

The

Global

NEW LIGHT of MYANMAR

Door Stays Open for Peace Engagement

All ethnic people, including the Kayin ethnic group residing in Kayin State, must unite and work to ensure peace and stability, the rule of law, and socioeconomic development cohesively.

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Senior General Thadue Maha Thray Sithu Thadue Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing sent a message to the ceremony to mark the Kayin National New Year Day on 30 December 2024. The full text of the translated message is as follows: -

Esteemed ethnic national people,

Today, 30 December 2024, the 1st waxing of Pyatho 1386 Myanmar Era, is a significant day designated as the auspicious Kayin New Year Day. On this occasion of the Kayin New Year, may all Kayin brethren alongside national people enjoy physical and mental well-being, prosperity, and abundant blessings, wishing everyone a joyful and meaningful celebration.

The Kayin ethnic people merrily celebrate their New Year Festival every year on the 1st waxing of Pyatho. The government officially recognizes this day as a public holiday throughout Myanmar, honouring its significance. The Kayin New Year is regarded as a day of great virtue, marking the transition from the old year to the new. It is a time for the Kayin people to embrace the New Year with renewed energy, optimism, and a fresh spirit, symbolizing a new beginning.

SEE PAGE 3

Tourism businesses in Myeik Archipelago ready for 2025 New Year visitors

Tourism operators in the Myeik Archipelago, Taninthayi Region, are gearing up to provide exceptional services for homegrown and international tourists during the 2025 New Year period, according to local tourism businesses.

“Hotels and tour operators in the Myeik Archipelago are offering special promotions for the New Year. We have organized events that showcase the local cuisine, the traditions and way of life of the Salon people, the lives of fishermen, and their resilience in navigating the challenges of the waves. Tourists can also enjoy New Year festivities and relaxation activities. At King’s Island (Lay Island), we are offering special group rates for families, companies, and entrepreneurs seeking to relax with their employees during the New Year. Activities include beach bonfires, dancing, canoeing through mangrove forests, group-wise growing of mangrove plants, and mangrove conservation efforts,” said U Kyaw Moe, Chief Executive Officer of Blue Ocean Star Resort & Travel Co Ltd.

He added, “Tourism is about raising awareness. We must continuously educate domestic and international tourists about the beauty of Myanmar and its regions. Effective promotion is essential,



Beaches of Myeik Archipelago that can attract tourists.

regardless of tourist numbers. In particular, we invite everyone to visit the Myeik Archipelago, including the King’s Island Resort, where visitors can experience natural beauty, serene beaches, stunning islands, and vibrant marine life in a safe and peaceful environment”.

The Myeik Archipelago, located in Taninthayi Region, consists of over 200 islands, while the region as a whole boasts more than 800 islands. The district is a popular destination for both international and local travellers. Prominent attractions include King’s Island

(Lay Island) and Smart Island (Papa Island), as well as other highlights such as Thameehla Island, Don Waterfall, Don Nyaung Hmaing (CBT), Taungpangyi Island, and Bailey Island, which together enhance the natural splendour of the archipelago. — 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)

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Order 59/2024

14th Waning of Nattaw 1386 ME
29 December 2024

Appointment and Duty Assignment to Chief Justice of Kayin State High Court

THE State Administration Council has appointed and assigned duty to U Nyunt Lin as Chief Justice of Kayin State High Court under Section 419 of the Constitution.

By Order,
Aung Lin Dwe
General
Secretary

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Order 60/2024

14th Waning of Nattaw 1386 ME
29 December 2024

Appointment and Duty Assignment to Judge of Kayin State High Court

THE State Administration Council has appointed and assigned duty to Daw Nwet Nwet Oo as Judge of Kayin State High Court under Section 419 of the Constitution.

By Order,
Aung Lin Dwe
General
Secretary

Five National Objectives for 77th 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"



2024 Population and Household Census



- Myanmar's 2024 Population and Household Census was conducted nationwide starting on 1 October 2024.
- Preliminary results are scheduled for publication on 31 December 2024.
- Census data will be available on the Department of Population's website at www.dop.gov.mm.

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 29 December 2024)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 30 December 2024: Light rain are likely to be isolated in Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions and Kachin State. Degree of certainty is 60%. Weather will be generally fair in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Magway and Lower Sagaing regions and Chin State and partly cloudy in remaining regions and states.

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

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

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 30 December 2024: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 30 December 2024: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 30 December 2024: Generally fair weather. — DMH

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)

Door Stays Open for Peace Engagement

FROM PAGE 1
Esteemed ethnic national brethren,

The national races residing together in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar have diverse customs and traditions. However, they all have fostered a spirit of family and the Union spirit, respecting and valuing one another as they live together. Despite differences in birthplace, region, language, literature, culture, religion, traditions, and customs, they have coexisted harmoniously as siblings within the Union, sharing the same land and resources.

The Kayin ethnic group is one of the indigenous peoples of Myanmar and, as such, they are spread across the entire country beyond Kayin State. Moreover, they reside in regions such as Mon State, Taninthayi Region, Bago Region, and Ayeyawady Region. Throughout history, the Kayin people have lived in harmony and unity side by side with other ethnic groups. Moreover, during the period when the country was under colonial rule, the Kayin people, driven by patriotism and a strong sense of national pride, joined hands with all other ethnic groups to fight for the country’s independence, sacrificing their lives, blood, and sweat. This historical contribution remains a source of great pride and respect.

The Kayin ethnic people are inherently honest, peaceful, and humble by nature. However, they are also courageous, resolute, and highly committed to their promises. With a deep sense of patriotism, they have united the nation during critical times. I encourage the Kayin people to continue preserving and passing down their language, literature, culture, arts, traditional customs, and historical heritage that have been safeguarded throughout generations by their ancestors.

In Myanmar, the Kayin ethnic group, as well as all national brethren from various regions, should always preserve and uphold their noble traditions. If everyone stands united, in harmony and solidarity, the Union will remain stable, strong, and enduring with unity.

Esteemed ethnic national brethren,

Peace is fundamental for the economic development of the nation, the improvement of the social lives of its citizens, national peace, prosperity and the rule of law. After regaining independence, the legacy of colonialism and its divisive governance have led to misunderstandings among ethnic groups, resulting in ongoing armed conflicts and instability. It is crucial to acknowledge this. The State Administration Council emphasizes efforts to stabilize internal peace and results from peace as an actual natural essence of the State. Mutual respect among ethnic groups, cooperation between individuals, and reducing misunderstandings and conflicts through dialogue and discussions are keys to resolving issues.

The State Administration Council has been holding meetings and discussions with political parties and ethnic armed groups to achieve durable peace. It has also been able to record the views obtained from these discussions, which will be further deliberated and confirmed in future parliamentary sessions. Invitations for continued dialogue are always open, and the door remains open for further engagement. In the future, efforts will continue to be made to work towards peace.

Esteemed ethnic national brethren,

The State Administration Council has established and is carrying out the prosperity of the nation and food security as a national vision. The prosperity of the nation refers to the ability of all citizens to live in tranquillity and peace under the rule of law, to pursue education, and to engage in employment opportunities.

To ensure food security, it is necessary to not only engage in traditional agricultural and livestock practices but also to innovate and implement modern methods for food production. During the tenure of the State Administration Council, we made efforts to preserve natural resources as much as possible and focused on exporting only the surplus products from agriculture and livestock. Economic prosperity is essential for national development, and we are working to promote economic growth and development.

All national people need to prioritize and actively support the enhancement of domestic production for food security. It is essential to focus on increasing the production of export goods to generate more foreign income. As the national economy improves, the social and economic lives of the people will also progress, and in alignment with the country’s economic policies, regions and states will develop and grow equally.

Esteemed ethnic national brethren,

Currently, to ensure the necessary peace and stability, rule of law, and socioeconomic development, all ethnic people, including the Kayin ethnic group residing in Kayin State, must unite and work together. To reduce the occurrence of conflicts and violent unrest in relevant regions, including Kayin State, they must work in unity to bring about peace and harmony, with all ethnic groups joining together to contribute to a peaceful and prosperous Union. It is hoped that this will lead to greater stability and development. Wishing for the well-being and prosperity of the Kayin people, I send this New Year’s greeting message with best wishes.

Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu
Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing
Prime Minister
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 on inspection tour of development activities, agricultural farms in Ayeyawady Region

ACCOMPANIED by Ayeyawady Region Chief Minister U Tin Maung Win, regional government ministers, and departmental officials, Member of the State Administration Council Mahn Nyein Maung visited agricultural projects in Ayeyawady Region's Maubin District yesterday morning.

Initially, he visited a 10-acre model sunflower farm owned by U Aung Kyaw Moe in Mayan Village, Pantanaw Township to view round the broadcasting of fertilizers on the sunflower crop. He encouraged local farmers, presented foliar fertilizer, and provided cash awards to Kayin cultural dance troupes.

In Dawwah Village, they visited a 5-acre summer paddy plantation owned by U Kyaw Khine Win. The farm uses a solar-powered irrigation system. The SAC member inspected the plantation, provided urea fertilizers to farmers, and gave cash awards

to Kayin don dance troupes.

At a 180-acre aromatic coconut plantation managed by Alloy Company in Yinkadit Village, Danubyu Township, the SAC member gave instructions on increasing the value chain of coconut production, manufacturing value-added coconut products, and integrating livestock breeding farms.

He looked into the proposed site for constructing a 16-bed station hospital in Layeinsu Village-tract, Maubin Township. At Dhamma School, he offered donations of rice and cooking oil to the head nun, and provided cash awards to students.

In meeting with district- and township-level departmental officials at the office of General Administration Department in Maubin District, the SAC member urged officials to preserve traditional heritages and live in unity.

He attended the Kayin



Member of the State Administration Council Mahn Nyein Maung provides a cash awards to an official.

National New Year Festival in Chaungwa Village in Nyaungdon Township. He extended New Year greetings, urging Kayin people to preserve their literature, cultural heritage, and traditional values while fostering unity. He watched Kayin traditional dance

performances and presented monetary awards.

In the afternoon, the SAC member inspected Basic Education High School in Nyaung-aing village, Kyaunggon Township and met with officials, teachers, and school committee members.

The school achieved notable university entrance exam results: a pass rate of 75.86 per cent in 2022, 100 per cent in 2023, and 75 per cent in 2024. The SAC member provided a cash awards of K1 million, to an official. — MNA/KZL

National-level MSME Product Exhibition and Competition under preparations

THE National-Level Micro-, Small-, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSME) Product Exhibition and Competition will take place at Tabaung Ground in Pobbathiri Township in Nay Pyi Taw soon.

It aims to support the success of MSME businesses, expand markets for their products, enhance connections with domestic and internation-

al organizations, and promote the long-term sustainability of MSMEs while ensuring accountability in their operations.

On his inspection tour, U Yin Maung Nyunt, Deputy Minister for Industry and Chairman of the MSME Product Exhibition and Competition Organizing Committee, on 28 December, viewed round the progress of booth construction

for the upcoming event.

During the inspection, the Deputy Minister instructed officials of relevant subcommittees to complete various pavilions, including the ministry's exhibition stalls, traditional food stalls, MSME product displays from regions and states, as well as booths for small industries and manufacturing cooperatives societies,

to ensure all measures to be ready on schedule.

He noted that the Nay Pyi Taw Council has prior experience in organizing MSME exhibitions twice before. Lessons learned from these events will guide efforts to build on strengths and address any weaknesses.

The Nay Pyi Taw Council members discussed ways to

assist in the smooth organization of the exhibition and agreed to share insights from past events.

Furthermore, the Deputy Minister emphasized the need for effective coordination to address any outstanding requirements for the booth construction to ensure the success of the exhibition and competition. — MNA/TKO

NATIONAL

Upgrading works
beefs up on
Pathein-Shawpya-
Chaungtha road

EMPHASIS must be placed on the long-term maintenance of roads, said Deputy Minister for Construction U Win Pe on his inspection tour of progress in upgrading Pathein-Shawpya-Chaungtha Road yesterday morning.

Together with Ayeyawady Region Minister for Transport U Nay Myo Aung, the deputy minister inspected the road up-

grading works.

Director (Civil) U Yan Nang Zaw of the Ayeyawady Region Highways Department and representatives from Oriental Highway Company Limited, Max Highway Company Limited and Shwe Taung Company Limited explained the progress of the road works. The Deputy Minister stressed the need for proper maintenance to ensure



Deputy Minister for Construction U Win Pe looks into the road upgrading works along the Pathein-Shawpya-Chaungtha Road in Ayeyawady Region yesterday.

the roads last longer, the use of high-quality construction materials, and the timely arrival of heavy machinery at work sites.

The inspection covered key sections of the road, including

a 40-foot earthen embankment under construction between mileposts 22/2 and 22/3, a bypass project at milepost 26/5, and another 40-foot earthen embankment between mileposts 30/4 and

30/6. The Deputy Minister looked into concrete paving on Kyet-thunkwin (Thabaung)-Magyeezin Road, which is being managed by the Ayeyawady Region Highways Department. — MNA/KZL

Large crowd celebrates at 2025 New
Year's Eve music concert in Nay Pyi Taw

A New Year's Eve music concert was held yesterday at Wunna Theikdi Stadium No 1 and 2 in Nay Pyi Taw to celebrate the New Year and promote peace and tranquillity across the nation. The event attracted both local residents and government employees.

As the day was a public holiday, many attendees, including families of government staff, arrived by car or motorcycle to enjoy the afternoon concert. Rigorous security measures were taken, with personnel conducting thorough inspections at the entrance gates and stationed throughout the venue to ensure safety.

The paths from Gates 1 and 4 to the main stage were il-

luminated with colourful lights, creating a festive and welcoming atmosphere. Organizers enhanced the celebration by providing photo booths, amusement games, and a children's playground.

The concert showcased performances by popular local singers, dancers, DJs, and bands, delighting the audience with well-loved songs. Adding to the excitement, a special performance by the Thai group 'The Gang of Popular Copy Show' captivated attendees, who sang along enthusiastically.

More than 50 stalls, including food vendors and souvenir shops, were set up to cater to the crowd, creating a lively

marketplace. Organizers ensured a clean and orderly environment by providing ample rubbish bins and mobile toilets for the convenience of visitors.

For those planning to join the New Year celebrations, a variety of entertainment programmes are scheduled. On 30 December, events will run from 3:00 pm to 10:00 pm, featuring a traditional Myanmar dance troupe performance at 5:00 pm. On 31 December, the countdown celebration will begin at 5:00 pm and continue until 1:00 am. Admission is free, and free shuttle bus services will operate along three routes to facilitate transportation for festival-goers. — Lu Lin Pyo/TRKM



This photo taken on 29 December 2024 shows a New Year's Eve music concert at Wunna Theikdi Stadium in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: AYE PYAE SONE

Melon prices hope to
help farmers happy this
year

IT is expected that the watermelon and muskmelon prices will increase this year, hoping to help farmers enjoy profits.

In Kyaukse Township, muskmelon season hasn't fallen yet but the yield is likely to decline as the number of growers has been fewer plus transportation barriers, however there is likelihood of price increased.

"It isn't the harvest season yet. Muskmelon season begins in late January. In this year, the number of farmers has been low so the production is expected to decline. As a result, the price will be high and demand will be high too. So this is a year that can make farmers happy," said a muskmelon farmer in Kyaukse Township.

In March, watermelon price was good depending on size and extreme summer heat



Watermelon in Yangon fruits market.

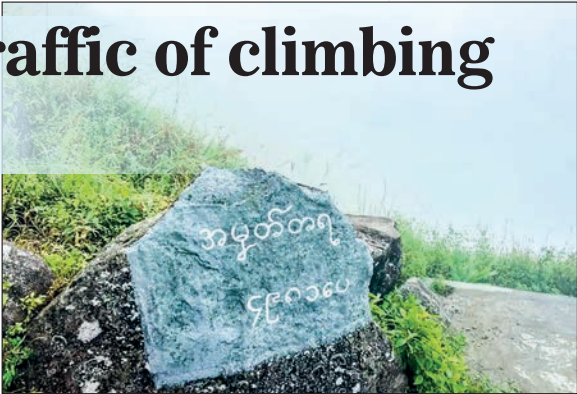
made the consumption of watermelon enlarged in Yangon. — Thit Taw/ZS

Gold Market Rate as of 29 December 2024

THE price of one tical (16.329325 grammes) of gold with density of 19.25 grammes per cubic centimetre and above is K5,280,000, as established by the Mineral (Gold) Reference Price Determination Committee.

NATIONAL

Mount Popa sees high traffic of climbing tourists in December



Photos show some of the hiking trails and hikers on their way to Mount Popa.

THERE has been a high number of tourists climbing Mount Popa in December, according to Popa locals. Since the Thadingyut holidays, they have seen a steady flow of tourists to Mount Popa with daily arrivals during December, the best time to climb, and hundreds of visitors during the holidays.

“In December, we have the highest number of tourists climbing Mount Popa. There are more visitors than the previous festival

periods. December is the best season for climbing, so more people come. As the government has set a 5-day holiday to make it more convenient for tourists to travel, even office staff are coming,” said a Popa resident.

Since Thadingyut and Tazaungdine periods, crowds of visitors have continued entering until the Christmas and New Year.

Popular programmes include night-stay trips to Mount

Popa from Yangon, Mandalay, Bago, Pakokku and NyaungU, and day trips to Popa by Bagan tourists. During this high tourist traffic period, the Forest Department was carrying out garbage collection and control, he said.

Unlike last year, Mount Popa has become more popular this year, leading to a significant increase in visitor arrivals, which has increased income opportunities, according to Popa locals.

— MT/ZN

Stimulant tablets, Happy Water seized in some townships



Offenders seen alongside confiscated drugs and motorcycle.

A combined team, including members of the Anti-Narcotics Police Force inspected a motorbike, driven by Myint Zaw Oo (aka) Myint Zaw, near Hlinetet Village in Thazi Township on 28 December. The police seized 4,000 stimulant tablets from him. Acting on a tip off, the police conducted a search in Kyatsakhan Village in Thazi Township on the same day and confiscated 14,000

stimulant tablets.

In Myeik Township, the police searched the house of Tin Htwe from Setwin, South Myeik Ward in Myeik Township on 27 December and seized 4,000 stimulant tablets. Happy Water, a type of psychotropic drug valued at K322.3 million, was seized in Tachilek Township, according to the Myanmar Police Force.

Acting on a tip-off, a com-

bined team, including members of the Anti-Narcotics Police Force, conducted a search of a KTV near Yangkyauk Village in Tachilek Township at 10 am on 25 December. They seized 1.63 kilogrammes of Happy Water and three motorbikes and arrested Ma Nang Shane, Ma Nang Yeing (aka) Nang Phu Yi, and Aik Aum (aka) Sai Aum.

At 5 pm on 25 December, the police stopped two motorbikes for inspection. One motorbike, driven by Aik Kam Kan accompanied by Sai Hla Kyaing, and another motorbike, driven by Aik Nuam Twi, were stopped. Aik Nuam Twi attempted to flee the scene but was arrested, and 1.3 kilogrammes of Happy Water were seized from them. The police took legal action against the offenders, and an investigation is ongoing to identify the perpetrators of the criminal network. — MNA/MKKS

YBS vehicles without fire extinguishers to face fines and punishments

YBS vehicles without fire extinguishers will be fined and will not be allowed to operate if they repeatedly violate the rules, said U Lyan Cin Mang of the Yangon Region Public Transport Committee (YRTC).

As there were incidents of YBS vehicles catching fire due to not having fire extinguishers in 2024, Yangon’s Chief Minister made an instruction at the departmental coordination meeting for it, he added.


“We have already instructed that all YBS vehicles must have fire extinguishers. There have been some incidents of fires due to not having fire extinguishers. Recently, there have been three cases. Therefore, we would

like to urge both YBS vehicles and other vehicles to have fire extinguishers as preventive measures,” he said.

The Traffic Enforcement Team will inspect whether YBS vehicles carry fire extinguishers, and the drivers who do not comply with the instruction will be fined, and ordered to purchase and install fire extinguishers. If they violate the regulations again, they will be banned from operation.

There were 280 cases taken action by the team for not having fire extinguishers in 11 months from January to November 2024. Currently, there are 3,600 to 3,800 YBS buses on 132 routes in Yangon, carrying 1.5 million commuters.

— MT/ZN



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We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm with your name and title.

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

Anyar fermented bean paste business becomes thriving again

A type of Anyar’s traditional food, pon ye gyi (fermented bean paste) trade has now expanded again. In NyaungU Township, orders for fermented bean paste have mounted, for giving as gifts as well as for reselling.

“Fermented bean paste has high consumption, many people like it. Fermented bean paste is well-known as Anyar’s souvenir. It is also produced from Magway Region. We have overseas orders for fermented bean paste. It is ordered to eat and present as gifts from Anyar,” said an official from Anyar traditional foods distribution in NyaungU Township.

The population of fermented bean paste makers has expanded since 2023 as the price is steady but the trade has increased, according to fermented bean paste businesses from Hse village in Ngathayauk of NyaungU Township.

The flavour of fermented bean paste made in Ngathayauk is distinctly good and more popular, said an owner of fried

noodle, fried rice and rice salad shop using fermented bean paste.

“I sell fried noodle, fried rice and rice

salad made of fermented bean paste as well as chicken and pork



Fermented bean paste produced from Anyar and fermented bean paste making business in Anyar.



meals mixed with fermented bean paste. Most of my customers are fermented bean paste crazy. Fermented bean paste is more perfect with pork. People eat it by cooking or salad and some fry it. We order fermented bean paste from NyaungU’s Ngathayauk because it is more popular and it tastes like creamy and mild sweet. Some fermented bean paste tastes a little sour,” said Ma Maw Maw Win, owner of Pon Ye Gyi PKU in Pakkoku Township.

There are about 35 fermented bean paste making businesses in NyaungU and Ngathayauk, from there, fermented bean paste are distributed under different brand names across Myanmar, through wholesalers. They sell fermented bean paste in dried and wet types and cook it into mild sweet flavour and sour flavour. Now, fermented bean paste making industry has been flourishing. — Thit Taw/ZS

Yangon Region approves 60 investment projects in 2024, creating over 29,000 jobs



Previously permitted CMP system garment industry in Yangon Region.

THE Yangon Region Investment Committee has approved 60 new investment projects from January to December 2024, generating 29,290 job opportunities, according to the committee’s report.

Of these 60 approved projects, 17 were funded by Myanmar investors, with a total investment of over K33 billion, while 43 were foreign-invested projects, amounting to over US\$53 million.

In December 2024, the committee approved one fully Myanmar-owned business and two foreign-owned businesses in the hotel, tourism, and industrial sectors during its 12/2024 meeting.

These include hotel service operations and the manufacturing of various apparels under the CMP (Cut-Make-Pack) system. The combined investment capital for these projects amounts to K1,180 million (US\$2.22 million), creating 2,440 job opportunities.

The Yangon Region Investment Committee reviews and approves new Myanmar and foreign investment projects monthly, in accordance with relevant laws and procedures, to promote job creation in the region. — ASH/TKO

Myanmar’s domestic cooking oil production meets consumption levels

THE Myanmar Edible Oil Millers Association aims to terminate edible oil imports entirely by 2025 as larger volume of edible oil than the past can be produced domestically, according to U Tun Tun Oo, Vice Chair of the Myanmar Edible Oil Millers Association.

“Currently, over 3,000 oil mills are operating nationwide, and production has met the consumption level. Oils made of sesame, groundnuts, and sunflowers are now of excellent quality. With this capacity, Myanmar can significantly reduce oil imports,” said U Tun Tun Oo.

The growth in domestic oil production has stabilized operations for local mills and provided substantial benefits to farmers

cultivating sesame, groundnuts, and sunflowers. This progress not only supports farmers with profitable crops but also generates employment opportunities in rural areas.

“Consumers are increasingly choosing locally produced oils, which are healthier. Strong demand has motivated producers to maintain high production levels. This creates a beneficial cycle for farmers, producers, and workers, which we aim to sustain,” he added.

Moreover, by-products from local oil mills, such as oilcake, are being used as animal feed for pigs, chickens, and fish, further reducing the country’s dependence on imported feed, the association highlighted. —ASH/KZL



Photo shows locally produced edible oils for sale in the market.

Daily newspapers available online

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

Preserve fine traditions of Kayin ethnicity for more generations

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Currently, to ensure the necessary peace and stability, rule of law, and socioeconomic development, all ethnic people, including the Kayin ethnic group residing in Kayin State, must unite and work together. To reduce the occurrence of conflicts and violent unrest in relevant regions, including Kayin State, they must work in unity to bring about peace and harmony, with all ethnic groups joining together to contribute to a peaceful and prosperous Union. It is hoped that this will lead to greater stability and development.

achieve durable peace. It has also been able to record the views obtained from these discussions, which will be further deliberated and confirmed in future parliamentary sessions. Invitations for continued dialogue are always open, and the door remains open for further engagement. In the future, efforts will continue to be made to work towards peace.

Currently, to ensure the necessary peace and stability, rule of law, and socioeconomic development, all ethnic people, including the Kayin ethnic group residing in Kayin State, must unite and work together. To reduce the occurrence of conflicts and violent unrest in relevant regions, including Kayin State, they must work in unity to bring about peace and harmony, with all ethnic groups joining together to contribute to a peaceful and prosperous Union. It is hoped that this will lead to greater stability and development.

HAVE you ever heard of the term Digital Detox and its impact? In today's world, we humans spend a lot of time with various digital screens. This term emerged from our inability to break free from the rapidly changing landscape of cultural communication. So, in this article, I will share with you what I understand about Digital Detox.

Starting a digital detoxification begins with setting clear and meaningful goals. Take some time to reflect on why you feel the need to take a break from technology and what you want to gain from it. Perhaps you're aiming to reduce stress caused by constant notifications and online demands, or maybe you want to improve your sleep quality by stepping away from screens before bedtime. Your goal could also be as simple as spending more quality time with your family and friends, free from digital distractions. Whatever your reasons, having a clear purpose will help keep you motivated and focused throughout your detox journey.

Creating boundaries is a key step in a successful digital detox. Start by setting specific times during your day or week when you commit to being device-free. For instance, you might decide to put your phone away during meals so you can focus on enjoying your food and connecting with those around you. Another idea is to establish a screen-free routine before bedtime to help your mind unwind and improve your sleep quality. You could even dedicate entire weekends to disconnecting from devices and engaging in offline activities. These boundaries allow you to take control of your time, fostering healthier habits and a better balance between your digital and real-world life.

Informing others about your digital detox is an important

step to ensure success. Let your friends, family, and colleagues know about your plan so they can understand why you might be less available or slower to respond. By sharing your goals, you also invite their support, which can help you stay committed. For example, your loved ones might refrain from sending unnecessary messages or help you stick to your boundaries by encouraging offline activities. Open communication ensures that those around you won't misinterpret your reduced online presence and can even inspire them to join you in prioritizing real-world connections.

Finding alternatives to screen time is a crucial part of a successful digital detox. Instead of reaching for your devices, explore activities that allow you to unplug and focus on the present moment. For example, immerse yourself in a captivating book, which can transport you to another world and stimulate your imagination. You might also enjoy going for a walk, which not only helps clear your mind but also keeps you physically active. Picking up a new hobby, such as painting, gardening, or cooking, is another excellent way to spend your time productively and creatively. By replacing screen time with fulfilling offline activities, you'll discover new interests and enjoy a healthier, more balanced lifestyle.

Using technology mindfully is an essential part of maintaining a balanced digital detox. Instead of defaulting to mindless scrolling through social media or getting lost in endless online content, make a conscious effort to use your devices with intention. For instance, if you're online, focus on activities that are productive or enriching, such as learning a new skill, connecting meaningfully with friends, or managing essential tasks. Set limits on

The Transformative Power of a Digital Detox

By Min Zan



A digital detox refers to a period of intentional disengagement from digital devices and technology, such as smartphones, computers, and social media.

A digital detox can lead to better sleep, especially when you reduce screen time in the hours before bedtime. The blue light emitted by screens interferes with the production of melatonin, the hormone that regulates sleep, making it harder to fall and stay asleep. By stepping away from devices in the evening, you allow your body to follow its natural sleep-wake cycle. This simple change can result in deeper, more restorative sleep, leaving you feeling refreshed and energized the next day. Over time, this improved sleep quality contributes to better overall health and well-being.

A digital detox can greatly enhance your focus and productivity. When you cut down on the constant digital distractions, such as checking notifications or scrolling through social media, it becomes easier to concentrate on important tasks. Without the interruptions of emails, messages, or apps, your mind can focus more deeply on what you're doing, leading to better results in less time. This increase in productivity allows you to accomplish more, whether at work, school or in personal projects, while also feeling more satisfied with your progress. Over time, the habit of

reducing distractions will help you develop stronger focus and a more efficient work routine.

A digital detox can lead to stronger relationships by fostering more face-to-face interactions and quality time with your loved ones. When you reduce screen time, you're more present and attentive, allowing you to engage in meaningful conversations without distractions. Spending uninterrupted time together helps deepen emotional connections and create lasting memories. Whether it's enjoying a meal together, playing games, or simply having a heartfelt chat, these moments

strengthen bonds and improve communication. By prioritizing real-world connections over digital ones, you'll cultivate deeper, more fulfilling relationships that are built on genuine connections and shared experiences.

Taking a break from screens can significantly boost your creativity. Without the constant noise and information overload from digital devices, your mind has the freedom to wander and think more deeply. This mental space allows for new ideas to emerge and creative solutions to form. Engaging in offline activities like walking, journaling, or simply daydreaming can help your brain make connections it might not have otherwise, leading to fresh perspectives and innovative thinking. By stepping away from screens, you allow yourself to tap into your creative potential and explore new ways of thinking and problem-solving.

Reducing screen time can have a positive impact on your physical health by encouraging more movement and less sedentary behaviour. When you're not spending hours in front of a screen, you're more likely to engage in physical activities like walking, exercising, or even simple tasks like cleaning and cooking. These activities help reduce the risks associated with a sedentary lifestyle, such as obesity, poor posture, and heart disease. By prioritizing movement and spending less time on devices, you improve your overall fitness and energy levels, which leads to a healthier and more active lifestyle.

Contemplating the importance of a digital detox reveals the profound impact technology has on our daily lives and well-being. In our hyper-connected world, constant notifications, social media pressures, and screen time can lead to increased stress and

anxiety. By stepping back and setting meaningful goals for a digital detox, individuals can regain control over their lives, reduce mental clutter, and enhance their overall quality of life. Reflecting on the reasons behind the need for a detox – whether it's to improve sleep, strengthen relationships, or simply find more time for personal growth – can provide the motivation needed to commit to the process and achieve lasting benefits.

Furthermore, the practice of creating boundaries and finding alternatives to screen time can foster healthier habits and a more balanced lifestyle. By setting aside device-free times, such as during meals or before bedtime, individuals can engage more deeply with the world around them and reconnect with loved ones. Exploring offline activities like reading, walking, or pursuing new hobbies not only helps reduce screen dependence but also stimulates creativity and personal development. This mindful approach to technology use encourages a more intentional and fulfilling way of living, where digital tools enhance rather than dominate one's life.

All in all, a digital detox offers numerous benefits that extend beyond just reducing screen time. It promotes improved mental health, better sleep, heightened focus, and stronger relationships. By setting clear goals, establishing boundaries, and mindfully using technology, individuals can achieve a healthier and more balanced lifestyle. The key lies in taking small, gradual steps to make the transition manageable and sustainable. As people become more conscious of their digital habits, they can enjoy the positive changes that a digital detox brings, ultimately leading to a more satisfying and enriched life.

Feel 60 When You Are 30: Scientists Investigate Negative Impact of Energy Drinks

The combined effects of nicotine and energy drinks on the bodies of young people aged 18 to 20 have been explored for the first time by a student from VI. Razumovsky Saratov State Medical University (SSMU) under the guidance of her tutors.

ACCORDING to the researchers, the combination of these two harmful habits leads to pre-

mature aging and increases the risk of cardiovascular diseases. The results were present-

ed in the Week of Russian Science (WeRuS-2024) collection.

Energy drinks are extremely popular among young people today and their consumption is expected to increase by 2.5 times by 2029 compared to the start of this dec-

ade, according to the SSMU.

It is well known that they negatively affect human nerve cells, increase thyroid hormone levels, and raise calcium ion concentrations. However, until recently, the extent of the damage caused by

combining energy drinks with nicotine was unclear; the researchers noted.

"I study at a medical university with a heavy academic workload, so many students resort to energy drinks to stay awake

longer. Smoking is also widespread among young people, so I was curious to explore their combined effects," said Nicol Klochkova, a third-year student at the SSMU and one of the study's authors.

Source : SPUTNIK



With energy drink consumption set to rise, it's crucial to raise awareness about these risks to prevent long-term health problems in future generations. ILLUSTRATION: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ VISUAL ART

SCI/ENVIRON: WORLD

Schrodinger's rings: Saturn to lose its famous feature twice in 2025

Saturn's rings will appear to disappear twice in 2025—once in spring and once in autumn—due to Earth's alignment.



Saturn's rings, just 30 metres thick, will disappear from view in 2025 due to Earth's alignment, a rare event. **ILLUSTRATION: VISUAL ART**

THE complete disappearance of Saturn's rings for observers on Earth will occur twice in 2025 — once in spring and again in autumn — according to Stas Korotkiy, the scientific director of the Ka-Dar Observatory.

"Every 15 years, or twice during Saturn's orbital period

(which lasts 30 Earth years), Saturn's rings seem to vanish. This happens because Earth's observers align with the same plane as Saturn's rings, making them appear edge-on," explained Korotkiy.

"Saturn's rings are extremely thin — only about 30 metres thick — and the dis-

tance from Earth to Saturn is over a billion kilometres. As a result, the rings essentially disappear from view, even through the largest telescopes. In 2025, this disappearance will occur in spring and autumn. At other times during the year, the rings will be visible as an extremely thin line. This rare phenomenon — occurring once every 15 years — makes Saturn seem to lose its famous rings," he added.

The paired disappearances will happen eight months apart: on 23 March and 26 November. However, the spring event will not be visible from Earth due to interference from the Sun. The autumn disappearance, on the other hand, will offer good visibility conditions. Observers using telescopes with strong magnification will be able to witness this rare alignment, the expert noted. — SPUTNIK

Tens of thousands still without power in Bosnia snowstorm

TENS of thousands of people in Bosnia were still without electricity Friday due to a snowstorm, as rescuers found the body of a weather station employee dead on a mountain.

The storm, which started on Sunday night, initially left more than 170,000 people without electricity and cut off parts of the Balkan nation.

Although the weather has improved across the country,

local officials and power firms said thousands of people were still cut off by blocked roads and tens of thousands of households were without electricity, notably in northern Bosnia. — AFP

Google's Gemini latest update allows users to ask questions about PDFs on mobile

IN a notable update to the Files by Google app, Gemini, Google's advanced AI assistant, now boasts the ability to recognise when a PDF is open on your screen, enabling users to directly query the file's contents.

According to The Verge, this feature is part of a broader roll-out of context-aware capabilities in Gemini, designed to enhance the way users interact with their digital files.

The functionality has begun rolling out to Gemini Advanced subscribers, The Verge reports. When users view a PDF within the Files by Google app, they can summon Gemini and tap a new button labelled "Ask about this

PDF." This option allows users to pose specific questions about the PDF's contents, similar to how one would engage with a conversational AI like ChatGPT.

Google's Gemini now offers a feature that allows users to interact with their documents in a more intuitive way. For example, you can open a PDF and ask Gemini to summarize it or explain a section. First teased at the May 2024 I/O conference, this functionality is currently available to Gemini Advanced subscribers and will expand to more users soon. It enables Gemini to interpret screen content, such as PDFs, web pages, or YouTube videos. — ANI



Google's Gemini now allows users to interact with PDFs and other content, summarizing or explaining sections for improved productivity. **PHOTO: PIXABAY**

Thousand people march against air pollution in Skopje

AROUND a thousand people protested on Saturday in Skopje against air pollution in North Macedonia's capital, which often ranks among the most polluted cities in Europe.

It was the second such demonstration in less than a month in Skopje, with the previous march involving a slightly smaller crowd of several hundred people. The participants of Saturday's march through downtown Skopje, dubbed "Come out for clean air", sought from the authorities to undertake immediate



Almost 4,000 people in North Macedonia die each year due to exposure to PM2.5 particles. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

measures over the issue. "Our air is poison, our government is deaf" and "Future cannot be seen from smog" read some of the banners carried by the protesters. The march was organised by several environmental groups and citizens' initiatives. The urgent measures sought by the protesters include increasing inspection for industrial facilities, ecological heating of state facilities, promoting the use of public transport and bicycles as well as better waste management. — AFP

India’s architecture fans guard Mumbai’s Art Deco past

IN Mumbai, India’s financial capital, the skyline is adorned with a remarkable collection of Art Deco buildings, considered one of the world’s largest. These structures, with their geometric patterns, porthole windows, and exotic motifs, reflect a unique blend of Western influence and Indian culture, often referred to as “Indo-Deco.”

Despite their historical significance, many of these buildings face demolition or poor renovations due to Mumbai’s rapid urbanization, which includes \$30 billion in infrastructure projects.

In 2018, UNESCO recognized the city’s Art Deco buildings, along with its Victorian Gothic structures, as World Heritage sites. However, rapid development threatens the preservation of this architectural heritage.

Mumbai is home to one of the world’s largest collections of Art Deco buildings, a unique architectural heritage that blends Western and Indian influences.



A small group of architects, building owners, and heritage lovers are striving to conserve the character of these buildings, which they see as vital to Mumbai’s identity.

Art Deco, introduced in the 1920s and 1930s, evoked modern technologies like airplanes and ocean liners. Indian architects who visited Europe were inspired to design these buildings for wealthy business families in Mumbai.

Atul Kumar, founder of an organization focused on conservation, believes Art Deco made Mumbai “modern, open, friendly,” and is crucial to the city’s historical character. — AFP

Mumbai’s Art Deco treasures include apartment blocks, office buildings and a cinema. **PHOTO: AFP**

Apple Watch Series 10 helps users stay motivated to achieve 2025 fitness goals

APPLE has unveiled a fresh advertisement aimed at encouraging users to stick to their 2025 fitness resolutions with the Apple Watch Series 10.

The ad ties into the familiar tradition of setting New Year’s resolutions, positioning the Apple Watch as the perfect partner to help users stay motivated throughout the year, as per MacRumors.

MacRumors, an American website that is updated on a daily basis with new articles, reports Apple and

Mac-related news, rumours, and information.

In the new campaign, Apple highlights a telling statistic: most people abandon their fitness goals by the second Friday of January.

With that in mind, the company suggested that the Apple Watch can provide the motivation needed to prevent users from giving up.

“This year, what if a little bit of help on our wrists could help us quit, quitting?” the ad asks, ending with the slogan “motivation on your wrist,” as per MacRumors.

The campaign highlights the Apple Watch’s consistent reminders, including activity ring prompts and workout milestone notifications. It emphasizes running features like pace tracking and alerts encouraging users to push harder. — ANI



Apple’s new ad campaign encourages users to stick to their 2025 fitness resolutions with the Apple Watch Series 10. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/PIXABAY**

Afghan bread, the humble centerpiece of every meal

EVERY day before dawn, Jamil Ghafori works alongside five other men at a cramped bakery in Kabul, producing thousands of traditional flatbreads, a staple of Afghan cuisine. For 27 years, Ghafori has perfected the art of making fluffy bread with a crunchy edge, baked in an earthen oven. He and his team take pride in their work, ensuring their customers receive fresh, quality bread each day. Afghan bakeries, with their warm, inviting displays, line the streets of Kabul, serving a diverse clientele from all walks of life.

In Afghanistan, bread is not just food — it’s a cultural cornerstone. Bakery worker Shafiq emphasizes the coun-



This photograph taken on 16 December 2024 shows Afghan vendors selling traditional flatbreads locally known as Naan, at a roadside market in Kabul. **PHOTO: WAKIL KOHSAR/AFP**

try’s deep reliance on bread, with consumption expected to rise rather than fall. Many people, regardless of social class, visit bakeries multiple times a

day to pick up their daily loaves, often consumed with tea or other simple dishes. For many families, bread is the foundation of every meal. — AFP

Netflix with Beyonce make splash despite NFL ratings fall

NETFLIX’S debut NFL broadcasts on Christmas Day received positive reviews and record streaming ratings but still attracted fewer viewers than the linear broadcasts last Christmas.

The streaming giant’s first venture into the USA’s biggest sport excited the sports business world which has been waiting years

for Netflix to enter the market.

The company paid a reported \$150 million per year for a three-year deal for the Christmas Day games.

Netflix had previously dabbled in live sports content via one off tennis and golf events and last month’s boxing contest between Mike Tyson and Jake Paul. — AFP

India’s increasing oil demand attracting global players

India, along with Southeast Asia and South Asia, will drive the region's future oil demand growth, said Kang Wu.

INDIA is finishing 2024 with its oil demand growth rate outpacing neighboring countries, a trend expected to continue into the next year, according to S&P Global Commodity Insights. The country has emerged as one of the fastest-growing fuel consumption centers globally.

As per the global commodities information services provid-



India has emerged as one of the fastest-growing fuel consumption centres globally. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

er, the increasing fuel consumption is prompting India’s refiners to accelerate expansion plans and widen crude sourcing.

Oil players are increasingly turning their focus to India amid expectations of its peak demand scenario coming much later than that of China’s, according to the latest commentary on India’s oil sector by S&P Global Commodity Insights. “India will be the leading driver, along with Southeast Asia and other parts of South Asia, of the region’s future oil demand growth,” said Kang Wu, global head of macro and oil demand research at S&P Global Commodity Insights.

“In 2025, India is forecast to deliver a relatively faster growth in oil demand of 3.2 per cent, compared with China’s 1.7 per cent,” Wu added. — ANI

Tax cuts, debt reined in as Italy adopts 2025 budget

ITALY’S parliament on Saturday approved the 2025 budget, aiming to both appease EU demands to lower the eurozone nation’s deficit and honour Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni’s pledge to cut taxes.

Over half of the package, worth some 30 billion euros (\$31 billion), is devoted to cuts to tax and social security contributions for low- and middle-income earners.

Rome is having to perform a fine fiscal balancing act, after Brussels took Italy to task earlier this year over its debt worth nearly 3 trillion euros, the second highest as a proportion of gross

domestic product (GDP) in the European Union.

Meloni’s hard-right coalition has committed to reducing the public deficit to 3.3 per cent of GDP in 2025, down from an expected 3.8 per cent this year.

But the budget comes amid slowing growth, with the ISTAT national statistics office estimating GDP this year to increase just 0.5 per cent — half what it forecast in June.

The measures approved include making permanent a merging of the lower two income tax brackets, so people earning 28,000 euros a year can pay 23 per cent instead of 25 per cent. — AFP



Italy is implementing text cut policies that aim to streamline business operations and reduce administrative burdens. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Kazakhstan tops regional investment with US\$ 15.7 billion in 2024



A visitor views commodities at the booth of Kazakhstan at the seventh China-Eurasia Expo in Urumqi, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, 20 September 2022. PHOTO: XINHUA/FILE

KAZAKHSTAN has solidified its position as the leading investment destination in North and Central Asia, drawing US\$ 15.7 billion in new projects in 2024, as per the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) report released on 25 December. This marks an 88 per cent year-on-year surge, with Kazakhstan accounting for 63 per cent of the region’s total investments, The Astana Times reported.

The region witnessed a 27 per cent rise in overall foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows, totaling US\$ 24.8 billion in 2023. ESCAP highlighted Qatar’s UCC Holding as a significant contributor to Kazakhstan’s FDI growth, with US\$ 11 billion committed to the development of critical gas infrastructure projects.

The projects include gas processing plants with annual capacities of one billion and 2.5 billion cubic metres, aimed

at optimising raw gas usage. Agreements for these initiatives were formalised between QazaqGas, the national gas company, and Qatar’s UCC Holding during President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev’s visit to Qatar. Additional developments encompass the construction of the Aktobe-Kostanai gas pipeline and the expansion of the Beineu-Bozoi-Shymkent pipeline, which is anticipated to enhance Kazakhstan’s energy infrastructure. — ANI

Pakistan delays opening of New Gwadar International Airport for third time

THE inauguration of the New Gwadar International Airport (NGIA) has been delayed for the third time due to ongoing security concerns in the region. Originally scheduled to begin operations on 1 January 2025, the airport, which is a key part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), will now remain closed indefinitely, the Balochistan Post reported.

Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has also cancelled its first commercial flight, which was set to coincide with the opening, according to reports from The Balochistan Times.

The NGIA, a major infrastructure project funded by Chi-

na at a cost of US\$ 250 million, is designed to accommodate large aircraft such as the Airbus A380. The airport's original opening date of 14 August 2024, was planned to coincide with Pakistan's Independence Day celebrations but was postponed due to protests organised by the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC).

The second delay followed a series of deadly attacks by the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), which targeted key CPEC-related infrastructure, including highways, railway bridges, and mineral transport vehicles, as reported by The Balochistan Post. — ANI



Originally scheduled to begin operations on 1 January 2025, the airport, which is a key part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), will now remain closed indefinitely, the Balochistan Post reported. **PHOTO: AVIATION.GOV.PK**

Winter fishing-themed cultural, tourism festival kicks off in China's Jilin

A winter fishing-themed cultural festival began at Chagan Lake, Jilin Province, celebrating traditional hand-drilled ice fishing and abundant fishery resources.

A winter fishing-themed cultural and tourism festival kicked off on Saturday at Chagan Lake. Chagan Lake, located in Songyuan City of Jilin Province, is the largest natural lake of the province with abundant fishery resources. Locals living by Chagan Lake have kept alive the tradition of ice fishing by hand-drilling holes through the thick ice and casting nets into the icy waters to catch fish.

The winter fishing at Chagan Lake, included in the national intangible cultural heritage list, has become a famous tourism attraction in the city. — Xinhua



People purchase fish at a market at Chagan Lake in Songyuan City of northeast China's Jilin Province, 27 December 2024. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

US to hit new debt limit as soon as 14 Jan: Yellen

THE United States could come up against its debt ceiling as soon as in mid-January, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said Friday, urging Congress to "act to protect the full faith and credit" of the country.

Lawmakers have suspended the debt ceiling — a limit on government borrowing to pay for bills already incurred — until 1 January

next year.

This means that on 2 January, a new limit will be set matching the amount of debt issued by the Treasury Department.

But the path forward could prove to be contentious if the United States hits this new limit, given that the lifting of the ceiling has been a thorny partisan issue in recent years. — AFP

Top Japan defence firms saw revenue increase 35% in 2023: think tank

THE top five Japanese defence firms tallied sales of \$10 billion in 2023, up 35 per cent from the year before, according to an international security think tank, as the country continues its defence buildup amid Chinese and North Korean threats.

Globally, the combined arms revenues of the world's 100 largest arms-producing and military services companies rose 4.2 per cent to \$632 billion, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute said in an annual report, citing increased demand for weapons worldwide.

Companies in regions where wars are being waged marked the largest percentage increases, with the two Russian companies with available data and six Middle Eastern firms on the list seeing combined sales climb 40 per cent and 18 per cent, respectively.

Asia and Oceania saw a 5.7 per cent rise, with Japanese and South Korean companies leading the growth in the region. — Kyodo



File photo taken on 15 March 2023, shows the Japan Ground Self-Defence Force's Type-16 maneuver combat vehicle displayed at a major defence show in Makuhari Messe convention centre in Chiba, near Tokyo. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Trump sides with Musk in right-wing row over worker visas

AMID growing tension within his base, Donald Trump endorsed the H1-B visa programme, a stance that has triggered a "MAGA civil war" with figures like Elon Musk defending skilled immigration against critics demanding stricter limits. Donald Trump weighed in Saturday in a bitter debate dividing his traditional supporters and tech barons like Elon Musk, saying that he backs a special visa programme that helps highly skilled workers enter the country.

"I've always liked the (H1-B) visas, I have always been in favour of the visas, that's why we have them" at Trump-owned facilities, the president-elect told the New York Post in his first public comments on the matter since it flared up this week. — AFP

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

North Korea unveils “toughest” strategy against US

North Korea condemned the military ties between South Korea, the US, and Japan, calling it a “nuclear military bloc” and announced a tough counter strategy.



This picture taken during the period of 23 to 27 December, 2024 and released from North Korea’s official Korean Central News Agency on 29 December shows Kim Jong Un attending the party meeting.
PHOTO: KCNA VIA KNS/AFP

CLAIMING that military ties among South Korea, the US, and Japan have evolved into a “nuclear military bloc for aggression,” North Korea announced its “toughest” counter strategy against the United States, Yonhap News Agency reported,

citing North Korea’s state media KCNA.

According to a report by KCNA on Sunday, this policy direction was outlined during the year-end plenary session of the Central Committee of the Workers’ Party of Korea, which took place from Monday to Friday under the leadership of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un.

During the meeting, the North Korean leader accused the military cooperation among Seoul, Washington and Tokyo of expanding into “a nuclear military bloc for aggression”, and added that South Korea has turned into “an out-and-out anti-communist outpost of the US”.

Kim also ordered to boost the country’s military “capabilities for fighting a war”. The order was made to meet the demands of modern warfare and the “ever-changing” war scenario and execution mode of enemies.

“Kim Jong Un clarified the strategic and tactical policies for more reliably guaranteeing the bolstering of war deterrence for self-defence through accelerated progress of defence science and technology and radical development of the defence industry to cope with the ever-increasing military provocations of the US and its vassal force,” Yonhap cited the KCNA report. — ANI

Peru closes 91 ports amid massive waves

MASSIVE waves of up to 13 feet (four metres) are pummeling the coasts of Peru, leaving scores of ports closed on Saturday, authorities said.

Peru closed 91 of its 121 ports until 1st January, the National Emergency Operations Centre said on its X social media account.

Callao, which sits adjacent to the capital Lima and is home to Peru’s largest port, has closed several beaches and barred tourist and fishing boats from venturing out.

Many beaches along the central and northern stretches of the country were closed to prevent risk to human life, authorities said.

Dozens of fishing boats were damaged, while those that were spared were still unable to work in the dangerous con-



Massive waves are pummeling the coasts of Ecuador and Peru. **PHOTO: AFP**

ditions.

The waves, according to the Peruvian navy, are being generated off the US coast by winds along the ocean’s surface. — ANI

NEWS IN BRIEF

US and UK seek to force Russia out of Syria to further destabilize Middle East: CIA Veteran

THE outgoing Biden administration and the British leadership are looking to maintain chaos in the Middle East while regarding the Russian military presence in Syria as a force hindering their plans, according to Russia’s Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR).

The SVR stated that the CIA and MI6 are developing plans to organize a series of terrorist attacks on Russian military facilities in Syria using ISIS fighters armed with drones as their proxies.

“This is just one more egregious example of the US poking the bear. And up to this point, the bear has not eaten the poker,” retired CIA intelligence official Larry Johnson tells Sputnik.

The US and its allies believe that they “can inflict enough damage on Russia that it’ll pull out of Syria and withdraw its presence from those military bases” since they misinterpret Moscow’s patience as weakness, according to Johnson. — SPUTNIK

Shark kills man fishing in Australia’s Great Barrier Reef

A shark has attacked and killed a 40-year-old pastor who was fishing with his family in the waters of Australia’s Great Barrier Reef, officials said.

The predator bit him on the neck on Saturday afternoon off Humpy Island on the country’s east coast, emergency services said.

“The man was fishing with family members when he was bitten by a shark,” Queensland state police said in a statement.

He sustained “life-threatening injuries” and died about an hour-and-a-half later, police said, adding that a report would be prepared for the coroner. — AFP

Russia’s Gazprom to restrict gas supplies to Moldova to zero starting 1 Jan

RUSSIAN energy giant Gazprom announced on Saturday that starting 1 January it introduces a restriction on gas supplies to Moldova to zero due to the debt of Moldovagaz.

“Gazprom sent a notification to Moldovagaz on Saturday in connection with the refusal of the Moldovan side to settle the debt for gas supplies. It says that Moldovagaz regularly fails to fulfill its payment obligations under the current contract, which is a significant violation of its terms... In this regard, based on the provisions of the contract and the applicable norms of Russian legislation, Gazprom introduces

a restriction on natural gas supplies to the Republic of Moldova to zero cubic meters per day starting from 8:00 Moscow time [5:00 GMT] on 1 January, 2025,” Gazprom said on Telegram. — SPUTNIK

SPORTS

Big teams shine in MFF
Futsal League I opener

THE 2024-2025 season of the MFF Futsal League I opening matches continued yesterday, with most of the top teams including the current champions VUC securing wins.

In the Fixture I, MIU won 2-1 against YRG, MH Dream Team triumphed 7-0 over Futsal Chitthu, VUC defeated SGF 4-1, and Generations won 5-3 against YCDC Marga. Winner Soccer and M2K teams both finished with a 2-2 draw.

Despite making significant pre-season adjustments, VUC, featuring four players selected

for the national team suffered defeat in the opening match against the rising YRG team. MIU, who led by one goal at half-time saw their advantage slip in the second half and ended with a tough draw. Although the current champions VUC let many of their star players out during the match, they still managed to secure a win in the opening match. MH Dream Team, who had also made several pre-season changes made an impressive debut with an impressive victory. — Shine Htet Zaw/KZL



MH Dream Team in action against Futsal Chitthu. PHOTO:MFF



Mar Rein and Arthawady in action during the MFF U-15 Youth League match. PHOTO:MFF

Mar Rein, Golden Light
United win in MFF U-15
Youth League

THE second day of Fixture 1 in the Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) U-15 Youth League continued yesterday evening at the Thuwunna Youth Training Centre.

Mar Rein defeated Arthawady 2-1, while Golden Light United trounced Myathida with

a dominant 6-0 victory.

After the Fixture 1, Royal Yangon, Golden Light United, Burmese Youth, Shwepyitha, Mar Rein, and Yangon Focus secured wins. The league features 12 teams, with matches scheduled every Saturday and Sunday. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

No enjoyment, 'just relief' for
Guardiola as Man City stop rot
at Leicester

PEP Guardiola said relief was his overriding emotion after a 2-0 victory at Leicester secured just a second win in 14 games for the crisis-hit English champions on Sunday.

Savinho and Erling Haaland struck either side of half-time as City ended a run of eight away games without a win.

The performance was still far from the standards that Guardiola's side have set in winning an unprecedented four consecutive English top-flight titles.

But the effusive celebrations of Haaland's header 16 minutes from time showed that three points was all that mattered for the visitors to at least temporarily halt their remarkable slump.

"It is not enjoyable right now, it is just relief. We have done incredible things for many years," said Guardiola.

"Our mood is in a better position. It was tight in the second half, they were much better.

"We don't have energy to sustain 90 minutes. Hopefully the new year can help us bounce back."

Victory lifts City up to fifth but they are still 11 points behind leaders Liverpool, who have two games in hand.

Defeat leaves Leicester still rooted in the bottom three.

Guardiola made just one change from the 1-1 Boxing Day draw against Everton as Kevin De Bruyne replaced his Belgian international colleague Jeremy Doku.

De Bruyne's fitness struggles have played a part in City's slump and he immediately showed what Guardiola's men have been missing for most of the season. — AFP

Olympics: JOC, JPC to let companies
sign joint sponsorship deal

THE Japanese Olympic Committee and Japanese Paralympic Committee plan to allow companies to sign a single joint sponsorship contract with both bodies from 2025, sources familiar with the matter said Sunday.

Until now, companies wanting to sponsor both the Olympics and Paralympics have had to sign separate contracts with each. At present, five companies sponsor both the JOC and JPC.

The two committees' decision to join hands is aimed at increasing the number of sponsors and public exposure.

There have been many calls from companies for joint Olympic-Paralympic contracts, but the JOC and JPC had been unable to reach agreement as their deals were based on separate sets of rules. "We want to promote Japanese athletes and the games by benefitting from the strengths of both the Olympics' and Paralympics' strength," one source said. Since Tokyo was awarded the hosting rights in 2013 for the 2020 Olympics, the idea of having the Olympics and Paralympics promote each other has become widespread.

Joint parades of Japan's Olympic and Paralympic athletes took place after the 2016 games in Rio de Janeiro and again after this year's games in Paris. — Kyodo



File photo shows Japanese Olympic and Paralympic athletes, who competed in Paris in the summer, holding a joint parade in Tokyo in November 2024. PHOTO: KYODO



PM Modi hails Tamil for being oldest language in world, praises Ayurveda’s popularity in Paraguay

PM Modi expressed pride in Tamil as the world's oldest language and highlighted global interest, including Fiji's Tamil Teaching Programme.

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday expressed pride in Tamil being the oldest language in the world. He noted the increasing global interest in learning Tamil, citing the recent launch of a Tamil Teaching Programme in Fiji with the support of the Indian government.

PM Modi further praised the Indian Embassy to Paraguay for promoting Ayurveda, with local residents seeking traditional health consultations.

PM Modi addressed the 117th episode of Mann Ki Baat, his monthly radio programme, where he engages with citizens on important national issues and themes impacting India.

He said, “It is a matter of great pride for us that Tamil is the oldest language in the world and every Indian is proud of it. The number of people learning it is constantly rising in countries around the world. At the end of last month, a Tamil Teaching Programme was started in Fiji with the support of the Government of India. This is the first time in the last 80



Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed pride in Tamil, calling it the oldest language in the world. PHOTO: ANI

years that trained Tamil teachers are teaching the language in Fiji.”

PM Modi added, “There is a country in South America called Paraguay. The number of Indians living there would not be more than one thousand. A wonderful effort is being done in Paraguay. At the Indian Embassy to Paraguay, Erica Huber offers Ayurveda Consultation. A large number of local people are reaching out to her to get Ayurved-based advice.” — ANI

179 dead in South Korea’s worst plane crash

A Jeju Air plane carrying 181 people from Thailand to South Korea crashed on arrival Sunday, smashing into a barrier and bursting into flames, killing everyone

aboard except for two flight attendants plucked from the wreckage.

A bird strike was cited by authorities as the likely cause of the crash — the

worst ever aviation disaster on South Korean soil — which flung passengers out of the plane and left it “almost completely destroyed”, according to fire officials. Video showed the Jeju Air Boeing 737-800 landing on its belly at Muan International Airport, skidding off the runway as smoke streamed out from the engines, before crashing into a wall and exploding in flames. “Of the 179 dead, 65 have been identified,” the country’s fire agency said, adding that DNA retrieval had begun. Inside the airport terminal, tearful family members gathered to wait for news.

An official began calling out the names of the 65 victims who had been identified, with each name triggering fresh cries of grief from waiting relatives. Only two people — both flight attendants — were rescued from the crash, the fire department said. — AFP



After issuing a “mayday,” the plane belly-landed, hitting a wall and bursting into flames. PHOTO: AFP

MAJOR QUALITATIVE LEAP

Suez Canal tests new lane section to boost traffic

THE Suez Canal has successfully tested a new lane that allows ships to travel in both directions along a 10-km stretch in its southern section, the Suez Canal Authority (SCA) announced Saturday.

SCA Chairman Osama Rabie said two ships used the new channel after dredging work was completed. He called the project a “major qualitative leap” that will significantly improve the canal’s capacity and efficiency.

Rabie added the lane will help ships navigate strong currents and weather conditions. — Xinhua