

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

Historic Dala Dockyard hosts sesquicentenary celebration

State-owned dockyards need to consider long-term interests with high capability by building vessels similar to the 150-year-old Dala Dockyard.

SENIOR General Min Aung Hlaing stressed the need to conduct research to use battery power for running vessels.

A ceremony to mark the 150th anniversary of the historic Dala Dockyard took place in Dala Township, Yangon Region, with an address by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing yesterday morning.

On his arrival, the Senior General and party were welcomed by children from families of the staff at Dala Dockyard.

Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Transport and Communications General Mya Tun Oo, Union Minister for Industry Dr Charlie Than and Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein formally opened the No 1 upgraded dock lane, new dock trailer and 1,500-tonne tugboat as a gesture of honouring the sesquicentenary celebration of the dockyard.

The Senior General unveiled the plaque of the heavy renovation of the historic diesel workshop built in 1875 at the shipyard and the historic signboard and sprinkled scented water on the plaque.

Speaking on the occasion, the Senior General said that the 150th anniversary of the shipyard took place at the ancient diesel workshop where they all watched a video clip on records of Inland Water Transport and Dala Dockyard.

He continued that inland water transport must be upgraded to coastal shipping, river freight transport to coastal freight transport, container transport and maritime freight systems to achieve greater connectivity and growth.

The Senior General highlighted that State-owned dockyards need to consider long-term interests with high capabil-



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing tours the exhibition at the sesquicentenary celebration of the Dala Dockyard in Yangon.

ity by building vessels similar to Dala Dockyard.

The Senior General stressed the need to conduct research to use battery power for running vessels.

He added that shipyards must be equipped with necessary facilities such as dock lanes, machinery, construction workshops, forklifts and heavy machinery, and essential equipment for vessel design creation to conform to global standards.

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Salient points from the speech delivered by the Senior General at the 150th anniversary of Dala Dockyard

1. Shipyards must be equipped with necessary facilities such as dock lanes, machinery, construction workshops, forklifts and heavy machinery, and essential equipment for vessel design creation to meet international standards.
2. Inland Water Transport must be upgraded to coastal shipping, river freight transport to coastal freight transport, container transport and maritime freight systems to achieve greater connectivity and growth.
3. State-owned dockyards need to consider long-term interests with high capability by building vessels similar to Dala Dockyard.

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NATIONAL

Residents Urged to Stay Vigilant as Terrorists Use Civilians as Human Shields

TERRORISTS launch attacks while hiding behind public houses in towns and villages.

Residents must exercise caution and awareness to avoid these groups, as they use people as human shields in their temporarily controlled areas to successfully combat terrorism.

(Excerpt from the speech given by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting with members of the Kayah State government, state-level departmental officials, town elders and locals on 4 September 2024.)

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Cybersecurity Law

(State Administration Council Law No 1/2025)

3rd Waxing of Pyatho 1386 ME
1 January 2025

THE State Administration Council hereby enacts this law under Section 419 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Chapter I Name, enforcement and judiciary

1. This law shall be called the Cybersecurity Law.
2. This law shall come into force on the date prescribed, by notification, by the President.
3. (a) Every person who commits any offence under the law shall be liable to punishment: -
 - (1) Offences committed in the country or vehicles and aircraft registered in accord with any existing law of the country
 - (2) Offences committed within the national cyberspace, or other cyberspaces connecting with national cyberspace
- (b) Myanmar citizens residing in foreign countries shall be liable to punishment under this law if they commit any offence under the law.

Chapter II Definition

4. The following expressions in this Law shall have the meanings given hereunder:
 - (a) State means the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
 - (b) Central Committee means Central Committee on Cybersecurity formed by the Union Government.

- (c) Steering Committee means Steering Committee on Cybersecurity formed by the Central Committee.
- (d) Ministry means a ministry that implements the provisions of this law.
- (e) Relevant ministries and organizations refer to Union ministries or Union-level organizations deemed by the Union Government to be related to cybersecurity issues, including the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Home Affairs, and Central Bank of Myanmar.
- (f) Department means a department assigned duties by a ministry that implements the provisions of this law.
- (g) Investigation Unit refers to a task force established by the Steering Committee with the approval of the Central Committee to conduct investigations.
- (h) Cybersecurity refers to the prevention of actions such as destroying, disclosing, accessing, sending, distributing, using, disturbing, transforming, and impeding information, cyber resources, or electronic information without approval. It also includes preventing unauthorized use, disturbance, transformation, and impediment to critical information infrastructures, as well as attempts to do so.
- (i) Cybersecurity service means an industry that offers cybersecurity services using cyber resources or similar technology and equipment. The word contains the services recognized by the ministry.
- (j) Cybersecurity provider refers to any individual or organization authorized to provide cybersecurity services in the country.
- (k) Digital Platform Service is a service that can allow users to express, send, distribute or use data information by using cyber resources and similar systems or equipment.
- (l) Digital Platform Service Provider means any individual or any entity providing digital platform services in the country.
- (m) Information means data, database, voice, text, image, appearance, code, sign, signal, video, software or application.
- (n) Electronic information means information created, sent, received or stored by electronic technology, electromagnetic wave technology or any other specific technology including fax and email.

To be continued

Five National Objectives for 77th Anniversary of Independence Day 2025

1. To address armed conflicts and differing perspectives lawfully, ensuring non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty
2. To safeguard the State with unity and strength of all citizens, guided by the spirit of the Union
3. To conduct a free, fair, and credible general election to establish a genuine, disciplined democratic system
4. To promote balanced development across all sectors of the Union through the collective strength of the entire people
5. To collectively advance politics, the economy, defence, national identity, and spirit with perseverance, diligence, and dedication, guided by the motto: "Keep Moving Forward to Achieve Our Goal"



Gold Market Rate as of 1 January 2025

THE price of one tical (16.329325 grammes) of gold with density of 19.25 grammes per cubic centimetre and above is K5,280,000, as established by the Mineral (Gold) Reference Price Determination Committee.

NATIONAL

IT should always be borne in mind that the culture of democracy suggests the realization of the aspirations of an individual or a group by avoiding antagonism and violence and by pursuing peaceful means.

(An excerpt from the speech delivered by Chairman of the State Administration Council, Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on the occasion to mark the Ninth Anniversary of the Signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) held on 15 October 2024)



Bagan landscape. PHOTO BY KYAW MYO THIHA (IPRD)

Historic Dala Dockyard hosts sesquicentenary ...

FROM PAGE 1

He underlined that relevant maritime departments have to exchange experiences and technologies of the ship-building process under the maritime rules and regulations for the existence of historic dockyards to develop the maritime sector development of the State.

The Senior General emphasized that to ensure the safe and secure operation of inland water transport, efforts must be made not only in riverine transport but also in coastal shipping, coastal cargo transport, and the inte-

gration of coastal and riverine passenger and cargo transport services.

He underscored that by assessing the state's funding support, market availability, and the potential for economic profitability, efforts should be made to enhance the transport of goods along the coastal waterways by leveraging the capabilities of the Dala Dockyard.

SAC Member Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Transport and Communications General Mya Tun Oo reported on the background of the shipyard,

work process, and implementation of shipyard functions in accord with the guidance of the Head of State and plans.

The Senior General presented cash awards to employees of the shipyard and visited the exhibition of the shipyard on documentary photos, scale models of vessels and others displayed at the ancient diesel workshop.

The Senior General inspected the heavy renovation of vessels, testing the scale models of vessels to build the coastal cargo vessels at the worksite of the shipyard and left necessary

guidance.

Also present at the ceremony were Council Joint Secretary General Ye Win Oo, council members, union ministers, union-level dignitaries, senior Tatmadaw officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief, the commander of Yangon Command, officials from the Ministry of Transport and Communications and employees from the shipyard.

Dala Dockyard is the oldest shipyard under the Inland Water Transport. It renovated IWT vessels, created vessel designs and built ships in successive eras

while manufacturing machinery and vessel parts, repairing vessels of other departments and enterprises successfully. As workshops, dock lanes and machinery are old at Dala Dockyard with lease capacity, docklanes were renovated, new machinery installed and buildings improved at the shipyard under the guidance of the Head of State. Hence, Dala Dockyard has plans to implement its new future duties assigned by the IWT, based on developed human resources, by constantly monitoring the changing trading system. — MNA/TTA

Pwe Kauk Waterfall Resort flower festival draws large crowds during New Year holidays

THE Pwe Kauk Waterfall Resort (BE Falls) flower festival drew large crowds during the New Year holidays.

The Pwe Kauk Waterfall Resort (BE Falls) near the PyinOoLwin-Lashio road was upgraded into an international standard resort featuring a 5D LED Digital glass bridge, modern playground, Jumping Cloud, suspension bridge, wooden logs, forest road, photo booth, cafes and restaurant, souvenir shops, local products and food shops. Moreover, it offers talent shows of elephants, free unplugged events, Sky Cable Car, Dinosaur Kingdom, Buggy service and perfect safe-

ty measures.

In addition to the natural waterfall of Pwe Kauk Waterfall

Resort, the florists decorated the BE Falls logo and 3D floral models with flowers and pre-

pared various models using different types of flowers for the BE Falls Flower Festival.



Visitors exploring the Pwe Kauk Waterfall and its surroundings near the PyinOoLwin-Lashio road.

During the New Year holidays, residents and local and foreign visitors visited Pwe Kauk Waterfall (BE Falls) with their families and friends. There are over 10,000 people daily during the flower festival day. Visitors can enjoy the beauty of a natural waterfall, take photos with beautiful flowers, ride a Sky Cable Car, walk on an LED glass bridge, on forest road and floating jigsaw, explore the Dinosaur Kingdom, watch the talent show of elephants, and participate in the singing concert to the accompaniment of the BE Falls Band, and unplugged concert. — MNA/KTZH

NATIONAL

Residents Urged to Prioritize Public Safety Amid Armed Terrorist Threats

ARMED terrorists have been launching attacks by using residential homes and administrative buildings in towns and villages as cover, where they have forcibly settled. They aim to shield themselves from Tatmadaw counterattacks while also persuading temporarily displaced persons to return to their native areas and recruiting new members. That enables terrorists to use civilians as human shields. Tatmadaw is committed to safeguarding the sovereignty of the State and will respond to these threats based on intelligence and prevailing conditions. Therefore, residents in areas where terrorists have taken control must prioritize their safety and protect themselves from being exploited by these groups.

(Excerpt from guidance given by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to Shan State cabinet members and state-level departmental officials on 3 September 2024)

Bagan's sand paintings thrive amid tourist influx

THE sand painting trade community in Bagan said that their paintings are popular and selling well due to the current influx of tourists.

"Trade is currently good because there are more visitors. Many people like them. We also sell them at the pagoda market in Bagan. When customers come, the artists apply Thanaka and hand-paint to attract them. The sand painting is a Bagan-only product. It is a small-scale industry. We have regular customers. Some people buy sand paintings as Bagan souvenirs," said a Bagan sand painting shop owner.

The Bagan sand painting market was good in Thadingyut and Tazaungdine periods, due to

the new designs that Myanmar people like.

It is a 100 per cent hand-made product originated in Bagan that combines painting and colouring with sand obtained from the river.

"Bagan sand painting is a type of painting in which our artists grind the sand obtained from the river into powder and then make various paintings. Then, we mix the sand powder with colours to create images of Bagan pagodas and views, which are called sand paintings. Sometimes, we use glue to make shapes with sand. Sand is divided into big, medium particles and dust," he continued. — Thit Taw/ZN



Photos showcase sand paintings created by an artist.

New Year tours for Yangonites: From long journeys to day trips



Photos showcase Akaukaung with cliff carvings of Buddha images along the Ayeyawady River (above) and pilgrims gathering for the Akaukaung pilgrimage (below).

DURING the New Year holiday, there are many day trip visitors from Yangon Region to Pyay-Akaukaung, Bago and Zalun Pyidawpyan Pagoda, according to some travel companies and tourists.

During the office and school holidays, families, friends and staff were travelling long local and outbound trips, as well as overnight and day trips from Yangon Region to Pyay-Akaukaung, Bago pilgrimage and camps near Yangon. There are trips that are connected with travel companies, or tourists rent a private car and travel on their own.

As part of the Pyay-Akaukaung pilgrimage, people also visit many famous pagodas, including ancient cliff-carving pagodas, Shwesandaw, Shwethamuni and Paungde Swetaw, and as part of the day trip, people pay homage to the pagodas such as Shwethalyaung Pagoda, Hinthagon Pagoda, Shwemawdaw Pagoda and Kanbawzathadi

Palace in Bago.

"We visited Thanlyin and places of interest nearby during this long holiday, as the children were on holiday and we will not be going on long trips," said a housewife.

Rising local travel trend in Thadingyut and Tazaungdine has continued its momentum till the Christmas and New Year holidays with aforesaid trips. — MT/ZN



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NATIONAL

13 dams in Bago Region support winter crops, summer paddy fields

ACCORDING to the Bago Region Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department, 13 dams in the Bago and Nyaunglebin districts, Bago Region help support winter crops and summer paddy cultivation.

These 13 dams, including the Mazin, Aline Ni, Shwepyi-3, Zalathtor, Wakhatoke, Salu, Shwelaung and Kotukwe reservoirs and Kawliya, Pyinpongyi and Bawni reservoirs in Nyaunglebin are supplying irrigation water to farmlands in the region.

These dams in Bago Region support over 80,000 acres in Bago District and more than 60,000 acres in Nyaunglebin District. Among them, the Kawliya Reservoir in Nyaunglebin has the capacity to store water for more than 160,000 acres, benefiting a wide area, including Thanetpin, Kawa, and Waw townships in Bago Region, as well as Kayan



The Moeyungyi Dam. PHOTO: KANU

Township in Yangon Region. The Moeyungyi Dam serves as the main water source for these areas, providing crucial irrigation

throughout the region.

In the 2023-2024 season, Bago District successfully cultivated 19,860 acres of summer

paddy, and plans are in place to expand cultivation to 26,325 acres in 2024-2025. This year, 6,465 acres of summer pad-

dy have already been planted. Following the harvest of monsoon paddy, farmers are now successfully cultivating other crops, including peas, beans, and groundnuts. The third crop known as summer paddy will begin planting on 1 February. The irrigation dams will continue to supply the necessary water for these fields.

Under the guidance of the Head of State, Bago Region has successfully implemented a three-crop system, including monsoon paddy, various types of beans and summer paddy which began in 2023. This year, the region continues to expand its agricultural production thanks to the consistent water supply from the dams making it possible to increase production from two crops to three regardless of the season. — Nyein Thu (MNA)/KZL

Korean sweet potato sees surge in popularity this year



Korean sweet potato gains popularity in the domestic market.

ACCORDING to traders from Taunggyi Township, Korean sweet potato (white sweet potato) has been popular recently in the domestic market and most orders are placed from Yangon Region.

Mainly grown in Hopong, it is a Korean species sweet potato and it is softer than yellow sweet potato and purple sweet potato.

“It is a Korean species. It is mainly grown in Hopong. In

last year, the plantation of the Korean sweet potato wasn't much as large as yellow and purple sweet potatoes, and wasn't popular much. But the price is higher than yellow and purple sweet potatoes. Yangon is the top among our customers. Now it has been more popular in the market and the number of consumers has also risen,” said Ma Sandi Tayar, a vegetables and fruits retail and wholesale distributor from Taunggyi Township.

Last November, local species sweet potatoes received orders from Tachilek, Myeik and Bago and compared to yellow sweet potato, purple sweet potato trade increased as it is mainly used in making snacks. — Thit Taw/ZS

Yangon leads in purchases of Kyaikto's best-selling pomelo

KYAIKTO township's fruit market said that Yangon is the main buyer of pomelo from their township in Mon State.

Although its price has slightly improved, they are still selling well, and most of them are bought from Yangon, Mandalay, and Taunggyi, with Yangon's highest orders.

“Pomelo is no longer as cheap as those from the rainy season. The price has slightly increased. Everyone eats it as they like it. So it sells well. Orders are made from Yangon, Mandalay, and Taunggyi. There are warehouses in Mandalay. Yangon tops among buyers,” said a pomelo trader in Kyaikto township.

Mawlamyine's fruits will run out in February, so Thai pomelo will enter the market.

“The fruit yield was quite low last year. It was almost out of stock this time last year. Pomelo is available until February. Then, Mon's sweet fruits



Pomelo fruits thriving at Kyaikto farm.

are finished. Sour pomelo from Thailand will enter. Ours is produced in Kyaikto. It is also produced in Mawlamyine to a smaller amount. The price will be quite good in February,” she explained.

Pomelo is mainly produced in Mon State, including Kyaikto, Bilin, Thaton, Mawlamyine, Mudon and Ye, and job opportunities for pomelo farmers were reportedly good. — Thit Taw/ZN

The people are urged to receive vaccination of COVID-19 without fail as full-time vaccination of COVID-19 and receiving booster shots can effectively mitigate infection of the virus, severe suffering from the disease and increase of death rate due to the disease.

NATIONAL

Magway Region tourism witnesses 22% growth in 2024

OVER 1.96 million domestic and international tourists visited destinations in the Magway Region from January to November 2024, according to the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism of Magway Region.

The number of visitors increased by approximately 22 per cent year-on-year. The region is home to numerous notable sites, including historical landmarks that continue to attract both local and foreign travellers. Popular destinations include Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda, Myathalun Pagoda, Minhla and Kwechaung Forts, and Yenangyoung Japky Road and 99-window House.

The region plans to organize special events such as a golf tour from 21 to 26 January 2024 at golf courses in Magway, Minbu, Thayet, and Aunglan for further tourism promotion. Additionally, an adventure cycling tour near the Japky

Road and the natural mountain ranges of Yenangyoung will be held in January.

The Directorate of Hotels and Tourism is collaborating with relevant departments to establish Magway as a prominent destination by leveraging its historical and cultural heritage. Key tourism areas in the region include Magway, Minbu, Minhla, Taung-dwinyi, Natmauk, Pwintbyu, Salin, Yenangyoung, Sale, and Pakokku.

Currently, the region has about 50 officially licensed hotels and guesthouses. Efforts are ongoing to enhance service quality provided by these facilities to ensure a comfortable stay for all visitors. — ASH/TMT



This image shows the Japky Road near Yenangyoung.



This photo depicts the Magway Myathalun Pagoda with pilgrims.

New EV charging stations on Yangon-Mandalay expressway ready in 3 months



A promotional event featuring BYD electric vehicles and a demonstration of a charging station.

ACCORDING to the Ministry of Construction, building additional EV charging stations along the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway (the Nay Pyi Taw-Yangon section) is expected to be completed within three months.

EV charging stations being constructed include one at the Bawnetgyi rest area and three at the 115-mile Pyu rest area.

A total of 19 charging stations have already been established, including

four in Nay Pyi Taw, five in Yangon, five in Mandalay, and five along the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway across the country.

Since 1 April 2023, electric vehicles have been exempted from road usage fees, and efforts are underway to enable their operation on major highways such as the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway, Yangon-Toungoo-Meiktila-Mandalay Union Highway, Yangon-Pyay Road, and Yangon-Pathein Road.

These EV express vehicles are designed to operate without noise, helping to reduce high temperatures, air pollution, and fuel consumption, while promoting environmental preservation. Plans are also being made to provide passengers with a comfortable and eco-friendly travel experience. — ASH/MKKS

'Pyusa' (Bewitch) set to premiere nationwide in Jan

THE Shwe Myanmar Film Production's movie 'Pyusa' (Bewitch) is scheduled to premiere in major cinemas nationwide around the second week of January.

Lu Nyo Chaw and Mae Min Bon co-wrote the film's storyline, and Ma Min Bon is also taking the roles of screenwriter and director.

"Director Mae Min Bon needs no introduction. This movie poses intriguing questions: Who will bewitch whom? Will it be driven by love or hate? And to what extent? It's sure to captivate the audience, so don't miss it," said actress Khaing Hnin Wai, who stars in the film.

The cast of 'Pyusa' includes acclaimed actors, such as Academy Award winners Nay Win and Soe Myat Thuza, alongside Shein Tin Htoo, Khaing Hnin Wai, Yadana Bo, Chuu Lay, and numerous other supporting actors. — ASH/TKO



This image showcases a poster for the 'Pyusa' film.

Daily newspapers available online

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News and Periodicals Enterprise



CBM to accelerate battle against digital wallet scams

THE Central Bank of Myanmar announced on 31 December to combat digital wallet scams.

CBM stated that it will initiate investigations and prosecutions against those involved in phishing scams and ensure robust enhancement to digital payment security in cooperation with the relevant financial institutions, in the exercise of the power conferred by Central Bank of Myanmar Law and the Financial Institution Law.

The mobile wallet has become a growing trend due to its convenience and contactless payment. However, various digital wallet scams occur by

asking for the personal information of the users, OTP codes, and passwords through phishing or other credential items. Scammers target digital wallet users with deceptive tactics to gain access to the account and steal money by impersonating mobile providers and SIM swapping.

CBM has been conducting awareness campaigns through websites, applications and social media platforms to prevent telecom frauds, e-wallet scams and financial transaction scams and disseminate steps to secure mobile wallets.

Therefore, digital wallet users need to use only the SIM card registered with

the Ministry of Transport and Communications and use authorized mobile service agents only to avoid scams. They must keep personal information and avoid posting them on social media. Furthermore, they must not share login details, OTP code and password with anyone, even those claiming to be from the bank. Cybercriminals use phishing URLs to obtain information. Users must not open the link or download applications from suspicious emails, SMS or websites. If they detect any scam, they must contact the call centre of the service providers immediately, CBM urged.

CBM has been governing mobile

payment systems to mitigate possible loss. Additionally, the State's Supervisory Committee on Mobile Financial Service Providers has been monitoring fraudulent activities. They announced Standard Operation Procedures to make a complaint if any scam is identified.

Relevant authorities are inspecting scams and working together with service providers to recover their financial loss through personal information, OTP and passwords without the user's negligence. CBM has been accelerating efforts to battle against those scammers and fraudulent institutions, CBM warned users. — NN/KK

MMFA to offer Branch Performance Training (Batch 1) on 18 Jan

THE Myanmar Microfinance Association (MMFA) will open Branch Performance Training (Batch 1) on 18-19 January 2024 from 9 am to 4 pm at the MMFA office in Yangon.

The course is tailored to operation managers, senior branch managers, branch managers, assistant branch managers, supervisors, and individuals engaged in the Human Resources Department, Training Department and a microfinance company and those who are interested in exploring a career in the microfinance sector.

Branch Performance Training will cover Social Performance Management

and COC, Efficiency and Sustainability Management, Financial Management, Portfolio Quality Management and Risk and Compliance, HR and MIS, with Certified Trainers of Frankfurt School of Finance & Management's Certify Trainer & Microfinance Professional Myanmar (MPM).

The fee is K120,000 for non-members. Members can enjoy a K20,000 discount. Trainees will receive a completion certificate. Those enthusiastic can enrol in the course by 13 January through <https://shorturl.at/DiFA3>. For further details, individuals can contact 09 965209010 during office hours. — NN/KK



Diligent female workers sewing garments at their workplace.

SWD invites trainees for school-based domestic vocational training



Trainees keenly engaged in their practical session.

THE Department of Social Welfare under the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement will be recruiting trainees for school-based domestic vocational training courses at its schools in ten big cities including Yangon.

The seventh training will take place at its schools located in Yangon, Mandalay, Mawlamyine, Patheingyi, Tounghoo, Myittha, Pyaw, Sittway, Ywangan and Dawei from 6 January to 14 February 2025.

The training will provide sewing courses (women,

children, men's clothing, and coats), domestic handicraft training (crochet, embroidery, sewing), baking, cooking and floral design training with domestic and foreign experts through technical and practical approaches.

There are eight batches every academic year, with each batch taking six weeks. Moreover, schools in Yangon, Mandalay, Mawlamyine and Patheingyi offer other special training courses.

Those interested individuals can contact the re-

spective domestic vocational schools in regions and states.

For further detail, individuals can enquire about the Yangon school in Bahan through contact numbers 09 427900046, Mandalay schools through 09 4036798, Mawlamyine through 057 2027166, Tounghoo through 054 2823571, Myittha through 074 2522558, Pyaw through 09 262757899, Patheingyi through 042 25373, 042 21037, Sittway through 043 22067, Ywangan through 081 4768015 and Dawei through 059 2024009. — NN/KK

OPINION

Emphasize preventive measures against fire in all seasons

IT is open season, so everyone must be cautious about potential fire outbreaks that can harm people's lives and property. Taking preventive measures against fire is essential at all times. Myanmar people recognize fire as one of five dangerous matters naturally imposed on society despite putting out fires as much as possible.

As major cities grow across Myanmar, public residential areas become crowded with high-rise buildings and dense populations.

The people of Myanmar face various disasters, with 70 per cent caused by fires. Climate change and a growing population in densely populated areas contribute to the increasing frequency of fires. To address this, the Myanmar Fire Brigade works to raise public awareness about fire prevention measures throughout the year. However, the cooperation of local communities, authorities, and fire brigades is essential to prevent fire-related dangers proactively. By working together and following preventive guidelines, communities can reduce the risk and impact of fires, ensuring greater safety and resilience against such disasters.

Fire outbreaks tragically claim many lives. Global records show 82.7 per cent of fire-related deaths occur in public houses, while 60 per cent of injuries happen at home. To reduce such risks, precautions are essential: handle stoves with care, keep fuel and explosives away from heat sources, and avoid letting children or the elderly cook unattended. Additionally, stoves should be adequately covered to prevent accidents. Prioritizing fire safety in daily routines can significantly reduce casualties and injuries caused by fires. Moreover, fire extinguishers must be systematically placed at relevant locations to ensure they are accessible to all residents.

The people of Myanmar face various disasters, with 70 per cent caused by fires. Climate change and a growing population in densely populated areas contribute to the increasing frequency of fires. To address this, the Myanmar Fire Brigade works to raise public awareness about fire prevention measures throughout the year. However, the cooperation of local communities, authorities, and fire brigades is essential to prevent fire-related dangers proactively. By working together and following preventive guidelines, communities can reduce the risk and impact of fires, ensuring greater safety and resilience against such disasters.

The proximity of structures, extensive use of electronics, and storage of explosives or fuel increase the risk of fires, potentially causing significant losses that are regrettable. The Department of Fire Services recorded 18,336 fires across Myanmar a decade from 2013 to 2022, averaging 1,800 incidents annually. Each year, these fires caused an estimated K15 billion in property damage.

Between January and September 2024, there were 953 fires nationwide in Myanmar, resulting in 76 deaths. The most common causes included electrical short circuits, negligence, and kitchen fires. This highlights the urgent need for improved fire prevention measures year-round and prioritizing rescue efforts during incidents. Additionally, both men and women should participate in firefighting training to learn modern techniques and safety practices for effective fire prevention and response to serve fire prevention and rescue measures in time.

A Place for Heroes and Talents

By Yin Nwe Ko

THE military is often viewed primarily as a force for national defence and security. However, its contributions extend far beyond the battlefield. The military not only produces disciplined and skilled soldiers but also plays a significant role in the cultural, social, and economic development of a nation. One notable example is Kyaw Swe, a former soldier who became a celebrated actor in Myanmar. Now, let me explore the various ways in which the military contributes to the country, highlighting its role in producing good citizens and fostering talent in diverse fields.

The military is a place where disciplined and skilled soldiers are trained. Soldiers learn to follow rules, stay focused, and complete their duties with care. The military provides tough training that builds both physical strength and mental focus. It also teaches important skills, such as teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving. At the same time, soldiers develop strong moral values and good character. They learn honesty, loyalty, and respect for others, which are important qualities for any person. These values help soldiers not only in their military duties but also in their personal lives, making them good soldiers and responsible individuals.

Kyaw Swe is a great example of a military member who made significant contributions to the arts. Before becoming a famous actor, he served in the military, where he gained discipline, courage, and a strong sense of responsibility. These qualities played an important role in his success as an artist. Military training helps develop focus, determination, and resilience, which can enhance artistic talents. For Kyaw Swe, the discipline and leadership he learned in the army allowed him to create meaningful and powerful films that inspired many people. His life shows how military experience can help individuals succeed in the world of art and culture. Here, the readers will

see his great talents.

Kyaw Swe, a famous actor, was known for his roles in action, romance, and natural-themed films. However, he directed only one war film, "Pearl Tears", which became a very popular movie. Because of his experience as a soldier, Kyaw Swe faced no difficulties in directing this war film. The movie became so successful that it left a remarkable mark in Myanmar's film history.

Although Kyaw Swe acted in many films with actress Khin Yu May, "Pearl Tears" was considered their best work together. Their performances in the movie were so perfect that their on-screen chemistry reached new heights. Kyaw Swe was a talented and outstanding actor, admired by many in the Myanmar film industry. Unfortunately, despite his skills, he never won an Academy Award. His expressions and actions spoke louder than words, showcasing deep meaning and emotion.

Kyaw Swe was born in Bago on 10 February 1924, a Sunday. His birth name was Maung Aung Thein, and his parents affectionately called him "Mauni". He was the third child out of five siblings. His father, U Ba Hnit, was a government officer, and his mother, Daw Ohn Sein, was a homemaker. When his family moved to Yangon, he attended ABM School in Kyimyindine Township until the second grade. He later continued his studies at St John's School for Boys, where he passed the tenth grade in 1942.

Early Life as a Soldier

During the colonial period, Maung Aung Thein joined the British Royal Air Force and trained in Myitkyina. When World War II broke out, he walked from Myitkyina to Bago with a group of seven companions. Along the way, five of them died, leaving only him and one other to survive. Once he returned to Bago, he joined the Burma Independence Army (BIA) with a strong patriotic

spirit. He served under Captain Bala as a sergeant major. After the BIA was reorganized into the Burma Defense Army (BDA), he continued to serve as an officer.

During the Japanese occupation, he worked as a police officer in Moulmein (Mawlamyine) and Bago while secretly opposing the Japanese. He joined the resistance movement and fought against fascism. After the war, he planned to attend a police officer training course in Mandalay. However, his friends convinced him to pursue a career in acting instead.

Beginning of Acting Career

Kyaw Swe struggled during his early days in the film industry. He faced many challenges in becoming a film actor. After several attempts, he met director U Tin Nwe, who introduced him to U Ba Shin of British Burma Films. U Ba Shin admired his handsome looks and confident personality. However, U Ba Shin set a unique condition: Kyaw Swe had to dive from the rooftop of a three-story building to qualify as the second lead actor. Kyaw Swe agreed.

At that time, Director U Ba Shin was filming "Saw Ya San Sha" in Mandalay with lead actor Tin Pe and actress May Myint. A One and British Burma Films had a habit of coming up with unique ways to film movies, so U Ba Shin organized a casting event by having people dive from the rooftop of a three-storey building in downtown Mandalay to generate public interest in his ongoing movie. Among the excited audience was a young man named Maung Aung Thein. When it was his turn, he bravely dived from the rooftop and landed gracefully on the ground, impressing U Ba Shin. Consequently, U Ba Shin chose him as the second lead actor and gave him the stage name "Kyaw Swe". From that moment on, Maung Aung Thein became known as the actor Kyaw Swe.

Success in Film

Kyaw Swe was passionate



One notable example is Kyaw Swe, a former soldier who became a celebrated actor in Myanmar.

about improving Myanmar's film industry. In 1969, he went to Japan to study filmmaking. After returning from Japan, he wrote scripts, acted, and directed his films, establishing his own film production company, "Moe Films". One of the notable films produced by his company was "Pearl Tears". This film was a large-scale production focused on the Anti-Chinese Riots, co-starring with actress Khin Yu May. Kyaw Swe's films were known for their emphasis on cinematography, resulting in visually stunning scenes that were vibrant and expressive. Throughout his career, Kyaw Swe acted with many famous actresses such as May Shin, May Myint, Mary Myint, May Thit, Myint Myint Khin, San Shar Tin, Tin Tin Mu, Hnin Hsi, Khin Lay Swe, Khin Nann Myint, and Khin Yu May. Most of his later films were produced with Khin

Yu May as his co-star.

Moreover, Kyaw Swe was a former soldier, and his military experience greatly enhanced his acting skills. Having served in the military, he brought a deep sense of realism and authenticity to his roles, which was evident in every performance. His disciplined approach and the intensity he conveyed in his characters made his portrayals stand out. He was not just playing a role; he was bringing his own life experiences into his work, which resonated deeply with audiences.

In the movie "Pearl Tears", Kyaw Swe's portrayal of a soldier was nothing short of remarkable. The film, which dealt with significant themes and dramatic scenes, required a strong and believable performance, and Kyaw Swe delivered just that. His depiction of the character's struggles and resilience was

powerful and moving. Even as a child, I remember being truly captivated by his performance, which was both convincing and compelling.

Kyaw Swe's military background not only made him a seasoned actor but also brought a sense of authenticity to his roles. His ability to convincingly portray a soldier in "Pearl Tears" is a testament to his talent and dedication. His performances were not just acts; they were reflections of his own experiences and understanding. This depth and realism made a lasting impression on me and undoubtedly on many others who watched his films.

In 1976, while filming "Saturday Night, 9 pm" with director Ye Baw Thet Shay, Kyaw Swe got a stroke. He passed away on 15 August 1982, at the age of 58. He appeared in 52 films throughout his career. Beyond his artistic contributions, Kyaw Swe was a patriot who fought for Myanmar's independence. He remains a highly respected figure in both Myanmar's film and history.

In brief, Kyaw Swe's life that had much experience in military service, and career serve as a remarkable example of dedication, talent, and patriotism. From his early days as a soldier to his success in the film industry, he demonstrated the values of discipline, resilience, and a deep love for his country. His contributions to both Myanmar's independence and its cultural heritage have left a lasting impact. Kyaw Swe's story inspires us to recognize the potential of individuals to excel in multiple fields and reminds us of the profound connection between discipline and creativity. His legacy continues to be celebrated, making him a true hero and a symbol of national pride.

Confession: (Writing in memory of (U) Kyaw Swe is special to me because my late father bore a striking resemblance to the famous actor (U) Kyaw Swe.)

Milan says no to all outdoor smoking in Italy's toughest ban

Milan has implemented Italy's strictest ban on smoking outdoors, effective 1 January 2025.

SMOKERS in Italy's financial and fashion capital of Milan risk being fined for lighting up on city streets or crowded public areas, after the country's toughest ban comes into effect Wednesday.

Those who defy the new prohibition in the polluted northern Italian city could be fined between 40 to 240 euros (\$41 to \$249), a punishment that does not sit well with all residents.

"The new law is excessive in my opinion. I agree not to smoke indoors, not to smoke near an elderly person or a child, but banning smoking outdoors for me somewhat limits a person's freedom," local plumber Morgan Ishak, 46, told AFP ahead of the ban.

Milan's air quality ordinance, passed in 2020 by the city council, called for progressively stricter bans on smoking.

Starting in 2021, it was forbidden to smoke in parks and playgrounds as well as bus stops and sports facilities.

The latest smoking ban, effective January 1, applies to "all public spaces, including streets", with the exception of "isolated places where it is possible to maintain a distance of at least 10 metres from other people", according to the text.

Local officials say the measure is aimed at reducing particulates in the air to "improve the quality of the city's air, to protect the health of citizens, including protection from passive smoking in public places, also frequented by children", according to a statement. Stellina Lombardo, 56, a non-smoker, said she supported the harsher smoking ban.

"I agree very much because smoking is responsible for a lot of pollution, in this era when we suffer a lot from climate change such a measure can help to scale down the effects of pollution that is devastating the planet," she said.

The ban — which comes ahead of the Milan-Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics — does not apply to e-cigarettes.

Situated in the middle of the industrial Po Valley and choked with road traffic, Milan is one of Europe's most polluted cities in terms of air. Italy's first national smoking ban was introduced in 1975, prohibiting smoking on public transportation, in classrooms, and other specified areas. By 1995, the ban was extended to public administration areas, and in 2005, it covered all enclosed public spaces, positioning Italy as a European leader in anti-smoking measures.

SOURCE: AFP



Milan's new tough ban on smoking on city streets or crowded public areas does not apply to e-cigarettes. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

NATIONAL

Mandalay Shwesin Academy gold shop robbery: 2 suspects arrested

TWO male suspects involved in the robbery of the Shwesin Academy gold shop in Mandalay have been apprehended.

The robbery occurred at 5:30 pm on 18 December 2024 at the Shwesin Academy gold shop located on 77th Street, between 36th and 37th Streets in Mahaangmyay Township, Mandalay Region. The shop owner Daw Win Win Aye (52) and staff were inside when three masked men arrived on an unregistered motorcycle.

One of the men stayed outside while the other two entered the store, brandishing pistols to threaten the staff. They then took gold items from three plastic boxes containing gold bars, chains and rings weighing approximately 3.55 visses (valued at around K3 billion). The authorities have launched an investigation under Section 392 of the Penal Code, aiming to identify and arrest the perpetrators.

Security forces apprehended one of the suspects involved in the robbery of the Shwesin Academy gold shop in Mandalay and recovered part of the stolen gold.

Authorities traced a Honda CBR 150 (licence plate 36W/96027) motorcycle used



The arrested offenders are shown with the stolen gold and motorbikes used in the robbery (left), while two suspects remain at large (centre and right)

in the robbery at a repair shop named "Alinn Yaung" in Chanayethazan Township. The vehicle had been left there by a man seeking to sell it. Security forces conducted surveillance and arrested Phyto Thet Aung (aka) Phyto Lay (25) from Gwaytyigon Village, Patheingyi Township, at 4:20 pm on 23 December 2024 near the "K-Mandalay" tea shop in Yemon Taung Ward, Mahaangmyay Township.

During interrogation, Phyto Thet Aung revealed that he had hidden a portion of the stolen gold in his home. Security forces searched his residence and recovered gold items weighing over 62 grammes stored inside an air cooler.

Following the confession of Phyto Thet Aung (aka) Phyto Lay, security forces apprehended an-

other suspect named Zin Myo Htike (aka) Zin Myo (29) from Mawra Giwha Ward, Chanayethazan Township. He was arrested at 2:30 am on 24 December 2024 at his residence.

During the operation, authorities seized a Honda Click motorcycle (SGG-47W/12410) used in the robbery and gold items weighing approximately 24 grammes hidden on the upper floor of his home.

Subsequently, security forces searched the residence of the remaining suspect Aung Myo Thu in Ward 4, Myawady, Kayin State at 10:30 pm on 25 December 2024. Although Aung Myo Thu was not found, investigators discovered gold items weighing 78.5 grammes hidden in the air compressor compartment of a Honda Fit (KYN-47B/5913) used

by the offender.

According to confessions from Phyto Thet Aung (aka) Phyto Lay and Zin Myo Htike (aka) Zin Myo, they along with Aung Myo Thu and Win Myat Thu planned and carried out the robbery at the "Shwe Sin Academy" gold shop.

The group convened in Mandalay on 10 December after Phyto Thet Aung and Zin Myo Htike travelled there to meet Aung Myo Thu and Win Myat Thu who were both residing in Myawady. During the meeting, Aung Myo Thu reportedly possessed two pistols which were used in the robbery. The group scouted the vicinity of the gold shop for about seven days by monitoring security and surroundings.

After observing that the gold shop's security guard had left at 5 pm on 18 December, the suspects

proceeded with the robbery. Phyto Thet Aung, Aung Myo Thu and Win Myat Thu approached the shop using a Honda Click motorcycle while Zin Myo Htike rode a Honda CBR motorcycle to create a distraction by driving noisily around the area.

Aung Myo Thu and Win Myat Thu entered the shop with pistols, accompanied by Phyto Thet Aung. They threatened the shop staff at gunpoint and stole various gold items including necklaces, bracelets, rings and pendants.

The stolen items were divided into portions with Aung Myo Thu and Win Myat Thu taking one share and Phyto Thet Aung and Zin Myo Htike each receiving their share. Instead of weighing the items accurately, they estimated portions based on the size and type of jewellery. Aung Myo Thu had reportedly acquired the pistols from an unidentified individual in Myawady.

The arrested offenders Phyto Thet Aung and Zin Myo Htike are being prosecuted under relevant laws. Security forces are continuing efforts to apprehend the remaining suspects Aung Myo Thu and Win Myat Thu and recover any remaining stolen items. — MNA/KZL

2-day illegal trade crackdown confiscates goods worth K3.462B

UNDER the supervision of the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee, efforts to combat the illicit trade are continued effectively by the law.

On 31 December, the combined teams supervised by the Customs Department impounded 550.1 grammes of gems supposed to be diamonds (valued at K3.42 billion) without official documents from the luggage of an Indian passenger travelling from Thailand at the Yangon International Airport. The action was conducted following Customs procedures.

Similarly, the combined on-duty teams nabbed an unregistered Mitsubishi Pajero (worth

approximately K20 million) at the Yadanabon bridge combined checkpoint in Sagaing Township, a Toyota Hilux carrying foodstuffs (valued at K2.16 million) without official documents near the Shwethanlwin tollgate in Phayagyi, Bago Region, and 1.538 tonnes of illegal timbers (worth K62,040) in Pyay district. The action was taken under the Forest Law.

The Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee reported five arrests on 31 December 2024 and 1 January 2025, confiscating illegal goods worth approximately K3.462 billion. — MNA/MKKS

K575 mln drug seizure in Chanayethazan, Mandalay

THE Myanmar Police Force has reported the seizure of heroin and stimulant tablets worth K575 million in Chanayethazan Township, Mandalay Region.

Acting on a tip-off, a combined team, including members of the Anti-Drug Police Force, searched a HiAce vehicle at the corner of 35th Street and 55th Street in Chanayethazan Township at 3 pm on 27 December. The vehicle, driven by Hein Thu Aung with Than Zaw Nyein, was found to contain 2.8 kilogrammes of heroin.

Further investigations led to the arrest of Thein Naing Oo, who was responsible for transporting the drugs. He was apprehended at his residence



Arrestees are seen with seized drugs and vehicle.

at the corner of 54 (A) Street and 32 (A) Street in the same township at 3:30 pm on the same day. Authorities seized an additional 8.2 kilogrammes of heroin and 200,000 stimulant tablets from the location.

The police have initiated legal proceedings against the suspects and are continuing investigations to uncover others involved in the drug trafficking network. — MNA/MKKS

Japan marks 1 year since powerful Noto quake, rebuilding remains slow

As of late December, 21,000 residents in Ishikawa Prefecture remain evacuated, with infrastructure restoration and demolition incomplete.



A powerful 7.5 magnitude earthquake struck the Noto Peninsula in Ishikawa Prefecture, Japan, on 1 January 2024. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

JAPAN on Wednesday marked one year since a powerful earthquake struck the Noto Peninsula in central Japan, leaving at least 500 dead, including those who succumbed to health issues afterwards, as efforts towards full recovery continue in the hardest-hit areas.

Some 21,000 residents in Ishikawa Prefecture, which faces the Sea of Japan, remain evacuated or in temporary housing as of late December,

with infrastructure restoration and the demolition of collapsed homes still incomplete.

The Ishikawa prefectural government held a ceremony in Wajima, one of the areas hardest hit by the earthquake, to offer condolences to the victims and pledge efforts towards reconstruction.

“There are many challenges left. To accomplish restoration and reconstruction efforts as soon as possible is the way to comfort the souls of the vic-

tims,” Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba said at the event.

He expressed his intention to revise laws concerning disaster relief and countermeasures in a bid to strengthen social welfare and promote government-private cooperation in devastated regions.

Those in attendance observed a moment of silence for the victims at 4:10 pm, the same time the magnitude-7.6 quake occurred on New Year’s Day last year. — Kyodo

340 injured in Christmas, New Year revelries in Philippines

THE Philippines’ Department of Health (DOH) said on Wednesday it has tallied 340 firecracker-related injuries nationwide during Christmas and New Year revelries.

The DOH said that the total number of injuries recorded from 22 December

2024 to 1 January 2025 was 34 per cent lower than that in the same period of the previous year.

According to the health department, nearly 60 per cent of the injuries were caused by prohibited powerful firecrackers. — Xinhua

BRIEF: LIFESTYLE

Patients brave mental health desert in Mauritania

MAURITANIA’S mental health system is extremely limited, with just one psychiatric ward for the country’s five million people. The Nouakchott Centre for Specialised Medicine, the only facility of its kind, has only 20 beds available for psychiatric patients.

Sidi, a 22-year-old man suffering from psychosis, was admitted after a series of violent episodes linked to his failed attempt to emigrate to the United States and his subsequent drug use. His father, Mohamed Lemine, a retired army officer, described how his son’s mental health deteriorated after being turned down for a bank loan to fund his emigration.

At the centre, patients like Sidi often stay for only a few days due to limited beds and staff. Many patients travel long distances for treatment, and families are integral to the care process, often accompanying their loved ones during their stay.

Mauritania’s mental health professionals, like Dr. Mohamed Lemine Abeidi, are all trained abroad due to the lack of local training programs. Psychiatrist Dia Al Housseynou, who brought mental health care to Mauritania in the 1970s, reflects on the country’s progress.

Yet, despite improvements, the system remains overwhelmed, with traditional treatments often being sought before hospital care. — AFP

Belgium becomes first EU country to ban disposable e-cigarettes

BELGIUM has become the first EU country to ban disposable e-cigarettes, a move aimed at protecting young people’s health. Starting 1 January, the sale of single-use vapes will be prohibited as part of Belgium’s national anti-tobacco plan. With the European Union aiming to create a tobacco-free generation by 2040, the ban on disposable vapes is seen as a significant step towards reducing smoking rates across the 27-nation bloc.

Vapes, often promoted as a less harmful alternative to traditional cigarettes, have gained immense popularity, especially among young people. Their appealing flavours, such as apple, watermelon, and cola, along with their sleek, disposable design, make them highly attractive. However, critics argue that these vapes, despite being marketed as safer, still contain nicotine, a highly addictive substance. There are growing concerns that

the use of disposable vapes may serve as a gateway to smoking traditional tobacco products.

Health experts warn that nicotine consumption is particularly damaging to the adolescent brain, potentially leading to long-term addiction and increasing the likelihood of using other drugs. Additionally, the environmental impact of disposable vapes, which contribute to significant plastic waste, has also sparked concern. — AFP



Vapes, often promoted as a less harmful alternative to traditional cigarettes, have gained popularity in recent years. **PHOTO: VISUAL ART**

ECONOMY WORLD

Landmark trade corridor reports record annual train volume in 2024

The departure marked the first time the annual train volume reached 10,000 on the new western land-sea corridor, reflecting a 5.1 per cent year-on-year increase.



A crane uploads containers at a railway container distribution center in Qinzhou City. **PHOTO: ZHANG AILIN/XINHUA/FILE**

THE New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor, a key logistics network connecting China's western regions to global markets — the ASEAN market in particular — has surpassed a milestone volume of 10,000 rail-sea intermodal train journeys this year, according to Beibu

Gulf Port Group.

On Monday morning, a cargo train carrying 90 containers departed from the Qinzhou railway container center station in south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, bound for Chongqing, an inland metropolis in southwestern

China.

The departure marked the first time that the annual train volume has reached 10,000 on the corridor, commonly known as the new western land-sea corridor, reflecting a 5.1 per cent year-on-year increase, the company said. — Xinhua

Indonesia's e-commerce gears up for 2025 with rising sales, promising prospects

INDONESIAN e-commerce is poised to face challenges and pursue ambitious targets in 2025, building on the experiences and successes of previous years.

Among the leading platforms is Tokopedia, which has significantly expanded the market for local micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) products, particularly

through its collaboration with TikTok to develop ShopTokopedia.

TikTok, the ByteDance-developed social media platform, remains the most popular in Indonesia, with 165.1 million users as of July 2024, according to Statista, the highest figure globally.

"In 2025, we will remain focused on empowering local sellers, including MSMEs, to thrive in the digital economy and ultimately make local brands the primary choice for Indonesians," said Aditia Grasio Nelwan, head of communications at Tokopedia and TikTok E-commerce, in an interview with Xinhua. — Xinhua



A merchant promotes a product via livestreaming on the TikTok in Sleman district, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, on 8 September 2023. **PHOTO: GUNG SUPRIYANTO/XINHUA/FILE**

South Sudan says it plans to resume oil production

SOUTH Sudan plans to resume production operations in block three and seven," the director general for Petroleum Authority, Kon John Akot, said in a letter dated 19 December.

The letter to the president of Dar Petroleum Operating County (DPOC) — among the firms in a consortium running South Sudan's oilfield — requested the firm "promptly share DPOC's Production Resumption Plans".

The landlocked and impoverished country's vital oil had been shipped to global markets from Port Sudan on the Red Sea, with Khartoum taking a cut as a transit fee.

AFP was unable to independently verify if production had restarted.

But the pipeline was damaged in February clashes between Sudan's army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, dramatically denting the young nation's economy.

However, a DPOC letter dated 23 December and addressed to other consortium members said there were a number of issues outstanding before production could resume, saying "further discussions" were required. — AFP

"The ministry of petroleum is hereby declaring the 30th December 2024 as the official kick-off date for the resumption of



The landlocked country's vital oil was shipped through Port Sudan, with Khartoum's transit fee. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

BRIEF: ECON

Nippon Steel sends Biden new US Steel proposal to win support: report

NIPPON Steel has sent the White House a new proposal on US Steel, attempting to get the green light from President Joe Biden to acquire the American company, a US media report said Tuesday.

The proposition involves giving the US government a veto over reducing US Steel's production capacity, reported The Washington Post.

Nippon Steel was said to offer a 10-year guarantee that it would not cut production capacity at US Steel's mills in areas such as Pennsylvania, Indiana and Alabama without approval by a panel led by the Treasury Department.

This came after the panel, known as the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS), failed to reach a consensus on whether Nippon Steel's acquisition of US Steel threatens Washington's national security.

The impasse by CFIUS shifts the decision on the \$14.9 billion transaction to the White House. — AFP

Japan rethinks tradition of New Year's cards as inflation persists

A growing number of Japanese people appear to be breaking with the country's tradition of sending New Year's greeting cards, as rising prices of daily goods are forcing them to cut back on spending.

Japanese businesses, too, are switching to digital format and doing away with the drudgery of preparing traditional paper postcards, a change that can help them cut costs and save labour in one of the busiest seasons of the year.

After a price hike in October, a basic New Year's postcard costs 85 yen (\$0.5), up from 63 yen for the previous year. Ja-

pan Post Co set its initial issuance of the greeting cards to 1.07 billion, down over 25 per cent from a year earlier. It was the 14th straight year of decline.

In an online survey asking 5,000 people, aged between 15 and 79, to list items or services they plan to trim their budgets on heading into 2025, New Year's cards ranked first at 10.8 per cent.

Lucky bags, which keep shoppers guessing what is inside until they purchase them, and other New Year's items came second, followed by dining out, according to research firm Intage Inc. — Kyodo



A girl puts a postcard in a special mailbox for New Year's cards at a Tokyo post office on 15 December 2024. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Visa-free policies brings more tourists to China

China has expanded unilateral visa-free access for travelers from 38 countries, allowing stays of up to 30 days.

PAULINE from New Zealand stood mesmerized by the ice castles and lifelike Asian landmarks, all aglow in neon lights under the crisp winter sky of Harbin, northeast China. "It is so colorful," she whispered.

For Pauline, who prefers to go by her given name, this is her first trip to China. Located at a latitude similar to Wakkanai, Hokkaido, Harbin is the third

stop on her journey, following Beijing and Shanghai.

Pauline, like many others, set foot in China for the first time. Whether it's experiencing the attire and recreations of ancient Kaifeng or marvelling at the towering natural pillars in Zhangjiajie that inspired the movie Avatar, the excitement of these travellers is unmistakable.

Thanks to a flurry of



Shanghai attracts tourists with its blend of modern skyscrapers, historic landmarks, vibrant culture, and iconic attractions like the Bund and Yu Garden. **PHOTO: CHINA DAILY**

policy changes after the pandemic, exploring China is now easier than ever before. China has expanded

unilateral visa-free access for travelers from 38 countries, allowing stays of up to 30 days. — Xinhua

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V UNI-ACTIVE VOY.NO. (0338-787N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V UNI-ACTIVE VOY.NO. (0338-787N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **2-1-2025** 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 EVERGREEN MARINE (ASIA) PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ISEACO FORTUNE VOY.NO. (0UVBAS1NC)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ISEACO FORTUNE VOY.NO. (0UVBAS1NC)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **2-1-2025** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/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 CMA-CGM SHIPPING LINE PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MCL 15 VOY.NO. (01N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MCL 15 VOY. NO. (01N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **2-1-2025** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **TMT** 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 MAWLAMYINE CENTURY LOGISTICS COMPANY LIMITED

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V BEYPORE SULTAN VOY.NO. (24022)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V BEYPORE SULTAN VOY.NO. (24022)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **2-1-2025** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S CONNEXT SHIPPING PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SITC ZHI VOY.NO. (2434S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SITC ZHI VOY. NO. (2434S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **2-1-2025** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT** 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 SITC CONTAINER LINE

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

Russia imposes new tourist tax



A new tourist tax has come into effect across Russia on Wednesday, replacing the previous resort fee. **PHOTO: SPUTNIK**

In July 2024, Russia's Tax Code added a "Tourist Tax", empowering regions with tourism sectors to adopt it locally.

A new tourist tax has come into effect across Russia on Wednesday, replacing the previous resort fee, RIA Novosti news agency reported on Wednesday.

From 1 January 2025, travellers staying in hotels and other accommodations will contribute an additional one per cent of their lodging costs, marking the start of a phased plan to bolster regional tourism infrastructure.

The tax was introduced as part of amendments to the Russian Tax Code in July 2024, which added a new chapter titled "Tourist Tax", granting regional authorities discretion to implement the tax as a local

levy. Many regions, particularly those with established or emerging tourism industries, have already embraced the initiative.

Under the current framework, the tourist tax will begin at a rate of one per cent in 2025 and gradually rise to three per cent by 2027. To ensure a baseline contribution, a minimum daily charge of 100 roubles (US\$0.9) has been established.

While hotels and other lodging providers are technically the taxpayers, the cost will be incorporated into the price of accommodations, thus being passed to tourists. — Xinhua

Pentagon appeals court upholds plea deals of 9/11 plotters

THE US government may move forward with the controversial plea agreements involving three men accused of orchestrating the 9/11 attacks, following a ruling by a Defence Department appeals court, the Washington Post reported.

The court's unanimous decision, issued on Monday night, rebuked Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin, who attempted to block the agreements in August despite their prior approval by a judge overseeing the cases.

The plea deals involve Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the alleged mastermind behind the 9/11 attacks, and two accomplices, Walid bin Attash and Mustafa al-Hawsawi. Under the agreements, the men would serve life sentences in exchange for admitting their roles in the al-Qaeda plot that killed 2,977 people.

The hijackers crashed the first two planes into the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York City, and the third plane into the Pentagon (the headquarters of the

American military) in Arlington, Virginia. The fourth plane was intended to hit a federal government building in Washington, DC, but crashed in a field.

Austin had argued that the families of 9/11 victims and those affected by the resulting wars deserved to see the men stand trial.

However, the appeals court ruled that while Austin could limit future pretrial

agreements, he did not have the authority to nullify agreements already approved. The court emphasized that the defendants' admissions of guilt would undermine the possibility of any new trial.

A senior defence official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said the Defence Department and Justice Department are reviewing the ruling and exploring options.

— ANI



The National September 11 Memorial & Museum is a tribute to the nearly 3,000 victims of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, and the six individuals killed in the 1993 World Trade Centre bombing. **PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iraq War WMD intelligence wrong: former Australian PM

FORMER AUSTRALIAN Prime Minister John Howard has admitted that intelligence about weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) that led to the Iraq War was wrong.

Howard on Wednesday said it was disappointing that searches failed to detect WMDs in Iraq, but that he still believes the decision to commit Australia to the war was in the national interest.

His comments coincided with the release of previously-sealed cabinet documents from 2004 by the National Archive of Australia (NAA).

Each year on 1 January, the NAA publicly releases cabinet documents from 20 years prior. The 2003 documents, which were released belatedly in March 2024 after some went missing, revealed that Howard's government authorized the deployment of troops to Iraq in January 2003, months before it publicly committed Australia to the war in March of that year. — Xinhua

Yoon Suk-yeol will be arrested within deadline, says anti-corruption chief

HEAD OF South Korea's Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials Oh Dong-woon said that impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol will be arrested by Monday following an arrest warrant, according to a report by Al Jazeera. Speaking with the reporters on Wednesday, Oh Dong-woon warned that any attempts to obstruct the arrest, including barricades or locked gates, would be seen as interference with official duties. Oh Dong-woon said that the arrest warrant against Yoon would be executed "within the valid period", the last day of which is Monday.

"We aim for a smooth process without major disturbances, but we are also coordinating to mobilise police and personnel in preparation," he told reporters. — ANI

SPORTS

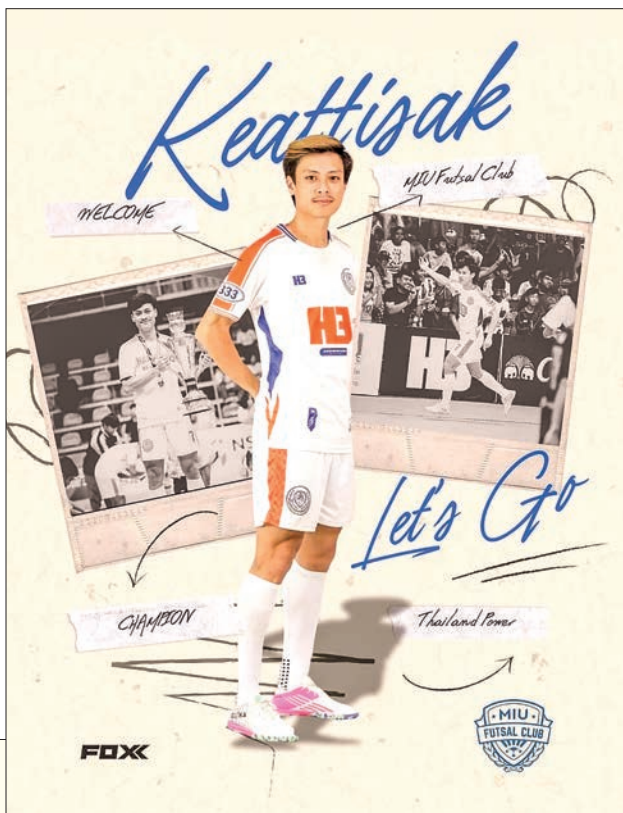
MIU, YRG strengthen squads with foreign players

THE MIU and YRG teams, currently competing in the 2024-2025 season of the MFF Futsal League I have bolstered their squads by signing foreign players.

MIU has recently signed Thai national Keattisak who played for the championship winner Hong Yanthakhum team in the Thai Futsal League. MIU has added domestic players to its roster including Set Wai Yan from Generations and Htoo Wai Yan from the Hanthawady team ahead of the new season.

Meanwhile, the newly promoted YRG team has signed Afghan player Sami Meh who previously competed in the MFF Futsal League for the Myanmar Futsal Club Futsal Chit Thu. Alongside, YRG has reinforced its team with national-level players such as Myo Myint Soe, Wai Zin Oo, Htut Wai Htun and Naing Lin Htun Kyaw.

Other clubs competing in the Futsal League I have also recruited foreign players who will feature in the upcoming matches. — Shine Htet Zaw/KZL



Thai player Keattisak from the MIU team.
PHOTO: MIU FC

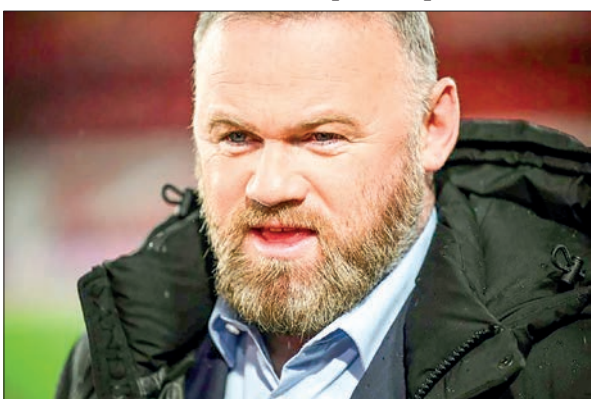
England legend Wayne Rooney sacked as coach of second tier Plymouth

FORMER England legend Wayne Rooney's coaching career looks to be in ruins after he was sacked by Plymouth Argyle on Tuesday.

Rooney leaves the club after only seven months of the three-year contract that he signed in the summer, and with Plymouth bottom of the division, with just 18 points from 23 matches.

It has lost six of its last nine matches and has the worst defensive record in the division, conceding 51 goals, while scoring just 22.

Plymouth announced Rooney's departure on social media, saying club and coach had "mutually agreed to part ways with immediate effect".



Wayne Rooney has left his role as Plymouth manager.
PHOTO: AFP

Rooney thanked Plymouth for giving him the chance to manage them and said the club would always "have a special place" in his

heart.

The sacking is the latest in a line of disappointments for the 39-year-old in his short coaching career, which will make it difficult for anyone else to take a risk in offering him a job.

He was surprisingly given the Plymouth job after a disastrous spell at Birmingham City, where a run of just two wins and nine defeats from his 15 games in charge took the club from mid-table security to relegation to League One (third division). — Xinhua

Canada's Dabrowski reveals cancer treatment amid run to Olympic bronze

CANADA'S Gabriela Dabrowski revealed Tuesday that her run to Olympic tennis bronze in Paris came as she received treatment for

breast cancer.

"How can something so small cause such a big problem? This is the question I asked myself when I was diag-

nosed with breast cancer back in mid-April," the 32-year-old doubles specialist wrote on Instagram.

"I know this will

come as a shock to many, but I am okay and I will be okay. Early detection saves lives. I can wholeheartedly agree with this". — AFP

OBITUARY

Asleep in Jesus Jorgen Jorgensen

84 years

Residing Aarhus, Denmark; beloved husband of Angeline Jensen; brother of (Bridget Kyaw Zan), Clematis Kyaw Zan + Moses, David Kyaw Zan + Hla Hla Htay, Edna Jean Kyaw Zan + Wallace, Felicity Kyaw Zan + Timothy was called into His heavenly home at 5:50 pm local time on Christmas Day (25.12.2024). Funeral service will be held at 12:30 pm on (7.1.2025) (Tuesday) at Abyhoj Kirke.

Bereaved Siblings

Zverev injured as holders Germany crash at United Cup



World number two Alexander Zverev pulled out of the United Cup with a bicep injury. PHOTO: AFP

ELENA Rybakina's Kazakhstan dumped defending champions Germany out of the United Cup on Wednesday with world number two Alexander Zverev sidelined by an arm injury barely a week away from the Australian Open. The upset in Perth sent the Kazakhs into the semi-finals of the 18-nation tournament.

In Sydney women's world number two Iga Swiatek led Poland into the last eight by winning a rematch of her 2023 French Open final against the Czech Republic's Karolina Muchova.

Britain also progressed to the quarter-finals with Katie Boulter's dominant 6-2, 6-1 victory over Australia's Olivia Gaedeck enough to guarantee

they won their group.

Sixth-ranked Rybakina earned the first point for Kazakhstan, with the 2022 Wimbledon champion hammering Laura Siegemund 6-3, 6-1.

Zverev then withdrew from his clash against Alexander Shevchenko at the last minute with a bicep strain, leaving the 254th-ranked Daniel Masur to face him.

He put up a brave fight but Shevchenko was too strong, powering home 6-7 (5/7), 6-2, 6-2 despite a medical timeout in the second set, complaining about difficulty breathing.

"I was struggling in this heat, it was so rough," said the world number 78, who upset Stefanos Tsitsipas in group play on Monday. — AFP



N Korea's Kim 'feasts his eyes' on new resort project: state media

NORTH Korean leader Kim Jong Un oversaw the launch of plans for a new beachside tourist resort, state media said on Tuesday, a "first big step" in a potentially wider border reopening.

The isolated North reopened its borders in August 2023 after almost four years of border closures, imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic, that prevented even its own nationals from entering.

Kim stressed the resort, part of the existing Wonsan-Kalma development project in the east, was "a first big step" in developing tourism, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said.

Kim toured the resort with his daughter Kim Ju Ae, "feasting his eyes with a bright smile", according to KCNA.

Pictures released by KCNA showed Kim and his daughter walking along the waterfront and touring the otherwise deserted hotel development.

He expressed "great satisfaction" that facilities had been built "so that they can be utilized for successfully hosting important external, political and cultural events of the state", KCNA said. — AFP

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un launched plans for a new beachside tourist resort as part of the ongoing Wonsan-Kalma development project.



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and his daughter toured a new resort development, according to state news agency KCNA. **PHOTO: KCNA /AFP**

Russia halts gas flow through Ukraine as deal expires: Gazprom

The expired Gazprom-Naftogaz deal leaves no legal or technical capacity for Russian gas transit through Ukraine.



Gazprom confirms no gas transit via Ukraine after agreement expiration, halting supply at 8 am Moscow time. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

RUSSIA'S Gazprom has no technical and legal ability to supply gas for transit through Ukraine due to the expiration of the agreement with Ukrain-

ian national oil and gas company Naftogaz, the Russian energy giant said on Wednesday, adding that the gas supply stopped at 8 am Moscow time (5:00 GMT).

"On 1 January 2025, at 8 am Moscow time, the validity period of documents signed on 30 December 2019, ended: the agreement between Gazprom and Naftogaz of Ukraine on the transport of Russian gas through the Ukrainian territory, and the cooperation agreement between the operators of Russia's and Ukraine's gas transmission systems – Gazprom and Operator of the Ukrainian Gas Transmission System," Gazprom said on Telegram.

The company also said it had been deprived of an ability to supply gas to Ukraine due to the "repeated and explicit refusal of the Ukrainian party to extend these agreements." — SPUTNIK

AVIATION INVESTIGATIONS

South Korea to send Jeju Air Flight data recorder to US for analysis

THE South Korean government announced on Wednesday that it will send the flight data recorder from the crashed Jeju Air plane to the United States for further analysis, according to a report by Yonhap News Agency. The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport stated that the timeline for transferring the flight recorder will be determined in coordination with the US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

Recovered from the wreckage of the Jeju Air

B737-800 aircraft at Muan International Airport, the flight recorder was found to have sustained external damage, including a missing connector that links the data storage unit to its power source. Joo Jong-wan, director of the aviation policy division at the ministry said, "We have determined that extracting data from the damaged flight data recorder here is not possible. And so we have agreed with the NTSB to send it to the US and analyze it there," Yonhap reported. — ANI