

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

Article

“Kumbh: A Global Beacon of Sanatan Culture and Spiritual Heritage”

By Ambassador of India
HE Mr Abhay Thakur

PAGE 8-9

NATIONAL

PAGE 6



Tatmadaw vessels deliver healthcare services to Thapyuseik Village

NATIONAL

PAGE 7



Kyaikto to offer free TB screening for all students starting Jan



This image depicts the Chinese New Year festival, bustling with visitors at the stalls in the previous year.

Yangon to host vibrant Chinese New Year market on 25-31 Jan

To welcome the Chinese New Year, which falls on 29 January 2025, a Chinese New Year festival market will be held from 25 to 31 January in Yangon Region, along Maha Bandoola Road in Lanmadaw Township, stretching from Lanmadaw Road to Latha Road.

The event will take place daily in two sessions – from 7 am to 11 am and from 4 pm to 11 pm – spanning seven lively days, according to the organizing committee for the festival market.

“The Chinese New Year Festival Market will feature shops selling a wide variety of consumer goods, beauty products, and food items. Visitors can also enjoy traditional Chinese lion and dragon dance competitions, as well as performances by renowned DJs and prominent artistes from the music, film, and theatre industries, and various entertainment activities. For children, there will be boat rides, playgrounds, and beautifully decorated photo spots. Guests will also have the chance to savour traditional Chinese

delicacies as part of the hospitality programme. We warmly invite everyone to visit the Chinese New Year Festival Market,” said U Hoke Hlaing, a member of the organizing committee.

It was also reported that starting this year, 29 January, the Chinese New Year Day, has been officially designated as a public holiday in Myanmar. According to the traditional Chinese calendar, this year’s Chinese New Year marks the transition from the Year of the Dragon to the Year of the Snake. — ASH/KNN

Myanmar fast-tracks Thanaka culture for UNESCO heritage list

EFFORTS are being made to put the ‘culture of Myanmar’s Thanaka’ into UNESCO’s world intangible cultural heritage list, similar to the traditional Myanmar New Year Atar Thingyan festival, according to the Department of Archaeology and National Museum.

The department is making preparations to submit the ‘culture of Myanmar’s Thanaka’ to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity of UNESCO by 31 March 2025, and the Form Compilation Task Force started compiling the proposal to the nomination form (ICH-02) from 15 to 17 January.

Although Myanmar has many intangible cultural

heritages, none have yet been listed as part of the World Intangible Cultural Heritage List. However, for over a thousand years, using Myanmar’s Thanaka as the traditional customs and practices have been passed down through generations, and today, the art of Myanmar’s traditional Thanaka remains a significant cultural symbol of the nation and is preserved with care.

Myanmar’s Thanaka was proposed for inclusion in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list starting in January 2020, as it aligns with the five criteria for designation as an Intangible Cultural Heritage. — ASH/TTA



The best Thanaka of Myanmar is neatly organized for sale at a shop.

NATIONAL

Education: The Foundation of a Nation's Strength and Future

- The strength of a country lies in its education.
- Students with five key capabilities are not only the nation's strength but also the future of the State.

(Excerpt from the speech given by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the opening of the Myanmar National Education Conference 2024 on 25 June 2024)



National Objectives for 78th Anniversary of Union Day 2025

1. To strive for the perpetual development of the Union through the Union spirit, patriotic values, a sublime state of mind and a genuine nationalist spirit.
2. To encourage collaborative efforts among all ethnic nationals to pursue dialogue for durable peace and to end armed conflicts.
3. To collectively advance cooperation amongst all national people, the government, and Tatmadaw to ensure stability and the rule of law.
4. To enhance collaborative efforts to ensure nationwide stability and tranquillity, enabling the successful conduct of multiparty general elections.
5. To promote balanced development across all regions and states, as well as enhance health, education and job opportunities for ethnic nationals.

Mottos for 78th Union Day 2025

1. When all ethnic national brethren stand in unity, hand in hand, the Union will firmly stand.
2. Drifting in one boat, on the same voyage we float; Bound together in communion, the heart of the Union.
3. United in heart and soul, Marching towards the Union's goal.
4. Let's build peace to achieve prosperity.
5. Strong in unity, Ethnic national brethren ensure the nation's strength.

Gold Market Rate as of 19 January 2025

THE price of one tical (16.329325 grammes) of gold with density of 19.25 grammes per cubic centimetre and above is K5,410,000, as established by the Mineral (Gold) Reference Price Determination Committee.

Yangon Region MJA elects new executive members

THE Yangon Region Myanmar Journalists Association (MJA) held its fourth annual conference and elections for regional executive members yesterday afternoon at the premises of Kyingakyi Sutaungpyae Pagoda in Bahan Township, Yangon.

Yangon Region MJA Chairman U Khin Maung Myint and Myanmar Journalists Association (Central) Chairman U Myat Khaing delivered opening speeches. Vice-Chairman U Thet Tin presented a report on activities undertaken during the third term. Joint Secretary 1 U Tin Win explained the arrangements for electing the executive committee for the fourth term.

Delegates were then issued ballot papers and cast their votes through a secret

ballot system with township representatives participating.

As a result, the newly elected executive committee for the fourth term was formed, comprising Chairman U Tun Yin, two vice-chairpersons, Secretary U Tin Win (Tin Win Lay – Kyimyindine) and nine executive members. The committee members pledged to carry out their responsibilities faithfully. — Ko Htet/KZL

The election process underway at the Yangon Region Myanmar Journalists Association.



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)

ASEAN to boost cooperation against online scams

AS online scams continue to rise in ASEAN countries, including Myanmar, it is essential to strengthen collaborative efforts to combat them, said State Administration Council Member Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Transport and Communications General Mya Tun Oo at the 5th ASEAN Digital Ministers' Meeting – 5th ADGMIN and Related Meetings with Dialogue Partners held in Bangkok of Thailand on 16 and 17 January.

He continued to say that to enhance users' trust in digital services, including digital financial services, greater cooperation is needed. Efforts should not solely focus on expanding internet connectivity and usage for comprehensive digital integration, but also on ensuring meaningful use of digital services by the public and businesses. To achieve this, it is necessary to prioritize and implement digital literacy programmes effectively.

He added that it is necessary to act based on the principles of security, innovation, and inclusivity in implementing digital transformation.

On 16 January morning, Thai Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra delivered a



SAC Member Deputy Prime Minister MoTC Union Minister General Mya Tun Oo (3rd L) poses for the documentary group photo at the fifth ASEAN Digital Ministers' Meeting in Bangkok on 16-17 January.

speech at the opening of the meeting at Avani+ Riverside Bangkok Hotel.

In her speech, the Thai Prime Minister underscored that currently, as online scams are becoming increasingly prevalent, posing serious dangers to the public, there is growing concern about this issue, highlighting the need for regional collaboration to address and resolve it effectively.

She noted that ASEAN must implement measures to combat fake news and misinformation that harm social trust, as well as to enhance digital literacy among

the public.

In today's world, as Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology continues to develop, it is essential for ASEAN to collectively and responsibly adopt and utilize AI technology in ways that maximize benefits for the region, she added.

At the two-day meeting, ASEAN digital ministers focused on the development of the digital sector in ASEAN, and collaborative efforts to initiate the digital future of ASEAN aligned with safety, innovation and all-inclusiveness to resolve challenges.

The meeting discussed re-

viewing the successfully implemented plans in 2024, approval for plans in 2025, financial measures for projects, eradication of online scams, enhancement of cybersecurity and systematic improvement of AI.

The General attended the dinner hosted by the Thai Prime Minister and the ASEAN Digital Awards 2025 ceremony at Capella Bangkok Hotel together with meeting participants.

During the trip, the ASEAN ministers held talks with dialogue partner countries China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, India, the United States and the In-

ternational Telecommunication Union (ITU) separately, issued the Bangkok Digital Declaration and held the press conference of the meeting on 17 January.

On the evening of 15 January, the General discussed opportunities and challenges of new technology and ways to resolve these challenges through collaborative efforts at the China-ASEAN Digital Ecosystem Cooperation Forum at Anantara Riverside Bangkok Resort.

The General met Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Digital Economy and Society of Thailand Prasert Jantararungtong on 16 January and Minister of Information and Communications of Vietnam Nguyen Manh Hung on 17 January to talk about the exchange of information and technological cooperation.

The meeting was attended by delegations from 10 ASEAN member States together with Temor-Leste, the People's Republic of China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, India, the United States in addition to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

The Myanmar delegation led by General Mya Tun Oo arrived back in Myanmar on 18 January. — MNA/TTA



Ministry of Health

53rd Myanmar Health Research Congress

20 to 24 January 2025

Department of Medical Research (Head Office)

No 5, Ziwaka Street, Dagon Township, Yangon

Daily newspapers available online

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News and Periodicals
Enterprise



NATIONAL

MoE Union Minister highlights research and collaboration priorities



Union Minister U Ko Ko Lwin inspects ongoing laboratory initiatives at the applied research department of the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise in Yangon Region yesterday.

UNION Minister for Energy U Ko Ko Lwin and officials from the Ministry of Energy visited the applied research department of the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise in Yangon Region yesterday morning and highlighted research and collaboration priorities.

The Union minister met departmental officials in the conference hall and stressed the importance of systematic research and laboratory operations to obtain accurate results critical for petroleum and natural gas exploration. He urged adherence to the ministry's "2025, the Year of Myanmar Energy" motto and emphasized the need to collaborate with relevant universities for field research aimed

at identifying new oil reserves and natural gas deposits.

He called for producing project-based research publications and advancing to applied research levels. He emphasized maintaining lab equipment, training staff, sharing expertise, and staying updated with technology. He also instructed officials to address the education and healthcare needs of staff and their families under corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives.

Union Minister U Ko Ko Lwin also inspected ongoing laboratory activities, the staff library and employee housing facilities and addressed necessary improvement during his visit. — MNA/KZL

MoI Union Minister advocates MSME implementation for job creation, poverty reduction

UNION Minister for Industry Dr Charlie Than urged the practical implementation of MSMEs, noting that they can create job opportunities for local people, reduce poverty, and lead to real development, during a meeting with staff and officials of the Magway Region Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection yesterday.

He stated that the percentage of the MSME sector's con-

tribution to the region's GDP must be calculated, and said that increasing production is key to national economic development, requiring the industrial sector to scale up production.

The Union minister emphasized that developing the manufacturing sector requires managing access to technology, developing human resources, and securing financial capital, and he highlighted the



Union Minister Dr Charlie Than views the products manufactured by MSMEs in Bago Region.

need to link industries with universities to facilitate technology access.

During the meeting, the head of the Magway Region Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection explained the efforts to develop MSMEs

in the region, including the construction and implementation of the Magway Industrial Zone, as well as Magway Region's participation in and competition at the Union-level MSME Expo and Competition.

The meeting was also

attended by Magway Region Minister for Economic Affairs U Aung Chein and officials.

The Union minister also visited Pyay Township to tour the display and sale of products produced by MSMEs in Bago Region. — MNA/TH

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

NATIONAL

Officials welcome trainees for People's Military Service Training 9

OFFICIALS welcomed the trainees from the People's Military Service Training 9 yesterday morning with a ceremony as they arrived at the Local Training Depot in Kengtung, Shan State (East).

The ceremony took place in the presence of Triangle Region Command Commander Brig-Gen Soe Hlaing along with officers, other ranks, families, members of the Myanmar

Police Force, War Veterans Organization members, departmental officials, ethnic cultural groups and locals.

The training course will begin on 20 January. Responsible officials are currently finalizing preparations including grouping and administrative measures for the participants, ensuring they are ready for the upcoming training. — MNA/KZL



Trainees for People's Military Service Training 9 line up and are welcomed at the Shan State (East) training depot.

Southern Shan State's dried tea leaves fetch high prices



This photo shows dried tea leaves produced by Shan State (South).

DESPITE prices getting high, dried tea leaves produced from southern Shan State have been traded well, making farmers feel happy. "The dried tea leaf trade

is thriving here. For various reasons, traders from different cities converge simultaneously, driving up prices. Among dried tea leaves, green tea is mainly used in Yangon," said Ma Kay Khine Soe from the Shwetoe wet and dried tea leaf trading from Pindaya Township.

However, wet tea leaf prices have fallen slightly as tea leaves harvested in Thadingyut are not durable enough to be made into wet form.

"Generally, Monywa, Bago and Ayeyawady use ordinary dried tea leaf," she added. — Thit Taw/ZS

Seafarers' pension plan aims to support elderly survival

THEY are planning to implement a pension system for Myanmar seafarers to ensure their survival in old age, said Captain Soe Min Aung, President of the Myanmar Seafarers Federation.

The concept was initiated after seeing old sailors in trouble, he said.

"The reason for pension is because we have found that many seafarers are homeless and helpless among our peers. What if a young sailor had no money when he got old? We must create a pension system. The existing pension law does not cover private employees, including sailors. So, we have initiated and written in our CBA that the pension will be saved from the seafarers' salaries and we are discussing with the organizations that will manage it. We will announce when we get an agreement," he added.

MSF established a committee with seven external volunteers to care for sick and elderly seafarers in 2021, and it has provided K180 million to 800 sick and elderly seafarers in three years. As the government social security system is appropriate for seafarers to protect their families, the federation obtained a social security permit in 2022 and thus any seafarer, including his or her family and children over 18, is eligible for this protection.

"For social security purposes, the salary is set at K300,000 for an officer or others, regardless of the level. For the family, it is determined to be K150,000. Two parts of social security include healthcare and compensation for injuries and deaths. We have made it possible for any sailor family to visit the clinics and hospitals run by the social security for medical treatment and hospitalization," he said. — MT/ZN



This photo shows the real estate and insurance knowledge-sharing talk jointly organized by MSF and Prime Estate.

Earthquake News

(Issued at 02:45 hour MST)

A slight earthquake of magnitude 4.5 Richter Scale with its epicentre inside Myanmar about 15 miles northeast of Paungpyin, latitude 24.44°N, longitude 94.96°E, depth 110 kilometres, about 44 miles northeast of Tamu seismological observatory was recorded at 02 hours 31 minutes 47 seconds MST on 19 January 2025. — DMH

Department of Meteorology and Hydrology
Seismological Division
Noy Pyi Taw
Tel:067-3411269 Fax:067-3411263

Earthquake Information	
Date	19.1.2025
Time (MST)	02:31:47
Magnitude	4.5(Slight)
Latitude	24.44°N
Longitude	94.96°E
Depth	110 km
Region	About 15 miles NE of Paungpyin.

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NATIONAL

Tatmadaw vessels deliver healthcare services to Thapyuseik Village



Tatmadaw doctors, specialists, and medical officers performing surgery and providing healthcare services in Maubin Township.



TWO Tatmadaw vessels — the Shwepuzun and the Saku — arrived in Thapyuseik Village, Kyaiklat Township, Ayeyawady Region, with Tatmadaw doctors, specialists and medical officers to provide healthcare services to the locals. The medical team was warmly welcomed by local officials, Tatmadaw personnel and the public.

The team based itself at the Nyaungchaung Monastery's Yadana Thukha Dhamma Beikmandaw in Thapyuseik

Village and conducted health services for 417 locals from the town and surrounding villages. The services included treatments for 111 individuals with general illnesses, 15 with surgical conditions, 19 with obstetric or gynaecological issues, 31 with paediatric diseases, 86 with orthopaedic issues, 38 with ENT conditions, 77 with eye diseases and 40 with dental problems.

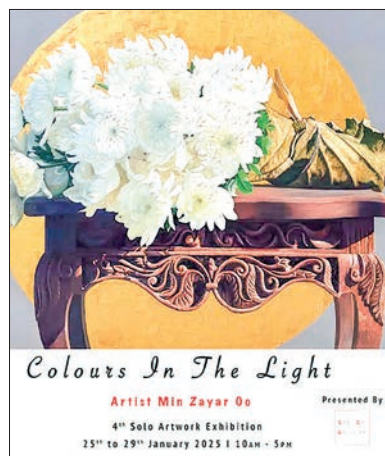
In turn, six general surgery patients

underwent procedures while seven patients received X-ray tests, 31 were tested in ultrasound and 11 had ECGs performed to assess heart conditions. Furthermore, 25 patients underwent laboratory testing and four individuals requiring hospital care were referred to nearby Tatmadaw hospitals for further treatment.

The Shwepuzun vessel successfully facilitated the delivery of a baby girl to Daw Myat Thu Aung, the wife of U Win

Tun Naing from Alangyi Village, Maubin Township, at around 8:06 pm on 18 January. Both mother and child are reported to be in good health. The newborn received a congratulatory gift including monetary rewards from the Office of Commander-in-Chief (Navy). This baby was the second successful delivery during the current mission and marked the 30th successful birth on the Shwepuzun vessel in its historical records. — MNA/KZL

Sar Ga Art Gallery to host 'Colours in the Light' solo exhibition



Photos showcase some works of artist Min Zayar Oo.

A solo art exhibition titled Colours in the Light will be held at Sar Ga Art Gallery in Pazundaung Township, Yangon Region, from 25 to 29 January.

The exhibition is Artist Min Zayar Oo's fourth solo show, featuring new paint-

ings completed over nearly a year and including a variety of sizes.

"The exhibition is a breathtaking collection of still life paintings that capture the interplay of light and shadow.

This exhibition is the re-

sult of nearly a year of hard work by artist Min Zayar Oo, and we respectfully invite art lovers to view and enjoy more than 20 of his masterpieces," said the gallery manager of Sar Ga Art Gallery. — ASH/TH

Production donates K1M to MMPO for 'Art of Cloud' film success

Brave Empire Production donated K1 million to the Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization (MMPO) on 18 January in recognition of the success of the film 'Tein Pachi' (Cloud Painting).

'Art of Cloud' is a film adaptation of a famous novel by writer Ham Sai (University of Medicine, Mandalay), directed by Aye Thiri Ko. The movie was produced by Brave Empire Production and directed by Pwint Theingi Zaw (Aryone Oo) and is part of Myanmar's motion picture industry.

The Brave Empire Production then also presented monetary gifts to the filmmakers including actors, directors, editors, production staff and musicians involved in the film.

The film 'Art of Cloud' features a distinguished cast including Academy Award-winning actors Wutt Hmone Shwe Yee, Aye Chan Maung, Nay Myo Aung,



This image reveals Brave Empire Production donating K1 million to the Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization (MMPO).

Si Phyto, Nyi Nanda, Academy Award-winning actress Melody Htoo Mon and many other talented actors. The movie has also been shortlisted for the 2024 Myanmar Motion Pictures Awards as it appears on the list of 18 films nominated for the Academy Awards. — ASH/KZL

Kyaikto to offer free TB screening for all students starting Jan

THE Kyaikto Township Health Department announced that it has started free special TB screening for all students in basic education schools in the township, Mon State, since January of 2024-25 academic year.

Students with cough or fever for more than two weeks, significant weight loss or failure to gain weight, and close contact with TB patients are being identified as TB suspects.

Sputum tests and X-rays will be conducted on these suspects and there is no need to worry about the cost as all tests are free of charge, it said.

Moreover, school meals will be provided in all schools with KG students, as part of the programme to be implemented by the Ministry of Education with the budget of the Ministry of Health, from January 2025, it added. — MT/ZN



This photo reveals TB screening and an awareness talk at the basic education school in Kyaikto Township. **KYAIKTO TOWNSHIP GENERAL HOSPITAL**

Myanmar, Denmark Red Cross societies discuss child-friendly centres



Delegates from Myanmar and Denmark Red Cross societies engage in discussions on enhancing child-friendly centres in Myanmar.

THE Myanmar and Denmark Red Cross Societies held a meeting on 16 January at the Myanmar Red Cross Society (Yangon Region) to discuss the operation of child-friendly centres established in Myanmar.

During the meeting, Myanmar Red Cross Society president Professor Dr Myo Nyunt and Denmark Red Cross Society MHPSS Advisor Ms Patricia Carolina Guadelupe Dumazert discussed capacity-building programmes for volunteers, training for child-friendly centre caretakers, workshops to review centre operations and support for expanding mental and social assistance programmes.

Present at the meeting were senior officials from both societies, including Myanmar Red Cross Society full-time executives Professor Dr Daw Mya Thu, Professor Dr Daw Yi Yi Tin, Professor Dr Tin Maung Hlaing, Assistant Secretary-General Daw Ei Ei Htwe, directors and Denmark Red Cross Society Country Manager Mr Fabio Beltramini.

The child-friendly centres aim to provide emotional support for vulnerable children, promote good hygiene practices and offer a safe and joyful environment for play. One such centre has been opened in Taunggyi Township, Southern Shan State. — ASH/KZL

0.9M stimulant tablets worth K380 mln seized in Kengtung

MYANMAR Police Force stated that a total of 966,000 stimulant tablets worth more than K380 million were seized in Kengtung Township of Shan State (East).

Acting on a tip-off, a combined squad comprising members of the Drug Enforcement Division of MPF searched an Isuzu D-Max driven by Sai San Hla from Mongping Township, accompanied by Sai Wun Khaung of Mongping Township, from Mongpying to Kengtung, near Kengphaung Village of Kengtung Township, Shan State (East) at 2:00 pm on 16 January. It seized 966,000 stimulant tablets worth K385 million from the rear of the vehicle.

According to the investigation, Sai Seng Aum (a) Aik Seng and Sai Nyunt from Mongping Township who are accomplices in trafficking stimulant tablets were arrested along with a motorcycle in Yanaungmyay Ward of Tachilek at 6:30 pm the same day.

Based on their confessions, these seized stimulant tablets were purposed to be trafficked to Tachilek on the Myanmar-Thai border from Mongping Township. Action has been taken against them under the law, and further investigation is being conducted to arrest more offenders. — MNA/TTA



Arrested drug traffickers are seen with seized stimulant tablets and vehicles.

OPINION

Emphasize initiatives of Blue Economy for Myanmar

WITH its rich environmental resources, including extensive coastal areas and vast waters, Myanmar's blue economy presents a key opportunity for achieving sustainable development through the long-term utilization of coastal natural resources.

It has been observed that ASEAN countries and nations around the world are working toward achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals by promoting and implementing the principles of the "Blue Economy." Currently, the Blue Economy is sure to improve the coastal environment and accumulation of marine resources at the seas. In Myanmar, it is necessary for environmentalists to protect Myanmar's waters including an exclusive economic zone while business people have to implement the blue economy.

The blue economy offers numerous opportunities, but at the same time, challenges must be effectively addressed. To achieve sustainable coastal development, the government, private sector, non-governmental organizations, and entrepreneurs must work together to implement practical solutions. According to the respective ministries and regional and state government bodies, actions are being taken to ensure long-term sustainability and balanced development of the coastal areas and inland water bodies.

support for fisheries and aquaculture of fish, shrimp, and crabs, and the potential to develop coastal and deep-sea fishing industries. Additionally, pearl farming and extraction can also be undertaken.

Moreover, there are promising prospects for the long-term extraction of offshore oil and natural gas, opportunities for generating renewable energy such as solar, water, and wind power, the potential to develop strategic and internationally competitive ports along global trade routes, the presence of naturally occurring coastlines and islands that can foster tourism development, and the ability to preserve and promote the rich cultural heritage of Indigenous coastal populations. By leveraging these various opportunities, the country can significantly contribute to its development and progress.

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The Coastal Resources Multi-Management Plan has been adopted to coordinate efforts across relevant sectors. Additionally, measures are in place to ensure the sustainable extraction of natural resources over the long term. Efforts to conserve valuable underground ecosystems are underway, and the preservation of both underwater and above-water natural resources is evident in the southern waters of Myanmar. These initiatives support the development of the green tourism sector.

Myanmar's coastline stretches over 1,260 nautical miles and includes more than 1,400 islands, enriched with valuable marine resources both above and below the water, as well as breathtaking coastal natural beauty. As a potential driver of Myanmar's blue economy, the coastline and its diverse marine ecosystems offer opportunities for various environmental services, support for fisheries and aquaculture of fish, shrimp, and crabs, and the potential to develop coastal and deep-sea fishing industries. Additionally, pearl farming and extraction can also be undertaken.

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"Kumbh: A Global Beacon of Sanatan Culture and Spiritual Heritage"

By Ambassador of India HE Mr Abhay Thakur

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi has consistently underscored the importance of the Kumbh Festival on international platforms, inviting the Indian diaspora and global admirers of Indian culture to witness this unparalleled spiritual event. But what makes the Kumbh Festival not only a symbol of Indian tradition but also a global phenomenon?

Historical and Mythological Roots

The Kumbh Festival is one of humanity's oldest and most sacred gatherings, deeply embedded in Vedic mythology. Its origins trace back to the legend of Samudra Manthan (churning of the ocean), where the gods and demons competed for the nectar of immortality. Drops of amrit (nectar) fell at four locations — Haridwar, Prayagraj, Ujjain, and Nashik — sanctifying these places and establishing them as the venues for the Kumbh Festival.

Ancient scriptures such as the Skanda Purana and the Vayu Purana extol the spiritual benefits of participating in the Kumbh. They emphasize that rituals and holy dips during this festival lead to salvation, marking it as a key spiritual practice in Sanatan Dharma.

Astronomical Alignments and Timing

The Kumbh Festival is uniquely governed by celestial alignments of the Sun, Moon, and Jupiter in specific zodiac signs, as described in the scriptures. It is held every six years (Ardh Kumbh) and every twelve years (Purna Kumbh) at the following locations based on these alignments:

- **Haridwar:** Sun in Aries, Jupiter in Aquarius.
- **Prayagraj:** Sun in Capricorn, Jupiter in Taurus.
- **Ujjain:** Sun and Jupiter both in Leo.
- **Nashik:** Similar configurations.

This precise timing adds to the festival's spiritual significance, with devotees believing that bathing in the sacred rivers during these auspicious periods cleanses sins and brings spiritual merit.

Kumbh: A Platform for Global Outreach

The Kumbh Festival's inclusion in UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity is a testament to its universal appeal. By showcasing India's spiritual ethos, it has become an essential part of India's soft power diplomacy.



Recognized by UNESCO as part of humanity's Intangible Cultural Heritage, it serves as a testament to India's rich traditions and global influence. PHOTO: AFP

1. Tourism and Economic Growth

The Kumbh attracts millions of pilgrims and global visitors, contributing significantly to spiritual tourism. Events organized during Kumbh inspire exploration of Indian heritage, generating avenues for cultural exchange and economic development.

2. Diplomatic Engagements

International dignitaries, diplomats, and scholars are often invited, creating opportunities for dialogue and cultural understanding. Such initiatives foster mutual respect and enhance India's relationships worldwide, including its historical ties with Myanmar.

3. Promotion of Indian Values

Through live broadcasts, documentaries, and social media, Kumbh highlights India's message of universal peace and sustainability, resonating with global audiences.

Strengthening India-Myanmar Relations Through Kumbh

The bond between India and My-

anmar, rooted in shared spiritual and cultural values, finds deeper resonance through festivals like Kumbh. Myanmar's reverence for Indic traditions — reflected in Buddhism, Sanskrit, and Pali studies — makes it a key participant in cultural exchanges inspired by Kumbh.

- **Cultural Exchange Programs:** Encouraging participation from Myanmar in events like the Kumbh can enrich mutual understanding of heritage and traditions.
- **Tourism Promotion:** Introducing Kumbh-inspired packages can attract spiritual seekers from Myanmar, benefiting both nations economically and culturally.
- **Artistic Collaborations:** Joint exhibitions and performances highlighting shared values of peace and spirituality can strengthen ties.

A Celebration of Universal Values

The Kumbh transcends religious boundaries to emphasize universal values of harmony, sustainability, and community welfare. As global challenges demand solutions rooted in compassion and unity, the festival becomes a plat-

form for leaders, thinkers, and seekers to converge and discuss these principles.

The Kumbh Festival transcends religious boundaries, symbolizing faith, harmony, and the eternal principles of Sanatan Dharma. It brings together millions of pilgrims, spiritual leaders, and saints who unite for rituals, discourses, and discussions on global welfare.

Prayagraj, referred to as Tirthraj (King of Pilgrimages), holds particular significance due to the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati rivers. Celebrated in the Ramcharitmanas by Goswami Tulsidas, this sacred site embodies spiritual bliss and enlightenment.

Global Recognition of Kumbh

The Kumbh Festival's global stature was solidified when it was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This recognition highlights its significance in promoting India's cultural and spiritual values worldwide.

Prominent global spiritual leaders have played a pivotal role in spreading Sanatan Dharma:

- **James Mallinson (UK):** Recognized for his contributions to yoga and Sanatan philosophy.
- **Swami Vishwananda (Germany):** Established over 50 Vaishnav temples in Europe.
- **Swami Madhavananda:** Instrumental in introducing Sanatan culture to Eastern Europe. Visionaries like Swami Vivekananda, Swami Sivananda, and Bhaktivedanta Prabhupada have further expanded India's spiritual footprint globally, inspiring millions through their teachings on yoga, Vedanta, and bhakti.

Tourism and Cultural Exchange

The Kumbh Festival is a major driver of tourism, attracting millions of visitors from across the world. The Uttar Pradesh Tourism Department reports that the Mahakumbh in Prayagraj significantly enhances India's global cultural appeal.

Beyond tourism, the festival serves as a platform for promoting sustainable living, environmental conservation, and human values. Spiritual leaders and scholars discuss topics of global welfare, emphasizing harmony and coexistence. The guiding mantra, "Krinvanto Vishwam Aryam" (Let us make the world noble), resonates strongly at this gathering.

Challenges and Opportunities

Despite its growing international appeal, the promotion of Sanatan culture faces challenges, such as misconceptions and limited awareness in certain regions. However, increasing acceptance of Hindu temples and traditions, even in places like the UAE and Saudi Arabia, marks a significant step toward broader recognition of Sanatan values.

The Kumbh Festival is more than a religious event; it is a living embodiment of India's spiritual depth and cultural richness. It serves as a beacon of unity, faith, and enlightenment, inspiring humanity to embrace the timeless principles of Sanatan Dharma. Through the Kumbh, India continues to project its cultural and spiritual heritage onto the global stage, fostering harmony and mutual respect.

The festival's enduring legacy ensures that it will remain a cornerstone of India's cultural diplomacy and a source of global inspiration for generations to come.

AI-driven technique analyzes heart cells' inner electrical signals from outside: Study

The method captures extracellular signals (outside the cells) and uses artificial intelligence to reconstruct precise intracellular signals (inside the cells).

A TEAM of researchers led by the University of California, San Diego, and Stanford University has discovered a noninvasive approach for monitoring electrical activity inside cardiac muscle cells from the outside, without physically penetrating the cells.

The method is based on capturing electrical signals from outside the cells and using AI to reconstruct the signals within the cells with high precision.

The electrical signals inside heart muscle cells provide insights into how the heart functions, how its cells communicate and how they respond to drugs. However capturing these signals typically involves puncturing the cells with tiny electrodes, which can damage them and make large-scale testing complicated.

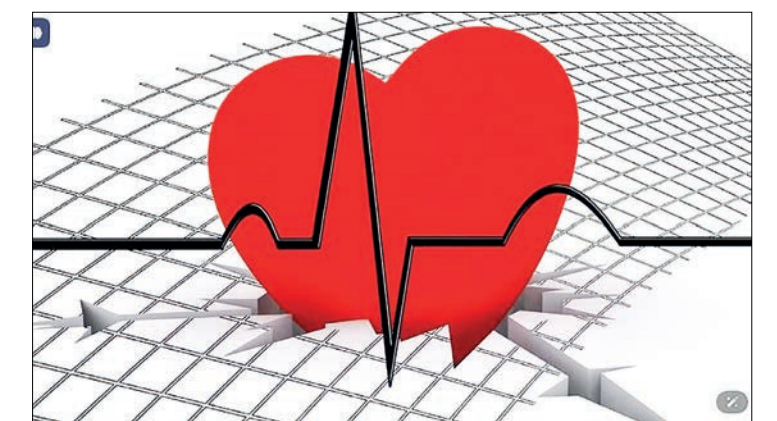
Now, researchers have found a way to peer inside the cells without actually going in.

The key lies in extracting the relationship between the signals inside the cells (intracellular signals) and those recorded on their surface (extracellular signals). "We discovered that extracellular signals hold the information we need to unlock the intracellular features that we're interested in," said Zeinab Jahed, a professor in the Aiso Yufeng Li Family Department of Chemical and NanoEngineering at UC San Diego, who is one of the study's senior authors. Keivan Rahmani, a nanoengineering Ph D student in Jahed's lab, is the first author of the study.

While extracellular signals can be captured with swless invasive methods, they do not provide much detail about the cell's electrical activity. "It is like listening to a conversation through a wall-you can detect that communication is happening, but you miss the specific details," explained Jahed. "In contrast, intracellular signals offer the details, making you feel like you are sitting inside the room hearing every word clearly, but they can only be captured by invasive and more technically challenging methods." Using AI, Jahed, Rahmani and colleagues developed a method to correlate extracellular signals with specific intracellular signals.

To develop the new method, the team first engineered an array of nanoscale, needle-shaped electrodes. These electrodes, each up to 200 times smaller than a single heart muscle cell, are made of silica-coated with platinum. Heart muscle cells, derived from stem cells, were grown and then placed on the electrode array.

SOURCE: ANI



This innovative approach bridges the gap between external and internal cellular signals, offering detailed insights into cardiac function. ILLUSTRATION: PIXABAY

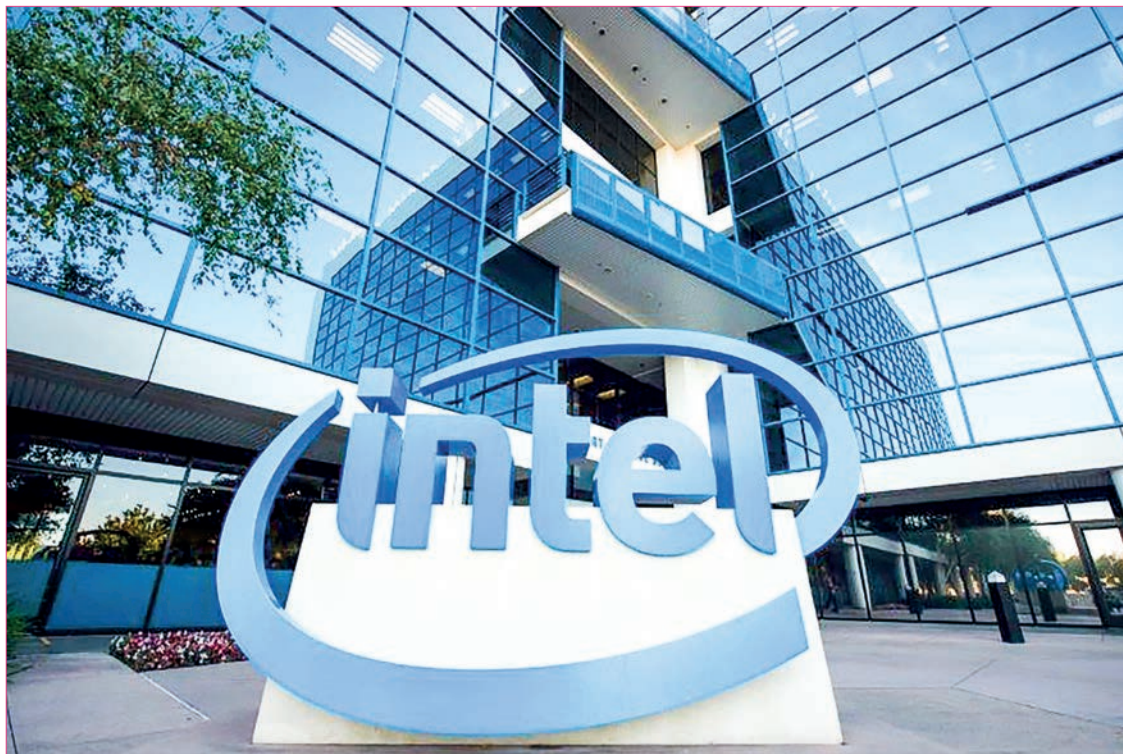
TECH/ENVIRON WORLD

India-US reaffirm commitment to secure digital connectivity, focus on AI collaboration

India and the United States reaffirmed their commitment to fostering secure, reliable, and interoperable digital connectivity and ICT infrastructure.

INDIA and the United States reaffirmed their commitment to fostering secure, reliable, and interoperable digital connectivity and ICT infrastructure during the US-India Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Working Group meeting.

The discussions held in New Delhi on Friday highlighted areas of collaboration, including advancements in 5G and 6G networks, artificial intelligence, cross-border data flows, and the promotion of Open Radio Access Networks (Open RAN). The US Department of State in a joint statement said, "The United States and India renewed our shared commitment to open, interoperable, reliable, and secure digital connectivity and ICT infrastructure to support the growth of the digital economy during a



Intel Corporation is a leading semiconductor manufacturer specializing in the production of advanced microprocessors, chipsets, and other related technologies. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/AFP/FILE**

meeting of the US-India Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Working Group in New Delhi on 17 October 2024."

"The 2024 ICT Working Group included discussions with private sector representatives from both countries on the promotion of secure and resilient 5G and 6G wireless networks, including through open and interoperable approaches like Open RAN and quantum communications; digital talent, collaboration on artificial intelligence (AI), expanding opportunities for Indian and US Information Technology, telecommunications, electronics manufacturing, and semiconductor companies in both countries; and support for trustworthy cross-border data flows, data protection, and data privacy measures," it added. — ANI

NEWS IN BRIEF

Landslide, flood warnings issued in Sri Lanka

SRI Lankan authorities issued landslide and flood warnings on Sunday, affecting multiple districts and provinces.

The National Building and Research Organization (NBRO) issued landslide warnings, effective until Monday morning for the districts of Badulla, Kandy, Kurunegala and Matale.

The irrigation department issued flood warnings for low-lying areas in Eastern and North Central provinces, particularly in the Mahaweli river basin. The warning will remain in effect until Tuesday morning as heavy rainfall continues in the river's catchment areas.

According to the weather department, the north-eastern monsoon was currently active, with rains being expected to persist in the coming days. — Xinhua

European Commission steps up probe into X over content moderation

THE European Commission said on Friday it was stepping up its investigation into whether Elon Musk's social media network X breached EU rules on content moderation with requests for information and an order for it to retain relevant documents.

As part of its investigation launched in December 2023, the EU executive said it was requesting X to provide by 15 February internal documentation about its recommender system that makes content suggestions to users, and any recent changes made to it.

"Today we are taking further steps to shed light on the compliance of X's recommender systems with the obligations under the DSA," EU digital chief Henna Virkkunen said in a statement, referring to the EU's Digital Services Act. — ANI

Infrastructure, ecology, post-quake recovery among Xizang's top agendas in 2025

SOUTHWEST China's Xizang Autonomous Region has targeted strong economic and social development in 2025, with infrastructure construction, eco-environmental conservation and reconstruction in the quake-hit areas some of its priorities listed in the regional government work report.

Xizang's gross domestic product (GDP) expanded by 6.3 per cent in 2024, and this year the region has set a growth target of over seven per cent, striving to reach eight per cent, Gama Cedain, acting chairman of the regional government, said on Sunday in the report delivered at the annual session of the regional people's congress.

The year 2025 marks the 60th founding anniversary of the Xizang Autonomous Region.

In the year, the region plans to invest more than 200 billion yuan (about US\$27.8 billion) into the construction



People visit the Barkhor Street in Lhasa, southwest China's Xizang Autonomous Region, 11 February 2024. **PHOTO: SUN RUIBO/XINHUA**

of major projects, including the Sichuan-Xizang Railway, according to the report.

The investment is much more than that in 2024 when over 170 billion yuan was spent on 21 major projects. Among the projects was the Lhasa-Xigaze Highway, which began operating in 2024.

The region continues to

prioritize ecology while developing its economy, according to the government report. It plans to promote the legislation of solid waste pollution prevention and control regulations in 2025. Afforestation of more than 1 million mu (about 66,667 hectares) is expected to be completed in the year. — Xinhua

US disneyland kicks off Lunar New Year celebrations

The 2025 Lunar New Year falls on 29 January, coinciding with the new moon and marking the beginning of the Year of the Snake.

DISNEY California Adventure Park kicked off its 2025 Lunar New Year celebrations during the weekend, featuring a variety of Asian cultural performances, culinary delights and fun festivities.

The park, located in Anaheim, Southern California, is adorned in brilliant red and gold, symbolizing good luck, health and prosperity. The annual celebrations have drawn visitors around the world in recent years.

The 2025 Lunar New Year falls on 29 January. It coincides

with the date of new moon and signals the start of the Year of the Snake.

At the Lunar New Year Wishing Wall in the park, visitors shared their messages of hope, health and happiness for the year ahead.

“Best fortunes to all the California fire victims and their families! We pray for them and all their losses of the New Year and Beyond,” says a card written by a visitor named DM Morales.

Chinese calligraphy demonstrations by local artisans were

another attraction.

Roger Sueng, one of the calligraphers, told Xinhua he was glad to introduce Chinese traditional art to American audiences. Many Americans have great interest in Chinese calligraphy, and “love” and “good fortunes” are among the most popular Chinese characters they would like to have, Sueng said. — Xinhua

DCA Lunar New Year Festival - Mickey Banner .
PHOTO: MICKEYBLOG



Residents of Canada, US border towns fear Trump creating divisions



An information sign stands near the Derby Line-Stanstead border crossing station at the US-Canada border on 14 January 2025 in Stanstead, Quebec, Canada PHOTO: ALEXIS AUBIN / AFP

A shared library, sports fields and fire stations. The American border town of Derby Line and its Canadian twin Stanstead have been living in harmony for more than two centuries, but their bonds are being tested by US President-elect Donald Trump.

“There is uncertainty. Are we going to maintain our good relations?” says Jody Stone, the mayor of Stanstead, Quebec.

A black line that runs across the floor of the Haskell Library, which also serves as a concert hall, marks the US-Canada border. The front door is on the American side, but Canadians don't need to go through a customs checkpoint to gain access. Inside, Americans and Canadi-

ans regularly cross paths as they browse the library stacks.

“We have very, very strong ties,” says Sylvie Boudreau, president of the library's board of trustees who lives in Stanstead, adding that Trump taking office on 20 January could bring uncertainty to the Since they were founded in the late 18th century, the twin towns have relied on each other. The Canadian town of 3,000 residents would get help from Derby Line's fire department in emergencies, and similarly would offer help to its American neighbors when needed. They also share water and sewage, an ice rink and basketball courts, and American educators teach Canadian schoolchildren. — AFP

Pompeii reveals 'impressive' bath complex

ARCHAEOLOGISTS at Pompeii have uncovered a private thermal baths complex where guests would take the plunge before sitting down to sumptuous feasts, the Italian site said Friday.

The baths excavated at the Roman villa make up “one

of the largest private thermal complexes” found so far in the ancient city, near Naples, which was devastated when nearby Mount Vesuvius erupted almost 2,000 years ago.

Guests would shed their robes in a changing room that could accommodate up to 30

people, judging by the benches present, according to the Pompeii statement. They would then relax in the “calidarium” — a room with a hot bath — followed by the “tepidarium” or warm room, and finally take a plunge in a pool of cold water in the “frigidarium”. — AFP

The video games bedeviling Elon Musk

SCEPTICISM surrounds whether Elon Musk genuinely invested the time to become a top player in video games like “Diablo IV” and “Path of Exile 2”. Both games belong to the “dungeon crawler” genre, where players navigate fanta-



Scepticism surrounds whether Elon Musk genuinely invested the time to become a top player in video games like “Diablo IV” and “Path of Exile 2”. PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

sy-like dungeons, fight monsters, solve puzzles, and gather rewards to enhance their characters. The gameplay involves grinding, where players repeatedly engage in low-level tasks to accumulate loot, a tactic that can consume significant time.

The main storyline in “Diablo IV” takes about 30 hours to complete, while “Path of Exile 2” offers even more extended gameplay, with average US players spending anywhere from 37 to 50 hours since early access began. The games also feature online multiplayer modes, adding to the time commitment.

Gaming industry analyst Mat Piscatella described “Diablo” as centred on “the never-ending search for better weapons, armor, and items.” Musk has posted videos and comments suggesting he has played both barbarian and spiritborn characters in “Diablo IV”, while online forums indicate he has used both softcore and hardcore characters in “Path of Exile 2”. However, doubts persist due to Musk's demanding schedule leading major companies like Tesla, SpaceX, Neuralink, and X (formerly Twitter). — AFP

ECON: WORLD

Milei touts 'promises kept' after producing rare Argentine budget surplus

Economy Minister Luis Caputo confirmed the surplus, which represented 0.3 per cent of GDP, marking the first since 2010.



Argentine President Javier Milei presented his budget to Congress. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

ARGENTINA'S government said Friday it had produced the country's first budget surplus in more than a decade in 2024, after a year of drastic austerity by libertarian President Javier Milei, whose term has also seen inflation fall.

Economy Minister Luis Caputo said the budget surplus, which amounted to 0.3 per cent of GDP, was the first since 2010.

"The promises have been kept. The 'zero deficit' is a real-

ity. Long live freedom, goddammit," Milei wrote on Instagram.

On the campaign trail in 2023, the self-styled "anarcho-capitalist" economist brandished a chainsaw as a symbol of his plans to slash public spending and tame inflation after years of eye-watering price increases.

Caputo said the 2024 surplus was the fruit of a reform programme "that surprised the whole world".

Milei has applied shock

therapy to try to stabilize South America's long-struggling second-biggest economy.

He devalued the national currency by 52 per cent, fired more than 33,000 public sector workers, slashed state subsidies on transport, fuel and energy and led a massive deregulation drive.

His reforms nearly halved annual inflation, which fell 94 points to 117.8 per cent last year but still remains amongst the highest in the world. — AFP

UAE participates in International Mining Conference in Riyadh

SAIF Ghobash, Assistant Under-Secretary for the Petroleum, Gas and Mineral Resources Sector at the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, participated on behalf of Suhail bin Mohammed Al Mazrouei, Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, in the International Mining Conference held in Riyadh from 14 to 16 January 2025.

During the conference, Ghobash took part in the roundtable meeting for ministers responsible for mining affairs. He discussed with his counterparts from various countries ways to enhance international cooperation in the mining sector and exchanged expertise and modern technologies for mineral exploration and development.

He also attended the open-

ing of the conference's accompanying exhibition, where he reviewed the latest innovations and technologies in mining, reflecting the ministry's commitment to adopting best practices and technologies to advance the UAE's mining sector.

On the sidelines of the conference, Ghobash met Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan, Adviser in Bangladeshi Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources, as well as Kimberly D Harrington, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Energy Diplomacy in the United States.

The discussions focused on strengthening cooperation in energy and mining, highlighting the importance of strategic partnerships to achieve sustainable development. — ANI



During the conference, Ghobash exchanged expertise and modern technologies with international counterparts in the field of mineral exploration and development. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ AFP/FILE**



Türkiye's alcohol tax has hit pubs and restaurants hard in Istanbul. **PHOTO: AFP**

Bootleg liquor deaths revive debate on Türkiye alcohol tax

IN Türkiye, the ongoing issue of bootleg alcohol poisoning has intensified, with 38 people dead in just four days, and 26 in intensive care after consuming counterfeit liquor in Istanbul. The debate over Türkiye's steep alcohol taxes has reignited, driven by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Islamist stance against alcohol consumption. Since Monday, 92 people have been hospitalized af-

ter ingesting alcohol tainted with methanol, a substance that can lead to blindness, liver damage, and death. More than a third of these cases have resulted in fatalities. The rising cost of legitimate alcohol — such as raki, Turkish national aniseed-flavoured drink — has made bootleg alternatives increasingly appealing. Prices for legal alcohol have skyrocketed, with a liter of raki costing around

1,300 lira (\$37.20), compared to just 30 lira (\$0.85) for counterfeit alcohol sold in makeshift containers. This has fueled the production and consumption of moonshine, which poses significant health risks. Opposition lawmakers, like Mustafa Adiguzel, have criticized the government for its tax policies, blaming them for driving people to buy cheaper yet deadly alternatives. — AFP

Omega Seiki unveils electric truck at Bharat Mobility auto expo

Omega Seiki unveiled its electric truck, M1KA 1.0, at the Bharat Mobility auto expo 2025, priced at Rs 699,000.

OMEGA Seiki, a company in the electric vehicle industry, unveiled its

much-anticipated electric truck — M1KA 1.0, priced at Rs 699,000, at the ongo-

ing Bharat Mobility auto expo 2025 here in the national capital.

The EV maker said in a statement that buyers can now pre-book the M1KA 1.0 at Rs 49,999, with deliveries commencing in April 2025.

Along with the launch of the M1KA 1.0, the company also presented the upcoming M1KA 3.0 model and the upgraded All New 2025 Stream City, a next-generation electric passenger vehicle.

The electric truck market in India is experiencing significant growth, driven by the push towards sustainability, government incentives, and the rising fuel cost. As industries increasingly

seek eco-friendly alternatives to traditional diesel trucks, there is a growing demand for electric trucks.

These trucks are suited for last-mile deliveries, small businesses, and urban logistics, offering affordability.

These trucks are suited for last-mile deliveries, small businesses, and urban logistics, offering affordability.

Narang, Founder and Chairman of Omega Seiki Pvt Ltd said, "While many electric trucks on the market are equipped with advanced features, the focus in India should be on providing high-volume, cost-effective 1-1.5 tonne trucks. — ANI



Pre-bookings are open for Rs 49,999, with deliveries starting in April 2025.

Kenyan bank partners with China UnionPay to boost e-commerce payments

KCB Bank Kenya, one of the top banks in Kenya, and UnionPay International (UPI), a subsidiary of China UnionPay, on Friday announced a partnership to enhance e-commerce payment capabilities in Kenya, enabling UnionPay cardholders to transact on digital platforms.

The collaboration marks a significant advancement in digital pay-

ment capabilities, aimed at facilitating online shopping for consumers and merchants across Kenya.

Jane Isiaho, director of retail banking at KCB Bank Kenya, said the partnership reinforces the bank's commitment to providing secure and efficient digital payment services that cater to the evolving needs of its customers. — Xinhua



M-pesa payment information is displayed on the wall of a shop in Nairobi, capital of Kenya, 16 September 2021.

PHOTO: ZHANG YU/XINHUA

Biden administration announces 15 more drugs for price talks

US President Joe Biden's administration on Friday announced a new list of 15 drugs for which it will negotiate lower prices with pharmaceutical companies.

The 2022 Inflation Reduction Act allows Medicare to negotiate the prices of certain drugs, and the costs of 10 key medicines were already cut in a first round of talks.

The aim is to reduce or eliminate the amount paid by beneficiaries of Medicare, a health coverage programme available to Americans over the age of 65. — AFP

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V MSC ANDREA F VOY.NO. (SB501A)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MSC ANDREA F VOY.NO. (SB501A)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **20-1-2025** 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
Myanmar Port Authority

Agent For:
M/S MEDITERRANEAN SHIPPING COMPANY S.A

Myanmar Port Authority
Open Tender Invitation

For Long-term Operation and Management of
Thilawa Multipurpose International Terminal (TMIT)

- The Myanmar Port Authority, in order to achieve its financial and port-service objectives, invites qualified local and international port operators/companies with comprehensive experience and technical expertise in port terminal operation and management to participate in an open tender for the long-term Operation and Management of Thilawa Multipurpose International Terminal (TMIT), located at Plot No. (25) and (26) of the Thilawa Port Area. The tender evaluation and selection process will be conducted transparently in accordance with government tender procedures. The most qualified company will be awarded to operate and manage TMIT under a concession agreement.
- The port operator companies interested therefore are invited to submit the tender. The tender applications and forms can be purchased and submitted in accordance with the following date, time and place:
 - (a) Tender Forms Selling Dates - 20-1-2025 to 18-2-2025
(During Office Hours: 09:30 to 16:30)
 - (b) Selling Address - International Relations and Human Resource Development Department, Myanmar Port Authority (Head Office), First Floor, No. 10 Pansodan Street, Kyauktada Township, Yangon.
 - (c) Pre-Bid Presentation, Date Time, and Place - 13-2-2025, 13:00, Training Room, Myanmar Port Authority (Head Office), First Floor, No. 10 Pansodan Street, Kyauktada Township, Yangon.
 - (d) Submission Date and Time - 20-2-2025, by 13:00
 - (e) Submission Address - Training Room, Myanmar Port Authority (Head Office), First Floor, No. 10 Pansodan Street, Kyauktada Township, Yangon.
- It is notified that any late tender application submitted after the due submission date and time shall not be considered.
- For detailed information, please contact the following phone numbers and e-mail addresses:
 - (a) Phone - 01-8391272, 01-8391273, +959 5146637
 - (b) E-mail: tmit.tender@gmail.com, dgmirhr@mpa.gov.mm

Tender Acceptance and Evaluation Committee
Myanmar Port Authority

ROLLING UPDATES: WORLD

Trump launches his own meme coin, value soars

The launch has raised ethical concerns, with critics arguing that it could be seen as an effort to profit from his political position. Despite this, the coin has gained substantial interest and trading volumes.



Snow is piled up at the US Capitol, where the presidential inauguration traditionally takes place, but Donald Trump said the ceremony on Monday would take place indoors due to the cold. **PHOTO: AFP**

US President-elect Donald Trump has launched his own cryptocurrency, appropriately called \$TRUMP, sparking feverish buying that sent its market capitalization soaring on Saturday to several billion dollars. The inauguration of Don-

ald Trump as the 47th president of the United States is expected to take place on Monday, 20 January, 2025.

In a message posted on his Truth Social platform and X, Trump unveiled the so-called meme coin, which is designed to capitalize on the popularity of a certain personality, movement or viral internet trend.

Meme coins have no economic or transactional value, and are often seen as a means of speculative trading.

"This Trump Meme celebrates a leader who doesn't back down, no matter the odds," says the coin's official site, which makes reference to the assassination attempt against the Republican in July 2024.

In the hours following the overnight launch, the crypto community posed questions about the legitimacy of the \$TRUMP coin, and its actual link to the president-elect, with some fearing a scam. — AFP

German opposition leader pledges 50 gas-fired power plants if elected amid growing energy crisis

OPPOSITION CDU/CSU chancellor candidate Friedrich Merz has vowed to build 50 gas-fired power plants if his conservative bloc wins the February 23 snap election, the news outlet T-Online reported.

"We need to build 50 gas-fired power plants in Germany as quickly as possible, which will be connected to the grid immediately," Merz said.

He lambasted Olaf Scholz's government for its "serious strategic mistake" when it decided to "shut down the last three nuclear power plants that guaranteed reliable power generation in the middle of the energy crisis".

Germany faced energy shortages caused by output 25 per cent below prior year levels of wind power last October and November. Gas-fired electricity production in Germany surged by a record 79 per cent in November.

Merz has been tipped to succeed Social Democratic Chancellor Olaf Scholz, whose coalition collapsed in November.



Germany's RWE Power is one of Europe's leading electricity and gas companies. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/RWE**

In 2022, Berlin 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. Since then, Germany has faced deindustrialization, surging inflation, and a cost of living crisis. — SPUTNIK

BRIEF: WORLD

Ishiba says ruling bloc aims for upper house majority in election

PRIME Minister Shigeru Ishiba said Sunday that his Liberal Democratic Party and its coalition partner must at least retain majority control of the upper house in the summer election after a setback in last year's polls for the more powerful lower house forced the formation of a minority government.

"We should retain a majority of (seats in) the upper house as a ruling coalition. This is our baseline," Ishiba said on a TV programme ahead of the beginning of a 150-day regular session of Japan's parliament on Friday.

The election must be held by late July, with half of the 248-member House of Councillors seats up for grabs. Upper house members serve six years in Japan, and an election in which half of the chamber's seats are contested takes place every three years. — Kyodo

Mexican authorities to seal secret tunnel on US border

A clandestine tunnel discovered on the US-Mexico border allowing entry from Ciudad Juarez into the Texan city of El Paso will be sealed by Mexican authorities, an army official said Saturday, adding that its construction was under investigation.

Discovered on 10 January by US and Mexican security agencies, the tunnel measures approximately 300 metres (1,000 feet) in length on the Mexican side and is equipped with lighting, ventilation and is reinforced to prevent collapses. — AFP

Nearly 200,000 Syrian refugees returned since Dec

NEARLY 200,000 Syrian refugees have returned to their home country since December last year, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi said Saturday.

As of 16 January, about 195,200 Syrians have returned home since the fall of President Bashar al-Assad's government on 8 December, 2024, according to figures posted by Grandi on social media platform X.

He also announced plans to visit Syria and neighbouring countries soon to strengthen the support of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Refugee Agency, for returnees and host communities, though the timeline remains unspecified. — Xinhua

SPORTS

Leverkusen's Terrier out for season with Achilles tear

BAYER Leverkusen attacker Martin Terrier is out for the season with an Achilles tendon rupture, the club said in a statement on Sunday.

The defending Bundesliga champions were already without injured forwards Victor Boniface and Amine Adli.

Seven minutes in to Saturday's 3-1 home win over Borussia Mönchengladbach, Terrier fell to the turf clutching his lower leg without an opponent making contact.

Leverkusen issued a statement on Saturday saying an MRI had "confirmed a rupture in the right Achilles tendon".

"It's a hard blow for Martin and for us as a club," Leverkusen sporting director Simon Rolfes said, with Terrier to undergo surgery on Monday.

The 27-year-old Terrier joined Leverkusen in the summer from Stade Rennais and has two goals and an assist in the league this season.

— AFP



Bayer Leverkusen forward Martin Terrier (R) will miss the rest of the season with injury. PHOTO: AFP

Alcaraz, Djokovic set up blockbuster Australian Open quarterfinal

MEN'S third seed Carlos Alcaraz and 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic won through on Sunday to set up a blockbuster quarterfinal at the Australian Open.

Second seed Alexander Zverev and women's defending champion Aryna Sabalenka also won their round of 16 matches in very hot conditions in Melbourne.

Four-time Grand Slam champion Alcaraz was ahead 7-5, 6-1 when Jack Draper retired amid fierce afternoon sun on Rod Laver Arena.

Fifteenth seed Draper had spent 13 hours on court in his previous three matches, which all went to five-sets, but it finally took its toll and he laboured around the court before pulling the pin. — Xinhua

Vonn crashes as Brignone wins Cortina World Cup Super-G



Federica Brignone won the super-G at Cortina d'Ampezzo on Sunday. PHOTO: AFP

FEDERICA Brignone continued her superb season by winning Sunday's super-G at Cortina d'Ampezzo to extend her World Cup lead, as comeback queen Lindsey Vonn crashed out.

Veteran Brignone, already the oldest woman to win a World Cup race at the age of 34, claimed the honours with a time of one minute and 21.64 seconds, 0.58 sec ahead of reigning overall and discipline champion Lara Gut-Behrami.

Brignone made sure that Italy claimed a Cortina double this weekend after Sofia Goggia won Saturday's downhill with her fourth victory of the season. Her win was also her first ever on the Olimpia delle Tofane piste which will host women's alpine events at the Winter Olympics next year. "I like this more spring-like snow because I can slide down the piste more and every mistake gets punished," said Brignone. — AFP

Top wrestlers set for Paris exhibition tour in June 2026

WRESTLERS from sumo's top division will make a two-day exhibition tour to Paris in June 2026, the third of its kind in the French capital, the Japan Sumo Association said Sunday.

One-day tournaments will be held on 13 and 14 June in a venue that accommodates about 15,000 people, and a playoff will be contested on the final day if there are different tournament winners over the two days.

"We'll make every possible preparation to have spectators enjoy the charm of traditional

culture and the power of the raised ring," sumo association head Hakkaku told a press conference in Tokyo.

"Our traditional culture has been recognized. We'd like to continue doing this as long as it doesn't put a burden on wrestlers."

Sumo's previous visits to Paris were in 1986 and 1995.

London's Royal Albert Hall is scheduled to host a five-day tournament this October. — Kyodo



Hakkaku (2nd from R), president of the Japan Sumo Association, attends a press conference at Tokyo's Ryogoku Kokugikan on 19 January 2025, to announce top-division wrestlers' exhibition tour to Paris in June 2026. PHOTO: KYODO



“India emerging as major pole over global economy, our priorities join very well’: Singaporean President

HIGHLIGHTING India’s emergence as a key player in the global economy, Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam said that India aspires to be a significant player in a multipolar world and this is also reflected in the evolving ties of the two nations.

While addressing the media during his visit to Odisha on Saturday, Tharman emphasized that India is poised to move up the ladder of skills and value, and has significant potential as an export economy, driven by demographics, ongoing development, and growing potential as an export economy.

“Singapore and India are now on a new plane of cooperation. It reflects India’s aspirations. It also reflects the fact that we are now in a world where we have to work harder at collaboration with each other...India aspires to be a pole in its own right in a multipolar world. That’s true geopolitically, but it’s also true economically,” President Tharman told reporters on Saturday.

India is emerging as a major economic pole due to demographics, development, skills, and export potential, President Tharman said.

President Tharman is on a four-day state visit to India from 14-18 January. He arrived in Odisha along with his wife on Friday. — ANI

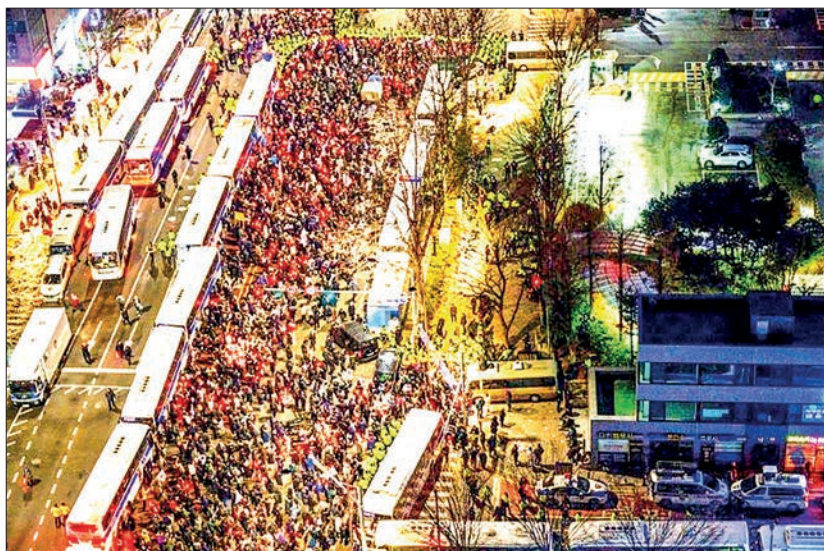
Tharman noted that India is moving towards becoming a skilled and value-driven economy, backed by its demographics, ongoing development, and growing potential as an export economy.



Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam visited Raghurajpur village in Odisha on Saturday and explored its heritage craft and artisanal diversity. **PHOTO: ANI**

Protesters storm S Korea court after president’s detention extended

Supporters of South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol stormed the Seoul court on Sunday after a judge extended the impeached leader’s detention.



Supporters of South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol gathered outside the court in the capital Seoul. **PHOTO: AFP**

SUPPORTERS of South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol stormed a Seoul court Sunday after a judge extended the impeached leader’s detention over his ill-fated attempt to impose martial law.

Yoon said he was “deeply shocked and saddened” by the pre-dawn attack on the court, where his supporters smashed windows and doors.

Tens of thousands of people had gathered outside the Seoul Western District Court in a show of support Saturday for the president, who became South Korea’s first sitting head of state to be arrested in a dawn raid this week.

AFP journalists saw hundreds of police officers charge into the court, with the force arresting dozens and denouncing an “intolerable illegal and violent incident”. — AFP

DEADLY BOMBARDMENT CONTINUED

Israel says truce with Hamas begins, after three-hour delay

ISRAEL on Sunday said a truce with Hamas began in Gaza at 0915 GMT, nearly three hours after initially scheduled, following a last-minute delay on the orders of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

During the delay, Gaza’s civil defence agency said Israeli strikes killed eight people.

The truce with Hamas in Gaza was delayed, leading to continued Israeli strikes, resulting in civilian casualties.

A statement from Netanyahu’s office, issued less than an hour before the truce had been set to start at 8:30 am (0630 GMT), said he had “instructed the IDF (military) that the ceasefire... will not begin until Israel has received the list” of hostages to be freed. — AFP