

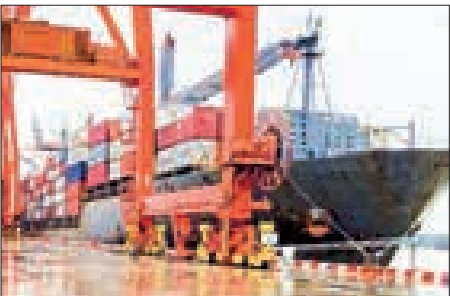
# The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

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Trade Dept announces five import categories for Customs warehousing

## Pure gold reference price declines by K140,000

ACCORDING to the Mineral (Gold) Reference Price Determination Committee, pure gold reference prices dropped by K140,000 per tical within almost two weeks. The committee set the pure gold reference price at K5.26 million per tical (16.329325 grammes) with 19.25 density on 26 December, down from K5.4 million on 13 December.

The Mineral (Gold) Reference Price Determination Committee has issued daily gold reference prices for a tical of pure gold (16.329325 grammes) with 19.25 density since 6 December through MRTV, MWD, the MNREC website [www.mining.gov.mm](http://www.mining.gov.mm) and YGEA Facebook page.

The committee was formed on 25 October 2024 to issue gold reference prices under existing laws, rules and regulations to stabilize gold prices.

The deputy minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation played a key role as the committee chairperson and the deputy governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar acted as vice-chairs.

The objectives behind the committee are setting daily reference gold prices through virtual meetings with the presence of three-quarters of the committee members, influenced by those factors. CBM's exchange rate, Myanmar's gold measurement as per some appraisal methods issued by the Ministry of Finance and Revenue in 1967 for gold price stability, spot gold price, prices of neighbouring countries, forex exchange rates and domestic gold market outlook.

The committee considers and analyzes the gold price submitted by the gold reference price evaluating task force comprising gold traders. Then, the committee links with the Ministry of Information to announce the daily gold reference prices. It amends prices upon real-time information of spot gold prices, forms working groups where necessary, stops gold market manipulation attempts, and coordinates with the Monitoring and Steering Committee on Gold and Currency Market and Federation of Myanmar Gold Entrepreneurs, Yangon Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association, Mandalay Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association, relevant gold institutions, and experts. — NN/KK



## Fourth Cherry Blossom Festival in Loimwe, Shan State, set for Jan 2025



This photo reveals visitors taking selfies amidst cherry trees in Loimwe, Kengtung Township, Shan State (East).

The festival will feature traditional dance performances by local ethnic groups, music performances by local singers, and a market offering local products.

According to the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism (Shan State), the fourth Cherry Blossom Festival is scheduled to take place for five days in January 2025 in Loimwe, Kengtung Township, Shan State (East). The festival was first held in January 2022.

“The festival will be held over five days during the cherry blossom season. The

exact dates will depend on the timing of the blossoms, so it is expected to be held in early January. Cherry trees were first planted in this area during the colonial era, and over generations, hundreds more have been added. As a result, the entire forest is covered with cherry blossoms during the season. Around 500 cherry trees were planted around 1990, and another 500 were planted between 2022 and 2023, bringing

the total to over 1,000 cherry trees in the Loimwe area,” said U Htin Aung Naing, Director of the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism (Shan State).

The festival will feature traditional dance performances by local ethnic groups, music performances by local singers, and a market offering local products.

In Myanmar, Chin State and Shan State are home to the most cherry trees. In Loimwe, two types of cherry trees – sweet and bitter – bloom alternately, and the cherry blossom season lasts for about a month. Cherry blossom festivals are also held in other Southeast Asian countries, including Vietnam, and Thailand, and cherry trees are highly regarded in Japan. — ASH/TMT

# NATIONAL

## Literature: A Source of Knowledge to Enrich Lives and Guide Society

THE knowledge gained from individuals' reading of literature will be able to provide significant support to improve their lives. They can provide guidance and clear direction to their families and society in their workplaces.

*(Excerpt from the speech given by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting with tutors, teachers and trainees at Mandalay Education Degree College on 26 August 2024.)*

## Over 200,000 people visit Bagan on Christmas holiday

PILGRIMS all over Myanmar thronged at the Bagan Ancient Cultural Zone in NyaungU district, Mandalay Region, during the Christmas holidays, according to the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism (Bagan branch).

During December Christmas holidays, local travellers visited three tooth relic pagodas in Bagan-NyaungU side Tant-kyitaung tooth relic pagoda, Maha Hngetpyittaung pagoda, Htilo Minlo, Arnanda, Maha Bodhi, Buu pagoda, Kataw Palin, Keminga, Thagyar Pone, Shweleiktu, Thatbyinnyu temple, Ngakywe Nataung, Pahtoe Thar Myar, Shin Myar Shin, Manuhar, Dhamma Yazaka, Shin Aiz-zagawna, Dhammayangyi and Sulamani pagodas, and the parking lots were full.

The Bagan-NyaungU Ancient Cultural Heritage Zone hosts local and foreign travellers even on non-significant days. Over 200,000 visitors paid a visit to Bagan during the Christmas holidays, and all the hotels and guesthouses were fully booked, said U Htin Lin

Oo, secretary of Lawkananda Pagoda board of trustees.

The traditional toddy sap shops are also opened along Kyaukpadaung-NyaungU road, and they are crowded with visitors. The sales of varieties of jaggery, peanut oil and sesame oil are also on the rise. Locals who operate e-bikes, mini-Oway, horse carts, car rentals, and restaurants including guides, hand painters, Thanaka appliers and photographers (phones) are reaping profits in NyaungU and Bagan. Moreover, the viewing mounds are also crowded with travellers to enjoy the beauty of sunset together with the picturesque Bagan scene, Ayeyawady River and Tantkyi Hill. — Dipar Lin/KTZH



Visitors enjoy exploring the Bagan Ancient Cultural Heritage Zone.

## Five National Objectives for 77<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence Day 2025

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

## Political party establishment applications under review

INDIVIDUALS seeking to establish political parties have been submitting applications, specifying their desired party names, to the Union Election Commission (UEC). To date, 18 groups have applied for party establishment.

Among the applicants, the Kayah State People’s Party (KySPP) was found to comply with the Political Parties Registration Law and related regulations. As a

result, the commission approved its establishment today.

The Kayah State People’s Party must apply for official registration as a political party with the commission within 30 days from the date of approval, as required under Section 7 of the Political Parties Registration Rules.

As of today, a total of 15 political parties have been approved for establishment. — MNA/KZL

## Low-Pressure Area Condition

26 December 2024 14:00 MST Today

ACCORDING to the observations at (12:30) hrs MST today, the Low-Pressure Area over Southwest Bay of Bengal (off South Andhra Pradesh-North Tamil Nadu Coasts, India) has weaken. — DMH

## Gold Market Rate as of 26 December 2024

THE price of one tical (16.329325 grammes) of gold with density of 19.25 grammes per cubic centimetre and above is K5,260,000, as established by the Mineral (Gold) Reference Price Determination Committee.



NATIONAL

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

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



Bagan landscape. PHOTO BY KYAW MYO THIHA (IPRD)

SAC Member visits successful agriculture and livestock projects in Nyaunglebin

STATE Administration Council Member Mahn Nyein Maung, along with Bago Region Chief Minister U Myo Swe Win, visited successful agricultural and livestock projects in Nyaunglebin District yesterday morning.

The SAC member and his team first visited Pyinmalwin village in DaikU Township, where they met local farmers growing two crops of summer paddy per year. They discussed improving farmers’ livelihoods, increasing productivity, and addressing challenges through collaboration and community support.

They also toured several successful initiatives, including U Thant Zin Tun’s poultry farm in Katode Ywama village, where 7,000 local chickens and 100 goats are raised with State economic promotion fund sup-



SAC Member Mahn Nyein Maung, Bago Region Chief Minister U Myo Swe Win, and officials observe a demonstration of the farming device.

port. They also visited U Maung Kyi’s dairy farm in Kyaiksakaw village, which raises cows and

goats and produces local chickens and eggs.

In the afternoon, the team

visited the government’s agricultural production unit in Thanetpin Township, meeting

with farmers growing summer paddy. They presented seeds and farming tools and discussed further support.

The team also visited Kamase village in Thanetpin Township, where U Win Htike Maung’s cattle farming operation has 42,000 animals. They observed rice milling and production operations at a local mill, guiding expanding contract farming and supporting local farmers.

Lastly, the team visited Obo village-tract in Bago Township, observing 100 acres of successful green bean farming. They met local farmers, listened to their needs, and concluded the visit with a meeting at Thiri Hantha Hall in Bago to discuss upcoming government plans and policies to further support local farmers. — MNA/KZL



Deputy Prime Minister MoPF Union Minister U Win Shein addresses the meeting with officials and personnel from the Customs Department in Yangon yesterday.

Full tax collection needed for country

DEPUTY Prime Minister Union Minister for Planning and Finance U Win Shein met the directors-general, deputy directors-general, relevant officials and staff of the Customs Department in Yangon yesterday.

Speaking at the meeting, the Deputy Prime Minister said the Customs Department is the focal that earns revenue for the country and also plays a key role in combatting illegal trade. Therefore, all should follow the rules and regulations, and make efforts to collect Customs duty, commercial tax and special goods tax for the country.

He then urged the attendees to work hard for the interests of the country and the public.

The Deputy Prime Minister then met the managing directors, directors-general, officials and staff from the ministry’s affiliated departments at the meeting hall of the Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank (head office).

During the occasion, he instructed to systematically carry out work plans in granting agricultural and development loans and supervise strictly to prevent financial abuse. — MNA/KTZH

# NATIONAL

## Residents Urged to Prioritize Public Safety Amid Armed Terrorist Threats

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

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

## National Committee holds meeting on IDP Resettlement and Shelter Closure

THE National Committee on the Resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons and the Closure of Temporary Shelters held its second coordination meeting yesterday at the Ayeyawady Hall of the Ministry of Border Affairs.

The meeting was attended by Chairman Union Minister Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung, Vice-Chairman Union Minister Dr

Soe Win, committee members, deputy ministers, permanent secretaries, directors-general, officials, and relevant regional and state government members. The state and regional ministers for Security and Border Affairs and the state and regional minister of Social Affairs participated online.

Chairman Union Minister Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung highlighted the

committee's successes over the past three years and discussed ongoing work, plans, and the budget for 2025-2026. Since the last meeting in May 2024, 35,245 households (141,788 people) have been repatriated, and 380 temporary shelters have been closed. Over K6,477 million were spent on humanitari-

an aid, roads and house building, relief aid and distribution of construction materials. Vice-Chair Union Minister Dr Soe Win explained the status of relief efforts, social support, vocational training, and immediate assistance for returnees. The meeting concluded with discussions on plans.

The deputy ministers, chairpersons of the Working Committee on the Resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons and the Closure of Temporary Shelters, the state and regional ministers for Security and Border Affairs, and the state and regional minister for Social Affairs presented sector-by-sector explanations on the

work completed and the plans to be implemented going forward. Members of the national-level committee and officials from the state-level committees discussed and explained the recommendations, and the chair and vice-chair of the national-level committee coordinated the explanations. — MNA/TS



Union Minister Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung presides over the second coordination meeting of the National Committee on the Resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons and the Closure of Temporary Shelters yesterday.

## MoL Union Minister meets Yunnan Deputy Governor-led delegation

UNION Minister for Labour U Myint Naung received a delegation led by Mr Liu Yipeng, Deputy Governor of Dehong Prefecture People's Government, Yunnan Province, People's Republic of China, yesterday morning at the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, discussions focused on ensuring Myanmar workers' legal stay and employment through border entry and exit points, supervising Chinese employers, and addressing

criminal matters and other challenges. The two sides explored continuing collaboration under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) system to facilitate the legal deployment of Myanmar workers in China.

The discussions also covered cooperation to protect and uphold labour rights for both legally employed and undocumented Myanmar workers in Dehong Prefecture, ensuring support for fair labour practices. Additionally, they emphasized



Union Minister U Myint Naung holds talks with Mr Liu Yipeng, Deputy Governor of Dehong Prefecture, Yunnan Province, yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

fostering friendly and cooperative cross-border labour relations. Myanmar and Dehong Prefecture authorities earlier signed

an MoU on 12 January in Mangshi City, China, to enable the lawful deployment of Myanmar workers under the MoU system. — MNA/KZL

## MoHT Union Minister meets Chair of Exploring Myanmar Culture & Tourism Organization

UNION Minister for Hotels and Tourism Dr Thet Thet Khine received Mr David Liu, Chairperson of the Exploring Myanmar Culture and Tourism Organization based in Yangon, Myanmar, yesterday morning at the Union Minister's guest hall. The discussion centred on strengthening Myanmar-China tourism promotion efforts.

Key points included enhancing collaboration between government and private sectors from both nations, increasing awareness of Myanmar's tourist destinations among Chinese travellers through Chinese social media platforms, and encouraging Chinese investors to engage in Myanmar's hotel and tourism sectors.

They also explored inviting Chinese tourists via maritime cruise ships, organizing cruise trips, and advancing tourism promotion initiatives. The Union Minister and Mr David Liu discussed cooperative opportunities with the Exploring Myanmar Culture and Tourism Organization to attract more Chinese visitors.

At the meeting, Mr David Liu received a formal certificate recognizing him as a representative of Myanmar-China tourism promotion. — MNA/KZL



NATIONAL

FLA terrorists arrested for shooting railway station ward administrator

U San Ngwe, the administrator of the Holm Street Railway Station ward in Sangyoung Township, Yangon, got gunshot wounds due to terrorists while he was in the office on 24 December.

Security forces conducted investigation, and arrested Zaw Zaw Bo (aka) Tun Tun Aung and May Myat Thinzar Kyaw (aka) Nge Nge in their residence in Insein Township, together with one CZ 2075 RAMI P pistol, five bullets and YGN-8 GG-6136 Fielder.

Based on the confession of Zaw Zaw Bo (aka) Tun Tun Aung, another offender Kyaw Zin Oo (aka) Kyaung Saya, was arrested in Htantabin township, with one Glock pistol, 14 bullets and one grenade on the same day.

Based on the confession of May Myat Thinzar Kyaw (aka) Nge Nge, security forces raided



Arrestees alongside seized weapons, munitions, and related items.

the house of Sai Naung Htet(aka) Argyi in Hlinethaya (East) township on 25 December and seized one SIG SAUER pistol, two magazines, 33 9mm bullets and two smoke bombs.

The three offenders confessed that they were members

of the Free Land Attack Force (FLA) comprising 15 members, and leader Nay Myo Nwe (Still investigating) is living in Mae Sot of Thailand, and they conducted destructive actions under the instructions of Nay Myo Nwe.

FLA leader Nay Myo Nwe

ordered them including Kyaw Zin Oo (aka) Kyaung Saya to murder the administrator of the Holm Street Railway Station ward of Sangyoung Township on 22 December.

On 24 December, Zaw Zaw Bo (aka) Tun Tun Aung drove a YGN-8 GG-6136 Fielder that they hired, and Kyaw Zin Oo (aka) Kyaung Saya and May Myat Thinzar Kyaw (aka) Nge Nge shot administrator U San Ngwe about five feet from the office. Then, Kyaw Zin Oo (aka) Kyaung Saya and Zaw Zaw Bo (aka) Tun Tun Aung took one pistol each and May Myat Thinzar Kyaw (aka) Nge Nge kept her SIG SAUER pistol, two magazines, 33 9mm bullets at the house of Sai Naung Htet(aka) Argyi.

Moreover, these three offenders also launched bomb attacks at the Tamway electrical manager office on 23 November,

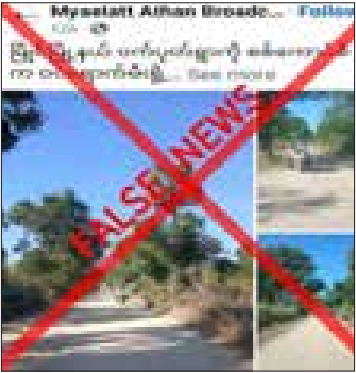
and another two bomb attacks at the Tamway development administrator office on 10 December under the instruction of the FLA leader.

Kyaw Zin Oo (aka) Kyaung Sayar, May Myat Thinzar Kyaw (aka) Nge Nge and FLA member Aung Myo Aye (aka) Sakura (still at large) exploded three time bombs at the fence of the power supply office in Insein Park in May 2023, one timer bomb at the fence of Tamway development administrator office in June and three remote mines at CCTV box near Mindhamma traffic light in Mayangon Township in August.

Four offenders including Kyaw Zin Oo (aka) Kyaung Sayar who are also members of FLA were arrested with three pistols, 52 bullets, one grenade and two smoke bombs, and were taken action under the existing law. — MNA/KTZH

Counter-argument to false information

False reports claim security forces blaze Wetpoke village



This screenshot reveals false reports.

FALSE reports claimed that security forces set fire to Wetpoke village in Myaing Town-

ship, Magway Region, on 25 December, destroying over 20 homes. These reports were denied by local security authorities.

An official stated that terrorists were responsible for the attacks, using heavy weapons and setting fires to create fear and disrupt peace. Malicious media falsely blamed security forces to mislead the public.

The official confirmed that security forces did not carry out any such actions and are working to protect local communities. — MNA/KZL

2-day illegal trade crackdown seizes goods worth K366M

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

On 24 December, the combined teams impounded three unregistered vehicles (worth approximately K27 million) in Magway and Pakokku Townships, 0.292 tonne of illegal timbers in Taungdwingyi Township, and a Nissan Diesel truck (worth approximately K80 million) carrying foodstuffs (worth K20 million) in Kengtung Township. The action was conducted under the Export-Import Law, the Forest Law and Customs procedures.

Similarly, on 25 December, the combined on-duty teams nabbed a KIA bus (worth approximately K25 million) carrying foodstuffs (valued at K7.972 million) without official documents at the Zathapyin combined checkpoint, a Yutong bus (worth approximately K30 million), traveling from Myawady to Pyay, carrying 10 kinds of

foodstuffs (worth K12.64 million) without official documents in Pyay, two unregistered vehicles (estimated value of K10 million) in Waw Township, and 7.277 tonnes of illegal timbers (valued at K989,781) in Bago district. The action was taken under the Forest Law, the Export-Import Law, and Customs procedures.

Additionally, the combined on-duty teams captured 1.167 tonnes of illegal teak and 6.342 tonnes of illegal timbers (worth K733,850) in Lewe and Ottara districts, a Shwe Htu truck and a Chenglong tractor head with a trailer (worth approximately K120 million) carrying foodstuffs and industrial materials (valued at K31.65 million) without official documents at the Mayanchaung permanent checkpoint. The action was carried out per Customs procedures.

The Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee reported 22 arrests on 24 and 25 December, seizing illegal goods worth approximately K366 million. — MNA/MKKS

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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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[newsroom@gnlm.com.mm](mailto:newsroom@gnlm.com.mm)  
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# NATIONAL

## Miss World Myanmar 2025 set this January



THE Miss World Myanmar 2025 pageant is planned to take place this coming January, according to National Director Ent Aung Lwin of Miss World Myanmar 2025.

Organized by Radiance Event Production & Model Agency, the pageant will see collaboration from Miss Grand Myanmar 2024, Thae Su Nyein, and former beauty queen Mee Mee, who will assist National Director Htoo Ent Lwin in the competition. Make-Up SORA will handle makeup, while designer Kham Philip will oversee the dressing for the event.

This image showcases a poster of the Radiance Event Production & Model Agency.

“The Miss World Myanmar titleholder should bring honour to the nation. She must systematically execute the projects set by our organization. Upon returning after representing the country, if she wishes to pursue acting, she can do so. However, I will only select a candidate who demonstrates dedication to the nation, commits to impactful projects, and can effectively carry out philanthropic work. It’s important to note that becoming Miss World Myanmar is no easy feat,” said National Director Htoo Ent Lwin.

The Miss World Myanmar 2025 winner will take on Beauty with A Purpose social welfare responsibility and represent Myanmar at the 72<sup>nd</sup> Miss World pageant. In addition, she will have opportunities to pursue a career in acting. — ASH/TKO

## Yangon Red Cross, Basic Education Dept launch first aid training

THE Yangon Region Red Cross Society has launched basic first aid training courses in collaboration with the Department of Basic Education.

Courses 2/2024, 3/2024, and 4/2024 were conducted from 18 to 20 December at No 3 Basic Education Middle School and No 8 Basic Education Primary School in Thingangyun Township, with a total of 106 trainees participating.

The society stated that similar training courses will be offered at basic education schools throughout Yangon Region. — ASH/MKKS



This photo depicts the first aid (basic) training sessions.

## Academy Award receptionists to select top 20 on 5 Jan 2025

ON 5 January 2025, the final selection round for Academy Award receptionists will take place, during which 55 participants will be selected. According to the Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization, the selection will be based on 60 per cent of the judges’ scores and 40 per cent of audience votes.

For the Myanmar Motion Pictures Academy Awards Ceremony to be held in Nay Pyi Taw for 2024, preliminary in-person screenings for applicants were conducted on 15 December. Out of over 280 applicants who participated, 90 candidates were selected in the first round. On 22 December, this number was narrowed down to 55 in the second round.

“From the initial 280 participants, we shortlisted 90 for the first round, and 55 for the



This photo shows the Academy Award receptionists at the second-round interview.

second round. Among them are 25 male and 30 female finalists. On 5 January, approximately 20 participants will be chosen as the final selection,” said Vice-Chair U Aye Kyu Lay of the Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization.

For the final competition, shortlisted contestants are required to create a TikTok video featuring a trending topic of their choice and submit it to the selection panel via Telegram. Additionally, participants must compete in acting performances portraying impromptu characters and answer general knowledge quiz questions. — ASH/TRKM

## Lanmadaw Bazaar to mark Independence Day on 27-30 Dec

ACCORDING to residents, Lanmadaw Bazaar is scheduled to take place from 27 to 30 December 2024 to commemorate Independence Day which falls on 4 January.

Lanmadaw Bazaar and Funfair have returned after a four-to-five-year hiatus since the coronavirus pandemic. This year, the bazaar will be held near a traffic pole on Anawrah-ta Road, Lanmadaw Township, to celebrate the upcoming Independence Day, according to vinyl advertisements.

Sellers have to reserve a 10-foot space at K150,000-K200,000. Lanmadaw Bazaar is also one of the famous events in Yangon and the Tazaungdine Festival is also an annual event held in November in the township. — NN/KK

### Daily newspapers available online

FOR those who would like to read the Myanmar Alinn, the Kyemon and the Global New Light of Myanmar, published daily by the Ministry of Information, please visit [www.moi.gov.mm/mal](http://www.moi.gov.mm/mal), [www.moi.gov.mm/km](http://www.moi.gov.mm/km), [www.moi.gov.mm/nlm](http://www.moi.gov.mm/nlm) and [www.gnlm.com.mm/e-paper](http://www.gnlm.com.mm/e-paper).

News and Periodicals Enterprise





# Trade Dept announces five import categories for Customs warehousing



An overseas-bound container vessel is docked at Yangon Port for loading and unloading.

THE Department of Trade under the Ministry of Commerce notified that only five import categories including 685 tariff lines (HS Code -10 Digit) and raw materials imported on a Cutting-Making and Packaging basis and other related equipment will be allowed for customs warehousing starting from 1 January 2025.

The Trade Department earlier stated that 1,100 tariff lines (HS code-10 Digit) in four import categories are allowed to be stored in customs warehouses without obtaining an import licence in advance, according to the export-import bulletin 2/2024 dated 30 May 2024. Yet, it is effective until 31 December 2024. Only five import categories with

685 tariff lines and CMP raw materials and equipment will be given the green light to be kept in customs warehouses following rules and regulations, including pharmaceuticals (110 lines), electric vehicles as per the Standard Grade set by the National-level Leading Committee on Development of Electric Vehicles and Related Businesses and taxi, public bus, commercial vehicles and auto parts (12 lines), industrial raw materials and chemicals (539 lines) and food raw materials (24 lines) and CMP raw materials and related equipment. This will come into effect on 1 January 2025.

CMP raw materials and related equipment have been allowed for customs warehousing since 1 December 2024. Additionally, the private-use Electric Vehicle with a higher level than the standard grading of the committee is permitted for bonded warehouses by 31 January 2025. Customs Warehousing rules for taxis and other vehicles remained unchanged, the department notified. — NN/KK



This image showcases the signage and map for Dagon Myothit (South) Township.

## Rising realty sales in Dagon Myothit (South)

REAL estate market sources say that properties in Dagon Myothit (South) Township, Yangon Region, are currently being bought up.

In November and December, real estate sales in that township have been picking up, with more sales of plots with houses.

“In November and December, sales are picking up. Many people are observing the situation. Sales are more than before. Some people are more interested in buying houses, some in land to build their own houses. Currently, there are more sales of land plots with houses,” said an official from ZK Real Estate Agency in Dagon Myothit (South).

Among its wards, Wards 24 and 25, which are quiet and many employees dwell in, are popular and there is a normal transaction with no decreasing prices.

“I can’t say exactly which ward is popular. Roughly speaking, prices are good at Wards 24 and 25 called VIP wards. Those quiet wards designated for employees can be the most popular. Then, starting from the entrance to the township, Wards 18, 19, 20, 21, 54, 55, 56, 70, and 71 are popular. There are many wards, and the prices have not fallen too much. But sales are still going on,” he said. — Thit Taw/ZN

## Star City Thanlyin to launch shuttle bus service trial on 1 Jan

STAR Bus-Shuttle Bus service will be launched on 1 January 2025 as trial run for three months, announced by Star City Thanlyin. The star bus service will commute to Junction City from Star City from Monday to Friday and to Capital Thakayta, Makro and Junction City on weekend and public holidays.

It is a cashless system and bus fare can be paid by Wavepay and KBZpay. Pre-paid tickets can be bought at estate man-

agement offices.

The bus service will be available from 7:00 am to 5:30 pm from Monday to Friday, and at 9:00 am, 10:00 am and 3:00 pm on weekend and public holidays. Star Ferry service which was introduced in November 2021 will stop on 1 January and the new shuttle bus service will be replaced in order to provide more efficient transportation service for passengers. — MT/ZS

STAR BUS SCHEDULE					
SHUTTLE TIMINGS (SAT, SUN AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS)					
DAILY ROUTE					
STARTING TIME	STARTING TIME	STARTING TIME	STARTING TIME	STARTING TIME	STARTING TIME
STAR CITY	8:00	STAR CITY	10:00	STAR CITY	16:00
CAPITAL	8:25	CAPITAL	10:25	CAPITAL	16:25
MAKRO	8:50	MAKRO	10:50	MAKRO	16:50
JUNCTION CITY	9:20	JUNCTION CITY	11:20	JUNCTION CITY	17:20
JUNCTION CITY	11:00	JUNCTION CITY	12:00	JUNCTION CITY	17:00
MAKRO	11:30	MAKRO	12:30	MAKRO	17:30
CAPITAL	11:50	CAPITAL	12:50	CAPITAL	17:50
STAR CITY	12:15	STAR CITY	13:15	STAR CITY	18:15

A schedule table for the Star bus service.

## Drivers embrace MPTA FM app for local petrol station info

THE launch of the MPTA FM Application to find out information on fuel filling stations in the country is good for drivers, according to some taxi drivers and car owners.

Under the guidance of the Central Committee on Ensuring Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods, a mobile application called MPTA FM was developed to allow people to find out available fuels, prices, and available quantities at the nearest petrol stations via their phones.

The application can be easily downloaded from the Google Play Store for Android phones starting 1 January 2025, and an IOS version is also under development for the App Store.

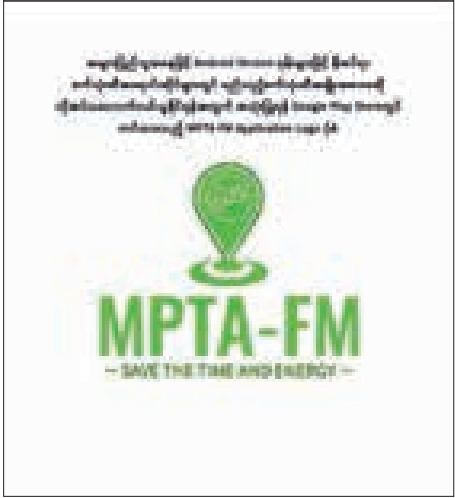
The MPTA FM application provides information on the location of fuel stations in the country, including opening and closing hours, and available fuel types and prices. It was jointly developed by the Fuel Import, Storage and Distribution Supervisory Committee and the Myanmar

Petroleum Trade Association (MPTA).

“We welcome this development because we will have access to information. We can know the data. We don’t have to go to petrol stations like before,” said Ko Myint Naing, a taxi driver.

Ko Hla Myint, a car owner, said he had already downloaded the application from the Play Store and would always use it.

“I have tried it out for a while now. It is convenient. I will continue to use it,” he said. — Htet Oo Maung/ZN



An advert of the MPTA FM App.



## Serve interests of the media sector, the State and citizens

IN a sovereign country, the government consists of three estates: legislative, executive, and judiciary, each responsible for advancing the interests of the State and its citizens. These estates must function efficiently and responsibly, guided by the media, the fourth estate, which ensures checks and balances.

Myanmar is establishing a Union founded on democracy and a federal system, where the media sector plays a crucial role in democratic nations. Recognizing this, successive democratic governments have prioritized the media. In 2014, during the first term

In challenging times, biased media outlets, those without journalistic integrity, and those prioritizing foreign interests over the well-being of their nation and people play a destructive role. Fake news, misinformation, hate speech, and rumours undermine national peace and security. It is crucial to address these issues by eliminating such harmful practices. Proper management of the media is essential to ensure the dissemination of accurate information and to promote the development of public awareness.

cy and usefulness in its reporting. By doing so, media organizations can earn the trust and respect of both the government and the public, establishing themselves as reputable institutions that serve the nation's best interests.

Journalists are tasked with uncovering the truth through the information and news they report. True and responsible journalists are often called the “shoulders” and “eyes” of the nation, bearing significant responsibility for the country’s well-being. However, recent times have seen unethical behaviour within the media. Rather than promoting peace and reconciliation in times of domestic conflict or differing opinions, some have exacerbated tensions, fuelling the flames of discord. Instead of remaining impartial, they have been seen taking sides.

In challenging times, biased media outlets, those without journalistic integrity, and those prioritizing foreign interests over the well-being of their nation and people play a destructive role. Fake news, misinformation, hate speech, and rumours undermine national peace and security. It is crucial to address these issues by eliminating such harmful practices. Proper management of the media is essential to ensure the dissemination of accurate information and to promote the development of public awareness.

of the democratically elected government of Myanmar, the News Media Law was enacted to promote the development of journalism and the media sector. The law’s clear objective is to ensure the media industry remains an independent entity.

The government has shown strong interest in the media sector and actively worked to support its growth. The media must uphold ethical standards and contribute to the development of society and public life. Furthermore, advancing technology in news and media, while adopting modern techniques that meet international standards and ethics, is essential for the progress of Myanmar’s media industry.

The media, as the fourth estate, plays a vital role in democracy by transparently reporting issues and sharing essential information with the public. This helps promote government transparency and effectiveness. Just as journalists’ knowledge is crucial, the media must prioritize accuracy and usefulness in its reporting.

## HAILING THE 77<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE DAY 2025: PEOPLE IN GENERATIONS HAVE DUTIFULLY SERVED

By Zarni Bwar

AT 10 am on 28 November 1885. After General Prendergast, the British military commander issued orders for the troops to march, British warships arrived at the Gawain Port in Mandalay. At that time, the entire royal city was silent and quiet.

Since no one inside the palace had made contact, the British troops, led by Colonel Sir Edward Bosc Sladen, marched toward the southern gate of the city walls and arrived there by 3 pm. Without encountering any resistance at the gate, they entered freely and continued toward the new royal palace’s eastern gate. After taking a break for a few minutes at the eastern gate of the new royal palace, they waited for Minister Kinwun.

While waiting like this, they saw Minister Kinwun riding an elephant and approaching quickly from a distance. Then, Minister Kinwun told Colonel Sladen that he wished to enter the palace alone with him and that the British troops accompanying them would not be allowed to enter the royal palace for any reason.

So, Colonel Sladen initially arrived at the parliamentary office together with Minister Kinwun. Later, Colonel Sladen, together with the Minister and the counsellors, entered the Golden Palace where King Thibaw was residing, met with him, and reported that they had to carefully take the His Majesty King and the Queen as ordered by the Governor General of India.

King Thibaw said that instead of suddenly calling him away from here to a distant place, he preferred to remain in the palace for one or two days. During that time, he desired to leave the palace and move to the summer palace in the southern garden. He made this statement to Colonel Sladen.

Colonel Sladen said he would inform General Prendergast about this matter. However, tomorrow morning, the His Majesty King must hand himself over to the Supreme Commander for his surren-

der, and after leaving the palace, he reported the news to Prendergast. Meanwhile, King Thibaw was closely guarded by soldiers from the Hampshire Brigade, stationed at the summer royal residence in the southern part of the palace.

On the morning of 29 November, British troops began their marching from the Gawwain Port, and by the afternoon, they had reached the palace. General Prendergast, after summoning four important ministers, went to meet King Thibaw and the Queen. The General informed them that they would be taken aboard a ship. Although the king and the queen requested a delay, asking for more time if possible, Prendergast insisted it was not possible and instructed that preparations be made for an immediate departure. Troops were then organized to begin their departure from the palace.

At around 3:30 pm, the British troops led the king and the queen away from the Summer Palace. Along the main road of the city and at the intersections, the people of the city wept, crying out as they watched the king and the queen pass by, bidding them a final farewell with tears. At 6:15 pm, they arrived at Gawwain Port, where the king and the queen, along with their entourage, were escorted aboard the ship “Suriya”. This day, the 8<sup>th</sup> waning of Tazaungmone 1247 of the Myanmar Era, is a day that Myanmar will never forget.

On 1 January 1886, India’s Governor General Lord Dufferin, issued a declaration that the territories previously governed by King Thibaw, along with Upper Myanmar, were annexed as part of the British Empire.

In this way, the Myanmar people, who had stood firmly and proudly for many years with their own throne, their own kingdom, and their own sovereignty, began to fall under British rule starting from the 8<sup>th</sup> waning day of Tazaungmone, when King Thibaw was captured.”

Historians remarked that the reasons for the defeat of Myanmar

in war are numerous, including a lack of political unity, differences in weaponry, and disparities in training. Historians have noted that the courage and strength of the Myanmar soldiers, who fought in all three wars with the British, were not lacking.

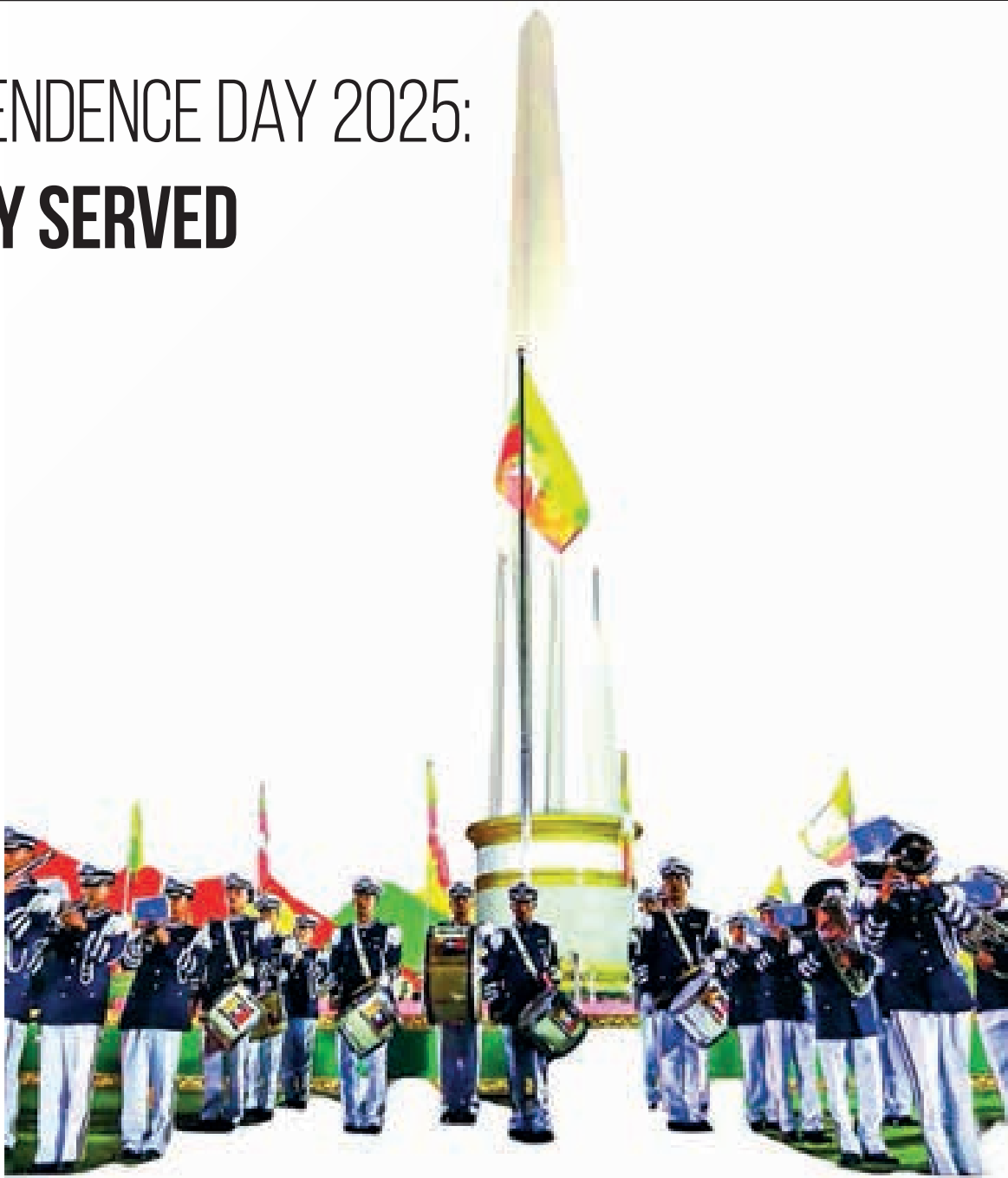
During the First Anglo-Myanmar War (1824-1826), General Maha Bandoola, who led the Myanmar forces, and General Maha Nay Myo, who nearly wiped out the British troops in the Battle of Wethigan, demonstrated great military skill and bravery. The British acknowledged and praised their heroic qualities. In the Second Anglo-Myanmar War (1852-1854), major commanders such as the governor of Yangon, Maha Min Hla Min Khaung, who led the troops defending Shwedagon fortress, Taungdwingyi’s governor Min Ye Min Khaung Kyaw, and the chief of the Pyay military area, General and Minister Thadode Thudamma Maha Min Khaung, led their forces with great strength and courage in the battles.

During the Third Anglo-Myanmar War (1885-1886), General Maha Thamin Bayan and the commanders, who fought fiercely from the Minhla fortress, were also esteemed and praised by the enemies for their patriotism and courage.

“Regarding the Battle of Minhla Fortress, British journalist and historian Grafton wrote, ‘Regardless of the circumstances, the Myanmar forces from Minhla Fortress from the western bank of the river attacked their enemies with great strength. To speak honestly, without bias, Myanmar should not be described as cravens, for they fought bravely and with tremendous strength.’”

Another historian also wrote, “Myanmar soldiers accepted that it is better to die in battle with national pride than to suffer defeat and disgrace.”

Similarly, when the British colonists expanded their control into Myanmar, the saying of the revered monk Seebanni, “Through the cycle of suffering and worldly strife, where the land is scorched by fire, even the great kingdoms will fall. In the face of loss, all will



4 January 2025, will mark the 77<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Independence Day. PHOTO: GNLM/FILE

be restored. Those who die for their nation, for their people, and for their religion, are truly noble,’ resonated with those who could not bear the destruction of Myanmar’s sovereignty. These patriotic individuals, in their fight for freedom and religion, chose to resist rather than remain under British rule, believing that it was better to die in battle than to live under foreign domination.

British troops took about eight years to oppress ethnic patriotic troops led by Prince Myin Saing, Prince Lin Pin, Prince Shwegyobu, Wuntho Saopha U Aung Myat, U Min Yaung with the title of Minister Shwe La Yaung, Bo Cho, Bo Yar Nyunt, Bo Ywe and so on in various areas of the nation.

The Buddhism of Myanmar people was dimming in the colonial era when Myanmar’s last King Thibaw was taken away in 1247 ME. As even members of the Sangha experienced a scarcity of offertories in urban areas, other members of the Sangha residing on Sagaing hills faced a worsening

of offerings.

In consideration of the welfare of the nationality and Buddhism, the residents of Mandalay, including the city’s elders and people, ensured that the religion would not face ruin due to the absence of a king. To sustain and propagate the Buddha’s teachings, they established the Malun Rice Donation Association in 1258 ME, 11 years after the king’s reign ended. Similarly, 13 years after the end of the king’s reign, in 1260 ME, they also established the Pariyatti Sasana-hita Association. The Malun Rice Donation Association with the emblem illustrating a rabbit at the centre of the moon continued to offer alms and rice donations to the monks, nuns, and laypersons who were practising meditation on the Sagaing Hills, following the tradition of successive Myanmar Buddhist kings who supported the Four Requisites (food, robes, shelter, and medicine) for the monastic community.

Additionally, the Pariyatti Sasana-hita Association, after

the fall of King Thibaw and the subsequent decline of cities and monastic communities, took steps to address the diminishing state of the Sasana (Buddhist teachings). With fewer monks and the Sasana falling further into decline, the association sought out the remaining senior monks who had preserved the scriptures in monasteries. They provided monthly offerings, including rice, oil, salt, chilli, and onions, alongside alms food.

Furthermore, although there had been no religious examinations for about 18 years, the association re-organized the first such examinations in 1265 ME. These were held in the Nine-Chambered Brick Pavilion within the Sakkasiha Pagoda precinct, under the guidance of U Tha Hnyin. From then on, the Pariyatti exams became known in the monastic community as the “Sakkasiha Exams”.

The Malun Rice Donation Association and the Pariyatti Sasana-hita Association have collaboratively contributed by people of the city and Buddhists from all

over Myanmar. As a result, these associations have served effectively for over 100 years, making significant contributions to the preservation and advancement of Buddhism. The Tipitakadhara Mingun Sayadaw also recognized the Malun Rice Donation Association as the “Mother Association of the Sasana” and the Pariyatti Sasana-hita Association as the “Father Association of the Sasana”.

Similarly, the Myanmar people established the YMBA (Young Men’s Buddhist Association) on 10 May 1906, for the sake of their nationality and Buddhism. At a time when organizations like the YMBA had not yet emerged, the local populace lived under the administration of the British colonialists. With the formation of the YMBA, discussions and consultations on national matters were conducted under the theme “Nationality, Religion, and Knowledge,” and these matters were presented to the British government.

When issues emerged for foreigners wearing shoes on religious grounds and pagoda platforms, the YMCA itself represented the country and lodged a formal appeal to the British government.

When the British government planned to elevate the administrative status of India, the YMBA (Young Men’s Buddhist Association) sent four representatives—U Su, U Pe, U Ba Pe, and U May Aung—to India to petition for a similar elevation of Myanmar’s status. However, the British government excluded Myanmar from the administrative upgrade. Consequently, in 1919, the YMBA sent three prominent representatives—U Ba Pe, U Pu, and U Tun Shein, collectively known as the “Pe-Pu-Shein” delegation—to England to make further appeals.

In 1920, the YMCA was expanded and restructured into the GCBA, advocating for Home Rule or self-governance. From that point onward, the Myanmar people actively participated in matters of national causes. As a result, the YMCA was recognized as “the beginning of Myanmar politics,” “the foundation of independence,” and “the cornerstone of Myanmar’s nationalistic spirit,” among other notable designations.

The YMBA and GCBA gave rise to the Doh Bamar Asiayone in 1930. The Myanmar people, having stood for generations as a nation of free and independent individuals, not as slaves, took pride in the

title “Thakin” (master) with the rallying cry: “**Thakin Myo Hey! Doh Bamar**” (“Masters, we are Myanmar”).

Along with this slogan, they passionately chanted:

- Myanmar is our land,
- Myanmar is our language,
- Myanmar is our speech.
- Our country - Love it
- Our literature - Praise it
- Our language - Respect it,”

This was the rallying cry. The Doh Bamar Asiayone (We Myanmar Association) was founded by Thakin Ba Thauang.

Subsequently, the Myanmar meeting organized by General Aung San, along with thirty comrades, led to the formation of the Burma Independence Army (BIA) and the Burma Defence Army (BDA). They continued to engage in territorial expansion and anti-fascist uprisings. During the wartime era, under the leadership of the great national leader General Aung San, the Anti-Fascist People’s Freedom League led by him was established, and on 4 January 1948, Myanmar regained its independence from British colonial rule, which had controlled Upper Myanmar for over 60 years and Lower Myanmar for over 100 years, finally becoming the sovereign Union of Myanmar.

The upcoming 4 January 2025, marks the 77<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Independence Day. On this 77<sup>th</sup> Independence Day, in the spirit of dedication to Myanmar’s independence, just as the previous generations who sacrificed their lives, we, as the new generation, must each take responsibility in the same way and contribute towards the future.

Currently, neo-colonialists, through behind-the-scenes manipulation, exert their influence over small nations, causing conflicts among them, leading to division and inciting rivalry, as they push them into competition like chickens fighting over a pot.

Thus, learning from the historical lessons of the past, when unity was lost and King Thibaw’s reign led to the loss of sovereignty and independence, the present and future generations have a responsibility to preserve and protect the independence for the continued stability and strength of the Union of Myanmar; as it has existed throughout history.

**Ref:** *Anglo-Myanmar War history written by Natmawk Phone Kyaw*  
**Translated by TTA**



# 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami: what to know 20 years on

*The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, triggered by a massive earthquake, killed 226,408, displaced 1.5 million, and reshaped disaster preparedness worldwide.*

SURVIVORS and victims’ relatives will this week mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, which killed more than 220,000 people across more than a dozen countries.

A 9.1-magnitude earthquake off the western coast of Indonesia’s Sumatra island triggered huge waves that swept into coastal areas of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand and nine other nations around the Indian Ocean basin.

**The Impact of the Deadliest Tsunami in History**

On 26 December 2004, at 7:59 am, the deadliest tsunami in history was triggered by

the longest faultline rupture ever observed, spanning 1,200 kilometres between the India plate and Burma microplate. This massive earthquake, with a magnitude of 9.1, unleashed energy equivalent to 23,000 Hiroshima bombs, generating waves over 30 metres high.

The tsunami devastated coastal regions, killing 226,408 people according to EM-DAT. Northern Sumatra suffered the heaviest toll, with over 120,000 lives lost out of Indonesia’s total of 165,708 fatalities. Sri Lanka, India, and Thailand were also heavily affected, with waves travelling at speeds exceeding 800 kilometres per hour. — AFP



This aerial view shows people taking photographs on one of the two patrol boats washed ashore by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and preserved at the community’s in Banda Aceh on 25 December 2024, on the eve of the tsunami’s 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. On 26 December 2004, a magnitude 9.1 earthquake struck the coast of Sumatra in Indonesia and triggered a huge tsunami across the Indian Ocean that killed more than 220,000 people in a dozen countries. **PHOTO: YASUYOSHI CHIBA / AFP**

## Japan Airlines reports cyberattack

JAPAN Airlines on Thursday, 26 December reported a cyberattack that caused delays to domestic and international flights but later said it had found and addressed the cause. Problems with the airline’s baggage check-in system had delayed more than a dozen flights at several Japanese airports, public broadcaster NHK said, but there were no mass cancellations or major disruption.

Japan Airlines (JAL) is the country’s second-biggest airline after All Nippon Airways (ANA). “We identified and addressed the cause of the issue. We are

checking the system recovery status,” JAL said in a post on X. “Sales for both domestic and international flights departing today have been suspended. We apologize for any inconvenience caused,” the post said.

Earlier Thursday, a JAL spokeswoman told AFP the company had been subjected to a cyberattack. Network disruption began at 7:24 am on Thursday, JAL said in a statement. Then “at 8:56 am, we temporarily isolated the router (a device for exchanging data between networks) that was causing the disruption,” it added. — AFP



The logo of Japan Airlines is displayed in the departure lobby of Tokyo’s Haneda Airport on 1 August 2023. **PHOTO: KAZUHIRO NOGI / AFP/FILE**

## Millions allocated for 165 environmental projects throughout Israel

THE management of the Fund for the Preservation of Open Spaces, headed by the Director of the Israel Land Authority, Yankee Quint, confirmed Monday at its meeting that the Fund will allocate approximately 400 million Shekels (US\$109 million) to approximately 165 environmental projects and the accessibility of nature sites to the public, of which approximately 150 million Shekels (\$41) is designated for the rehabilitation of areas damaged in the war.

A total of 432 applications were submitted to the fund, totalling approximately 1.2 billion Shekels (US\$326 million). Approximately 70 per cent – 294



With 432 applications submitted, totalling 1.2 billion Shekels (US\$326 million), the fund prioritizes collaboration with government ministries, local authorities, and other organizations to preserve biodiversity, enhance open spaces, and promote recreational development across Israel. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS**

applications – were submitted by local authorities, of which 60 were submitted by minority authorities and 12 applications were submitted by city associations. — ANF

## Rural communities urged to flee east Australia bushfire

AUSTRALIAN authorities urged people in dozens of rural communities to leave home “immediately” Thursday to escape an out-of-control bushfire tearing through a national park.

About 600 firefighters were battling the blaze in the Grampians National Park 240 kilometres (150 miles) west of Melbourne, a Victoria state emergency services spokesperson said.

The blaze has persisted for more than a week in hot, windy conditions, scorching 55,000 hectares (136,000 acres) — about one-third of the park — so far without causing deaths or destroying homes. — AFP

# Santa visits indigenous children in Brazilian Amazon community

*Jorge Alberto, a 60-year-old technician, is among 50 volunteers spreading joy to over 150,000 children in rural Amazon communities.*



The event is part of an annual effort by the volunteer group, Friends of Santa Claus, founded in 1998. **PHOTO: AFP**

SANTA Claus made a special appearance in the riverside community of Abelha in the Brazilian Amazon, delighting Indigenous children by arriving on a boat laden with gifts. This unique initiative is part of an annual effort led by Friends of Santa Claus, a vol-

unteer organization dedicated to bringing joy to remote areas of the Amazon. Jorge Alberto, a 60-year-old technician, is one of 50 passionate volunteers who have participated in this heart-warming mission. Since its founding in 1998, the group has reached over

150,000 children in rural communities, many of whom have limited access to such festive celebrations. Through their work, Friends of Santa Claus not only spread holiday cheer but also highlight the importance of connecting with isolated communities. — AFP

# AI-assisted healthcare draws concerns in US

OVER the past year, millions of people have started being treated by US health providers using artificial intelligence (AI) for repetitive clinical work. The

hope is that it will make doctors less stressed out, speed up treatment and possibly spot mistakes, reported The Washington Post on Wednesday.

“Medicine, traditionally a conservative, evidence-based profession, is adopting AI at the hyper speed of Silicon Valley,” noted the report. “These AI tools are being widely adopted in clinics even as doctors are still testing when they’re a good idea, a waste of time or even dangerous.” The harm of generative AI, notorious for “hallucinations”, producing bad information is often difficult to see, but in medicine the danger is stark. One study found that out of 382 test medical questions, ChatGPT gave an “inappropriate” answer on 20 per cent. — Xinhua



Millions of US patients now receive care enhanced by AI, aiming to reduce doctor stress, accelerate treatment, and minimize errors. **ILLUSTRATION: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/PIXABAY**

# Christmas fair promoter killed during celebration in Mexico

THE promoter of one of the largest Christmas fairs in the southern Mexican state of Guerrero was shot dead during a street festival Tuesday, along with another man, local authorities said. Martin Ramirez Ruiz, board president of the Christmas fair in the state capital Chilpancingo, was attacked by armed men while he was participating in a dance, according to the state prosecutor’s office and government officials. Witnesses said the attackers opened fire on the dancers, killing the promoter and another man whose identity has not

been released by authorities. Guerrero governor Evelyn Salgado said on social media platform X that Ramirez Ruiz’s murder “is an inadmissible act that will not go unpunished.” And the state prosecutor’s office said in a statement that it has opened a homicide investigation in the case. The Chilpancingo Christmas fair is among the largest in Guerrero, drawing thousands of attendees and includes the centuries-old traditional walk known as Teopancalaquis, which goes through the five historic neighbourhoods of the city. — AFP

# ‘Exquisite’ 1,700-year-old oil lamp sheds light on Jewish symbolism



An intricately decorated 1,700-year-old ceramic oil lamp, adorned with symbols linked to the Jewish Temple was discovered during an archaeological excavation near Jerusalem’s Mount of Olives. **PHOTO: ANI**

AN intricately decorated 1,700-year-old ceramic oil lamp, adorned with symbols linked to the Jewish Temple was discovered during an archaeological excavation near Jerusalem’s Mount of Olives, the Israel Antiquities Authority announced on Thursday. “This unique oil lamp, which in an exciting manner bears the symbols of the Temple, connects the lights of the past with the Chanukah holiday of today, and expresses the deep and long-standing connection of the nation of Israel to its heritage and to the Temple’s

memory,” said Minister of Heritage Rabbi Amichai Eliyahu. The eight-day holiday of Chanukah, which began on Wednesday night, marks the successful Maccabee revolt against the Seleucid King Antiochus IV and the subsequent rededication of the Second Temple. The holiday is celebrated by lighting a menorah, a nine-branched candelabrum. The ceramic lamp’s decorations feature the Temple menorah, an incense shovel, and a lulav — the date palm branch used in Jewish rituals during the Sukkot holiday. — ANI



ECONOMY  
WORLD

China encourages more industries to open environmental protection facilities to public

China has directed four key industries—petrochemicals, power, steel, and building materials—to open their environmental protection facilities to the public.

CHINA has encouraged four of its pillar industries to open their environmental protection facilities to the public in its latest move towards green development, with similar efforts having yielded positive results.

Pei Xiaofei, spokesperson for the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, told a Tuesday press conference that the ministry has issued guidelines directing the petrochemicals, power, steel and building materials industries to open their environmental protection facilities to the public, either by permitting public visits or offering live video tours.

The ministry’s latest move is expected to do more to stimulate enthusiasm and initiative among the public to protect the environment, and to promote the healthy and orderly development of related industries, Pei said.

Since 2017, the ministry and other relevant authorities have been promoting the opening of four environmental protection facility categories to the public: environmental monitoring, urban wastewater treatment, urban household waste treatment, and hazardous, electrical and electronic waste disposal, Pei said.

— Xinhua



An aerial drone photo taken on 8 August 2024 shows an exterior view of the ethylene production area at PetroChina Daqing Petrochemical Company in Daqing, northeast China’s Heilongjiang Province.

PHOTO: ZHANG TAO/XINHUA/FILE

India’s tourism strategy aims to boost employment and increase Forex

INDIA is devising tourism-focused initiatives to not only attract tourists but also create employment and attract

foreign exchange, as published in the yearend data shared by the Ministry of Tourism on Wednesday.



Tourists from around the world visit the Taj Mahal to admire its stunning architecture and rich cultural history.

PHOTO: AFP/FILE

According to the Ministry’s data, India recorded 18.89 million international tourist arrivals in 2023. Foreign exchange earnings (FEEs) through tourism during 2023 surged to Rs231,927 crore.

In the same year, about 2509 million domestic tourists visited different tourism sites, the ministry stated.

The Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned a total of 76 projects for an amount of Rs5287.90 crore under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme, out of which 75 projects are physically complete.

— ANI

Gazprom’s gas sales revenues will amount to \$46B in 2024

THE proceeds from Russian energy giant Gazprom’s gas sales are expected to amount to 4.6 trillion roubles (\$46 billion) in 2024, which is 155 billion roubles more than the original plan, the deputy chairman of

the company’s management committee Famil Sadygov said on Tuesday.

“In terms of the key indicators, Gazprom’s performance in 2024 will definitely be recognized as strong. For instance,

the proceeds from the sales of gas will amount to RUB4.6 trillion, which is RUB155 billion more than was envisaged in the financial plan initially approved,” Sadygov said in a statement.

— SPUTNIK

BRIEF: ECON

BOJ to raise rates if economy moves on track, watch wage trend: Ueda

BANK of Japan Governor Kazuo Ueda said Wednesday that the central bank will raise rates if the economy keeps improving, emphasizing that it will closely monitor if the country’s wage growth continues into next year. “The degree (of monetary accommodation) may become excessive if the bank maintains the current low level of the policy interest rate even as economic activity and prices improve,” Ueda said in a speech at an event hosted by the Japan Business Federation, the country’s biggest business lobby.

Raising rates according to the degree of improvement in the economy is extremely important so the bank can avoid being forced to hike them rapidly at a later time to contain inflation, he said.

The remarks came about a week after the BOJ kept its rates at around 0.25 per cent at its latest policy meeting in a move widely expected by market players, with Ueda citing uncertainties over the wage trend at home and the outlook for US economy under incoming President Donald Trump.

— Kyodo

Singapore’s manufacturing output up 8.5% in November

SINGAPORE’S manufacturing production rose 8.5 per cent year-on-year in November, following a 1.2 per cent growth in October, according to data released by the Economic Development Board Thursday.

Electronics led the increase with a 26.2 per cent year-on-year growth last month, supported by robust production in semiconductors, computer peripherals and data storage, and infocomm and consumer electronics segments.

The production of precision engineering also recorded growth in November. Meanwhile, the output of chemicals, transport engineering, general manufacturing, and biomedical manufacturing decreased.

— Xinhua

# Penalty imposed on coaching institutes for misleading advertisements

THE Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has imposed a penalty of Rs 7 lakh each on Vajirao & Reddy Institute and StudyIQ IAS for advertising misleading claims regarding the results of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) Civil Services Exam (CSE) 2022 and 2023, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution stated on Thursday.

The CCPA also imposed a penalty of Rs 1 lakh on Edge IAS for advertising misleading claims about the same year's results. The authority has issued an order against these coaching centres to discontinue the misleading advertisements with immediate effect.

These actions are taken to protect and promote the rights of consumers and to ensure that no false or misleading advertisements are made for any goods or services that contravene the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. — ANI



CCPA fined Vajirao & Reddy Institute, StudyIQ IAS, and Edge IAS for misleading UPSC exam result advertisements, ensuring consumer protection. **PHOTO: ANI**

# Japan's Aeon Bank ordered to boost money laundering countermeasures

JAPAN'S Financial Services Agency on Thursday directed retail giant Aeon Co's banking unit to address insufficient measures against money laundering.

The business improvement order is the first since Japan's financial watchdog strengthened bank monitoring over alleged misuse of accounts following a 2021 request from an intergovernmental body tasked with combating money laundering and terrorist financing.

The Financial Action Task Force, based in Paris, urged Japan to take stricter countermeasures to fight money laundering, pointing out that efforts by some smaller financial institutions fell short. In the wake of the instruction, the Japanese government bolstered its surveillance of domestic financial institutions, requiring them to complete the implementation of necessary steps to curb money laundering by the end of March 2024. — Kyodo

# China's 2024 cotton output jumps with tech boost

CHINA'S cotton production saw a significant increase in 2024, driven by technological advancements and improved cultivation techniques, particularly in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. The country's cotton production rose to 6.164 million tonnes in 2024, a 9.7 per cent increase from the previous year, with northwest China's Xinjiang leading the growth, official data showed Wednesday.

The national growth was driven by increased planting area and improved yield efficiency. China's total cotton planting area expanded by 1.8 per cent from 2023, while the yield per unit area saw a significant jump of 7.8 per cent year on year, reaching 2,172 kilogramme per hectare, according to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). This

China's cotton growth was fuelled by a 1.8 per cent increase in planting area and a 7.8 per cent yield rise.



A cotton harvester is at work in Shawan City, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, 8 October 2024. **PHOTO: GUAN BING/XINHUA**

improvement in productivity played a crucial role in boosting the country's overall cotton output. Xinjiang, China's largest cotton-producing region, saw a 3.3 per cent increase in planting area to 2.45 million hectares. In contrast, cotton planting areas in the Yangtze River and Yellow River basins decreased by 1.6 per cent and 13.6 per cent, respectively. — Xinhua

# 5<sup>th</sup> Moscow Interior and Design Week concludes in Russia

THE 5<sup>th</sup> Moscow Interior and Design Week, one of the leading industry events, brought together over 1,100 companies, including 45 international participants. The event attracted more than 180,000 visitors over four days. The project will culminate in an exhibition at the New Tretyakov Gallery, showcasing the best works from the event. The exhibition is open from 24 December and will run for an entire year.

This year's central theme was Russian style. Representatives from 22 countries, including Egypt, Peru, Ecuador, Turkey, Mexico, Iran, Belarus, and Colombia, as well as buyers from China, attended to explore how Russian traditions are expressed in the designs of domestic brands. — ANI

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE M.V BANGKOK VOY.NO. (196N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V BANGKOK VOY.NO. (196N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **27-12-2024** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.  
Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department  
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

**M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE**

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE M.V SITC WENDE VOY.NO. (2422S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SITC WENDE VOY.NO. (2422S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **27-12-2024** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.  
Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department  
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

**M/S SITC CONTAINER LINE CO., LTD**



# ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

## PM Modi extends Hanukkah greetings to Netanyahu

*PM Modi wished for the radiance of Hanukkah to illuminate lives with hope, peace, and strength in a post on X.*



Over the eight nights of Hanukkah a candle on the menorah is lit after reciting prayers. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi extended Hanukkah greetings to Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and people across the world celebrating the festival.

PM Modi wished that the radiance of the festival illuminates everyone’s lives with hope.

“Best wishes to PM Netanyahu and all the people across

the world celebrating the festival of Hanukkah. May the radiance of Hanukkah illuminate everybody’s lives with hope, peace and strength. Hanukkah Sameach!” PM Modi said in a post on X.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday extended Hanukkah greetings to Israeli Foreign Minister Gidon Sa’ar and the global community

celebrating the festival.

Sa’ar thanked “dear friend” Jaishankar for his wishes.

“Thank you, S Jaishankar, dear friend, for your warm Hanukkah wishes and your kind words.” Meanwhile, Israeli Ambassador to India, Reuven Azar extended Hanukkah greetings to people and explained the significance of the Jewish festival.

— ANI

## Japan PM Ishiba to meet Nobel-winning A-bomb survivor group

PRIME Minister Shigeru Ishiba is planning to meet next month with members of Nihon Hidankyo, Japan’s leading group of atomic bomb survivors that received this year’s Nobel Peace Prize, a source familiar with the matter said Thursday.

The government is expected to celebrate the group’s achievements over its decades

of activism and encourage it further ahead of the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the US atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki next year, during the meeting slated for 8 January.

Tetsuo Saito, who leads the Komeito party, the junior coalition partner of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, will also attend, according to the source.

Nihon Hidankyo, also known as the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations, received the award “for its efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and for demonstrating through witness testimony that nuclear weapons must never be used again,” according to the Norwegian Nobel Committee.

— Kyodo

NEWS IN BRIEFS

Sri Lanka train memorial honours tsunami tragedy

On 26 December 2004, Sri Lanka’s Ocean Queen Express became a tragic symbol of the tsunami disaster, as it was struck by giant waves that killed around 1,000 people.

Many victims were passengers who had boarded the train for safety after the first wave hit, but were caught by two larger waves that swept the train off its tracks, pushing it over 100 metres from the shoreline. Each year since, the train has stopped in Peraliya, a village 90 kilometres south of Colombo, to honour the victims.

Survivors and relatives of the dead remember the disaster with ceremonies, lighting incense and offering flowers at a beachside memorial. The 9.1-magnitude earthquake that triggered the tsunami affected countries across the Indian Ocean, causing over 226,000 deaths. In Sri Lanka alone, 35,399 people died, leaving scars that are still deeply felt by those who lived through it. — AFP

Mexican authorities seize more than 400,000 fentanyl pills

MORE than 400,000 pills containing the deadly opioid fentanyl were seized and destroyed by Mexico’s Attorney General’s office, along with six tonnes of chemical precursors for the drugs, the agency said Wednesday. A statement said the narcotics were seized in multiple operations in the western Mexico state of Jalisco, where the powerful New Generation cartel operates.

The agency seized “416,751 tablets and 6.9 kilogrammes (15 pounds) of fentanyl, 990 acetaminophen tablets” and more than six tonnes of twenty different chemical precursors, all of which were destroyed.

Mexico has ramped up its operations against the trafficking of synthetic narcotics, especially fentanyl, with US President-elect Donald Trump ramping up pressure on the issue. — AFP

Democratic Party submits impeachment motion against South Korea’s acting President

THE Democratic Party (DP) has submitted an impeachment motion against South Korea’s acting President Han Duck-soo and reported it to a parliamentary plenary session on Thursday, Yonhap News Agency reported.

The main opposition party’s decision came after Han announced that he will not appoint justices to the Constitutional Court until the rival parties agree for a political compromise. — ANI



(From R) Toshiyuki Mimaki, Shigemitsu Tanaka and Terumi Tanaka, representatives of Nihon Hidankyo, Japan’s leading organization of atomic bomb survivors and winner of the 2024 Nobel Peace Prize, pose during the award ceremony on 10 December 2024, in Oslo. **PHOTO: KYODO/FILE**

SPORTS

Hungry Sabalenka ready for more Slam success

WORLD number one Aryna Sabalenka says she is "fresh and ready to go" in her bid for a third straight Australian Open title, warning she has plenty of room for improvement.

The 26-year-old enjoyed a sensational 2024, reaching seven finals and winning four titles, including the US Open.

Her year was kickstarted by defending her Australian Open crown, beating China's high-flying Zheng Qinwen in the final.

Should she win it again, she will become the first woman to claim three straight Melbourne Park singles titles since Martina Hingis between 1997-1999.

"I feel fresh and ready to go," the Belarusian said, according to the WTA website Thursday, after arriving for the Brisbane International which starts on Sunday ahead of the Australian Open from 12 January.

"I love Australia and I always come here hungry and always come here ready.

"I feel all the support here, and I think that's the best thing about Australia, that people are really, really, into tennis." — AFP



Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka poses ahead of the Brisbane International. **PHOTO: AFP**



Guinness World Records partners with Dubai Marathon, allowing participants to attempt world records in various creative categories on 12 January 2025. **PHOTO: ANI**

Guinness World Records teams up with Dubai Marathon

GUINNESS World Records has joined forces with the Dubai Marathon for a partnership that gives participants an opportunity to break world records while running in the iconic event on 12 January 2025.

The partnership will enable runners across distance categories to try to achieve a new verified record, giving a new feel to one of the region's top annual sporting events.

Runners can set records in a variety of categories such as while wearing costumes for a humanitarian cause, running in a group, or through several other creative ways.

Among the peculiar record ideas shared by Guinness World Records, Dubai Marathon participants can try setting the fastest marathon time while dribbling a football or a basketball; running as a blindfold athlete; running in school uniform or a suit or dressed as a doctor; running while hula-hooping or even running with an egg and spoon. There are also record categories for the fastest marathon times run by a mother and daughter and by a father and son.

Shaddy Gaad, Senior Marketing Manager at Guinness World Records, highlighted the unique benefits of this initiative.

"This partnership with the Dubai Marathon aligns with our mission to inspire communities to embrace sports while offering them an incredible chance to enter the record books," he said. — ANI

CREWS of more than 100 yachts set sail Thursday on a "boat-breaking" Sydney-Hobart yacht race, with gale-force winds and high seas forecast for the gruelling bluewater classic.

Under blue, mid-summer skies, spectators crowded onto boats and lined the shore of a breezy Sydney Harbour as a starting cannon set the fleet on a dash to the open ocean. In a dramatic opening

Sydney-Hobart yacht crews set off on gale-threatened race

contest, reigning line honours champion LawConnect lost an early lead when one of her sails failed to unfurl. Comanche, four-time line honours champion and the event's record holder, took over as front-runner.

By late evening, Comanche was speeding southwards down Australia's east coast with a lead of more than eight



This handout image taken and received from Rolex on 26 December 2024 shows the yacht Master Lock Comanche competing at the start of the annual Sydney to Hobart yacht race on Boxing Day on Sydney Harbour. **PHOTO: CARLO BORLENGHI / ROLEX / AFP**

nautical miles over LawConnect.

LawConnect edged Comanche to win by just 51 seconds last year and the two 100-foot supermaxis are again expected to battle for line honours.

Alive, last year's overall winner of the Tattersall Cup, which takes into account boat size and other factors, was the first casualty of this year's race, retiring with reported engine issues. — AFP

Japan women's football team to play Colombia in friendly match

THE Japan Football Association said Thursday the women's senior national team will play Colombia in a friendly match in Osaka on 5 or 6 April.

The match at Yodoko Sakura Stadium will be the first home game since Dane Nils Nielsen was named the first foreign manager of the team, known as Nadeshiko Japan, earlier this month.

Before the friendly match, the two teams are scheduled to face each other at the SheBelieves Cup tournament beginning 20 February in the United States.

Japan are ranked eighth in the world and Colombia 21st. Japan have won their only head-to-head meeting. — Kyodo





# WORLD



Greenland remains a part of Denmark under the Danish crown. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

## Denmark to strengthen Greenland's defence following Trump's remarks

*The US president-elect suggested acquiring Greenland for national security, announcing Ken Howery as the new US Ambassador to Denmark.*

DENMARK has announced plans to enhance Greenland's defence capabilities after US President-elect Donald Trump reiterated his controversial desire for the US to purchase the Arctic territory, Euronews reported on Wednesday.

In response to Trump's comments, the Danish government revealed a significant defence investment plan aimed at bolstering Greenland's security.

According to Euronews, Danish Defence Minister Troels Lund Poulsen

said that the country would invest a "double-digit" billion amount in Danish kroner to upgrade its defence systems, though he did not specify the exact figure. The investment could range from EUR 1.34 billion to EUR 13.27 billion, as reported by Euronews.

Earlier on Sunday, the US president-elect made his comments via the social media platform Truth Social, stating that the US should seek ownership of Greenland for "purposes of national security and freedom throughout the world."

He made this remark while announcing the former US Ambassador to Sweden, Ken Howery, as the US Ambassador to Denmark.

Meanwhile, Greenland's Prime Minister, Mute Egede, swiftly rejected the notion, asserting that "Greenland belongs to the people of Greenland" and emphasizing that the country "is not for sale and will never be for sale," Euronews reported. Egede further highlighted the importance of preserving Greenland's long-standing struggle for independence. — ANI

### THE MACROECONOMIC INDICATORS

#### GDP growth of CIS countries to be 4.7% in 2024

THE growth of gross domestic product (GDP) of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) members will reach 4.7 per cent this year, Russian President Vladimir Putin said Wednesday at an informal CIS summit held in Leningrad Oblast.

"The macroeconomic indicators of our countries have improved significantly. Thus, by the end of 2024, the growth of total GDP of the Commonwealth countries is projected to reach 4.7 per cent," Putin said. He described the figure as "higher than the world average".

Russia's trade turnover with other CIS members in January-October increased 10.6 per cent and amounted to more than US\$93 billion, the president noted, adding that in the 10 months, the industrial production of CIS countries rose 4.3 per cent, the volume of cargo transport went up 7.4 per cent, and retail sales added by 7.7 per cent.

Russia is chairing the CIS this year. Putin recalled that during Russia's chairmanship period, priority was given to deepening economic cooperation, ensuring free movement of goods and services, eliminating trade barriers and simplifying customs procedures. — Xinhua

## Nepal hosts hot-air balloon festival

WITH Nepal's snowy Himalayan peaks as a backdrop, the sky above Pokhara transformed into a vibrant canvas of colours for the country's first hot-air balloon festival.

Tourism is a major earner for Nepal, which saw over a million foreign visitors this year after a post-pandemic bounce-back, and investments are being made in hotels and airports to cater to travellers.

"We felt that we must bring a balloon festival like this to Nepal," Sabin Maharjan, an organizer of the event, told AFP.

Hot-air balloons from more than 10 countries participated in the festival.

The snow-capped Annapurna range

provided a breathtaking backdrop for a stunning display of hot air balloons, captivating onlookers. American pilot Derek Hamcock, 67, described the view as "unbelievable" every time he saw the Himalayas.

Among the colourful participants were balloons shaped like a rat and a frog, drifting gently with the wind. Spanish pilot Diego Criado del Rey, 29, noted, "You never know where you are going; it's a harmony with nature."

Nepal's Civil Aviation Authority granted nine days of open skies over Pokhara for the event. — AFP



Hot air balloons rise in the sky during the International Hot-Air Balloon festival in Pokhara. PHOTO: PRAKASH MATHEMA / AFP