

Demands Should Be Met Through Political Dialogue, Not Armed Terrorism

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing sent a message to the ceremony to mark the 50th Anniversary (Golden Jubilee) Rakhine State Day which falls on 15 December 2024. The full text of the translated message is as follows: -

Esteemed national brethren in Rakhine State,

First and foremost, I extend my greetings with heartfelt wishes, praying for the well-being and happiness of all Rakhine ethnic brethren in all parts of the nation and in Rakhine State, as well as all Union-born ethnic people across the nation, wishing them fulfilment in their aspirations and prosperity both in mind and body on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Rakhine State Day which falls on 15 December 2024, today.

Rakhine State Day is a special and significant day filled with unique attributes and pride for the indigenous Rakhine people. Under the 1974 Constitution, Rakhine State was also designated as one of the states in the Union. As 15 December when the national referendum was held to approve the 1974 constitution was designated as Rakhine State Day, it turns 50 years now as a commemoration of the golden jubilee.

Rakhine State is blessed with cultural heritage and plentiful artistic works due to its prolonged history of forefathers. As Rakhine State is a region where Buddhism is flourishing, the state has abundant ancient stupas and temples as cultural heritage guided by the motto: Number of Buddhist monuments is equal to blossoming orchid flowers (defined as 6,354,755 pagodas in numerical signs).

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MoL issues OWICs to over 181,000 workers by Nov 2024

NATIONAL **PAGE 12**

Russia-Myanmar visa exemption to start early 2025

Taungthaman Bridge and Lake attract 2,000 daily visitors

ACCORDING to U Soe Win, the secretary of the Taungthaman Bridge Maintenance Committee, the number of domestic and international tourists visiting Taungthaman Bridge and Lake in Amarapura Township, Mandalay Region for relaxation and sightseeing has reached nearly 2,000 per day since the second week of December.

Taungthaman Lake and Bridge are among the most popular destinations in Mandalay Region, attracting both local and overseas travellers.

They are considered some of the most visited spots in the area.

“The number of tourists increases significantly in the mornings during the winter season,” said U Soe Win. “Since the second week of December, tourist arrivals have noticeably increased. During the first week of December, the daily number of visitors was around 1,000, but since the second week, it has risen to nearly 2,000 per day.”

At present, the famous Taungthaman Lake and Bridge



The general view of the Taungthaman area in Mandalay Region.

in Mandalay Region are attracting a large number of domestic visitors, mainly from cities such as Mandalay, PyinOoLwin, Taunggyi, and Yangon. As for foreign tourists, most visitors come from Thailand, Vietnam, and South Korea, according to reports. — ASH/TMT

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NATIONAL

United Strength Needed to Stop Internal Threats Undermining National Progress

- While many citizens work to improve the country, some engage in obstructionism, undermining progress.
- Terrorists, often from within the region, commit destructive acts.
- Outsiders cannot destroy a region; the threat often comes from within.
- It's like those who take shelter under a tree but cut off its branches.
- These terrorists must be stopped through the united strength of the people.

(Excerpt from the speech given by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the SAC Meeting 3/2024 on 7 June 2024)

Private sector urged to ensure efficient inflow of foreign currency

THE 33rd Annual General Meeting of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) was held yesterday at the National Theatre in Yangon.

The event was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Planning and Finance U Win Shein, Union Ministers U Aung Kyaw Hoe, Dr Kan Zaw, and U Tun Ohn, Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar Daw Than Than Swe, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein, regional ministers, officials from foreign embassies, and representatives from partner organizations.

UMFCCI President U Aye Win first delivered a welcome address to the meeting.

Following this, Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister U Win Shein highlighted that the private sector serves as a key driving force in economic development. He emphasized that the government prioritizes the interests of private businesses and urged entrepreneurs to ensure the timely and efficient inflow of foreign currency earnings from exports into the country.

He also stated that the economic growth rate for the 2024-2025 financial year is targeted at 3.8 per cent. Despite challenges in certain sectors due



Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Planning and Finance U Win Shein visits the exhibition booths displayed during the 33rd Annual General Meeting of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) in Yangon yesterday.

to regional and territorial conditions, the GDP growth rate for the first six months (from April to September) has reached 2.4 per cent. He acknowledged that UMFCCI plays a crucial role in fostering collaboration between the government and the private sector, helping to create a better economic environment through its contributions to policy-related

issues.

Subsequently, the federation's General Secretary Daw Khine Khine Nwe presented the annual report, financial statement, and the external audit report from JF Group (Certified Public Accountants & Auditors). After addressing questions and suggestions, the annual report and financial statement were ap-

proved, and an external auditor was appointed for the 2023-2024 financial year.

Following this, the president of the federation delivered a closing speech, after which group photos were taken. Attendees then toured the exhibition booths of partner organizations displayed inside the National Theatre. — MNA/TMT

Myanmar-China Friendship Association (Central) and Chinese Embassy meet

AS a gesture of hailing the 75th anniversary of Myanmar-China diplomatic relations, a meeting was held on 13 December at the Pan Pacific Hotel in Yangon.

The meeting was between the Myanmar-China Friendship Association (Central), led by Chairperson U Tin Oo, along with its patrons, vice chairpersons, and executive members, and a delegation from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China to Myanmar, headed by Chinese Ambassador Ms Ma Jia, along with senior diplomats and embassy staff.

During the meeting, the Chairperson of the Myanmar-China Friendship Association (Central) and the Chinese Ambassador delivered speeches. Discussions were held on enhancing bilateral friendship and deepening cooperation across various sectors. The meeting included an exchange of gifts and a joint



The meeting between the Myanmar-China Friendship Association (Central) and a delegation from the Chinese Embassy to Myanmar in progress in Yangon on 13 December 2024.

prayer for the enduring strength of Myanmar-China diplomatic relations. The event concluded with a cordial dinner shared by the participants. — MNA/TMT

GoldMarket Rate as of 14 December 2024

THE price of one tical (16.329325 grammes) of gold with a density of 19.25 grammes per cubic centimetre and above is K5,400,000, as established by the Mineral (Gold) Reference Price Determination Committee.

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)

Demands Should Be Met Through Political Dialogue, Not Armed Terrorism

FROM PAGE 1

According to the geographical conditions, Rakhine State is located on the western coast of the nation, on 14,200 square miles of area, sharing borders with neighbouring countries. So, it is a strategic area of the nation. It is a proud and beautiful state with lush forests, mountains, and rivers, as well as a long and scenic coastline, rich in natural and water resources, enabling the production of valuable goods.

Esteemed ethnic national brethren,

Now is a State of Emergency when the State Administration Council is assuming State responsibilities under the Constitution. Since its outset, the State Administration Council has adopted the roadmaps and objectives and now has been implementing the five-point roadmap and nine objectives.

As the State Administration Council is implementing the work processes in accord with the five-point roadmap, the national population and household census has so far been collected. The enumeration of the census is being undertaken in some areas that were left for various reasons. Now, arrangements are being made to successfully hold a multiparty democratic general election aligned with the last point of the five-point roadmap.

The basic foundation to emerge the genuine, disciplined democratic system the people aspire to is to conduct a free, fair, and prestigious general election. In such doing, as it is necessary to restore peace and stability across the nation, all citizens and entire people have to join hands with the government in implementing the mission with the national spirit.

Esteemed ethnic national brethren,

The State Administration Council emphasizes the implementation of two key political and national visions each while formulating good conditions to shape a peaceful, prosperous future for the State and all ethnic and national people. As food, clothing and shelter are basic needs for everyone, two national visions were adopted to ensure the prosperity of the State and food security. Now, the government fulfils the need to produce agricultural produce suitable for the regions and accelerate successful farming of livestock breeding to benefit all citizens.

The government has allocated K10 billion from the State economic promotion fund to operate agriculture, livestock, cooperative and industrial businesses to develop Rakhine State. At present, the allocated fund has been distributed to agricultural farmers, livestock farmers, cooperative societies and industries to implement their projects.

Making efforts to enhance agriculture and livestock sectors in Rakhine State can reflect the socioeconomic life of the rural people who are the majority population in the state as well as the manufacturing sector of the country. It shows the goodwill of the State for Rakhine State and national people from the Rakhine region in addition to the family spirit of national brethren, genuine

patriotism and Union spirit.

The government is implementing the KG+9 education plan for the improvement of a society blessed with physical capacity and mental knowledge. I would like to urge all to emphasize the increase of high per cent student number for all school-age children, completion of school education and raising the rate of student grades.

Better techniques and correct knowledge and attitude are crucial to come out well-versed qualified youths who would be reliable for the state and the country in the future. Hence, it is necessary to participate in the activities on the development of libraries and raise the reading skills being implemented by the State for the people to accumulate techniques and knowledge in the entire nation.

Esteemed ethnic national brethren,

The State Administration Council has established the Rakhine State Peaceful, Stability and Development Central Committee, which is working on improving the socioeconomic development of the state in sectors such as agriculture, livestock, education, health, communication, and electricity. These efforts are carried out sector by sector. In May 2023, during the impact of the powerful cyclonic storm Mocha, the committee was able to immediately launch rehabilitation activities in Rakhine State the day after the cyclone struck. As a result, Rakhine State is making significant progress in recovery from natural disasters, working quickly to restore and improve conditions beyond their original state.

Rakhine State has historically faced numerous difficulties in terms of transportation and infrastructure. As a result, successive governments have placed significant emphasis on the development of Rakhine State up until the present time. Everybody knows that this focus has led to substantial changes and improvements.

However, at present, there is instability and unrest within the country, including in Rakhine State, and this creates an opportunity for certain powerful nations to exert influence over the country's geopolitics landscape, which results in the creation and shaping of internal instability.

The actions of the MNDAA, TNLA, and AA terrorists, which began in October 2023, have further worsened the socioeconomic conditions of the ethnic people. Due to the sabotage acts of these armed terrorist groups, many innocent civilians have suffered in poverty and hardship. The continuous armed attacks by these terrorists, driven by political motives and misguided ideologies, have only resulted in further acts of violence. They have been observed to prioritize standing alone rather than collectively building the union on a multiparty democratic path. Young people have been trapped and manipulated through drugs, leading them to be involved in violent conflicts. It has become clear that their demands cannot be achieved through armed terrorism, but rather through political dialogue at the negotiation table. They now recognize that peaceful solutions are the only way to resolve conflicts, and it is urged that they abandon the path of armed struggle and instead

follow the right course.

Esteemed ethnic national brethren,

All national races and peoples living within Myanmar have long been united, sharing the land, water, and resources in harmony, as brothers and sisters, for many generations. In the present day, however, certain internal traitors and powerful foreign nations have caused immense suffering to these ethnic peoples, pushing them into poverty and destroying the regions where they live, along with the development and resources that once sustained them. It is now crucial for everyone to consider the long-term benefits for the nation and their communities, rather than allowing their livelihoods and resources to be destroyed. If we are in disunity, the strength of the nation will diminish, and we risk becoming a people who are merely subjects, following others' will as history leaves us behind. Therefore, it is important to heed this warning and work together for the greater good of the nation.

Only by following the path of the Nationwide Cease-fire Agreement (NCA) for the Union's peace can we build the peaceful and prosperous nation we all aspire to. In advancing the peace of our country, it is crucial to ensure there is no foreign interference or internal division. All ethnic groups must unite in the spirit of the Union and seek solutions through political dialogue and negotiation. The government also invites discussions and continues to keep the door to peace open. As the saying goes, "Strength of the nation lies within", and we urge all ethnic peoples to unite and work together for the national interest with coordinated efforts.

In Rakhine State, the Rakhine, Kaman, Khami, Dainet, Maramagyi, Mro, Thet, and other indigenous ethnic groups live together alongside the Myanmar and Chin ethnic groups. The peace, stability, and development of the state rely on the unity of all the ethnic peoples living together and their commitment to the spirit of the Union. The efforts for peace and regional development by the ethnic national brethren residing in Rakhine State contribute to the stability, peace, and progress within the state, and serve as a source of strength for the nation-building process.

In conclusion, to establish a strong multi-party democratic system and successfully implement necessary reforms in our country, the critical factors for achieving security, peace and stability, which are essential for smooth and rapid progress, include the full participation of the people in ensuring national security and peace. Moreover, the ethnic people of Rakhine State are urged to uphold the Union spirit and national spirit to serve the interests of the people from Rakhine State, the State and the union. Wishing for lasting peace, happiness, and prosperity, we pay tribute to the Golden Jubilee of Rakhine State and respectfully submit this letter.

Senior General Thadon Maha Thray Sithu
Thadon Thiri Thudamma Min Aung Hlaing
Prime Minister
Chairman, State Administration Council

NATIONAL

Myanmar participates in 9th GMS Cross-Border Transport Meeting in Laos

THE Myanmar delegation comprising senior officials from the Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of Planning and Finance and Ministry of Construction, led by State Administration Council Member Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Transport and Communications General Mya Tun Oo, attended the ninth meeting of the Joint Committee for the Greater Mekong Subregion Cross-Border Transport Facilitation Agreement, and preliminary meeting of Senior Officials of the National Transport Facilitation Committee in Laos on 12 and 13 December.

The delegation left Yangon on 11 December morning to attend these meetings.

On 12 December, a Myanmar delegation led by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Transport and Communications attended the preliminary meeting of Senior Of-



SAC Member DPM Union Minister General Mya Tun Oo and attendees of the ninth Joint Committee Meeting for the GMS Cross-Border Transport Facilitation Agreement pose for the group documentary photo in Laos.

ficials of the National Transport Facilitation Committee and discussed the implementation work for the greater Mekong subregion cross-border transport agreement in which Myanmar

ratified, draft agreement to expand route and entry and exit sites of border second time under GMS CBTA Protocol 1, operations conducted in 2024 under GMS transport protocol

and missions for 2025.

On 13 December, the Deputy Prime Minister and party attended the ninth meeting of the Joint Committee for the Greater Mekong Subregion

Cross-Border Transport Facilitation Agreement and discussed the NTFC SOM, a joint statement of the ninth meeting, and MoU on the second-time expansion of route and entry and exit sites of borders for the second time under GMS CBTA Protocol 1.

Myanmar signed the GMS CBTA in 2003, and all the member countries approved the annexes, protocols and commitment in 2015. The agreement is essential to solve the physical challenges in trade among member countries, reduce costs, develop trade, tourism and investment and promote the living standards of people. Myanmar will host the meetings of the Greater Mekong Subregion Cross-Border Transport Agreement in 2025.

The Myanmar delegation arrived back in Myanmar on 13 December evening. — MNA/KTZH

SAC members meet state-level officials in Sittway

A delegation led by State Administration Council Members Dr Hmuh Thang, Dr Ba Shwe and Khun San Lwin met state-level departmental officials yesterday morning at the Rakhine State government office in Sittway.

During the meeting, the Rakhine State chief minister presented an update on the regional situation. The SAC members discussed the needs and guided on critical matters. Following this, Union ministers, SAC Central Advisory Body members, and deputy ministers outlined ongoing and planned initiatives to advance state development, ensure stability, and

uphold the rule of law.

Union Minister Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung also handed over essential supplies, including rice, oil, salt, pulses, and canned goods to the Chief Minister for distribution to government employees in Rakhine State.

SAC Member Dr Ba Shwe expressed appreciation for the unified efforts of all departments in carrying out their responsibilities and emphasized that state-level officials are instrumental in implementing national policies.

He highlighted that sustainable peace can only be achieved through political di-

alogue at negotiation tables, and reiterated that previous public concerns raised during his visits to Sittway were promptly reported to the Head of State, who acted swiftly. He encouraged state government and departmental officials to present their needs, stressing that collective efforts are essential for state development, the rule of law, and regional stability.

After the meeting, the delegation visited the Mahazeya Theikdhi Monastery in Sittway, where they paid homage to the abbot and made offerings of donations and religious items.

— MNA/KZL



State Administration Council Members Dr Hmuh Thang, Dr Ba Shwe and Khun San Lwin discuss with Rakhine State-level officials at the Rakhine State government office in Sittway yesterday.

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NATIONAL

Winners awarded in bodybuilding, athletics, swimming, Taekwondo, cricket, Vovinam sports

FINAL matches and awarding ceremonies in the Inter-Ministry and Inter-State and Region competitions of the Fifth National Sports Festival 2024 took place at relevant stadiums and gymnasiums in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The Bodybuilding and Fitness Physique sports at the Inter-State and Region level of the 5th National Sports Festival 2024 was held at Myanmar International Convention Centre II in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

Regional ministers and Deputy Minister U Htein Lin, Union Ministers Dr Myo Thein Kyaw and U Nyan Tun presented prizes to the winners in the men's U-21 bodybuilding event, men's 55-kilogrammes bodybuilding event, men's 60-kilogramme event, men's 65-kilogramme event, men's 170-centimetre Athletic Physique event, women's Athletic Physique event, and men's Fitness Physique event, respectively.

State Administration Council member Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Yar Pyae also awarded winners in the men's above 170-centimetre Athletic Physique.

In the final matches of the Inter-Ministry Athletics Sports held at Wunna Theikdi Stadium, Chairman of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union U Aung Zaw Thein, Union Minister U Min Thein Zan, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman U Than Tun



SAC Member Union Minister Lt-Gen Yar Pyae presents prizes.

Oo, deputy ministers, members of Union Civil Service Board, the deputy governor of Central Bank of Myanmar and officials of Myanmar Athletics Sports Federation presented prizes to winners in the men's 1,500-metre race, women's 1,500-metre race, women's triple jump, women's javelin, men's 20-kilometre walking race, women's 20-kilometre walking race, women's 400-metre race, men's 400-metre race, women's 100-metre hurdles, and men's triple jump, respectively.

At Wunna Theikdi swimming pool, Union Minister for Legal Affairs and Union Attorney-General Dr Thida Oo, the

Union Constitutional Tribunal member, the Deputy Minister for Information, the Shan State minister and officials of Myanmar Swimming Federation presented prizes to winners in the women's 200-metre freestyle, men's 200-metre freestyle, women's 50-metre backstroke, men's 50-metre backstroke, women's 50-metre breaststroke, men's 50-metre breaststroke, women's 50-metre butterfly, men's 50-metre butterfly, women's 50-metre freestyle, men's 50-metre freestyle, women's 50-metre x 4 shuttle freestyle, and men's 50-metre x 4 shuttle freestyle, respectively.

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Union Constitutional Tribunal Chair U Aung Zaw Thein awards prizes.



Union Minister for Legal Affairs and Union Attorney-General Dr Thida Oo presents prizes.



Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Kyaw hands out prizes.



Union Minister U Myo Thant delivers awards.



Union Minister U Min Thein Zan offers prizes.

NATIONAL

Athletes vigorously compete in 5th National Sports Festival 2024



Photos show enthusiastic spectators cheering a basketball match between the Ministry of Home Arrairs and the Ministry of Border Affairs.



SPORTS events of the Fifth National Sports Festival 2024 continued at relevant sports venues in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area yesterday morning.

In the Inter-Ministry athletics sports at Wunna Theikdi stadium, officials presented prizes to winners in the men's and women's 20-kilo-

metre walking races, women's javelin, men's and women's 1,500-metre races, men's and women's triple jump, women's 110-metre hurdles, and men's

and women's 400-metre races, respectively. Moreover, men's javelin, women's 100-metre hurdles and men's 110-metre hurdles

events took place at relevant venues.

In the Inter-State and Region swimming sports at Wunna Theikdi swimming pool, officials awarded winners in the men's and women's 200-metre freestyle, men's and women's 50-metre backstroke, men's and women's breaststroke, men's and women's butterfly, men's and women's 50-metre freestyle, and men's and women's 50-metre x 4 mixed shuttle events respectively.

In Inter-State and Region Vovinam sports at Shwekyapin gymnasium, officials handed prizes to men's and women's 50-55-kilogramme, men's and women's 60-65-kilogramme, mixed defending arms performance, men's double swords attack, and men's four-athletes performance without arms events respectively.

In the Inter-State and Region billiards and snooker sports at Wunna Theikdi Stadium, athletes took part in the snooker 6Red, billiard singles 16-player knockout event, 9 Ball Pool singles, snooker 15 Red double, snooker 6 Red double, and 9 Ball Poll singles events.

In the Inter-State and Region Bodybuilding and Fitness Physique sports at MICC 2, officials gave prizes to winners in the men's U-21 bodybuilding, men's 55-kilogramme bodybuilding, men's 60-kilogramme bodybuilding, men's 65-kilogramme bodybuilding, men's 170-centimetre fitness physique, men's above 170-centimetre fitness physique, women's athletic physique and men's fitness physique events.

Officials awarded prize-winning teams in the men's and women's cricket events in the Inter-State and Region U-25 cricket sports at Wunna Theikdi archery shooting ranges 1 and 2.

Moreover, quarterfinals of the Inter-State and Region U-21 men's football and Inter-Ministry men's open football group matches continued at relevant stadiums.



Inter-State and Region men's doubles tennis match.



Inter-State and Region men's football match.



Inter-State and Region Billiards-snooker match.



Ma Zin Nyein Aye from Bago Region competes in the women's 49-kilogramme category.

NATIONAL

Winners awarded in bodybuilding, athletics, ...

FROM PAGE 5

In the Inter-State and Region Taekwondo sports held at TC-1 gymnasium, regional and state ministers, Deputy Minister U Zin Min Htet, Supreme Court Judge U Myo Tint, Union Ministers U Myo Thant and U Min Thein Zan hand-

ed prizes to winners in the women's -46 kilograms attack, women's 46-51 kilograms attack, women's 51-56 kilograms attack, men's -54 kilograms attack, men's 54-58 kilograms attack, women's 56-62 kilograms attack, men's 58-63 kilo-



Deputy Minister U Ye Tint bestows prizes.



Union Civil Service Board Chairman U Aung Thaw gives out prizes.

grammes attack, men's 63-68 kilograms attack, men's 68-74 kilograms attack, and men's above 74 kilograms events, respectively.

In the Inter-State and Region Cricket sports at Wunna Theikdi archery

shooting range-1, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman U Than Tun Oo and dignitaries presented prizes to winners in the women's and men's cricket events.

In the Inter-State and Region Vovinam sports at Shwekyapin Gymnasi-



Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman U Than Tun Oo offers prizes.

um, Chairman of Union Civil Service Board U Aung Thaw and dignitaries awarded winners in the women's singles one-sword event, mixed arms event, mixed arms defending event and men's double swords event,

men's four-athlete without arms event, men's 50-55 kilograms attack event, women's 55-60 kilograms attack event and women's 60-65 kilograms attack event, respectively. — MNA/TTA

Athletes vigorously compete in 5th National Sports Festival 2024



Photos show sports fans cheering the Inter-Ministry competition in Sepak Takraw event yesterday.

FROM PAGE 6

In addition, relevant teams and athletes competed in group matches of the Inter-Ministry men's futsal sports, the final

match of men's Sepak Takraw sports, Taekwondo attack sports, table tennis sports, weightlifting sports, and men's open volleyball and women's

volleyball sports, respectively.

Up to now, the standing table on medallists at the Inter-Ministry level shows the Ministry of Sports and Youth

Affairs with seven gold, five silver and two bronze medals in the first position, followed by the Ministry of Home Affairs with six gold, seven silver and

six bronze in the second, the Ministry of Defence with six gold, two silver and five bronze in the third. Meanwhile, Yangon Region has so far secured 54 gold, 25 silver and 23 bronze medals in the first position at the Inter-State and Region level, Shan State with 20 gold, 24 silver and 30 bronze in the second and Sagaing Region with 17 gold, 11 silver and 15 bronze in the third.

Union-level dignitaries, deputy ministers, regional and state cabinet ministers, departmental personnel, officials from relevant sports federations, staff members, students and sports fans people happily enjoyed the sports competitions. — MNA/TTA

Systematically conserve coral reef ecosystem

CORAL is a marine invertebrate composed of numerous tiny animals called polyps. These soft-bodied organisms secrete a calcium carbonate exoskeleton for protection. Over hundreds of thousands of years, the accumulation of these exoskeletons has formed coral reefs.

Gradually, coral reefs form an underwater ecosystem that supports the food supply and livelihoods of approximately 850 million people worldwide. Moreover, coral reefs serve as a vital water resource for around 30 million small-scale fisheries globally. Currently, the world's largest coral reef — over 300 years old and measuring more than 32 metres in length and 34 metres in width — is located in the southwest Pacific Ocean.

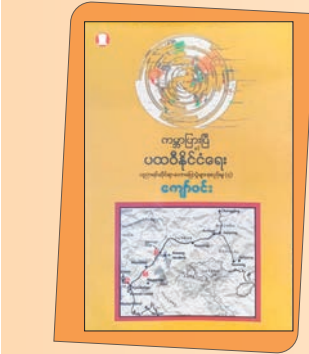
According to the Living Planet Report 2022, the world has lost 50

per cent of its coral reefs in the past 40 years. Although coral reefs cover just 0.1 per cent of the ocean floor, they provide habitat for 25 per cent of marine species. However, these vital ecosystems are being destroyed by global warming, cyclonic storms, and various human activities, including oil drilling, port construction, waterway development, overfishing, and the disposal of waste. Myanmar is endowed with extensive coastlines and a vast marine territory, home to stunning coral reefs. The most precious coral reefs are located along the Taninthayi and Rakhine coasts. Research indicates that Myanmar hosts over 500 coral species. However, surveys conducted by the International Environmental Organization and Myanmar's marine scientists revealed that by 2015, 58 per cent of these reefs were damaged. The damage was attributed to human activities, severe climatic conditions, and unsustainable fishing practices.

Now is the time to conserve Myanmar's coral reefs and prevent further damage. Coral reefs play a vital role in sustaining marine resources, such as fish and other aquatic species, which are crucial for the nation's food security. Relevant authorities, law enforcement bodies, and coastal management committees at all levels must prioritize the protection of existing coral reefs to prevent the depletion of aquatic animals in Myanmar's territorial waters.

Now is the time to conserve Myanmar's coral reefs and prevent further damage. Coral reefs play a vital role in sustaining marine resources, such as fish and other aquatic species, which are crucial for the nation's food security. Relevant authorities, law enforcement bodies, and coastal management committees at all levels must prioritize the protection of existing coral reefs to prevent the depletion of aquatic animals in Myanmar's territorial waters.

The maritime fishing industry heavily depends on the sustainability of coral reefs, along with associated ecosystems such as mangrove forests and seagrass beds. Degradation of these ecosystems can have far-reaching consequences, threatening not only the fisheries sector but also marine tourism, resort businesses, and other related industries. Since Myanmar's coral reefs continue to attract travellers, it is crucial to implement comprehensive management strategies to ensure the long-term conservation of these vital ecosystems.



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Gabarpyarbi Hnint Pahtawi Naing Ngan Yay

THIS book is a collection of talks delivered by Saya Kyaw Win, a writer-cum-political analyst, and was published by Tagaung Publishing House. This book includes talks titled, “Gabar Pyarbi Hnint Pahtawi Naing Ngan Yay, Pyinnya Yat Hsaing Yar Haw Pyaw Bwe”, “The World is Flat” and “Myanmar Pahtawi Naing Ngan Yay” – i.e. The Geopolitics of Myanmar etc.

In his foreword, Saya Kyaw Win said, “The World is Flat” by Thomas L. Friedman was published on 5 April 2005. Thanks to the late medical doctor in the name of Dr Ne Win Maung, I got this book in real time. Thinking that this book deserves translation into Myanmar, I immediately took action, doing the translation and sending the translated works to journals and magazines. After one year of publishing the original work of Friedman, I was able to publish my translated version titled, ‘Gabar Pyarbi’. I think this book has won my popularity among readers. And when I

delivered talks, I used the title of this book. My book was made from the PowerPoint slides I used in my talks.

He went on to say that he has already published three books which were all the collections of his talks, that this book is the fourth collection, that his books are being used by some people when they deliver lectures and that he is not needed to quote when his books are used in lectures or talks. He even said that it is he who is grateful to those who are using his writings regardless of whether they are giving him credit or not.

In his introduction, Saya Kyaw Win said that Gabar Pyarbi or The World is Flat is about globalization, that the original writer is Thomas L. Friedman, who is a journalist for the New York Times and that Friedman has written two books on globalization. This book was translated by him while the other work of Friedman was translated by Maung Su Zan.

The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century is a 2005 book by Thomas L. Friedman. The book explores the effects of globalization on the United States of America and other countries. It covers what the flattening of the world means, how it affects countries, companies, communities and individuals, and how governments and societies can adapt. For critics of globalization, Friedman illustrates its benefits; for champions of globalization, he discusses its problems.

The term globalization was first used in 1992 by Boutros Boutros Ghali, then United Nations Secretary-General. No sooner had he used this word than it spread across the world like wildfire. In Myanmar, this word was first used in the year 2000, suggesting that we were eight years late. When the system came into existence, globalization was faced with tough resistance, particularly by the less developed nations.



Book Title	-	Psywar Htaat Gyin Ah Tat Pyinnya (The Art of Psychological Warfare by Christopher Kingler)
Translator	-	Ye Min Win
Publishing House	-	Thar Nge
Publication Date	-	October 2024 (2 nd Edition)
Price	-	K7,500

Psywar Htaat Gyin Ah Tat Pyinnya

(The Art of Psychological Warfare by Christopher Kingle)

I would like to introduce a book the theme of which is quite topical these days. As known to you all, people are enthusiastic about discussing, talking about and listening to the political development prevailing in the country of Myanmar. In this regard, propaganda is being spread by all parties, applying the tactics of psychological warfare. Before introducing this book to the readers, I would like to raise the following four questions: Is it possible to defeat an enemy unless a penetrating attack is made? : Have you ever thought about why such eloquent speakers as politicians, orators, celebrities or social influencers can win the love and trust of their audience? What are their selling strategies?; Are you being frustrated by the success of your peers and fellow workers? ; Have the quotations and the words of admonition provided by the wise people become clichés? If your answers to these questions are in the affirmative, you are already attacked by psychological warfare.

The book under review was written by Christopher Kingler and translated by Saya Ye Min Win. The translated version was published by Thar Nge Publishing House, and this is the second edition. This book has 17 chapters:

- Chapter 1: Why You Should Know the Art of Psychological Warfare
- Chapter 2: What Is Psychological Warfare Theory?
- Chapter 3: The Greatest Exponents of the Art of Psychological Warfare
- Chapter 4: What Can We Learn From Sun Tzu And Machiavelli?
- Chapter 5: Dangerous Dark Personalities
- Chapter 6: The Psychology of Deception, Influence and Domination
- Chapter 7: The Art of Blackmail, Manipulation, and Brainwashing
- Chapter 8: Manipulative Political Propaganda and Media Tactics

- Chapter 9: What Is Psypog?
 - Chapter 10: Why Do People Join Cults? How Do Cults Work?
 - Chapter 11: Psychological Warfare and Strategic Thinking at Work
 - Chapter 12: Psychological Warfare and Strategic Thinking In Relationships and the Power of Words
 - Chapter 13: Psychological Warfare and Strategic Thinking For Entrepreneurs and Business
 - Chapter 14: Defense Strategies In Psychological Warfare
 - Chapter 15: Train Your Mind To Be Calm In Every Situation
 - Chapter 16: Persuasion versus Manipulation
 - Chapter 17: Earn Respect
- May I conclude my review by repeating the same question — Is it possible to invade an enemy's mind and win without a fight?

Teacher's Smile

By Chit Ko Pe

ဆရာအဖွင့် နှစ်ကိုယ်ရပ် မဟုတ်တော့ပါ ညှိုးဖျော့ကိုယ်ပါ ရောအလို လိုက်ခဲ့ပြီ။

ဆရာလက်ထဲ မြေဖြူခဲဆပ် မဟုတ်တော့ပါ ကြိမ်ပေါ့တုတ်ကောက် အားထောက်ကူဖို့ ကိုင်ခဲ့ပြီ။

ဆရာခြေလှမ်း သွက်မြန်းသုတ်သုတ် မဟုတ်တော့ပါ အားပျော့ချည့်နဲ့ ယဲ့ယဲ့ရွှေ့ရုံ ရှိခဲ့ပြီ။

အမြင်မလန်း မစွမ်းသာငြား တပည့်သားတို့ ပျော်ပါးမြင်ရ တစ်ခဏမှာ ဆရာအပြုံး အလှဆုံးပါ။ ဆရာနှလုံး အမြတ်ဆုံးပါ။

There is no more chalk in his fist, but a light cane stick to assist.

There is no fast move in his tread, but a slow pace with weakness.

There is no prime look in his features, but an aged debility looming over.

Despite such bad things in a series, the teacher feels heartily pleased with a glance at his ex-pupils in glee. His smile is the most beautiful, indeed!

ချစ်ကိုဗေ

TRADITIONAL MYANMAR CULTURE HERITAGE THINGYAN MOE FILM

By Mya Thae (Research)

- Amid Thingyan films, Thingyan Moe is the best king.
- When the water festival comes, it is broadcast on TV every year.
- Audience like heartily and cheer.
- Khin Than Nu and May Than Nu are beautiful with Myanmar costumes safely.
- They performed Myanmar dances and songs amazingly.
- They adorned their hair with fragrant Yellowish Padauk flowers.
- Besides lovely actresses beautified with Traditional Myanmar precious jewels.
- This film indicates the winning of Traditional Myanmar culture.
- Dainty youngsters will imitate and adom With Myanmar Costumes several.

(In Honour of the Traditional Myanma Ata Thingyan Festival on UNESCO'S Intangible Culture Heritage List)

Notes - Thingyan Moe is not only famous in Myanmar but also in other countries. Nay Aung and Khin Than Nu are invited from Japan to visit there. This is also an honourable case.

ဆရာမကြီး၏ နောက်ဆုံးကဗျာ လက်ရေးပုဒ်

I was dying; my cat by my side
I was yearning to die so the cat did meow.
That means she can't let me go
When will she let me die.
That I don't know only she knows
(Oh, meow, let me go)²
(Oh the cat, will you meow)³

Last poem of Dr Myint Myint Khin was composed in the afternoon of 16 June 2014 less than three days before she passed away around 2:17 - 2:20 pm on Thursday, 19 June 2014 at Shegonedine Specialist Centre, Yangon 'Buragon', Myanmar 'Burma'.
Transcribed by loving son Myint Zan.

NATIONAL

Entertainment

Nu Nu Yi (Inwa)
Seikku Cho Cho Publishing House will release the seventh edition of the novel 'Accept Our Kowtow with a Smile; Accept Our Kowtow with a Laugh' by Sayama Nu Nu Yi (Inwa) in January. The novelist also said, "The book with a new cover of two powerful Taungpyone brothers will be released before the Seikku Cho Cho book fair. I also thank those who buy and point out spelling mistakes whenever the new edition is released".



Pachi Soe Moe
Director Pachi (artist) Soe Moe, former chairman of the academy selection board, appreciated his work while serving as chairman as his team did not face any negative comments. He also told the media that he was not included in the reviewing team when his film was on the nomination list, and it is illogical as one reviews his own film.



Aye Chan Maung
ACTOR Aye Chan Maung faced both negative and positive comments for his character and acting talents in the 'Tain Pachi' movie. The actor expressed gratitude to senior artistes like U Lwin Moe and Daw Wah Wah Win Shwe for making positive comments. He also thanked actress Wutt Hmone Shwe Yee for her support throughout the movie.



Wutt Hmone Shwe Yee
Academy Wutt Hmone Shwe Yee starred in the 'Tain Pachi' movie that highlights faithful marriage. She said it is based on a true story and she accepted to portray that character to share a positive message to her fans. The movie was screened on 13 December.

Yay Kyi Chan Mya
TRADITIONAL Myanmar dance performer Yay Kyi Chan Mya participated in the opening ceremony of the 11th China-ASEAN (Nanning) Theatre Week in China representing Myanmar. She performed a traditional solo dance and participated in the performance of the Pyapon Yama dance troupe.



Thet San Andersen
MYANMAR beauty queen Thet San Andersen, who ranked in the Top 6 at Miss International Universe, attended the Sein Nantaw jewellery fair at Terminal M Shopping Mall together with Miss Grand Myanmar Thae Su Nyein. She also participated in the Lucia Festival portraying Saint Lucia, organized by the Swedish Embassy at Saint Augustine on 13 December in Yangon. Lucia honours Saint Lucia, a fourth-century Christian martyr from Italy. — Htun Htun/KTZH



'May May Aчит Oo' (Mom's First Love) debuts in Yangon



ACCORDING to director Min Sett, the press conference of the 'May May Aчит Oo' (Mom's First Love) film was held at Sedona Hotel in Yangon on 12 December.

Ko Sett created and directed the story for Sein Htay Film Production, with Ingyin Han writing the script.

"It is my second movie. Although my fans are satisfied with the 'Thabin The Mya Hninzi' film, it is not my favourite. Now, the 'May May Aчит Oo' (Mom's First Love) movie is my cherished one, and it is a romantic drama. All trust me to make a

film. I also thank individuals who believe in me," said director Min Sett.

During the press conference, Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization Chair U Kyi Soe Tun, Academy Maung Myo Min (Yin Twin Phyt) and Producer of Sein Htay Film Production U Win Kyi made speeches.

The movie is cast with Henry San, May Mie Ko Ko, Thae Su Nyein, Shun Lei Ko Ko, Thanzin Phyo Paing, and other performers. May Mie Ko Ko will portray a mother character and Thae Su Nyein will take a daughter role in the movie. — ASH/KTZH

Weekly
Roundup

10 December

5th National Sports Festival 2024 kicks off

Promoting sports can help cultivate a disciplined and healthy spirit, strengthening the nation's human resources, which can contribute to the country's success through unity and cooperation, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the ceremony to commence the Fifth National Sports Festival 2024 at Wunna Theikdi Stadium in Nay Pyi Taw.

International Anti-Corruption Day marked

Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing noted that corruption is rooted not only in government bodies and the private sector but also in non-profit charity organizations in developed and developing countries worldwide, at the ceremony to mark the International Anti-Corruption Day 2024 at the Myanmar International Convention Centre I in Nay Pyi Taw.

11 December

SG Min Aung Hlaing receives Russian Kalmykia Republic Head

Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received Kalmykia Republic Head of the Russian Federation Mr Batu Khasikov to talk about the exchange of visits of officials between Myanmar and Kalmykia Republic to promote cooperation, at the Credentials Hall of the SAC Chairman Office in Nay Pyi Taw.

International Human Rights Day observed

SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing highlighted the need to counter hate speech, misinformation, and fabrications that undermine peace, stability, the rule of law, and the promotion of fair, just, and orderly rights to create human rights as a fundamental force for a peaceful and equal world at the commemorative ceremony of the 76th International Human Rights Day 2024 at MICC I in Nay Pyi Taw.

MPC officials take affirmation

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing underscored that freedom of expression is a must under the law in a democratic society and good governance and development are also essential, at the ceremony of the affirmation of the members of the Myanmar Press Council, at the office of the SAC Chairman in Nay Pyi Taw.

Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee meets

State Administration Council Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win delivered a speech at the work coordination meeting 5/2024 of the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee at the Ministry of Commerce in Nay Pyi Taw.

13 December

DSTA 26th intake holds passing out parade

As military leaders emphasize advanced technologies more than manpower in current wars, the role of technology is crucial in adopting defence policies, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing in his speech delivered at the passing out parade of 26th Intake of DSTA in PyinOoLwin.

14 December

YUE marks 60th-anniversary celebration

Yangon University of Economics produces exceptional individuals excelling in various fields, said Senior General Min Aung Hlaing in his video message sent to the 60th-anniversary celebration of the University of Economics. — GNLM/TTA



The ceremony marking the 60th anniversary of the founding of Yangon University of Economics (YUE) and the teachers' honouring ceremony in progress on the YUE campus yesterday.

60th anniversary of Yangon University of Economics held

THE ceremony marking the 60th anniversary of the founding of Yangon University of Economics (YUE) and the teachers' honouring ceremony was held yesterday morning on the YUE campus. Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations Dr Kan Zaw attended the event and delivered a congratulatory speech.

During his speech, the Un-

ion minister expressed appreciation for the contributions of successive faculty members who have advanced the field of economics, shaped the country's development, and served at the national level. He also commended the university for its progressive expansion of economics-related disciplines over the years.

YUE Rector Dr Tin Tin Htwe welcomed the distin-

guished faculty members and explained the organization of the 60th-anniversary commemoration event.

Out of the 256 invited faculty members, 134 attended the ceremony in person, while others joined online. Following the ceremony, the honoured faculty members were hosted at a luncheon as a gesture of gratitude and respect. — MNA/TMT

MoH Union Minister opens 7th Myanmar Gastrointestinal & Liver Diseases Conf

THE opening ceremony of the seventh Myanmar Gastrointestinal and Liver Diseases Conference took place yesterday morning at Wyndham Hotel in Yangon.

Union Minister Dr Thet Khaing Win inaugurated the conference under the theme "Towards better GI and Liver Health Care." The event brought together medical professionals from Myanmar, as well as specialists from India, Singapore, Thailand, Japan, Indonesia, Hong Kong (China), the UK, and the US, who shared their expertise and experiences. The conference provided valuable knowledge and training opportunities for general practitioners, medical professionals, and specialists in Myanmar, thereby enhancing patient-centred healthcare services.

Following opening remarks by Professor and Head of Gastroenterology Dr Than Than Aye and Retired Professor Lt-Col Dr Kyaw Soe Tun (Retd), the Union minister, the Yangon Region chief minister, Professor Dr Than Than Aye, Retired Professor Lt-Col Dr Kyaw Soe Tun, and Professor F Blaine Hollinger officially opened the conference. Attendees visited academic and pharmaceutical exhibition booths featuring 27 academic posters and 41 pharmaceutical displays.

The conference, held on 14 and 15 December, focuses on knowledge-sharing and collaboration between Myanmar's medical specialists and their international counterparts. Activities include exchanging clinical experiences and showcasing advanced treatment techniques in the field of gastroenterology and hepatology.

In the afternoon, the Union minister and delegation visited the international-standard endoscopy department at Yangon General Hospital, where both local and international professors and specialists collaborated on endoscopic treatments. The programme involved 12 gastroenterology specialists from Yangon General Hospital, Thingangyun General Hospital, and Nay Pyi Taw General Hospital (1,000-bed) working alongside seven specialists from Thailand, India, and Indonesia to treat 11 patients.

Using advanced SpyGlass endoscopic technology, the team performed procedures such as pancreas stone removal, treatment for achalasia, early-stage cancer detection, and endoscopic tumour resection. These treatments, previously available only abroad, are now accessible in Myanmar, signifying a significant advancement in local healthcare services. — MNA/KZL

NATIONAL

MoL issues OWICs to over 181,000 workers by Nov 2024



This picture shows the OWIC centre in Mayangon.

THE Ministry of Labour has issued Overseas Workers Identity Card (OWIC) to 181,899 workers to work abroad as of November 2024.

“The ministry issued 210,628 cards in 2023 and 181,899 as of November this year to Myanmar migrant workers to work in foreign countries under overseas recruitment agencies

or on their own.

The Department of Labour in Dagon Myothit (North) Township provides OWIC services for those working under registered overseas recruitment agencies and the Department of Labour in Mayangon Township issues OWICs for those working abroad on their own, said an official of the department.

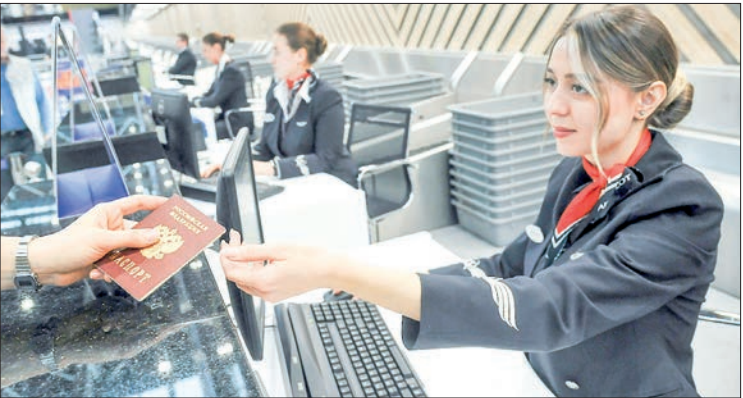
Myanmar citizens who work overseas are required to seek OWIC. Professionals and technician workers need to be exempt from training courses to seek OWIC when they come back to Myanmar. Those who will work abroad on their own need to attend training in the department first before seeking the OWIC. — ASH/KK

Russia-Myanmar visa exemption to start early 2025

MYANMAR’S Economic Attache in Moscow stated that Mr Nikita Kondratyev, head of the Department of Multilateral Economic Cooperation and Special Projects of the Ministry of Economic Development of Russia addressed that visa exemption for tourist purposes between Russia and Myanmar is planned to start in early 2025.

Foreign Affairs ministries of Myanmar and the Russian Federation have agreed to that after a series of negotiations. He expected that the two countries would agree to implement this. At present, Myanmar has granted visa exemptions for Russian tourists, he added.

Myanmar has been preparing for visa-free travel for citizens of Russia and Myanmar, citing an interview answered by U Than Swe, Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs with TASS News Agency. Myanmar Airways International (MAI) also launched a direct flight between Yangon, Mandalay and Novosibirsk, the Russian Federation, in September 2023. — NN/KK



An officer checks the passport of a traveller at a Russian airport. PHOTO THE MOSCOW TIMES

CBM injects 340,000 yuan, 400,000 baht into financial market on 13 Dec

THE Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) sold 340,000 yuan and 400,000 baht on 13 December.

CBM sold \$28.51 million and 600,000 baht on 12 December and 500,000 yuan again on 11 December. CBM announced on 10 December that it would sell \$35 million and 40 million baht through the foreign exchange trading platform. Then, it sold about 900,000 yuan on 10 December, \$15 million, over one million yuan and 200 million baht on 6 December, over 1.55 million yuan on 5 December after sales of 1.48 million yuan on 4 December and 1.43 million yuan on 3 December.

Furthermore, CBM injected \$38 million, 1.48 million yuan and 107.46 million baht online foreign exchange trading platforms on 2 December. CBM sold 16.54 million baht and announced the sale of 10 million yuan to importers on 29 November. CBM sold over \$59 million, over 280 million

baht and 8.78 million yuan in November.

CBM injected over \$91 million, over 9.8 million yuan and over 610 million baht into the financial market in October 2024. CBM aims to curb the instability in the foreign exchange market and the currency devaluation.

According to CBM’s notification on 15 March, it has been

joining hands with law enforcement agencies to combat and prosecute those who attempt to manipulate the currency market under the existing laws.

CBM allowed authorized dealers (private banks) to operate online foreign exchange trading freely as per the market rate depending on supply and demand, starting from 5 December 2023. — NN/KK



The Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) in Yangon.

Myanmar exports hit over US\$9B in 8 months

THE Ministry of Commerce stated that Myanmar’s exports reached US\$9.825 billion in the past eight months of the current financial year 2024-2025.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods to foreign countries.

Myanmar has been implementing the National Export Strategy (NES) 2020-2025 to

bolster exports.

The priority sectors of the NES comprise agricultural production, garment and apparel, industrial and electronic device, fishery business, forest product, digital manufacturing and service, logistic service, quality management, trade information service, innovation and entrepreneurship sectors. — 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, www.moi.gov.mm/km, www.moi.gov.mm/nlm and www.gnlm.com.mm/e-paper.

News and Periodicals Enterprise

JR Kyushu mulls ending Japan-S Korea ferry service after coverup

KYUSHU Railway Co is considering abandoning plans to resume its suspended ferry service between Fukuoka in southwestern Japan and South Korea's Busan, as well as exiting the business entirely, a company source said Friday, following revelations that its unit concealed a water seepage issue.

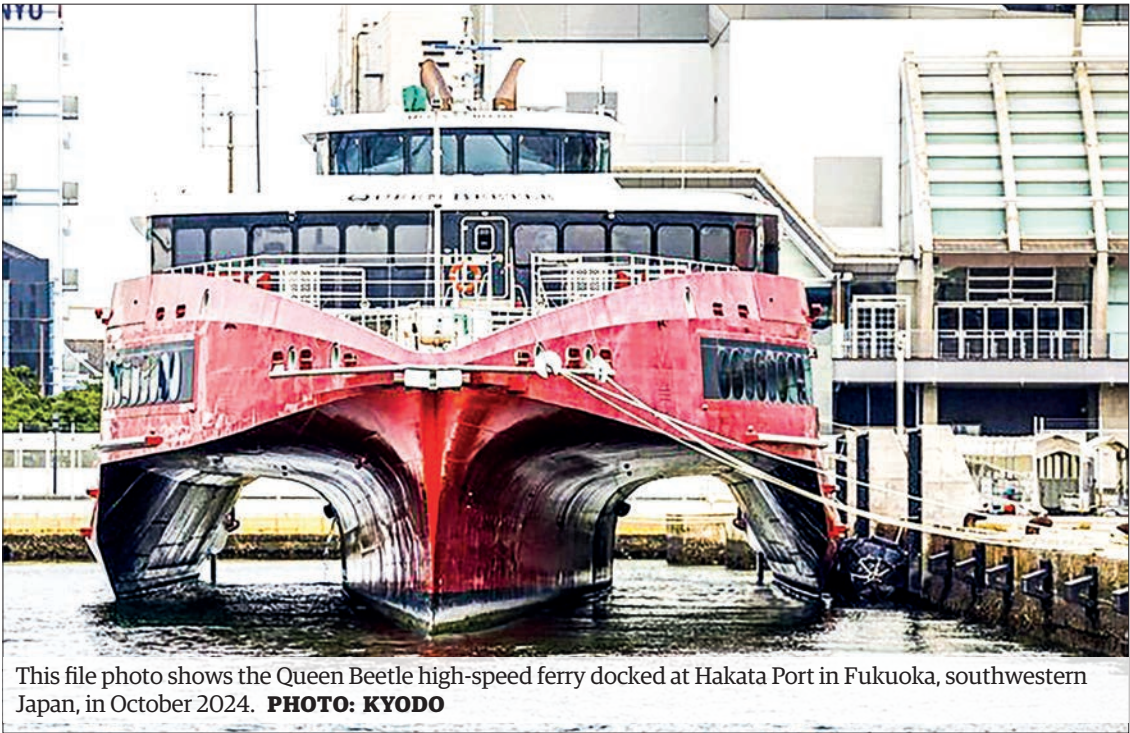
In remarks to Kyodo News, JR Kyushu President Yoji Furu-miya maintained that the company's "aim to restart services is unchanged at the present time" while saying difficulties with disaster prevention measures could preclude a restart.

The source said Kyushu Railway is considering withdrawing from the business

due to potential challenges in restoring public trust in its unit, JR Kyushu Jet Ferry Inc, and the costs associated with reinforcing the ferry. A final decision is expected within the month, the source added.

Before services were suspended in August over the water ingress, the unit was operating daily return voyages to the South Korean city on its Queen Beetle high-speed ferry.

An inspection by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism in August found that JR Kyushu Jet Ferry falsified the Queen Beetle's logbook to hide that it ran voyages from February to May despite knowledge of the immersion. — Kyodo



This file photo shows the Queen Beetle high-speed ferry docked at Hakata Port in Fukuoka, southwestern Japan, in October 2024. PHOTO: KYODO

McKinsey to pay \$650 mln to settle US criminal case on opioids

CONSULTING giant McKinsey & Company will pay \$650 million to settle US criminal charges that it collaborated with Purdue Pharma to intentionally misbrand opioids, worsening a public health



Prosecutors said the settlements marks the first time a management consulting firm has been held criminally responsible for advice resulting in commission of a crime by a client. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

crisis, officials announced Friday.

US prosecutors unveiled a sweeping deferred prosecution agreement (DPA) over McKinsey efforts that helped Purdue "turbocharge" sales of the highly addictive OxyContin opioid, responsible for deadly overdoses. The accord, which requires McKinsey to implement a comprehensive compliance programme, represents the "first time a management consulting firm has been held criminally responsible for advice that it has given resulting in the commission of a crime by a client," said US Attorney Christopher Kavanaugh, of the Western District of Virginia, speaking at a news conference.

Additionally, prosecutors charged McKinsey US with one felony count of knowingly destroying evidence with an intent to impede a probe and a misdemeanor of knowingly conspiring with Purdue to abet the misbranding of drugs, the Justice Department said. — AFP

Mongolia's central bank keeps benchmark interest rate unchanged at 10%

MONGOLIA'S central bank, the Bank of Mongolia, announced on Friday that it would maintain its benchmark interest rate unchanged at 10 per cent.

"This decision was made after evaluating the current and projected state of the economy,

financial markets, and external economic risks," the central bank said in a statement.

The move is aimed at stabilizing inflation at the target level and ensuring economic and financial stability over the medium term, the statement added. — Xinhua

WFP says Zimbabwe's food security situation worrying

ZIMBABWE'S food security situation is worrisome, amid the late onset of the 2024/2025 rainfall season, United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) Country Director Barbara Clemens has said.

Speaking to journalists at a food aid distribution event Thursday in Chivi District, Masvingo Province, Clemens called for stronger resource mobilization to meet current needs and mitigate the impact of future climate shocks. "We are heading into our lean season, and we are receiving less rainfall than we had anticipated, so the problem could exacerbate crop yields in the coming harvest season," she said.

The WFP is looking at raising resources to increase its African Risk Capacity insurance premiums for drought mitigation in Zimbabwe, Clemens said. "We are viewing these climatic insurance policies as a huge tool in our anticipatory action toolbox to be able to leverage so that we can start early," she said. — Xinhua

IndiGo Airlines apologizes to customers after delays on flights connecting Istanbul

INDIGO Airlines has apologized to the customers for the inconvenience caused by the delays on the flight connections to Istanbul. The airline said that it accords high priority towards customer convenience and their teams are available at contact points to assist customers.

In a statement released on Friday, IndiGo Airlines said, "We are aware of the delays on the IndiGo flight connections to Istanbul. We accord the highest priority towards customer convenience and out teams are available at all contact points to assist customers. IndiGo apologizes for the inconvenience caused to the customers."

The airlines has issued a statement after several passengers took to social media platform to report about delay on the flight. — ANI

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS DIGEST



The “India Day” cultural festival at Moscow’s “Island of Dreams” celebrates India’s Independence Day and Russia-India diplomacy. **PHOTO: SPUTNIK**

Indian-Russian cultural collaboration shines in Leningrad region

14 DECEMBER

VARIOUS events aimed at developing cultural and humanitarian cooperation with India were held in the Leningrad region this year, the press service of the regional government told RIA Novosti.

Russia’s Leningrad region has hosted a series of events aimed at strengthening cultural and humanitarian ties with India, the regional government’s press service reported to RIA Novosti.

A highlight of the celebrations was the

unveiling of a bronze monument to Russian artist Nikolai Roerich at the Roerich Museum-Estate in Izvara, commemorating his birthday.

The sculpture, created by Arutyun Akobian, depicts Roerich as a young artist. The event included performances by Anna Malyшева, Dmitry Kovzel, and the Nevskie Zori ensemble, alongside exhibitions showcasing Roerich’s works and family memorabilia.

— SPUTNIK

13 DECEMBER

Nancy Pelosi hospitalized after injury in Luxembourg

FORMER US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi was hospitalized after suffering an injury during an official visit to Luxembourg, her spokesperson announced on Friday.

Pelosi was travelling with a bipartisan Congressional delegation to mark the 80th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge.

Battle of Bulge is an episode from World War II, which started as a result of the German offensive and ended with

the victory of the Allied powers.

Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi sustained an injury while travelling with a bipartisan Congressional delegation in Luxembourg to mark the 80th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, her spokesperson said.

Pelosi is currently receiving treatment and has expressed ‘regret’ on being unable to attend the remainder of the engagements. — ANI

12 DECEMBER

Russia’s navy chief announces upgrade to nuclear forces

RUSSIA has modernized the naval component of the country’s strategic nuclear forces, Navy Commander-in-Chief Alexander Moiseyev said on Thursday at an international Arctic forum in St Petersburg.

Moiseyev said that the naval nuclear forces are based in the Arctic and the eastern region of Kamchatka while emphasizing that their combat readiness is currently at its highest

modernization level.

“The presence of this group (of forces), which addresses important global geopolitical tasks, should place responsibility on all participants in this region,” the navy chief noted.

Moiseyev emphasized that heightened responsibility is essential for all, including those escalating regional tensions. — Xinhua

11 DECEMBER

Apple to invest US\$1 bln in Indonesia

APPLE has agreed to invest US\$1 billion in Indonesia to gain market access for its latest iPhone 16 model in the world’s fourth most populous nation, a minister said on Wednesday.

Indonesian Minister of Investment Rosan Roeslani said that intensive communication with Apple is going on through messaging applications, focusing on the proposed investment model and partnerships with sales vendors in Indonesia.

“These discussions are just to fine-tune

the specifics,” he said.

He noted that Apple initially planned to begin its investment in 2026, but the government urged the company to start earlier.

“Apple requested to commence its investment in 2026, but we are pushing for it to start in 2025,” he said.

It was previously reported that Apple was not allowed to sell the iPhone 16 model in Indonesia because it had failed to meet the country’s minimum local content requirements. — Xinhua

10 DECEMBER

Syria’s London-born first lady not welcome in UK

ONCE celebrated as an advocate of women’s rights in the Middle East, Syria’s British-born former first lady Asma al-Assad has fled into exile with her husband, with UK officials saying she is not welcome to return to London.

Asma al-Assad, 49, the wife of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, and their three children reportedly sought refuge in Moscow after rebels ousted her husband from power.

Born in London in 1975, Asma grew

up in the UK, retaining British citizenship. However, UK Foreign Minister David Lammy recently declared she is no longer welcome in the country, and her UK assets were frozen in 2012.

Initially celebrated for her elegance and efforts to modernize Syria, Asma later encountered widespread condemnation for her support of her husband’s harsh response to protests, which led to accusations of profiting from the war and sanctions imposed by the US in 2020. — AFP

9 DECEMBER

Türkiye to reopen border crossing for Syrian refugees

TURKISH President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced on Monday that Türkiye will reopen a border crossing with Syria in southern Hatay province to facilitate the voluntary and secure return of Syrian refugees.

The Yayladagi crossing close to the northwest tip of Syria has been closed since 2013 due to fighting near the border.

While highlighting significant changes in Syria’s socio-political landscape, Erdogan expressed optimism about the region’s future. “As of yesterday, a dark period in Syria has ended, and a brighter era has begun,” he said. Erdogan reaffirmed Türkiye’s commitment to respecting territorial integrity, stating that its cross-border operations aim only to protect the nation from terrorist threats, not occupy foreign land. Türkiye controls parts of northern Syria due to operations against Kurdish groups. — Xinhua

8 DECEMBER

Eurostar is Europe’s worst-ranked rail operator

EUROSTAR is the worst-performing rail operator among 27 companies in Europe, with pricey and unreliable service, while Italy’s Trenitalia tops the list, a study released Sunday said.

A report by Transport and Environment (T&E) reveals that ticket prices do not correlate with higher service quality. Eurostar, which charges nearly twice the European average, ranks 14th in reliability.

In contrast, Austria’s OBB and Trenitalia offer the best price-quality ratios.

The study evaluated criteria like price, reliability, discount programmes, compensation for delays, passenger experience, and amenities such as night trains or bicycle spaces, with Trenitalia, SBB, and RegioJet leading. — AFP

SPORTS

19 preliminary players announced for AFC Women's Futsal Champ qualifiers

THE Myanmar Women's National Futsal Team has selected a preliminary squad of 19 players to compete in the qualifiers for the 2025 AFC Women's Futsal Championship.

The Myanmar Football Federation has made changes to the team's leadership, appointing

Thai national Banlert Chaivon as the new head coach, replacing U Htay Myint. The squad consists of 11 coaching staff and 19 players, with Banlert Chaivon overseeing the team. Key players include goalkeeper Chaw Sandi Aung, as well as skilful players such as May Thet Paing, Khin



This photo depicts the Myanmar Women's National Futsal Team during the ASEAN Futsal Championship. PHOTO: MFF

Moe Wai, and Thu Zar Lwin. The team is scheduled to begin training on 15 December.

The AFC Women's Futsal

Championship qualifiers will be held in the second week of January, with Group D matches taking place from 15 to 19 Jan-

uary in Yangon. Myanmar will play against Vietnam, Chinese Taipei, and Macau in the group stage. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

Diallo reelected head of French football

PHILIPPE Diallo was comfortably reelected president of the French Football Federation on Saturday.

Diallo, who took over after the resignation of long-standing former chief Noel Le Graet in 2023, won just over 55 per cent of the vote to beat Le Graet's former ally Pierre Samsonoff.

For the first time in France's largest sports federation which boosts 2.4 million members, the presidents of amateur clubs could vote electronically along with the heads of professional clubs with 11,500 voters compared to fewer than



French Football Federation President Philippe Diallo. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

250 previously. Diallo, 61, welcome the "strong legitimacy" the vote gave him and praised the "democratic maturity which does honour to our sport". He said he would begin a nationwide discussion on French football from mid-January "to define together our roadmap for aid to amateur football". — AFP

Princess Cup bronze-medallist equestrian honoured

THE Myanmar Equestrian Federation (MEF) held a ceremony yesterday at its head office in Dagon Myothit (North) Township to honour athletes who brought pride to the nation. The event included the unveiling of the MEF Hall of Fame, showcasing photographs of award-winning equestrians from national and international competitions, and the presentation of certificates of honour to distinguished athletes.

The highlight of the ceremony was the recognition of Phyo Kyaw Myint Than, Myanmar's national equestrian, who won the bronze medal in the Princess Cup - FEI SEA Cup

- CSIJ-B Pattaya 2024 Show Jumping Competition. MEF president U Pyone Maung Maung, his spouse and Academy Award-winning actress Daw Khin Thida Tun and family presented a K1 million cash award to the athlete.

During the event, the MEF president also addressed the appointment of National Level Officials, presenting them with certificates of recognition. The meeting concluded with discussions on establishing a task force aimed at nurturing the next generation of equestrian athletes, ensuring the continued growth and success of the sport in Myanmar. — Arkar Lin/KZL

'Fighting spirit': Disabled French boxer years for glory



Pierre-Mickael Hugues, an accomplished amateur boxer, crossed the Atlantic at the end of November to make a name for himself in the United States. PHOTO: AFP

BOXER Pierre-Mickael Hugues trains in New York like any other able-bodied athlete — but has prosthetic legs from below the knee.

"Your hands, Pierre! Hit him in the body!" shouts his trainer.

The accomplished amateur was invited to spend two weeks in the United States by former French heavyweight Christophe Mendy.

"I've always seen myself as an able-bodied athlete, with the same passion — sometimes greater — to achieve the same result," Hugues, 31, said in a soft, determined voice, against the low din of a Harlem boxing gym.

With his super welterweight physique, he is the first disabled boxer in the world to be registered in the able-bodied elite amateur category.

Hugues, who was born without lower legs, crossed the Atlantic at the end of November for his first tour to make a name for himself in the United States.

Because of a lack of funding in his native France, he hopes to find financing for his passion while in the United States and turn professional within two years. — AFP

Tuchel will speak to Southgate for England debrief

ENGLAND manager Thomas Tuchel plans to speak to Gareth Southgate and Lee Carsley about his new team ahead of the 2026 World Cup qualifying campaign.

Tuchel will officially start work as the permanent replacement for Southgate on 1 January after England turned to Carsley on an interim basis following Euro 2024.

Southgate ended his eight-year reign after England lost 2-1 to Spain in the Euro final, with

Carsley leading the Three Lions to Nations League promotion while the search for a new boss was underway.

The Football Association eventually settled on former Chelsea and Bayern Munich manager Tuchel. The German, who signed an 18-month contract, on Friday learned his route to the World Cup will run through Group K opponents Serbia, Albania, Latvia and Andorra in the qualifying stage. — AFP

India's per capita availability of fruits and vegetables increases by 7 kg and 12 kg over last decade

Per capita availability of fruits and vegetables has increased by seven kilograms and 12 kilograms, respectively, over the past ten years, according to State Bank of India (SBI) report.

However, it highlights several challenges in the agricultural supply chain that continue to impact food consumption across the country. Notably, states like Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, and Jammu & Kashmir have seen growth in both fruit and vegetable production. However, many north-



States like Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, and Jammu & Kashmir have seen growth in fruit and vegetable production, while northeastern states have reported declines. **ILLUSTRATION: VISUAL ART**

The SBI report shows increased per capita fruit and vegetable availability, but highlights challenges in the agricultural supply chain, including significant waste and regional production declines, particularly in northeastern states. Extreme weather and inefficiencies also impact consumption.

eastern states have reported a decline in per capita production.

India produces around 227 kg of fruits and vegetables per person per year, which exceeds the general recommendation of 146 kilograms per person

annually.

Despite this, a significant portion — 30-35 per cent — of fruits and vegetables perish due to their perishable nature, as well as inefficiencies in harvesting, storage, transport, and packag-

ing. This loss affects the overall consumption of these products.

The report highlights extreme weather's negative impact on agriculture, noting that a 1°C rise during wheat's grain-filling period can reduce yields by 3-4 per cent. It also discusses India's easing inflation, driven by falling vegetable prices, but rising protein costs.

Core inflation is expected to average 4.8 per cent in 2025. Additionally, it suggests labor migration from low-income to higher-income states accelerates disinflation in the latter, with minimal impact from wage increases on food prices. — ANI

Blue zones' longevity claims are often based on inaccurate, flawed data

Claims of extreme longevity in blue zones are based on faulty data, with inaccurate records and age exaggerations distorting findings.

MOST of what we know about people living to extreme old age, especially in "blue zones", is based on inaccurate or faulty data, according to researcher Saul Justin Newman from University College London. The desire to uncover the secrets of longevity has fuelled a booming lifestyle industry, selling supplements and advice.

However, Newman's research on centenarians and supercentenarians in the US, Italy, England, France, and Japan reveals that many of these individuals come from areas with poor health, high poverty, and poor record-keeping. In Japan, for example, 82 per cent of the country's centenarians were found to be either missing or dead. Newman also highlights that many individuals in "blue zones" may have exaggerated their ages. In Costa Rica, for instance, 42 per cent of centenarians had previously lied about their age. — AFP



The Italian island of Sardinia was the original "blue zone", where people were believed to live longer than elsewhere. **PHOTO: DANIEL SLIM / AFP/FILE**



One for the road: Nine times more young people are leaving Italy than are migrating there. **PHOTO: AFP**

Why young Italians are leaving in droves

BILLIE FUSTO, a 24-year-old student from Calabria, is training to be an archivist and dreams of a quiet life in Italy.

past decade, more than a million Italians have left, with a third of them aged 25-34.

Young graduates are par-

the north, working conditions in the industrialized north are also unattractive, and real wages in Italy have fallen since 2019.

Youth unemployment is higher than the EU average, and salaries are not linked to education or experience. Many young Italians, like Elena Picardi, find better opportunities abroad, leading to an estimated loss of 134 billion euros between 2011 and 2023.

The exodus is compounded by Italy's aging population, raising concerns about the country's future. — AFP

Many young Italians leave the country, causing a 134 billion euro loss and worrying about the aging population.

However, like many young Italians, he faces limited opportunities and feels forced to consider emigration. Over the

ticularly affected, citing low salaries and a lack of recognition for their skills. Despite some migration within Italy from the south to