

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

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Domestic visitors are seen flocking to popular tourist sites in 2024.

Myanmar's domestic tourism hits 10M in 2024

Myanmar's domestic tourism significantly boomed in 2024, attracting up to 10 million homegrown visitors, according to the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism under the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

“Despite the drop in international traveller arrivals, domestic tourism significantly grew in 2024. Before the COVID pandemic, the number of domestic travellers was estimated at over five million. Domestic travellers doubled to nearly 11 million. Locals mostly visit Shan State, Yangon, Mandalay, Nay

Locals mostly visit Shan State, Yangon, Mandalay, Nay Pyi Taw, Kyaiktiyo, Hpa-an and Bago. More visitors are expected to come to Shwesettaw, Magway in the upcoming months.

Pyi Taw, Kyaiktiyo, Hpa-an and Bago. More visitors are expected to come to Shwesettaw, Magway, in the upcoming

months,” said the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism official.

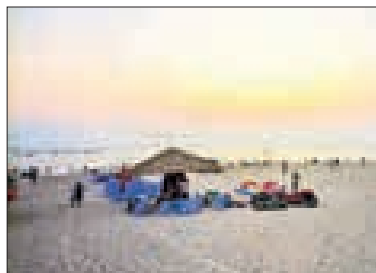
Indigenous guests flock to tourist

destinations across Yangon, Bago, Ayeyawady and Mandalay regions, Nay Pyi Taw, Shan and Mon States. — ASH/KK



BUSINESS PAGE 7

Realtors advise verifying contractor backgrounds for presale condominium investments



NATIONAL PAGE 11

Ngwehsaung Beach sees spike in advanced bookings, welcomes more visitors

8th Bengal Global Business Summit welcomes Myanmar delegates

ACCORDING to the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization, the eighth Bengal Global Business Summit invited Myanmar businesspeople to participate.

The eighth Bengal Global Business Summit, organized by the Government of West Bengal, is scheduled to take place on 5-6 February 2025 in Kolkata, India.

Myanmar is welcomed as a partner country at the sum-

mit. Partner country offerings include pride of place in the entire BGBS 2025, featuring in all brandings of the summit, display of partner country flags, state hospitality with all protocol for ministers, ambassadors and high commissioners, an exhibition space to highlight the country's business strength, interactions with business delegates through B2B, G2G and

B2G meetings, business opportunities through MoUs and agreements and speaking slots at sectoral sessions and roundtables.

Myanmar representatives who want to attend the summit can register through the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization at 067 408622 and email event.td.myantrade@gmail.com. — NN/KK

NATIONAL

Collective Strength: Key to Sustainable Development Beyond Government Efforts

WHILE the government must spearhead comprehensive and equitable development of the Union, sustainable progress can only be achieved through the collective strength of its people.

(Excerpt from the speech given by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the ceremony of presenting awards to outstanding students who passed the matriculation examination 2024 with distinctions in all subjects on 22 July 2024)



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

Myanmar Gazette

Heads of Service Organizations transferred and appointed

- The State Administration Council has transferred the following persons as Heads of Service Organizations shown against each of their names from the date they assume charge of their duties.

Name	Appointment
(a) U Min Hein Director-General Electronic Registration Department Ministry of Immigration and Population	Director-General Minister's Office Ministry of Immigration and Population

(b) U Kyaw Yin Oo Director-General Department of Population Ministry of Immigration and Population	Director-General Electronic Registration Department Ministry of Immigration and Population
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- The State Administration Council has appointed the following persons as Heads of Service Organizations shown against each of their names on probation from the date they assume charge of their duties.

Name	Appointment
(a) Professor Dr Ye Myint Medical Superintendent Nay Pyi Taw General Hospital (1,000-bed) Department of Medical Services Ministry of Health	Director-General Department of Food and Drug Administration Ministry of Health

(b) Professor Dr Khin Saw Oo Professor/Head Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation University of Medicine 2 (Yangon) Department of Human Resources for Health Ministry of Health	Rector University of Medical Technology (Yangon) Department of Human Resources for Health Ministry of Health
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Public Awareness Announcement: Right to Object

- The Kayah State People's Party (KySPP), headquartered at Aye-127, Thazin Street, Aung Thiha Ward, Loikaw, Kayah State, has applied for registration as a political party under Section 5 of the Political Parties Registration Law on 21 January 2025. In its application, the party submitted its name, flag, and emblem, which it intends to use as specified.
- Anyone wishing to object to the proposed party name, flag, or emblem may submit objections along with valid evidence to the Union Election Commission within seven days from the date of this announcement under Article 14 (d) of the Political Parties Registration Rules.

Union Election Commission

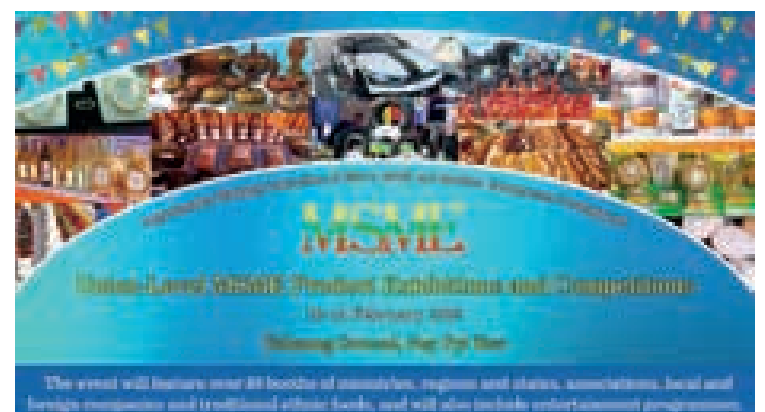


Flag (left) and
Emblem (above).

Political party registration applications continue

THE Peace and Development Party submitted its application to establish a political party to the Union Election Commission yesterday, under Section 3 of the Political Parties Registration Law, to participate in the multiparty democratic general election.

As of today, 19 parties have applied under Section 3 of the Political Parties Registration Law, while 50 parties have applied for continued registration under Section 25, bringing the total to 69 parties. The Union Election Commission is currently reviewing the latest application. — MNA/KZL



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)

Chinese Embassy holds reception to mark Chinese New Year in Yangon

THE Chinese Embassy in Yangon celebrated the Chinese New Year reception at the Inya Lake Hotel yesterday evening.

On behalf of State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, SAC Member Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister at the Prime Minister's Office Admiral Tin Aung San and his wife, attended the event.

The Admiral and his wife, the Chinese Ambassador and officials first observed the Chinese traditional wares displayed at the event.

The event was inaugurated with Chinese traditional lion pole dance and lion-dragon dances.

Speaking at the event, on behalf of the SAC Chairman Prime Minister, the Admiral said the Pauk-Phaw relations between Myanmar and China have long existed since the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries.

Linked by mountains and rivers, the people of the two countries have had friendly relationships for a long time. In the new era of diplomatic ties between the two countries, the bilateral relation is upgraded into a "comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership" via close cooperation based on the Pauk-Phaw spirit. Moreover, the spirit of the Myanmar-China community that goes through thick and thin to-



SAC Member, Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister at the Prime Minister's Office Admiral Tin Aung San, his wife, and China's Ambassador Ms Ma Jia view round the booths at the celebration venue yesterday.

gether was established during the visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping to Myanmar in 2020.

The Admiral appreciated the support of the Chinese government to Myanmar in education, health, social, rural development sectors and poverty reduction.

He added that China provides positive support to Myanmar

in peacemaking and national reconciliation processes, and the country also appreciates the support of the international community and China, including the understanding and assistance of China.

He expressed best wishes for all people from the two countries to be able to overcome any challenges and extend bilateral

relations in 2025.

Chinese Ambassador Ms Ma Jia also remarked, saying 2025 marks the 75th Anniversary of China-Myanmar diplomatic relations, and it is the Year of the Snake in the Chinese calendar. It is a symbol of auspiciousness, prosperity and good luck. Therefore, it will bring mutual benefits to the people of the two countries

and enhance Myanmar-China friendship and cooperation. The Chinese ambassador also extended a wish for consolidation of the existing Pauk-Phaw relations.

The guests at the event were served with dinner after enjoying Chinese traditional music and dance and Myanmar traditional dance. — MNA/KTZH

Daily newspapers available online

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News and Periodicals Enterprise



NATIONAL

Naval junior officer management and engineering courses conclude



The passing-out parade of the 84th Intake of Tatmadaw (Navy) Junior Officer (Management) Course and the 58th Intake of Tatmadaw (Navy) Junior Officer (Engineering) Course in progress yesterday, with Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Htein Win speaking on the occasion.

THE passing-out parade of the 84th Intake of Tatmadaw (Navy) Junior Officer (Management) Course and the 58th Intake of the Tatmadaw (Navy) Junior Officer (Engineering) Course was held at the Naval Training Command Headquarters in Thanlyin Station yesterday morning.

On behalf of the State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Htein Win delivered a speech on the occasion.

First, the Commander-in-Chief (Navy) took the salute of the graduate company and companies of honour and inspected these companies. Not

only companies in the parade ground but also naval vessels from the Yangon River also saluted the Admiral.

The Admiral presented the Best Trainee Award to Navy 5748 Sd-Lt Hein Min Thant and the Excellent Award in Maritime Studies to Navy 5745 Sd-Lt Hein Htet Aung of the 84th Intake of Tatmadaw (Navy) Junior Officer (Management) Course and the Best Trainee Award to Navy 5769 Sd-Lt Sai Min Thant and the Excellent Award in Marine Engineering Studies to Navy 5770 Sd-Lt Phone Myint Kyaw of the 58th Intake of Tatmadaw (Navy) Junior Officer (Engineering) Course.

On behalf of the SAC Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Htein Win delivered a speech. He said that maritime transport, maritime engineering, naval weaponry and naval logistics subjects were given to officer trainees but they have to continue further studies as a lifelong learning activity.

He continued that in accord with the guidance of SAC Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, those officer trainees have to enhance their capacity as good leaders who can be relied on by the organization.

He underscored that those officers have to emphasize learning the advancement of technologies and knowledge. They have to accumulate knowledge about the political affairs of Myanmar and the world in addition to constantly observing technological processes, work procedures, policies and directives without losing sight, he noted.

Also present at the parade were Chief of Armed Forces Training Lt-Gen Htein Win of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army), Chief of Staff (Navy) Vice-Admiral Aye Min Htwe, Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Zaw Hein, senior naval officers, and senior

Tatmadaw officers from Yangon and Thanlyin stations.

The Admiral left the parade ground after taking the salute of the graduate company and other companies of honour. The Admiral met with outstanding graduate officers and their parents at Annawathiri Avenue and spoke words of honour.

In the evening, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Htein Win and his wife, Chief of Armed Forces Training Lt-Gen Htein Win of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) and his wife, Chief of Staff (Navy) Vice-Admiral Aye Min Htwe and his wife, Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Zaw Hein and his wife, senior naval officers and their wives, distinguished guests, graduate officers and their parents attended the graduation dinner.

The entertainment troupe of the Directorate of Public Relations and Psychological Warfare of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) and the Navy Band performed songs and dances.

After the dinner, the Admiral cordially greeted the graduate officers and their parents and relatives. — MNA/TTA



The photos highlight the presentation of the Best Trainee Award, the Excellence in Maritime Studies Award, and the Excellence in Marine Engineering Studies Award to the respective outstanding trainees.

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.

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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

Deputy PM MoFA Union Minister pays official visit to Brunei Darussalam

AT the invitation of Dato Seri Setia Haji Erywan bin Pehin Datu Pekerma Jaya Haji Mohd Yusof, Minister of Foreign Affairs II of Brunei Darussalam, the Myanmar delegation led by U Than Swe, Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, paid an official visit to Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam on 22 and 23 January 2025.

During the visit, on the morning of 22 January 2025, the Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister attended the briefing event on the construction of the new Myanmar Embassy building located in the diplomatic compound in Bandar Seri Begawan. He received updates on the progress of the construction and gave necessary instructions after the briefing. He also attended the cornerstone laying ceremony of the Myanmar Embassy building and laid the foundation.

Afterwards, the Deputy



Deputy Prime Minister MoFA Union Minister U Than Swe has an audience with His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah of Brunei Darussalam yesterday.

Prime Minister and Union Minister visited other two land plots out of three obtained under the agreement for reciprocal exchange of land for the construction of diplomatic premises between Myanmar and Brunei

Darussalam and observed the possibility of building residences for Myanmar Embassy staff. Then, he inspected the functioning of the Myanmar Embassy in Bandar Seri Begawan, met with the Embassy staff and gave

instructions.

On the evening of 22 January 2025, Minister of Foreign Affairs II of Brunei Darussalam hosted an official dinner in honour of the Myanmar delegation at the Rumbia Restaurant in

Bandar Seri Begawan.

On the morning of 23 January 2025, the Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs had a meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs II at Assarraa VIP Guest House villa 2 and had an audience with His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah of Brunei Darussalam in the afternoon at the Istana Nurul Iman Palace. During the meetings, they cordially exchanged views and discussed matters on the promotion of cross-sector cooperation, especially on trade, defence, health, education and people-to-people exchanges and collaborating more closely in regional organization ASEAN and international arenas. Furthermore, the Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs updated the Myanmar Government's efforts to ensure peace, development, and democracy in the country and the latest developments in Myanmar. — MNA

NSPNC meets political parties' working group

THE National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee (NSPNC) met the political parties' working group at the National Solidarity and Peacemaking Centre in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

It was attended by Committee Chairman Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung, committee members, U Ko Ko Gyi, leader of political parties' work group and chairman of People's Party and other representatives.

Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung first explained the discussion made with political parties regarding the stipulations of the Constitution (2008) to be amended, actions taken based on the elec-

toral suggestions of the political parties, plans to spread peace procedures among the public aiming at achieving stability, peace processes based on NCA and ongoing plans, current progresses in political affairs and successful holding of a free and fair multiparty general election.

Leader of the political parties' work group U Ko Ko Gyi and NSPNC secretary Lt-Gen Min Naing clarified the meeting's objectives and agenda, current political situation, role of political parties and potential cooperation between NSPNC and political parties.

The political parties' work group tabled the motions and NSPNC member Lt-Gen Win Bo



The meeting between the National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee and the political parties' working group underway in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Shein (Rtd) discussed the opinions gathered for the points in the 2008 constitution that should be

amended. They also exchanged views on proposals by the two sides for amendments and sup-

plements to the 2008 constitution.

The second day will be on 24 January. — MNA/KTZH

Gold Market Rate as of 23 January 2025

THE price of one tical (16.329325 grammes) of gold with density of 19.25 grammes per cubic centimetre and above is K5,450,000, as established by the Mineral (Gold) Reference Price Determination Committee.

NATIONAL

Myanmar Cultural Heritage Trust awards stipends to outstanding culture and arts students

STUDENTS from the National University of Culture and Arts (Yangon) who demonstrated academic excellence but required financial assistance were awarded stipends by the Myanmar Cultural Heritage Trust (MCHT), according to reports.

For the 2024-2025 academic year, a stipend awarding ceremony was held for two sculpture students in need of financial support. The event took place in the university's meeting hall. Daw Sanda Khin, Chairperson of MCHT, presented stipends to Nang Aye Mya Mon, a fourth-year sculpture student from the National University of Culture and Arts (Yangon), and Maung Aung Myint Myat, a third-year sculpture student from the State High School of Fine Arts (Yangon). The stipends covered tuition fees for



This photo shows the Myanmar Cultural Heritage Committee awarding the stipends.

the first semester of the 2024-2025 academic year.

During the ceremony, the stipend recipients expressed their gratitude and presented their sculptures as tokens of appreciation to Daw Sanda Khin.

The ceremony featured speeches by Daw Sanda Khin,

Chairperson of MCHT, and Dr Kaythi Htwe, Rector of the National University of Culture and Arts (Yangon). Attendees included members of MCHT, the university's Pro-Rector (Academic), professors, heads of departments, and officials from the Training and Research Division (Yangon). — ASH/MKKS

MAI launches Mandalay-Chiang Mai flight on 10 Feb

MYANMAR Airways International said a new flight from Mandalay to Chiang Mai will be launched in February.

For convenient travel between Mandalay and Chiang Mai, MAI will introduce the new flight as of 10 February 2025, every Monday and Friday, it said in an announcement.

Bookings for this flight can be made, it said.

“MAI brings more opportunity to you to visit Chiang Mai's natural beauty adorned with its cultural traditions, so start your best Chiang Mai vacation with MAI right now,” it said.

Mandalay-Chiang Mai flight will depart at 2:10 pm and arrive at 4 pm and Chiang Mai-Mandalay flight will depart at 4:30 pm and arrive at 5:20 pm.

Another new flight from



A poster of the Mandalay-Chiang Mai new flight.

Yangon to Vietnam's Da Nang 2 April, two days per week, MAI has been scheduled to start on said on 22 January. — MT/ZS

Training on Child-Friendly Spaces and Psychological First Aid for Children opens in Yangon

THE Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) and the Danish Red Cross jointly organized the Child-Friendly Spaces for Facilitators and Psychological First Aid for Children Training in Yangon, according to the MRCS.

The training was a collaborative effort between the MRCS's First Aid and Safety Department and the Danish Red Cross. At the opening ceremony, Professor Dr Daw Mya Thu, a full-time Executive of MRCS, along with Mr Fabio Beltramini, Country Manager of the Danish Red Cross, and Ms Patricia, MHPSS Advisor, delivered speeches.

The training is being attended by 24 Red Cross volunteers and staff from some regions and state. It is scheduled to last five days, from 20 to 24 January.

Attendees at the opening ceremony included Professor Dr Mya Thu, Dr Soe Hlaing (a part-time Executive), Professor Dr Khin Hla Hla, Deputy General Secretary Dr Nyo Nyo Wint, and directors of MRCS. Also present were officials from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Danish Red Cross, the First Aid and Safety Department of MRCS, and the trainees themselves. — ASH/KNN



Attendees at the Child-Friendly Spaces for Facilitators and Psychological First Aid for Children Training.

'Shel Yauk Khama Myar' Film to premiere on 31 Jan

THE Myanmar movie 'Shel Yauk Khama Myar', produced by Aung Thiri Film Production, is set to premiere in advanced cinemas across the nation starting on 31 January.

The story of the film was written by Nat Yae (Physics), with the script developed by Lu Nyo Chaw. Directed by Ko Zaw (Aryone Oo), the film promises a compelling cinematic experience.

Categorized as a romantic comedy, the film revolves around a hilariously entertaining story of a matchmaking attempt involving four foster mothers, with plenty of natural humour and unique twists.

The film features an ensemble cast, including Hlwan Paing, Kyaw Htet, Chuu Lay, Khin Hlaing, Khine Hnin Wai, Academy Moh Moh Myint Aung,



The film poster showcases scenes from the movie, highlighting its essence.

Academy Gwan Bon, Academy Wah Wah Aung, Sin Ma, Myo Myo Khine, Thwet Lett, and many more. — ASH/KZL



An overseas-bound container vessel dock

Customs now offers import licence recommendations on MACCS

THE Customs Department declared on 22 January 2025 that seeking a recommendation for an import licence can be undertaken on the Myanmar Automated Cargo Clearance System (MACCS) Online Payment System.

The Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department will utilize the MACCS to carry out import recommendation procedures starting from February 2025.

The applicants can get the MACCS user code and e-token at the User Registration Section of MACCS or via email at maccs.user@gmail.com with the necessary

documents. The applications can be made from 15 January 2025.

To complete the MACCS registration, applicants must provide a Letter of Commitment on company letterhead, the UR-4 Form via the official MACCS website, the MACCS Registration Form, a citizenship scrutiny card, an IE Code, the Application Form (UR 1), an original colour Company Registration, and a Company Extract.

The UR forms can be downloaded via the MACCS website at www.maccs.gov.mm. — NN/KK

Reasonable prices lead to expansion of potato plantations

POTATO prices have been moderate, encouraging farmers to extend their plantation acre, according to the Naungtaya Potato Association official.

G-2 potato seeds, produced from a research project on potato reproduction, in a collaboration between the Department of Agricultural Research in Aungban Township and the Naungtaya Potato Association, were distributed to farmers in Sinphyukyun,

Taungni, Heho, Naungtaya, Pyntha, Htinakaung, Htamot, Hteyoon Nannalin, Lwinywa, YeU, Kyaunggon and Theinpyon, and Thayaon in January.

“Potato prices have stayed at a moderate level so farmers are eager to expand their plantation acre. Potato prices extremely surged last month, which wasn’t helpful for both consumers and farmers. But the prices have been now moderate that is suitable

for both parties,” he explained.

Potato prices tremendously rocketed late last year. However, the prices have returned to normal recently after potatoes from additional plantation acres were produced further, he added.

Potatoes grown in Sinphyukyun will be harvested in February and March, so the production will peak from March to May. — MT/ZS

K544.7B two-step loans to be provided

DEPUTY Minister U Min Htut for Planning and Finance stated that K544.786 billion have been disbursed to the small and medium enterprises under the SME Two-Step Loan Project.

He said so at a working committee meeting 1/2025 for loan access for SMEs, held on 22 January 2025 at the Union Minister’s office of the Ministry of Planning and Finance.

In a bid to finance the micro, small and medium enterprises in Myanmar, SME Two-Step Loan Project Phase 1 was implemented in the 2015-2016 Financial Year and Phase 2, in the 2018-2019 Financial Year.

Under Phase 1, 663 SME entrepreneurs have received K157.243 billion through Participating Financial Institutions (PFI) (six banks) as of December 2024. Under Phase II, 1,936 entrepreneurs took out K387.543 billion from 11 PFI banks by December-end, 2024, he added.

The Deputy Minister also urged working committee members to ensure qualified SMEs get access to SME Two-Step loans with low interest rates following the State’s policies. This project that aligns with State policies for supporting SMEs contributes to the development of SMEs. He also asked them to conduct evaluation and monitoring processes continuously, manage loan repayment and grant new loans in line with rules and regulations.

He also instructed PFIs including Myanma Economic Bank to give priority to import-substitution and export promotion businesses and MSMEs that promote local products and ensure not to be Non-performing loans. He also coordinated department concerned and working committee members regarding fund management, increase in SME loan access and effective management, and called for suggestions and concerted efforts to make existing projects reap a fruitful result. — NN/KK

Realtors advise verifying contractor backgrounds for presale condominium investments



This image shows a realty talk in action.

REAL estate entrepreneurs recommended that the contractor’s background is important when investing in presale apartments and condominiums.

Buying to live, to do businesses, to open a shop, to rent it out, and to invest for reselling are among the purposes

of transactions.

However, as some finished buildings have been found to tilt a little, prospective presale buyers need to study them.

“When buying an apartment, either a contract building or a condominium, quality and facility are im-

portant, including the work and painting. Some contractors built without support columns and their buildings tilted. If you are investing in a presale property, I think the background of the contractor is very important,” said an official from Prime Estate.

Decisive factors for prop-

erty prices include location, business opportunities, transportation, living standards in the environment and quietness when buying real estate. For buying a contracted building, it is required to check the original land title deed and the contract between the landowner and the contractor and to ensure concrete soundness, the buyer should publish a notice in the newspaper, he suggested. — MT/ZN

OPINION

Develop AI but thoroughly apply it for society

AS education and knowledge are of great importance to human society, people have continuously upgraded their qualifications across various fields. While they rely heavily on education and general knowledge, they have never fallen victim to it. To this day, humans continue to apply education and knowledge in their daily lives.

In recent years, innovation and technological development have been rapidly booming throughout the world. Humans, as controllers of these technologies, are capable of managing their advancement. With the development of artificial intelligence (AI), this technology is spreading globally and becoming increasingly applicable to penetrating various fields. Powerful advancement of AI gradually influences over all arenas of the society.

Although humans create AI, many people worldwide are concerned about its rapid advancement and the potential risks it poses to societies and even the entire world through its powerful applications. As a result, scientists and governments around the globe are highlighting the potential benefits of AI for society. In line with this, the United Nations has adopted the theme: "AI and Education: Preserving Human Agency in a World of Automation" for the 2025 International Day of Education.

In fact, the global community prompts reflections on the power of education to equip individuals and communities to navigate, understand, and influence technological advancement. As computer and AI-driven systems become more sophisticated, the boundaries between human intention and machine-driven action often blur, raising critical questions about how to preserve, redefine, and ideally elevate human agency in an age of technological acceleration, according to the United Nations.

Hence, it is essential to apply education and knowledge, including advanced innovative technologies, across relevant sectors to benefit both living and non-living beings worldwide. For the time being, global leaders and scientists must harness the powerful advantages of AI and other educational resources to serve the global population, while addressing challenges and mitigating potential risks. In doing so, the global community will be safe and secure for all living beings.

Everyone is responsible for controlling technology through critical thinking, informed by subject-specific knowledge and education, without causing harm to society. The benefits of technologies, including AI, should be used for the betterment of society, fostering peace and avoiding conflicts, hatred, and malicious activities. Scientists must continuously improve all technologies, including AI, and explore advanced applications to enhance their ability to manage these technologies effectively, alongside educational efforts to support these advancements.

IN contemporary times, with an increasingly fast-paced lifestyle and a modern approach to healing tactics, we unknowingly keep accumulating micro assaults on our immune system without allowing our body to address them. Here's how the ancient albeit simple practices of yoga can be utilised to boost our immunity and lead a healthier life.

The human body to a great extent is a self-regulating, preserving, repairing and maintaining entity. Nature has designed this wonderful machinery with an inherent capability to heal; provided the natural laws of healing are allowed to operate, our health is in its entirety, a natural outcome of all the encounters we have in life. This healing capacity that we are endowed with is called vitality or immunity. Our body has a self-reliant system of protecting its tissues against assaults by bacteria, viruses, harmful proteins and oxidative stress through an interplay of nervous, endocrine and immune systems.

In today's world, these systems are constantly challenged due to our fast-paced lifestyle, stress, unhealthy eating habits and a lot of exposure to pathogens. Yoga asanas and pranayama can reduce stress and

Immunity The Natural Way

By Dr Raghavendra Rao

improve the body's immune response to fight infections and allergies. Yogic practices have been known to improve human body's immunity.

Yoga and immunity

Yoga can help to modulate this immune response in an appropriate way. Yoga as a mind-body intervention has been used globally to combat these lifestyle-related diseases where stress is believed to play a role. Yoga helps calm down the mind, bring stability and balance the vital energies. Studies have shown yoga to improve immunity in the population during influenza epidemics. Yoga is a system of holistic living, having its roots in Indian traditions and culture. It is a discipline to develop one's inherent power in a balanced manner. Now it is being practiced as a part of healthy lifestyle. Yoga is popular globally because of its spiritual values, therapeutic credentials, its role in the prevention of diseases, promotion of health and management of lifestyle-re-

lated disorders.

One of the most useful and popular mode of yogic exercises which provides the benefits of Asanas, Pranayama and Mudras altogether is the Surya Namaskar. It consists of a series of twelve postures which are performed early in the morning facing the rising Sun. Each step of Surya Namaskar is accompanied by regulation of breath. Its regular practice energises all systems of the body and ensures perfect harmony between them. It makes the body flexible and improves immunity. Our body has its own set of immuno-responses, amongst them, inflammation is the most common. A natural counter which is often helpful when it comes to healing injuries and infections, inflammation often becomes chronic under constant psychological and physical stress, thereby weakening our immune system. Most asanas involve systematic stretching that alleviates inflammation and increases flexibility. The immunity-boosting capabilities of even basic yogic

practices also find mention in a new research published in the Journal of Behavioural Medicine. Today, even Western researchers vouch for yoga's benefits. The Harvard Medical School Guide to Yoga: 8 Weeks to Strength, Awareness, and Flexibility, says that regular practice of yoga can lead to greater muscle and bone strength, improved sleep, better stress management and resilience, strengthened immune system and enriched brain health.

Nadi Shodhana Pranayama (Alternate Nostril Breathing):

The main characteristic feature of Nadi Shodhana Pranayama is alternate breathing through the left and right nostrils without or with retention of breath (kumbhaka). Sit in a comfortable posture. Keep the spine and head straight with eyes closed. Relax the body with a few deep breaths. Keep the left palm on the left knee in Jnana mudra and the right palm should be in Nasagra mudra. Place the ring

and small fingers on the left nostril and fold the middle and index finger. Place the right thumb on the right nostril. Open the left nostril, breathe in from the left nostril, close the left nostril with the small and ring fingers and release the thumb from the right nostril; exhale through the right nostril. Next, inhale through the right nostril. At the end of inhalation, close the right nostril, open the left nostril and exhale through it. This completes one round of the Nadi Shodhana Pranayama (Alternate Nostril Breathing). Repeat for another 4 rounds. The duration of inhalation and exhalation should be equal for beginners. Breathing should be slow, steady and controlled and not be forced or restricted.

Benefits of Pranayama

The main goal of Pranayama is to nourish the body as a whole by cleansing the main channels that distribute energy throughout it. In addition to boosting vitality

and lowering stress and anxiety levels, this technique promotes calmness and improves focus. Pranayama can also help with coughing, mental calmness, and concentration. Its advantages go beyond boosting immunity, making it a comprehensive strategy for general health.

Cleansing with kriyas

Cleansing techniques called kriyas also help in removing excess mucous and restore mucosal immunity. Shatkriyas are yogic cleansing techniques used to purge the internal organs and systems of the body. These are a part of the process of detoxification. These techniques are classified into six divisions as under: Neti (nasal washing); Dhauti (stomach washing); Basti (colon washing); Kapalabhati (purificatory yogic breathing); Nauli (isolation of abdominal recti muscles) and Trataka (yogic visual gaze).

These kriyas cleanse, activate and revitalise organs and develop deep internal awareness. The practice of Surya Namaskara, deep breathing exercises, pranayama, meditation and deep relaxation is also highly beneficial. Pranayama is the fourth constituent of Ashtanga yoga, which deals with the regulation of Prana and energy, grossly translated as

breath. It is a practice which helps to regulate vital energies through the regulation of breathing. The main purpose of Pranayama is to gain control over the autonomous nervous system and through it to influence the mental functions. Regular practice of Pranayama makes the mind calm.

Understanding immunity

Though exposure to pathogens help build adaptive immunity, surviving such an exposure may sometimes become fatal. Research has shown that there is a heterogeneity in susceptibility to infections during a flu epidemic. Psychologic stress, fitness and physical activity, nutrition, sleep, comorbid conditions and lifestyle play a vital role in shaping this immune response. A growing body of evidence identifies stress as a co-factor in infectious disease susceptibility and outcomes. It has been suggested that the effects of stress on the immune system may mediate the relationship between stress and infectious disease. Stress increases stress hormones that dampen immune response and also reduce the ability of the cells to repair the damage caused due to infections.

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Meditate on wellness

The process of keeping one's

attention focussed with sustained concentration on an object is commonly known as meditation. It is an integral part of all yogic practices and is beneficial for psychological and spiritual growth. Over the years, the stress relieving benefits of regular meditation have been known to achieve a sense of calm which has a positive impact on an individual's health and promotes a healthy lifestyle. It has been known to be beneficial when it comes to overcoming addictions of tranquilizers, reducing hypertension, insomnia, migraines, depression, anxiety, and other psychosomatic illnesses. It stabilises the mind, increases awareness, concentration and will power while simultaneously improving memory and alertness. It is an effective tool for rejuvenation of the mind, body and soul, and even helps in coping with the stressful situations of everyday life.

Dr Raghavendra Rao M, BNYS, PhD is the Director, Central Council for Research in Yoga & Naturopathy (CCRYN), under the Ministry of AYUSH, Delhi. He has completed several research projects on the use of both yoga and naturopathy interventions.

Global green energy push likely to continue despite Trump climate retreat: UN

The UN believes that many countries will keep moving towards renewable energy investments, as these initiatives are proving to be profitable and beneficial for the environment.

DONALD Trump's decision to withdraw the United States from the Paris climate agreement should not slow the global momentum towards renewable energy investments that the deal created, the UN said Wednesday.

"I believe that many countries will continue moving in the direction of green energy," said Celeste Saulo, head of the United Nations' World Meteorological Organization weather and climate agency.

As he took office on Monday, President Trump announced the US withdrawal from the 2015 Paris accord adopted by 195 parties to

curb greenhouse gas emissions driving climate change.

Critics warn that the move undermines global cooperation on reducing fossil fuel use and could weaken other countries' commitments to climate action.

But WMO chief Saulo said in a joint interview with AFP and Reuters she did not believe the US exit would slow what are turning out to be profitable investments in green energy.

The shift towards renewable energy sources "is ongoing and... brings wealth to the countries", she said on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in the

Swiss ski resort town of Davos.

"That will not change." She did not "expect people to move away from investments that are really very profitable and at the same time are green initiatives."

"I think that the move and the momentum that started with the Paris Agreement is there."

Early warnings

Trump previously withdrew the United States from the Paris accord in 2017, during his first term, only to see former president Joe Biden re-enter when he took office in 2021.

Monday's announcement, on Trump's first day back in power, signalled that the United States would formally exit in one year, under the accord's rules.

It came as global average temperatures already hit record highs in 2024, while over the past two years they temporarily surpassed a critical 1.5 degrees Celsius warming threshold for the first time.

Asked about Trump's move, Saulo said it was "a decision of a sovereign country, and we need to accept that".

The focus for the WMO now, she said, would be on "continu-

ing the... strong collaboration and engagement of the US" with the agency.

In particular, the work towards establishing early warning systems for extreme weather events should "not be affected", she said.

With extreme weather events on the rise, the UN has said it wants to see every person on Earth protected by early warning systems by 2027 for floods, droughts, heatwaves and storms.

Saulo highlighted the close cooperation between the WMO and the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration



The momentum created by the Paris Agreement is likely to persist, driving further investments in green energy. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

(NOAA). The NOAA's work was "quite impactful worldwide", she stressed.

"I'm sure that that will continue along the same lines, because

they are saving lives," including using climate information to issue early warnings for looming disasters.

"I would say that the United

States is one of the countries that uses most climate information for decision making," she said.

SOURCE: AFP

NATIONAL

Day 4 of 53rd Myanmar Health Research Congress held in Yangon



The 53rd Myanmar Health Research Congress enters fourth day.

WITH the supervision of the Ministry of Health, the 53rd Myanmar Health Research Congress continued its fourth day at the Department of Medical Research head office in Yangon yesterday.

In the morning session, the seminar themed “Virological and Immunological Highlights of Dengue, Chi-

kungunya and Zika Virus Infections in Myanmar” was conducted.

During the session, the experts from Myanmar and Japanese Naga Saki University discussed their findings regarding these diseases under eight different topics.

In the afternoon, the deputy director and researchers

of the department, physicians and post-graduate students of DSMA, microbiologists consultant doctor of National Health Laboratory and Nay Pyi Taw General Hospital (1,000-bed) read out their relevant research papers, and the participants raised questions and suggestions.

— MNA/KTZH

Counter-argument to false information

False news circulates about Zinkyaik Camp

A recent post on the Khit Thit Media Facebook page alleged that timber smuggling was occurring at the Zinkyaik Camp and that prisoners were being forced to participate in such activities. These claims, reportedly sourced from individuals connected to timber traders in Paung Township, have been debunked as entirely false.

The actual incident involved a vehicle transporting timbers for the construction of a building at Shwe Dinga Monastery in Zinkyaik. Due to the vehicle being unable to enter the monastery grounds through the gate, arrangements were temporarily made to offload the timbers within the camp premises with the approval of the Zinkyaik Sangha Nayaka Committee Chairman, who is also the presiding abbot of the Shwe Dinga Monastery.

It was clarified that timbers were subsequently transported to the monastery on 19 January by smaller vehicle.

The collaboration between the monastery and prison authorities was purely based on mutual goodwill, and no other affiliations or improper actions were involved. Furthermore, the presiding monk of the Shwe Dinga Monastery has long maintained harmonious relations with the local community.

The misleading report by Khit Thit Media aims to misinform the public and tarnish the reputation of the Correctional Department. The publication of such falsehoods has been criticized as an attempt to spread malicious news and create misunderstandings. — Thitsa/KZL

Security forces accused of arson in Shwebo

SECURITY forces were accused of entering Kinbywa Village in Shwebo Township, Sagaing Region, and burning down the village school and residential houses, according to fabricated and false reports circulated by subversive media outlets.

Regarding these allegations, a local security official stated that security forces are conducting operations under the law to ensure territorial security and prevent acts of violence by terrorists operating in the area. The official clarified that no village schools or residential houses had been burned down by the security forces. Instead, it

was revealed that terrorists had been targeting villages that did not support them, setting fire to these villages. Additionally, with the intent of causing widespread destruction to the nation, terrorists have been planting mines, detonating explosions, and burning schools and departmental buildings, and it is all known to the public.

The official further noted that the news in question was deliberately fabricated and circulated by terrorist-supporting media outlets. The aim was to cover up the actions of terrorists and to mislead the public into having a negative perception of the security forces. — MNA/MKKS

People’s Military Service Rules promulgated

THE Ministry of Defence of the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has promulgated the People’s Military Service Rules and Regulations by Notification No 2/2025 on 23 January 2025.

The rules are divided into 10 chapters, 59 sections, and 12 appendices. Chapter I covers the names and definitions of terms; Chapter II addresses the age and period for military service; Chapter III outlines the stages of formation and responsibilities of the Committee for Summoning People’s Military Servants; Chapter IV deals

with the registration and enlistment of soldiers; and Chapter V outlines the application process for exemption from medical examination and military service, or for the reduction or postponement of the military service period to a separately specified time. Chapter VI addresses summonses, Chapter VII outlines the formation and duties of medical examination boards, Chapter VIII details the rights of people’s military servants, Chapter IX covers military mobilization, and Chapter X provides general information. — MNA/TH

Illegal trade crackdown seizes illegal goods worth K1.238B

UNDER the supervision of the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee, efforts are being made to combat the illicit trade effectively under the law.

On 20 January, the combined teams impounded nine Hijet vehicles (worth approximately K270 million) carrying 34 barrels of smuggled fuel oil (valued at K17.3 million) in Yesakyo Township, seven unregistered vehicles and an unregistered motorbike (worth K49.2 million) in Myaing, Yesakyo and Pwintphyu Townships and 2.222 tonnes of smuggled charcoal (valued K60,000) in Myothit Township. The action was conducted under the Petroleum and Petroleum Products Law, the Export-Import Law and the Forest Law.

Similarly, on 22 January, the combined on-duty teams seized an Isuzu truck (estimated value of K18 million) carrying foodstuffs worth K18.48 million without official documents at the Zathapyin combined checkpoint. The action was carried out per Customs procedures.

Additionally, the combined teams supervised by the Mandalay Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force

captured industrial materials and consumer goods (valued at K52.28 million) without official documents from the parcel van of a Yangon-Mandalay Up train at the Mandalay Railway Station, a Nissan Diesel truck (worth approximately K60 million) carrying foodstuffs (valued at K27.48 million) without official documents on the detour around Kyaukse, and a Yutong bus (estimated value of K110 million) carrying foodstuffs (valued at K6.2 million) on Yangon-Mandalay expressway. The action was conducted following Customs procedures.

The Customs Department on-duty teams seized industrial materials worth K547.56 million without official documents from eight containers at the Myanmar Industrial Port, and a Nissan Condor truck (estimated value of K50 million) carrying consumer goods worth K11.55 million without official documents at the Mayanchaung permanent checkpoint. The action was taken according to Customs procedures.

The Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee reported 33 arrests on 20 and 22 January, confiscating illegal goods worth approximately K1.238 billion. — MNA/MKKS

NATIONAL

Kyaikto arranges COVID-19 vaccination for 120 retirees

A total of 120 people who retired from the civil service in Kyaikto Township were provided the COVID-19 vaccine Pfizer on 22 January, according to the Kyaikto Township Public Health Department.

In order not to have difficulty, the department went to the bank on pension payday to vaccinate. COVID-19 vaccination was also done on 20 January at the township hospital, it said.

The township public health department urged the public to come to have the COVID-19 vac-

cine at township hospitals, station hospitals and rural clinics during office hours as it is over six months after the latest dose.

“COVID-19 vaccination has resumed. It has been over six months that we were unable to provide the vaccine. Our immunity has now declined so we need to re-boost it. COVID-19 will not disappear from the earth, it just hides for a while. Let’s boost our immunity by having Covid-19 vaccine so that it won’t revive again,” it said. — MT/ZS



The Kyaikto Township Public Health Department vaccinating retirees against COVID-19 on 22 January.

Ngwehsaung Beach sees spike in advanced bookings, welcomes more visitors



This photo showcases visitors to Ngwehsaung Beach on 22 January.

ACCORDING to tourism officials, there is a surge in tourists to Ayeyawady’s Ngwehsaung Beach, and people are already booking tickets in advance for February.

Due to some rumours, the sale of tickets for the Chaungtha tour has been suspended, but there are still people booking tickets for the Ngwehsaung trip in February.

“Currently, the number of

tourists has decreased a little. On the Ngwehsaung side, everything is normal. People are still going. On the Chaungtha side, ticket sales have stopped for a while. But some people continue going to Ngwehsaung beach. Some people have booked for February. The Ngwehsaung route is convenient. Due to some rumours, the number of cars on the road decreased slightly,” said an official

from Mini Tour Travel & Tour in South Okkalapa Township.

In terms of domestic tourists, famous destinations in this year’s travel season include not only Shan State, Taunggyi, Inlay, Kalaw, Bagan, and Popa, but also Chaungtha, Ngwehsaung and Ngwetaung beaches in Ayeyawady Region, as well as pilgrimage trips to Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Inwa, Bago, and Kyaiktiyo. — Thit Taw/ZN

Reintroducing 37 spirit costumes to promote Myanmar’s ancient attire

REVEALING the costumes of the 37 spirits is aimed at connecting them with the costumes of Myanmar people from all periods, said Myanmar artisan Ko Htake Tin Sithu Hein.

He is now photographing the models with these costumes made by referencing ‘The Thirty-Seven Nats by Sir Richard Carnac Temple’ and other sources.

“Most Myanmar people have seen dresses of the Konbaung dynasty. What we reintroduce are those from Taungoo, Inwa and Tagaung periods. Myanmar will know the costumes of different periods by learning the dresses of these 37 spirits. Many people



Shintaw Nat

like our intention. They sent letters to congratulate us and say they are happy,” he said.

Among them, the cos-

tumes of Min Mahagiri, Mandalay Bodaw and Shintaw Nats have been filmed and they will continue filming another three next week.

“The costumes of Min Mahagiri, Mandalay Bodaw and Shintaw Nats have been filmed and we will continue with another three. We film according to the ancient Parabaik like holding swords and spears. The Min Mahagiri mostly seen as a ministerial dress is reintroduced in the same clothes as in the Pyu and Tagaung periods. We will continue with filming Htiphyusaung, Htiphyusaung Maetaw and Minkhaung Nats next week,” he said. — Thit Taw/ZN

UNESCO Myanmar launches free online courses for hearing-impaired children

A free online course on inclusive education for children with hearing impairments will be launched, according to a statement from the UNESCO Myanmar Project Office.

Education is a birthright for every child, and regardless of their ability, disability, or background, hearing-impaired children should also have access to survival, development, protection, and participation, and the right to education with their peers should not be denied or ignored, the training announcement stated.

It is necessary to find ways for people with hearing disabilities to learn and provide support for teaching while inclusive education is also an application of a

new vision or social perspectives to the education sector, it added.

Regarding this, UNESCO Myanmar will launch an online course on “Inclusive Education for Hearing Impairment”. To attend the course, interested persons can visit the link: <https://mmteacherplatform.net/en/e-learning/courses/mawgyau-4-akyaayaonkhyao-winkhyaetyahithawmthansunkemyaaaaalutaingakyaonwinnipayngatlekyangaththinkyapekhyin-aunlaingthinkhansa> and register in advance. For any technical difficulties, they are advised to contact training.myanmar@unesco.org. It will issue a certificate of completion after finishing the course and passing the assessment, it said. — MT/ZN

ECONOMY WORLD

SoftBank, OpenAI, Oracle to invest \$500 billion on AI in US: Trump

The initiative, called the Stargate Project, aims to develop new AI infrastructure for OpenAI, the creator of the ChatGPT AI chatbot.

JAPANESE tech giant SoftBank Group Corp as well as OpenAI and Oracle Corp will form a new company that will invest at least \$500 billion on artificial intelligence infrastructure in the United States, President Donald Trump announced Tuesday, saying it would bring a massive number of jobs to the country.

The investment, under what is called the Stargate Project, will be made over the next four years, building new AI infrastructure for OpenAI, according to a statement released by SoftBank Group and OpenAI, the US developer of



SoftBank Group Corp is a prominent Japanese tech giant. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

the widely used AI chatbot ChatGPT.

At a press conference in the White House, Trump said “the largest AI infrastructure project by far in history” will ensure “the future of technology”, “It’s all taking place right here in America,” he said, adding it will create “over 100,000 American jobs”.

The companies said in a joint statement, “This project will not only support the re-industrialization of the United States but also provide a strategic capability to protect the national security of America and its allies.” — Kyodo

India, US can strengthen ties in healthcare security and affordability

AS the US remains the top market for the Indian pharmaceutical industry, experts in India are now expecting opportunities for collaboration in healthcare security and affordability following the new US administration under President Donald Trump, stated Sudarshan Jain, Secretary General of the Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance.

Jain said, “The relationship between India and the US has been growing from strength to strength over the years. Healthcare security and affordability are key priorities for the new Trump Administration. India and the US have an opportunity to collaborate in these areas to advance the healthcare agenda.”

He also stated, “Together,

India and the US recognize the importance of building a resilient and diversified pharmaceutical supply chain. India has already implemented the Production Linked Incentive Scheme for active pharmaceutical ingredients, and early results are promising. A synergistic effort from both countries can accelerate this initiative, strengthening self-reliance and enhancing healthcare security. As a supplier of quality-assured medicines, India plays a vital role in meeting the needs of the US and the global market.”

He further added that more opportunities can be explored in pharmaceutical research, development, and manufacturing. “Healthcare can serve as a cornerstone of this partnership and will help to explore opportunities for cooperation in pharmaceutical research, development, and manufacturing, and to address common challenges in healthcare, including supply chain resilience and security”. — ANI



India plays a crucial role as a supplier of quality-assured medicines for the US and the global market. PHOTO: ANI

NEWS IN BRIEF

Philippines posts US\$1.5 bln deficit in December

THE Philippines' overall balance of payments (BOP) posted a deficit of US\$1.5 billion in December 2024, a reversal from a 642-million-dollar surplus recorded in December 2023, according to the central bank. The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) said the latest BOP deficit reflected the BSP's net foreign exchange operations and drawdown on the national government's deposits with the BSP to pay off its foreign currency debt obligations.

The BSP said the cumulative BOP position registered a surplus of 609 million dollars in 2024, lower than a 3.7 billion-dollar surplus recorded in 2023. Based on preliminary data, the decline in the cumulative BOP surplus was due to higher trade in goods deficit and lower net receipts from trade in services and net foreign borrowings by the national government. — Xinhua

Canada willing to inflict economic pain to get Trump back down

WARNING that Canada will respond strongly if US President Donald Trump moves forward with his plan to impose tariffs, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Ottawa is willing to inflict ‘economic pain on the US to get Trump to back down,’ CBC News reported. Trudeau promised that his country would respond with “robust, rapid” and “very strong” retaliatory measures.

This came after Trump announced that his administration is planning to impose 25 per cent tariffs on imports from Mexico and Canada from 1 February. “We are thinking in terms of 25 per cent on Mexico and Canada because they’re allowing vast numbers of people ... to come in, and fentanyl to come in.” When asked about the timeline, he said, “I think we’ll do it February 1.” — ANI

Central Tokyo condo prices top 100 mln yen again in 2024

The average price of new condominiums in central Tokyo exceeded 100 million yen (\$639,000) for the second consecutive year.

THE average price of new condominiums released last year in central Tokyo topped 100 million yen (\$639,000) for the second year in a row, as costs for building materials remained high, real estate research firm data showed Thursday.

But the price was slightly lower than the previous year, falling by

2.6 per cent to 111.81 million yen per unit in the capital's 23 wards, the Real Estate Economic Institute said.

By area, the average price of new condos rose 8.9 per cent to 58.9 million yen in Tokyo outside its 23 wards, 13.8 per cent to 55.4 million yen in Saitama Prefecture, 18.9 per cent to 56.9 million yen in

Chiba Prefecture, and 6.0 per cent to 64.3 million yen in Kanagawa Prefecture.

However, the drop in prices in the 23 wards saw the average price decline 3.5 per cent to 78.2 million yen in the greater Tokyo.

"There were no new super-high-end properties actively sought out by wealthy buyers, but rising costs pushed up the over-

all prices," said an official of the research firm.

The number of new condominiums put on sale last year in the capital and the surrounding three prefectures dropped 14.4 per cent from the year before to 23,003 units, hitting the lowest level since records began in 1973, the institute said. — Kyodo

High-rise condominium buildings in Tokyo's Chuo Ward. PHOTO: KYODO/FILE



Algeria strikes deal with Chevron to assess offshore oil

ALGERIA signed an agreement with US energy giant Chevron on Wednesday aimed at assessing potential offshore oil resources in the Mediterranean, according to the country's energy ministry.

The partnership was struck between the national hydrocarbon agency Alnaft and Chevron North Africa, the ministry said in a statement. The agreement, which will last two years, envisions an "in-depth study to evaluate Al-

gerian offshore oil resources", the statement said. The deal could "open the way for exploration and development projects aimed at developing national hydrocarbon resources".

It is part of Alnaft's "efforts to attract quality investments and step up technical capacity in the field of offshore exploration", the agency's president, Mourad Beldjehem, was quoted as saying by Algeria's official APS news agency. — AFP

Spain's Sabadell bank to move HQ back to Catalonia



Sabadell was one of some 7,000 firms to move its headquarters out of Catalonia during the region's failed 2017 independence bid. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

SPAIN'S Banco Sabadell approved Wednesday moving its headquarters back to Catalonia, the first major firm to do so after thousands left in the

wake of the region's failed 2017 independence bid.

The move was agreed by the lender's board at an extraordinary meeting and comes as Sabadell

is fighting a hostile takeover bid from its larger rival BBVA.

The bank, which was founded in 1881 in Sabadell, a city of around 200,000 located north of Barcelona, has cited its importance to the wealthy northeastern region's economy as one of the reasons for opposing the takeover bid launched in May.

The board decided "that the time is right to return to its place of origin now that the circumstances that motivated its move over seven years ago no longer

exist," Sabadell said in a statement.

The bank relocated its legal headquarters to Alicante in the neighbouring region of Valencia in October 2017, shortly after Catalonia pushed ahead with a secession referendum deemed illegal by the courts which was followed by a short-lived declaration of independence.

Some 7,000 companies from all sectors moved their headquarters out of Catalonia at the time, including Sabadell's rival CaixaBank. — AFP

<p>CLAIMS DAY NOTICE M.V AS SERENA VOY.NO. (501W)</p> <p>Consignees of cargo carried on M.V AS SERENA VOY.NO. (501W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24-1-2025 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/MIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day. Phone No: 2301185</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Shipping Agency Department Myanma Port Authority</p> <p>Agent For: M/S MAERSK A/S</p>	<p>CLAIMS DAY NOTICE M.V ARIONAS VOY.NO. (0UVBMS1NC)</p> <p>Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ARIONAS VOY.NO. (0UVBMS1NC) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24-1-2025 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day. Phone No: 2301185</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Shipping Agency Department Myanma Port Authority</p> <p>Agent For: M/S CMA-CGM SHIPPING LINE PTE LTD</p>	<p>CLAIMS DAY NOTICE M.V ISEACO WISDOM VOY.NO. (V.142N)</p> <p>Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ISEACO WISDOM VOY.NO. (V.142N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24-1-2025 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day. Phone No: 2301185</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Shipping Agency Department Myanma Port Authority</p> <p>Agent For: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES</p>
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ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD



The US-Mexico border wall is seen in Sasabe, Arizona in December 2023. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Trump toughens crackdown on immigration and diversity

The US Refugee Admissions Programme has been indefinitely halted.

PRESIDENT Donald Trump announced Wednesday deployment of an extra 1,500 US troops to the Mexican border, as he stepped up a crackdown against illegal immigration and diversity programmes in a whirlwind start to his second term.

The 78-year-old Republican — who has pledged a “golden age” for America — halted refugee arrivals and threatened to prosecute local authorities that fail to deport migrants. As part of his blitz of right-wing measures on returning to office,

the billionaire also ordered that US government employees in diversity programmes — conceived as ways to combat racism and sexism — be put on paid leave immediately.

Trump held what was reportedly his first phone call with a foreign leader since taking office Monday, talking with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who promised increased trade to the United States, according to the kingdom’s foreign ministry.

And in the latest round

of appointments, Trump announced that fast food executive Andrew Puzder — who has previously faced questions over his business and private conduct — will be the new US ambassador to the European Union. He named his longtime Secret Service bodyguard Sean Curran — who was at his side when an assassin opened fire and grazed his ear during a presidential campaign rally last July — as director of the security agency, which protects the president and other top officials. — AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Belarus declares EU interference in its sovereign affairs

BELARUSIAN Foreign Ministry has declared gross interference in the country’s election campaign by the European Union.

Anatoly Glaz, a representative of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry, told local media on Wednesday about the “grossest interference” in the republic’s sovereign affairs during the election campaign.

The ministry has obtained a statement from the European External Action Service (EEAS), which it plans to make following the elections in Belarus. The elections in Belarus have just begun, but the document already condemns and does not recognize everything, the official said. — Xinhua

Shooting, explosions in Jenin as Israel presses raid

GUNFIRE and explosions rocked the Jenin area of the occupied West Bank on Wednesday, an AFP journalist reported, as the Israeli military kept up a large-scale raid for a second day.

The operation, launched just days after a ceasefire paused more than a year of fighting in Gaza, has left at least 10 Palestinians dead, according to Palestinian health authorities.

Israeli officials have said the raid is part of a broader campaign against militants in the West Bank, citing thousands of attack attempts since the Gaza war erupted in October 2023.

“The situation is very difficult,” Jenin governor Kamal Abu al-Rub told AFP. “The occupation army has bulldozed all the roads leading to Jenin camp and to the Jenin government hospital... There is shooting and explosions,” he added, referring to the Israeli military. — AFP

New cases of bird flu found in Israel

H5N1 bird flu was diagnosed in a flock of turkeys at Kibbutz Tzora in the Mateh Yehuda Regional Council. Following an unusual mortality of approximately 19,300 turkeys, aged 6.7 weeks, in four chicken coops, samples were sent to the laboratories of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, which confirmed the suspicion.

This is the 16th case of bird flu diagnosed in the current flu season in commercial chicken coops. As a reminder, in the past two weeks, two additional cases of bird flu were discovered in a turkey coop at Kibbutz Tzora. — ANI

Cambodia announces launch of BAKONG Tourists app with Visa

THE National Bank of Cambodia (NBC) on Wednesday announced the launch of the BAKONG Tourists app with Visa in order to make digital payments easier for foreign tourists while travelling in Cambodia.

International tourists travelling in Cambodia can now easily make digital payment transactions by simply down-

loading the BAKONG Tourists app on their smartphones and connecting it with their VISA payment cards, said an NBC news release.

Once connected, users can transfer funds from their Visa card accounts into their BAKONG accounts and make payments by scanning KHQR codes at approximately 4.5 mil-

lion merchant locations across Cambodia, the news release said.

“The integration with Visa now allows users to link their Visa cards, enabling effortless fund transfers and cashless payments via KHQR codes,” NBC’s governor Chea Serey said during the launch event in Phnom Penh. — Xinhua



Tourists choose souvenirs at a souvenir shop in the Old Market in Siem Reap province, Cambodia, on 18 October 2024. **PHOTO: SAO KHUTH/XINHUA**

SPORTS

Myanmar to compete in 2025 ASEAN Women's Championship

THE 2025 ASEAN Women's Championship, organized by the ASEAN Football Federation (AFF), is scheduled for June with eight teams including Team Myanmar.

Indonesia has been chosen as the host country for this year's tournament. While the competition is scheduled for June, the AFF has yet to announce the specific dates for the event and the group stage draw. The 2025 championship will feature a revamped format, following the 2024 AFF Women's Cup's qualifying structure.

Last year, six lower-ranked teams were split into two groups for qualifiers, with Indonesia claiming the championship title, Cambodia as runners-up, and Singa-



Myanmar women's national team undergo training for the upcoming international tournaments. PHOTO: MFF

pore securing third place. Higher-ranked teams, including Myanmar, Australia, Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines, directly advanced to the main competition without needing qualifiers.

The Myanmar women's national team is currently undergoing intensive training for several international tournaments this year. In February, the team will participate in a four-nation invitational tournament in Nepal. Myanmar will then compete in the AFC Women's Asian Cup qualifiers and the 33rd Thailand SEA Games. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

Man City step up rebuild with signing of Marmoush for £59 million

MANCHESTER City on Thursday announced the signing of Eintracht Frankfurt forward Omar Marmoush, with Kyle Walker joining AC Milan on loan, as the club step up their rebuild during a disappointing season.

Egypt forward Marmoush has signed a four-and-a-half-year contract with the Premier League champions for an initial fee of £59 million (\$72.6 million) with add-ons worth a potential £4 million.

He is City's third signing of the January transfer window following the arrivals of defenders Abdou Diallo and Vitor Reis as manager Pep Guardiola reshapes his squad.

The 25-year-old, who scored 37 goals in 67 games for Bundesliga side Frankfurt, said signing for City was "an amazing feeling".

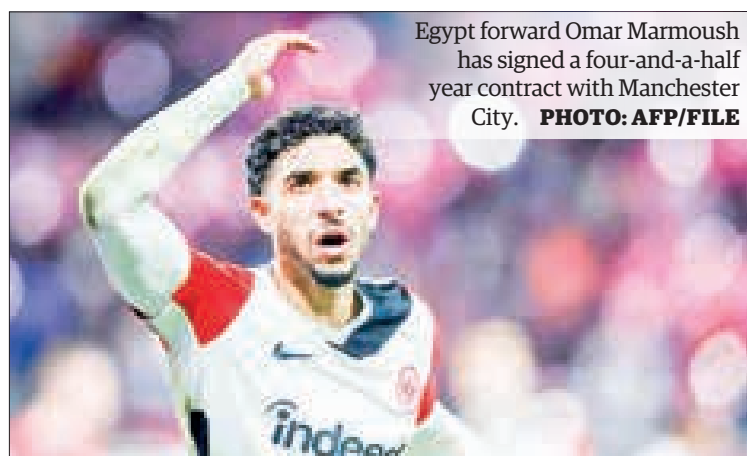
"With Pep, his technical staff and the world-class facilities here, players have everything

they need to improve," he said. "That was really enticing for me when I had the chance to come here.

"And I cannot deny I also want to win trophies. City have been the most successful club in England for many, many years, so I know I am joining a winning environment and winning culture." Director of football Txiki Begiristain said Marmoush, who has 35 international caps, was an "accomplished and exciting forward".

"He's had an outstanding season, and every time we have watched him, he has influenced matches," he said.

"He has all the attributes a top-class attacker requires. He has outstanding pace and awareness, and he is exceptional in front of goal. He can also play a number of different positions, which is a really valuable asset". — AFP



Egypt forward Omar Marmoush has signed a four-and-a-half year contract with Manchester City. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

PSG finally click and fire warning shot to European rivals



Bradley Barcola led PSG's thrilling fightback against Manchester City in the Champions League on Wednesday. PHOTO: AFP

PARIS Saint-Germain had been let down by their inability to score goals in this season's Champions League but everything clicked on Wednesday, when they produced a brilliant fightback to beat Manchester City 4-2 and finally kickstart their campaign.

Semi-finalists last season, PSG came into their penulti-

mate game of the league phase in real danger of an early exit, sitting one point and two places outside the qualifying spots for next month's play-off round.

Their plight worsened when, after a good first-half showing, they fell 2-0 behind within eight minutes of the second half starting.

PSG had scored only three

goals in their first five matches in this season's Champions League — one of which was an own goal — as they made a habit of dominating games but squandering chances.

They suffered defeats against Arsenal, Atletico Madrid and Bayern Munich before being boosted by a 3-0 win away at Red Bull Salzburg in their last European outing in December.

Doing the same against City appeared a far greater challenge, however. Nevertheless, they were rapidly back on level terms thanks to goals by Ousmane Dembele and Bradley Barcola, before Joao Neves put them ahead on 78 minutes and Goncalo Ramos wrapped up a remarkable win at the death.

"I thought it was a complete performance, even when we were 2-0 down," said coach Luis Enrique after getting one over Pep Guardiola, his close friend and former Barcelona teammate. — AFP

Sabalenka powers through to third straight Australian Open final

ARYNA Sabalenka will play for a historic third consecutive Australian Open title in Saturday's final after overpowering Paula Badosa in the semifinals.

Sabalenka, the world number one, beat the 11th seeded Badosa 6-4, 6-2 in one hour and 26 minutes at Melbourne Park on Thursday night.

It extends Sabalenka's winning streak at

the Australian Open to 20 matches as the Belarusian aims to become the sixth woman in history — and first since Martina Hingis in the 1990s — to win the Australian Open in three straight years.

"I'm proud of myself, I'm proud of my team that we were able to put ourselves in such a situation," Sabalenka said on court. — Xinhua



Global leaders call for action on AI, regional reforms, environmental initiatives at WEF 2025

The creation of the world's largest tropical forest reserve in Africa, the Kivu to Kinshasa Green Corridor Reserve, which will protect over 550,000 square kilometres of forest in the Congo River Basin.



The town of Davos is pictured during the 2025 World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting in Davos, Switzerland, 20 January 2025. **PHOTO: LIAN YI/XINHUA**

GLOBAL leaders have called for action on artificial intelligence, regional reforms, and environmental initiatives at the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting 2025, discussing key issues such as social

media reform in Europe, closer regional integration in Asia, the creation of the world's largest tropical forest reserve in Africa and opportunities for progress in the Middle East.

At the 2025 World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting, global leaders called for action on pressing issues such as artificial intelligence (AI), regional integration, and environmental conservation. Key announcements included the creation of the world's largest tropical forest reserve in Africa.

The Kivu to Kinshasa Green Corridor Reserve, announced by the President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, will protect over 550,000 square kilometres of forest in the Congo River Basin, benefiting both the environment and local communities.

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim highlighted ASEAN's role in green energy and its growing ties with China, while advocating for dialogue over conflict. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez called for stronger social media governance within the EU, stressing the need to curb misinformation and cyber harassment through the Digital Services Act and better algorithm oversight. — ANI

CREW RELEASE CONFIRMED

Yemen's Huthis say freed detained ship's crew after Gaza truce

YEMEN'S Huthi rebels on Wednesday freed the crew of the merchant ship *Galaxy Leader* after detaining them for more than a year, citing the ceasefire in Gaza between Israel and Hamas as motivation.

Weeks after the war in the Gaza Strip broke out on 7 October 2023, the Iran-backed Huthis began launching attacks on shipping in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden in what they said was support for the Palestinians.

At the start of their campaign, helicopter-borne rebels stormed the vehicle carrier *Galaxy Leader* and detained its 25 international crew.

On Wednesday, the Huthi supreme council "announced the freeing of the crew of the *Galaxy Leader*, who were arrested on 19 November 2023 during the campaign in solidarity with Gaza", the rebels' Saba news agency said. — AFP

Greenland walks a tightrope: Balancing resources, BRICS, and US security concerns

GREENLAND should be particularly careful in choosing partners for natural resources cooperation due to geopolitical tensions in the world, a lawmaker from Greenland's ruling coalition party, Siumut, Kuno Fenker, has told Sputnik

"And with the tensions in the world, Greenland has to be very careful of choosing who we cooperate with. And we know that the critical minerals and oil and gas are security concerns of the United States. The United States has the Monroe doctrine in regards to the North American continent. Greenland has to respect that," Fenker said, when asked if Greenland was

open to mining projects with BRICS countries.

Mining in Greenland is open to everyone in theory, as there are currently no restrictions in the legislation, Fenker added.

"But, of course, every time there's a project coming on, it has to be evaluated in regards to foreign politics, security, and defence matters," Fenker said.

Greenlandic Prime Minister Mute Egede previously said that the island is open to expanding cooperation with the US in terms of the development of natural resources.

Greenland has enough resources to become the "Qatar of



While Greenland's laws currently place no restrictions on mining projects, Fenker emphasized the importance of evaluating potential partnerships based on foreign policy, security, and defence considerations. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

the North", Fenker noted.

The lawmaker also said that while Greenland does not utilize

enough resources for it at the moment, he hopes that in time it will do so "in absolute respect

of our laws that protect the environment and also protect the population". — SPUTNIK