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The Global NEW LIGHT of MYANMAR

Vol. XI, No. 250, 7th Waning of Nattaw 1386 ME | www.gnlm.com.mm | Sunday, 22 December 2024

OPINION

Beware of climate change in all parts of the country

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SUNDAY EDITION

Realty & Auto Expo at Junction Square offers special prices

A three-day Property and Auto Expo took place at Junction Square (Promotion Area) in Kamayut Township, Yangon, from 9 am to 5 pm on 20-22 December, offering promotion prices for customers and bringing leading developers and companies in the real estate and automotive industry together.

Shwe Taung Real Estate, iMyanmar House and CarsDB jointly organized this expo, providing a platform to showcase under-developed and developed apartments, condominiums, plots of land and houses of the construction companies and developers in the most diverse cities in Myanmar.

Additionally, vehicles of extensive ranges of international brands and models are featured at the expo as well. The expo offered Christmas promotion discounts, zero-interest instalment payment plans, special prices and long-term instalment plans. — ASH/KK

This picture showcases the Realty & Auto Expo being held at Junction Square (Promotion Area).

This picture captures Myanmar's konjac being exported to Japan, Thailand, and China after being processed into value-added dried konjac and powder. **PHOTO: MYINT OO (MYEIK)**

Konjac farming thrives in Taninthayi Region

Konjac (elephant yam) commercial farming increasingly grew in Taninthayi Region and this business flourished in the region.

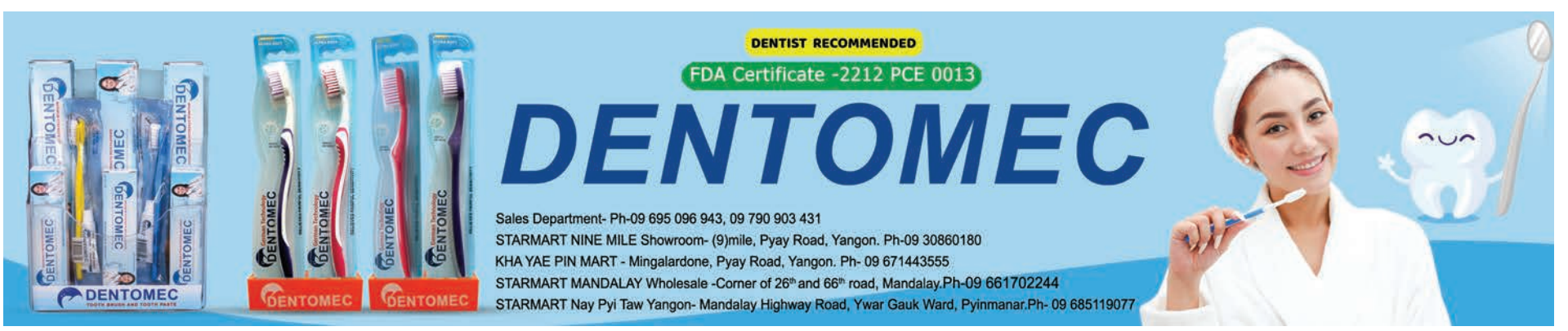
Residents in Taninthayi Region primarily rely on fisheries and perennial crops such as rubber, and areca nuts. At present, coffee, cocoa and konjac are cultivated under an intercropping system. Growers turn to commercial farming on a manageable scale. Konjac has foreign demand beyond domestic consumption. They are processed into dried konjac and powder with value addition and exported to Japan, Thailand and China. Konjac is rich in Glucomannan fiber. Konjac raw materials are utilized in food and beverage, cosmetics, traditional medicine and pharmaceutical industries with value addition. Even the byproducts can be used as animal feed.

"Konjac cultivation season starts in May-June and harvest season is in December. Cultivation costs K6 million per acre and generates K10 to K12 million income," said U Thaw Zin Tun, head of the Agriculture Department in Palauk Town.

"Growers started to cultivate konjac in the town five years ago. Foreign demand enticed them to execute this business two years ago. This way, konjac cultivation expanded in the region," he added.

Chin State is the largest producer of Konjac in Myanmar. Konjac is grown in Kachin, Shan, Mon, Kayin and Chin states and Bago, Sagaing and Taninthayi regions. High profitability and foreign demand prompted growers to cultivate konjac, according to the Agriculture Department.

Konjac cultivation is found in Yephyu, Kaleinaung, Dawei, Thayetchaung, Palaw, Myeik, Kyunsu, Taninthayi, Palauk, Bokpyin and Mawtaung areas. — Myint Oo (Myeik)/KK



NATIONAL

Nation's Development Relies on Contributions from Intellectuals and Experts

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

(Excerpt from the speech given by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the ceremony of presenting awards to outstanding students who passed the matriculation examination 2024 with distinctions in all subjects on 22 July 2024)

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"

Gold Market Rate as of 21 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 K5,250,000, as established by the Mineral (Gold) Reference Price Determination Committee.

Govt designates continuous public days for 2024-2025 to ease travel and extend leisure

THE government has designated select working days between gazetted holidays and public holidays in the 2024 and 2025 calendars as continuous public days to facilitate easier travel and extended leisure periods for people and government employees as follows: -

(a) 31 December 2024, between 28 (Saturday), 29 (Sunday) and 30 (Kayin New Year Day) December 2024, and 1 January 2025 (five holidays)

(b) 14 March and 12 March 2025 (one day ahead of Taboung full moon day), between 13 March (Taboung full moon day), 15 (Saturday) and 16 (Sunday) March 2025 (five holidays)

(c) 3 November 2025, between 1 (Saturday), 2 (Sunday) and 4 (full moon day of Tazaungmone) November 2025 (four holidays)

(d) 26 December 2025, between 25 (Christmas), 27 (Saturday) and 28 (Sunday) December 2025 (four holidays)

The Saturdays closest to the above extended holidays will be substitute working days. For the first five-day holidays, 4 January 2025, Saturday is a substitute working day, but it is Independence Day. Therefore, 11 January (Saturday) will be a substitute working day, while 22 March (Saturday) and 29 March (Saturday) for the second-long holidays, 8 November (Saturday) for the third-long holidays, and 3 January (Saturday) 2026 for the fourth-long holidays. — MNA/KTZH

Depression News, No 3, 2024

21 December 2024 19:00 MST Today

Depression

According to the observations at 17:30 hours MST today, the Depression over the Westcentral Bay of Bengal continues has moved east-northeastwards. It is centred at about 510 nautical miles west of Coco Island (Myanmar), 230 nautical miles south-southeast of Visakhapatnam (India).

The centre pressure of Depression is (1003) hPa and maximum wind speed near the centre is 30-35 miles per hour.

It does not intend to move towards Myanmar coasts at the present stage and therefore the Depression is coded as yellow stage.

Forecast

It is likely to move slowly east-northeastwards during next six hours and weaken gradually over the Westcentral Bay of Bengal. Due to the Depression, rain or thundershowers are likely to be fairly widespread in Chin State, scattered in Mandalay, Magway and Sagaing regions and Kachin, Rakhine and Shan states isolated in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon, Bago and Ayeyawady regions and Kayah State with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls tonight up to 23 December 2024.

Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely at times off and along Rakhine Coast. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach 30-35 miles per hour and wave height will be about seven to nine feet off and along Rakhine Coast.

Advisory

People should be awared of the natural disasters such as the heavy rainfall with strong wind, thunder, lightning strike, lightnings, hails, flash floods and landslides in the hilly areas and near small rivers and inland water transport and domestic flights. — DMH

Daily newspapers available online

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News and Periodicals Enterprise

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 9th Anniversary of the Signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) held on 15 October 2024.)

Bagan landscape. **PHOTO BY KYAW MYO THIHA (IPRD)**

Efforts to enhance food security, exports, and State economy

A meeting on agricultural sector development coordination was held yesterday morning at the meeting hall of the Union Minister's Office of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation. It was attended by Union Minister U Min Naung, deputy ministers, permanent secretaries, directors-general of the departments, officials, heads of regional and state agriculture departments, heads of oil crop special zones, and heads of training schools.

The coordination meeting on agricultural sector development in progress at the Office of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, the Union minister delivered a speech stating that the government has formulated policies for the development of the agricultural sector to ensure domestic food security, increase export production, and boost the national economy. He also mentioned that the needs of all sectors are being addressed. In efforts to significantly improve agricultural production, the performance of the heads of the regional, state, district, and township agriculture departments — who work closely with farmers — is crucial. Therefore, it is necessary to implement measures to effectively enhance farmers' interest in farming, including improving crop quality, strengthening the market, fetching good prices, and focusing on seed, soil, water, and technology-related activities.

The deputy ministers then discussed ways to promote cooperation between relevant departments for the development of the agricultural sector, ensure strict compliance with financial regulations, enforce the rental of departmental buildings following procedures, and effectively utilize digital communication technology to ensure continuous interaction between civil servants, experts, researchers, and farmers.

The permanent secretary and directors-general of the departments continued the discussion by presenting issues related to achieving target yields of major crops, including rice and oil crops, expanding the cultivation of industrial raw materials and market crops, and ensuring the accuracy of basic statistics on acreage and yield by crop. The Union minister delivered a concluding speech. — MNA/TKO

MoH Union Minister honours healthcare participants in National Sports Festival

THE ceremony to honour participants in healthcare programmes and athletes at the Fifth National Sports Festival 2024 was held at the Ministry of Health's hall yesterday.

The ceremony was attended by Union Minister for Health Dr Thet Khaing Win, Deputy Minister Dr Aye Htun, directors-general, officials from the Directorate of Medical Services, specialists, assistant surgeons, nurses, medical technicians, supporting health workers, administrative staff, athletes representing the Ministry of Health, and other invitees.

The Union minister stated that health workers are not only based in Nay Pyi Taw but that health workers in regions and states have also been organized to provide medical care for the National Sports Festival. In addition, not only the Ministry of Health but also medical workers from the Medical Services and the Myanmar Red Cross Society have formed nearly 300 strengths of medical teams to participate in healthcare efforts. He expressed his gratitude to all staff members who have overseen and managed the healthcare services to ensure that no one was left behind.

Following this, the Union minister, the deputy minister, and the directors-general presented certificates of honour and gifts to those who participated in the healthcare programmes and sports competitions, contributing to the successful organization of the Fifth National Sports Festival.

Union Minister for Health Dr Thet Khaing Win presents certificates of honour to officials who participated in the healthcare programmes and sports competitions during the Fifth National Sports Festival.

They also hosted a lunch.

During the event, the Ministry of Health treated over 5,800 patients, including 1,371 injured in sports competitions, 1,487 at traditional medicine clinics, 92 at specialist clinics, 2,314 at accommodation sites, 557 in the performance groups' training and during the opening and closing ceremonies, and 42 at hospitals. — MNA/MKKS

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)

SEAOP, SEAGP contribute 493 charity, social welfare projects in Myanmar

This photo reveals donations and aid contributed by SEAOP and SEAGP.

CHINA'S Southeast Asia Oil and Gas Pipeline Company (SEAOP) and Southeast Asia Natural Gas Pipeline Company (SEAGP) have implemented 493 charity and social welfare projects in Myanmar, according to the launch of the China-Myanmar Oil and Gas Pipeline Project 2024 ESG Report, held in Yangon.

These companies have donated 163 school buildings, 28 buildings for libraries, halls, roads, and teaching aids to improve the education sector in Myanmar.

In the health sector, they have also helped build 35 hospital and medical centre projects, nine hospital wards, external power lines, road-related buildings, 11 ambulances, and medical equipment, all aimed at improving the quality of local health services.

In the transportation sector, the companies donated 11 roads, bridges, ports, and transportation structures to facilitate the movement of people. Similarly, in the area of ensuring people's livelihoods, 17 community electricity supply facilities, 30 community wells or water supply pipelines, and two communication towers were donated to help local people access electricity, and drinking water, and improve communication.

SEAOP and SEAGP have also provided 121 donations and assistance during post-disaster and recovery efforts in Myanmar. — ASH/TMT

Cooking oil reaches 420,000 households by Nov with 5,000 daily deliveries to homes

This photo shows edible oil bottles displayed at the 32nd annual general meeting of the Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association at the UMFCCI office in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: THITSA(MNA)**

THE Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association announced at its 32nd annual general meeting yesterday that it had delivered cooking oil to over 420,000 households by November 2024 through a daily home delivery system, reaching over 5,000 households. The initiative aims to provide convenience for consumers.

The association opened call centres in the Yangon Region in July 2024 to facilitate cooking oil distribution for consumers. Starting in August, home delivery services were launched, initially serving over 700 households daily. By the end of December 2024, this number had increased to over 5,000 daily deliveries, and by November 2024, more than 420,000 households had successfully received cooking oil.

"The old system of selling cooking oil in bulk was unreliable. We've improved with new packaging, better distribution through local representatives, and home delivery services in Yangon, especially for busy workers. We've significantly increased our reach, from 700 to over 5,000 daily deliveries. Our goal is to ensure consistent access to cooking oil for all," said the chairperson of the association, U San Lin.

The Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association is working closely with oil millers, wholesalers, retailers, importers, and transporters to ensure that consumers have uninterrupted access to cooking oil and can purchase it easily. The association is also collaborating with the government to achieve this goal. — Thitsa (MNA)/TRKM

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CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION
(+95) (01) 8604532,
Hotline - 09 255597511
ADVERTISING & MARKETING
(+95) (01) 8604530,
Hotline - 09 251022355
marketing@gnlm.com.mm
subscription@gnlm.com.mm

Printed and published at the **Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory** at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the **Global New Light of Myanmar Daily** under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.
gnlmnews@gnlm.com,
newsroom@gnlm.com.mm
www.gnlm.com.mm

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NATIONAL

Weekly Roundup

15 December

Message sent to 50th Anniversary of Rakhine State Day

It has become clear that their demands cannot be achieved through armed terrorism, but rather through political dialogue at the negotiation table, said Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing in his message sent to the 50th Anniversary (Golden Jubilee) Rakhine State Day.

16 December

Tatmadaw (Air) commissions aircraft and helicopters into service

The newly commissioned aircraft and helicopters should be handled with care, elevating the honour of the Tatmadaw, said SAC Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the ceremony to mark the 77th Anniversary of Tatmadaw (Air) Day in conjunction with the commissioning of aircraft and helicopters into service at the Flying Training Base in Meiktila.

17 December

2/80 Yarn Factory Branch begins quality production

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing emphasized that Tatmadaw Textile Factory (Meiktila) manufactures military equipment for the entire Tatmadaw by using cotton wool while the newly-opened 2/80 yarn factory will fulfil the clothing requirement of the nation, at the inauguration ceremony of the factory in Meiktila.

18 December

DSMA graduates medical officers in 25th Intake

Military medical officers must provide better healthcare services for the people with contributions to the daily socioeconomic security, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing pointed out in his speech at the passing out parade of the 25th intake of DSMA in Yangon.

State Administration Council issues Order 52/2024

The State Administration Council has appointed and assigned Admiral Tin Aung San to the duties of Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister at the Office of the Prime Minister under Section 419 of the Constitution.

State Administration Council issues Order 53/2024

The State Administration Council has appointed and assigned General Maung Maung Aye to the duties of Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Defence under Section 419 of the Constitution.

SAC issues Orders 54, 55 and 56

The State Administration Council issued Order 54/2024 to form the Industrial Development Commission chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Transport and Communications General Mya Tun Oo, Order 55/2024 to establish the Electricity and Energy Development Commission chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister at the Office of the Prime Minister Admiral Tin Aung San and Order 56/2024 to set up the Agriculture and Livestock Development Commission led by SAC member General Nyo Saw.

21 December

Fifth National Sports Festival 2024 concludes successfully

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing underlined that Qualified players from the festival will undergo training to prepare for achieving success in the 2025 XXXIII SEA Games and 2026 XIII ASEAN Para Games in Thailand, at the closing ceremony of the Fifth National Sports Festival 2024 at Wunna Theikdi Stadium in Nay Pyi Taw.

Myanmar Motion Pictures Law amended

The State Administration Council enacted the Amendment to the Myanmar Motion Pictures Law signed by SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing as Law No 59/2024 under Section 419 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. — GNLM/TTA

Nationwide illegal trade crackdown seizes smuggled goods worth K1.169 bln on 20 Dec

SUPERVISED by the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee, action is being taken under the law against illicit trading across the nation.

During inspections on 20 December, the combined on-duty teams managed by the Mandalay Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force impounded a Hino Profia truck (approximately K30 million) carrying industrial materials and consumer goods valued at K37.180 million without official documents on the Kyaukse detour, a Sunglong bus (estimated value of K70 million) carrying industrial materials and consumer goods worth K34.895 million without official documents on the Yangon-Mandalay expressway and consumer goods valued at K44.017 million without official documents on the Yangon-Mandalay Up train at the Mandalay Railway Station. The action was conducted following Customs procedures. Similarly, the combined teams nabbed two vehicles (approximately K50 million), travelling from Thamanya to Toungoo, carrying foodstuffs and industrial materials worth K4.8 million without official documents at the Nyaungkhashay x-ray station, an unregistered Toyota Voxy (estimated value of K7 million) in Bago Township and 4.327 tonnes of illegal teak and 0.384 tonne of illegal hardwood worth K4.069 million in Toungoo and Nyaunglebin districts. The action was taken under the Export-Import Law, the Forest Law, and Customs procedures. Additionally, the combined on-duty teams seized

Confiscated illegal timbers in Bago

an unregistered Nissan X-trail (estimated value of K4.5 million) in Htantabin Township, a Toyota Lite Ace (approximately K19.5 million) carrying 0.521 tonne of illegal teak worth K458,000 in Thanlyin Township, a Nissan Diesel tractor head with a trailer (approximately K70 million) carrying industrial materials and foodstuffs worth K30 million without official documents at the Yetha temporary vehicle checkpoint, industrial materials worth K57.358 million without official documents from two containers at the Thilawa Port and industrial materials and consumer goods valued at K706.031 million without official documents from 18 containers at the Myanmar Industrial Port. The action was conducted under the Forest Law, the Export-Import Law and Customs procedures.

The Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee reported 28 arrests on 20 December, confiscating illegal items worth K1.169 billion. — MNA/MKKS

NATIONAL

Shwedagon to host consecration in May 2025 after receiving gold foil

This photo showcases the previous year's consecration ceremony at the Shwedagon Pagoda.

THE Shwedagon Pagoda Board of Trustees stated that the consecration ceremony will be held at the Shwedagon Pagoda in May 2025 after the full-body gold foil donations are completed.

The board has been implementing the process of donating the full-body gold foils to the Shwedagon Pagoda since September 2024, and the donation will be completed before the consecration ceremony.

The gold plates, which will be donated until March 2025, will be included in the full-body gold foil donation.

The Shwedagon Pagoda consecration ceremony is typically held on the full moon day of Kason (Buddha Day) in May each year, and alms-offering ceremonies are also part of the event.

In addition, the Kason water pouring festival is held at the Shwedagon Pagoda on the full moon of Kason. It is planned to conduct both the consecration ceremony and the Kason water pouring festival together when the full-body gold foils are donated in 2025. — ASH/MKKS

U Kyauk Taung and family from Nay La Yadana Company are presenting cash donations to the Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization.

MMPO to offer foodstuffs to artistes as New Year donations

ACCORDING to Vice-Chair U Aye Kyu Lay of the Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization, the Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization plans to offer food items such as rice, edible oil, and snacks to members of the film industry as a New Year donation in January 2025.

"The Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization will be supporting film industry members for the 15th time by distributing rice and food items as a New Year donation. For this, generous donors have also contributed money," said U Aye Kyu Lay.

He also mentioned that U Kyauk Taung family (Nay La Yadana Company) donated K1 million on 20 December to help distribute rice, oil, and food items to the film industry as part of the New Year donation.

The Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization has previously supported the film industry with rice and oil-based food products 14 times, commencing from 3 until 6 April 2004, benefiting the industry's various sectors, including management, distribution, scriptwriting, production, and supporting roles. — ASH/TKO

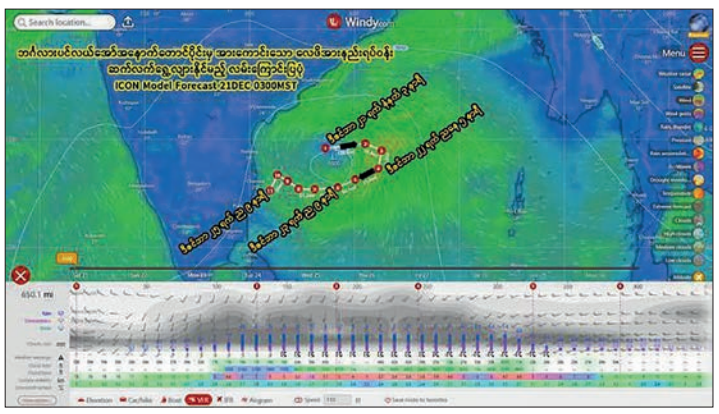
Meteorologist predicts weaker low-pressure area, colder weather for Myanmar on 25 Dec

AFTER the low-pressure area is forecast to weaken on 25 December, night temperatures across the country may continue to drop and become colder, said meteorologist U Win Naing.

The low-pressure area INVEST-91B over the southwest Bay of Bengal is forecast to weaken near the Tamil Nadu coast on 25 December after moving eastward and southward on 21 and 22 December respectively, he said, quoting the ICON Model update at 2:00 am on 21 December.

The possibility of rain in Myanmar may decrease, he added.

"Due to the continuous low-pressure areas below, cold currents from the north cannot enter well, leading to less coldness in areas such as Ayeyawady and Yangon regions. With no low-pressure area, both northern and Himalayan currents can enter, making it colder," he said.



This picture captures the weather conditions of some regions for four days.

Due to El Niño, temperatures in Myanmar rose to become the 15th hottest country in the world in early 2024. Unusual disasters include heavy rains in the upper reaches of the Ayeyawady and Chindwin rivers, which caused flooding along the banks, and another unusual flooding in eastern and southern Shan State and central Myanmar due to remnants of a typhoon in the South China Sea.

"Accordingly, we observed the La Niña phenomenon. The initial forecast showed 70 per cent likely, and now it is 59 per cent likely for the strongest La Niña event to happen in January, February, and March next year. If it is, it will be a weak La Niña, so it will not be colder, and there will not be cold waves," he said.

Therefore, he forecasts that Myanmar's weather in 2025 may be like normal and unusual events may decrease. — MT/ZN

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NATIONAL

MRF offers rice at reference prices via mobile markets in Yangon

UNDER the supervision of the Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF), locally consumed rice varieties can be purchased across townships in Yangon Region under a mobile market system, as per reference prices set by the Department of Consumer Affairs.

MRF announced on 4 December to sell rice at the set reference prices and comply with rules and regulations for rice price stability. The Department of Consumer Affairs under the Ministry of Commerce issued reasonable market prices monthly. MRF urged rice millers, wholesalers, retailers, depot owners, merchants and traders to follow the reference prices to make transactions. Additionally, the federation asked them not to manipulate the market in terms of quality or prices.

Yet, price-gouging sales posts are spreading on social networks. Some unscrupulous traders are allegedly attempting to hike the prices of Shwebo Pawsan and Ayeyawady Pawsan varieties during the harvest season of new paddy, MRF's notification stated.

Therefore, MRF thereby notified again not to store locally consumed rice varieties such as Shwebo Pawsan, Ayeyawady Pawsan, Ayeyamin, Ayeyapadetha, Magyantaw and Manawthukha for price manipulation. They were asked to comply with the reference price regulations again.

Consumers purchasing various rice varieties at reference prices in Yangon.

Those rice varieties are not designated for export so merchants cannot raise excess prices because of the export market and the negative impacts of natural disasters. If consumers find those kinds of fake news, they are considered social media manipulation.

MRF announced that the warehouse operators and wholesalers need to seek registration on Myanmar Rice Online (MyRO) through www.myro.com.mm for procurement of more than 2,500 baskets of paddy and over 25 tonnes of rice by 24 December 2024, according to the directives of the Ministry of Commerce.

MRF warned that overpricing, sales with inaccurate measurement and quality and non-compliance with directives are subjected to fines, taxation and prosecution under Section 5 of the Essential Supplies and Services Law. Thus, rice millers, rice outlets, traders and merchants are encouraged to strictly adhere to the rules. — NN/KK

Nationwide cotton cultivation exceeds 540,000 acres this year

THE Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation stated that there were over 450,000 acres of cotton cultivation across the country this year.

A work coordination meeting was held at the meeting hall of the ministry on 19 December, regarding meeting raw material needs for the domestic textile production industry and improving cotton cultivation.

Plantation workers harvesting cotton in ChaungU, Sagaing Region.

Dr Ye Tint Tun Director-General at the meeting instructed officials concerned to draw up necessary projects to help make long-staple cotton production resilient to climate, achieve yield targets, conduct inspection tours to provide technical assistance to boost cotton quality and have accurate information and statistics on cultivation acres and yield.

The meeting highlighted reaching technical and necessary assistance to cotton farms to improve the quality of the cotton during its season, replanting and remedy activities in disaster-affected farms and ensuring agricultural statistics related to yield, farming acres and success rate. — NN/KK

A plantation worker sorts Myanmar's maize for export.

Foreign demand boosts maize prices

FOREIGN demand pushed up maize prices in the domestic market.

Myanmar's maize is primarily exported to the Philippines, Vietnam and India through maritime trade. They are also sent to neighbouring countries via land borders.

Thailand gives the green light for maize imports under zero tariff (with Form D), between 1 February and 31 August. However, Thailand imposes a maximum tax rate of 73 per cent on maize imports to protect the rights of their growers if the maize is imported during the maize season of Thailand.

Additionally, China has been purchasing Myanmar's maize through cross-border trade under the alternative development programme. Legitimate maize trade between Myanmar and China commenced at the end of 2022. A total of 112 Myanmar companies have been permitted for maize exports.

Myanmar shipped over two million tonnes of maize to foreign trade partners in the 2022 corn season, and the majority of them went to Thailand, according to the Myanmar Corn Industrial Association.

The corn is cultivated in Shan, Kachin, Kayah and Kayin states and Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway regions. Myanmar has three corn seasons- winter, summer and monsoon. Myanmar's annual corn output is estimated at 2.5-3 million tonnes. — NN/KK

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OPINION

Beware of climate change in all parts of the country

THROUGHOUT the world, people are facing various challenges brought about by the changing climate, natural disasters, and environmental issues. These phenomena are not normal occurrences, and as a result, catastrophic events have been happening. The negative effects of these events are being experienced by people worldwide. This situation requires urgent action to protect and preserve the environment through proactive measures and awareness to prevent further harm.

During this period, unusual climate changes around the world have caused natural disasters such as droughts, heavy rains, storms, floods, extreme heat, and earthquakes, among other environmental hazards. Countries worldwide are facing these challenges. The global population will continue to experience negative impacts in climate change.

> Hence, the changing climate and extreme weather events, along with the risks of environmental hazards, are affecting the future. To ensure more stable and sustainable weather patterns, every human must reduce deforestation and protect trees. It is essential to plant trees and reduce carbon dioxide emissions through various means, in order to protect the environment and mitigate these risks. We must take immediate action to prevent further harm.

As for Myanmar, the country is currently experiencing wind patterns from the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea, which are bringing moist air. There are also strong winds from the coastal regions near the South China Sea. This combination has caused a convergence of air masses, resulting in possible rain and thunderstorms, particularly in the coastal areas of the Bay of Bengal. From 20 to 23 December, there may be heavy rain in the regions of Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Sagaing, Kachin, Chin, Rakhine, and Shan States, which could lead to severe weather conditions.

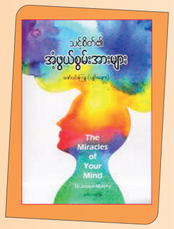
With heavy rain, strong winds, thunderstorms, lightning, hail, thunder strikes, flooding, landslides, and other natural disasters, there is a possibility of danger. People living near highland areas have to be cautious of landslide risks, while those residing near rivers and streams should be aware of potential flooding dangers. The Department of Meteorology and Hydrology has issued warnings to help people stay informed and prepared.

Climate change refers to abnormal weather patterns, such as severe weather events, heavy rainfall, flooding, and rising sea levels. Climate change is a global issue that affects the survival and health of humans, as well as ecological systems in various ways. Therefore, humans must take proactive steps to address health-related challenges caused by climate change and work to prevent its causes, including the destruction of natural ecosystems and the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions.

Hence, the changing climate and extreme weather events, along with the risks of environmental hazards, are affecting the future. To ensure more stable and sustainable weather patterns, every human must reduce deforestation and protect trees. It is essential to plant trees and reduce carbon dioxide emissions through various means, in order to protect the environment and mitigate these risks. We must take immediate action to prevent further harm.

BOOKRACK

POEM



Book Title	-	Thint Seik Ei Antbwe Swan Ah Myar
Writer	-	Dr Joseph Murphy
Translator	-	Zaw Win Kyu (Pyinmana)
Publishing House	-	Thar Nge
Publication Date	-	September 2023 (2nd Edition)
Price	-	K4,500

Thint Seik Ei Antbwe Swan Ahmyar

(Miracles of Your Mind by Dr Joseph Murphy)

IN this book, Dr Joseph Murphy explains how the latent powers inherent in our subconscious can improve our lives. He discusses the two minds we possess – the objective and subjective mind – and how to integrate them. He also explains how to harness the power of the mind, especially the subconscious mind. Dr Joseph Murphy, the founder of 'The Church of Divine Science', produced books, tapes, and radio broadcasts on spiritual matters, the historical values of life, the art of wholesome living, and the teachings of great philosophers from the Eastern and Western cultures.

Who Should Read "The Miracles of Your Mind"? And Why?

"Whether you wish to conquer a bad habit, be more successful, obtain harmony in your family, or achieve goals that have thus far been unattainable," says the blurb of The Miracles of Your Mind, this book will give you "guidelines to put you on the right path". Read it if you can suspend your disbelief, though, and you are not a scientific person. There are no arguments or cited studies here, but most of the claims are yet to be proven by science.

Joseph Murphy was an Irish-born American bestselling author and one of the leaders of the New Thought and the Human Potential movement. A Roman Catholic, he travelled to India in his thirties and formed a new church in America influenced by Hindu ideology. Later, he became the minister of the Los Angeles Divine Science Church in 1949, which, under his leadership, became one of the largest New Thought congregations in the United States. He published his first book in 1945 (aged 47) but wrote books afterwards. Published in 1963, The Power of Your Subconscious Mind is still considered a New Thought classic. Published in 1953, The Miracles of Your Mind is perhaps Joseph Murphy's second best-known book, The Power of Your Subconscious Mind being the other.

In the second chapter of his book, his purpose is "to remove the mystery of the workings of the mind and to know better its modus operandi". As always, it is our purpose to remove the mystery of his book and pack it up in a neat summary. "Man has only one mind, but he has two distinct phases or functions of the one mind" – the introductory sentence of Murphy's The Miracles of Your Mind.

The captain is the ship's master; his orders are followed out; likewise, your conscious mind is the captain, the master of your ship. Your body and all of your affairs represent the ship. Your subconscious mind takes the orders you give it based upon your beliefs and suggestions accepted as true. Another simple illustration is this: When you repeatedly say to people, 'I do not like mushrooms', then the time comes for you to be served mushrooms, you get indigestion because your subconscious mind says to you, 'The boss does not like mushrooms'. This is an example probably amusing to you; nevertheless, this is an example of the relationship between the conscious and subconscious mind. The conscious and subconscious mind are connected in an inverse proportion: the more one of them is used, the less the other contributes. That's why the subconscious mind "performs its highest functions when the objective senses are in abeyance … when the conscious mind is suspended or in a sleepy, drowsy state".

Book Title	-	Kodwin Thamadaw (How to Use Your Mind to Heal Your Body)
Writer	-	Louis Proto
Translator	-	Dr Myint Lwin (Seik Pyinnya)
Publishing House	-	Hsu Yaung Zin
Publication Date	-	October 2024 (2nd Edition)
Price	-	K15,000

Kodwin Thamadaw

(How to use your mind to heal your body)

THIS book deals with some tips for healing your body using your mind. The mind can protect, take care of and cure your body. There is a psychologist inside our body, said the translator. The original writer is Louis Proto and the original title is, "Self-Healing: How to use your mind to heal your body". The translator of this book is a psychologist himself.

He is known as Dr Myint Lwin (Seik Pyinnya). He entered the literary field in 1986 when he first contributed an article to the Annual Magazine of the University of Mandalay. His first article is 'Kyun Note Toh Ei Seik Pyinnya'.

He has been contributing articles on psychology to magazines and journals such as Ahtway Ahmyin, Life Style, Family Myanmar, People Idea, Beauty Fashion Image and Computer Knowledge.

He won the literary award presented by the Htun Foundation in April of 2007 in the Child Literature Genre.

His award-winning book is titled, "Lunge Doh Ba Wa Nay Htaing Nee", which means, "How to Live a Life on the Part of the Youth". He is still writing articles on psychology.

As self-healing techniques are becoming increasingly popular, Proto clearly explains the connection between what we put into our bodies, the stress we put ourselves under, and our state of health.

The author examines the nature of illness and offers a range of self-healing techniques, including meditation, visualization, reflexology and massage.

There are three parts in this book with Part I dealing with Illness. Under this title, there are four chapters: The Nature of Illness; Negativity and Illness; Energy and Illness; and The Meaning of Illness. Part II is about Healing. Under this title, there are 10 chapters: Before We Begin; De-stressing Yourself; Detoxifying Your Body; Nourishing Your Immune System; Boosting Your Vital Energy; Letting Go of Negativitiy; Affirming the Positive; Visualizing Health – and a Bright Future; Loving Yourself More – and More; and Listening to Your Inner Self. Part III touches on titles Staying Well and Accepting and Expressing Our Feelings.

In Self Healing, Louis Proto shows you how to use the power of your mind to heal your body, improve the quality of your life and enjoy a greater sense of well-being.

This fascinating and helpful book explains how you can develop a positive mental attitude to help you fight illness, reduce your stress levels and strengthen your immune system, release any negative feelings, detoxify your body and boost your energy, and use visualization and affirmations to improve your health.

Louis Proto has written several books on alternative health, meditation techniques and positive living including Increase Your Energy and Be Your Own Best Friend (Piatkus).

ကျင်သန်

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Wrestler

By Chit Ko Pe

At each round of defence and attack,
a force with tricky moves is wielded
with a footwork and a hand grasp,
to get the rival in a scuffle defeated.
Clinching a gold award in the contest,
the wrestler has the proudest moments
with his head held high on the way home back.

(Dedicated to Rakhine's traditional sport "Kyin")

THE BEST FAITHFUL TELLING

By Mya Thae (Research)

Honest persons like to tell the truth
Harsh people like to say rude
Flatters like to speak flatly
Sorrowful persons like to talk sadly
Wicked people like to tell lie
Thieves like to tell crime
Which way do you want to tell well?
I want to tell the truth fair.

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Rain

By Khin Maung Lwin (Myanmar Sar),
Translated by Myint Zan

because the frogs croak
the rains come
ohn-in, ohn-in (the sound made by the frogs)

over the hills
dark and grey
Deiwar (the rain god) is coming

'tis raining heavily
and it is very cold
[the child] takes refuge
in Mum's bosom
it is warm, it is warm

Translator's note: The above poem appeared in the vernacular in the February 2005 issue of Sataing Thit ('New Style') magazine. A brief philosophical note can be added here. Did the rains come because the frogs croak or did the frogs croak because the rains have arrived? The translator is reminded of a Sufi story where the sayings of the (apocryphal?) Mullah Nasiruddin is narrated by the author Idris Shah (16 June 1924-23 November 1996). Nasiruddin was throwing breadcrumbs around his house fence. A bystander asked why he did so. Nasiruddin stated: 'to pre-empt tigers from coming here'. The astonished bystander said 'But there are no tigers for dozens of miles in this area'. Nasiruddin replied: 'It works, doesn't it?'.

NATIONAL
Entertainment

Zaw Win Htut

Great singer Zaw Win Htut will be in Mandalay with his Emperor band for Christmas. He will perform at The Square in Chanayethazan Township, Mandalay, on 24 and 25 December. New member Sunny will perform in the place of the deceased Ko John. It is the third event for Sunny with the Emperor.

Aung Shan Wyne (Kyaikmaraw)

Journalist, author and artist Aung Shan Wyne organized his first solo exhibition at Bogyoke Bazaar in Yangon on 18 December. He said, "As a writer, I want to publish books. So, I make efforts to make extra money for books. Book prices are high today. I will publish books with the money received from the sale of paintings. That's why I conduct this exhibition." The event features 53 paintings and will end on 22 December.

May Than Nu

The Academy Award escorts and tray bearers are under selection for the coming Academy Award event. There are over 200 applicants, and Khant Kyaw, grandson of Academy awardee Myat Mon, is one of these applicants. "We selected based on the applications and didn't know about Khant Kyaw like whose son he was. We didn't know Khant Kyaw participated in the application. He also didn't notify us. We will emphasize the one from our field, in reality. We want those from our field to be Academy Award chaperones," said Academy May Than Nu, a selection team member.

Pan Yaung Chel

VOCALIST Pan Yaung Chel celebrated the Christmas festival in Malaysia this year. She performed with FGWC (Full Gospel Worship Centre, Malaysia) on 15, 16 and 17 December. She will star in the 'Certainly A Man' movie directed by director Maung Myo Min (Yin Twin Phyit) together with Alinn Yaung, Htet Aung Shine and Wai Lar Yi.

CELEBRITY BRIEF

Connie

Senior vocalist Connie thanked her fans for making wishes for her birthday and announced that her real date of birth is 21 December. She also pledged to make donations as much as she can and shared her unique thoughts on the life lessons of human beings on her Facebook.

Phyo Gyi

A one-person Live Performance show of Phyo Gyi will take place in The Essential BBQ & Restaurant at No 7, Quarter 3, Aungtheikdi Road, Mayangon Township, Yangon, on 25 December. Invitations are extended to music fans for an unforgettable night in December. — Htun Htun/KTZH

Chatrium hosts Diary Live Concert

THE Diary Live Concert of great singers Zaw Paing, Htun Eaindra Bo, Nay Min Eain, The Sai and May La Than Zin occurred at Chatrium Hotel on 20 December, according to Htun Eaindra Bo.

"I performed with my colleagues at Chatrium Hotel. December is a dry season and there are many concerts. I also want to sing as others participate in concerts. I was so excited and eager to perform. The well-known songs were performed at the event," she said.

The Diary Live Concert consisting of two senior vocalists Zaw Paing and Htun Eaindra Bo, and three young singers with the accompaniment of Mercury IX Band was organized by Ngwe Taungtan Entertainment as the December Music Concert at Chatrium Hotel on 20 December. — ASH/KTZH

NATIONAL

Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association holds its 32nd annual plenary meeting

MYANMAR Edible Oil Dealers' Association held its 32nd annual plenary meeting yesterday at the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) office in Yangon.

Speaking at the event, Chairman U San Lin highlighted the association's activities regarding cooking oil security, its distribution at fairer prices, bridging among the government, consumers, oil dealers, and businesspeople support for edible crop production and seeds production to develop the oil crops and oil sectors. Continuous efforts are made to stabilize commodity prices by cooperating with governmental organizations.

Yangon Region Economic Minister U Myo Myint Aung and UMFCCI President U Aye Win then made speeches, and attendees coordinated the discussion.

Afterwards, they posed for commemorative photos and observed 15 booths at the event. The Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association was founded in 1992, and it has more than 9,000 members to date. The association runs for the development of edible crops and oil sectors in the country. — Thitsa (MNA)/ KTZH

The 32nd annual plenary meeting of the Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association in progress yesterday in Yangon. **PHOTO: ZWE MARN**

This image captures a commuter paying fare using a YPS card on the YBS bus.

YPS boasts 200,000+ card users, 150,000+ QR code downloads

THE number of YPS card users to pay fares has exceeded 200,000, and the number of users who have downloaded the application to use the QR code has exceeded 150,000, according to an official from Asia Starmar Transport Intelligent.

Card usage has increased by about 50 to 60 per cent since its introduction.

"Currently, the YPS card usage rate has exceeded 200,000. The number of QR Code downloads was over 150,000. It has increased by 50 to 60 per cent since its introduction. Commuters are more comfortable with the card system as they can avoid carrying small notes. Card payment is more convenient for them, so its uses have increased," he said.

There are 98 bus lines and 3951 vehicles that passengers can use YPS cards.

"YPS card is convenient. I don't have to look for small notes. Before, we had to wait till the next stop to get changes when we paid in a K1,000 note. With the YPS card, there is no issue of changes. It is convenient." said a commuter who is using a YPS card.

Top-ups can be made for YPS cards and YPS QR at YPS sales counters, G&G Convenience Stores, Capital Supermarkets, Peace Store (near Sanpya Market), Samadhi Mini Mart (near Insein Park), YBS 21 (Power 11) terminal, YBS 57 terminal (Thakin Mya Park), YBS 81 terminal (Thukha Dagon housing), Amyin Thit Store (near Hmawby electric office), Thitsashin lottery (near Bailey bus stop), and Rangoon Minimart (corner of Strand and Natsin roads), Yangon Payment Services (YPS) stated.

Currently, there are 3,600 to 3,800 YBS buses operating in Yangon, transporting 1.5 million passengers. — MT/ZN

Shipping lines struggle to recruit qualified seafarers amid lower interview success

THERE is a low interview success rate at shipping companies seeking qualified seafarers, said Captain Soe Min Aung, president of the Myanmar Seafarers Federation (MSF).

"If people choose to become a seafarer, there are regulations regarding the training they need to attend, and it will cost them time and money. What I am hearing now is that when companies interviewed qualified candidates, only 15 or 20 out of 100 succeeded. The rest failed. I heard and saw in reality," he said.

Despite completing courses and certificates, a candidate who doesn't meet their expected qualifications during the interview is not hired by employers. In addition to relevant certificates, young people need to learn English as the main language in the maritime world.

"Since English is the main language in the maritime world, even if you are not a professional, you must be able to understand what others are saying and vice versa. You must be able to read and interpret what others have written. You must write in a way that others can understand. Therefore, I would like to encourage candidates to study English for literacy to be able to understand and speak it," he said. — MT/ZN

This photo depicts some onboard Myanmar seafarers at work.

ECONOMY
WORLD

Brunei emphasizes workplace safety after fatal fall incidents

BRUNEI'S Safety, Health and Environment National Authority is urging employers and workers to prioritize safety measures to prevent fall-related fatalities in the workplace, local media reported on Friday.

According to local daily Borneo Bulletin, falls from height have accounted for nearly half of all workplace fatalities in Brunei since 2013, with a total of 79 workers losing their lives during this period.

Brunei recorded four tragic workplace deaths in 2024. This alarming trend underscores the urgent need for stricter safety protocols, particularly in high-risk industries like construction, according to the newspaper.

Brunei's Safety, Health and Environment National Authority has demanded that all employers, occupiers, and principals must take immediate actions to implement comprehensive safe work practices to protect their workers from fall-related fatalities. — Xinhua

NEWS IN BRIEF

Dara Sakor airport in SW Cambodia to begin operation for domestic charter flights

THE newly-built Dara Sakor International Airport in southwest Cambodia's Koh Kong province is set to begin operations for domestic charter flights next week, a civil aviation spokesperson said on Friday.

Cambodian State Secretariat of Civil Aviation (SSCA)'s Undersecretary of State and Spokesperson Sinn Chanserey Vutha said the first domestic test flight will be held between the Phnom Penh International Airport and the Dara Sakor International Airport on 26 December.

He added that Mao Havannall, minister in charge of the SSCA, is expected to welcome the first domestic charter flight to the airport on that day. "This will mark the first-ever travel by air to the coastal area of Cambodia's Koh Kong province," Chanserey Vutha said in a news release. — Xinhua

El Salvador plans to sell or shut its crypto wallet

EL Salvador will privatize or close the cryptocurrency wallet "Chivo" created by President Nayib Bukele when he made bitcoin legal tender in 2021, an official said Thursday.

The announcement came after the Central American nation's government reached a $1.4 billion loan deal with the International Monetary Fund that addressed its controversial embrace of bitcoin.

While bitcoin remains legal tender in El Salvador, Chivo "will be sold or wound down", Stacy Herbert, director of Bukele's National Bitcoin Office, wrote on social media platform X.

She did not say how many people used the digital wallet, which was created by the government in September 2021 for Salvadorans to make payments in bitcoin. "El Salvador will continue buying bitcoin (at possibly an accelerated pace) for its Strategic Bitcoin Reserve," Herbert added. — AFP

China solicits opinions on tax-related information rules concerning internet platform companies

China seeks public feedback on rules regulating internet platforms' tax information submissions, promoting a fair, orderly platform economy.

Photo taken on 3 July 2020 shows the research centre of the Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba on the "AIsland" of Zhangjiang Science City in Pudong New Area, east China's Shanghai. **PHOTO: FANG ZHE/ XINHUA/FILE**

CHINESE authorities on Friday began soliciting public opinions on rules to regulate internet platform companies' submission of tax-related information about businesses and employees on their platforms.

The rules aim to promote the healthy and orderly development of the country's platform economy, according to the State Taxation Administration and the State Administration for Market Regulation, which jointly drafted the rules.

The rules are drafted in accordance with the provisions of the existing laws and regulations, such as the e-commerce law, aiming to establish a robust and regularized tax information reporting system.

They seek to effectively uphold the rule of law and a fair tax order, without causing substantial impact on the majority of industries and related individuals.

The rules provide clear stipulations on who should report tax-related information, what should be reported, and how it should be reported. — Xinhua

New Zealand falls into recession with abrupt economic slowdown

NEW Zealand tipped into recession in the third quarter, official data showed Thursday, with the economy suffering an unexpectedly sharp slump that sent the country's currency tumbling and sparked political finger-pointing.

The conservative coalition government defended its "respect for taxpayers' money" as the opposition accused it of feeding a "recessionary fire".

The economy has for months teetered on the verge of recession, with consumer sentiment weighed by high prices, elevated borrowing costs and a housing crisis.

But the latest figures showed gross domestic product fell a bigger-than-expected 1.0 per cent July-September from the previous three months. Analysts had forecast a contraction of 0.2 per cent.

That marked the second quarterly contraction in a row, after shrinking a revised 1.1 per cent in April-June. — AFP

New Zealand entered recession in Q3, with GDP falling 1.0 per cent, sparking political blame amid high prices and borrowing costs. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Electricity distribution companies continue to remain a burden on state finances: RBI

State Discoms' losses reached Rs6.5 lakh crore by 2022-23, impacting 2.4 per cent of GDP.

ELECTRICITY distribution companies (DISCOMs) continue to weigh heavily on State finances, stated a report by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

The report also noted that the total accumulated losses of state Discoms reached a staggering Rs 6.5 lakh crore by 2022-23, accounting for 2.4 per cent of the country's GDP.

It said, "Electricity distribution companies (DISCOMs) continue to remain a drag on State finances".

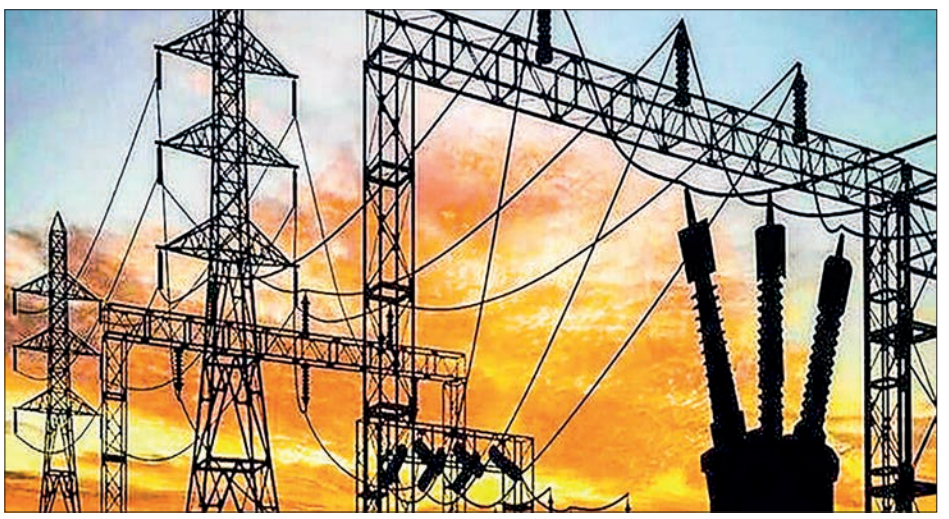
The report added that DISCOMs remain a significant challenge for States despite various reform efforts.

To address this, the RBI stressed the importance of measures such as improving productivity, reducing transmission and distribution losses, and aligning tariffs with the actual cost of power supply.

Other recommended steps include unbundling the electricity supply industry and privatizing power generation and distribution. These measures, the report noted, are crucial for enhancing the financial health of DISCOMs and, by extension, improving the overall quality of State finances.

It added, "Unbundling the electricity supply industry, and privatizing generation and distribution remain critical and would significantly improve the quality of State finance."

Despite multiple financial restructuring efforts, the report highlighted that the DISCOMs' total outstanding debt has grown at an average annual rate of 8.7 per cent since 2016-17. — ANI



The report added that DISCOMs remain a significant challenge for States despite various reform efforts. **PHOTO: ANI**

UK retail sales disappoint before Christmas

UK retail sales rose less than expected in the run-up to Christmas, according to official data Friday that deals a fresh blow to government hopes of growing the economy.

Separate figures revealed a temporary reprieve for Prime Minister Keir Starmer, however, as public borrowing fell sharply in November.

The updates follow news this week of higher inflation in Britain — an outcome that caused the Bank of England on Thursday to leave interest rates unchanged.

Retail sales by volume grew 0.2 per cent in November after a drop of 0.7 per cent in October, the Office for National Statistics said Friday. That was less than analysts' consensus for a 0.5-per cent gain.

"It is critical delayed spending materializes this Christmas to mitigate the poor start to retail's all-important festive season," noted Nicholas Found, senior consultant at Retail Economics. — AFP

Customers browse a display of books, saying buying second-hand gifts not only helps stretched budgets but is also good for sustainability. **PHOTO: AFP**

Volkswagen unveils major job cuts in cost-saving drive

CRISIS-HIT auto giant Volkswagen said Friday it planned to axe 35,000 jobs by 2030 in Germany after reaching an agreement with unions on a drastic cost-cutting plan.

The deal, struck at the end of marathon negotiations with labour representatives, will save Europe's largest carmaker around four billion euros ($4.2 billion) a year, the German group said.

But the powerful IG Metall union hailed the agreement, which came just in time for Christmas and put an end to rolling strikes, saying it had averted forced redundancies and plant closures.

Volkswagen had originally said it was considering completely shuttering production sites in Germany, which would have been an unprecedented move in the 87-year history of the carmaker.

The situation at the eponymous mass-market Volkswagen brand, which employs around 120,000 people in Germany, was "serious" and demanded urgent action, management argued.

VW has struggled with the transition to electric vehicles as it battles rising competition in China from local manufacturers, such as BYD and Geely.

The 10-brand group — which also owns Audi, Porsche and Skoda — has said it also has to contend with falling demand and elevated labour and production costs in Europe. — AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V XO LUCKY VOY.NO. (24010E)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V XO LUCKY VOY.NO. (24010E)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **22-12-2024** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S TI2 LOGISTICS PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V BLPL FAITH VOY.NO. (3427S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V BLPL FAITH VOY.NO. (3427S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **22-12-2024** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S BLPL SHIPPING LINE

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS DIGEST

PM Modi's visit to Kuwait marks the first by an Indian Prime Minister in 43 years, attending Arabian Gulf Cup. **PHOTO: INDIANSINKUWAIT**

21 DECEMBER

PM Modi embarks on two-day visit to Kuwait, to attend opening ceremony of Arabian Gulf Cup

PM Modi will attend the Arabian Gulf Cup opening and engage with the Indian diaspora at 'Hala Modi' event.

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday embarked on a two-day visit to Kuwait at the invitation of Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Emir of the State of Kuwait.

This will be the first visit of the Prime Minister any Indian Prime Minister to Kuwait after 43 years.

PM Modi will attend the opening ceremony of the 26th Arabian Gulf Cup as a special guest of the Emir of Kuwait. He will also interact with the Indian diaspora at the 'Hala Modi' community event at Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Sports Complex.

PM Modi said that his visit will deepen India's historical linkages with Kuwait and expressed eagerness to meet the Crown Prince of Kuwait. — ANI

20 DECEMBER

Italian regulator fines OpenAI for personal data abuses

ITALY'S data protection agency announced on Friday that it has fined artificial intelligence company OpenAI 15 million euros (US$15.6 million) and mandated a public information campaign.

The decision follows a 21-month investigation into the privacy and data management practices of the US-based company, which operates the ChatGPT service.

The investigation alleged that OpenAI used users' personal data to train its ChatGPT chatbot "without having adequate legal basis" and failed to uphold the principle of transparency. It also concluded that the company provided insufficient mechanisms for age verification, potentially exposing children under 13 to inappropriate responses. In addition to the fine, OpenAI has been ordered to launch a six-month media campaign in Italy to raise public awareness about its services and data collection practices. — Xinhua

19 DECEMBER

US removed 270,000 migrants in a year

US immigration authorities removed over 270,000 people last financial year, figures showed Thursday, weeks before Donald Trump takes office threatening to deport millions of migrants.

The tally of removals is the final annual report under President Joe Biden, and is higher than at any time in the last decade — including during Trump's first term as president.

The bulk of those forced to leave the United States had crossed the southern border illegally, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) said in its report.

Around a third of them had criminal convictions, or were facing criminal charges.

Covering 12 months to the end of September, the period largely coincided with the presidential campaign in which Trump made clamping down on migration a key feature. — AFP

18 DECEMBER

Hanoi karaoke bar fire kills 11

A suspected arson attack on a karaoke bar in Hanoi late Wednesday left 11 people dead and two injured, with authorities arresting a man accused of deliberately setting the fire following an argument with staff.

A fire ripped through a karaoke bar in the Vietnamese capital, killing 11 people and injuring two others in a case of suspected arson, police said Thursday.

Photos from the scene showed the blackened multi-storey building in western Hanoi mostly destroyed by flames, and piles of twisted metal strewn nearby.

Police said they received reports of a fire at 11:00 pm Wednesday (1600 GMT) "with many people trapped inside".

Rescue workers rushed to the scene and managed to bring out seven people alive, two of whom were rushed to hospital. Eleven others were found dead, they said.

Witnesses said the fire was so large that no one dared to attempt to rescue those trapped inside. The building's balconies were enclosed with metal bars, likely making escape difficult. — AFP

17 DECEMBER

One million Syrians may return in first half of 2025

THE United Nations said Tuesday it expects around one million people to return to Syria in the first half of 2025, following the collapse of president Bashar al-Assad's rule.

Assad fled Syria just over a week ago, as his forces abandoned tanks and other equipment in the face of a lightning offensive spearheaded by the Islamist Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), ending five decades of repressive rule by Assad's family.

The rule was marked by the mass jailing and killing of suspected dissidents, and nearly 14 years of civil war that left more than 500,000 people and forced half of the population to flee their homes.

The ousting of Assad sparked celebrations around Syria and beyond, and has prompted many to begin returning to their war-ravaged country.

UNHCR forecasts one million Syrians returning between January and June next year, says Rema Jamous Imseis. — AFP

16 DECEMBER

French MPs pass 'special law' to maintain tax system

MORE than a week after a historic no-confidence vote brought down a prime minister unable to secure backing for an austerity budget, French lawmakers Monday unanimously passed a law to keep tax and social security machinery running.

A minimalist bill designed to keep the policy-making show on the road was passed 11 days after the turmoil engendered by the downfall of Michel Barnier after barely three months as prime minister.

Barnier suffered the first successful no-confidence action since a defeat for Georges Pompidou's government in 1962, when Charles de Gaulle was president, as he became contemporary France's shortest-serving premier. — AFP

15 DECEMBER

Iran demands $170 million from US over 2010 attack

AN Iranian court has ordered the US government and officials to pay US$170 million in compensation to the families of Iranians killed and those injured in a "terrorist attack" in the southeastern port city of Chabahar in 2010.

The ruling was issued at an undisclosed date by the 55th branch of the Tehran Court of Justice following complaints filed by six people, including families of the victims and survivors of the attack, the Mizan news agency of the Iranian judiciary reported on Sunday.

A suicide bombing in Chabahar killed 39 and injured 70 during a religious ceremony in December 2010. — Xinhua

SPORTS

Myanmar team ousted from group stage after defeat

THE final match of Group B in the 2024 ASEAN Cup took place at 7:30 pm Myanmar Standard Time on 21 December. The Myanmar team was eliminated from the group stage after suffering a heavy defeat in their away match.

In the match held in Vietnam, the Vietnamese team defeated Myanmar with 5-0. Despite advancing hopes to the next round, Myanmar's loss to Vietnam in the away match led to their early exit from the tournament. While Myanmar managed to keep the first half scoreless, they conceded five goals in the second half.

With Maung Maung Lwin suspended and unavailable, the Myanmar team fielded a lineup including Pyae Phyo Thu (goalkeeper), Hein Phyo Win, Latt Wai Phone, Soe Moe Kyaw, Thiha Htet Aung, Okkar Naing, Wai Lin Aung, Lwin Moe Aung, Thiha Zaw, Ye Yint Aung, and Win Naing Tun.

From the start, Vietnam put pressure on the Myanmar side, taking advantage of Brazil-born naturalized player Rafaelson. While Vietnam could not finish effectively in the first half, they capitalized on Myanmar's defensive weaknesses and declining performance in the second half.

Vietnam scored through Vo Van Vu in the 48th minute, Rafaelson in the 55th and 90th minutes, Nguyen Quang Hai in the 74th minute, and Nguyen Tien Linh in the 90+2 minutes.

In another match held in Indonesia, the Philippines defeated the host team Indonesia 1-0, advancing to the semifinals. Christian Sand scored the winning goal for the Philippines via a penalty in 63 minutes.

After Group B matches Vietnam topped the group with 10 points, followed by the Philippines with six points, both advancing to the semifinals. Indonesia and Myanmar, with four points each, and Laos, with two points, were eliminated in the group stage.

Thailand will face the Philippines, while Vietnam will compete against Singapore in the semifinals. — Ko Nyi Lay/TMT

Myanmar women's futsal team prepares for Asian Cup qualifiers

This photo captures the Myanmar women's futsal team during a training session. **PHOTO : MFF**

MYANMAR women's futsal team has been in training camp since 16 December to prepare for the 2025 Asian Futsal Championship qualifiers.

The Myanmar women's futsal team, composed of 19 players, is coached by Thai national Ban Lekchayowon. The 2025 Asian Women's Futsal qualifiers will be held in the second week of January, with Group D matches, including Myanmar, from 15 to 19 January in Yangon.

Myanmar is grouped with Vietnam, Chinese Taipei, and Macau SAR. The Myanmar women's futsal team consists of 11 administrative, coaching staff and 19 players, led by team leader U Naing Thaung Htaik. The Myanmar women's futsal team will have approximately one month to prepare for the Asian Cup qualifier. — Ko Nyi Lay/TRKM

Pereira happy to achieve Premier League 'target' with Wolves

VITOR Pereira said he was happy to achieve a career ambition of managing in the Premier League after being appointed by struggling Wolves.

The 56-year-old, previously at Saudi Pro League side Al-Shabab, was confirmed Thursday as the new boss at Molineux, replacing the sacked Gary O'Neil.

He will take charge for the first time at fellow relegation candidates Leicester at the weekend. Wolves are second-bottom of the Premier League, five points from safety, but former Porto and Olympiakos boss Pereira said the lure of the English top flight meant he had no hesitation in joining the Midlands club. "Because it's (the) Premier League and in my opinion the Premier League is the best in the world," said Pereira when asked by reporters on Friday why he had made the move. — AFP

Myanmar Vovinam team wins 11 medals at 5th AVF Asian Vovinam Championships 2024

THE Fifth AVF Asian Vovinam Championships 2024 is being held in Bali, Indonesia, from 17 to 22 December, with Vovinam athletes from 13 countries, including Myanmar, competing.

On 19 December, May Honey Aung Lwin won the gold medal in the Ying Yang Sword form female competition, Tin Htoo Zaw won the gold medal in the Four Element Staff Form male competition, Aik Soe Lin and Tin Htoo Zaw won the silver medal in the Dual Form Three competition, Aik Soe Lin won the bronze medal in the Ying Yang Sword Form male competition, and Aik Soe Lin, Tin Htoo Zaw, Ye Yint Aung, and Eaindray Phoo won the bronze medal in the One Female Defending Against Three Males with Weapons competition.

In the Cross Form female competition held on 20 December, Eaindray Phoo won the silver medal. In the Pair Sword Form male competition, Aik Soe Lin and Tin Htoo Zaw won the bronze medal. In the 50-55 kilogrammes competition held on 22 December, Ye Yint Aung won the silver medal.

In the Dual Form Three female competition, Eaindray Phoo and May Honey Aung Lwin won the bronze medal. In the Five-Gate Form male competition, Ye Yint Aung won the bronze medal, and in the Pair Sword Form female competition, Eaindray Phoo and May Honey Aung Lwin won the bronze medal.

The Myanmar Vovinam team celebrates its victory at the Fifth AVF Asian Vovinam Championships 2024 in Indonesia.

The Fifth AVF ASIAN Vovinam Championships 2024 is attended by athletes from 13 countries, including Myanmar, Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines, Cambodia, India, China, South Korea, Japan, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Timor-Leste, and Nepal. Myanmar's team consisted of U Hlwan Aung as the administrator-cum-coach, three referees, and five athletes (three males and two females), totalling nine participants.

The Myanmar team won two gold medals, three silver medals, and six bronze medals, for a total of 11 medals. — MNA/TKO

PM Modi urges everyone to embrace meditation for transformative benefits on World Meditation Day

On World Meditation Day, PM Modi urges everyone to embrace meditation for peace, harmony, and societal transformation. **PHOTO: VISUAL ART**

On World Meditation Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called upon everyone to make meditation a part of their lives and experience its transformative potential.

He called meditation a "powerful way" to bring peace and harmony to one's life and to society and planet Earth.

In a post on X, PM Modi stated, "Today, on World Meditation Day, I call upon everyone to make meditation a part of their daily lives and experience its transformative potential. Meditation is a powerful way to bring peace and harmony to one's life, as well as to our society and planet. In the age of technology, Apps and guided videos can be valuable tools to help incorporate meditation into our routines".

On 6 December, UNGA unanimously declared December 21 as World Meditation Day, with India's key role.

On 6 December, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution, declaring 21st December as World Meditation Day. India was instrumental in the unanimous adoption of the said resolution.

Meanwhile, Spiritual Guru Sri Sri Ravi Shankar emphasized the necessity of meditation during his address at the inaugural session of the first-ever World Meditation Day at United Nations headquarters in New York.

Gurudev Ravi Shankar called meditation "mental hygiene" and reflected on its importance in today's time when "mental health took a big toll" on the population. — ANI

Cod is king in Portugal at Christmas

SALT COD, or bacalhau, has been a cornerstone of Portuguese cuisine for centuries, with countless recipes dedicated to this humble fish. At Christmas, it takes centre stage in family meals, much like turkey at Thanksgiving in the US. The traditional preparation involves baking the cod with boiled potatoes, though it can also be grilled, fried into fritters, or even used in lasagna. Chef Ricardo Simoes, known for adding a touch of sophistication to traditional dishes, recently created a cod confit with prawns and coriander juice. Portugal consumes nearly 55,000 tonnes of salt cod annually, with a third of that being consumed during Christmas. The fish, introduced to Portugal in the 16th century, initially served as a nutritious, non-perishable food for sailors. Over time, it became known as "the meat of the poor" and a symbol of Portuguese culture. —AFP

Traditional preparation includes baking with boiled potatoes, but it can also be grilled, made into fritters, or used in lasagna.

Customers enjoy a meal at a Lisbon restaurant specialized in traditional cod-based recipes, D'Bacalhau, where they cook a minimum of eight tonnes of cod per month. **PHOTO: AFP**

AI-based app helping Japanese farmers forecast crop pests

HIROAKI ASAKURA, a farmer in Aichi Prefecture, central Japan, learned how to be a green thumb from his father. This meant knowing the seasons for planting crops and what pesticides to apply and when. But climate change has made reliance on instinct a dangerous game.

To deal with today's reality, Japanese firms have begun supplying

Photo taken on 6 November 2024, shows farmer Hiroaki Asakura looking at an AI app that predicts disease and pest outbreaks in Toyohashi, Aichi Prefecture, central Japan. **VPHOTO: KYODO**

AI-based agricultural pest diagnosis solutions to farmers like Asakura via smartphone apps, in a bid to boost crop yields and reduce the amounts of pesticides used in cultivation.

At a time when the agricultural industry is facing increasing labour shortages because of fewer farmers amid Japan's aging population, companies like Mirai Vegetable Garden based in Nagoya, western Japan, are making life easier with forecasts for pest solutions by machine learning on big data.

Others such as Nihon Nohyaku Co and NTT Data CCS Corp — agriculture and system integrator companies respectively — have jointly developed an AI app to identify types of crop diseases and suggest the appropriate pesticide controls. The timely application of pesticides based on outbreak forecasts is expected to help farmers who might find themselves at a loss to make good decisions when the temperature drops later than in the average year, for example, due to the effects of global warming. — Kyodo