

Embrace the Future: Unfolding a New Chapter with a Fresh Vision

# The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

Vol. X, No. 301, 3<sup>rd</sup> Waxing of Tabodwe 1385 ME

[www.gnlm.com.mm](http://www.gnlm.com.mm)

Monday, 12 February 2024



# 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 the rule 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

## Second Amending Law of the Myanmar Police Force Discipline Enforcement Law enacted

THE State Administration Council enacted the Second Amending Law of the Myanmar Police Force Discipline Enforcement Law as the No 16/2024 Law of the State Administration Council dated 11 February 2024.

The second amendment of the law was enacted under Section 419 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. — GNLM

## People's much-loved elephant Mo Mo undergoes health assessments after showing a sign of aging

MO Mo, an old female elephant still much loved by people at Yangon Zoo, is undergoing a medical check-up for what the zoo says is an aging sign with a wart-like growth on her upper toenail.

Mo Mo, now 71 years old, was donated to the zoo by U Khun Sanda of Loikaw, Kayah State, in 1961 when she was seven.

After identifying a common sign of old age — a wart on her upper toenail — elephant experts Dr Khin Maung Win (White Elephant Garden) and Dr Zaw Min Oo, deputy assistant general

manager from the Myanmar Timber Enterprise, were called in to provide advice and daily care. Another expert, Dr Win Myint was also invited for required examinations and ongoing care, Yangon Zoo said.

In her old age, Mo Mo tends to choose different kinds of feed according to her nature. As she changes her diet almost every day, more feed and supplements are being fed according to her preferences and other care tasks such as making a sand bed for a comfortable night-time sleep and close monitoring are also being carried out. — MT/ZN



Mo Mo lies to sleep on the sand bed.

## Some 36,000 Myanmar migrant workers in Thailand pay taxes



Myanmar migrant workers in Thailand.

THE Myanmar Embassy to Thailand announced that about 36,000 Myanmar migrant workers have paid taxes, with some 1,000 people on average coming to the embassy for paying tax

daily, said the embassy.

The embassy issues receipts promptly on the same day. A total of 35,919 migrant workers fulfilled their tax obligations between 13 December

2023 and 8 February 2024. The workers can pay taxes during the office hours at the embassy.

Taxpayers should keep their receipts carefully as they can utilize them to claim tax deductions from the township-level Internal Revenue Department when purchasing property and vehicles.

Factory workers can send a representative under the management of their factory owner to pay taxes, too.

The representative must provide the name of the passport, gender, passport number, date of birth, and dates of passport issue and expiration. Taxpayers are advised to bring their tax receipts when visiting the embassy in Bangkok or the consulate-general in Chiang Mai. — MT/TWA/ZN/NT

## Soya bean double cropping Successful in Zalun

THE soya bean double-crop trial in Zalun, Ayeyawady Region, has been successful, said U Naing Kyaw Soe, the Staff Officer of the Agricultural Research Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation.

Black gram and green gram were cultivated as the main crops in Zalun Township, but soya bean yields 30-40 baskets per acre, he said.

“Under the leadership of the Agricultural Research

Department, 10 acres of soya bean were tested and grown in our town. It was successful. By growing soya bean as substituted crop, it yields 30-40 baskets an acre if soil and water are right. Our country aims for the sufficiency of edible oils by 2025. So, we are encouraging the cultivation of groundnut, sesame and sunflower. Soya is strange as cooking oil can be extracted from soya bean. If farmers are interested in linkages with companies and

market prospects depending on the demand, we wanted to demonstrate that they could grow soya bean in addition to black gram,” he explained.

The double and triple cropping programmes to boost crop yield in Zalun, sponsored by the special funds of Lancang-Mekong Cooperation, have reportedly added soya bean as a new crop for the area and trial cultivations are being made. — Thit Taw/ZN

# NATIONAL

## Country firmly built under the constitution based on Our Three Main National Causes as three national tasks will not be harmed in any way: Senior General

The following is a full text of the 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 77<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Union Day 2024, today.

### Esteemed ethnic people of the Union,

On the occasion of the 77<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Union Day, which falls today, I extend my greetings with the best wishes for all national brethren residing in the country amicably to be healthy and wealthy with all auspiciousness.

Although Myanmar had lived in the country for hundreds of years under its own monarchical system, British colonialists occupied Myanmar in invasion into the country with three aggressive wars in the Konbaung era. So, Myanmar lost the monarchical system and fell under colonial rule.

In accord with the divide-and-rule policy, the British colonialists exercised various administrative systems over the ethnics with unequal terms of rights, causing disunity among the ethnics. As all ethnic people fought against the colonialists with the firm Union spirit and patriotic spirit for regaining independ-

ence by holding various arms, the British colonialists considered separately giving independence to hilly regions and the nation's mainland in the situation of providing independence without fail.

Adopting a pledge to take independence for both hilly and mainland in an equal term of rights in unison, General Aung San and 23 ethnic leaders signed the historic Panglong Agreement in Panglong of Shan State on 12 February 1947. It was a great, long-lasting evidence of the Union spirit to show the Union Day on 12 February, and this year's occasion turns 77 years.

In accord with the motto: "Unity is strength and strength of the Union", the independence and sovereignty taken by all ethnic people with the Union spirit must be strengthened with only the Union spirit. At present, as powerful countries attempt to control developing small countries under military and political influence, it can be seen that these powerful countries are implementing multi-operational warfare behind the small countries.

Hence, I would like to urge all ethnic people to protect the Union for long-term existence with the Union spirit.

### Esteemed ethnic people of the Union,

In looking back at the political landscape of Myan-

mar, Myanmar Tatmadaw, conceived in the independence struggle based on patriotic spirit, is safeguarding independence for its existence while initiating the nation's development and joining hands with the ethnic people in building a genuine, disciplined multiparty democratic Union.

At a time when the Myanmar government was called the Yangon government due to leveraging up internal colourful insurgencies in the post-independence period, Tatmadaw, with some 20,000 strengths, successfully fought in the 122-day-long Insein battle due to the encouragement and participation of the people and then assaulted colourful insurgencies step by step in order to strive for non-disintegration of the Union in full swing.

Currently, some internal ethnic armed organizations and saboteurs at home and abroad commit a variety of unrests and violent acts as well as clashes with the instigation of some foreign powerful countries which do not wish to see the interests of our country. Due to these instabilities, innocent people lose life and limb, and the country also loses resources. Local ethnic people are suffering much plight. I want to remark now that it is very important for all to safeguard the country facing dangers in all aspects conscientiously.

SEE PAGE-4

## Myanmar exports over 400,000 tonnes of tissue cultured banana between April-January

MORE than 400,000 tonnes of tissue cultured bananas have been transported to China via Kampaiti and Lweje border checkpoints between April and January of 2023-24 Financial Year, according to U Htay Lwin, the head of Kachin State Department of Agriculture.

Myanmar grows tissue cultured bananas only for export without domestic consumption. The exported tissue cultured bananas are cultivated in over 50,000 acres of 32 companies that have registered to export the tissue cultured bananas to China from Kachin State.

"Nearly 402,191 tonnes of tissue cultured bananas were

exported to China with the use of 12,348 trucks from Kampaiti and Lweje trade zones between April and January of this financial year. In previous financial year, a total of 491,954 tonnes of the produce were exported using 12,103 trucks. This year's exports will be higher than those of the previous year since the statistics until now are higher than the whole financial year of last year. A total of 32 companies that have registered to export to China grow banana in Myitkyina, Waingmaw, and Bhamo in Kachin State, and border areas in Sagaing Region. The tissue cultured bananas are fruitful between November and March. Thus, it is mainly exported within



A tissue cultured banana plantation thriving in Waingmaw, Kachin State.

these months," U Nanda said.

Before Covid-19 period, there were 70,000 acres of tissue cultured banana cultivations in Kachin State. However, it remains only 50,000 acres now

and an acre of cultivation earns US\$6,000, the report states.

Main items exported through these border checkpoints involve tissue cultured bananas, pigeon peas, peanut, cashew, rice, sug-

arcane, rattan, broken rice, chilli, rubber and butter bean; and main imported items are electric products, pharmaceuticals, vehicle accessories, and food.—ASH/TMT

# NATIONAL

## Country firmly built under the constitution based on Our Three Main National Causes as three national ...

### FROM PAGE-3

Focusing on the interests of the Union, Tatmadaw is protecting the Union by upholding Our Three Main National Causes: Non-disintegration of the Union, Non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty. In line with the motto: "Strength of the nation lies within", encouragement of all ethnic people in the entire Union and their standing with Tatmadaw are basic support for the State defence measure. Hence, I want to urge the government, Tatmadaw, and the people to harmoniously join hands in forging peace, stability, and the rule of law for the country.

### Esteemed ethnic people of the Union,

The State Administration Council strives to enhance the State's economic prosperity. This being so, encouragement is being given to the development of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSME) based on agriculture and livestock-based natural products such as timber, bamboo, rattan and other materials for serving the interests of the entire people in a short time.

The government is creating good economic environments for the development of the MSME, easing hardships to be faced in starting new businesses, easing capital money flow, leveraging up awareness, consultation, sharing of technique and entrepreneurship measures, connecting information networks and distributing information data on a broader scale.

It is necessary to make utmost efforts to enhance manufacturing industries based on agriculture and livestock farms inclusive of entire ethnic people to improve their socioeconomic life and develop all parts of the Union by uplifting the role of MSME.

As food, clothing, and shelter are basic needs for humans' daily routine, two national visions have been adopted: prosperity of the State and food security.

As Myanmar is blessed with vast agricultural lands, a proper number of population and favourable weather, it can be said that the country is sufficient in food. It is necessary to focus on the nation's prosperity and development by manufacturing larger nutritious foods and agricultural and livestock products.

Every citizen must be educated to serve at all areas of the country to achieve national visions of the State. As such, the policy is being implemented for all school-age children to attend schools and complete at least the KG+9 scheme of middle school education. Meanwhile, industrial, agriculture and livestock breeding high schools have been established to create good contributions to the successful implementation of agriculture and livestock-based production industries. It is necessary to implement double and mix-cropping patterns suitable for the regions and periods. On the other hand, all ethnic people have to strive to successfully implement two national visions of the State by beefing up livestock breeding tasks for the interests of all citizens.

I would like to note that all ethnic people have to

forge durable peace on a political trend through mutual respect, understanding, and trust to harmonize the whole Union in all aspects.

All matters demanded by some ethnic groups are involved in the Union system based on democracy and federalism being initiated by the government. I would like to highlight that the country is firmly built under the Constitution based on Our Three Main National Causes as three national tasks will not be harmed in any way. As relevant regions and residents will suffer the consequences of occurrences in the country, it is necessary to solve all issues in political ways for the sake of their regions and the country. And I want to urge all ethnic people to participate in the emergence of a modern, developed nation and a Union based on democracy and federalism to which we all aspire

### Esteemed ethnic people of the Union,

I send this message to the ceremony to mark the 77<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Union Day with a deep urging to all ethnic and national people residing in the Union through thick and thin to firmly join hands with each other to ensure the prestigious existence of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

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

## Visitors flock to 2<sup>nd</sup> day of MSME Products Show & Traditional Food Fair

IN celebration of the 77<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Union Day, the second day of the MSME product exhibition and traditional food display and sale took place at Tabaung Ground near Uppatasanti Pagoda, Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday morning. Students, youths, ministerial staff, families, and citizens purchased products with interest.

On the second day of the exhibition, entrepreneurs involved in micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and those aspiring to start small businesses came to learn with keen interest. Exhibition officials shared information and technology to develop MSMEs, gain access to domestic and foreign markets, and enhance competitive ability based on their respective businesses. They also discussed challenges and solutions relevant to their enterprises.



MSME booths crowded with visitors. PHOTO: KO GYI HTEIN

Ethnic groups warmly welcomed and explained traditional cultural knowledge, local practices, landmarks, socio-economic activities, regional traditional foods, and MSME products to visitors. The event was bustling with visitors enthusiastically

observing and taking souvenir photos with ethnic groups.

Additionally, MSME products and traditional food galleries from various regions and states, including the Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, were meticulously displayed for visitors to

learn about regional foods, local MSME businesses, and products exported through the One Region-One Product scheme.

In the galleries, traditional cultural dances and songs showcasing the beauty of regional traditions and patriotic songs were

performed, fostering a sense of unity among visitors.

MSME products, traditional foods, ethnic souvenirs, and traditional costumes from regions and states, including the Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, were sold at affordable prices, encouraging support for MSME development.

Furthermore, fresh regional and traditional foods were available for visitors to enjoy in a peaceful and affectionate atmosphere.

In the evening, entertainment programmes featuring modern and traditional songs and dances entertained the crowd as part of the celebration.

The exhibition showcased 34 product galleries from regions and states, including the Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, and 19 traditional food galleries, scheduled to run from 10 to 14 February.—Aung Ye Thwin, Aye Aye Thant/ TRKM

# NATIONAL

## SSB expands healthcare services for insured workers in three regions ahead of 77<sup>th</sup> Union Day



Mobile medical unit of the Ministry of Labour's Social Security Board gives medical services to insured workers in industrial zones.

AS part of hailing for the upcoming 77<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Union Day, the Ministry of Labour's Social Security Board has expanded healthcare provisions to workers in industrial zones across Yangon, Mandalay, and Bago regions, all covered by social security, through the deployment of three mobile medical units.

As of January 2024, social security covered over 1.2 million insured workers. The board delivered medical services at three general hospitals, 96 township-level social security clinics, 14 maternity clinics, and one traditional medicine clinic.

Simultaneously, the mobile medical teams provided treatment to workers from 9 to 15 February, including 5,657 individuals in Yangon Region, 1,173 in Mandalay Region, 2,286 in Gyobingauk Township, and 837 in Nattalin Township, Bago Region. The treatments encompassed various medical services, such as lab tests and ECG examinations for heart health. — MNA/NT

### Counter-argument to false information

## False reports of security inspections circulate on social media



MISLEADING information is circulating on social media, alleging that security forces conducted inspections and arrested around 40 passengers travelling on the Mandalay-Monywa road near Legyi village in Sagaing Township, Sagaing Region, for interrogation.

Additionally, it is claimed that similar actions took place at near Monywa University of Economics at approximately 3 pm yesterday.

However, an official from the security forces clarified that there were no inspections conducted by security forces in Legyi village, Sagaing Township, Sagaing Region. The regular security check-up procedures were carried out near Monywa University of Economics as part of routine measures.

These false reports, propagated by media with malicious intent, aim to sow discord, misrepresent the actions of the security forces, and create unnecessary fear among the public. — MNA/TKO



## Yangon Region Chief Minister promotes use of seeders for farmers

THE Chief Minister of Yangon Region highlighted the benefits of using seeders for farmers, including time and cost savings, increased per-acre yield, and higher income.

He made these remarks during a ceremony on 8 February, where 100 seeders were distributed to local farmers in Yintaikkwin Village, Taikkyi Township, to boost the agricultural sector.

During the event, the Chief Minister observed the direct seeding of rice using seeders at farmer U Soe Tun's farmland and presented documents related to the seeders to the local farmers.

Additionally, the chairman of the Taikkyi District Administration Body provided an update on the distribution of 510 seeders, supported by the regional government, to wards and villages in the district for the summer paddy season of 2023-2024. He also reported on the completion of planting summer paddy and other crops.

The Chief Minister encouraged farmers to plant crops early, utilize



Yangon Region's Chief Minister explaining the usage of seeder to the local farmers and interests.

available resources, fully utilize their farmlands, and cultivate more crops.

According to officials from the Township Department of Agriculture, farmers are keen on using seeders as

they can save time, reduce the need for weeding and shifting cultivation, and address labour shortages and wage issues. — TWA/TKO

# NATIONAL

## Sewage Treatment Plant in Yangon to be shifted into museum

ARRANGEMENTS are underway to maintain the Sewage Treatment Plant in Botahtaung Township, Yangon Region, as an urban heritage as well as to transform it into a museum so that domestic and overseas visitors can visit, according to the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC).

Currently, YCDC is conducting maintenance on formerly used coal-powered boiler blowers that have been preserved as well as electric-powered boiler blowers in use.

The Sewage Treatment Plant was constructed and put into use in Yangon in 1888. The plant used coal-fired boilers to push waste from Yangon's sewage system to the wastewater treatment plant in Thanlyet-son before pumping them into the Yangon River. In 1962, after the installation of electric boilers, the operation of coal-fired



The photo depicts coal-fired boiler blowers and electric-powered boiler blowers.

boilers stopped in 1964.

Currently, the coal-fired boilers operated from 1888 to 1964 are maintained at the

plant, and the electric-powered boilers used to push the sewage are in operation. — ASH/TKO



Students demonstrate in traditional costume show.

## Bhamo University students shine with traditional costumes for Union Day preparations

IN preparation for the 77<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Union Day celebrations, students from Bhamo University in Kachin State showcased traditional costume shows and cultural displays on 9 February.

The show aimed to strengthen the bond between different ethnic groups of the Union and foster patriotism.

Dr Nay Thwe Kyi, the university's rector, elaborated: "We have various ethnic students at the university and this show is a testament to the bond between them. In addition to the cultural

show, we also arranged a market fair and competitions for painting, essay writing, English and mathematics proficiency skills."

The students adorned Jingphaw, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Mon, Bamar, Rakhine, Shan, Lisu, Mawshan, and Rawang traditional costumes. The guests voted for their favourite costume to select winners in the competition. Winners of the competitions and cultural shows received prizes. The event also elected the university's beauty king and queen of the academic year 2023-24. — ASH/NT

## National Library (Yangon) hosts Children's Day pre-event programme



ON 10 February, the National Library (Yangon) in Pabedan Township, Yangon Region, held a children's library activity programme and a photo exhibition in celebration of Children's Day, which is observed on 13 February. This event was jointly organized by the National Library (Yangon) and the National University of Arts and Culture (Yangon). Dr Kay Thi Aye, Director of the National Library (Yangon), shared, "As a precursor to Children's Day on 13 February, we organized various activities including a photo exhibition, storytelling sessions, painting activities, storytelling and picture contests for children, with prizes awarded to winners. Additionally, games were arranged to bring joy to the children."

During the event, Daw Myo, an associate professor from the National University of Arts and Culture (Yangon), engaged the children with captivating stories, while staff members from the National Library (Yangon) acted out the narratives through expressive performance. Daw Thel Thanda Htet, the librarian of the university, led painting sessions where children created artworks alongside her. — ASH/TKO

## Confiscation of illegal items: foodstuffs, consumer goods and vehicles

DURING inspections on 7 and 8 February, the combined on-duty teams confiscated five vehicles (approximately K110 million) heading to Yangon from Mawlamyine and to Magway and Nay Pyi Taw from Myawady, carrying 23 kinds of goods valued at K43.423 million, including 350 pieces of lady clothes and 22,080 bottles of YooGood drinking yoghurt without official documents at the Nyaungkhashay x-ray station, an Isuzu truck (estimated value of K30 million), heading to Yangon from Thamanya, carrying 8,100 kilogrammes of BOPP film that were not declared in the Import Declaration (ID) near Shwe Than Lwin Tollgate in Phayagyi. Actions were taken against offenders under Customs procedures.

On 8 February, the on-duty teams captured a Hino Profia truck (estimated

value of K60 million) heading to Yangon from Hpa-an, carrying 100 luggage bags valued at K12.775 million that were not declared in the Import Declaration (ID) at the Ywathagyi Dry Port. Action was conducted under Customs procedures.

On the same day, a total of 17 kinds of brand new clothing, 11 bottles of Kirishima Brilliant whisky, 13 types of cosmetics, 16 kinds of foodstuffs and 22 sets of laptops and tablets (used) were seized from a container at the Myanmar Industrial Port and a total of 25.369 tonnes of illegal timbers worth K2,412,858 in Tatkon township. Actions were conducted under Customs procedures and the Forest Law.

According to the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee, 23 arrests were made on 7 and 8 February, estimated at K312,839,858. — MNA/MKKS

Global NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

www.gnlm.com.mm



### CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION

(+95) (01) 8604532,  
Hotline - 09 255597511

### ADVERTISING & MARKETING

(+95) (01) 8604530,  
Hotline - 09 251022355  
marketing@gnlm.com.mm  
subscription@gnlm.com.mm

Printed and published at the Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the Global New Light of Myanmar Daily under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.  
[gnlmnews@gmail.com](mailto:gnlmnews@gmail.com),  
[newsroom@gnlm.com.mm](mailto:newsroom@gnlm.com.mm)  
[www.gnlm.com.mm](http://www.gnlm.com.mm)

### Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email [aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm](mailto:aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm) with your name and title.

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.

## Next FY to witness 2M tonnes of fertilizer, 35K tonnes of pesticide imports

ACCORDING to the Urea Fertilizer Purchasing and Distribution Steering Committee, a total of two million tonnes of fertilizer and 35,000 tonnes of pesticides will be imported in the 2024-2025 financial year.

The committee has already acquired import licences and will distribute and sell the imported fertilizers and pesticides to farmers at affordable prices before the farming season.

A total of 4,900 tonnes of urea fertilizer and 21,000 tonnes of compound fertilizer will be supplied in 12 regions and states, including the Nay Pyi Taw Council area, during winter oil crops projects. In the spring paddy project, over 36,000 tonnes of urea and over



The photo shows two farmers broadcasting fertilizer in a paddy field.

36,000 tonnes of compound fertilizer are set to be used for 720,000 acres of cultivation in six regions and states, including Nay Pyi Taw. Similarly, over 37,000 tonnes of urea and 37,000 tonnes of compound fertilizer will be used in more than 740,000 acres of plantation in 10 regions and states, including Nay Pyi Taw, in the monsoon paddy project. The projects will use financial support provided by the State Economic Promotion Fund.

The import permits for two million tonnes of fertilizers and 37,000 tonnes of pesticides have been approved in the current 2023-2024 financial year, according to the committee. — TWA/MKKS

## 93 investments logged in Mon State within three years

A total of 93 foreign and domestic investments have entered and operated in Mon State, according to head of the Mon State Directorate of Investment and Company Administration U Tin Tun Aung,

A total of 56 businesses owned by Myanmar nationals amounting to K934,758.248 million and 37 foreign investments amounting to US\$5,136.396 million are being operated in Mon State from 2021-22 FY to 2023-24 FY. Those investments employed 4,487 individuals, the

report indicated.

“The Mon State Investment Committee’s 1/2024 meeting green-lighted the manufacturing of motorcycles that Min Oo Motor Myanmar Co Ltd will operate with full Myanmar national investment and extension of developing stage of the business of purification, upgrading, manufacturing and exporting of rubber that will be run by M Rubber Co Ltd with full Myanmar national investment in last January,” U Tin Tun Aung said.

The Mon State Investment

Commission’s 1/2024 meeting was held on 31 January 2024 at the office of the Mon State Government, and it was attended by the Chairperson of the Mon State Investment Commission Mon State Chief Minister U Aung Kyi Thein and committee members, and investors.

The Mon State Investment Committee has been permitting Myanmar national and foreign investments to create job opportunities within Mon State as per rules and regulations. — ASH/TMT



A factory operating in Mawlamyine Industrial Zone in Mon State.

## Myanmar-Russia online business meeting looks for exporting Myanmar’s products to Russia

AN online business matching has been conducted between Myanmar and Russian businesspersons on 9 February to discuss measures to export Myanmar’s products to Russia, according to Daw Naw Mutar Kapaw, the director general of Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization of the Ministry of Commerce.

The meeting was titled ‘Agricultural Produce Export from Myanmar to Russia. It was conducted by collaboration between Myanmar and Russian business entrepreneurs, Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization, and Russian Trade Representative Office in Yangon.

Daw Naw Mutar Kapaw said, “This is the very first discussion between Myanmar and Russian traders and it was led by Myanmar side. We will continue making efforts to send representatives mutual-

ly for the trade collaboration between the two countries.”

The online business matching was attended by the Director General of Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization and officials, and representatives of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Myanmar Rice Federation, Myanmar Pulses, Beans, Maize and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association, Myanmar Fishery Products Processors & Exporters Association, Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producers and Exporters Association, Myanmar Rubber Planters and Producers Association, and Myanmar Coffee Association. The Russian agricultural companies led by Mr Vladimir S Kazadaev, the Russian trade representative virtually attended the meeting. — ASH/TMT

# OPINION

## March towards building a Union based on democracy and federalism

Embarking on the journey to construct a Union grounded in democratic principles and federalism, the government has initiated a system that encapsulates the concerns voiced by various ethnic groups. The foundation of this Union is deeply rooted in the constitution, with a steadfast commitment to Our Three Main National Causes, which serve as the bedrock for the nation's progress.

It is imperative for all citizens to refrain from actions that could jeopardize the integrity of a nation meticulously crafted under the auspices of democracy and federalism. The nation's resilience lies in addressing all issues through political means, thereby safeguarding the interests of both specific regions and the entire country.

All individuals must meticulously evaluate events and external influences on Myanmar by powerful nations. Striving to extricate themselves from the grip of larger countries in all aspects, the people must enhance their standing in the international community while upholding the Union's perpetuity. By embracing the Union spirit, the entire ethnic populace can contribute to the shared objective of constructing a Union firmly grounded in democratic principles and federalism.

In the current global landscape, powerful nations seek to exert control over smaller counterparts through a blend of military and political influence. Recognizing these external pressures, it becomes paramount for every ethnic community to preserve the Union's essence for its sustained existence, embodying the spirit of unity.

Presently, internal ethnic armed factions and disruptive elements, both domestic and foreign, instigate unrest and violence in various regions. These acts are often fuelled by foreign powers indifferent to Myanmar's interests. The repercussions are dire, resulting in loss of life, depletion of resources, and the affliction of local communities. In the face of these challenges, it is crucial for all citizens to unite in safeguarding the nation from multifaceted dangers.

A collaborative effort involving the government, Tatmadaw, and the populace is imperative to establish peace, stability, and the rule of law. It is incumbent upon everyone to comprehend the gravity of the situation and work collectively to propel the country forward without regressing. Solidarity among the citizens is essential to thwart external threats and uphold the nation's integrity, ensuring a secure environment free from harm.

All individuals must meticulously evaluate events and external influences on Myanmar by powerful nations. Striving to extricate themselves from the grip of larger countries in all aspects, the people must enhance their standing in the international community while upholding the Union's perpetuity. By embracing the Union spirit, the entire ethnic populace can contribute to the shared objective of constructing a Union firmly grounded in democratic principles and federalism.

Our eyes are incredible gifts that allow us to see and experience the world around us. The value of our eyesight is immeasurable, as it plays a crucial role in our daily lives. In this article, we will explore why our eyesight is so important and how we can take care of our eyes.

### The Gift of Sight

Imagine a world without colours, shapes, and the beauty that surrounds us – that's what life would be like without the gift of sight. Our eyes enable us to witness breathtaking sunsets, admire the faces of our loved ones, and navigate the world with ease. Sight is a fundamental sense that enhances our overall experience of life.

### Everyday Tasks

Consider the various everyday tasks that rely on our ability to see. From reading a book to watching a movie, from cooking a meal to crossing the street – all these activities involve our eyesight. Our eyes help us gather information and make sense of the world, making them essential for learning and understanding.

### Learning And Development

For children, good eyesight is vital for their learning and development. The ability to see clearly allows them to read books, write, and participate actively in school. Parents and teachers play a crucial role in monitoring children's eye health to ensure they have the best opportunities for academic success.

### Work And Productivity

In the professional world, our eyes are vital for various occupations. Whether it's reading emails, analyzing data, or operating machinery, a clear vision contributes to productivity and job performance. Regular eye checkups are essential to maintain optimal eyesight, ensuring we excel in our chosen fields.

### Protecting Your Eyes

Given the immense value of our eyesight, it becomes crucial to take steps to protect our eyes. Here are some simple tips to maintain good eye health:

- Regular Eye Checkups:** Schedule regular eye examinations with an optometrist to monitor the health of your eyes and detect any potential issues early.
- Healthy Diet:** Consume a balanced diet rich in vitamins and minerals, particularly those that promote eye health, such as vitamins A, C, and E.
- Protective Eyewear:** If your work or recreational activities expose you to potential eye hazards, wear protective eyewear to prevent injuries.
- Limit Screen Time:** Reduce eye strain by taking breaks from screens, adjusting screen brightness, and following the 20-20-20 rule (look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds every 20 minutes).
- Proper Lighting:** Ensure good lighting when reading or working to reduce eye strain and prevent discomfort.

# Guardians of Your Vision

By Min Zan

Our eyesight is a precious gift that enhances every aspect of our lives. Understanding the value of our eyes and taking proactive steps to care for them ensures a brighter, clearer future. By prioritizing eye health, we can continue to appreciate the beauty of the world around us and lead fulfilling lives. Remember, the gift of sight is priceless, and its value cannot be overstated.

Furthermore, we watch our salt and fat intake to protect our hearts. We exercise and take calcium to protect our bones. We slather on sunscreen to protect our skin. But what can we do to protect our eyes all year round? A lot. We asked experts what lifestyle steps people should take to safeguard their vision and eye health.

Invest in Quality Sunglasses "Protecting the eyes from ultraviolet light — sunlight — is very important," says Dr Esen Akpek, an ophthalmology professor at Johns Hopkins University in the United States. "It's one of the biggest things in our environment to have an impact on the eyes. Ultraviolet light has been shown to have an effect on cataract development and macular degeneration."

To shield your eyes, wear sunglasses certified to block out 99 to 100 per cent of UVA and UVB light. Surprisingly, dark lenses aren't necessarily the most protective. "In fact, if the lenses are

dark but not UV-protected, that's worse for your eyes because when you're looking through dark lenses, your pupils dilate, which lets more UV light inside to do damage," says Akpek.

One reason for eye fatigue

during screen use is that people tend to blink less when staring at computer screens, which can lead to dryness. "One of the best ways to prevent that is hydration—drinking four or five glasses of water daily," says Grover. "If you still feel your eyes are dry or getting tired, or your vision is occasionally blurred, use lubricating eye drops."

Wear Safety Glasses When Needed. You don't need protective eyewear to do construction or factory work. Gardening, yard work, home repairs, and sports all pose the risk of trauma to the eye. It's estimated that up to 90 per cent of sports-related eye injuries are actually preventable with proper eye protection. Experts recommend wearing sports or safety glasses with polycarbonate lenses, which are a type of plastic that will not easily shatter or break.

"I see people who've been gardening, leaned forward, and got poked in the eye by a branch," says Dr Davinder Grover, an ophthalmologist at Glaucoma Associates of Texas. "And sometimes lawnmowers cause objects like stones to hit you in the eye."

Take a Break from Screens According to a 2022 review article published in the journal *Heliyon*, there's no scientific evidence that the light from electronic screens damages the eyes. But staring at a screen can leave eyes fatigued and may blur vision. Experts suggest following the 20-20-20 rule: Every 20 minutes, take a break and look at something about 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

One reason for eye fatigue

during screen use is that people tend to blink less when staring at computer screens, which can lead to dryness. "One of the best ways to prevent that is hydration—drinking four or five glasses of water daily," says Grover. "If you still feel your eyes are dry or getting tired, or your vision is occasionally blurred, use lubricating eye drops."

### Eat For Your Eyesight

Research shows that foods rich in vitamin C, E, zinc, lutein, zeaxanthin, and omega-3 fatty acids are linked to lower risk for age-related macular degeneration, cataracts, and maybe even dry eye. Getting these nutrients from whole foods rather than from supplements is best.

- For omega-3 fatty acids, look for fish like salmon, tuna and halibut.
- For lutein and zeaxanthin, eat dark leafy greens like spinach, kale, and collard greens.
- For vitamin C, go for citrus, strawberries, tomatoes, sweet peppers, and broccoli.
- For vitamin E, choose peanuts, almonds, sunflower seeds, avocado, pumpkin, and asparagus.
- For zinc, good sources are beef, fortified cereals, and oysters.

### Stop Those Bad Habits

First, the obvious: smoking isn't just bad for your lungs; it can harm your eyes. "Smoking is terrible," says Akpek. "It causes dry eyes, worsens thyroid eye disease, and correlates with severe macular degeneration." Smoking also increases the risk of cataracts and can even harm the optic nerve.

Also, try not to rub your eyes. "Rubbing makes inflammation worse," says Akpek. "The more you rub, the more itchy your eyes will get. Rubbing has been linked to thinning and bulging of the cornea. It can lead to infections." Instead, "take medication or use drops for allergies or dry eye," says Grover.

### Repair the Air

Indoor heating and air conditioning can dry out the air—and the eyes. Outdoor cold and wind can also dry, while pollution and allergens can cause irritation. In addition to lubricating eye drops, "air purifiers and humidifiers are our friends," says Akpek.

Finally, don't forget to see an eye specialist regularly for a checkup, if possible. Not all eye problems are noticeable, and all are best treated when found early. For most people, unless there are



PHOTO CREDIT: READER'S DIGEST

problems, that means having your eyes tested by an optometrist or health care provider every one to two years.

In sum, our eyes are truly precious gifts that enrich our lives in countless ways. From witnessing the beauty of the world to engaging in everyday tasks, our eyesight is fundamental to our overall well-being. To safeguard this invaluable sense, adopting simple practices like regular eye checkups, maintaining a healthy diet, wearing protective eyewear,

and being mindful of screen time is essential. The article emphasizes the significance of vision in various aspects of life, from childhood development to professional success. By following these tips and consciously caring for our eyes, we can ensure a brighter and clearer future, cherishing the priceless gift of sight that enhances our appreciation for the world around us.

Reference: Reader's Digest January 2024

## Study finds body temperature is linked to depression

*The elevated body temperature in individuals with depression could be due to impaired self-cooling mechanisms or heightened metabolic activity.*

A study from UC San Francisco revealed that individuals with depression may benefit from lowering their body temperatures, as they tend to be higher.

The study, published in *Scientific Reports*, does not clarify whether depression causes increased body temperature or vice versa. People with depression may have a higher body temperature due to impaired self-cooling, increased heat output from meta-

bolic processes, or a combination of the two. Researchers analyzed data from more than 20,000 international participants who wore a device that measures body temperature and also self-reported

their body temperatures and depression symptoms daily.

The seven-month study began in early 2020 and included data from 106 countries.

The results showed that with each increasing level of depres-

their body temperatures and depression symptoms daily.

The seven-month study began in early 2020 and included data from 106 countries.

The results showed that with each increasing level of depres-



Researchers examined data from over 20,000 participants worldwide who reported their body temperatures and depression symptoms daily while wearing a monitoring device. ILLUSTRATION: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/PIXABAY

er depression scores in people whose temperatures had less fluctuation throughout a 24-hour period, but this finding didn't reach significance.

The findings shed light on how a novel depression treatment method might work, said Ashley Mason, PhD, the study's lead author and associate professor of psychiatry at UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences.

A small body of existing, causal studies has found that using hot tubs or saunas can reduce depression, possibly by triggering the body to self-cool, for example, through sweating.

"Ironically, heating people up actually can lead to rebound body temperature lowering that lasts longer than simply cooling

people down directly, as through an ice bath," said Mason, who is also a clinical psychologist at the UCSF Osher Center for Integrative Health.

"What if we can track the body temperature of people with depression to time heat-based treatments well?"

"To our knowledge, this is the largest study to date to examine the association between body temperature - assessed using both self-report methods and wearable sensors - and depressive symptoms in a geographically broad sample," added Mason.

"Given the climbing rates of depression in the United States, we're excited by the possibilities of a new avenue for treatment."

SOURCE: ANI



# NATIONAL

## Myanmar assumes alternate chair of 2024 ASEAN Committee in Beijing

ACCORDING to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Myanmar has taken its turn holding the alternate chair of 2024 ASEAN Committee in Beijing-ACB.

The 2024's first meeting of the heads of embassies of the ASEAN Committee in Beijing (ACB) in conjunction with the ceremony to transfer the chairmanship of the ACB was hosted by the Malaysian Embassy in Beijing, China, on 8 February.

The ASEAN Ambassadors

exchanged views on the cooperation between China and ASEAN and the successfully implemented programmes of ACB during the term of Malaysia's alternate chair at the meeting. Afterwards, Malaysia Ambassador Mr Norman Muhamad handed over the chairmanship responsibilities to Myanmar Ambassador U Tin Maung Swe.

The Myanmar ambassador, the alternate chair of the ACB, clarified the issues to address

during Myanmar's term of alternate chairmanship. Additionally, the Myanmar ambassador stressed the importance of continuous contact among ASEAN embassies in Beijing. He expressed his firm belief that China and ASEAN nations will have to enhance cooperation as 2024 was set as the year to promote relations between China and ASEAN countries. — ASH/MKKS



Malaysian Ambassador Mr Norman Muhamad and Myanmar Ambassador U Tin Maung Swe shakes hands at the meeting in Beijing on 8 February.



This photo taken on 2 March 2023 shows BYD electric cars at the Pannita Auto Fair in Yangon, Myanmar. Myanmar has imported the first batch of Chinese-made battery electric vehicles (BEVs) in January in implementing its one-year pilot EV project. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

## Different types of 5,308 electric vehicles registered

A total of 5,308 different types of electric vehicles have been registered from January 2023 to January 2024, according to a release by the Road Transport Administration Department.

The release said that 81 companies have been authorized to import and sell EV vehicles and they will have to open the brand showrooms starting 1 February. Import licences will only be issued to the companies which meet the requirements.

According to the statement, there are 2,217 passen-

ger EV vehicles, 11 EV light trucks, 2,836 EV motorbikes and 244 EV tricycles have been registered with the department. There are many kinds of EV vehicles and the prices range between K80 million to K200 million.

In order to develop the EV sector, the National Steering Committee for the Development of Electric Vehicles and Related Industries has set the tax rates for the electric vehicles to zero per cent, and has also invited the local investors to invest. — TWA/TRKM

## Magway Region Govt unveils water supply plan for Buddha Pujaniya festival



The Manchaung Dam is seen.

THE Magway Region Government announced that it will supply irrigation water during the Mann Shwesettaw pagoda festival period.

The Manchaung Dam,

located in Ngaphe Township, Minbu District, provides year-round irrigation for farmland in Ngaphe and Minbu (Sagu) townships. Additionally, it aids in replenishing the Mann creek

for recreational purposes and fire prevention.

Water distribution from the dam was halted on 28 November 2023, after the monsoon paddy harvest, and resumed on 8 February. The water will feed summer crops and support the construction of guest houses ahead of the Mann Shwesettaw Buddha Pujaniya festival on 14 February.

The dam was built in 1995-96 financial year and finished in 1998-99 FY. The embankment is 4,480 feet long and 135 feet high. It has a storage capacity of up to 120,000 acre-feet and a watershed area spanning 136 square miles. — TWA/NT

## Serial collision of five vehicles leaves two dead, eight hurt

A serial collision of five cars between 158 and 159 mileposts of the Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw Expressway on 10 February left two dead and eight injured, according to the initial statement of the Department of Fire Services that conducted a recuse operation.

According to the investigation, a Thit San express bus in high speed collided with a line of vehicles at a checkpoint. The three saloon cars hit by the Thit San express bus were forced to clash with the Khine Mandalay express bus in front of them. Fortunately, passen-

gers from both express buses did not have any injuries.

Of the passengers from three saloon cars, two died, and eight were hurt and sent to the Toungoo hospital. Relevant authorities are investigating the incident. — TWA/TRKM

## Finnair weighs passengers in Helsinki study

*Finnair has initiated passenger and carry-on luggage weigh-ins as part of a study to enhance aircraft weight calculations before takeoff.*

FINNISH carrier Finnair has begun weighing passengers with their carry-on luggage as part of a study aimed at better determining the weight of the aircraft before take-off, it said Wednesday.

The weigh-ins will take place in February, April and May and are on a voluntary basis, it said.

“Measurements began at Helsinki Airport this week on Monday... So far, more than 500 volunteer customers have participated in the weigh-ins,” Finnair spokeswoman Kaisa Tikkanen told AFP.

Finnair noted in a statement that flight balance calculations require airlines to know the “weight of the aircraft itself and the weight of fuel, checked baggage and cargo, onboard catering, water tanks, and of course customers”.

Airlines may use average weights provided by aviation authorities or collect their own data, it said.

“The collected data is not linked in any way to the customer’s personal data,” said Satu Munnukka, head of ground processes at Finnair. — AFP



The voluntary weigh-ins will occur in February, April, and May, with over 500 volunteers participating at Helsinki Airport. **PHOTO: AFP**

## Korean Cultural Centre India celebrates Lunar New Year ‘Seollal’ in New Delhi

KOREAN Cultural Centre India celebrated ‘Seollal’, the Lunar New Year, by organizing an event at the centre’s auditorium in the national capital, an official statement said, adding that 110 Indian students and officials attended the celebrations.

Seollal or the Lunar New Year, is one of the most important traditional festivals in South Korea which commemorates the first day of the Korean Lunar Calendar with hope and greeting for the New Year ahead.

During the event, the Korean Cultural Centre India showcased the traditional events that are held back in their homeland,

such as greeting the elders in the family and wishing them a happy New Year.

“The tradition also involves visiting the graves of ancestors and paying respect to them. The occasion is further celebrated by playing traditional games, wearing the Hanbok, the traditional clothing of Korean people, and eating Tteokguk, a rice cake soup. Tteokguk is a special festival dish that is prepared on Seollal, as it is believed that it is only after consuming a bowl of Tteokguk on the first day of the Lunar year that a person grows a year older,” the official statement read. — ANI

## Japan: Grand cycle Tokyo event encouraged bicycling in safe, healthy manner



Tokyo Metropolitan actively encourages safe and healthy bicycling, striving to engage people in sports weekly and make sports accessible to those with disabilities. **PHOTO: ANI**

*In December, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government hosted the “Grand Cycle Tokyo” event in Odaiba Tokyo, targeting cycling enthusiasts. The event’s focus was on appreciating the scenic landscape, enjoying clean air, and advocating for a healthy lifestyle.*

THE “Grand Cycle Tokyo” event, organized by Tokyo Metropolitan Government for Odaiba Tokyo cycling enthusiasts last December, was aimed at enjoying a beautiful landscape, getting clean, fresh air and accelerating to grow a healthy life.

Tokyo Metropolitan encourages bicycling in a safe and healthy manner. Its goal is to encourage people to participate in sports at least once a week and lead a person with a disability

to accessible sports.

Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike said, “Grand Cycle Tokyo Rainbow Ride. It will start soon. I think you’re going to ride a bicycle straight ahead anyway, but please keep your time in mind and enjoy this event.”

The Odaiba area has a rainbow bridge and a newly added gate bridge. These two bridges are landmarks in Tokyo to attract residents and visitors.

A 32-kilometre course and

an 8-kilometre course were prepared. 4,500 cyclists participated in the pleasant breeze and stunning scenery, including Olympic and Paralympic medalists as well as other cyclists. Adoption of safe riding is another crucial aspect. Moreover, the helmet was compulsory for all cyclists. Enthusiasts with tandem bicycles, which are designed for two riders, also participated in the event. People with physical disabilities also participated. — ANI

## ‘Buzzing’ Bangkok celebrates Lunar New Year

A riot of scarlet lanterns hung over the red-clothed crowds offering candles as they murmured prayers at a traditional temple in Bangkok to celebrate Lunar New Year.

Millions of Thai-Chinese marked the occasion with parties, family meals and visits to many of the shrines dotted around Chinatown.

The old streets in the capital’s downtown came alive on Saturday afternoon, with thousands of curious tourists and happy devotees such as Watcharin Parichatwuttikoon, 70, enjoying the occasion.

“It’s very sacred. I have attended since I was young,” he told AFP outside Wat Mongkorn, among the city’s largest.



Lion dancers perform at Kwang Tung shrine in Chinatown in Bangkok. **PHOTO: AFP**

“I like to make merits, wash away bad deeds. Today, it’s refreshing because it’s raining.”

There is a long history of Chinese migration to Thailand,

with Thai-Chinese people accounting for roughly 10 per cent of the population — including some of the kingdom’s most prominent business families. — AFP

# ECONOMY WORLD

## 87 per cent of Japan firms say paternity leave averages less than 3 months

A Kyodo News survey of 113 companies found over 80 per cent of major Japanese firms saw male employees taking child-care leave under three months, while females took longer.



Female workers typically took longer leaves, with 51 per cent of surveyed companies reporting an average leave of 12 to less than 18 months, and 27 per cent reporting six to less than 12 months. **PHOTO: KYODO**

MORE than 80 per cent of major firms saw male employees take child-care leave of less than three months over the past year while female employees got longer leave times, a recent Kyodo News survey showed, underscoring the dominant role women continue to play in child-rearing in Japan.

In the survey that covered 113 companies between November and December, around half of them reported in their securities filings that at least 80 per cent of their male employees took paternity leave, regardless of the length.

But on the duration of such leave taken, the largest group of 47 per cent said the average length per child was “one month to less than three months,” followed by 25 per cent who said “two weeks to less than one month.”

About 13 per cent said the leave averaged “five days to less than two weeks”, 4 per cent answered “three months to less than six months”, while 2 per cent said “less than five days”.

In contrast, female workers took much longer leave times, with 51 per cent of the surveyed companies seeing them take an

average leave of “12 months to less than 18 months”, and 27 per cent standing at “six months to less than 12 months”.

Eight per cent said the leave lasted “18 months or more”, while 4 per cent said it was “less than six months.”

Asked about the challenges female employees face after taking longer child-care leave than males, with multiple answers allowed, 59 per cent of the firms cited lagging career advancement, 30 per cent said restrictions in work hours and 19 per cent delays in pay rise. — Kyodo

## ‘Restaurant of Love’ helps feed Tunis homeless

ON a corner by the entrance to Tunis zoo, Leila waits for a hot meal from the Tunisian capital’s “Restaurant of Love” in a cardboard shelter where she and her dogs sleep.

The 50-year-old says she has been living on the streets for more than 27 years.

“I don’t want to go to the shelter centres,” and feels safer in her makeshift abode, despite the dangers of robbery and violence on the street, she says as she fixes a plastic cover over her bed for the cold winter night.

Leila is always happy to see the volunteers from the NGOs Universelle and Samu Social when they bring her food and clothing every Friday night.

For the rest of the week, she often has to make do with no more than a tin of sardines.

The Friday night meal is from the kitchen of the “Restaurant of Love”, a charitable initiative launched by Universelle three years ago to help feed the growing number of Tunis’ homeless.

There are no official data on

the exact number of people living on the streets in the capital, but it is estimated to be in the hundreds.

### First of its kind

The “Restaurant of Love,” Tunisia’s first of its kind, offers affordable meals with a plate of pasta priced at \$1.40. Around 30 per cent of the daily 400-450 meals are provided free to homeless individuals.

Paying customers can contribute donations to support the cause. All profits are directed towards aiding the homeless, with some also employed to encourage integration into society.

Economic challenges, including low growth and high inflation, worsened by the pandemic and global events, have increased poverty rates, particularly affecting vulnerable groups.

In 2021, Tunisia’s nationwide poverty rate was 16.6 per cent, rising to around 25 per cent in rural areas. Migration from poorer regions to coastal cities in search of employment often leaves individuals homeless due to limited opportunities. — AFP



The restaurant has paying customers as well as feeding the homeless. **PHOTO: AFP**

## London mayor fears Eurostar ‘chaos’ under new EU border checks

LONDON mayor Sadiq Khan warned today that Eurostar passengers going from Britain to the continent face “chaos” once a new computerised border scheme proposed by the European Union takes effect.

All visitors entering the EU with visas or visa waivers will have to go through the automated EU Entry/Exit System, which has been long delayed and now scheduled

due to start in October.

Almost 19 million people used the Eurostar — which connects Britain with Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands — last year as traveller numbers returned to their pre-pandemic levels.

The system will record a non-EU national’s details and biometric data along with their date of entry and exit, keeping track of overstays and refused entries.



File picture taken in Paris on 10 December 2020 shows the Eurostar train stationed at Gare du Nord. **PHOTO: AFP**

“As it stands these new post-Brexit checks will cause chaos at St Pancras (the London station serving Eurostar passengers), with cuts to services and potentially huge queues facing passengers at peak times,” said Khan.

“This is directly a result of Brexit, and it’s not an issue ministers can now wash their hands of,” added Khan, of the main opposition Labour party. — AFP

## Celeb-packed Super Bowl ads hope to outshine Taylor

THE Super Bowl is here and that means millions of Americans will sit down on Sunday to partake in a national passion: watching commercials on TV.

The final of the NFL season — pitting the Kansas City Chiefs against the San Francisco 49ers — is the US advertising industry's biggest event of the year.

Companies will shell out an average of \$7 million for 30 seconds in front of an audience that reached 115 million in 2023.

This year, big brands have the sizeable challenge of competing for buzz with megastar Taylor Swift — she will jet in from a concert performance in Tokyo to see her boyfriend play.

Her romance with Kansas City tight end

Travis Kelce is expected to boost viewership to record levels, with teens and tweens grabbing a seat on the family sofa to see their hero cheer for her man from a luxury box.

Advertisers pay crazy money because the Super Bowl is one of the rare times when a politically divided and culturally fragmented nation gathers in front of one show.

"There's no other medium where you can get more than 100 million viewers that are watching at the same time," said Charles Taylor, professor of marketing at Villanova University.

"This is like the old days when an advertiser can reach most of America with an ad campaign. Today, we've just got no other venue to do that," he added. — AFP



Bud Light's Super Bowl spot mostly takes place in the predictable confines of a sports bar. PHOTO: AFP

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V BLPL BLESSING VOY.NO. (2404S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V BLPL BLESSING VOY.NO. (2404S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12-2-2024 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AWPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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 BLPL SHIPPING LINE

## Lunar New Year Eve sees over 190 million passenger trips across China

The Spring Festival travel rush, spanning from 26 January to 5 March, sees heightened transportation demand as people travel home for family reunions during China's most significant festival.



Passengers wait to board their trains at Zhengzhou East Railway Station in Zhengzhou, central China's Henan Province, 26 January 2024. PHOTO: LIAN/XINHUA

SOME 195.24 million passenger trips were handled by China's transportation sectors on Friday, the Chinese Lunar

New Year Eve, up 26.7 per cent from the same day of last year, official statistics showed.

Of the total, high-

way traffic amounted to 184.62 million passenger trips, up 24.2 per cent year on year, according to a special work team

established in January to ensure the safety and sound operation of the year's Spring Festival travel rush.

Railway traffic jumped 98.8 per cent to 8.257 million trips while air trips surged 137.7 per cent to 1.797 million, and passenger trips by water increased by 11.9 per cent to 566,000.

The Chinese Lunar New Year, or Spring Festival, China's most important festival, fell on 10 February this year. The travel rush, usually a period of high transportation demand as people return home for family reunions, lasts from 26 January to 5 March. — Xinhua

## Japan taxi, bus driver's licence tests to go multilingual

JAPAN is set to offer tests for driver's licences for taxis and buses in foreign languages amid a shortage of drivers in the country, with the police agency distributing sample questions in the coming weeks.

The National Police Agency will issue sample exam questions in 20 languages to prefectural police forces nationwide by the end of March, allowing them to formulate their own questions based on local needs, an official said.

The new multilingual approach for the class 2 driver's license comes after industry groups facing driver

shortages requested more be done to enable foreign nationals to work in relevant sectors. The licence is necessary to operate passenger transport vehicles, such as local buses and taxis, but the test has only been given in Japanese so far.

As of the end of 2022, foreign nationals made up just 5,189, or 0.6 per cent, of the 880,536 registered holders of class 2 large and standard vehicle licenses, according to the agency.

Asian languages will comprise the majority of the 20 offered, including Chinese, Korean and Tagalog, but European lan-



Photo shows taxis lined up outside Nagoya Station in Nagoya, central Japan, on 13 July 2022. PHOTO: KYODO

guages, such as English and Portuguese, will also be covered.

The NPA said it had not previously provided tests for the licenses in foreign languages because it had not received a specific request to do so.

The changes will bring the testing system in line with that for the class 1 driver's license for private cars, motorbikes and other automobiles. The NPA has since

2009 distributed example questions for the class 1 tests in English, and the tests are already available in the same 20 languages.

Along with questions on traffic rules included in the class 1 test, the class 2 exam also tests knowledge of vehicle safety procedures such as brake inspections. It is a purely technical exam and has no questions on customer interactions. — Kyodo

# ROLLING UPDATES WORLD

## Indonesia set for presidential vote, ex-general tipped to win

*Polls anticipate Subianto's victory as he appeals to over 205 million voters across Indonesia's vast archipelago.*

INDONESIANS vote in a presidential election Wednesday with Defence Minister Prabowo Subianto the clear favourite after a campaign mixing nationalist rhetoric and pledges to continue the era of popular outgoing leader Joko Widodo.

The former general lost to Widodo in 2014 and 2019 but is on course to finally lead the world's third-largest democracy after rehabilitating his image.

Widodo is constitutionally barred from running for a third term but his popularity hit all-time highs last year with polls showing he would have likely won another election.



Early voting begins for Indonesians in Malaysia at the World Trade Centre in Kuala Lumpur on 11 February 2024. **PHOTO: SHAFWAN ZAIDON/AFP**

Instead he is playing kingmaker for his defence chief and eldest son, who have joined forces on the same ticket.

Polls project Subianto to win a

majority from nearly 205 million Indonesians who will dip their finger in halal ink at more than 800,000 polling stations across the volcano-dotted archipelago. — AFP

## Chile bids farewell to ex-president Pinera in state funeral

CHILE on Friday held a state funeral for former president Sebastian Pinera, who died this week when the helicopter he was piloting plummeted into a lake.

A military band in red conical hats played as Pinera's coffin, draped in the Chilean flag, was escorted to a cathedral in Santiago by guards on horseback for his funeral mass. Pinera will later be buried in a private family ceremony attended by his widow, four children and grandchildren. Former presidents and politicians from across the political spectrum attended the funeral ceremonies for Pinera, who ruled Chile from 2010 to 2014, and again between 2018 and 2022.

The 74-year-old billionaire returned the right wing to power for the first time after casting off the baggage of former dictator Augusto Pinochet. — AFP

## Industrial megapower Germany on edge of ruin thanks to energy war against Russia

*Germany's industrial production has plummeted for the seventh consecutive month, with December recording a negative 1.6 per cent, exacerbated by a 7.6 per cent decline in the chemical industry and a 3.4 per cent drop in construction.*

IN 2022, Berlin dutifully followed the Biden administration's instructions to cut Germany off from Russian gas and ramp up arms deliveries to Ukraine for NATO's proxy war against Russia. Two years on, alarming predictions of a major economic crisis and the wholesale deindustrialization of Europe's biggest industrial economy are coming to pass.

Germany's industrial production has dropped for the seventh-straight month, reaching negative 1.6 per cent in December, from negative 0.2 per cent in November, according to data released Wednesday by Germany's national statistics office. Among the sectors most heavily affected was the chemical industry, which faced losses of a whopping 7.6 per cent – its worst showing since 1995. Construction suffered a 3.4 per cent decline.

Business media took the data as a sign of serious problems in the German economy, with Bloomberg running a piece entitled 'Germany's Days as an Industrial Superpower Are Coming to an End', and



The Eberspaecher factory in Herxheim bei Landau, southwestern Germany. **PHOTO: KIRILL KUDRYAVTSEV / AFP**

citing the energy crisis stemming from the loss of Russian energy supplies as the straw that broke the back of the declining European economic powerhouse.

"There's not a lot of hope, if I'm hon-

est," Stefan Klebert, CEO of GEA Group AG, a Dusseldorf-headquartered special purpose industrial machinery company, told the outlet. "I am really uncertain that we can halt this trend. Many things would

have to change very quickly."

The company Klebert manages is nearly 150 years old, surviving 20<sup>th</sup> century crises from the two world wars to the 1929 depression. Now, it and its 18,000+ employees face an uncertain future.

"Despite the motivation of our employees, we have arrived at a point where we can't export truck tires from Germany at competitive prices," Maria Rottger, head of Northern Europe operations at French-headquartered tire-making giant Michelin, said.

"If Germany can't export competitively in the international context, the country loses one of its biggest strengths," he noted.

Some 5,000 of Michelin's 66,000+ European employees are based in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. In late 2023, the company announced cuts of over 1,500 jobs to its German operations. Goodyear, the American tire giant, announced the closure of two plants in the country, cutting 1,750 jobs. — SPUTNIK

# SPORTS

## Beijing to host 2029 World Aquatics Championships

President Husain Al Musallam praised Beijing's excellent conditions for athletes and announced that the World Aquatics Masters Championships will also take place in the Chinese capital.

WORLD Aquatics confirmed on Sunday that the Chinese capital, Beijing, will host the World Aquatics Championships in 2029.

"Beijing has repeatedly welcomed major aquatics events, providing excellent conditions that enable our athletes to perform at their very best. For this, we are deeply grateful," stated World Aquatics

President Husain Al Musallam.

The 2029 World Aquatics Masters Championships will also be hosted in Beijing, with the exact dates of both events to be announced in due course.

Beijing, known as an aquatics hotspot, has a rich history of hosting prestigious aquatics events.

"China is deeply passionate

about aquatic sports. We have a very proud history of welcoming the best aquatics athletes to our country," Chinese Swimming Association President Zhou Jihong remarked.

Following the ongoing tournament in Doha, the 2025 and 2027 editions of the World Aquatics Championships will be hosted in Singapore and Budapest, respectively. — Xinhua



World Aquatics President Husain Al Musallam announces the host city during a press conference held by World Aquatics in Doha, Qatar, 11 February 2024. PHOTO: XIA YIFANG/XINHUA

## South Africa beat DR Congo in shootout to finish third at AFCON



South Africa defender Khuliso Mudau (L) fights for the ball with DR Congo midfielder Aaron Tshibola. PHOTO: AFP

CAPTAIN and goalkeeper Ronwen Williams was the hero again as South Africa beat the Democratic Republic of Congo 6-5 on penalties in the Africa Cup of Nations third place play-off on Saturday.

After a 0-0 draw following 90 minutes in Abidjan, Williams saved spot kicks from Chancel Mbemba and Meschack Elia to give Bafana Bafana the bronze medal in the Ivory Coast.

Before Elia had his kick saved, Siyanda Xulu convert-

ed to give South Africa what proved the decisive lead in the shootout.

Williams saved four shootout kicks last weekend to help South Africa get past Cape Verde after a goalless quarter-final.

DR Congo will regret many misses chances during regular time in a lively match while South Africa maintained a perfect record in third place play-offs having beaten Tunisia on penalties 24 years ago.

South Africa made three changes to the team beaten in a penalty shootout by Nigeria after an incident-packed semi-final three days ago.

Nkosinathi Sibisi, Thapelo Morena and Mhlahi Mayambela came in for suspended Grant Kekana and injured duo Mthobeni Mvala and Percy Tau.

DR Congo retained only two of the side that lost to hosts Ivory Coast in the other semi-final — captain and centre-back Mbemba and midfielder Samuel Moutoussamy.

But eight of the nine who were dropped sat on the bench, leaving French coach Sebastien Desabre with multiple options should he wish to make changes.

### Threatening

Although the Congolese had less of the ball in the opening half at Stade Felix Houphouet-Boigny in the Ivorian economic capital, they were the more threatening team in the attacking third.

Physically imposing Silas Mvumpa came close to breaking the deadlock after just eight minutes, but as he tried to round Williams in the area, the goalkeeper snatched the ball. — AFP

## Madrid's Bellingham to miss Leipzig trip with ankle sprain

REAL Madrid confirmed Sunday midfielder Jude Bellingham has sprained his left ankle and Spanish media report he will be out for up to three weeks.

The England international, Madrid's top goalscorer with 20 strikes in 29 matches across all competitions, will miss the Champions League last 16 visit to RB Leipzig on Tuesday.

Bellingham, who sustained the injury after scoring twice in a crushing 4-0 win over Girona in La Liga on Saturday to put Madrid five points clear at the top, could be fit in time for the second leg on 6 March.

"Bellingham has been diagnosed with a high-grade sprain

in his left ankle," said Madrid in a statement.

The 20-year-old is also likely to miss league clashes with Rayo Vallecano, Sevilla and Valencia.

Madrid have had severe injury problems this season, with Thibaut Courtois, David Alaba and Eder Militao out long-term, while key forward Vinicius Junior has also had various issues.

Bellingham, who arrived from Borussia Dortmund in the summer for 103 million euros (\$111 million), has quickly become a vital player for Carlo Ancelotti's side and is the top scorer in La Liga with 16 goals. — AFP



Real Madrid's English midfielder Jude Bellingham will miss the Champions League last 16 visit to face RB Leipzig on Tuesday. PHOTO: AFP

Indonesia set for presidential vote, ex-general tipped to win

PAGE-14



## ZERO TOLERANCE FOR PAEDOPHILIA

### Hungary's President resigns after pardoning a convicted child abuser

HUNGARY'S President Katalin Novak resigned on Saturday after growing pressure for pardoning a man convicted of being involved in conspiring to conceal an instance of a sex abuse case in a children's home, according to Al Jazeera.

Announcing her resignation, Novak said, "I made a mistake... Today is the last day that I address you as president," she said in a speech broadcast on state television.

"I made a decision to grant a pardon last April, believing that the convict did not abuse the vulnerability of children whom he had overseen. I made a mistake as the pardon and the lack of reasoning was suitable to trigger doubts over the zero tolerance that applies to paedophilia," she added.

On Friday, at least a thousand protesters demonstrated in the nation's capital, calling for her resignation. Opposition parties in Hungary also called for her resignation. — ANI

## Singaporean president calls for avoiding black-and-white terms to seek growth



People visit a temple on the eve of the Lunar New Year in Singapore, on 11 February 2021. PHOTO: PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ THEN CHIH WEY / XINHUA

*Speaking at the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry Lunar New Year Celebration, Tharman emphasizes the importance of avoiding black-and-white perspectives to thrive amidst unprecedented challenges.*

SINGAPOREAN President Tharman Shanmugaratnam has called on the business circle to avoid black-and-white views to seek opportunities in a more uncertain and unpredictable climate.

Tharman made the remarks while addressing the Singapore Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry

Lunar New Year Celebration Saturday.

Noting that international growth is a source of Singapore's prosperity, the president described avoiding black-and-white terms as the basic orientation to live with unprecedented uncertainties.

Stressing that Asia is full of opportunities but also unpredictable and risky, the president told the businesses to take

the opportunities while avoiding large concentrations of bets.

"We have to recognize that the challenges and strengths can both be true at the same time. We have to avoid black-and-white views to seek opportunities in a more uncertain and unpredictable climate," Tharman told Singaporean business leaders. — Xinhua

## Dubai Civil Defence launches world's first mobile floating fire station



Designed for efficient marine emergency response, it reflects Dubai's commitment to enhancing fire services while prioritizing sustainability. PHOTO: ANI

*This pioneering structure offers improved coverage and faster response times, setting a new standard for maritime safety.*

IN a significant initiative that reinforces its leadership in safety infrastructure and innovation, Dubai Civil Defence has launched the world's first sustainable mobile floating fire station. The initiative reflects Dubai's strategy to constantly enhance its fire and rescue services and raise environmental sustainability.

Engineered to provide high efficiency in safeguarding marine activities as well as enhanced coverage and swifter response times, the new mobile floating fire station is set to transform maritime emergency response mechanisms in Dubai. The first of its kind in the world to be sustainable and environmentally friendly,

the floating structure is 70 per cent more cost-effective than traditional marine fire stations.

Lieutenant General Expert Rashid Thani Al Matroushi, Director General of Dubai Civil Defence, said: "The deployment of the mobile floating fire station marks a significant step forward in our journey towards achieving global leadership in safety and security. The inauguration of this station not only demonstrates our dedication to generating innovative safety solutions but also aligns with our commitment to contributing to enhance Dubai's overall infrastructure and services." — ANI