

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

SAC Chair PM Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Russian State Duma Deputy Chairman



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing holds talks with Mr Sholban Kara-Ool, Deputy Chairman of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, during the latter's courtesy call on the former yesterday.

STATE Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received a delegation led by Mr Sholban Kara-Ool, Deputy Chairman of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, at the Credentials Hall of the Office of the State Administration Council Chairman in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday

morning.

At the meeting, the two parties exchanged views on existing relations between the two countries, the ongoing progress in friendship and cooperation, exchange of visits by senior officials, the stance of Russia towards political changes in Myanmar among the international communities, and the standpoint of My-

anmar towards political changes in the Russian Federation, preparations for free and fair elections and invitations to Russian observers at the time of elections, potential cooperation in the legal, religious, cultural and youth sectors, potential expansion of tourism and trade, enhancement of technological cooperation in manufacturing and agriculture, further col-

laboration in fertilizer production and farming industries, and promotion of sector-wise cooperation in addition to power and energy production.

After the meeting, the Senior General and the Deputy Chairman of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation exchanged gifts and posed for the documentary photo. — MNA/KTZH

OPINION

Empower people with disabilities without discrimination

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Myanmar exports 1.7M+ tonnes of rice in past 8 months

NATIONAL

Unlocking Knowledge: The Essential Role of Libraries and Reading Habits

- A library is an institution dedicated to disseminating knowledge.
- It is essential to cultivate a reading habit.
- Individuals should read books to acquire knowledge.
- They must take notes from their readings to deepen their understanding.
- Reading is a powerful tool for accumulating knowledge.

(Excerpt from the speech given by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to the ceremony to donate cash and books to libraries across the nation for their development on 10 April 2024)

Bagan hot-air balloon rides offer Dec discounts for young and senior visitors

HOT-air balloon rides are a popular annual attraction in the Ancient Bagan Cultural Heritage Zone, allowing visitors to enjoy breathtaking aerial views of the ancient cultural heritage. This December, BOB Ballooning Company is offering a special discount programme as a New Year gift for visitors under 18 and over 60 years old.

"This year, we've seen an increase in travellers, especially during full moon days starting with the Thadingyut Festival. December will feature the Alodawpyae Pagoda Festival, making it a vibrant time for travel. As Bagan is a culturally rich destination highly regarded by international tourists within ASEAN, we are enhancing our services during this peak sea-

son. For the first time, we are providing discounts for those aged over 60 and under 18," a responsible personnel from Ballooning Over Bagan explained.



Photos showcase hot-air balloons in action at the Bagan Ancient Cultural Heritage Zone. **PHOTO: ZWE MARN**

Hot-air ballooning is a major tourism attraction in many European and Asian countries, offering unique views of cities, mountains, gardens, and cultural heritage sites. These services significantly boost tourism rev-

enue in regions rich in natural and cultural assets.

Within ASEAN, Myanmar's Bagan region is a standout destination, attracting both domestic and international tourists with its rich heritage. To help

visitors fully appreciate the beauty of Bagan from above, the company is providing its services throughout December, accompanied by a special discount programme. — Thitsa (MNA)/TMT

Photos depict the entrance to Popa and visitors at the foot of Mount Popa.



Popa attracts 500 visitors on weekends and holidays

IN this year's dry season, visitor arrival to Mount Popa has visibly elevated and there are around 500 on weekends and public holidays.

In addition to youths, international school students were also among

visitors this year, said residents.

"Visitor arrival dramatically rose this year, especially on weekends and public holidays. Most visitors are from Yangon, Mandalay and Pakkoku. Among visitors, there are youths and international school students," said Ko Tin Ko Min from Mahagiri Group.

People who love nature have been growing, leading the visitor number mounting.

During the last Thad-

ingyut and Tazaungdine holidays, visitor arrivals were around 500 joined the overnight-stay trek tour and day trip to Mount Popa, he said, and added that, about 100 visitors stayed overnight at the mountain over last weekend.

It is also expected that the visitor arrival to Popa will be large on New Year and an increase in visitor arrival can help the development of the livelihood of residents, he said. — MT/ZS



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)

Non-profitable industries may be halted after reviews

The industries which cannot bring profit for the State may be halted through reviews and State-owned industries must be cost-effective.



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing addresses the Union government meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

SENIOR General Min Aung Hlaing pointed out that only when productivity rises and supply and demand are in balance will authorities be able to manage commodity prices.

Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing yesterday afternoon said so at the Union government meeting at the meeting hall of the Office of the SAC Chairman in Nay Pyi Taw.

Speaking on the occasion, the Senior General underscored that producers and business owners are urged to sell these basic commodities at reasonable and fair profit margins.

He said that the industries which cannot bring profit for the State may be halted through reviews and State-owned industries must be cost-effective.

He emphasized that only when productivity rises and

supply and demand are in balance will authorities be able to manage commodity prices.

The Senior General added that by selling larger quantities with smaller profit margins, they can help alleviate the financial burden on the public and contribute to their welfare measures.

The Senior General underlined that it is also important to maintain a balance between national income and expenditure. To achieve this, production must be increased without fail to enable greater exports.

He highlighted that employment opportunities should be created, and incentives should be provided to boost manufacturing industries to further increase production.

With regard to the employment opportunities, the Senior General stressed that deserved jobs, salaries and wages must be created for the people. Regions and states have to create

employment opportunities to develop these regions, he added.

He highlighted that if new projects are beneficial for the country, the government will allow them but the projects must be implemented on schedule. But, these projects must be completed during the tenure of the government.

He went on to say that everybody must participate in initiatives to ensure food security. If all regions and states have food security, there is no reason to raise commodity prices.

The Senior General stressed the operation of bamboo and bamboo-based industries, rubber industries and expanded sown acreage of onion to export surplus to foreign markets.

In the education sector, the Senior General disclosed that teachers must be qualified in teaching skills as they are early teachers of students from primary and middle schools. The gov-

ernment has a plan to establish more polytechnic universities in regions and states.

He instructed that all regions and states have to create green zone areas for the greening of the environment. Relevant administrators need to supervise growing trees along both sides of roads and conserve them. Officials need to supervise road areas and railway areas strictly.

Union ministers, the Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman and

chief ministers of regions and states reported on education, health, agriculture and production measures, and respective sectors.

Also present were SAC Vice Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win, union ministers, union-level dignitaries and officials, together with the Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman, chief ministers from regions and states through video conferencing. — MNA/TTA

Salient points from the speech delivered by the Senior General at the Union government meeting

1. By selling larger quantities with smaller profit margins, they can help alleviate the financial burden on the public and contribute to their welfare measures.
2. Employment opportunities should be created, and incentives should be provided to boost manufacturing industries to further increase production.
3. Everybody must participate in initiatives to ensure food security. If all regions and states have food security, there is no reason to raise commodity prices.

NATIONAL

Prioritize education to empower people with disabilities: Vice-Senior General

THE education sector should be prioritized to develop the capacities of people with disabilities, said Vice-Senior General Soe Win.

At the ceremony to mark the 2024 International Day of Persons with Disabilities held at the Myanmar International Convention Centre II in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning, Chairman of the National Committee on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities Vice-Chairman of the State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win delivered a speech on the rights of the persons with disabilities.

Speaking on the occasion, the Vice-Senior General noted that there are about 23,000 children with disabilities according to a 2016 study, and two in three children do not attend school and only 36 per cent can read and write. Therefore, special emphasis should be placed on the education sector for disabled people in the future. The government also arranges proper measures like creating opportunities at basic education schools for the disabled, vocational schools, adopting inclusive curricula and practices for disabled persons, teacher training for special education and providing required technologies and teaching aids for the disabled persons to get learning opportunities like others.

He added that the theme of this year is "Amplifying the leadership of persons with disabilities for an inclusive and sustainable future".

Among 8,200 million of world population, 16 per cent, over 1,300 million, are with disabilities. The 2019 interim census of Myanmar shows 5.9 million representing



State Administration Council Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win speaks on the occasion to mark the 2024 International Day of Persons with Disabilities yesterday.

12.8 per cent of the country's population are with disabilities.

The government ratified the UNCRPD on 7 December 2011 and also enacted the Right of Persons with Disabilities Law (2015) and Rules (2017). Moreover, the country organized the National Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and nine working committees and subcommittees to implement the rights of persons with disabilities.

Similarly, the government also creates a non-obstacle environment for people with disabilities in public buildings and transport and adopts sign language in news broadcasting. Moreover, the honorary awards are also being presented for accessible tourism for people with

disabilities every year in ceremonies marking the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

He continued that although the body of disabled people is not strong enough like others, proper measures must be arranged for them to participate in different sectors using their healthy body parts. Such actions can end the depression and feeling of insecurity of disabled people and can empower them to become reliable persons bringing benefits to the country. When disabled people can operate their vocational industries, they can receive integration in social and economic sectors, and become independent. Therefore, all should understand and accept them as they can do something even though they are disabled

persons, and allow them to participate in organizations, servicing duties in making policies and decisions.

Moreover, the classification of disabilities and registration process is being conducted in 21 townships, and 5,937 are registered to date.

He then stressed the need to conduct rehearsals and education programmes for disabled persons regarding natural disasters, carry out actions under the laws, rules and regulations, and work together in line with the theme of this year.

Then, the Vice-Senior General awarded the winners of article competitions marking the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Moreover, the SAC mem-

bers and Vice-Chair 1 of the National Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities presented awards to the winners of different levels in different competitions.

Next, the Vice-Senior General and party enjoyed the performance of the members of the Myanmar Federation of Persons with Disabilities and students of Kyimyindine School For the Blind and School For the Deaf (Yangon).

The Vice-Senior General presented cash awards to the dance troupes.

The Vice-Senior General also posed for a photo together with the attendees and observed the displayed books, handmade products and photo records. — MNA/KTZH



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NATIONAL

SAC Member receives Russian State Duma Deputy Chairman

STATE Administration Council Member U Wunna Maung Lwin received a delegation led by Mr Sholban Kara-Ool, Deputy Chairman of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, at the SAC office yesterday afternoon.

Both sides discussed strengthening bilateral relations and multi-sectoral cooperation. They exchanged expe-

periences on national elections, cooperation between Members of Parliament, support for students studying in Russia, and language teaching collaboration.

The event was attended by Director-General U Win Ne Lwin from the Department of Media Security, the ambassador of the Russian Federation, and other officials. — MNA/TS



The Deputy Chairman of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation calls on SAC Member U Wunna Maung Lwin yesterday.

DPM MoFA Union Minister receives Russian State Duma Delegation



The Russian State Duma delegation calls on Deputy Prime Minister Union Foreign Affairs Minister U Than Swe yesterday.

DEPUTY Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Than Swe received the Russian State Duma delegation led by Mr Sholban Kara-Ool, Deputy Chairman of the State Duma,

Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, yesterday at the Union Minister's Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw.

Both sides cordially exchanged views on further consolidating existing friendship

ties between Myanmar and Russia, expanding bilateral cooperation in various areas, including economic, cultural and tourism sectors, and enhancing cooperation through regional and international organizations. — MNA

UEC Chair meets Russia's State Duma Deputy Chair

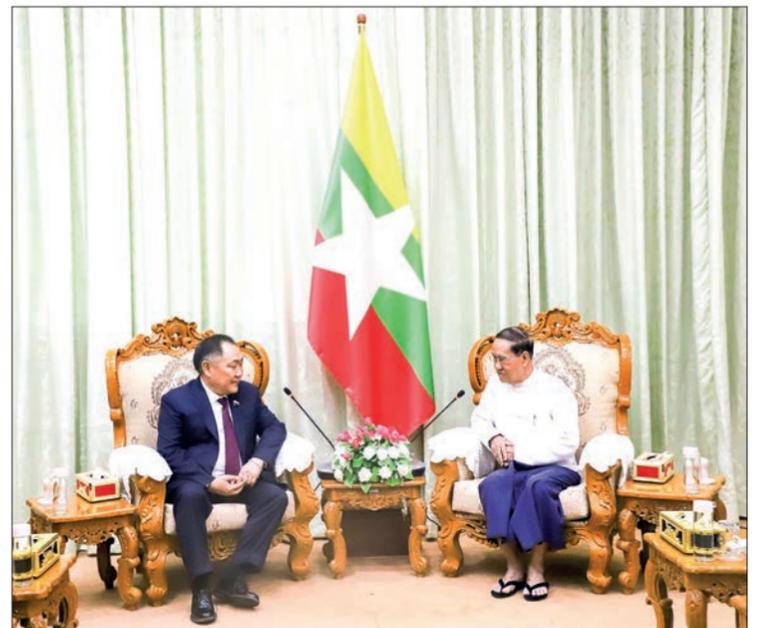
UNION Election Commission Chair U Ko Ko held talks with Mr Sholban Kara-Ool, Deputy Chairman of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, at the UEC office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The UEC chairman explained collaboration efforts under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation and preparations undertaken to ensure the successful conduct of elections.

Mr Sholban Kara-Ool shared

insights into the structure and operations of the State Duma, potential areas for bilateral cooperation, and ways for Russia to assist in facilitating successful elections. The Russian ambassador also raised questions on election processes, which the UEC chairman addressed in detail, highlighting the ongoing measures for successful elections.

The meeting discussed election-related matters in a frank and cordial atmosphere. UEC members and officials were present at the meeting. — MNA/KZL



UEC Chair U Ko Ko receives Russian State Duma Deputy Chair Mr Sholban Kara-Ool yesterday.

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NATIONAL

17th Flower Dreamland Festival celebrates Kandawgyi Park's centenary

ACCORDING to U Zaw Min Tun, an official from the park, the 17th Flower Dreamland Festival will take place at the National Kandawgyi Park in PyinOoLwin, Mandalay Region, to commemorate the park's 100th anniversary.

The event is scheduled to run from 14 December 2024 to 14 January 2025.

"The festival aims to establish a signature annual floral event that showcases seasonal flowers in creative and distinctive arrangements. It is designed to delight domestic and international travellers while boosting Myanmar's tourism industry to global standards," said U Zaw Min Tun. The event will promote Myanmar's floral industry, raise environmental awareness, and support regional development.

The festival will feature eight exhibition zones, includ-



A glimpse of the National Kandawgyi Park, PyinOoLwin, set to hold the 17th Flower Dreamland Festival.

ing one dedicated to local flower varieties. Approximately 200,000 flowers will be cultivated and artistically displayed. Visitors can enjoy month-long entertainment programmes, including music performances, magic

shows, and dance displays. Special events will be organized for Christmas, New Year, and Independence Day.

In addition to the floral displays, the festival will host a garden fair offering consumer



goods and food items. An exhibition zone will also be established for local products, plants, and flowers, supporting the local economy.

The National Kandawgyi Garden, established in 1924,

spans 436.96 acres, including 70 acres of water. Managed by the Htoo Group of Companies under a 15-year lease since 2010, it remains one of Myanmar's iconic natural attractions. — ASH/TMT

Shwethaungyan Beach welcomes 24,545 visitors in Nov



This photo showcases beachgoers enjoying the beauty of the Shwethaungyan Beach.

ACCORDING to Daw Cherry Myint, Executive Officer of the Myanmar Tourism Federation (Shwethaungyan Beach), the Shwethaungyan Beach in Patheingyi Township, Ayeyawady Region, welcomed 24,545 domestic and international travellers in November.

"In September, Shwethaungyan Beach saw 16,546 local and foreign visitors and 17,857 in October. Visitor numbers typically decline during the rainy

season, but the beach remains a year-round destination, particularly for day-trippers. The Kyaukmaungnama Elephant Camp is another popular attraction," said Daw Cherry Myint.

The beach area features 20 hotels and guesthouses, offering services to visitors throughout the year. Ahead of the peak tourist season, hotels are implementing measures to ensure cleanliness along the

beachfront, beautify landscapes and roads within hotel grounds, and maintain hygiene in public spaces. Local cuisine is also being prepared to enhance the experience for guests.

Visitors can enjoy a variety of offerings, including seafood, local products, and souvenirs sold along the beach. Additional services such as bicycle rentals, motorboats, horse carts, and horse rides are also available. — ASH/MKKS

New series 'The Curse' to premiere on M Entertainment channel on 21 Dec

A new television series, Thu Nge Chin Mi Htway (The Curse), is set to premiere on the M Entertainment Channel on 21 December.

The series is based on a novel by Warso Moe Oo and Phyo Thinza Kyaw, with Phyo Thinza Kyaw adapting the script. Directed by Noha Ko and produced by Bonanza Film Production, the cast features Academy Ye Aung, Tyron, Nay Htut, Warso Moe Oo, Naw Phaw Eh Htar, and other supporting artistes.

The show will air at 7 pm every Saturday and Sunday on the M Entertainment channel and will also be available for streaming on the M Entertainment YouTube channel. — ASH/TRKM



This photo reveals casts of the new TV series 'Thu Nge Chin Mi Htway' (The Curse).

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MGMA to offer Basic Sewing Machine Operator Training Course Batch 247

MYANMAR Garment Manufacturers Association (MGMA) will conduct a Basic Sewing Machine Operator Training Course (Batch 247) from 9 to 27 December 2024 at the Myanmar Garment Human Resources Development Training Centre (MGHRDC).

The course will provide practical and technical approaches to sewing machines, different sewing methods, labour laws and practices.

This training will also help those hunting jobs from regions outside Yangon connect with the garment factories to create job opportunities.

Those who wish to attend the training can enrol through the contact num-



Trainees practising basic sewing machine operation in previous training.

bers of MGHRDC at 09 940858350, 09 450723262, 09 9403912570, 09 784085794 and 09 952802635. — NN/KK

CBM sells over US\$38M, 1.48M yuan, 107.46M Thai baht on 2 Dec

THE Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) pumped over US\$38 million, 1.48 million yuan and 107.46 million Thai baht into the financial market on 2 December.

CBM sold 16.54 million baht and announced the sale of 10 million yuan to importers on 29 November,

CBM sold \$59 million, 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 enforce-

ment 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

YGEA pursues ISO certification

YANGON Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YGEA) is endeavouring to issue an International Standards Organization (ISO) certification as stated by YGEA Chair U Myo Myint.

In order to issue ISO certification, YGEA is preparing to open an ISO laboratory, establish a company, and import gold purity testing machines simultaneously.

"Since gold was designated as essential goods, it must meet international transaction standards. We want Myanmar gold to be recognized to meet gold quality and efficiency, assuring this system to meet international benchmarks. We will continue the process only after receiving ISO 17025 and ISO 17065 certification," said U Myo Myint.

At present, gold testing machines will be imported to open a laboratory. Foreign expatriates will also be hired to handle those machines. — ASH/KK



This photo showcases some gold ingots.

MYANMAR'S rice and broken rice exports totalled over 1.7 million tonnes in the past eight months of the current financial year 2024-2025 beginning 1 April, with an estimated value of \$804 million, statistics of the Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF) showed.

The export volumes are 111,862 tonnes worth \$55 million in April, 71,279.5 tonnes worth \$36 million in May, 162,325.75 tonnes worth \$84 million in June, 165,444 tonnes worth \$81 million in July, 207,369 tonnes worth \$97 million in August, over 219,560 tonnes worth \$104 million in September, 424,784.27 tonnes of rice worth \$189 million in October and over 334,530 tonnes worth \$156 million respectively.

Myanmar exported over 1.6 million tonnes of rice by sea and 30,000 tonnes through border posts.

The federation aims to achieve 2.5 million tonnes of rice exports in the 2024-2025 financial year (April-March).

The Ministry of Commerce has been cooperating with departments and institutions concerned to achieve export targets and beyond, depending on the supply volume of rice, broken rice, puls-



Export rice bags are being loaded onto the overseas-bound merchant vessel.

Myanmar exports 1.7M+ tonnes of rice in past 8 months

es, corn, rubber and fisheries from the respective companies.

Ministry of Commerce is working together with the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Myanmar Rice Federation,

Myanmar Rice Federation, Myanmar Pulses, Beans, Maize and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association, Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association, Myanmar Industries Association, Myanmar Rubber Planters and Producers Asso-

ciation, Myanmar Fisheries Products Processors and Exporters Association to meet monthly export targets and facilitate exports.

The federation is projected to achieve 2.5 million tonnes of rice export in the FY 2023-2024, generating earnings of one billion dollars. However, rice exports fell short of the target with 1.6 million tonnes worth \$845 million.

The Central Bank of Myanmar's monetary policy to control export earnings impeded rice exports, hurting exporters financially. The El Nino weather condition also hampered rice export, the Myanmar Rice Federation chairperson

affirmed.

Myanmar exported 2,261,203 tonnes of rice and broken rice to foreign trade partners in the past 2022-2023 FY (April-March), valued at approximately \$853.472 million. — NN/KK

OPINION

Empower people with disabilities without discrimination

ALL societies have people with disabilities. Since no one is perfect, no one should discriminate against others due to physical or mental disabilities. In fact, no one wishes to experience any form of disability. Therefore, everyone should offer a helping hand to those with disabilities.

Everyone should cultivate consideration and compassion toward people with disabilities. No one should underestimate them, as both ordinary individuals and people with disabilities have the wonderful capacity to demonstrate their intelligence and problem-solving abilities, even in difficult situations.

Under the guidance of religious teachings, most people in Myanmar do not discriminate against individuals with disabilities. They are often eager to offer assistance and contribute to the communities of people with disabilities. Well-wishers donate both money and goods to schools for the deaf and blind. Additionally, the Ministry of Social Welfare and Resettlement oversees various schools for people with disabilities and supports organizations dedicated to their welfare.

In line with the 2024 theme, "Amplifying the leadership of persons with disabilities for an inclusive and sustainable future," it is essential for people in relevant countries to cultivate empathy and support for individuals with disabilities, empowering them to overcome life's challenges and strengthen their resilience to be able to shape their peaceful families.

Only when authorities and citizens demonstrate genuine goodwill, free from discrimination, will people with disabilities find the courage to build their lives with confidence.

Internationally, the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy was launched in June 2019. The Secretary-General emphasized that the United Nations should lead by example and enhance its standards and performance on disability inclusion across all pillars of work, from headquarters to the field.

The United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy lays the foundation for sustainable and transformative progress on disability inclusion across all areas of the United Nations' work. Through this Strategy, the United Nations system reaffirms that the full realization of the human rights of all persons with disabilities is an inalienable, integral, and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In line with the 2024 theme, "Amplifying the leadership of persons with disabilities for an inclusive and sustainable future," it is essential for people in relevant countries to cultivate empathy and support for individuals with disabilities, empowering them to overcome life's challenges and strengthen their resilience to be able to shape their peaceful families.

"The Court"

By Kyaw Myint Tun (Paris)



A picture taken on 5 September 2011 shows the International Criminal Court's building (ICC) in The Hague. PHOTO: AFP

PEOPLE should know, and people should note.

The formula is simple! When faced with repeated negative news, under intense heat, turn the focus on a small third-world country, which is easy to bully and usual punching bag. The

request for an arrest warrant is as simple as that. There is a desperation for some positive news for a change.

A distinguished "Prosecutor" is facing sex harassment allegations. He is under investigation. A trigger-happy "Prosecutor" is

himself being investigated! When the accuser, a woman, came forward with the complaint, the Distinguished "Prosecutor" and his close associates at the August Court tried to silence and discredit her. It didn't work. The internal body is said to be investigating.

That's the problem. Internal body? Let's bring in truly independent external investigators. Would they dare if they wanted the truth? The Distinguished "Prosecutor" has denied the allegations. Don't they all in these cases! But as the famous saying goes, where there's smoke, there's fire!

Oh yes, people should also note that one of the Distinguished "Prosecutor's" past clients was one of the world's most notorious dictators! Questions from the journalists have been evaded as to why in the world the Distinguished "Prosecutor" was on the payroll of the particular client. It's all on the streaming platform. People should look it up.

How can a person like this have a sound, fair and lawful judgement?

When it comes to the 'Uncles' in the Western countries, they curl their tails and take the assault on the chin. Let's note that the previous "Prosecutor" was declared PNG by a very, very powerful country. Not allowed to enter at all. They took that on the chin! Imagine, if that was a country like Myanmar, they would throw all kinds of kitchen sinks at the country.

In addition to the sexual harassment probe, lately, no news is good news. An arrest warrant was issued against a head of government of a country under the protection of a very, very powerful country. That backfired! The heat was intense! A powerful lawmak-

er in that country even threatened to invade the country where all these so-called lawyers are located! They take all that on the chin as well. No courage to confront their 'Uncles'.

To appease their Western Uncles, there was a rush to issue arrest warrants not long after the conflict in Eastern Europe started. It hasn't worked! Only people with no brains would issue an arrest warrant for the person who is key to ending the conflict.

They are trigger-happy with issuing arrest warrants, but not a good track record in terms of actual arrests. Case in point, a former President of a war-torn African country was issued an arrest warrant in 2009. He remains in his country! People should go online to see the so-called court's track record.

The "court" founded on noble principles, has become an activist organization. These people have come to think they are God! They endlessly preach democracy. But in true democratic terms, these people are not elected by the people of the world at all. They are anointed by a cosy network of globalists. It's a small circle where everyone knows everyone.

Investigative journalists should be unleashed to dig deeper into these most arrogant people. They won't stand a chance. Look into their past clients. How their travel expenses were covered, and so on. One after another they'll run.

Indigenous groups call for health protections in plastic deal

FOR Caleb Justin Smith-White, negotiations in South Korea on a landmark global deal to curb plastic pollution are about more than the environment. They are about saving lives.

He is one of dozens of people who have travelled from across the world to the city of Busan to share personal stories about the ways they say plastic — from its production to its disposal — has harmed their communities and their health.

Smith-White describes his home in Canada's Ontario as a "petrochemical valley" and blames production of plastic for a string of leukaemia deaths in Aamjiwnaang, his community of

around 2,000 people from the Chipewewa Indigenous group.

"We are too small of a population for cancer studies to be effective," he said, adding that "we don't have the money for that".

But his message to negotiators is that plastic causes harm, a position backed by a coalition of scientists attending the talks.

"Known and emerging health hazards constitute a serious and evolving global health concern," they warned ahead of the negotiations.

Near Smith-White's village Sarnia are factories run by industrial giants — Imperial Oil, Shell, Suncor Energy among others — handling chemicals needed to



Microplastics and nanoplastics have been found in the human body — including inside lungs, blood and brains. PHOTO: AFP

produce plastic. INEOS, one of the top producers of styrene — a component in polystyrene plastic — said earlier

this year it would shutter its factory near Sarnia by 2026.

Smith-White said his community had long "pushed for better regulations" over chemicals in water sources but also more recently benzene emissions in the air. "We did not close INEOS," he said. "They decided that it was not worth putting money into that plant to bring it up to the standards that we pushed for."

First Nations groups from petrol-producing US states such as Texas and Alaska, and Indigenous peoples from Australia to Latin America have used their time in Busan to describe harms linked to plastic.

SOURCE: AFP

ARTICLE



A Long March-12 carrier rocket carrying two experimental satellites blasts off from the Hainan commercial spacecraft launch site in the southern island province of Hainan, 30 November 2024. PHOTO: XINHUA

China's seaside commercial spacecraft launch site completes first mission

CHINA on Saturday successfully launched a new carrier rocket into space from the Hainan commercial spacecraft launch site in the southern island province of Hainan.

The Long March-12 carrier rocket blasted off at 10:25 pm (Beijing Time) from the site's No 2 launch pad, and sent two experimental satellites into their planned orbits.

The launch mission achieved complete success at 10:48 pm, according to Hainan provincial authorities.

The mission was the maiden flight of the Long March-12 carrier rocket, and the first launch mission undertaken by the Hainan commercial spacecraft launch site.

The construction of the launch site, which is the first to be built for commercial missions in China, commenced in July 2022.

With investment of over four billion yuan (about US\$ 553 million), the launch site was built and is being operated by the Hainan International Commercial Aerospace Launch Co Ltd (HICAL).

It includes a launch area, a TT&C (telemetry, tracking

and command) building, rocket assembly buildings, spacecraft testing facilities, fuel storage facilities and other structures.

Location advantages

The launch site is located at a latitude of 20 degrees north, benefiting from the advantages of this low latitude, which can increase rocket payload capacities and reduce rocket fuel costs.

The site is located off the coast of Wenchang City, making it more convenient and safer than inland launch sites as large rockets can be transported to site by ship, which is very important for commercial launch services. The Hainan provincial government is also planning a new, purpose-built port.

The coastal location is also an advantage for HICAL's recovery of reusable rockets after launch. The company is working with commercial rocket developers on experiments related to vertical landings and the recovery of rockets from the sea.

The site currently has two launch pads for liquid propellant rockets. The No 1 pad is designed for the Long March-8, China's new generation medium-lift carrier rocket. The No 2 pad is capa-

ble of launching multiple types of rockets with various diameters from commercial rocket companies. Each pad has an annual capacity of 16 launches.

The site's propellant and gas supply system is capable of refueling and supplying liquid oxygen, liquid hydrogen, kerosene and methane.

Growing industrial chain

The launch site will also accelerate the cultivation of the commercial space industry and talent in Hainan, with industrial chains covering spacecraft R&D, launch services and satellite applications. Such integration is conducive to the future high-quality development of the island province.

Domestic space companies such as i-Space, Galactic Energy, LandSpace, Space Pioneer and CAS Space have either established facilities in Hainan or plan to do so. In one example, the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation's China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology has built a Long March-8 rocket assembly plant in Hainan, with an annual output of 50 rockets.

SOURCE: Xinhua

NATIONAL

MoH Union Minister attends 2024 World Conference on Traditional Medicine

THE 2024 World Traditional Medicine Conference took place today at the China National Convention Centre in Beijing, People's Republic of China.

Union Minister Dr Thet Khaing Win attended alongside the PRC's Minister of Health, senior officials from invited nations, high-ranking representatives of the World Health Organization (WHO), and other distinguished guests.

The event began with the reading of a congratulatory message from Chinese President Xi Jinping. Professor Yu Yanhong, Head of the National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine, followed with a welcoming speech.

The opening addresses included remarks from the WHO Regional Director for the Western Pacific and a speech by the WHO Director-General via videoconferencing. Mr Lei Haichao, China's Minister of Health, delivered the keynote speech, and Vice-Premier Mr Liu Guozhong



Union Minister Dr Thet Khaing Win (3R) poses for the group documentary photo at the 2024 World Conference on Traditional Medicine in China, 3 December 2024.

officially inaugurated the conference.

A high-level roundtable discussion followed the opening

ceremony, featuring health ministers from participating countries. Union Minister Dr Thet Khaing Win highlighted the sig-

nificance of traditional medicine in national healthcare systems, advocating for the integration of traditional and modern medicine

to improve healthcare outcomes. He stressed the importance of advancing research to enhance the acceptance and efficacy of traditional medicine.

Dr Thet Khaing Win addressed key topics, including international collaboration in the production of traditional medicines, intellectual property rights associated with traditional medicine, ensuring the quality, safety, and efficacy of traditional medicines and promoting regional cooperation to produce high-quality traditional medicines.

He highlighted Myanmar's ongoing efforts, such as collaboration with ASEAN countries and Shanghai Cooperation Organization member states, and noted that Myanmar hosts an annual traditional medicine conference to facilitate international collaboration and knowledge exchange.

The session concluded with a group photo to commemorate the event. — MNA/TMT

Food Safety & Environmental Health Conference backed by Mekong-Lancang

THE Food Safety and Environmental Health Research Conference, organized with the support of the Mekong-Lancang Special Fund (2022), was held yesterday at the MGallery Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw. This conference is part of the project to establish a network for pesticide residue analysis and technological information for the Mekong-Lancang region (Myanmar, Thailand, and China). The project also aims to create a laboratory for pesticide residue analysis and build research capacity within the region.

Attendees included Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation Dr Tin Htut, U Bo Bo Kyaw, officials from the Myanmar Embassy in the People's Republic of China, the rector of Yezin Agricultural University, faculty members, and invitees.



The commemorative group photo of the Food Safety and Environmental Health Conference held yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

In his opening speech, Dr Tin Htut highlighted that, with the support of the Mekong-Lancang Special Fund (2022), the project will establish

pesticide residue laboratories based on existing buildings. This initiative will also involve collaborative research, staff training, and the development

of expertise in pesticide residue management. He emphasized that the project would enhance the research capabilities of Myanmar's academic community

and contribute to establishing a platform for pesticide residue analysis, benefiting Myanmar's minimum residue levels (MRLs) strategy.

The conference also discussed the environmental impact of pesticide residues, strategies for reducing pesticide contamination in food, and ways to monitor and assess the health risks associated with pesticide residues. The conference will help improve food safety standards for both domestic and export markets.

The rector of Yezin Agricultural University clarified the objectives of the conference, and an official from the Myanmar Embassy in China delivered a congratulatory speech. The conference continued to focus on the connections between food safety and environmental health. — MNA/KZL

NATIONAL

National sports games continue with group matches in Nay Pyi Taw

THE 2024 Fifth National Sports Festival group-stage competitions are continuing in Nay Pyi Taw. These matches are being held at designated sports venues across the city, starting yesterday morning.

In the men's under-20 volleyball matches, Shan State defeated Rakhine State 3-0, Kachin State triumphed over Ayeyawady Region 3-2, and Bago Region won against Chin State 3-0. In the women's volleyball category, Shan State beat Nay Pyi Taw 3-0, while Taninthayi Region secured a 3-0 victory against Rakhine State.

Similarly, men's futsal matches were held at Wunna Theikdi Futsal Stadium, where Shan State defeated Mon State 2-1. Sagaing Region and Magway Region each scored three goals in their respective matches, and Yangon Region overcame Nay Pyi Taw 4-0. Mandalay Region claimed a dominant 9-0 victory over Chin State, Kachin State defeated Kayah State 6-0, and Taninthayi Region edged Ayeyawady Region 3-1.



The group match of the Inter-State and Region Volleyball Tourney in action yesterday.

Afternoon futsal matches in the women's category saw Nay Pyi Taw beat Shan State 2-1, Rakhine State and Mandalay Region draw 0-0, and Sagaing Region secure a 4-2 victory against Ayeyawady Region.

Under-23 basketball games took place at Shwekyapin Indoor Stadium. Sagaing Region beat Nay Pyi Taw with a score of 80-46, Mandalay Region outplayed Taninthayi Region 94-27, Kayin State triumphed over

Bago Region 65-43, and Kayah State defeated Mon State 58-48. Yangon Region crushed Magway Region 82-17.

In the under-21 men's football competition, Nay Pyi Taw and Shan State ended in a 1-1

draw, while Kayah State secured a 2-0 win against Kayin State.

The under-25 women's football matches took place in Bawgawadi and Lewe, where Magway Region defeated Kayin State 1-0 and Kachin State triumphed over Nay Pyi Taw 3-1.

The inter-ministerial men's football matches were also held at various venues, with the Ministry of Home Affairs winning 4-0 against the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement achieved a 1-0 victory over the Ministry of Transport and Communications, while the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development defeated the Ministry of Science and Technology 3-0.

The festival includes six inter-ministerial sports categories and 23 regional/state sports, featuring disciplines like volleyball, futsal, and basketball. Four para-sports are also being held, with competitions continuing daily at various venues. — MNA/KZL

Foreign Affairs Ministry hosts flag-giving ceremony for athletes



Deputy Minister U Lwin Oo presents the victory flag to the ministry's contingent.

THE Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized a ceremony yesterday at its Lawkanat Hall to present

victory flags, sports equipment, and nutritional supplements to athletes representing the min-

istry in the Fifth National Sports Festival 2024.

During the ceremony, Deputy Minister U Lwin Oo encouraged athletes to maintain high morale, foster camaraderie among colleagues, and strive for excellence in the competitions. He then presented the victory flags to the teams.

After the ceremony, the deputy minister engaged with team officials and athletes to address their needs. The ministry's contingent will compete in golf and men's futsal at the upcoming sports festival. — MNA/KZL

Sharp temperature drop forecast for 3 states, Yangon townships to feel cold in 4 days

OVER the next four days, the temperature will fall just slightly at night in some townships in Yangon Region but a dramatic decrease is forecast in three states, according to meteorologist U Win Naing.

"There is the impact of the low-pressure area formed in the northern Tibet Plateau and Yunnan Province, China, and the northeast monsoon in the South China Sea has strengthened. So, the cold wind has started entering Myanmar now and will bring a visible effect over the next four days," he said.

The temperature will drop below 15 degrees Celsius-10 degrees Celsius at night in Kachin State, Chin State and Shan State, and the weather will be colder in upper Sagaing Region and Naga Self-Admin-

istered Zone, Lashe and Lahe.

"The temperature is forecast to drop below 10 degrees Celsius in Chin State as well as in Kachin State's Khaunglanphu and Kampaiti, but there won't be much fall in Shan State because cumulonimbus clouds are possible to enter. There is a 40-50 per cent chance of rain in eastern Shan State, Tachilek," he added.

No chance to see low temperatures in the next four days, however, it is colder the farther from the coast, therefore the weather will be cold just mildly in Hlegu, Hmawby, Taikkyi and Htantabin townships in Yangon, he said.

The chance to La Nina has declined currently so the weather will be normal in early 2025, he said. — MT/ZS

The people are urged to receive vaccination of COVID-19 without fail as full-time vaccination of COVID-19 and receiving booster shots can effectively mitigate infection of the virus, severe suffering from the disease and increase of death rate due to the disease.

NATIONAL

Authorities crack down on illegal gold mining in Yamethin's Moehti-Moemi

ILLEGAL gold mining in the Moehti-Moemi area of Yamethin Township, Mandalay Region, has led to environmental degradation, tax revenue losses, and natural disasters such as flooding, landslides, and soil erosion in nearby villages. Acting on reports and complaints from residents, joint task forces, including security personnel, have intensified efforts to uncover and arrest those involved in these illicit activities.

On 27 November 2024, a task force conducted an operation at Beckhoe Hill near Thabyaybin Village in the Moehti-Moemi area. The team discovered illegal gold mining operations and apprehended six individuals — U Zaw (son of U Htun Kyi), aged 52, from Kyu Taw Wa Village, Pyawbwe Township, and five others from Thabyaybin Village in Yamethin Township: Lwin Ko Naing (son of U Aye), aged



This photo reveals machines, motorbikes, and related items used by illicit gold miners being confiscated alongside arrestees in Moehti-Moemi near Thabyaybin village in Yamethin Township, Mandalay Region.

28; Kyaw Thet Paing (son U Ye Thway), aged 22; U Maung (son of U Nyo), aged 60; and Naing Kaung Htet (son of U Aye), aged 22. Equipment used in the mining activities was seized at the site.

The following day, 28 November, authorities searched

the residence of a suspect, Tin Lin (son of U Myine), 45, from Thabyaybin Village. Although Tin Lin was not found, two other individuals — Win Soe (son of U Hla Than), 32, and Aung Soe Oo (son of U Aung Thein Win), 16 — were arrested. Authorities confiscated 35 bags of suspected

gold-bearing earth, 20 bags of sand, five grinding plates, and other mining equipment.

Later that day, at around 6:30 pm, officials inspected an area near Beckhoe but found no miners. However, they seized equipment believed to be used in illegal gold mining, including 15

bags of suspected gold-bearing earth, a solar panel, a battery, a hand-held generator, a diesel engine, a dynamo, a wheelbarrow, and 13 motorbikes.

In total, seven individuals were apprehended during the operations, with arrest warrants issued for Tin Lin and others still at large. Cases have been filed against the suspects under Section 30 (a) of the Myanmar Mines Law at Yamethin Township Police Station, and further legal action is underway.

Authorities remain vigilant in combatting illegal gold mining within state-owned mining concessions in Moehti-Moemi. These efforts aim to curb environmental harm, recover lost state revenue, and uphold the rule of law while ensuring territorial security. All operations are conducted in compliance with existing legal frameworks. — MNA/TMT

Counter-argument to false information

False claims: Drone attack in Hsihseng kills 2, injures 1

REPORTS have emerged stating that security forces carried out a drone strike in Naungvin village, Hsihseng Township, southern Shan State, which resulted in the deaths of a two-year-old child and a woman, as well as severe injuries to a man.

According to a security official's statement, the forces were conducting necessary security operations to prevent terrorists from residing in the rural areas of Hsihseng Township. On 2 December, terrorists launched an attack from the surrounding villages using heavy weapons and drones. The resulting explosion from the heavy weapons hit the village, injuring several security personnel and killing residents.

The official added that reports circulating regarding the incident were fabricated by malicious news media, intending to cover up terrorist groups' actions. Misleading photos and false narratives were part of their efforts to spread propaganda.

— MNA/KZL



This screenshot reveals misinformation.

2-day illegal trade crackdown seizes goods worth K916M

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

On 1 and 2 December, the combined teams impounded an unregistered TVS King three-wheel motorbike (worth K7 million) in Chauk Township, illegal timbers weighing 6.697 tonnes (worth K910,955) in Myaungmya and Kyonpyaw Districts, and an unregistered Xero 110 motorbike (valued at K500,000) in Myaungmya Township. The action was conducted under the Export-Import Law and the Forest Law.

Additionally, the combined teams conducted inspections and seized an unregistered Toyota Wish (worth approximately K15 million) at the Yadanabon bridge combined checkpoint in Sagaing Township, unregistered Toyota Crown and Toyota Alphard (estimated value of K22.5 million) in Kyaikmaraw Township, a Yutong bus (estimated value of 65 million) carrying



Confiscated illegal items.

industrial materials and consumer goods (worth K99.34 million) without official documents at the Milepost-352 on Yangon-Mandalay expressway and a Nissan Diesel tractor head with a trailer (estimated value of K78 million) carrying industrial materials (valued at K30.24 million) without official documents near a Max filling station beyond Singaing. The action was taken under the Export-Import Law and Customs procedures.

The joint on-duty teams nabbed a Mitsubishi canter (worth approximately K40 million) carrying industrial materials (valued at K14.85 million) without official

documents at the Mayanchaung permanent checkpoint, industrial materials (valued at K403.17 million) without official documents from eight containers at the Asia World Port Terminal container checkpoint, and industrial materials (valued at K140.24 million) without official documents from three containers at the Myanmar Industrial Port. The action was conducted per Customs procedures.

The Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee reported 19 arrests on 1 and 2 December, confiscating goods worth approximately K916.76 million. — MNA/MKKS

Sanofi to invest 1 bln euros in insulin production base in Beijing



Star product Dupixent of Sanofi is on display during the seventh China International Import Expo (CIIE) in east China's Shanghai, 5 November 2024. PHOTO: XINHUA

FRENCH pharma giant Sanofi will invest some 1 billion euros (about US\$1.05 billion) to establish a new insulin production base in Beijing, according to the Beijing Economic-Technological Development Area (BDA).

On Monday, Sanofi signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Beijing Municipal Bu-

reau of Economy and Information Technology and the BDA Administrative Committee to build the facility in the city's southern area of Yizhuang. This will be Sanofi's fourth production-and-supply base in China and represents its largest single investment in the country to date.

Sanofi Chief Executive Paul Hudson

noted that the new production base featuring advanced automated production technologies, cutting-edge digital integrated management systems and sustainable environmental standards will further enhance the company's supply-chain resilience and efficiently address the growing needs of diabetes patients. — Xinhua

US manufacturing PMI contracts for eight straight months amid weak demand

ECONOMIC activity in the US manufacturing sector contracted in November for the eighth month in a row, the Institute for Supply Management (ISM) said Monday.

The US Manufacturing Purchasing Managers'

Index (PMI) stood at 48.4 per cent in November, up 1.9 percentage points from the 46.5 per cent recorded in October. Any reading below 50 per cent indicates the manufacturing sector is generally contracting. "Demand

continues to be weak but may be moderating, output declined again, and inputs stayed accommodative," Timothy Fiore, chair of the ISM's manufacturing business survey committee, said in a statement. — Xinhua

Singapore's manufacturing PMI rises to 51 in November

SINGAPORE'S Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), an early indicator of manufacturing activity, rose by 0.2 points in November to reach 51, signalling the 15th consecutive month of expansion, according to data released Monday night by the Singapore Institute of Purchasing and Materials Management.

The electronics sector PMI also increased by 0.2 points, reaching 51.6,

marking its 13th straight month of growth. A PMI reading above 50 indicates overall expansion in the manufacturing economy, while a reading below 50 points to contraction. — Xinhua

Malaysia's crude oil, condensate production decline 8.9% on year in Q3

MALAYSIA'S crude oil and condensate production totalled 41.8 million barrels in the third quarter of 2024, declining by 8.9 per cent compared to the previous year, official data showed Tuesday.

The Department of Statistics Malaysia said in

a statement that the decrease was due to a drop of 14.2 per cent in crude oil production. However, condensate production remained positive, rising 4.6 per cent during the quarter.

Meanwhile, the production of natural gas contracted by 2.7 per cent

year-on-year to 659.3 billion cubic feet.

During the third quarter, the export value of crude oil and condensate stood at 8.2 billion ringgit (US\$1.83 billion), lower than 9.4 billion ringgit in the previous quarter. — Xinhua

EMBASSY OF PAKISTAN, YANGON INVITATION FOR BIDS (TENDER NOTICE)

The Embassy of Pakistan, Yangon, invites sealed bids from reputable companies to provide the following services:

- **Four (4) Security Guards:** Round-the-clock security services (24/7) ensuring the safety and security of personnel, visitors, and the Embassy premises.
- **One (1) Cleaner:** Daily cleaning services for maintaining hygiene and cleanliness within the Embassy.

Eligibility Criteria:

1. Registered with relevant local authorities and compliant with applicable laws.
2. Proven experience in providing security and cleaning services to embassies or high-security facilities.
3. Adequate financial capability and well-trained personnel.
4. Equipped with necessary security/cleaning equipment.

Bid Submission Details:

- **Availability of Bidding Documents:** Documents can be obtained from the Embassy of Pakistan, Yangon, during office hours from 4th December 2024 to 20th December 2024.
- **Submission Deadline:** Sealed bids must be submitted by 20th December 2024 by 1100 hours.
- **Bid Opening:** Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives at the Embassy of Pakistan, Yangon, on **20th December 2024 at 1100 hours.**

Contract Award:

- The contract will be awarded to the lowest compliant bidder following a thorough evaluation of the bids.

Contact Information:

Head of Chancery:
Embassy of Pakistan, Yangon
Phone: +95 1222881
Email: acctspakembygn@gmail.com

Note: The Embassy reserves the right to reject any or all bids without assigning any reason.

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ISEACO WISDOM VOY.NO. (137N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ISEACO WISDOM VOY.NO. (137N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **4-12-2024** 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.

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ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

UN warns global drought carries \$300 bln annual cost



People walk around during the 16th session of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, UNCCD COP16, in the Saudi capital Riyadh on 2 December 2024. **PHOTO: AFP**

DROUGHT costs the world more than \$300 billion each year, the United Nations warned Tuesday in a report published on the second day of international talks on desertification in Saudi Arabia.

Fuelled by “human destruction of the environment”, drought is projected to affect 75 per cent of the world’s population by 2050, the report cautioned.

It said the crisis has already exceeded \$307 billion in costs annually around the globe.

The warning coincides with a 12-day meeting in Riyadh for the

16th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP16) under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), seeking to protect and restore land and respond to drought amid ongoing climate change.

The UN urged investment in “nature-based solutions” such as “reforestation, grazing management, and the management, restoration and conservation of watersheds” to cut the price of desiccation and benefit the environment. Marked by devastating droughts in Ecuador, Brazil,

Namibia, Malawi and nations bordering the Mediterranean, which sparked fires and produced water and food shortages, 2024 is on course to be the hottest year since records began.

“The economic cost of drought extends beyond immediate agricultural losses. It affects entire supply chains, reduces GDP, impacts livelihoods, and leads to hunger, unemployment, migration, and long-term human security challenges,” Kaveh Madani, a co-author of the UN report, said. — AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Vietnam’s Ho Chi Minh City reports surging measles infections among children

VIETNAM’S southern hub Ho Chi Minh City has recently reported a surging number of measles cases, especially among children, according to the city’s Department of Health on Tuesday.

The city reported 319 new measles infections last week, 58.1 per cent more than the average for the previous four weeks.

The number of new cases rose among children aged 11 to 14 and newborns aged six to nine months.

Since early this year, there have been 2,438 new cases of measles infection in the city, including four deaths.

Vietnam’s Ministry of Health launched a campaign to provide measles vaccines for children nationwide on 22 August, this year. — Xinhua

Death toll in Thailand flooding jumps to 25: disaster agency

THE death toll from flooding in southern Thailand has risen to 25, officials said on Tuesday, with days more heavy rain forecast.

Flooding since 22 November has affected more than 660,000 homes in the south, the country’s disaster agency said on its Facebook page.

The agency’s announcement raises a previous death toll of nine reported on Saturday.

More than 22,000 people have been displaced from their homes due to flooding in Pattani, Narathiwat, Songkhla and Yala provinces, the Thai government’s public relations department said. Suwas Bin-Uma, a chicken farm owner in Songkhla, told state broadcaster Thai PBS that the floods had wiped out his entire flock of more than 10,000 chickens.

“I’ve lost at least three million baht (\$87,000),” he said.

The Thai weather agency on Tuesday warned of continued heavy rain until December 5. — AFP

EU countries to push for outdoor smoking and vaping bans

EU countries are poised to push for stricter anti-smoking rules on Tuesday, backing bans on smoking and vaping in many outdoor areas including playgrounds and cafe patios.

A recommendation inviting member states to crack down on second-hand smoke — and vapour — will be on the table as health ministers from the bloc’s 27 nations meet in Brussels.

It is likely to be approved, according to diplomatic sources, despite political divisions on the issue — on display last week when the European Parliament voted against a similar text.

The recommendation would be non-binding, as health is a competence of individual mem-



This photograph shows a no smoking sign on a pavement in Manosque, southern France, on 29 September 2024. **PHOTO: AFP**

ber states.

But it gives an indication of the policies governments could pursue in the future as they

seek to reduce smoke-related deaths and ailments.

Following an initial proposal by the European Commission

in September, a draft document calls on EU countries to extend restrictions in place for cigarettes to cover “emerging products”, such as heated tobacco devices and electronic cigarettes that are increasingly popular with young people.

Governments should “provide effective protection” from aerosols emitted by these in indoor environments such as offices and public buildings.

Such protection should also be granted in some outdoor areas, it says.

This in practice entails that all smoking should be banned in locations including swimming pools, beaches, zoos, rooftop bars and restaurant terraces.

‘Violation of individual freedom’

The push comes as the EU is aiming to reduce its smoking population from around 25 per cent now to less than five per cent of the total by 2040, as part of its “Beating Cancer Plan”.

Tobacco use is estimated to kill more than eight million people globally each year, including about 1.3 million non-smokers who are exposed to second-hand smoke, World Health Organization (WHO) statistics show.

Emissions from electronic cigarettes also typically contain nicotine and other toxic substances that are harmful including to second-hand smokers, according to the WHO. — AFP

SPORTS

Myanmar Football Federation holds 7th Congress

THE seventh Congress of the Myanmar Football Federation (MFF Congress 2024) took place on 3 December at the Novotel Yangon Max. Representatives from FIFA and Asian Football Confederation, the MFF president, vice-presidents, executive committee members, representatives from state and regional football federations, and invitees.

During the congress, Union Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs U Min Thein Zan and FIFA President Gianni Infantino delivered video messages, while MFF President U Zaw Zaw gave an opening speech. As part of the event, U Zaw Zaw presented the 2024 MFF Service Award to U Ba Yi to recognize dec-

ades of his contributions to Myanmar football.

MFF Vice-President U Pyae Phyo Tayza presented the financial reports, including details of revenue and expenditures, followed by an external audit report by U Wan Tin. The congress included a review of the 2023 financial year, with voting sessions and approval of proposed reports, led by MFF General Secretary U Tun Tun Aung. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

MFF President U Zaw Zaw presents the Service Award to U Ba Yi for his longstanding contributions to Myanmar football. **PHOTO: MFF**



Australian tennis great Neale Fraser dies aged 91

AUSTRALIAN tennis great Neale Fraser, who won 19 Grand Slam titles, has died aged 91, officials said on Tuesday as tributes poured in.

The former world number one lifted three major singles titles, including Wimbledon in 1960, together with 16 Grand Slam doubles crowns.

In 1959 he won all three US titles — singles, doubles and mixed — at Forest Hills and led Australia to glory in the Davis Cup, a competition he became synonymous with and captained his country in.

“He was like a father to me,” national governing body Tennis Australia quoted Pat Cash, another former Wimbledon champion, as saying.

“He just knew how to make you feel important and play your best.”

Fellow Australian great Rod Laver, who was beaten by Fraser at Wimbledon and for the US title, paid tribute to “my dear mate and fellow lefty”.

“He was a true gem in a golden era of Australian tennis legends — an incredible World No 1, a Grand Slam champion and a Davis Cup icon,” the 86-year-old Laver wrote on X.

“Neale bested me in two major finals, pushing me to become a better player.

“I’ll miss you dearly, buddy,” he added.

Tennis Australia chief executive Craig Tiley called Fraser “a true icon of our sport”.

“His passion for tennis and dedication to representing Australia inspired generations of players and fans,” he added. — AFP

Ex-world title holder Tokuyama aims to develop champions



Former WBC super flyweight champion Masamori Tokuyama instructs a child at his boxing gym on 2 December 2024, in Higashiosaka, Osaka Prefecture. **PHOTO: KYODO**

FORMER WBC super flyweight champion Masamori Tokuyama opened a gym Monday in Higashiosaka, Osaka Prefecture, with the aim of developing

boxing greats.

“I want to develop champions like Naoya Inoue or Kazuto Ioka,” said Tokuyama, who retired in 2007 after an illustrious career.

His gym is not only targeted at serious boxers but also a wide range of people.

“I welcome people who come for fitness purposes, and I also want to put a special focus on kids,” the 50-year-old said.

Tokuyama took the WBC super flyweight belt from South Korea’s Cho In Joo in August 2000 and successfully defended it eight times until he was dethroned by Katsushige Kawashima in June 2004.

Tokuyama reclaimed the title 13 months later in a rematch with Kawashima. — Kyodo

Bayern puzzling over replacement for irreplaceable Kane

BAYERN Munich faces a formidable challenge in replacing its star striker, Harry Kane, ahead of the German Cup clash against Leverkusen on Tuesday evening.

The 31-year-old suffered a muscle injury during the recent 1-1 league draw against Dortmund and immediately returned to Munich on a privately chartered plane to begin treatment. Coach Vincent Kompany now faces the difficult task of finding a suitable replacement.

“It’s impossible to replace him,” said sporting director Christoph Fre-

und, adding, “We can’t afford a second Harry Kane; besides, it wouldn’t be healthy for the squad’s atmosphere.”

Kane’s importance to Bayern Munich is evident not only in his record as the top scorer last season but also in his contributions this year - 14 goals and nine assists in the national league alone. Across all competitions, Kane has already amassed 20 goals and nine assists in just 19 games, underscoring his significant value to the team.

Beyond his goals, Bayern will miss Kane’s leadership and his role in integrating the squad, especially during

crucial matches like the upcoming game against reigning German champion Leverkusen. Since joining from Tottenham, the England captain has become a key figure for the 2020 treble winners, both on and off the pitch.

Kompany described Kane as an “irreplaceable force”, emphasizing the challenge Bayern faces without him. Adding to the difficulty is the under-performance of wingers such as Serge Gnabry, Kingsley Coman, Leroy Sane, and Mathys Tel - players whose form will be crucial against Xabi Alonso’s side. — Xinhua



BRI plays key role in driving economic development in participating countries, says expert

THE China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) plays a significant role in driving economic development across participating countries, an Egyptian economic expert has said.

Waleed Gaballah, a member of the Egyptian Association for Political Economy, Statistics and Legislation, said the initiative is a groundbreaking model for fostering global growth, highlighting its transformative impact on infrastructure, trade and technology.

“Launched in 2013, the BRI ... aims to create new paths for the global economy, by pumping huge investments into the participants,” he told Xinhua in a recent interview.

The initiative is working to promote international trade by fostering a broader and less costly exchange and support the development of industries that creates more job opportunities, Gaballah said.

He further noted that the BRI is distinguished by its focus on infrastructure projects, along with its emphasis on social sectors like health and education.

Gaballah also highlighted the extensive reach of the initiative, under which over 150 countries and over 30 international organizations have signed cooperation documents with Beijing, and its implementation according to a



Staff members work on the dishwasher production line at a factory of Chinese home appliance manufacturer Midea at the China-Egypt TEDA Suez Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone in Ain Sokhna district of Suez province, Egypt, 6 November 2024. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

well-planned and adaptable timetable that avoids both impulsive actions and undue caution.

The Egyptian expert also praised China’s commitment to fair and mutually

beneficial economic cooperation within its initiative, affirming that China “seeks to share the benefits with all involved, rather than monopolizing them for itself”.

The BRI stands out due to its

non-competitive nature, he noted, adding that the West failed to implement similar infrastructure investment projects with their stated intentions in Africa and other regions. — Xinhua

S Korea president says will lift martial law

SOUTH Korea’s President Yoon Suk Yeol said Wednesday he would lift martial law, just hours after imposing it in a bid to quell what he called “anti-state forces”.

Yoon backed down after lawmakers voted to oppose the unexpected declaration, which caught even South Korea’s closest allies around the world off guard.

Earlier the National Assembly was sealed and troops entered the building for a short time, while hundreds of protesters gathered outside chanting: “arrest Yoon Suk Yeol” and faced off with security forces.

“Just a moment ago, there was a demand from the National Assembly to lift the state of



People gather outside the National Assembly in Seoul on 4 December 2024 after South Korea President Yoon Suk Yeol declared martial law. **PHOTO: AFP**

emergency, and we have withdrawn the military that was deployed for martial law operations,” Yoon said in a televised address around 4:30 am (1930

GMT Tuesday).

“We will accept the National Assembly’s request and lift the martial law through the Cabinet meeting.” — AFP

Israel says European criticism over Gaza aid ‘disappointing’

ISRAEL expressed disappointment Tuesday with three European nations after they demanded it take urgent action to allow aid into the war-ravaged Gaza Strip.

Britain, France and Germany had written to the Israel government to “urge action on the unacceptable humanitarian situation in Gaza”, UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy said on Monday.

In a post on X, he said: “Israel must implement the UN’s winter plan now: send equipment to guard against cold & flooding, give access to fuel, repair vital infrastructure, and get aid in.”

Israel’s foreign ministry hit back, denying it was imposing any restrictions on the amount of aid entering Gaza.

“It is disappointing that the foreign ministers of the E3 (Britain, France and Germany) failed to address the 7 October massacre and the daily attacks on Israeli civilians since then in their letter,” spokesman Oren Marmorstein said in a statement.

“Israel is facilitating the entry of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip and does not impose any restrictions on the quantity of aid entering the Strip.”

Marmorstein said international organizations had failed “to distribute the aid due to looting by Hamas”. — AFP