

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

India extends free pigeon pea import policy to March 2026



Workers diligently load export bean bags onto a lorry (above). A vendor showcases the pigeon pea variety.

Myanmar shipped 1.5 million tonnes of pulse exports from April to December 2024 of the current financial year 2024-2025, including 200,000 tonnes of pigeon peas.

INDIA'S Ministry of Commerce and Industry stated that India extended the duty-free import policy of pigeon pea (tur) to 31 March 2026.

This move benefits Myanmar's pulse growers and exporters. Also, it has a significant impact on pulse exports.

Myanmar's pigeon pea output is estimated at 300,000 tonnes. This year, pigeon pea's yield is expected to rise.

Myanmar shipped 1.5 million tonnes

of pulses exports from April to December 2024 of the current financial year 2024-2025, including 200,000 tonnes of pigeon peas, Myanmar Pulses, Beans, Maize, and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association said.

Myanmar mainly exports black gram, green gram and pigeon peas to foreign markets. Of them, black gram and pigeon peas are primarily shipped to India, while green gram is exported to China

and Europe.

India has growing demand and consumption requirements for black grams and pigeon peas. According to a Memorandum of Understanding between Myanmar and India signed on 18 June 2021, India will import 250,000 tonnes of black grams and 100,000 tonnes of pigeon peas (tur) from Myanmar for five consecutive years from 2021-2022 financial year to 2025-2026 FY. This G-to-G pact will not affect

the pulses' annual quota set by India. Myanmar's exporters are also entitled to deliver the pulses to India under that yearly quota.

The Myanmar Pulses, Beans, Maize and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association stated that black grams, which India primarily purchases, are commonly found only in Myanmar, whereas pigeon peas, green grams and chickpeas are grown in African countries and Australia. — NN/KK

Article

Leveraging Technology for Development: Democratization of Technology

By Debnath Shaw

PAGE 8-9

NATIONAL

PAGE 3



Myanmar attends 9th Ministerial Cooperation Meeting with Laos

BUSINESS

PAGE 7



Myanma Port Authority calls for open tender for TMIT

NATIONAL

Nation's Development Relies on Contributions from Intellectuals and Experts

IN line with the saying, "The strength of the nation lies within," the country's development efforts depend on the contributions of intellectuals and experts in the arts and sciences.

(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)



Thanaka Gallery in NyaungU opens to public

THANAKA produced from different regions and states have been displayed at Thanaka Gallery opened in NyaungU Township and local and foreign tourists are welcome to visit with free admission, said Shwe Pyi Nann Company's general manager U Khin Zaw.

Except for Wednesday, it is open daily and draws the attention of local and foreign tourists.

"At the gallery, Thanaka are exhibited corresponding to their different origins and growing techniques. Local and foreign visitors can visit," said U Khin Zaw.

Shwe Pyin Nann has distributed Thanaka value-added products which have been promising in the local market with the public's interest, and it has grown 40,000 Thanaka plants covering about 100 acres in Bagan-NyaungU as



This image shows the Thanaka Gallery in NyaungU Township.

a conservation of the best four Thanaka species — three Ayadaw species and one Pakokku species, he said.

Shwe Pyin Nann Thanaka's finished products, which are especially good for skin as well as for health, have been distributed through regional and state agents throughout

the country, he said.

Thanaka, which has been used from generation to generation in Myanmar, can protect the skin from the sunlight and provide moisture, and it can also be good for dysentery and other intestinal diseases, according to Thanaka experts. — MT/ZS

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.

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Friday 24 January, 2025)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is a few cloud over the North Bay, partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and Eastcentral Bay of Bengal and cloudy elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF 25 JANUARY 2025: Light rain are likely to be isolated in Taninthayi Region. Degree of certainty is 60%. Weather will be partly cloudy in Yangon, Upper Sagaing, and Ayeyawady Regions and Kachin, Kayin, and Mon States and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about 4-7 feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of slight decrease of night temperatures in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin, and Chin States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 JANUARY 2025: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 JANUARY 2025: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 JANUARY 2025: Generally fair weather.

WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR WEEKEND: Weather will be generally fair in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay Region and partly cloudy in Yangon Region. — DMH

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)

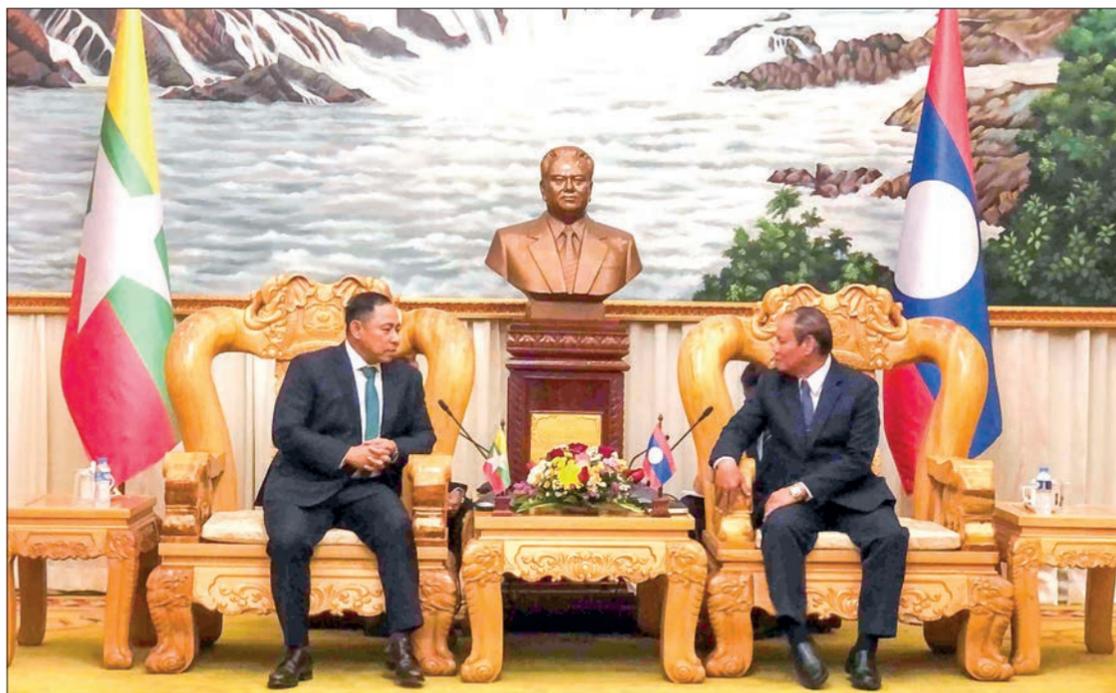
Myanmar attends 9th Ministerial Cooperation Meeting with Laos

A Myanmar delegation led by State Administration Council Member Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Yar Pyae attended the ninth Ministerial Level Bilateral Cooperation Meeting between the Ministry of Public Security of Laos and the Ministry of Home Affairs of Myanmar held in Vientiane from 21 to 23 January.

On 22 January, the Senior Officials Meeting between the two ministries was held, followed by the Ministerial Level Meeting.

The meeting was attended by a delegation led by Union Minister Lt-Gen Yar Pyae while the Laos side was led by General Vilay Lakhampong, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Security.

During the meeting, both sides cordially discussed matters relating to promot-



SAC Member Union Home Affairs Minister Lt-Gen Yar Pyae meets General Vilay Lakhampong, Lao Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Security.

ing bilateral cooperation in security and law enforcement between the two countries, tel-

ecom fraud and cybercrime, cross-border gambling, eliminating illegal drugs and human

trafficking, and cooperation in fugitive investigations.

Moreover, they discussed

the enhancement of cooperation between BLOs of the two countries, further cooperation in combating illegal entry and exit of humans and commodities via border areas under laws and procedures of the two countries, uncovering and transferring of terrorist groups and members who were declared as fugitives and establishment of communication system to exchange of information about transnational crimes on time.

After the meeting, the two ministers signed and exchanged the meeting minutes.

In the evening, the Myanmar delegation joined the dinner hosted by General Vilay Lakhampong.

The Myanmar delegation arrived back in Yangon on 23 January. — MNA/KTZH

53rd Myanmar Health Research Congress enters fifth day

THE 53rd Myanmar Health Research Congress continued its fifth day at the Department of Medical Research head office in Yangon yesterday.

In the morning session, the seminar themed “Artificial Intelligence: Shaping the Next Generation of Health Professionals” was conducted.

During the event, Union Minister for Health (Retd) Dr Pe Thet Khin and the director-general of the Department of Human Resources for Health made opening speeches.

The event continued with different topics: “AI in Medical Education: Transforming Learning Environments”, “Ethics and Challenges in AI-Integrat-

ed Healthcare”, “Roles of AI in Medical Research” and “AI Applications in Clinical Diagnosis and Treatment”.

Professors then raised questions and participants coordinated the discussion.

At noon, Professor Yinzi Jin and Dr Yikai Feng from Peking University of China, Dr Fatema Shabnam from Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University of Bangladesh and Specialist Dr Kaung Myat Shwe from Yangon General Hospital discussed four health-related topics.

The event also presented the best paper awards, including basic research, applied research, health systems research, best poster and young researchers. — MNA/KTZH



A documentary group photo session during the 53rd Myanmar Health Research Congress yesterday.

NATIONAL

NSPNC holds 2nd day meeting with political parties' working group

THE second-day meeting of the National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee (NSPNC) and the political parties' working group took place 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, the leader of the political parties' working group and chairman of People's Party and other representatives.

During the meeting, participants considered the proposals which were not completed on the first day of the meeting and



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

discussed the reshuffling of the working group.

During the general discus-

sions, the representatives of political parties exchanged views on 2025 electoral processes,

measures to gain state stability, lawful actions to fulfil the needs of the public, current political

affairs, cooperation between the government and the people, suggestions to increase the entry of PDFs, who emerged due to political propaganda, to the boundary of government and numbers of recruitment under the People's Military Servant Law.

The agreements, proposals and opinions obtained from the two-day discussions of both sides were then signed, collected and recorded.

U Ko Ko Gyi and Committee Chairman Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung made concluding remarks and exchanged gifts. — MNA/KTZH

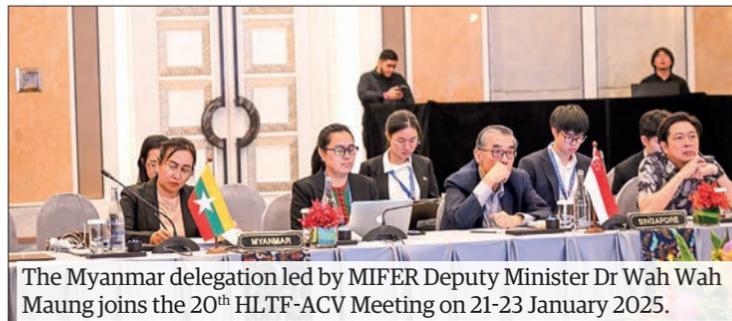
Myanmar delegation attends 20th HLTF-ACV Meeting

THE Myanmar delegation led by Dr Wah Wah Maung, an Eminent Person (EP) of Myanmar for the High-Level Task Force on ASEAN Community Vision 2045 and Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations of the Republic of the Union Myanmar attended the 20th Meeting of High-Level Task Force on ASEAN Community Vision 2045 (20th HLTF-ACV) which was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 21-23 January 2025, accompanied by officials from the ASEAN Affairs Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Drafting sessions of the High-Level Representatives were also held on the sideline of the 20th Meeting of HLTF-ACV and concluded the fifth reading with 99 per cent completion of the draft ASEAN Political and Security Community (APSC) Strategic Plan.

The 20th HLTF-ACV Meeting was co-chaired by Eminent Persons (EP) of Malaysia and

the Philippines, and attended by Eminent Persons, High-Level Representatives and officials from the ASEAN Member States, representatives from Timor-Leste as well as ASEAN Deputy Secretary-General for APSC and officials from the ASEAN Secretariat.

At the meeting, the HLTF-ACV had an Interface Meeting with the Chair of the High-Level Task Force on ASEAN Economic Integration (HLTF-EI), Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Development of the ASCC Strategic Plan and Chair of the ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee (ACCC) and the respective pillars have updated their progress in developing their respective strategic plans. The meeting exchanged views on the development of the respective strategic plans, the timeline for submission of the Strategic Plans and identifying Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to monitor the



implementation of the Strategic Plans. Moreover, the meeting exchanged views concerning the Institutional Strengthening-related Strategic Measures and cross-cutting issues.

The meeting also discussed the Draft Kuala Lumpur Declaration on ASEAN Community Vision (ACV) 2045, APSC Strategic Plan, ASEAN Secretariat paper on cross-pillar issues, ASEAN Secretariat paper on Institutional Strengthening, Communication Plan for ACV 2045 and Monitoring Tools.

During the 20th HLTF-ACV Meeting, the deputy minister and head of the HLTF-ACV Myanmar delegation, commended the comprehensive recommendations delivered by the co-chairs of the other pillars. The Deputy

Minister highlighted that the discussions on the development of strategic plans for the other pillars in implementing the ASEAN Community Roadmap 2045 have provided clarity for the HLTF-ACV's work. The deputy minister further emphasized the importance of completing the relevant domestic procedures of the ASEAN Member States to ensure the timely approval of the ASEAN Community Roadmap 2045 and its attendant documents. She also highlighted the critical role of both qualitative and quantitative data in monitoring the implementation of the strategies outlined in the roadmap. The availability and accurate calculation of key indicators will be essential for assessing progress and effectiveness. To ensure the roadm-

ap's successful implementation, cross-sectoral collaboration will play a pivotal role. Therefore, this coordinated effort will allow for the collection and analysis of data to monitor the progress of implementation.

The upcoming 21st HLTF-ACV Meeting scheduled in Manila will look into further discussion of the Strategic Plans of the ASEAN Community Pillars. In addition to ongoing discussions on the ASEAN Community Roadmap 2045, the ASEAN Member States will continue deliberating on key issues to enhance coordination and effectiveness. These include ensuring consistency and linkages between sectors, avoiding duplication of plans, and strengthening mechanisms for monitoring implementation. Discussions also addressed the importance of identifying a lead sectoral body to oversee the implementation of strategic programmes that require collaboration across ministries. This initiative aims to streamline efforts and foster more effective cross-sectoral cooperation in achieving ASEAN's shared goals. — MNA

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Printed and published at the Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the Global New Light of Myanmar Daily under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.
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NATIONAL

Tatmadaw hospital vessels offer healthcare in Pyapon

THE Tatmadaw medical team including skilled doctors, nurses, and paramedics on the Shwepuzun and Saku vessels provided healthcare services to locals along the Ayeyawady River yesterday.

The team reached Ward 12 in Pyapon Township, Ayeyawady Region, where they received a warm welcome from locals, teachers, and students.

The medical team set up operations at the Township Agriculture Department office and offered healthcare services to 389 residents from nearby villages.

Among the cases treated were 142 general medical pa-

tients, 11 surgical cases, seven maternity-related cases, 17 paediatric cases, 96 orthopaedic cases, 38 ENT cases, 43 ophthalmology cases and 35 dental cases.

The team also performed two general surgeries and five eye surgeries. Diagnostic services included X-rays for 19 patients, ultrasound scans for 27 patients, ECGs for 18 patients and laboratory tests for 37 patients.

Arrangements were also made to transfer four patients needing further treatment to the nearest Tatmadaw hospitals or people's hospitals. — MNA/KZL



Pyapon residents receiving healthcare services from the Tatmadaw medical team.

Thanlwin Tatmadaw vessel delivers healthcare to Pearl Island locals



The medical team from the Tatmadaw naval hospital ship provides treatment to locals on Pearl Island.

THE Tatmadaw Thanlwin naval hospital vessel, with a team of doctors, specialists, and nurses provided healthcare services to locals from the Taninthayi coastal region, Yangon Region's Cocogyun Township and Ayeyawady Region's Hainggyikyun.

The vessel arrived at Pearl Island in the Bokpyin Township of Taninthayi Region, where they were warmly welcomed by local officials, departmental staff, community members, teachers and students.

The medical team provided healthcare services to 320 people from Pearl Island and nearby villages, based at the Bokpyin Township's Basic Education High School (branch) on Pearl Island.

They treated 97 people for general health issues, 22 for surgery-related ailments, 22 for Obstetrical and gynaecological issues, 20 for paediatric illnesses, 55 for orthopaedic diseases, 10 for ear, nose and throat disorders, 59 for eye diseases and 33 for dental issues.

Among those treated, four general surgery patients, four eye surgery patients, five X-ray patients, 16 patients tested with ultrasound, 43 patients examined using ECG machines and 50 patients undergoing laboratory tests were provided with necessary medical treatment.

Two patients in need of hospital care were arranged to be sent to the nearest Tatmadaw or general hospital for further treatment. — MNA/KZL

MoE's RON68 petrol to be sold for compatible vehicles

THE Ministry of Energy has published "Public's Resources to Public" article part I on 3 January 2025 and part II on 15 January in the State-run newspapers for the knowledge of people regarding local petrol distribution and consumption.

The locally-produced petrol was sold at the state-owned petrol stations as the first phase — one station in Nay Pyi Taw and two stations in Mandalay, totalling three petrol stations, on 4 January 2025, at K2,200 per litre, to motorcycles and three-wheeled vehicles. Currently, according to the demand of people, it will be sold to RON68-fuelled public vehicles, ministries and development committee's vehicles starting from 25 January 2025 as the second phase.

The use of locally-produced petrol can bring benefits as it can reduce the fuel import volume to a certain extent, save the use of foreign currency, create easy transportation for SMEs, save petrol on a long drive, whereas people can buy at cheaper prices instead of paying high prices at private petrol stations daily and it can save and provide the income of families. — MNA/KTZH

Counter-argument to false information

False airstrike reports spread by malicious media in Kyaikdon

MALICIOUS news media made false reports that an airstrike by security forces in Kyaikdon, Kya-in Seikkyi Township in Kayin State resulted in the death of a woman and damage to several buildings. However, according to a statement from a relevant security official, security forces have not targeted civilian sites, and no such airstrikes occurred.

The official explained that the security forces only carried out operations against terrorists

in areas where the local people did not support them. Terrorists were attacking with heavy weapons and drones, using bombings. Malicious news outlets that support terrorists have spread false reports to protect terror activities and mislead the public into thinking the security forces caused harm to civilians. These false reports are being shared on social media to cause confusion and damage the public's trust in the security forces. — MNA/KZL

NATIONAL

China-Myanmar Cultural Exchange Week marks Happy Chinese New Year

IN commemoration of the Happy Chinese New Year, a ceremony to mark the China-Myanmar Cultural Exchange Week featuring Yunnan-Myanmar Intangible Cultural Heritage took place at the China Culture Centre (Yangon) in Ahlon Township of Yangon Region yesterday.

Minister-Counsellor Ms Cao Jing of the Chinese Embassy to Myanmar and Chairman of Myanmar Writers' Association U Ohn Maung (Myinmu Maung Naing Moe) made speeches, and a video clip on the Happy Chinese New Year was screened.

Deputy Curator of the Yunnan Provincial Museum Fan Haitao talked about the snake culture of the ancient State of Jiang, the Researcher of the Research and Exchange Department of Yunnan Provincial

Museum, the festival culture in Yunnan Province and Pro-Rector U Khaing Tun of the National University for Arts and Culture (Yangon), Myanmar's festival culture.

Moreover, the reporter from China Media Group (Yangon Bureau) and the producer from Myanmar's SkyNet TV recounted their experiences on TV broadcasting through collaborative efforts between Myanmar and China.

The ceremony was attended by representatives from the culture, media, education and tourism sectors of Myanmar, the Chinese community in Myanmar and Chinese investment organizations, China-Myanmar media, Chinese students from Yangon University, University of Foreign Languages (Yangon), National University for Arts and Culture (Yangon),

National Management Degree College and GESC Chinese language centre.

The programmes of the China-Myanmar Cultural Exchange Week to mark the Happy Chinese New Year featured intangible cultural handicrafts, the process of fragrant sachets, lanterns and bronze wares showcased by the South Asian and Southeast Asian Regional Communication Centre in Yunnan Province and the Yunnan Provincial Museum. Moreover, teachers from the Chinese Community in Myanmar Hand-writing Association presented wishes for the festival. Furthermore, some 100 photographic works depicting beautiful cultural and tourism industries from Myanmar and Yunnan Province were also displayed at the ceremony. — ASH/TTA



This photo depicts the China-Myanmar Cultural Exchange Week being grandly organized with the attendance of representatives from various organizations.

MRF sells over 500,000 rice sacks at fair prices in 2024

THE Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF) sold more than 500,000 rice sacks (Pawsan and Aemah-ta varieties) under the Good Rice Good Price programme in 2024, according to the annual report 2024 of the MRF.

The sales reached civil servant households (277,350 10-kilogramme rice sacks), factories (295,940 sacks) and associations and retail shops (28,484 sacks).

The federation offered rice sales with 10-kg small sacks at fairer prices starting from 2022 amid a price surge in the domestic rice market, with 20,000-30,000 10-kilogramme rice sacks on average per month.

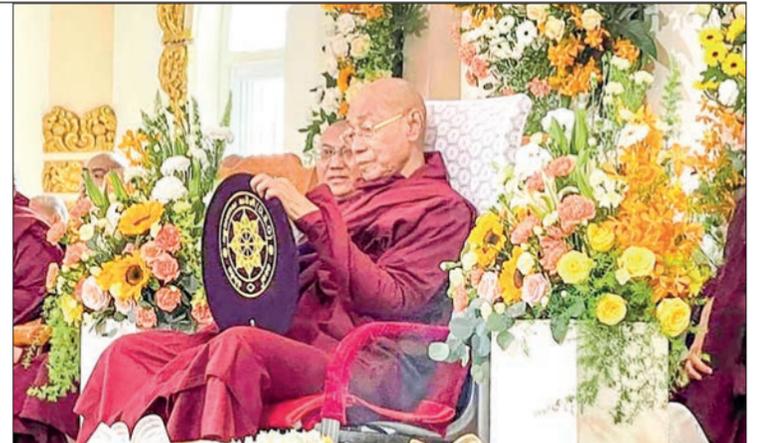
MRF held central executive committee meetings in the



This photo depicts the Myanmar Rice Federation offering fair rice sales through mobile market trucks on 24 December 2024.

second week of January, addressing rice export conditions, market analysis on domestic and international rice prices,

performances and plans of the federation, and other matters to enhance rice sectors. — ASH/KK



Rector Sayadaw's 85th birthday to be celebrated on 13 Mar

THE 85th birthday celebration of Rector Sayadaw Aggamaha Pandita Abhidhaja Maharaththa guru Dr Bhaddanta Nandamala Bhivamsa, the patron monk of the Maha Subodhayon Monastery and Shwegyin Nikaya Upa Okkahta Maha Nayaka, will be held on 13 March at the Aungchantha Dhamma Centre in PyinOoLwin Township in Mandalay Region.

The birthday offering cere-

mony will provide food for 30,000 guests from across the country to pay homage to Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Nandamala Bhivamsa. Currently, the Dhamma pavilion, the charity food offering area, and the parking area are all being cleaned and prepared.

Sayadaw travelled to Bangkok, Thailand, on the morning of 22 January for his annual medical checkup. — ASH/MKKS

Yangon Eye Hospital now accepts online bookings for outpatient services

YANGON Eye Hospital, located in Tamway Township, Yangon Region, is now accepting outpatient appointments through online booking platforms.

The hospital continues to provide daily emergency eye care services without holidays and accepts outpatient cases on government working days from 8:30 am to 4 pm. Currently, the hospital is facilitating online registration for non-emergency outpatient services to streamline the process.

A hospital official stated, "We are implementing online booking through the Caremebot App, Facebook Messenger and Viber to reduce patients' waiting times. While walk-in patients are still required to register at the outpatient department upon ar-

rival and follow a queue system, those with online bookings are given priority on their scheduled day. However, many people are not yet aware of this online service".

In 2024, the Yangon Eye Hospital treated over 11,000 inpatients, attended to more than 90,000 outpatients through scheduled appointments and conducted over 9,000 eye surgeries. The hospital provides treatment and surgeries for a wide range of eye conditions including cataracts, retinal detachment, retinal perforation, blood leakage in the vitreous chamber, eye infections, eyelid and tear duct disorders, corneal diseases, glaucoma, post-cataract complications and optic nerve-related disorders. — ASH/KZL



This photo shows medical staff conducting eye checkups for outpatients at the Yangon Eye Hospital.

Myanmar Port Authority calls for open tender for TMIT

MYANMA Port Authority invited qualified local and international companies to participate in an open tender for the long-term Operation and Management of Thilawa Multipurpose International Terminal (TMIT), according to Myanmar Port Authority's Tender Acceptance and Evaluation Committee.

The most qualified company with solid experience and technical expertise will be selected transparently through an open tender, per tender procedures, to carry out port terminal operation and management for the TMIT at Plot No 25 and 26 of the Thilawa Port Area under a concession agreement.

Interested operators are invited to submit the tender



The photo displays the entrance signage of the Thilawa Special Economic Zone facade.

and tender applications must be submitted by 20 February during office hours (1 pm) at the International Relations and Human Resource Development Department of Myanmar Port Authority. Tender forms are sold at that department located on the first floor on No 10 Pansodan Street, Kyauktada Township, Yangon. Pre-Bid Presentation will be held at the Training Room of Myanmar Port Authority.

Late submission will not be considered, the Committee announced. Individuals can enquire about details through 01 8391272, 01 8391273, 09 5146637, and email tmit.tender@gmail.com and dgmirhr@mpa.gov.mm. — NN/KK

Poultry farmers emphasize raising black chicken in Yangon, Mawlamyine, Taunggyi



Black chickens at a poultry farm.

ACCORDING to black chicken farms, the number of breeders of Indonesia-mixed breed black chicken has expanded in Yangon, Mawlamyine and Taunggyi.

Black chicken is believed to have medicinal properties and is mostly

consumed by people who have cancer and diabetes.

"Black chicken trade is fine and the number of breeders is large too. We reproduce ourselves the Indonesia-mixed breed so we have many customers, largely from Yangon,

Mawlamyine and Taunggyi and they even buy hundreds of chickens. Some buy it for eggs because the black chicken egg is good for diseases such as cancer and diabetes, so people eat it as protective against diseases," said an official from a black chicken farm in PyinOoLwin Township.

Black chicken is suitable for commercial breeding and it lays 20-40 eggs per time, and for health purposes or on a small-scale farm, two females and one male can be bred together.

"Black chicken egg is nutritious. Two females and one male are paired for commercial breeding. The duration of breeding is 3-4 years. They lay eggs until they're alive. They are being bred mainly for commercial purposes," she said. — Thit Taw/ZS

Wundwin-made sarongs in high demand, garner numerous orders from Yangon

MYANMAR men's 'Longyi' or 'Pasoe' (sarong for male) made in Wundwin has been sold well over recent years and most orders were placed from Yangon Region.

The number of men who wear paste has become large, which has resulted in an increase in demand, and paste that is fairly priced is more marketable.

"Price gets high slightly. Customer likes are different so all kinds of

products have been sold well but fairly-priced products are more marketable. The majority of orders for Wundwin-made 'Pasoe' are from Yangon and followed by Mandalay, from there, they re-distribute to wholesalers," said Ma May July Aung from AAA Wundwin-made 'Pasoe' distribution.

Cotton sarong is more popular than other kinds of 'Pasoe', and according to Wundwin's sarong market, orders have been placed before the

Thingyan Festival.

"Among orders, most are placed for cotton 'Pasoe'. People like cotton 'Pasoe' because they can wear it casually. Silk sarongs are used only for special occasions. Currently, the trade has increased. Now it is nearing to Thingyan Festival so people make purchases in advance because the supply is adequate to fulfil the demand, at the present," she added. — Thit Taw/ZS

Hong Kong Electronic Fair 2025 invites Myanmar startups

HONG Kong Electronic Fair 2025 will take place on 13-16 April at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Hong Kong SAR, and welcomed the participation of Myanmar startups in the Startup Zone, according to MSMEs Development Department, and Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection, Ministry of Industry.

It is the world's leading electronics marketplace, showcasing a wide array of innovative electronics and technological solutions.

The Startup Zone will offer a unique platform for tech startups to showcase their electronic devices and innovations to international buyers, suppliers and investors, along with pitching competition, investment matching sessions, one-to-one mentoring, product demonstrations and many startup events.

It will also provide a network for Myanmar startups to enhance their brand visibility, connect with investors and key stakeholders in the industry and span businesses into the market of Mainland China.

A Complementary Barter Booth Stand worth US\$1,303 will be provided for Myanmar technology and electronic companies referred by the Consulate-General of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in Hong Kong SAR. Those interested individuals can enquire about details through the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) at 85 225844332, email michelle.ks.sze@hktcd.org and the MSMEs Development Department in Yangon at 09 255910363, 09 985222753, 09 79873472, and 09 788933894. — NN/KK

OPINION

Eradicate online gambling and scams as a national duty

AS TECHNOLOGY and communication advance, humanity enjoys many benefits, but these advancements have also enabled a surge in deception and fraudulent activities. Online platforms are rife with scams and manipulations, ranging from human trafficking and misinformation to financial fraud. Addressing and eradicating these issues is a collective national responsibility.

Illegal activities, such as unauthorized online gambling, are prevalent in areas like Myawady-Shwe Kokko and KK Park in Kayin State. Reports reveal ongoing efforts to suppress these activities, highlighting crackdowns on online scams and gambling operations. The Shwe Kokko project, initiated in 2016 to promote regional economic development, was suspended due to media reports of illegal activities. The area's instability, marked by armed groups and weak law enforcement, has created opportunities for criminal activities, including online gambling.

The Myanmar government is committed to ensuring nationwide peace, stability, and the rule of law. However, some citizens exploit enforcement weaknesses, collaborating with Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) and engaging in illegal trading, smuggling, and gambling. Such actions undermine the country's stability and economic progress.

Online scams and gambling operations are largely orchestrated by individuals from neighbouring countries, using intermediaries in Myanmar. These activities harm Myanmar's economy and financial stability. To combat this, regional cooperation and mutual agreements with neighbouring countries are vital. Joint efforts are essential to dismantle these operations and protect the nation.

The government is actively working to promote socioeconomic security and enforce the rule of law. In collaboration with international organizations, authorities are cracking down on online fraud and gambling schemes. Many scammers and gambling operators collaborate with EAOs, including signatories of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), exploiting law enforcement's limited control over unstable regions.

In fact, a group in exile who committed crimes deceived not only Myanmar but also its neighbouring countries. Those who are guilty must be exposed and those who protect them must also be prosecuted. Only when authorities take action against those online gamblers and scammers under the law will youths of all countries be free from the persuasion of these criminal acts and see their brighter future.

To address these challenges, the government is taking decisive action, partnering with international organizations to ensure effective enforcement. Citizens and local organizations play a crucial role in this fight by reporting scams and illegal activities to authorities. Combating online gambling and scams is not just a governmental task but a national duty. Myanmar can curb online fraud and gambling, promoting peace, stability, and economic security for all people.

Leveraging Technology for Development: Democratization of Technology

By Debnath Shaw

TECHNOLOGY is an important factor in global development. Development is a core issue for the Global South, many of whose members are being left behind in achieving their Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The key factors behind this unequal state of affairs are technology, finance and information. Thomas Friedman has argued, that the era of globalisation has been characterized by the democratization of technology, finance and information (The World is Flat, 2004). However, with the pace of globalization slowing down, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic, the democratization of technology too has taken a hit.

Democratization of technology refers to the process by which access to technology progressively becomes more easily available to more people at a reasonable cost. Historically, the printing press is the earliest recorded

instance of technology opening new frontiers of knowledge dissemination, leading to the empowerment of a greater number of people. Since the mid-1990s, the internet has been the prime vehicle of the universal democratization of knowledge and information.

The effects of the democratization of technology have been dramatic, more so with digitization. New technologies and improved user experiences have empowered those outside of the technology industry to access and use technological products and services. In India, think - UPI, mobile banking WhatsApp, X, etc, - tools being used regularly by the country's 900 million mobile phone users, mostly connected to the internet, including a vast user base in rural areas. The 'open source' model allows users to participate directly in the development of software. Upgrades in communication technology have made the

globe more interconnected than ever.

Democratization of technology has helped 'the last person in the queue' to access public services with ease and reduced corruption, get timely access to relief when hit by natural disasters, and useful and reliable information allowing meaningful participation in the democratic process. It has made markets more broad-based and diversified and consumers are able to use complex technological products without the guidance of qualified professionals. Such job categories have taken a hit, a situation whose downward spiral is being perpetrated by developments in artificial intelligence and machine learning technology.

However, we should not lose sight of the challenges faced by the democratization of technology, which is hampered by the slow pace of digitization and infrastructure gaps, particularly in developing countries. Gender

and social inequities restricting access to and use of technology, and the data divide, too need to be addressed. Cyber security and data privacy concerns are felt at all levels. What is comforting is that both governments and technology-driven companies are addressing these concerns, while moving ahead with their programmes to harness technology for the benefit of the masses.

In India, the democratization of technology is manifested in some remarkable programmes which have changed the lives of millions. The prime example is the Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), part of the 'India Stack', which operates digital identification, payments and data management. The Common Service Centres (CSC) are the access points for the delivery of government to citizen (G2C) e-services, within reach of citizens by creating nationwide physical service delivery

ICT infrastructure. The Namu Drone Didi initiative has many goals, including addressing gender inequality issues, empowerment and pride among women, modernization of agricultural practices, and substantial income to the rural women folk. The two hundred thousand Aayushman Aarogya Mandirs in India's villages directly connect health centres with the best hospitals and modern technology, bringing professional medical expertise and services, largely concentrated in urban areas, to rural India. The India AI Mission or 'AI for All' is aimed at the democratization of the benefits of AI across all strata of society.

A key issue, particularly for the Global South, which has been pursued vigorously by India, is the growing gap between developed and developing countries in the access and endogenous production and development of climate technologies. This has been a key constraint on collective progress in global efforts to achieve sustainable development and effective climate action under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement. Developing countries view technology transfer and capacity building as the key to reducing the technology and wealth gap. Both climate mitigation and adaptation require huge funding transfers from developed countries as per past commitments. Unfortunately, even at COP29 in Baku last year, the level of funding pledged was nowhere near the level required to achieve set goals. There

have been repeated calls for enhanced international cooperation arrangements, through reform of existing WTO-mandated trade rules, to permit developing countries to protect emerging green industries through tariffs, subsidies and public procurement.

The ray of hope on the horizon is that industries driven by frontier technologies like blockchain, drones, gene editing, nanotechnology, electric vehicles, solar and wind energy and green hydrogen could create a market of over \$9.5 billion by 2030 (UNCTAD estimate). Some developing and emerging economies like India have made important policy changes to seize some of the opportunities in these sectors. It is hoped that with the increasing democratization of technology and effective partnerships between developed and developing countries, mankind's development goals will be reached sooner than later.

Debnath Shaw, (IFS 1984, Retd), former High Commissioner to Tanzania and Ambassador to Azerbaijan. Served in Indian Missions in Hong Kong, Beijing (twice), Bonn and Dhaka and at Headquarters in various positions. Seconded to Ministry of Defence as JS (PIC) 2005-07. Visiting Fellow at CSIS, Washington DC 2004-05.

FLYING through Bangkok's cloudless blue skies, a small aircraft sprays a white mist over a thick haze of pea soup smog below.

This is Thailand's desperate, unproven attempt at reducing the oppressive air pollution over its capital, which on Thursday reached eight times the World Health Organization's recommended daily maximum average.

The scourge has made more than a million people ill since late 2023 and cost Thailand more than \$88 million in medical expenses, the public health ministry said earlier this month.

According to Bangkok governor Chadchart Sittipunt, the main culprits are vehicle emissions, crop burning in the wider region and "closed" weather conditions — a warm atmospheric lid covering the dust, preventing it from dispersing.

Known as a temperature inversion, the kingdom is trying to deal with the phenomenon using a homegrown experimental method to displace the pollution.

Twice a day, the Royal Rainmaking Department sends aircraft up to spray cold water or dry ice into the layer of warm air

to cool it down.

Critics say there is little to no evidence it works.

AFP was granted exclusive access on board a flight over the outskirts of Bangkok.

Inside the small craft — which climbed to an altitude of around 1,500 metres (5,000 feet) — a scientist tracks the flight path on an iPad as two crew members release icy water from a pair of large blue containers that sprays out from the craft's belly.

The theory is that reducing the temperature difference between the levels makes it easier for the trapped particles, known as PM2.5, to disperse into the upper atmosphere.

It is an unconventional method the department says is only used in Thailand.

"This is not the usual cloud seeding," said programme head Chanti Detyothin.

'Doing our best'

Countries have long tried "cloud seeding" — injecting chemicals such as silver iodide into clouds to trigger rain or snowfall — in attempts to alleviate drought and, increasingly, air pollution.

Ice in the sky: Thailand's fight against air pollution

The pollution has had severe health impacts, making over a million people sick and costing the country millions in medical expenses.

But its effectiveness is open to question and scientists say it has been shown to only be marginally useful in creating rain and absorbing pollutants.

Thailand's worst smog happens during the dry season between December and April, when it is too windy and cloudless to induce precipitation.

The new technique was first used last year and is still in its testing stages.

Another aircraft measures pollutant concentrations before and after spraying to gauge the difference in air quality.

"The concentration (of PM 2.5) is less," said Chanti.

"The data suggests that at the level of our area of focus, the dust cleared up," though he admits they cannot "make the pollution go away entirely. Even with this new technology, there are limitations."

"We have been working every day for Bangkok to have clean air. We are doing our best as much as we can," he said.

Oil and gas firm

Ahead of takeoff, rainmaking staff pile a tonne (1,000 litres) of ei-

ther dry ice, or ice and water into a plane — traditional cloud-seeding aircraft with repurposed spraying equipment.

The dry ice — solidified carbon dioxide — is provided by Thailand's oil and gas giant PTT and other energy companies.

PTT did not immediately respond to requests from AFP for comment.

Another fossil fuel company, Bangkok Industrial Gas, also donated dry ice to the programme this month, with managing director Piyabut Charuphen saying in a statement the gift was part of



A pilot flies next to another aircraft from Thailand's Royal Rainmaking department spraying icy water in the air outside Bangkok in a bid to reduce pollution. PHOTO: AFP

their "commitment to creating a sustainable future".

Carbon dioxide is itself a greenhouse gas and the environmental and health effects of spraying dry ice in the atmosphere are not fully understood.

Weenarin Lulitanonda, co-founder of Thailand Clean Air Network, accused the energy firms of "using cilantro to garnish

their dish".

The Thai idiom, she explained, meant that "instead of solving the problem, (they) are creating a beautiful image".

Just one flight can cost up to \$1,500, and with aircraft taking off from three bases around the country, it can reach \$9,000 per day. Ekbornin Winijkul of the Asian Institute of Technology said it is

more cost-effective for Bangkok to address the causes of pollution with proven measures such as low-emissions traffic zones.

City authorities are already pursuing many of these, he said, like banning some heavy-duty vehicles and working with other provinces to control agricultural burning.

SOURCE: AFP

NATIONAL

MNHRC inspects Little Sisters of Poor Home for Aged

THE inspection team, led by U Kyaw Soe, U Win Hlaing Oo and U Than Win, Members of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC), conducted an inspection of the Little Sisters of the Poor Home for the Aged under the Social Welfare Department in Mingala Taungnyunt Township, Yangon Region yesterday.

During the inspection, the team visited the Home for the Aged and enquired about whether the residents were enjoying fundamental rights, including health services, appropriate food, provision of purified drinking water, right to freedom of religion, adequate dormitories, arrangements for leisure and old age social pension for those who were 85 years old and above.

The MNHRC inspection team will send its findings and recommendations to the relevant department for necessary actions under the MNHRC law. — MNA



The MNHRC inspection team is pictured during their tours at the Little Sisters of the Poor Home for Aged.

Two-day illegal trade crackdown seizes goods worth K977M

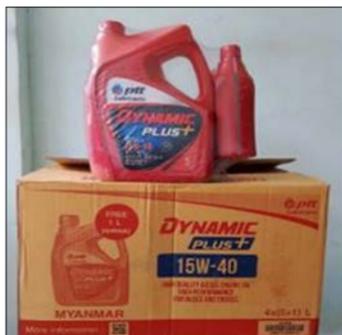
UNDER the supervision of the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee, efforts to combat the illicit trade are continued effectively by the law.

On 22 January, the combined teams impounded 1.988 tonnes of illegal timbers valued at K111,176 in Ottarathiri Township, 0.146 tonne of illegal teak, 5.289 tonnes of hardwood, and 22.938 tonnes of other timbers valued at K5.551 million in Kyonpyaw, Pathein and Myanaung districts. The action was conducted under the Forest Law.

On 23 January, the combined on-duty teams captured 2.688 tonnes of illegal teak and other 0.023 tonne of timbers worth K2.368 million in Hlegu and Mingaladon Townships, a Dongfeng tractor head with a trailer (estimated value of K80 million). Travelling from Hpa-an to Yangon, carrying three kinds of industrial materials without official documents worth K9.2 million near the Shwethanwin tollgate in Phayagyi, 1.576 tonnes of illegal hardwood and 0.735 tonne of other timbers worth K1.171 million in Toungoo and Nyaunglebin districts and an unregistered Hijet pickup (estimated value of K5 million)

in Pyay Township. The action was taken under the Forest Law, the Export-Import Law, and Customs procedures.

Additionally, the combined teams seized a Nissan Condor truck (estimated value of K36 million), travelling from Hteelon to Hpa-an, carrying a kind of consumer goods worth K60.16 million without official documents at the outskirts check-



Photos reveal confiscated illegal items and vehicle in Bago Region.

point of Hpa-an Township, 19 kinds of industrial materials worth K378.86 million without official documents from four containers at the Asia World Port Terminal container checkpoint, two kinds of industrial materials worth K395.9 million without official documents from two containers at the Thilawa Port, consumer goods valued at K3.642 million without import licence at the Yangon International Airport (Import Desk). The action was conducted following Customs procedures.

The Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee reported 18 arrests on 22 and 23 January, seizing illegal goods worth approximately K977 million. — MNA/MKKS

Online applications begin for July JLPT exam

STARTING from the July 2025 JLPT exam, applications by training schools will be accepted through the online system and registration will be processed through it from 27 to 31 January, the Myanmar Association of Japanese Alumni (MAJA) announced.

The website link will be posted on the morning of 27 January, it said.

A separate announcement will be made for application after setting the deadline. A maximum of 70 forms will be sold per school for Yangon and Mandalay schools. One licence is considered one training school, and sub-licences with the same owner are not included while incomplete applications and expired licenses will not be considered.

The Institution ID that was entered in the Japan Foundation's 2024 Survey of Japanese Language Schools Overseas programme is required. Without this ID or with the wrong ID, it will not be accepted. As only one registration and one application can be made per email address, applicants are advised to check the email address thoroughly.

The person in charge of the



This image shows the advert for the 2025 JLPT exam.

school must fill in the form by himself and if any discrepancy arises out of a representative, the school is solely responsible. Registration data to submit include the owner's information/registration and front and back of national scrutiny card photos in image files in JPEG or PNG. Payment must be made via KPay or e-commerce registered MPU card, and for detailed instructions, applicants can contact the JLPT Examination Organizing Committee, MAJA, 01 757 10 15 ext 1 during office hours. — MT/ZN

Trump signs executive order to release remaining files of JFK, RFK, MLK assassinations

US President Donald Trump on Thursday signed an executive order to declassify any remaining files from the assassinations of former President John F Kennedy (JFK), his brother Robert F Kennedy (RFK) and civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr (MLK).

“I have now determined that the continued redaction and withholding of information from records pertaining to the assassination of President John F Kennedy is not consistent with the public interest and the release of these records is long overdue,” Trump said in the executive order.

“And although no Act of Congress directs the release of

information pertaining to the assassinations of Senator Robert F Kennedy and the Reverend Dr Martin Luther King, Jr, I have determined that the release of all records in the Federal government’s possession pertaining to each of those assassinations is also in the public interest,” Trump said.

In the executive order, Trump instructed the Director of National Intelligence and the Attorney-General to present a plan to him for the “full and complete” release of records relating to the assassination of JFK within 15 days. The Senate has confirmed neither of the nominations. — AFP



The assassination of President John F Kennedy (JFK) remains one of the most significant and controversial events in US history. **ILLUSTRATIVE IMAGE: BRITANNICA**

US Instagram users complain about inability to unfollow Trump, Vance

SOCIAL media users, including celebrities like Demi Lovato and Gracie Abrams, have been grumbling as they aren’t able to unfollow US President Donald Trump, Vice-President JD Vance, and First Lady Melania Trump on Instagram, stating that the multinational technology conglomerate Meta is not allowing them to unfollow the head of the new US admin-

istration, CNN reported on Wednesday.

According to CNN, Abrams, an American singer and songwriter, took to her Instagram story stating that she had to unfollow the “@vp” and “@potus” accounts three times as Meta kept automatically refollowing them. She even had to block the accounts to ensure she stayed away from them. — ANI

Tajikistan launches crackdown on ‘witchcraft’ and fortune-telling

Tajikistan cracks down on fortune tellers and occult practices, targeting mediums and clairvoyants with raids and fines.



This photo taken on 3 July 2024 shows a city view of Dushanbe, Tajikistan. **ILLUSTRATIVE PHOTO: YAN YAN/XINHUA**

IN a block of flats in Tajikistan’s capital Dushanbe, a turbaned woman cautiously opened the door of her apartment a chink, letting out a waft of incense.

“I’m not taking on new clients. It could be a set-up,” she says, as she closes the door again and locks it.

“I risk a heavy fine. I do not want people outside on my landing,” speaking through

the door. A majority Muslim country in Central Asia, mountainous and impoverished Tajikistan has recently launched a crackdown against fortune tellers, clairvoyants, mediums and “witches”.

Practitioners of the occult are keeping a low profile to avoid arrest and public shaming because of a government-led campaign against

them.

Tajik police have stepped up raids against what they call “parasites engaged in some of the most detestable activities imaginable — divination and witchcraft”.

Other countries in Central Asia are also cracking down on what have become widespread practices with roots in pre-Islamic traditions. — AFP

J-pop star Nakai to retire after sex misconduct allegations: media

ONE of Japan’s biggest pop stars and best-known TV hosts, Masahiro Nakai, announced his retirement Thursday over sexual misconduct allegations, reports said, in the latest scandal to rock Japan’s entertainment industry.

Nakai’s announcement comes after now-defunct boy band empire Johnny & Associates admitted in 2023 that its late founder Johnny Kitagawa for decades sexually assaulted teenage boys and young men.

Nakai was a member of the now-disbanded SMAP — part of Johnny & Associates’s lucrative stable — that swept the charts in Japan and across Asia during the band’s nearly 30 years of fame. — AFP



This photo taken on February 2020 shows Masahiro Nakai, a former member of the J-Pop boy band sensation SMAP and a celebrity television host, speaking in Tokyo. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

ECONOMY WORLD

WTO chief warns against 'catastrophic' tit-for-tat tariffs

WTO chief Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala warns against trade wars, urging calm and cooperation to avoid catastrophic economic fallout reminiscent of the 1930s Great Depression-era tariff retaliation.

WORLD Trade Organization chief Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala urged nations Thursday to keep calm over tariffs, warning that a tit-for-tat trade war would be "catastrophic" for the world economy.

Okonjo-Iweala issued her appeal during a panel discussion on tariffs at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in a week that saw US President Donald Trump threaten tariffs against China, the European Union, Mexico and Canada. The WTO director-general urged cooler heads to prevail, quipping: "Please let's not hyperventilate. I know we are here to discuss tariffs. I've been saying to everybody: could we chill, also. I just sense



World Trade Organization (WTO) Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (L) speaks as World Economic Forum President and CEO Borge Brende listens on, during the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting, in Davos. **PHOTO: AFP**

a lot of hyperventilation."

She recalled the fallout from the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act in the United States during

the Great Depression in 1930, which prompted retaliation and worsened the global economic crisis at the time. — AFP

Germany's crisis-hit economy casts shadow over election

AUTO industry jobs have long been the lifeblood of the German town of Luedenscheid but now, a trade union official says, the sector's woes have sparked fears it will turn into an "open-air industrial museum".

Insolvencies and layoffs have cast doubt on the town's future prosperity, echoing wider anxieties in Europe's biggest economy as it heads towards 23 February elections.

Politicians are scrambling for answers on how to turn around the export-led economy, long the envy of the world, which has shrunk for the past two years and faces strong headwinds from China and the United States.

In Luedenscheid, a town of 70,000 in Germany's Ruhr industrial heartland, the mood is glum after autoparts-maker Gerhardt filed for bankruptcy in November, threatening its

1,500 employees with redundancy.

Another supplier, Kostal, which makes electronic components, has already relocated hundreds of jobs to eastern Europe, and the future is uncertain for those who remain.

"I'm too young to retire but too old to find another job," said Petra Baensch, 60, who has worked for 20 years as a quality control technician at the firm. "It's a terrifying situation."

The IG Metall union's local representative Fabien Ferber said that the region's industry "has been promising prosperity to workers for generations" but that this is "collapsing like a house of cards".

He said last year about 1,000 jobs were lost among the region's car suppliers, which make everything from electronic widgets to plastic body parts. — AFP

Singapore eases monetary policy for first time in five years

SINGAPORE'S central bank eased monetary policy Friday for the first time in almost five years on expectations that inflation and economic growth will slow this year.

The Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS), which uses exchange rates rather than interest rates to control policy, said it would "reduce slightly

the slope" of the dollar trading band, which it said "will ensure medium-term price stability".

The local dollar is pegged to a basket of currencies of its main trading partners and is allowed to rise or fall within an undisclosed band.

In a statement, the MAS said there would be no change to the width of the policy band

or the level at which it is centred. The last time the MAS eased monetary policy was in March 2020, when Singapore was headed for a pandemic-sparked recession.

It said it expected core inflation to average 1.0-2.0 per cent this year, compared with the 1.5-2.5 per cent projected in October. — AFP



Singapore's economy grew a forecast-topping 4.0 per cent in 2024. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE PHOTO/ PSA**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Trump says will demand interest rates drop 'immediately'

US President Donald Trump said Thursday he would seek to bring interest rates lower by unleashing energy production, and would speak to the Federal Reserve if needed.

"I'll demand that interest rates drop immediately," he told the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in a virtual address. "Likewise, they should be dropping all over the world. Interest rates should follow us all over."

The US Federal Reserve has a dual mandate from Congress to act independently to keep inflation and employment in check, primarily by raising and lowering the level of short-term interest rates.

As US president, Trump does not have a say over interest rate decisions, a fact that he has frequently criticized.

Trump told reporters in Washington later on Thursday that he would like to see interest rates come down "a lot," adding that lower oil prices should help them to fall.

"When the oil comes down, it'll bring down prices, he said. "Then you won't have inflation, and then the interest rates will come down."

Asked what he would do if the Fed did not lower interest rates, Trump said he would "put in a strong statement" and expected officials to listen to his views, adding that he would consider talking to Fed chair Jerome Powell if needed. — AFP

Boeing warns Q4 loss bigger than expected on costs from labour strike

Boeing reported a larger-than-expected Q4 2024 loss of \$5.46 per share, driven by a prolonged labour strike and safety issues.

BOEING announced Thursday that it incurred a bigger than expected fourth-quarter loss, concluding a difficult 2024 in which it struggled with a lengthy labour strike and safety problems.

The US aviation giant projected a loss of \$5.46 per share, much above the \$1.55 foreseen by analysts, according to a profit warning that cited

the costs of a new labour agreement, among other factors.

The company experienced \$1.1 billion in unexpected costs in its commercial plane business because of fewer plane deliveries due to the strike and the effect of “higher estimated labour costs” under a new agreement with Seattle-based International Association

of Machinists and Aerospace Workers after a more than seven-week strike.

Boeing also suffered one-time costs of \$1.7 billion in its defence, space and security division in light of higher costs on some defense projects, some due to “impacts of the IAM work stoppage and agreement”, Boeing said. — AFP



Unexpected costs included \$1.1 billion in the commercial plane sector due to reduced deliveries and increased labour expenses under a new union agreement. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Volkswagen hopes to avoid hefty EU emissions fines

VOLKSWAGEN wants to boost sales of electric cars to avoid 1.5 billion euros (\$1.56 billion) in fines under stricter EU carbon emissions targets, a source at the German car giant said Tuesday.

“1.5 billion is the risk... That’s the fine we would be facing, the theoretical amount if we would do nothing at all,” the source told AFP.

“We have new [electric] models coming. That’s not the value we expect for the year,” the source added.

From this year, the European Union is lowering the average emissions that new vehicles sold in the bloc are permitted to produce, with carmakers facing hefty fines if they fail to comply.

Several EU countries including France and Italy had urged Brussels to ditch the penalties for embattled European carmakers, who have been plunged into crisis by a

stuttering switch to electric vehicles and increasing competition.

Xavier Chardon, who heads Volkswagen in France, told AFP that the group was counting on the French and German markets above all to boost sales of electric cars.

In a separate statement, the 10-brand group, which apart from its namesake also owns Audi, Skoda and Seat, said

that previously introduced and upcoming all-electric models would help the firm achieve the EU target.

One way of avoiding fines would be the purchase of other carmakers’ unused carbon credits. However Volkswagen said it hopes to avoid fines “primarily through its own efforts, based on the positive product momentum”, according to the statement. — AFP



Volkswagen is pumping 35 billion euros (\$40 billion) into the shift to electric vehicles and aims to become the world’s largest electric carmaker by 2025. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Many feared dead in massive explosion at ordnance factory in India’s Maharashtra

MANY people are feared dead in a massive blast that took place Friday at an ordnance factory in the western Indian state of Maharashtra, multiple local media reports said.

The blast took place at the factory in Bhandara district, about 830 kilometres east of Mumbai, the capital city of Maharashtra.

According to a senior local government official,

Sanjay Kolte, the blast occurred around 10:30 am (local time) at the factory, following which firefighters were rushed to the spot to contain the situation.

Rescuers from the health and disaster management department also reached the spot to look for survivors.

The impact of the blast caused the roof of the factory to collapse.

Authorities have brought in an excavator to remove the debris and look for the trapped ones.

“At least 12 people were under it during the explosion. Two of them were rescued, and an excavator is being used to remove the debris,” Kolte was quoted in local media as having said. “The rescue operation is underway to look for the trapped ones.” — Xinhua

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MSC SUPARNA F VOY.NO. (SB502A)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MSC SUPARNA F VOY.NO. (SB502A)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **25-1-2025** 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.

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GLOBAL VIEWPOINTS: FEATURED REPORTS FOR THIS WEEK



Global Reactions to Donald Trump's Return to the White House

NATO's Rutte foresees increased defence spending under Trump, while EU leaders urge collaboration; Hungary's Orbán eyes expanded European influence through US alignment.

DONALD Trump's inauguration for a second term as US president sparked a wave of reactions from world leaders, reflecting both optimism and unease. The responses underscore key geopolitical dynamics and the challenges awaiting Trump's administration.

Optimism Amid Complex Relations

Ukraine's President Zelensky hailed Trump's "peace through strength" strategy, seeing it as an opportunity for US leadership in achieving "long-term and just peace," particularly in the context of the ongoing conflict with Russia. Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin voiced cautious optimism, emphasizing the need for dialogue on a "lasting peace" in Ukraine, rooted in mutual respect. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu welcomed Trump's return, expressing hope to elevate the US-Israel partnership to unprecedented heights. Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas, however, reiterated the need for a two-state solution, signalling lingering tensions in the Middle East peace process.

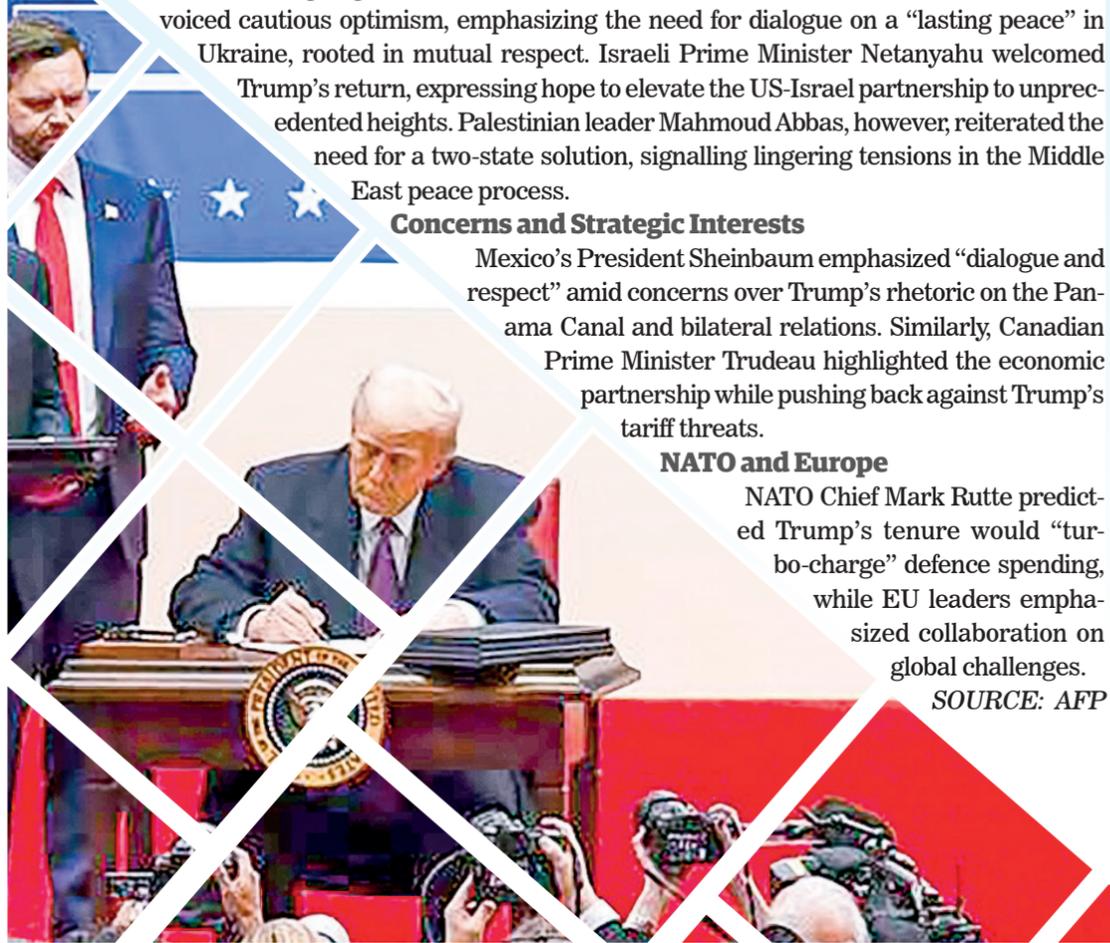
Concerns and Strategic Interests

Mexico's President Sheinbaum emphasized "dialogue and respect" amid concerns over Trump's rhetoric on the Panama Canal and bilateral relations. Similarly, Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau highlighted the economic partnership while pushing back against Trump's tariff threats.

NATO and Europe

NATO Chief Mark Rutte predicted Trump's tenure would "turbo-charge" defence spending, while EU leaders emphasized collaboration on global challenges.

SOURCE: AFP



US President Donald Trump signs an executive order at Capital One arena in Washington, D.C., the United States, 20 January 2025. PHOTO: LI RUI/XINHUA

Post-ceasefire checkpoint surge restricts West Bank movement

IN the aftermath of the Gaza ceasefire, Palestinians in the West Bank face heightened restrictions as Israeli forces intensify the use of checkpoints and roadblocks. These measures, including the installation of 146 new gates since October 2023, have significantly disrupted daily life.

Residents, including Father Bashar Basiel of the Christian village of Taybeh, report severe delays and restricted movement. Taybeh, known for its quiet charm and brewery, now contends with

iron gates at its entrances, forcing commuters to endure hours-long waits. In some cases, gates remain closed for extended periods, turning routine commutes into all-night ordeals.

The increase in checkpoints has coincided with Israel's stated goal of "strengthening security" in the West Bank. Military officials argue the measures aim to prevent militants from escaping while ensuring civilian movement, but locals perceive these as collective punishment. A

Ramallah commuter likened the situation to being trapped "like rabbits in a cage", underscoring the psychological toll. According to rights group B'Tselem, Israel has shifted its focus from Gaza to exerting control over the West Bank. The uncertainty about daily movement has compounded frustrations, leaving residents unable to plan their lives. As one observer put it, "The Israeli government is making the Palestinian people pay the price."

SOURCE: AFP



People wearing VR headsets attend the World Economic Forum (WEF) in an "immersive manner" in Davos, Switzerland, 23 January 2025. PHOTO: XINHUA

The Rise of an Aristocratic Oligarchy Amid Davos Debates

204 new billionaires emerged in 2024, with projections of five trillionaires within a decade.

As global elites converge on Davos for the World Economic Forum (WEF), a leading NGO has sounded the alarm on the emergence of an "aristocratic oligarchy" poised to thrive under Donald Trump's presidency. In its annual pre-Davos report, global charity Oxfam criticized the consolidation of wealth and influence among billionaires, describing it as a threat to democracy and global equity.

Oxfam's report, titled "Takers Not Makers", revealed that billionaire wealth surged by \$2 trillion in 2024, reaching a staggering \$15 trillion. The report emphasized the growing political and economic clout of billionaires, with 204 new entrants last year and projections that five trillionaires could emerge within a decade. Amitabh Behar, Oxfam's executive director, warned of a dangerous concentration of

power in the hands of a few, calling it a direct challenge to democratic institutions.

The inauguration of Donald Trump for a second term coincided with the opening of Davos, further fueling debates. Oxfam criticized Trump's policies—tax cuts, deregulation, and trade tariffs—as amplifying inequality and boosting billionaire fortunes. The report highlighted Trump's ties to influential figures, including Elon Musk, whose financial support exemplifies the entanglement of wealth and politics.

Protests in Davos underscored public discontent, with demonstrators demanding fairer taxation and climate accountability. Activists, like heiress Marlene Engelhorn, decried the unchecked influence of the wealthy over global politics, stressing the need for systemic change.

SOURCE: AFP

SPORTS

Soe Lin Oo loses by decision in ONE 170

MYANMAR fighter Soe Lin Oo suffered a defeat by decision after a hard-fought battle with veteran Thai fighter Seksan in a thrilling ONE 170 event held on 24 January in Bangkok, Thailand.

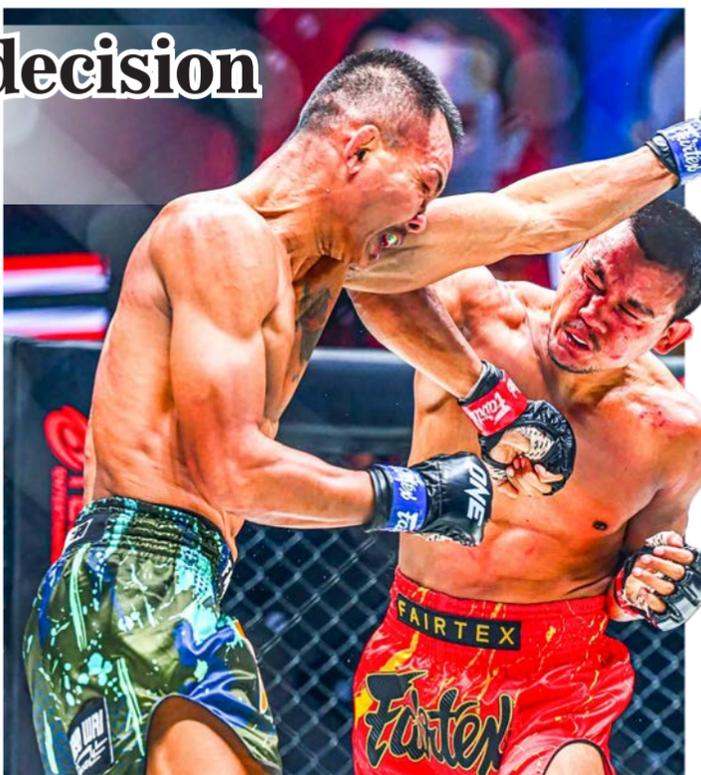
Both fighters showcased an intense exchange of strikes throughout the match, but after three rounds of competitive action, the judges ruled in favour of Seksan.

The bout saw no significant size or striking advantage between the two.

From the start, both fighters engaged in aggressive exchanges, with Soe Lin Oo managing to land some damaging strikes. As the fight progressed, Seksan's relentless punches and elbow strikes took a toll.

Despite Soe Lin Oo's efforts to hurt his opponent, the decision was ultimately rendered in Seksan's favour.

This loss marks Soe Lin Oo's second consecutive defeat by decision, having now been unable to secure a win in his last two ONE Championship bouts. — Shine Htet Zaw/KZL



Soe Lin Oo and Seksan exchange blows in a heated battle at ONE 170. PHOTO: ONE CHAMPIONSHIP

Liverpool to face Ipswich, Chelsea to test Man City's leaky defence

LIVERPOOL has the chance to add further pressure at the top of the Premier League on Saturday as its nearest chasers face tricky away games.

Arne Slot's side plays at home to Ipswich Town, who will travel to Anfield chastened in the wake of last weekend's 6-0 hammering at home to Manchester City.

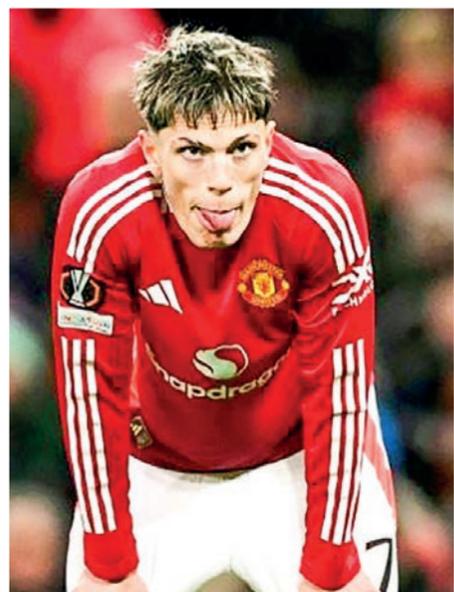
Ipswich played some good attacking football for the opening half hour of that defeat, but its expansive football has been punished by powerful rivals, and visiting coach Kieran McKenna may have to switch to a more conservative approach against a rival that has plenty of goalscoring options. — Xinhua

Maresca happy with Chelsea wide men as Garnacho rumours swirl

CHELSEA manager Enzo Maresca said Friday he is happy with his wide options despite reports linking the London club with a move for Manchester United winger Alejandro Garnacho.

The 20-year-old Argentina international has reportedly been the subject of interest from Chelsea and Italian side Napoli during the January transfer window.

Representatives of Garnacho were in attendance as Chelsea beat Wolves at Stamford Bridge on Monday. — AFP



Chelsea have been linked with a move for Manchester United winger Alejandro Garnacho. PHOTO: AFP



Thant Zin suffers second-round defeat in ONE 170

MYANMAR'S rising MMA star Thant Zin

failed to make victory against Thailand's Suriyanlek in a thrilling clash at

ONE 170, held on the evening of 24 January in Bangkok, Thailand. Despite a strong start, Thant Zin fell

short, suffering a defeat in the second round.

The young Myanmar fighter began the match with determination, exchanging strikes with Suriyanlek in the first round. Myanmar's young man managed to land a few solid blows and appeared to have the upper hand early on. However, in the second round, Suriyanlek switched up his strategy and started landing precise strikes. Thant Zin was hit hard and after two knockdowns, the referee called for a stoppage at two minutes and nine seconds into the round, declaring

Thant Zin and Suriyanlek exchange fierce blows in the thrilling first-round battle at ONE 170. PHOTO: ONE CHAMPIONSHIP

Suriyanlek the winner by Technical Knockout (TKO).

This defeat marks Than Zin's second consecutive loss in the ONE Championship,

following a similar result in his previous match. — Shine Htet Zaw/KZL

Vegas-bound Inoue knocks out South Korea's Kim in Tokyo

JAPAN'S unbeaten Naoya Inoue retained his undisputed world super-bantamweight titles on Friday in style by knocking out South Korean rank outsider Kim Ye-joon in the fourth round in Tokyo.

Inoue is expected to take his prodigious skills to Las Vegas for his next fight and he bid farewell to his adoring fans in the Japanese capital with another ferocious performance.

The 31-year-old took his record to 29-0 with 26 knockouts after making short work of Kim, who stepped in to replace injured Australian Sam Goodman just two weeks before the fight.

Inoue stunned Kim with a left hand near the end of the fourth round, then sent him to the canvas with a juddering right that convinced the Korean fighter's corner to throw in the towel. "I don't

know how complete I am as a boxer. I want to keep training so that I can keep improving until the end of my career," said Inoue. "I'm aiming to fight overseas this year, and I want to fight in Las Vegas in spring".

Inoue signed a sponsorship deal with Saudi Arabia's Riyadh Season last year and he has also been tipped to fight in Saudi Arabia later this year. — AFP



XI JINPING, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said on Thursday that the steel industry is an important basic industry of the country and the real economy is the foundation of the national economy.

Xi made the remarks while visiting a cold rolling mill of Bensteel Group in Benxi City, northeast China's Liaoning Province.

He learned about the operation of the intelligent integrated control system at the control center, and inquired about the cold rolling process, technological innovation and product performance in the workshops. He also met with model workers, young technicians and staff representatives.

Bensteel, a time-honoured enterprise in the country, has been revitalized through restructuring with Ansteel, improving the modern corporate system and promoting industrial transformation and upgrade, he said.

"The steel industry is an important basic industry of the country and the real economy is the foundation of the national economy," Xi said, urging continued efforts to strengthen weak links, optimize industrial structures and contribute more to Chinese modernization. — Xinhua

Xi stresses importance of steel industry, real economy

Xi noted that Bensteel has been revitalized through restructuring and urged continued efforts to strengthen the industry, optimize structures, and support Chinese modernization.



Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, visits a cold rolling mill of Bensteel Group in Benxi City, Northeast China's Liaoning province, on 23 January 2025. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Mexican president rules out early US-Mexico-Canada treaty review



Mexico's President Claudia Sheinbaum listens a question during her daily press conference at the National Palace in Mexico City on 21 January 2025. **PHOTO / AFP**

MEXICAN President Claudia Sheinbaum said on Thursday that there is no need to expedite a review of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agree-

ment (USMCA) which was proposed by her US counterpart Donald Trump.

Speaking at her daily press conference at the National Pal-

ace in Mexico City, Sheinbaum emphasized that "according to the decrees signed by President Trump", a review of the agreement could begin in 2026, not sooner.

"What typically begins is a consultation process involving business leaders, workers and various societal sectors to assess the agreement's implementation. Again, the best approach is to adhere to what is written in the decrees," she said.

An article in The Wall Street Journal, citing sources close to Trump, reported Tuesday that the US president wants to renegotiate the USMCA by leveraging tariff increases on Mexico and Canada. — Xinhua

SMART TRANSPORTATION

UAE unveils high-speed rail project connecting Abu Dhabi, Dubai

ETIHAD Rail of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Thursday unveiled a high-speed train project connecting Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

Mohammed Al Shehhi, chief projects officer at Etihad Rail, highlighted during a press conference the project's role in enhancing the country's economic growth, social integration, and sustainability.

Powered entirely by electricity, the network aligns with the UAE's "Net Zero 2050" strategy, Al Shehhi said.

The rail system will fea-

ture six stations, including Yas Island and Saadiyat Island in Abu Dhabi, and Jaddaf and Al Maktoum International Airport in Dubai. The first passenger fleet, with a capacity for 400 passengers, will connect Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, and Fujairah, integrating seamlessly with existing metro and bus networks.

"This initiative reflects the UAE's leadership in sustainable infrastructure and smart transport, improving quality of life for residents and visitors," Al Shehhi added. — Xinhua