

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

Historical evidence confirms Thanaka use in Bagan and Inwa eras

Myanmar's traditional cultural heritage is well preserved in the country, and the use of Myanmar's Thanaka can be clearly traced back to the Bagan and Inwa periods through historical evidence found in mural paintings. The Conservation Unit under the Department of Archaeology and National Museum (Bagan Branch), has confirmed these findings.



An ancient Pagoda: **PHOTO: DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND NATIONAL MUSEUM (BAGAN BRANCH)**



A mural painting shows grinding Thanaka.

Depictions of Thanaka application have been discovered in mural paintings at the Apeyadana Temple in Bagan,

Apeyadana Temple. These are invaluable historical and cultural artifacts. Our department continues to conserve and

built in the 11th century AD and at the Culamani Stupa, which was constructed after the 15th century AD.

“The murals in the Apeyadana Temple from the Bagan period and the Culamani Stupa from the Inwa period provide clear evidence that Myanmar Thanaka was used with great reverence by ancient monarchs. While many are familiar with the depictions at Culamani Stupa, fewer people are aware of the ones at

maintain ancient temples, stupas and associated heritage in the Bagan region every year,” said U Kyi Lin, Assistant Director of Conservation Unit under the Department of Archaeology and National Museum (Bagan Branch).

The Department of Archaeology and National Museum continues to safeguard and restore the historical and cultural heritage in the Bagan region. Ancient murals found in temples, stupas and caves are being preserved so that domestic historians, students, tourists and local pilgrims can study and appreciate them as historical legacies.

The Thanaka-painted murals at Apeyadana Temple from the Bagan period have been officially recorded. Meanwhile,

during a UNDP project conducted between 1991 and 1992, the murals inside Culamani Stupa were cleaned and restored, revealing significant depictions of Thanaka application.

The Bagan archaeological zone is home to 3,822 temples, stupas and pagodas built during the reign of the Bagan kings, along with an extra 15 temples and stupas in the Tantkyi hill area, bringing the total to 3,837 structures. The murals found in Apeyadana Temple from the Bagan era and Culamani Stupa from the Inwa era serve as strong historical evidence that Myanmar Thanaka has been used since ancient times and continues to be an integral part of Myanmar's cultural heritage. — Thitsa (MNA)/KZL

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YPS prepares to launch corporate service for employees

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Special Thingyan tour to icy Hponkanrazi climb planned

Myanmar sweeps 29 ASEAN tourism standard awards in 2024 and 2025

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The panoramic view shows pleasant Kengtung which secured the ASEAN Clean Tourist City Award in 2024.



NATIONAL

Cooperative System: Key to Economic Development in Myanmar

- The cooperative system is the most suitable approach for Myanmar to develop its economic sector under current conditions.
- This system fosters collaboration among entrepreneurs and farmers who share common goals and ideas.

(Excerpt from the speech given by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to the Union government meeting 6/2024 on 29 July 2024.)

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council

Notification 46/2025

4th Waxing of Tabaung 1386 ME
2 March 2025

THE State Administration Council Chairman has conferred religious titles on following persons for their excellent performances to develop the Buddhism with contributions of four prerequisites –

Thiri Thudhamma Theingi Title

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Daw Than Than Nwe | Zeyathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw |
| 2. Daw Khin Saw Hnin | Pobbathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw |
| 3. Daw Khin Aye Myint | Pobbathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw |
| 4. Daw Htwe Htwe Nyunt | Pobbathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw |

Sd/Min Aung Hlaing
Senior General
Chairman
State Administration Council



The 8th SCWCS meeting in progress.

8th State Central Working Committee of the Sangha commences 7th meeting

THE Eighth State Central Working Committee of the Sangha held its first-day session of the seventh meeting at Maha Pasana Cave on Thiri Mingala Kaba Aye Hill in Mayangon Township, Yangon Region, yesterday morning.

Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Tin Oo Lwin offered cash for nine prerequisites and Myanmar version books on Parittas, Sutta and Desana preached by the Lord Buddha to State Ovadacariya Sayadaws, members of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee and members of the State Central Working Committee of the Sangha.

The meeting was presided over by Chairman of the SSMNC Aggamaha Pandita Aggamaha Saddhammajotikadhaja Dr Bhaddanta Candima Bhivamsa while Joint Secretary Sayadaw Aggamaha Ganthavacaka Pandita Aggamaha Saddhammajotikadhaja Bhaddanta Pañajota acted as master of ceremonies.

The meeting participants listened to Ovadakatha of State Ovadacariya Sayadaws.

At the meeting, the Chairman Sayadaw delivered a Sara-niya Ovadakatha. The Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture supplicated religious affairs, set records on numbers of State Ovadacariya Sayadaws, SSMNC member Sayadaws and SCWCS member Sayadaws who passed away within a year from Tabaung of 1385 ME to date and sought the approval for the list of elected State Ovadacariya Sayadaws, SSMNC member Sayadaws and members of SCWCS.

Secretary of SSMNC Aggamaha Pandita Aggamaha Saddhammajotikadhaja Mahadhammakathika Bahujanahitadhara Bhaddanta Vasettha Bhivamsa supplicated a brief report of the SSMNC on its work process within a year to the meeting.

Aggamaha Pandita Bhaddanta Siha, Aggamaha Pandita Bhaddanta Kovida and Aggamaha Pandita Dr Bhaddanta Suriya read the Vinicchaya, religious and educational sectors in the one-year report of the SSMNC.

Meeting participant members of the Sangha were served day meals by U Thein Maung-Daw Pa Pa of Sandi traditional medicine family from 240, Konzaytan Street, Yangon.

The meeting was also attended by Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein, Yangon Region ministers, departmental heads, the pro-rector (Admin) of International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University and officials. — MNA/TTA

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council

Notification 47/2025

4th Waxing of Taboung 1386 ME
2 March 2025

THE State Administration Council Chairman has conferred honorary title on the following persons for their excellent performance in development of the State in relevant arenas –

Pyidaungsu Sithu Thingaha Title Sithu Title

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| 1. U Wunna Maung Lwin | member | State Administration Council |
| 2. U Than Swe | Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| 3. U Aung Thaung | Group Leader (Retd) | Union-level Peace Dialogue Group |
| 4. U Aung Min | Vice-Chairman (Retd) | Union Peacemaking Negotiation Work Committee |
| 5. U Thein Zaw | Vice-Chairman (Retd) | Union Peacemaking Negotiation Work Committee |
| 6. U Khin Maung Soe | member (Retd) | Union-level Peace Dialogue Group |
| 7. Lt-Gen Thet Naing Win (Retd) | member (Retd) | Union-level Peace Dialogue Group |
| 8. Lt-Gen Khin Zaw Oo (Retd) | Secretary (Retd) | Peace Commission |
| 9. Lt-Gen Myint Soe (Retd) | member (Retd) | Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee |

Sd/Min Aung Hlaing
Senior General
Chairman
State Administration Council

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)

SAC member attends 63rd Peasants' Day event in Kangyidaunt

THE 63rd Anniversary of Peasants' Day ceremony was held yesterday morning at Wardu Village, Kangyidaunt Township, Ayeyawady Region. State Administration Council member Mahn Nyein Maung, Regional Chief Minister U Tin Maung Win and officials attended the event.

The ceremony began with SAC member, the Chief Minister and other officials cutting the ribbon to open the event. They then toured agricultural exhibitions including home gardens and fruit plantations. The SAC member also met with a Russian Embassy official and a RUMA Organic company representative to discuss Russian organic fertilizers and quality sunflower seeds.

Officials then inspected pesticide-free crops and modern sunflower plantations before the SAC member read a message from SAC Chairman



SAC member Mahn Nyein Maung visits an exhibition to mark the 63rd Anniversary of Peasants' Day in Kangyidaunt of Ayeyawady Region yesterday.

Prime Minister Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudamma Min Aung Hlaing. The Chief Minister

delivered a speech, followed by cultural performances featuring traditional dances and songs that entertained the at-

tendees.

On the occasion, outstanding farmers were honoured with awards, and the SAC member

inaugurated the Peasants' Day exhibition, showcasing modern paddy transplanter. The event concluded with a communal lunch with farmers, a live agricultural discussion, and further cultural performances.

At the ceremony marking the 63rd Anniversary of Peasants' Day, the Department of Agriculture showcased model multi-crop plantations, while the Department of Fisheries exhibited fish farms. The Agricultural Mechanization Department demonstrated farming equipment, including a paddy transplanter, a six-row paddy transplanter and a ten-row seeder. A total of 51 exhibition booths were set up, featuring displays on agriculture, livestock breeding, and MSME development research. These exhibitions and discussions will continue to be held vibrantly until 4 March. — MNA/KZL

Myanmar sweeps 29 ASEAN tourism standard awards in 2024 and 2025

Myanmar has secured 29 awards which were 16 ASEAN Tourism Standard Awards in 2024 and 13 more awards in 2025, according to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

The ASEAN Tourism Standards Awards have been established since 2008, with a total of 11 ASEAN tourism standards officially recognized. Awards are presented based on the relevant tourism standards. Myanmar, since 2008 until today, has won 134 awards under these ASEAN tourism standards over the years.

Efforts are being made in accordance with ASEAN tourism standards to provide excellent services to international travellers visiting Myanmar, create reliable and high-quality experiences, and establish Myanmar as a desirable tourist destination for more



The panoramic view shows pleasant Kengtung which secured the ASEAN Clean Tourist City Award in 2024.

visits. Currently, the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism is actively raising the nationwide awareness and discussion sessions on ASEAN tourism standards.

In 2024, the number of tourist arrivals in the ASEAN region rebounded to 123.68 million. Around half of ASEAN's total tourist arrivals consisted of intra-ASE-

AN travel among its member countries. Therefore, Myanmar is actively working to tap into this tourism market. Moreover, efforts are being made in collaboration with tourism sector associations to attract visitors from key tourism markets such as China, Japan, Korea, India, and Russia. — ASH/TTA

NATIONAL

Union Information Minister calls for ensuring promotion of Myanmar's positive image globally

AS films and documentaries serve as spotlights that illuminate the history, culture, and imagery of Myanmar, the Myanmar film industry embodies the nation's spirit, just as traditional culture and history define the identity of the Myanmar people, said Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn on his inspection tour of the work process in conversion of films to digital works at the Film Archive on Sasana Yeiktha Road in Bahan Township yesterday.

He added that previously, due to the lack of digital preservation for these films, some movies and documentary footage were unfortunately lost or destroyed.

Since taking responsibility, the Union minister continued that the government has purchased film cleaning machines and film scanners to facilitate the conversion of film to digital format. At present, some movies and documentary films have been successfully converted to digital format, and further systematic efforts are needed to continue the process in accordance with the specified quality standards.

He urged all to oversee the digitization process of 12 black-



Union Information Minister U Maung Maung Ohn meets members of Myanmar Narrative Think Tank at Myanmar Motion Pictures Promotion Branch of IPRD in Bahan Township yesterday.

and-white films, 154 colour films, and 2,781 documentary films preserved in the Film Archive, as well as to establish a national film archive that meets international standards for systematic preservation.

Director U Ye Lin Myint reported on conversion of Myanmar films and documentaries to the digital works.

The Union minister inspected maintenance of the 100-year-old Archive Film building and instructed officials to conduct the film professional course to

produce human resources for development of Myanmar film industry.

The Union minister together with Chairman of Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization U Kyi Soe Tun also inspected the land plot chosen for construction of the National Film Archive Museum at the corner of Kaba Aye Pagoda Road and Okponseik Road.

At the meeting hall of the Myanmar Motion Pictures Promotion Branch of Information and Public Relations Department, the Union minister met

with members of Myanmar Affairs and Myanmar Narrative Think Tank.

At the meeting, the Union minister noted that the Myanmar Affairs is organizing and publishing books on Myanmar affairs, global issues, and ethnic matters. These books feature a wide range of topics, including politics, economics, social issues, technology, the environment, and legal affairs. It is necessary to publish the books to be further developed to ensure its quality and completeness. The Ministry

of Information is actively working to promote Myanmar's positive image globally and ensure that Myanmar can adapt to the changing global dynamics. To do so, the Myanmar Narrative Think Tank has been established to carry out these tasks.

At present, the Union minister highlighted that research teams in relevant sectors are enhancing the image of the country. In so doing, it is necessary to work effectively to be able to penetrate into the international arena. In March 2025, he unveiled that an international forum with international experts will be held to discuss and explore ways to enhance the country's image, as well as the challenges and opportunities that will be faced in 2025. During this forum, it is necessary to present the natural conditions of the country and expect to gain international cooperation that will positively impact our country.

Chairman of Myanmar Narrative Think Tank U Ko Ko and officials clarified preparations to hold the forum under the title of Challenges and Opportunities that Myanmar will face in the multi-polar world beyond 2025. — MNA/TTA

Relief efforts underway for fire-affected Gaungdokka Village, Rakhine State

A fire broke out at a relief camp in Gaungdokka Village, Sittway Township, Rakhine State, at around 2:15 am on 1 March, which officials fought using two fire engines, three water bowsers, and one Tatmadaw water bower.

The fire destroyed 272 rooms, each measuring 11 feet long and nine feet wide (with CI sheet roofs, bamboo walls, and planks) in 34 dormitories, each measuring 45 feet long and 18 feet wide (with CI sheet roofs, bamboo walls, and planks), at

the Gaungdokka Village Relief Camp, affecting 314 households and 2,149 people.

Rakhine State Chief Minister U Htein Lin and Western Command Commander Maj-Gen Kyaw Swa Oo, along with officials, visited the fire scene to inspect the debris removal carried out by members of the Tatmadaw, Myanmar Police Force, firefighters, Red Cross Brigade members, and villagers. They also reviewed the arrangement of temporary shelters, the distribution of drink-

ing water, and the provision of necessary healthcare services by the Department of Public Health, as well as the Disaster Management Department's efforts under the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement to provide 314 family kits, each containing 16 types of consumer goods, to fire-affected households. They also met with departmental officials and village heads to coordinate the needs and provide food for those involved in the rehabilitation work. — MNA/TH



Tatmadaw members, MPF members and firefighters clean up debris at fire scene of the relief camp in Sittway on 1 March.

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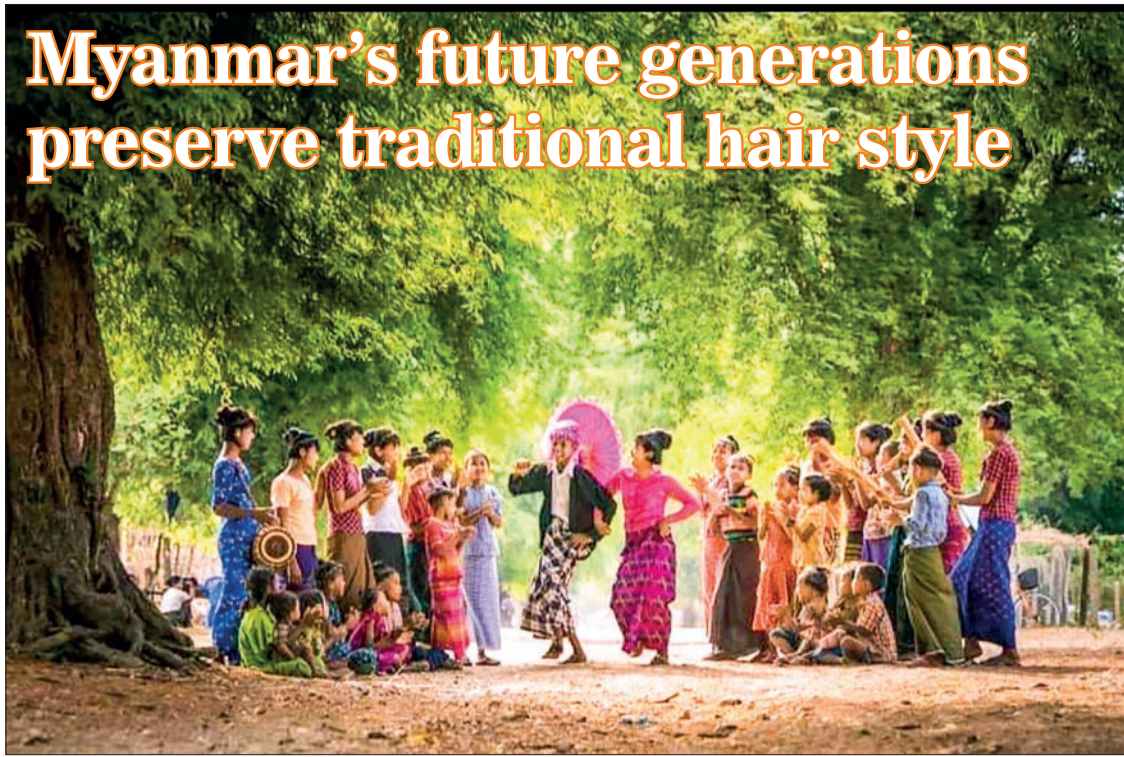
NATIONAL

CHILDREN in Yebokkyi Village, Pwintbyu Township have been preserving the Myanmar's traditional hairstyle named "Sankaytha Sayit Wyne" for over 200 years. This is one of Myanmar's traditional cultural practices.

Myanmar has many traditional cultural practices, including the Thingyan festival, betel nut customs, traditional clothing, traditional music and traditional sports. It also includes the cultural heritage of pagodas, temples, lakes and stupas, as well as traditional crafts and arts.

The traditional cultural heritage including the hairstyles of young boys and girls in rural villages has been preserved with great care. These hairstyles, particularly the circular hair

Myanmar's future generations preserve traditional hair style



styles known as "Sayit Wyne" are admired for their elegance and cultural significance. They have gained popularity worldwide through online media and have become beloved cultural symbols that people from around the world come to study and admire.

The villages that still preserve this traditional hairstyle are rare, with only a few villages in Myanmar continuing this practice. These include villages like Khansatkan in the Natogyi Township and Setsetyo in the NyaungU Township, both located in the Mandalay Region and Yebokkyi village in the Pwintbyu Township in the Magway Region. — Zeyya Naing (Shwekan Myay)/KZL



Myanmar girls seen with traditional hair styles.



Kyaukkalat Beach in Ayeyawady draws many visitors

PUBLIC interest in visiting Kyaukkalat Beach located in Ayeyawady Region has elevated, according to a social media post.

The beautiful beach, Kyaukkalat is located south-

ernmost of Datzun, the opposite of Mawtinzun in Ayeyawady's Ngaputaw Township and close to Hainggyi Island.

"It is still untouched and beautiful wildy. There are

similar natural sceneries in Myanmar. Kyaukkalat is really beautiful like in photo," said Ko Kway Kar, a tour guide in Gawyingyi Island. — Htun Htun/ZS



The beautiful Kyaukkalat Beach



YPS prepares to launch corporate service for employees

YANGON Payment Service has planned to provide a new service that YPS pre-paid cards will be going to sell at private companies.

As YPS corporate service, YPS will go to sell cards at private companies for either use or resell, in order to offer an efficient transport service for companies at peak hour. Door to door refill service will also be offered, said YPS service.

At present, YPS card and YPS QR services are available for more than 100 bus lines. YPS has more than 200,000 card subscribers and more than 150,000 who use QR code service, said an official from Asia Starmar Transport Intelligent in a press conference held on 19 Decem-

ber at YRTC headquarters.

For more information, inquires can be made to YPS Facebook page or Viber number 09254380054. According to YRTC's statistics, more than 130 YBS bus lines commute 1.5million people by more than 3,500 buses on a daily basis. — MT/ZS



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NATIONAL

Shwedagon Pagoda achieves 80 % completion of full-body gold foil donation

THE work of donating the full-body gold foils to the Shwedagon Pagoda is about 80 per cent finished, and it is expected to be finalized by April 2025, according to the Shwedagon Pagoda Board of Trustees.

The board has been implementing the process of donating full-body gold foils to the Shwedagon Pagoda since September 2024, with the target of completion in May 2025, before the consecration ceremony is

held.

Well-wishers can donate K15 million for each one-square-foot, six-tical gold plate and K2.5 million for each ten-square-inch, one-tical gold coating to the pagoda. In addition, the gold plates, which will be donated until March 2025, will be included in the full-body gold foil donation.

The Shwedagon Pagoda consecration ceremony is typically held on the full moon

day of Kason (Buddha Day) in May each year. It is planned to hold both the consecration ceremony and the Kason water pouring festival together once the full-body gold foils donation is completed in May. — ASH/TH

This photo showcases installation of scaffolding for the gold foils offering at Shwedagon Pagoda.



Some paintings displayed at "The Scenes-II" art exhibition.

"The Scenes-II" Group Art Exhibition showcases renowned artists' works

THE "The Scenes-II" Group Art Exhibition has been open for public viewing since 1 March at Artistic Space Art Gallery in Botahtaung Township, Yangon. The exhibition will continue until 5 March, displaying a diverse collection of paintings by 28 renowned artists.

The exhibition features a wide range of paintings with various themes, colours and techniques. According to the

organizers, the event highlights the exceptional talent of experienced artists and provides art enthusiasts with a chance to appreciate their creative works.

"The Scenes-II showcases works from 28 distinguished artists in a group exhibition. The event is open daily from 10 am to 5 pm, and we warmly invite everyone to visit and enjoy the artworks," stated a representative of the exhibition.

The participating artists include Alice Zin, Aung Saw Min, John D Mar, Kay Thwe Han, Khin Mg, Khual Pi Art, Kyaw Zayar Min, Linn Naung, Lunge, Lynn Satt, May Thu Won, Min Zin, Moe Lwin, Mwint, Nay Lin Soe, Nay Thawal, N.C.A, PannChi, Soe Min Tun, Thar Ngal, Tharlikar, Thaung Lwin Tun, Thuta Mon, Wae Phyto Aung, Wai Phyto Maung, Zan Hla Aung, Zin Paing, and Zwe Khant Te. — ASH/KZL

Myanmar, German Red Cross collaborate on Information Management Training in Magway

THE Myanmar Red Cross Society, in collaboration with the German Red Cross, conducted an Information Management (Data Management in Excel) training course in Magway Region during the last week of February, according to the headquarters of the Myanmar Red Cross Society.

The training was held at the Pale Shweyi Hotel in Magway from 25 to 28 February, lasting four days. A total of 20 Red Cross volunteers from various townships within Magway Region participated in the course.

At the opening ceremony,

Professor Dr Daw Chaw Khin, Chairperson of the Magway Region Red Cross Supervisory Committee, delivered a speech, while U Nyein Chan Naung, Head of the Information Management and Technology Unit, provided an overview of the training.

The event was attended by members of the Magway Region Red Cross Supervisory Committee, officials from the Information Management and Technology Unit, and Red Cross volunteers from different townships. — ASH/KNN



Opening ceremony of Information Management (Data Management in Excel) in progress.

Special Thingyan tour to icy Hponkanrazi climb planned

AS part of the April Thingyan Myanmar New Year holiday, Trekking in Myanmar Agency will be offering an 8-day Hponkanrazi icy mountain climbing package as a special tour.

In the past few days, tourists from Thailand and Russia have been interested in ice-capped mountains and have visited PutaO, according to Ko Moe Min Thein (Putao), who is organizing

the tour.

Trekking In Myanmar planned this special tour for those who want to visit ice-capped Mount Hponkanrazi in PutaO, Kachin State, during the upcoming April Thingyan. The tour will take 8 nights and 9 days if a traveller comes by Yangon-Mandalay-Myitkyina flight, and the round trip from PutaO to Mount Hponkanrazi will take

7 nights and 8 days.

The tour will start on 11 April. Passengers will arrive in PutaO on 10 April and return to PutaO on 17 April.

This is a regular trip designed for ordinary mountaineering enthusiasts. Those who want to join the trip need to notify about a month before and pay 30 per cent in advance. Passengers should bring a warm raincoat, a



Climbers of ice-capped Mount Hponkanrazi.

thick sweater, a thin long-sleeved shirt, thick gloves, thick socks, ear-mufflers, a warm hat, good hiking boots or military boots,

personal water bottles, a headlamp, a flashlight, and miscellaneous items such as lotions and medicines. — MT/ZN

NATIONAL

Myanmar detains 141 more foreign illegal entrants

A total of 141 foreign nationals who illegally entered Myanmar were further detained yesterday, while trilateral cooperation between Myanmar, China, and Thailand continues to investigate and combat individuals involved in online scams, online gambling, and foreign masterminds.

These individuals, who entered Myanmar via border routes through some neighbouring countries, including Thailand, were found to be involved in online gambling, telecom fraud, and other criminal activities in areas such as Shwe Kokko, Mehtawthalay, and KK Park in Myawady, Kay-

in State.

Officials collected the personal information and records of those detained in a single day to facilitate their swift repatriation to their respective countries.

Between 30 January and 2 March, a total of 3,474 foreign nationals who had illegally entered Myanmar were apprehended, with 757 systematically repatriated to their countries through Thailand in accordance with legal procedures. The remaining 2,717 individuals are prepared for transfer and are currently being securely detained. — MNA/TH



Immigration officials check profiles of foreign illegal detainees.



Pieces of nga shwe are sun-drying.

Dried golden pike conger trade rises

AMONG dried fish, golden pike conger (nga shwe) sale is the best.

Dried nga shwe is affordable for all class and mainly consumed in lower Myanmar.

“Among seasonal dried fish, nga shwe trade is the best. It is being consumed nationwide, especially in lower Myanmar. The price is within the reach of all class,” said Ko Aung Lay who runs dried fish retail and wholesale trading in Kyaikkhami.

Nga shwe produced from Kyaikkhami is widely consumed in Mawlamyine, Monywa and Mandalay as well as many orders from Bayintnaung Wholesale Trading Centre in Yangon.

“The consumption is highest in Anyar and Bayintnaung is a major destination too,” he added. — Thit Taw/ZS

Pig farming expands in Bago Region

IN Bago Region, pig farming has increased especially in Indagaw, DaikU and Pyuntaza.

“Commercial pig farming either big or small-scale has been seen everywhere. But in Bago Region’s Indagaw, DaikU and Pyuntaza, majority of pig farms are big-sized while there are small farms in Thayawady,” said Ko Wai Gyi who runs a pig farm in Thayawady.

The government has provided livestock loan for the pig farming industry, however there are many farms which had to stop as the feeding cost and live pig price are pretty high.

“Despite the government’s support and loan, many pig farms had to stop their operation as they couldn’t make profit due to rising feeding cost. So, farm owners are now carefully considering if the feeding



A commercial pig farm.

cost continues to rise,” he said.

The number of pig farms decreased

in 2024 as a result of swine fever broke out in 2023’s winter. — Thit Taw/ZS

Weather

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 2 March 2025)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is generally fair over the North Andaman Sea and a few cloud to partly cloudy over the South Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF 3 MARCH 2025: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Kachin State and isolated in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions. Degree of certainty is 80 per cent. Weather will be partly cloudy in Lower Sagaing Region and Kayin, Chin, Mon and northern Shan States and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about 5-7 feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of isolated to scattered rain or thundershowers in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions and Kachin State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 3 MARCH 2025: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 3 MARCH 2025: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 3 MARCH 2025: Generally fair weather. — DMH

OPINION

Don't forget the gratitude of peasants

FARMERS are real benefactors for society as they cultivate crops to provide food supplies to society, although they suffer from the impacts of bad weather in growing crops in all seasons. As such, Myanmar marks Peasants' Day for the people not to forget the gratitude of those farmers forever.

This year's Peasants' Day marked 63 years in Myanmar. Hence, everybody should take pride in the endeavours and performances of farmers engaged in agriculture and livestock breeding, as they play a pivotal role in ensuring food security for the ethnic people. People need to contribute to peasants to have economic growth along with the nation's surging agricultural and livestock industries.

To ensure national prosperity and food security, efforts are being made to develop the agriculture and livestock sectors using modern techniques, promote MSME industries to enhance exports and increase the yield of oil crops to achieve self-sufficiency and enable exports. These three key economic objectives have been set, and both short-term and long-term plans are being formulated and implemented accordingly.

Currently, the government is encouraging agricultural and livestock tasks for farmers to meet the demand of domestic consumption. In this regard, the role of peasants is essential for agricultural and livestock production. As such, it is necessary to help farmers achieve target goals for crops grown in currently cultivated farmland, and working towards doubling or tripling yields will not only increase farmers' income but also contribute to national economic growth.

To prevent the degradation and loss of essential soil for crop cultivation, it is necessary to adopt various farming methods. These include using a combination of chemical and natural fertilizers, planting cover crops, growing wind-break trees, practising crop rotation, implementing terrace farming in hilly regions, utilizing contour farming techniques, and adopting agroforestry systems that integrate crops with trees. Additionally, to enhance soil fertility, the use of natural fertilizers such as manure (cow and chicken

dung), EM Bokashi compost, fish amino acids, and green fertilizers like water hyacinths should be encouraged. Other soil improvement techniques, such as planting green manure crops and incorporating them into the soil, are also being promoted.

Not only is this being carried out, but to ensure that farmers have access to high-quality and fairly priced agricultural inputs, fertilizers, seeds, and pesticides are regulated through laws and regulations. Moreover, the government, private businesses, and organizations are collaborating to implement these efforts. Furthermore, support is being provided through the National Economic Development Fund in coordination with input supply companies.

Currently, the government is encouraging agricultural and livestock tasks for farmers to meet the demand of domestic consumption. In this regard, the role of peasants is essential for agricultural and livestock production. As such, it is necessary to help farmers achieve target goals for crops grown in currently cultivated farmland, and working towards doubling or tripling yields will not only increase farmers' income but also contribute to national economic growth.

as manure (cow and chicken

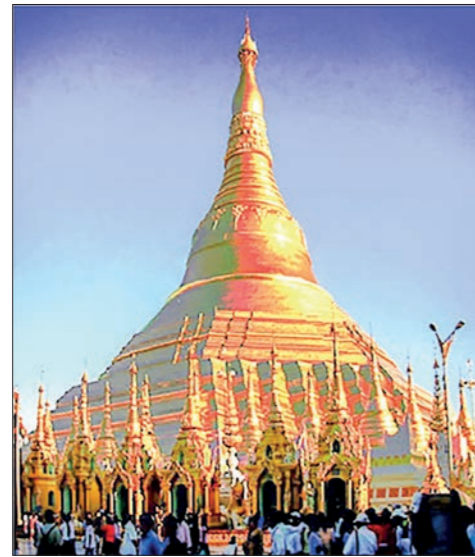
dung), EM Bokashi compost, fish amino acids, and green fertilizers like water hyacinths should be encouraged. Other soil improvement techniques, such as planting green manure crops and incorporating them into the soil, are also being promoted.

Not only is this being carried out, but to ensure that farmers have access to high-quality and fairly priced agricultural inputs, fertilizers, seeds, and pesticides are regulated through laws and regulations. Moreover, the government, private businesses, and organizations are collaborating to implement these efforts. Furthermore, support is being provided through the National Economic Development Fund in coordination with input supply companies.

Currently, the government is encouraging agricultural and livestock tasks for farmers to meet the demand of domestic consumption. In this regard, the role of peasants is essential for agricultural and livestock production. As such, it is necessary to help farmers achieve target goals for crops grown in currently cultivated farmland, and working towards doubling or tripling yields will not only increase farmers' income but also contribute to national economic growth.

A Month of Faith, Festivity, and Cultural Splendour

By Yin Nwe Ko



Shwedagon Pagoda.



Kakku Pagoda.



Pindaya Shwe Oo Min.



Mawtinzun Pagoda.

MARCH in Myanmar is a time of vibrant celebrations, deep-rooted traditions, and spiritual reflection. Across the country, various regions come alive with festivals that draw locals and tourists alike. March is a wonderful time for Myanmar's pagoda festivals and joyful celebrations as it coincides with the month of Taboung in the Myanmar calendar. Among the most captivating events are the Shwedagon Pagoda Festival, Kakku Pagoda Festival, Pindaya Shwe Oo Min Festival, and Mawtinzun Pagoda Festival. Each offers a unique glimpse into Myanmar's rich cultural and religious tapestry.

Shwedagon Pagoda Festival

In the bustling city of Yangon, the iconic Shwedagon Pagoda stands as a symbol of devotion and reverence. The Shwedagon Pagoda Festival, held during the full moon of the Tabauung month, is one of the most significant religious events in Myanmar. Thousands of devotees flock to the pagoda to offer prayers, light candles, and participate in various rituals. The festival is a mesmerizing spectacle of colours and lights, with the golden spire of the pagoda shimmering against the night sky.

The Shwedagon Pagoda itself is a marvel of architecture and history. Believed to be over 2,500 years old, it is considered the oldest pagoda in the world. The pagoda enshrines strands of Buddha's hair and other holy relics, making it a highly revered pilgrimage site. The festival is an opportunity for Buddhists to renew their faith, seek blessings, and express gratitude.

Visitors to the festival can explore the sprawling temple complex, which houses numerous smaller stupas, shrines, and pavilions. The atmosphere is filled with the scent of incense, the sound of chanting monks, and the sight of devotees meditating or circumambulating the pagoda. Stalls offering traditional food, religious items, and souvenirs line the pathways, creating a lively and festive ambience. The festival also features cultural performances, including traditional dances and music, adding to the rich tapestry of the celebration.

Kakku Pagoda Festival

In the heart of Shan State, the Kakku Pagoda Festival

takes place at the Kakku Ancient Pagoda Complex near Taunggyi. This festival, also celebrated during the Tabauung full moon, showcases the beauty of the Kakku pagodas, which date back over two millennia. The complex boasts over 2,000 stupas, each intricately carved and adorned with decorative motifs. The sight of the pagodas, standing in rows against the picturesque landscape, is a testament to the architectural brilliance of ancient Myanmar.

The festival is a significant event for the Pa-O ethnic group, who play a pivotal role in organizing and participating in the celebrations. Pilgrims and visitors gather to pay their respects, engage in religious ceremonies, and enjoy traditional performances. The festival provides an opportunity to experience the unique culture of the Pa-O people, including their traditional attire, music, and dance. The intricate architecture of the pagodas, adorned with flowers and candles, creates a breathtaking and serene ambience.

Visitors can witness various religious rituals, such as offering food to monks, lighting candles, and chanting prayers. The festival grounds are bustling with activities, including cultural shows, craft exhibitions, and food stalls offering local delicacies. The Kakku Pagoda Festival is not only a religious event but also a celebration of the Pa-O community's heritage and traditions.

Pindaya Shwe Oo Min Festival

Further south in Shan State, the town of Pindaya hosts the Pindaya Shwe Oo Min Festival. This event is held at the Shwe Oo Min Pagoda, a site famous for its limestone caves filled with thousands of Buddha images. The caves, with their labyrinthine passages and serene atmosphere, are a major pilgrimage site for Buddhists. The festival, like others in March, coincides with the Tabauung full moon. It is a time for devotees to visit the pagoda, offer prayers, and make merit.

The Pindaya Shwe Oo Min Festival is a vibrant and lively affair, drawing visitors from all over Myanmar and beyond. The festival grounds are filled with stalls selling traditional foods, handicrafts, and religious items. The air is filled with the sounds of traditional music, the chatter of excited visitors, and the rhythmic

beating of drums. The festival is a celebration of both religious devotion and communal harmony.

One of the highlights of the festival is the procession of Buddha statues, carried by devotees through the town and up to the pagoda. The sight of the statues, beautifully adorned with flowers and gold leaf, is a moving and inspiring spectacle. The festival also features cultural performances, including traditional dances, music, and drama, providing entertainment and cultural enrichment for visitors. The Pindaya Shwe Oo Min Festival is a unique blend of spiritual reverence and cultural celebration, making it a must-visit event in March.

Mawtinzun Pagoda Festival

In the Ayeyawady Region's Ngaputaw Township, the Mawtinzun Pagoda Festival is a highlight of March. The pagoda, with its stunning golden stupa, is a focal point of Buddhist worship in the region. The Mawtinzun Pagoda is believed to date back several centuries and holds great historical and religious significance. During the festival, pilgrims from near and far gather to participate in religious ceremonies, offer prayers, and pay homage to the Buddha statues.

The festival grounds are filled with stalls selling traditional foods, religious items, and crafts. One of the most captivating moments is the evening candle-light procession, where the pagoda is illuminated by thousands of candles, creating a magical and serene atmosphere. The festival also features traditional cultural performances, including dances, music, and puppet shows, adding to the charm and vibrancy of the celebration.

The Mawtinzun Pagoda Festival is not only a religious event but also a celebration of community and culture. Families come together to share meals, exchange gifts, and participate in the festivities. The festival provides an opportunity for people to connect with their cultural roots, strengthen communal bonds, and renew their spiritual faith. The serene and picturesque setting of the pagoda, combined with the vibrant festival atmosphere, makes the Mawtinzun Pagoda Festival a truly unforgettable experience.

Mawtinzun Pagoda is uniquely located on a small

coastal islet in the Ayeyawady Region of Myanmar. Unlike many other pagodas built on huge stones, this pagoda stands on a landmass that is sometimes surrounded by water, depending on the tide. During high tide, the pagoda appears as if it is floating on the sea, creating a breathtaking view. Visitors often have to adjust their travel plans according to the tidal changes to reach the site. This special location gives the pagoda a peaceful and isolated atmosphere, making it a distinctive place of worship and meditation.

In addition, Myanmar's March festivals offer a unique and enriching experience for anyone who wishes to delve into the country's spiritual and cultural heritage. From the bustling city of Yangon to the serene landscapes of Shan State and the Ayeyawady Region, these festivals highlight the enduring faith and vibrant traditions of the Myanmar people. Whether you are a local or a visitor, the Shwedagon Pagoda Festival, Kakku Pagoda Festival, Pindaya Shwe Oo Min Festival, and Mawtinzun Pagoda Festival are events that should not be missed.

These festivals provide a window into the soul of Myanmar, showcasing its rich history, deep-rooted spirituality, and the unbreakable bonds of community. They offer an opportunity to witness the beauty of Myanmar's cultural diversity, the warmth and hospitality of its people, and the timeless traditions that continue to shape the nation's identity. Attending these festivals is not only a spiritual journey but also an immersion into the vibrant and colourful tapestry of Myanmar's cultural heritage.

The Deep-Rooted Value of Religious Traditions in Myanmar

In Myanmar, religious traditions are more than just rituals; they are the bedrock of cultural identity and community life. The people of Myanmar, predominantly Buddhist, hold their religious practices and customs in the highest regard, weaving them seamlessly into their daily lives and annual cycles.

Reverence and Devotion

At the heart of Myanmar's society is a profound reverence for Buddhism. Temples and pagodas are

not only places of worship but also social hubs where communities gather to share their joys and sorrows. The sight of families visiting temples, offering alms to monks, and participating in meditation sessions is a common and cherished aspect of daily life. This deep devotion is reflected in the meticulous care taken in maintaining religious sites, often adorned with intricate carvings, gilded statues, and vibrant murals.

Festivals and Community Bonding

Religious festivals in Myanmar, such as the Shwedagon Pagoda Festival, Kakku Pagoda Festival, and Pindaya Shwe Oo Min Festival, are grand celebrations that reinforce communal bonds. These events are occasions for families and friends to come together, participate in collective prayers, and engage in traditional activities. The preparation for these festivals often involves the entire community, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose. Through these celebrations, cultural values and religious teachings are passed down to younger generations, ensuring the continuity of traditions.

Moral and Ethical Guidance

Buddhism in Myanmar serves as a moral compass, guiding individuals in their ethical conduct and daily decisions. The teachings of the Buddha centred around concepts of compassion, mindfulness, and Karma, are deeply ingrained in the Myanmar psyche. These principles influence behaviour, encouraging acts of kindness, generosity, and respect for all living beings. The practice of making merit, whether through donating to monasteries or volunteering in community projects, is a testament to the Myanmar people's commitment to living virtuous lives.

Preservation of Heritage

Myanmar's religious traditions are also a means of preserving the nation's rich cultural heritage. Ancient rituals, traditional crafts, and historical sites are maintained with reverence, showcasing the artistic and spiritual achievements of past generations. Festivals and ceremonies often feature traditional music, dance, and attire, providing a window into Myanmar's cultural legacy. By upholding these practices, the people of Myanmar honour their ancestors and affirm their cultural identity.

Moreover, the religious traditions of Myanmar are cherished not only for their spiritual significance but also for their role in fostering community, guiding ethical behaviour, and preserving cultural heritage. The people of Myanmar's deep-rooted value of these traditions is evident in their daily lives, communal celebrations, and the continued reverence for their cultural and religious legacy.

So, whether you are seeking spiritual enlightenment, cultural enrichment, or simply a memorable experience, make sure to mark your calendar for March and join in the celebrations of Myanmar's enchanting festivals. You will leave with a deeper appreciation for the country's traditions, a sense of connection to its people, and memories that will last a lifetime.

SCI/ENVIRON WORLD

Delhi bans older vehicles' refuelling; pollution versus fairness debate

Delhi's ban on refuelling older vehicles has ignited a debate on pollution and fairness.

THE DELHI government's decision not to allow refueling for vehicles older than 15 years after 31 March has sparked mixed reactions. While some residents see it as a necessary step to combat pollution, others question its fairness, arguing, "If a vehicle is well-maintained, why ban it?"

Many residents believe road-worthiness should be based on a

vehicle's condition rather than its age.

A cab driver backed the decision, telling ANI, "The government is right. Vehicles expire after 15 years, so they should not be driven on the roads. Such vehicles should be sent to the scrapyard."

However, a resident opposed the move, arguing that the focus should be on vehicles that



While some support the measure, others argue for vehicle condition over age. **PHOTO: ANI**

contribute to pollution. "This government decision is wrong. If the condition of the vehicle is good, then its validity should be increased. Only those vehicles should be stopped that are

spreading pollution. We maintain our vehicles from time to time, so the decision should be taken only after seeing the condition of the vehicle..." he said while speaking to ANI. Another local support-

ed the measure, saying that it would help reduce air pollution. "Considering the pollution levels in Delhi, I think this decision is appropriate. It will help curb pollution in the city," he said. — ANI



The Garigliano Nuclear Power Plant near Sessa Aurunca, Italy. **WIKIMEDIA COMMONS**

Italy breaks 'taboo' with push to revive nuclear

ITALY'S cabinet opened the door Friday to a return to nuclear power, aiming to overturn nearly 40 years of opposition — though experts say any revival is at least a decade away.

Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's hard-right government says nuclear could play a key role in increasing energy security, as well as slashing Italy's carbon emissions and sky-high electricity prices.

Energy Minister Gilberto Pichetto Fratin has set a 2026 deadline to draw up a legal frame-

work for everything from traditional reactors to next-generation technologies. "With the latest generation of nuclear power, together with renewables, we will be able to achieve the objectives of decarbonisation, guaranteeing the country's full energy security," Pichetto Fratin said on Friday.

But opponents say nuclear is much more costly than other low-carbon energies, takes years to implement and gives policymakers an alibi to slow the phase-out of gas, a fossil fuel driving climate change. — AFP

Niger's 2024 floods killed 400, affected 1.5 mn: toll

NEARLY 400 people died in Niger and more than 1.5 million others were affected by floods triggered by last year's exceptionally torrential rains, according to a final toll announced on Saturday.

"Floods caused the deaths of 396 people during the course of 2024," said Interior Minister

Mohamed Toumba.

A further 405 were injured and more than 200,000 households — amounting to 1,526,653 people — were affected, he said.

Scientists have long warned that climate change driven by man-made fossil fuel emissions is increasing the

likelihood, intensity and length of extreme weather events such as severe droughts and torrential rains.

The severe droughts in Africa's Sahel region exacerbate the flooding because the dry, hard soil loses much of its capacity to absorb water when it rains again. — Xinhua

England allows wild beaver releases in 'milestone' for UK nature

BEAVERS will soon be released into waterways in England under a new scheme launched on Friday, signalling a return to the wild for an animal once hunted to extinction.

It's a win for wildlife campaigners seeking to restore England's depleted countryside — and a triumphant turnaround for the dam-building rodents, which until recently had been

absent for hundreds of years.

The UK's environment department said Eurasian beaver releases would be carefully managed and the first are expected to be set free in southwest England soon. Beavers went extinct in Britain in the 16th century when they were sought after for their fur, meat and special sacs, which produce a leathery scent prized by perfume makers. Small populations have been reintroduced in enclosures in recent years as part of a wider "rewilding" drive, and following escapes and illegal releases around 500 are already thought to be living in the wild in England. — AFP



Beavers create dams and pools that boost wildlife while also fending off floods and droughts. **PHOTO: AFP**

Brits turn brat as Charli XCX wins big at UK pop music's special night

POP sensation Charli XCX turned the Brit Awards into the brat awards on Saturday as she claimed five gongs at the annual celebration of UK music.

Fresh from winning three Grammys, the 32-year-old behind the cultural movement “brat summer” won Album Of The Year, the evening's most coveted gong, at the 45th annual awards ceremony in London's O2 Arena.

“Brat”, the artist's sixth album and launched in June with its lime-green cover and celebration of a relaxed, partying lifestyle, transformed her into one of the top music stars in 2024.

It redefined the word “brat”, which even became associated with Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris when fans began applying the colour-

ed “brat” filter to the nominee's images.

“I am living proof that you don't need to compromise,” she said on picking up the award.

The album beat off competition from veteran band The Cure, seven-time Brit winner Dua Lipa, jazz group Ezra Collective and indie-rockers The Last Dinner Party.

Charli XCX — full name Charlotte Aitchison — also won song of the year for “Guess”, featuring Billie Eilish, and thanked the US singer for the collaboration.

“I'm really happy a song about underwear now has a Brit Award,” she joked.

Her other two awards on the night were for best artist and best dance act, adding to the best songwriter prize she was awarded on Wednesday. — AFP



British singer Charli XCX poses on the red carpet upon arrival for the BRIT Awards 2025 in London on 1 March 2025. PHOTO: HENRY NICHOLLS / AFP

Sydney Mardi Gras celebrates inclusion in sea of glitter and feathers

THOUSANDS of scantily clad revellers danced through Sydney on Saturday for the 47th annual Mardi Gras parade, transforming the Australian city into a vibrant sea of colour and costumes.

More than 10,000 people — many of them painted in glitter makeup — and 180 floats rolled down a packed Oxford Street, lighting up the vibrant heart of Sydney's LGBTQ scene.

Mardi Gras is a highlight of the city's social calendar, with this year's theme “free to be” celebrating freedom, authenticity, and the right to live openly and proudly, organizers said. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, who has marched in Mardi Gras for almost 40 years, said the event “shows a commitment to respect people for who they are”. — AFP

Studio Alta, Tokyo's Shinjuku iconic meetup spot, closes after 45 yrs

Managed by major Japanese department store operator Isetan Mitsukoshi Holdings Ltd. as a fashion-focused shopping complex, Shinjuku Alta housed stores selling apparel and sundries.



Studio Alta in Tokyo's Shinjuku Ward on 28 February 2025. PHOTO: KYODO

THE landmark Studio Alta building in Tokyo's Shinjuku, a popular meeting spot and former filming site of the long-running Japanese variety show “Waratte Iitomo,” closed its doors Friday, drawing the curtain on around 45 years of history.

Since opening in 1980, the area in front of the shopping complex near Shinjuku Station has been a well-known meeting spot known as “Alta-mae,” and many people nostalgic for the site gathered to witness the end of an era.

Managed by major Japanese department store operator Isetan Mitsukoshi Holdings Ltd as a fashion-focused shopping complex, Shinjuku Alta housed stores selling apparel and sundries.

The building's exterior frequently appeared at the start of “Waratte Iitomo,” filmed on the seventh floor, making it the “face” of the east exit of what the Guinness World Records has recognized as the world's busiest railway station.

But visitors declined as the building's recognition decreased after the show ended in 2014, and a decision was made to close it amid difficulties in giving it new life. Harajuku Alta, located in neighbouring Shibuya Ward, also closed Friday. — Kyodo

UK pie 'n' mash fans seek protected status for Cockney classic

“ONE and one please love,” a regular said, leaning on the counter at a pie and mash shop in London's East End.

In seconds, one piping-hot beef pie appeared with a single scoop of mashed potatoes at G Kelly's shop, topped off with parsley sauce known as liquor.

Londoners have been eating this classic Cockney combination since at least Victorian times but for many years the working-class staple has had a humble reputation among outsiders. Now a campaign to get pie and mash special protected status is gaining ground, with supporters arguing the dish deserves an official stamp. London's iconic pie and mash, a dish steeped in 19th-century dockside origins, seeks official Traditional Speciality Guaranteed status. Campaigners, backed by MPs,

aim to preserve its heritage against mass-produced imitations. With its distinctive “one and one” ordering and traditional utensils, pie and mash embodies East End culture.

Despite changing tastes and gentrification, shops like

G Kelly's, founded in 1939, retain loyal customers drawn to the dish's comforting nostalgia. The potential TSG label would safeguard its authentic recipe, ensuring future generations experience this culinary time capsule. — AFP



A picture shows the facade of the traditional pie and mash shop G Kelly in east London on 19 February 2025. PHOTO: BENJAMIN CREMEL / AFP

ECON: WORLD

WTO talks end with no major win, throwing trade body into 'crisis'

Geopolitical tensions and economic challenges hindered progress on crucial trade issues.

A high-level WTO conference ended Saturday with a temporary extension of an e-commerce moratorium but no deals on agriculture and fisheries, throwing into doubt the effectiveness of the multilateral trade body.

The outcomes of the World Trade Organization's 13th ministerial conference in Abu Dhabi highlighted the sharp divisions between the body's 164 members amid geopolitical tensions and economic headwinds that are threatening global commerce.

"The WTO needed a good crisis and perhaps this will lead to a realization that we cannot continue like this," said a senior European Union official participating in the talks.

Speaking at the closing press conference, the Emirati chair of the so-called MC13 gathering, Thani Al Zeyoudi, acknowledged the shortcomings.

"Despite our best efforts, we failed to agree on some texts which are of great importance to



WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said the talks came up "against an international backdrop marked by greater uncertainty than at any time I can remember". **PHOTO: AFP**

many of our members," said Al Zeyoudi, who also serves as the UAE's foreign trade minister.

For her part, WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said the talks came up "against an international backdrop marked by greater uncertainty than at any time I can remember".

"We have achieved some important things and we have not managed to complete others," she said, while insisting that the "glass was half full".

The WTO, the only international body dealing with the rules of trade between nations, requires full consensus from all members to chalk up deals.

It was hoping the MC13 would replicate the landmark success of its 2022 ministerial in Geneva, which yielded a deal on fisheries and saw members agree to restore a now-defunct dispute settlement system by the end of this year.

But the latest ministerial fell short of that objective. — AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

China's landmark trade corridor sees surge in goods transport

THE New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor, a key logistics network connecting China's western regions to global markets, has transported 209,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) via intermodal rail-sea service in the first two months of this year, according to the China Railway Nanning Group.

This volume has already exceeded the total for 2019, marking a year-on-year increase of 58.4 per cent, the railway group said.

In February, demand for freight transportation surged, with notable increases in the shipment of timber and stone materials from south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, as well as tea and roll paper from central China's Hunan Province. — Xinhua

Nepal sees 96,880 foreign tourists in February

A total of 96,880 foreign visitors toured Nepal in February, 0.6 per cent lower than the same month in 2024, the Nepal Tourism Board said on Sunday.

Indians, Americans and Chinese were among the top three sources of tourists for Nepal, the board noted in a report.

Nepal welcomed 102,423 foreign tourists in February 2019, the highest in one month for the South Asian country.

There has been a 94.6-per cent recovery in the month in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Mani Raj Lamichane, director at the board, told Xinhua. Tourism is a major source of foreign exchange earnings in Nepal, contributing 6.7 per cent of the country's gross domestic product, according to a World Bank report in 2022. — Xinhua

Trump orders tariff probe on lumber, calls for supply boost

US President Donald Trump ordered a probe yesterday into potential tariffs on lumber imports — in his latest move threatening to stoke trade tensions — while also pushing for a domestic supply boost.

Trump signed an executive order instructing Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick to start an investigation "to determine the effects on the national security of imports of timber, lumber, and their derivative products."

The study may result in new tariffs being imposed, which would pile on top of existing levies.

The investigation takes aim at exporters like Canada, Germany and Brazil, with White House officials earlier accusing these economies of "dumping lumber into our markets at the expense of both our economic prosperity and national security."

Canada, for example, is among the world's biggest exporters of softwood lumber,



Canada, for example, is among the world's biggest exporters of softwood lumber, with its largest export market being the United States. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ CONCEPT ART**

with its largest export market being the United States.

The probe under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act comes days after Trump used the same tool to study copper imports, and after he unveiled tariff hikes on steel and alumin-

ium products.

Speaking to reporters ahead of the announcement, a White House official criticised "bad actors" globally who develop "massive overcapacity" with the help of government subsidies. — AFP

Brunei records highest economic growth rate since 1999

For 2025, Brunei's economy is projected to rise between 2.4 and 3.4 per cent.

BRUNEI achieved a 4.2-per cent economic growth in 2024, its highest growth rate since 1999, Haji Mohd Amin Liew Abdullah, Brunei's minister at the Prime Minister's Office and second minister of Finance and Economy, has said.

The minister made the

remarks during a speech at a session of the 21st Legislative Council meeting on Saturday.

He added that the unemployment rate in 2024 dropped to a record low of 4.8 per cent, the lowest since 1991. For 2025, Brunei's economy is projected to rise between 2.4 and 3.4 per cent.

Meanwhile, he announced that the Ministry of Finance and Economy had proposed a budget of 6.35 billion Brunei dollars (US\$4.71 billion) for the fiscal year 2025-26, compared to last fiscal year's 6.25 billion Brunei dollars (\$4.63 billion).

— Xinhua



This photo shows a scene of the 21st Legislative Council meeting in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei, 1 March 2025. **PHOTO: LI MENG/XINHUA**

Japan rice prices remain high despite govt plans to release reserves

RICE prices in Japan have remained high despite hopes that they would normalize after the government announced plans two weeks ago that it would release its stockpiles to curb the surge.

On 14 February the government said it would release up to 210,000 tonnes of its stockpiled rice, to be handed over to wholesalers in mid-March after it has been bid for and expected to hit store shelves between late March and early April.

The farm ministry expected the announcement alone would lead to lower prices before the release of the stockpiled rice. But there has been no such effect, an executive at a major rice wholesaler said.

Wholesale prices of Koshihikari brown rice from Niigata Prefecture, for example, was between 48,300 yen (\$320) and 48,500 yen per 60 kilogrammes as of 26 February, little changed from a month earlier, according to rice market research firm Beikoku Databank.

"Once the results (of the bidding) are revealed, it will have an effect on low-



Photo shows stockpiled rice in a storage facility in Saitama Prefecture on 18 February, 2025. **PHOTO: KYODO**

ering prices," an official at the research firm said.

The government is scheduled to release 150,000 tonnes of rice in the first stage, and could release an additional 60,000 tonnes if the need arises.

According to the consumer price data released last month, rice prices surged 27.7 per cent in 2024 from the previous year, the largest increase since 1975. In December alone, prices soared 64.5 per cent from a year earlier. — Kyodo

ACME Solar plans Rs 17,000 crore capital expenditure spending by 2026

RENEWABLE energy firm ACME Solar Holdings plans to invest Rs 17,000 crore as capital expenditure to boost renewable energy capacity to 5 gigawatts by 2026, the company said in a statement Sunday.

"We intend to focus our new capacities on the revenue and margin accretive Hybrid and FDRE renewable energy projects as a critical pivot

in our business strategy," Nikhil Dhingra, CEO of the company, was quoted in the statement.

The CEO added that ACME Solar plans to expand capacity in two phases, starting in April this year.

According to the statement, the company is also evaluating entry into the nuclear energy segment, though these plans are still on the drawing

board.

As part of a broader strategy, ACME Solar aims to triple its current renewable capacity to 7 GW by 2028.

As of nine months of 2024-25 (April- December), ACME Solar's portfolio stood at 6,970 MW, with 2,540 MW already operational and 4,430 MW under construction projects. — ANI

US approves sale of \$3 bn in munitions, bulldozers to Israel

THE United States on Friday announced the approval of the sale of more than \$3 billion in munitions, bulldozers and related equipment to Israel, which used American-made weapons to devastating effect in densely populated Gaza.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio signed off on the sales of \$2.04 billion in bomb bodies and warheads, another \$675.7 million in other bomb bodies and guidance kits, and \$295 million in bulldozers and related equipment, the US Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) said. — AFP

UK firms cautiously optimistic on US trade deal prospects

HOPES of a trade deal between Britain and the United States, reignited by President Donald Trump's positive comments after meeting Prime Minister Keir Starmer this week, prompted cautious optimism Friday from a UK business sector keen to avoid tariffs.

After hosting Starmer at the White House on Thursday, Trump signalled the potential for a "great" post-Brexit trade accord, one that Britain has been seeking out since its departure from the European Union.

New negotiations between the countries provide "a real opportunity to take the heat out of the uncertainty created by the risk of tariffs on UK exports", said William Bain, head of trade policy at the British Chambers of Commerce. — AFP

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

Egyptian, Palestinian PMs meet to discuss Gaza reconstruction plan

The Egyptian government has prepared an integrated plan for the early recovery and reconstruction of the Gaza Strip while keeping the Palestinians in the enclave.



Vehicles are pictured among destroyed houses in Beit Hanoun in the northern Gaza Strip, on 19 February 2025. **PHOTO: RIZEK ABDELJAWAD/XINHUA**

EGYPTIAN Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly met with Palestinian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mo-

hammad Mustafa here on Saturday to discuss plans for the early recovery and reconstruction of the Gaza Strip,

according to a statement released by the Egyptian cabinet.

Madbouly reaffirmed Egypt's support for the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, especially the right to self-determination and independence.

The Egyptian government has prepared an integrated plan for the early recovery and reconstruction of the Gaza Strip while keeping the Palestinians in the enclave, Madbouly said.

He stressed that Egypt had exerted sincere efforts to back the Palestinian cause and people, either through endeavors to implement the ceasefire deal in all its phases or the reconstruction of Gaza.

Mustafa expressed gratitude to Egypt for supporting the Palestinian people.

They also discussed coordination efforts between Egypt and Palestine to follow up on the completion of the reconstruction plan before presenting it to the upcoming emergency Arab Summit slated for 4 March. — Xinhua

NEWS IN BRIEF

UK PM Starmer meets Ukrainian President Zelensky

BRITISH Prime Minister Keir Starmer met with visiting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Saturday.

During their meeting at Downing Street, Starmer said Ukraine has "full backing across the United Kingdom." He stressed Britain's "unwavering determination" to achieve lasting peace.

Britain and Ukraine have agreed a loan of 2.26 billion pounds (US\$2.84 billion) to support Ukraine's defense capabilities, according to Ukrainian Finance Minister Serhiy Marchenko.

Zelensky's visit came ahead of a defense summit Britain is hosting, with European leaders gathering in London on Sunday to discuss a peace plan for Ukraine. Starmer has said he believes such a deal will have to involve the United States. — Xinhua

Namibia's founding president laid to rest at national shrine

NAMIBIA'S founding President Sam Nujoma was laid to rest at the country's National Heroes' Acre on the outskirts of the capital, Windhoek, on Saturday.

Nujoma passed away at a local hospital on 8 February at the age of 95.

Speaking at the state funeral, Namibian President Nangolo Mbumba described Nujoma as a leader who stood for freedom and justice throughout his life.

"Today, we are laying to rest one of Namibia's illustrious sons, a man who fought for justice and the liberation of his country. He dedicated his life to improving the lives of many Namibians. It is a great loss to our nation," Mbumba said. — Xinhua

Israel agrees to temporary ceasefire proposal for Ramzan, passover periods

ISRAEL has agreed to a proposal by US President Donald Trump's envoy, Steve Witkoff, for a temporary ceasefire in Gaza during the Ramzan and passover periods, the Prime Minister's Office announced.

The decision comes as the first phase of a previously agreed ceasefire was nearing its expiration, Al Jazeera reported.

The temporary truce aims to ease tensions during the religious holidays. Further details on its implementation are yet to be disclosed. — ANI

Japan weighs South Koreans as eligible for 2nd working holiday visa

JAPAN is considering adding South Korea to the list of eligible countries for its working holiday visa renewal system, as the two countries commemorate the 60th anniversary of diplomatic normalization this year, sources familiar with the matter said.

Currently young people from eight countries are able to renew their working holiday visa, which is generally only available once for up to one year.

The Japanese government hopes to increase the number of foreigners eligible to work to meet requests from the winter sports industry for more instructors amid a surge in overseas visitors to the country.

Citizens of Canada, Britain, New Zealand, Denmark and Austria have been able to renew their working holiday visa since December, while those from Germany, Ireland and Slovakia have been able to do so since January.

British and Canadian passport



The Japanese government aims to increase the number of eligible foreign workers to address the demand for instructors in the winter sports industry due to a rise in overseas visitors. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/JAPAN SPORT TOURISM**

holders can apply for and acquire a renewal while still in Japan, while those from the other six countries must first return home before they can obtain a second working holiday visa.

Japan first implemented the working holiday visa system in 1980 with Australia, and the scheme is now in place with 30 countries and regions. — Kyodo

SPORTS

63rd Cycling Esports National Championships held in Yangon



Cyclists seen in training to take part in 63rd Cycling Esports National Championships.

THE 63rd Cycling Esports National Championships took place at the Thuwunna Youth Training Centre (YTC) in Thingangyun Township yesterday.

In the 16-kilometre competition, first place went to Ye Myat Kyaw of RCC (Yangon), second place to Zay Lin Htet of TYC (Mandalay), and third place to Saw Wai Naung Tun of TYC (Mandalay) in the Men's Junior category.

In the Women's Elite category, first place was won by Khaing Wah of TYC (Mandalay), second place by Thwe Zin Han of KNCC (Yangon), and third place by Hla Hla Nwe of FCC (Yangon).

In the Men's Elite category, first place went to Hercules of TYC (Mandalay), second place to Wai Hlyan Aung of FCC (Yangon), and third place to Htet Aung Soe of KNCC (Yangon).

The competition, which ran from 28 February to 2 March saw 58 athletes competing in the Men's Junior category, 20 athletes in the Women's Elite category and 22 athletes in the Men's Elite category, making a total of 100 participants. — Arkar Linn/KZL



Two traditional boxers fighting in a ring.

"Nine Lethwei Club" opens to foster new generation fighters

THE opening ceremony of the "Nine Lethwei Club" took place last night at the Novotel Hotel in Yangon. To commemorate the occasion, a series of events were held, including three traditional Lethwei matches, two kickboxing bouts and one MMA fight, which were all witnessed and supported by Lethwei officials.

U Kyaw Zeya, representing the Nine Lethwei Club mentioned, "The Novotel Hotel was chosen because it offers easy access for athletes. If athletes want to learn and train in Myanmar's traditional Lethwei sport under the guidance of skilled and experienced coaches, we want them to come here. Traditional Lethwei is the most powerful martial art in history. This club is established with the aim of nurturing a new generation of athletes who will promote the future of Lethwei".

There are reportedly around 100 traditional Lethwei clubs across the country's regions and states. — Arkar Linn/KZL

Hong Kong opens sports park with 50,000-seat stadium

HONG Kong launched a sprawling sports complex on Saturday, with officials and celebrities opening the HK\$30 billion (\$3.86 billion) Kai Tak Sports Park at its centrepiece 50,000-seat stadium.

The 28-hectare sports park has transformed the Kai Tak neighbourhood, once the site of Hong Kong's airport which sat amidst dense urban development at the harbour's edge — a famously challenging landing spot for pilots.

Hong Kong is seeking to regain its mojo as a hub for international sports, cultural and entertainment events, after its reputation was bruised by political upheaval and strict COVID curbs.

Thousands flocked to Saturday's opening ceremony held at the waterfront stadium, which boasts a purplish facade dubbed "Pearl of the Orient" and a retractable roof.

City leader John Lee said the facilities ushered in a "state-of-the-art new



Thousands flocked to Saturday's opening ceremony held at the waterfront stadium, which boasts a purplish facade dubbed "Pearl of the Orient" and a retractable roof. PHOTO: AFP

stage for Hong Kong".

The stadium is expected to host the rugby Hong Kong Sevens later this month, and Coldplay concerts in April.

Officials hope the high-profile

events will boost the city's profile in Asia. Last year, Taylor Swift's Eras Tour ditched Hong Kong for Singapore while the NBA inked a deal with Macau. — AFP

Davis retains WBA lightweight title with majority draw against Roach

UNBEATEN American Gervonta Davis retained his World Boxing Association lightweight world title with a majority draw against battling challenger Lamont Roach in Brooklyn on Saturday.

Davis, who had won 28 of his prior 30 fights by knockout, was taken to the limit by WBA super-feather-

weight world champ Roach in an action-packed all-American bout at the Barclays Centre.

Two judges scored it 114-114 while a third gave it to Davis 115-113 — but controversy erupted over the referee's failure to call it a knock-down when the champion took a knee in the ninth round.

Davis, who then stuck his head through the ropes to have his face towed off, said he stopped because oil from his hair got in his eye.

He chided fans for booing when he offered that explanation in the ring after the bout.

"They love you and then they hate you," he said. — AFP



Gervonta Davis takes a knee due to the grease in his braids dripping into his eyes in round nine of his lightweight world title defense against Lamont Roach. PHOTO: AFP



Brunei, China partner to advance industrial technical talent education

The Brunei government is actively collaborating with industrial sectors to establish vocational training programmes aimed at fostering a knowledge-based economy and attracting foreign direct investment.



Brunei, rich in oil and natural gas, has been focusing on economic diversification and strengthening ties with Chinese enterprises, with Hengyi Industries being a key project under the Belt and Road Initiative. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ BEDB**

THE Brunei government continues to work with the country's industrial sectors to develop vocational training programmes, to create a knowledge-based economy that can attract more foreign direct investment, a Bruneian government minister said at the Legislative Council on Saturday.

The Brunei-China joint venture Hengyi Industries has provided a scholarship program through collaboration with local educational institutions in Brunei such as Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Institute of Brunei Technical Education, and Politeknik Brunei, according to Haji Mohd Amin Liew Abdullah, Brunei's minister at the Prime Minister's Office and second minister of Finance and Economy.

The minister said that a total of 941 students have received scholarships or

participated in collaborative programs with the relevant local educational institutions. Of these, 530 students have been offered jobs at Hengyi, while the rest are still studying and will undergo

work training before being offered jobs.

Brunei is a Southeast Asian country on Borneo's northern coast. Rich in oil and natural gas, the Sultanate has pursued economic diversification in recent

years, deepening cooperation with Chinese enterprises across various sectors. Hengyi Industries is a flagship project between Brunei and China under the Belt and Road Initiative. — Xinhua

In first, private US spaceship lands upright on Moon

A US company successfully landed its spacecraft on the Moon on Sunday, marking only the second private mission to achieve the milestone — and the first to do so upright.

Firefly Aerospace's Blue Ghost Mission 1 touched down shortly after 3:34 am US Eastern Time (0834 GMT) near Mons Latreille, a volcanic formation in Mare Crisium on the Moon's northeastern near side.

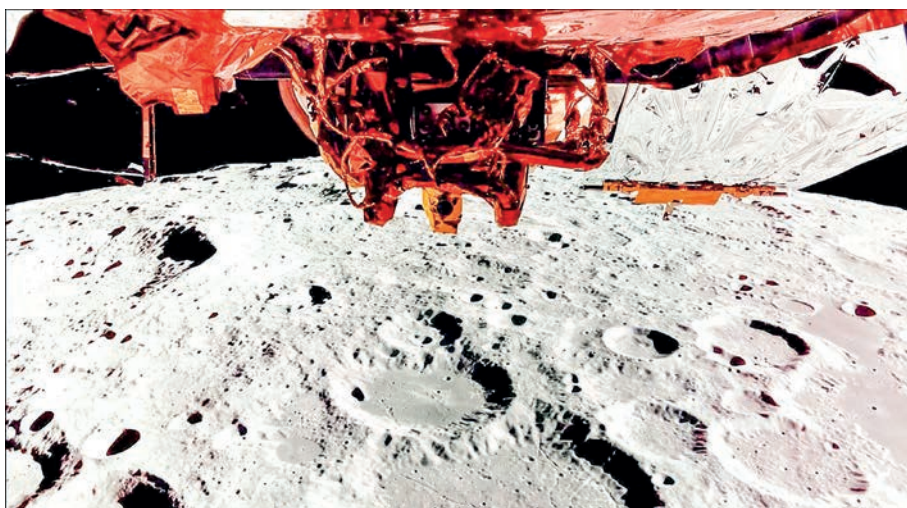
"Y'all stuck the landing, we're on the Moon," an engineer at mission control in Austin, Texas, called out as the team erupted in cheers.

CEO Jason Kim confirmed that the spacecraft was "stable and upright" — in contrast to the first private landing last February, which came down sideways.

"We're on the Moon!" Nicky Fox, associate administrator for NASA's Science Mission Directorate, rejoiced.

The first image from the lander revealed the rocky, pockmarked terrain it had to autonomously navigate in or-

The landing occurred near Mons Latreille, a volcanic formation in Mare Crisium, shortly after 3:34 am US Eastern Time (0834 GMT).



This still image taken from a 24 February video released by Firefly Aerospace shows Firefly's Blue Ghost lander on its third lunar orbit, showing the far side of the moon. **PHOTO: FIREFLY AEROSPACE / AFP**

der to select its touchdown spot, having slowed down from thousands of miles per hour to just two mph. Nicknamed "Ghost Riders in the Sky," the mission

is part of a NASA-industry partnership aimed at reducing costs and supporting Artemis, the programme designed to return astronauts to the Moon. — AFP

ENHANCED SAFETY MEASURE

S Korea's new battery rules on planes highlight growing aviation risk

SOUTH Korea tightened rules on carrying lithium batteries on planes from Saturday, highlighting a growing risk to flights worldwide from the batteries used in cellphones and e-cigarettes which can malfunction to produce smoke, fire or extreme heat.

Last year three incidents a fortnight of overheating lithium batteries on planes were recorded globally by the US Federal Aviation Administration, compared to just under one a week in 2018. Aviation has long recognized the increasingly used batteries as a safety concern, and rules are periodically tightened in response to accidents.

From Saturday, passengers on South Korean airlines should keep power banks and e-cigarettes on their person and not in overhead cabin bins. Devices should not be charged on board, and battery quantity and strength limits will be enforced. — Xinhua