

Engineers in Australia have discovered a way to make stronger concrete using roasted leftover coffee grounds, giving the drink additive a "second chance" and reducing waste going to landfills.

Lead author Dr Rajeev Roychand from RMIT University said the team developed a technique to make concrete 30 per cent stronger by turning waste coffee grounds into biochar, using a low-energy process without oxygen at 350 degrees Celsius.

### Organic waste

"The disposal of organic waste poses an environmental challenge as it emits large amounts of greenhouse gases including methane and carbon dioxide, which contribute to climate change," said Roychand, from the School of Engineering.

Australia generates 75 million kilograms of ground coffee waste every year - most of it goes

to landfills. Globally, 10 billion kilograms of spent coffee is generated annually.

Published in the Journal of Cleaner Production, the study by RMIT engineers is the first to prove that waste coffee grounds can be used to improve concrete.

"The inspiration for our work was to find an innovative way of using the large amounts of coffee waste in construction projects rather than going to landfills - to give coffee a 'double shot' at life," said Roychand, a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at RMIT.

"Several councils that are battling with the disposal of organic waste have shown interest in our work.

"They have already engaged us for their upcoming infrastructure projects incorporating pyrolysed forms of different organic wastes."

Pyrolysis involves heating organic waste in the absence of oxygen.

### The construction industry

Joint lead author, Dr Shannon Kilmartin-Lynch, a Vice-Chancellor's Indigenous Postdoctoral Research Fellow at RMIT, said construction industries around the world could play a role in transforming this waste into a valuable resource.

"Inspiration for my research, from an Indigenous perspective, involves Caring for Country, ensuring there's a sustainable life cycle for all materials and avoiding things going into landfill to minimise the impact on the environment," said Kilmartin-Lynch from RMIT's School of Engineering.

"The concrete industry has the potential to contribute significantly to increasing the recycling of organic waste such as used coffee.

"Our research is in the early stages, but these exciting findings offer an innovative way to greatly reduce the amount of organic



Engineers in Australia have discovered a way to make stronger concrete using roasted leftover coffee grounds. PHOTO: RMIT UNIVERSITY

waste that goes to landfill."

### Preserving resource

Corresponding author and research team leader Professor Jie Li said the coffee biochar can replace a portion of the sand that was used to make concrete.

"The ongoing extraction of natural sand around the world

- typically taken from river beds and banks - to meet the rapidly growing demands of the construction industry has a big impact on the environment," Li said.


50 billion tonnes of natural sand are used in construction projects globally every year.

"There are critical and long-lasting challenges in main-

## Ever Love With Smile

By Mya Thae (Research)

Teacher Jasmine returns from her student's house. The sky is dark, overwhelmed with clouds. She hurries to the bus stop with fear. Three men come to the bus stop and wait near. When the bus comes, Jasmine runs and gets into the car. The bus is not crowded, but she avoids the men far. She tells Jasmine you are not returning in time. Jasmine embraces her mother and says you are lovely when you smile. May May also embraces Jasmine and smiles with kindness. Oh! May May I ever love you with a smile.



## EARTHQUAKE NEWS

(Issued at 20:15 hour MST)

A slight earthquake of magnitude 3.8 Richter Scale with its epicentre inside Myanmar (about 11 miles west of Paungpyin), latitude 24.26 °N, longitude 94.63 °E, depth 81 kilometres, about 20 miles east-northeast of Tamu seismological observatory was recorded at 19hr 51min 40sec MST on 14 January 2024.

## WEATHER REPORT

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 14 January 2024)

**BAY INFERENCE:** Weather is generally fair over the North Bay, a few cloud over the North Andaman Sea and Central Bay and partly cloudy over the South Andaman Sea and South Bay of Bengal.

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 15 January 2024:** Weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi regions and Kachin, Eastern Shan, Kayin and Mon states and generally fair in the remaining regions and states.

**STATE OF THE SEA:** Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (3-6) feet in off and along Myanmar Coasts.

**OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS:** Likelihood of isolated light rain or thundershowers in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin and Shan states.

**FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 15 January 2024:** Generally fair weather.

**FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 15 January 2024:** Generally fair weather.

**FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 15 January 2024:** Generally fair weather.

SOURCE: ANI



# SCI/ENVIRON WORLD

## Chinese researchers develop AI tech to help interpret animal social behaviour

Referred to as SBeA, the algorithm is adept at precisely calculating 3D social posture, identity, and intricate social modules in various species, including mice, birds, and domestic dogs.

A Chinese research team has developed an artificial intelligence (AI) technology that addresses crucial challenges in accurately detecting animal social behaviour, according to the Shenzhen Institute of Advanced Technology (SIAT) under the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The most difficult part of multi-animal social behavior analysis is to distinguish be-

tween animals that look very similar at the same time.

The new technology, Social Behavior Atlas (SBeA), developed by researchers from the SIAT, can identify similar-looking animals with more than 90 per cent accuracy, eliminating the need to define social behavior categories in advance, which may help discovery new, undefined differences in animal social behaviour.

The new algorithm can also effectively synthesize a large volume of new data and train models with higher accuracy, thus obtaining more accurate 3D social gesture estimation results, said Wei Pengfei, correspondence author of the study.

SBeA is suitable for accurately calculating 3D social posture, identity and fine social modules in mice, birds and domestic dogs,



A new algorithm the correspondence author, not only enhances the accuracy of 3D social gesture estimation but also efficiently synthesizes a significant amount of new data for model training. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/XINHUA**

with potential for cross-species applications, Wei said.

The study was recently

published in the journal Nature Machine Intelligence.

— Xinhua

## NASA postpones Artemis III mission till at least 2026

NASA's Artemis programme, which seeks to return astronauts to the moon this decade, is facing substantial delays, with the Artemis III mission postponed to at least September 2026, a year later than originally scheduled.



The setbacks are primarily attributed to delays in SpaceX's Starship development, the massive rocket and spacecraft system designed for lunar transportation. **PHOTO: NASA**

NASA'S ambitious Artemis programme, aiming to return astronauts to the moon this

decade, has encountered significant delays, as announced by the space agency, CNN re-

ported.

The much-anticipated Artemis III mission, set to mark the return of humans to the lunar surface, has been postponed to at least September 2026, a year later than initially planned.

The primary factors contributing to the delay revolve around SpaceX's development of Starship, the colossal rocket and spacecraft system intended to transport astronauts to the moon's south pole. Recent setbacks, including two Starship test flight explosions in 2023, have impacted the timeline. — ANI

## Tanzania's Serengeti National Park moves to prevent elephants from raiding farms

THE Serengeti National Park (SENAPA) in Tanzania has donated 300 honey beehives to community cooperatives in three villages of Simiyu Region that will help to deter elephants from invading farms and destroying crops.

The Serengeti National Park (SENAPA) in Tanzania has donated 300 honey beehives to community cooperatives in

three villages of Simiyu Region that will help to deter elephants from invading farms and destroying crops, an official said on Friday.

Constructed beehives on fence posts could reduce elephant raids, Joseph Mapunda, SENAPA senior conservation officer for communications, said at a news conference in Simiyu Region. — Xinhua



The file photo, taken on 9 February 2022, shows an entrance to Serengeti National Park in Tanzania. **PHOTO: CAO JINGMIN/XINHUA**

## Kenya to translocate 21 black rhinoceros to boost population

THE Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) said on Friday that it plans to translocate 21 female and male black rhinoceros to Loisaba Conservancy, located about 190 km north of the national capital of Nairobi, before

the end of January to boost the population of the iconic species.

Erastus Kanga, director general of the KWS, said the black rhinoceros will be coming from Nairobi National Park, Ol

Pejeta Conservancy, and Lewa Wildlife Conservancy.

"This strategic action of having 21 rhinos in Loisaba Conservancy aligns with our vision to establish viable habitats, fostering optimal conditions for

rhinos to thrive," Kanga said in a statement.

He added that the black rhinoceros were on the brink of extinction three decades ago, but since then, the numbers have climbed so rapidly that they are

overcrowding their sanctuaries.

According to the KWS, the current population of the black rhinoceros stands at about 966, up from 240 in 1984 as a result of enhanced security against poachers. — Xinhua

## Michael Jackson's biopic release date out now

Michael Jackson's biopic, 'Michael,' is slated for an 18 April 2025 release, according to Variety.



Directed by Antoine Fuqua, the film stars Jaafar Jackson, the late King of Pop's nephew, in his first major role. **PHOTO: ANI**

MICHAEL Jackson's biopic, 'Michael,' is all set to release on big screens on 18 April in 2025, as per Variety.

Directed by Antoine Fuqua the biopic stars the late King of Pop's nephew, Jaafar Jackson, in his first major role.

Lionsgate will release the film domestically, while Universal will handle international distribution. The shooting of the film will begin on 22 January.

The official synopsis for the film, produced by "Bohemian Rhapsody's" Graham King and written by John Logan, read, "Michael' will bring audiences a riveting and honest portrayal of the brilliant yet complicated man who became the King of Pop.

The film presents his triumphs and tragedies on an epic, cinematic scale, from his human side and personal struggles to his undeniable creative genius, exemplified by his most iconic performances. As never before, audiences will experience an inside look into one of the most influential, trailblazing artists the world has ever known." — ANI

## OpenAI CEO Sam Altman marries longtime partner Oliver Mulherin at picturesque location

SAM Altman, the CEO and co-founder of OpenAI, the organisation behind ChatGPT, has married his partner Oliver Mulherin in a seaside ceremony, NBC News reported. The pictures of the couple started circulating online on Thursday.

NBC News is a US-based media publication.

According to the NBC report, the photos of Altman and his partner portrayed the couple at an unidentified exotic beach spot with approximately a dozen guests and surrounded by palm trees.

Born and raised in the St. Louis region, Altman spent years eschewing the limelight while he gained prominence in the tech sector as the CEO of Y Combinator, a renowned software startup accelerator and investment organisation, according to NBC News.

However, he increased his

public appearances and media exposure as CEO of OpenAI, including testifying before US Congress. In 2023, Time magazine named him "CEO of the Year."

Whereas, Mulherin is an Australian software programmer who lives in San Francisco and owns a ranch in Napa, California, with Altman, according to The New York Times.

Altman and Mulherin, his partner attended the White House state dinner last year, when US President Joe Biden welcomed Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the US in June 2023.

As the CEO of OpenAI, the artificial intelligence startup that created ChatGPT, the sophisticated chatbot that upended Silicon Valley a year ago and motivated tech firms of all sizes to invest in rival AI projects, Altman has quickly become well-known. — ANI

## E-bike craze in high gear at CES gadget fest



Companies at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas highlight the booming e-bike market, with sales eclipsing those of electric cars. **PHOTO: AFP**

With 44 million e-bikes sold globally in the past year, projections indicate a surge to 77 million by 2030, surpassing electric car sales, according to market tracker Statista.

ELECTRIC bicycle makers at CES touted slick features like ChatGPT as they rode a trend of people wanting to enjoy a breeze in their face without sweat on their brow.

Some 44 million "e-bikes" were sold worldwide last year, and that number is expected to top 77 million by the year 2030, according to market tracker Statista.

E-bike sales are outpacing

sales of electric cars, according to data and companies pitching their latest models at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) that ends in Las Vegas on Friday.

"Bikes are fun," said Futurum Group research director Olivier Blanchard, a self-confessed cyclist.

"There is something about the freedom of being on a bicycle, out in the open air feel-

ing the sun and wind on your skin."

And with e-bikes, that exhilaration comes with knowing you won't have to pedal hard up hills or exert much energy at all if you are tired.

China-based Urtopia grabbed attention at this year's AI-obsessed CES with the introduction of an e-bike with ChatGPT chatbot capabilities built in. — AFP

## Italy to increase regulation of social media influencers



AGCOM's oversight will apply to influencers with over a million social media followers, where at least 2 per cent engage with the content. **PHOTO: AFP**

ITALY will expand regulation of social media influencers by placing their activities under the same authority that oversees television and other au-

dio-visual media.

The decision by Italy's communications authority AGCOM follows a growing scandal involving Chiara Ferragni, a

leading Italian fashion blogger.

AGCOM said its oversight will apply to influencers with more than a million followers on social media, with at least two per cent of them interacting with the content.

An audio-visual media law adopted in December 2021 calls for fines of up to 600,000 euros (\$660,000) for violating data protection laws, especially for minors.

AGCOM said in a statement that its measures will concern "commercial communication, and the protection of fundamental rights of people, minors and sporting values". — AFP

# ECONOMY WORLD

## Canada plans cap on international students amid housing crisis



The minister did not specify the extent of the reduction in the immigration system but emphasized the need for a conversation between the federal and provincial governments to address the concerning volume of international students. Hart House at the University of Toronto. **PHOTO: TAXIARCHOS228/WIKIPEDIA**

*Amid Canada's growing unemployment and housing crisis, Immigration Minister Marc Miller is considering the possibility of imposing a cap on the number of international students residing in the country.*

AMID the growing unemployment and housing crisis in Canada, Immigration Minister Marc Miller on Saturday said in the next few months, he will be looking at the possibility of putting a cap on the number of international students living in the country, CTV News reported on Saturday.

The minister didn't specify the extent of reduction the government is planning on making

in the immigration system.

In an interview to CTV's Question Period host Vassy Kapelos, the minister said, "This is a conversation the federal government will need to have with provincial governments to make sure that the provinces that have not been doing their jobs actually rein in those numbers on a pure volume basis."

"That volume is disconcert-

ing," Miller said, with reference to the number of international students in Canada.

"It's really a system that has gotten out of control," he added.

Miller said he will be looking at the possibility of setting a cap on international students to help reduce the demand for housing in both the first and second quarters of this year.

— ANI

## Trade at key Afghanistan-Pakistan crossing stops over travel document dispute

THE busiest frontier crossing between Afghanistan and Pakistan has been closed to trade in the latest row over document rules for commercial vehicle drivers crossing the border.

Crossings between the two countries have been temporarily shut in recent months after Islamabad last year launched a massive operation against undocumented Afghans living in Pakistan and tightened document requirements for Afghans entering the country.

Both sides blamed the oth-

er for the latest shutdown at the Torkham crossing, which started late Friday night, according to officials on either side of the border.

"Torkham is closed to commercial truck drivers without visas from Pakistani authorities," Afghan border official Abdul Jabbar Hekmat said in a statement on Friday.

Pakistani officials on Saturday denied a visa requirement had been imposed, saying the border had been shut when Afghan counterparts were in-

formed truck drivers could only cross with a valid passport, a document many Afghans do not have.

"Following our updated policy, Afghan officials were informed last night that cargo drivers will only be allowed to enter our side if they possess a passport," a Pakistani customs official told AFP.

He said this regulation had been agreed in past meetings between Afghan and Pakistani authorities on border rules. — AFP

## German government's selective austerity measures may destroy agriculture

GERMAN farmers are right to be angry about the left-green government's push to save money for migrant subsidies and green projects by having agriculture bear the burden of high prices, Eugene Schmidt from the Alternative for Germany (AfD) party told Sputnik.

He argued that the government encouraged migrants to come to Germany by guaranteeing generous social benefits and refusing to do enough to secure

borders. The Federal Office for Migration estimated on Monday that 351,915 migrants applied for asylum in Germany in 2023, up 51.1 per cent from the year before.

"The federal government's attempts to justify measures by budget deficit are absurd. Berlin wants to save money on industry and agriculture but it still finds sufficient funds for green projects, continues to support mass migration to the country," Schmidt said. — SPUTNIK

## UAE, Kazakhstan sign agreement on investment cooperation in data centre and AI projects

*The strategic agreement aims to establish a framework for cooperation in data centre and artificial intelligence (AI) projects in Kazakhstan.*

THE UAE Ministry of Investment has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Digital Development, Innovations, and Aerospace Industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Sovereign Wealth Fund Samruk-Kazyna.

This strategic agreement aims to create a framework for

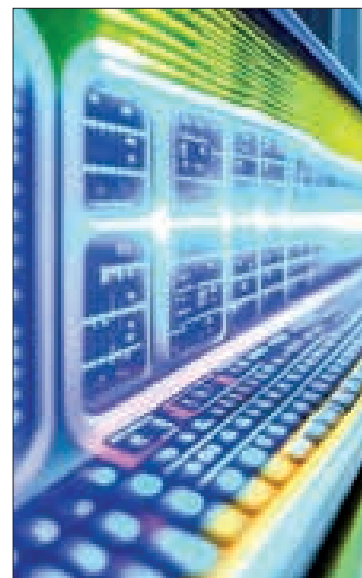
investment cooperation in data centre and artificial intelligence (AI) projects in Kazakhstan.

The MoU was signed by Mohamed Hassan Alsuwaidi, Minister of Investment; Bagdat Mussin, Minister of Digital Development, Innovations, and Aerospace Industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan; and Nurlan Zhakupov, Chairman of the Management Board of Samruk-Kazyna, JSC.

Data centres are essential for organizations to store crucial data and operate applications. Kazakhstan, the largest economy in Central Asia, is witnessing substantial growth in its data centre industry driven by increased demand for computing resources, progressive government policies and AI advancements.

The country's data centre market is projected to grow at a 6.83 per cent compound annual growth rate between 2024 and 2028, resulting in a market volume of USD 416.7 million.

The MoU between the UAE and Kazakhstan centres on establishing robust and efficient collaboration through the development of bilateral relationships between public and private organisations. — ANI



The UAE Ministry of Investment has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Digital Development, Innovations, and Aerospace Industry of Kazakhstan, and the Sovereign Wealth Fund Samruk-Kazyna. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/PIXABAY**

## China's weekly coastal bulk freight index falls

CHINA'S coastal bulk freight index dropped during the week ending on 12 January, according to the Shanghai Shipping Exchange (SSE).

The composite index for coastal bulk freight fell 3.1 per cent week on week to 1,052.92, the SSE said. According to data, the coal sub-index decreased 4.8 per cent to 1,040.64. The figure for crude oil rose 3.1 per cent to 1,643.47, while that for refined oil edged up 0.3 per cent from the previous

week to 1,508.20.

The SSE initiated the index in 2001, under the guidance of the Ministry of Transport, to reflect fluctuations in the Chinese coastal transport market. — Xinhua

This aerial photo taken on 27 December 2023 shows a huge oil tanker at a crude oil terminal of the Yantai Port in Yantai, east China's Shandong Province. **PHOTO: LI AN/ XINHUA**



## Shenzhen reports surge in cross-border e-commerce trade in 2023

CHINA'S southern metropolis of Shenzhen reported a total cross-border e-commerce foreign trade volume of 326.53 billion yuan (about 45.96 billion US dollars), up 74.4 per cent year on year, the municipal bureau of commerce said on Saturday.

Data shows that the number of cross-border e-commerce export enterprises in Shenzhen now exceeds 150,000, accounting for almost half of Chinese sellers on platforms including Alibaba.com, AliExpress, Lazada, and eBay, and one-third of Chinese sellers on Amazon come from Shenzhen.

With a sound policy system and superior business environment, Shenzhen has attracted well-known domestic platforms, such as Douyin, JD Worldwide, and Alibaba, as well as their foreign peers, to increase their investment there. Amazon launched its world's first innovation center in Shenzhen in December last year. Mercado Libre, the largest e-commerce platform in Latin America, will soon set up its China headquarters in the metropolis. — Xinhua

## Cambodia's export to RCEP members rises sharply despite weakening global demand



A crane truck lifts a container at the Hong Leng Huor Dry Port on the western suburb of Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 13 January 2022. **PHOTO: PHEARUM/XINHUA**

CAMBODIA on Saturday reported a sharp rise in its export to Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) member countries last year despite a slowdown in global demand. The kingdom shipped 8.17 billion US dollars worth of

products to the RCEP member countries in 2023, an increase of 28.8 per cent from a year earlier, said a General Department of Customs and Excise's report.

Its top five export destinations under the regional mega-trade pact are Viet Nam,

China, Japan, Thailand and Singapore, the report added.

The RCEP agreement comprises 15 Asia-Pacific countries including 10 ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) member states, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam, and their five trading partners, namely China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand.

Cambodian Ministry of Commerce's Secretary of State and spokesperson Penn Sovicheat said the RCEP, entering into force on 1 January 2022, is a catalyst for long-term export growth and a magnet to attract more foreign direct investment inflows to the kingdom. — Xinhua

## Making smoked catfish slices in Bogor, Indonesia

SKILLED workers at a traditional workshop in Bogor, Indonesia's West Java are making smoked catfish slices. They place fish slices on a grill, arrange them carefully, and expose them to smoke from firewood, thus preserving and adding flavor to the final products.

This traditional workshop produces up to 500 kilogrammes of smoked catfish slices daily for domestic consumption as well as export to Malaysia and Nigeria. — Xinhua



A worker prepares firewood to smoke catfish slices at a traditional workshop in Bogor, West Java, Indonesia, on 10 January 2024. **PHOTO: AGUNG KUNCAHYA B./XINHUA**

## Hong Kong records 34 mln visits in 2023 as tourism rebounds

HONG Kong received approximately 34 million visits in 2023, with nearly 4 million arrivals in December, the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTb) said Saturday.

Through 2023, the Chinese mainland remains the largest source of visitors to Hong Kong, with ideal numbers during the May Day holiday, summer vacation and the Golden Week in October. The Southeast Asian market has shown the fastest recovery, with the number of visitors from the Philippines and Thailand in December surpassing pre-pandemic levels (averaged from 2017 to 2018), reaching a recovery rate of 116 per cent and 106 per cent, respectively.

Analyzing by type of travelers, the volume of visitors for conferences, exhibitions and incentive tourism has recovered to around 70 per cent of pre-pandemic levels, making it the fastest-recovering segment and surpassing the leisure tourism segment.

Among the visitors to Hong Kong, half of them are overnight tourists, which is a higher proportion compared to pre-pandemic levels. On average, they stay in Hong Kong for 3.6 nights, which is longer than before the pandemic. According to a survey conducted by the HKTb, the satisfaction rating of overnight tourists is 8.7 out of 10, also surpassing pre-pandemic levels. — Xinhua

# ROLLING UPDATES

## WORLD

## Indian Army to showcase Made in India weapons and platforms at Republic Day parade

MADE-IN-INDIA weapon systems and platforms would be the main attraction in this year's Republic Day parade from the Indian Army including the LCH Prachand chopper, Pinaka multi-barrel rocket launchers and Nag anti-tank missiles.

The LCH Prachand is the first indigenous Multi-Role Combat Helicopter designed and manufactured by HAL. It has potent ground attack and aerial combat capability. The helicopter possesses modern stealth characteristics, robust armour protection and formidable night attack capability. Onboard advanced navigation system, guns tailored for close combat and potent air to air missiles make the LCH especially suited for the modern battlefield.

NAG has been developed by DRDO to engage highly fortified enemy tanks in day and night conditions. The missile has "Fire & Forget" "Top Attack" capabilities with passive homing guidance to defeat all



The Republic Day parade in India will showcase Made-in-India weapon systems and platforms, with a focus on the Indian Army's LCH Prachand chopper, Pinaka multi-barrel rocket launchers, and Nag anti-tank missiles. **PHOTO: ANI**

MBTs equipped with composite and reactive armour. The NAG missile carrier NAMICA is a BMP II based system with amphibious capability.

The latest armoured vehicles and specialist vehicles produced by the Indian industry indigenously are also going to be showcased at the parade where French President Emmanuel Macron will be the chief guest, Army officials said.

The Quick Fighting Reaction Vehicle, Light Specialist Vehicle and the All Terrain Vehicle would be marching on the Kartavya Path this year.

The weapon systems would also include the T-90 tank, BMP-2 infantry combat vehicle, c, Drone jammers, Advanced Sarvatra bridge, Medium Range Surface to Air Missile launcher and multi-function radar, they said. — ANI

## Germany's Scholz speaks in favour of compromise between protesting farmers, Gov't

GERMAN Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Saturday spoke in support of a possible compromise between the federal government and farmers protesting against a scheduled diesel subsidy phaseout, and urged the parties to jointly work on further plans.

German government spokesman Steffen Hebestreit said last week that instead of canceling diesel subsidies all at once, their amounts would be cut gradually and vehicle tax breaks for forestry and agriculture would remain in place. However, farmers still continued their protests and strikes across the country.

"We took the farmers' arguments to heart and revised our original plan again. It's a good compromise. It is also about what else we can do to ensure that agriculture has a good future. And that is what we are discussing together and looking for a joint solution," Scholz said in a video address published by the German government. A compromise on the issue could not be reached if each side keeps insisting on the full implementation of its demands, Scholz added. — SPUTNIK



Tractors are lined up in the "Strasse des 17 Juni" boulevard, towards the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, as German farmers demonstrate against the planned abolition of subsidies for agricultural diesel. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

## N Korea launched ballistic missile towards East Sea, says South Korea military

IN its first missile launch of the year, North Korea fired an unidentified ballistic missile towards the East Sea on Sunday, according to the South Korean military, Yonhap News Agency reported.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff confirmed it had learned about the launch, but they did not elaborate much on the matter.

Following the ballistic missile launch, the prime minister's office of Japan called it an emergency alert and stated that more details are awaited on the same.

"[Emergency alert] North Korea has launched a suspected ballistic missile. More up-

dates to follow," the PMO of Japan wrote in a post on X.

However, South Korea's Defence Minister Shin Won-Sik said last week that Pyongyang may test-fire solid-fuel intermediate-range ballistic missiles as early as this month, according to Yonhap News.

On 18 December, the North fired the last Hwasong-18 solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile into the East Sea on a lofted trajectory.

The most recent launch coincides with already elevated tensions following North Korea's artillery shelling along the Yellow Sea maritime boundary on 5-7 January. — ANI

## Netanyahu calls for Gaza-Egypt border closure – Report



People walk on a road near the Gaza Strip's border with Egypt, 12 January 2024. **PHOTO: RIZEK ABDELJAWAD/XINHUA**

THE border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt must be closed to prevent the flow of weapons into the enclave, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, as quoted by CNN.

He claimed that the Palestinian movement Hamas has

been using the border crossing between Egypt and the Gaza Strip to smuggle weapons.

"We'll destroy Hamas, we'll demilitarize Gaza, and military equipment and other deadly weapons will continue to enter this southern opening, so

of course we need to close it," Netanyahu said.

Currently, Israel controls all the Gaza Strip border crossings (including airspace and maritime routes) apart from town of Rafah on the border with Egypt. According to the broadcaster, Israel is undecided about means of controlling the Gaza-Egypt border, but obviously mulls different options.

Earlier, Egyptian officials warned that any Israeli incursion in the zone would be considered as blatant violation of the 1979 peace treaty. Egypt's Foreign Ministry spokesman Ahmed Abu Zeid stressed that Israeli intentions to control the Gaza-Egypt border are "subject to scrutiny". — SPUTNIK

# SPORTS

## Myanmar fighters beat Thai fighters in Myanmar-Thai Lethwei Challenge



Tun Min Aung (left) lands a strong punch on Thai fighter Rachvieha during the five-round bout of the Myanmar-Thai Lethwei Challenge held in Yangon on 14 January 2024. **PHOTO: BALA SOE**

TWO Myanmar fighters, Tun Min Aung and Thant Zin, won over Thai fighters during the Myanmar-Thai Lethwei Challenge at Theinbyu Boxing Gym in Yangon yesterday.

In the five-round fight against Tun Min Aung (Myanmar) versus Rachvieha (Thailand), Tun Min Aung defeated a Thai fighter in the fifth round.

In the bout of Thant Zin (Myanmar) versus Ritksew (Thailand), Thant Zin produced a series of punches on the Thai fighter to finish the bout even in the first round.

In the four-round challenging fight, Saw Arkar (Lonechaw) fought to a draw against Nyi Ye Khant (YFC), while Maung Zaw (Hanthawady) beat Arman (Top Academy) in the first round. — Bala Soe/KZL



Leverkusen's goalkeeper Lukas Hradecky (L) vies with Ermedin Demirovic (C) of Augsburg during the German first division Bundesliga football match between FC Augsburg and Bayer 04 Leverkusen in Augsburg, Germany, 13 January 2024. **PHOTO: PHILIPPE RUIZ/XINHUA**

## Dortmund ease past Darmstadt, Leverkusen stay atop

BORUSSIA Dortmund returned to winning ways after beating last-placed Darmstadt 3-0, while leaders Bayer Leverkusen snatched a last-gasp 1-0 win over resilient Augsburg to keep Bayern at bay in the Bundesliga 17<sup>th</sup> round on Saturday.

Dortmund took the reins from the kickoff but had problems finding gaps in Darmstadt's well-positioned defense.

The visitors had to wait until the 20<sup>th</sup> minute when Julian Brandt created the first noteworthy chance after testing Darmstadt goalkeeper Marcel Schuhen from close range following a cross into the box.

Schuhen was hapless though four minutes later when Jamie Bynoe-Gittens' good build-up work allowed Brandt to break the deadlock.

The BVB controlled the proceedings but failed to widen the gap in the first half.

The hosts had the chance to stun Dortmund at the hour mark when Luca Pfeiffer had all the time and space to head home but Dortmund custodian Gregor Kobel was on guard.

Dortmund piled on the pressure and made it two in the 77<sup>th</sup> minute when new arrival Jadon Sancho set up for Marco Reus, who tapped home the square pass from the central position.

Darmstadt's resilience was broken and the visitors tripled its lead through Youssoufa Moukoko, who drilled the ball from 16 meters into the roof of the net in the dying seconds.

With the result, Dortmund stay in the top five while Darmstadt remain on the last spot of the standings.

"It was extremely important that we won this game today. Not everything worked, but a lot worked and we know there is still a lot of work ahead of us," said Dortmund coach Edin Terzic. — Xinhua

## Men's Open Mountain Bike Competition held

IN commemorating the 77<sup>th</sup> Union Day, the Men's Open Mountain Bike Competition was held at Kandawgyi Lake Road at 6 am yesterday.

The participants raced along the Kandawgyi Lake Road at 26 kilometres for six rounds. Next, officials presented K500,000 to the winner, K400,000 to the first-runner-up athlete, K300,000 to the second-runner-up athlete, K200,000 to the fourth-placed bicyclist and K100,000 to the fifth-placed bicyclist. In turn, all the finishers grabbed cash awards ranging between K10,000 and K50,000 according to their finishing time. More than 240 cyclists from townships in Yangon Region participated in the competition. — Bala Soe/KZL



Bicyclists participate in the Men's Open Mountain Bike Competition near Kandawgyi Lake on 14 January 2024. **PHOTO: BALA SOE**

## Atletico Madrid forward Correa and family robbed at gunpoint at family home

ATLETICO Madrid's Argentinian international striker Angel Correa and his family were robbed at gunpoint in their home on Saturday night, according to Spain's 'Cadena Cope' radio station.

Four masked gunmen burst into the house and threatened the striker and his family at around 9 pm on Saturday night, according to the report.

The radio network reported that the

robbers "demanded all of the jewels and cash that was available in the house", before leaving.

The report added that "there was no personal damage suffered", and the player informed the police of the robbery after the thieves had left, with an investigation now under way.

Correa returned to Spain from Saudi Arabia on Thursday after playing in

Wednesday's Spanish Super Cup semifinal, which his side lost 4-3 to Real Madrid.

The forward is not the first high-profile Spain-based footballer to be robbed in recent times, with Sergio Ramos, Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, Casemiro, Lucas Vazquez and Isco all suffering similar ordeals in recent years. — Xinhua

Indian Army to showcase Made in India weapons and platforms at Republic Day parade

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## Bodh Gaya Marathon creates 'remarkable' blend of spirituality, physical endurance

*The International Buddhist Confederation collaborated with the Bodh Gaya Marathon Committee for a historic marathon in Bihar's Bodh Gaya, blending spirituality and physical endurance.*

IN a historic collaboration, the International Buddhist Confederation teamed up with the Bodh Gaya Marathon Committee to organise a marathon in Bihar's Bodh Gaya on Sunday.

This unique marathon brought together an eclectic gathering of soldiers and monks, creating a remarkable blend of spirituality and physical endurance.

The distinguished flag-off ceremony was presided over by His Holiness Tai Situpa Rinpoche, Lt Gen. PS. Minhas, AVSM, Comdt. OTA, Bodhgaya and DG IBC Shri Abhijit Halder, adding a



Approximately 800 participants, including professional runners, monks, army personnel, lay individuals, and government officials, gathered at the Magadha University starting point for the diverse assembly. **PHOTO: ANI**

spiritual and military aura to the event, the International Buddhist Confederation said in an official release.

A diverse assembly of approximately 800 participants, including professional runners, monks, army personnel, lay individuals, and government

officials, converged at the starting point—Magadha University, the press release added.

This enlightened run for peace and unity transcended borders, drawing international participants from countries such as Korea, Hong Kong, London, Bhu-

tan, Kenya, and more.

The marathon, with categories spanning 42.195 kilometres, 21.097 kilometres, 10 kilometres (time-bound), and a 5-kilometre Dhamma run, embarked on a journey to foster a collective spirit of harmony. — ANI

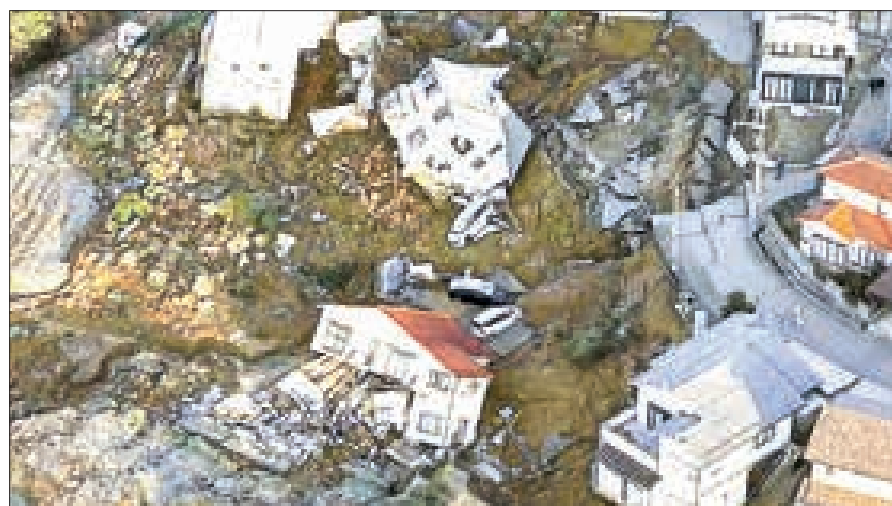
## 220 killed, 20 missing in Japan's quake-hit Ishikawa prefecture

*JMA predicts strong winds, snow, and high waves in northern and eastern Japan from Sunday evening through Tuesday due to a strengthening winter pressure pattern.*

THE death toll rose to 220 in the central Japanese prefecture of Ishikawa on Sunday, after a series of strong quakes of up to 7.6 magnitude jolted the prefecture and its vicinity, as snow and rain continued in the quake-stricken region.

The number of people who remained unaccounted for dropped to 20 in the hardest-hit prefecture as of 9 am local time, while at least 1,015 people suffered injuries due to the quakes, local authorities said.

According to the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA), strong winds, snow and high waves are expected in northern and eastern Japan from Sunday evening through Tuesday as the winter pressure pattern strengthened. — Xinhua



The death toll in Japan's Ishikawa prefecture rose to 220 after powerful earthquakes, reaching up to 7.6 magnitude, struck the region, accompanied by ongoing snow and rain. **PHOTO: KYODO**

### REPORT OF BOARD OF INVESTMENTS

#### Philippines' approved investment projects

THE approved investment projects in 2023 amounted to 1.26 trillion pesos (roughly 22.5 billion US dollars) in 2023, 73 per cent higher than in 2022, Philippine Department of Finance (DOF) said Sunday.

Citing an updated report of Board of Investments (BOI), the DOF said in a press release that the approved investments comprised 311 projects, mainly on renewable energy, telecommunication infrastructure, and the export of copper, gold, and other metals. These projects would produce over 49,000 jobs if fully operational.

The renewable energy and power sector emerged as the top-performing sector with 987.12 billion pesos (17.7 billion dollars), a 141 per cent surge from 2022, the BOI added. — Xinhua