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Four Objectives of the National Defence and Security Council

1. To steadfastly strive for emergence of political forces and the people's representatives who can implement a genuine, disciplined multi-party democratic system while constantly emphasizing on the national interests of the State.
2. To persistently strive for promoting the socio-economic life of the people through the development of agro-based industries in improving the agricultural sector, the vital foundation of the economic growth of the State.
3. To put emphasis on enhancing the national education and health sectors for sustainable development of the State.
4. To implement multi-party democratic system, with the participation of the people, to ensure the success of multi-party democratic general election process and successfully moving towards with the multi-party democratic system aspired by the entire people.

Senior General: Government Responsible for Stability, Peace and Development

For economic development, in addition to following government guidance and instructions, local communities must take proactive measures to boost the production of agricultural, livestock, and other regional products in ways best suited to their areas.

Acting President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and State Security and Peace Commission Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing met departmental officials and town elders at the City Hall in Kengtung, Shan State (East), yesterday.

The Senior General first heard reports submitted by the Shan State chief minister regarding the agricultural and livestock breeding activities, crop target per acre, edible oil crop plantation, educating programmes for farmers, supply of seedling and fertilizer, plantation of coffee, tea leaves and rubber, double crop plantation, production and distribution of animal feed, loan disbursement using State Economic Promotion Fund, supervision on illegal trade, measures for development of regional transport, power generation from hydropower plants, reopening of schools for students, arrangements to promote education, health and sports sectors, successful holding of election Phase I and Phase II and preparations for Phase III.

The town elders also presented their willingness to upgrade the Kengtung-Tachilek Road, Kengtung-Taunggyi Road into Union Highway Road, holding a flower festival at the Loimwe hill resort, a plantation of about 14,000 cherry plants under the guidance of the Head of State and other regional development programmes that needed to be carried out by the government.

Similarly, the Union ministers and deputy ministers coordinated the discus-



Acting President and State Security and Peace Commission Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing looks into the local MSME products displayed at yesterday's event in Kengtung, Shan State (East).

sions, clarifying that certain sections of the Kengtung-Taunggyi and Kengtung-Tachilek roads had been damaged by natural disasters and were currently undergoing repairs, that road upgrading projects were being implemented annually according to the budget year, and that road standards were being improved based on traffic

volume. Regarding teacher shortages, the government is producing and deploying teachers to regions and states.

They also highlighted support for agricultural and livestock development, the capital loans for MSME development, the export of regional MSME products, the holding of MSME exhibitions and

fairs at Union and regional levels, training programmes to ensure quality of MSME production, and the emphasis on developing skilled human resources in agriculture, livestock and industrial sectors, including the establishment of Polytechnic Universities.

SEE PAGE 3

NATIONAL



National Objectives for 79th Union Day 2026

1. To work together among all ethnic nationals to achieve the country's prosperity and food security, the national goal of the country.
2. To cooperate hand-in-hand with the government, Tatmadaw and all ethnic nationals in successfully implementing the measures for stability and rule of law.
3. To strive together with ethnic armed groups to establish a lasting peace, while propagating justice, freedom and equality within the country.
4. To build a Union based on democracy and federalism, practising a genuine and disciplined multiparty democratic system through the friendship, trust, unity and collaboration of ethnic people.
5. To cooperate, ensuring the development of education, health and socioeconomic status of ethnic nationals and the emergence of a developing country.

- Let us encourage production for prosperity of the Nation.
- Let us ensure education sector for the development of the Nation.
- Let us protect our environment for the prosperity of the Nation.

Mottos for 79th Union Day 2026

1. Unity is strength,
Unity is power,
Peace is beauty.
2. Let's build lasting peace
for the Union's development
3. National brethren, let's unite
and join hands for the Union
4. Unity boosts friendship
Harmony brings peace

Myanmar continues submitting oral arguments



MYANMAR presented its first oral arguments in the case brought by The Gambia against Myanmar at the International Court of Justice in The Hague from 10 am to 6 pm local time yesterday.

Lawyer of Myanmar Mr Sam-Bloom Cooper submitted his presentation concerning the allegations made by The Gambia, which claimed that Tatmadaw, under the reason of

counter-terrorism operations, conducted similar pattern of conduct in Min Gyi, Chut Pyin and Maung Nu villages in northern Rakhine State with genocidal intent against Bengalis, and Lead Counsel and Advocate for Myanmar Mr Christopher presented arguments against the pieces of evidences cited and submitted by The Gambia. (The statements of two lawyers are excerpted separately.) — MNA/KTZH

Myanmar continues presenting its oral arguments at the International Court of Justice in The Hague, the Netherlands.

Collector's Show art exhibition to run on 17-21 Jan

THE Collector's Show art exhibition will run at Artistic Space Art Gallery in Botahtaung Township, Yangon Region, from 17 to 21 January, according to the gallery.

The Art Gallery will feature a variety of watercolour, oil, acrylic, chalk, and pencil drawings by artists such as U Win Pe, Paw Oo Thett, Khin Maung Yin, Ba

Gyi Aung Soe, Be Nyo, Mg Thein Hlaing, Lu Maw, Naing Gyi, Aung Naing Maung, and Nay Tun.

"The Collector's Show at Artistic Space Art Gallery, which features many paintings by veteran artists, will be on display from 17 to 21 January from 10 am to 5 pm, so we respectfully invite you to come and see it," said the

gallery manager.

The sizes of the paintings to be displayed at the exhibition include 24 by 24 inches, 36 by 24 inches, 18 by 24 inches, and 18 by 18 inches. — ASH/MKKS

The Collector's Show art exhibition catalogue.



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.

(An 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)

Senior General: Government Responsible for ...

FROM PAGE 1

After hearing the reports and discussion, the Senior General expressed gratitude to all ethnic nationalities for the successful conduct of Phases I and II of the 2025 multiparty democratic general election in eastern Shan State.

He noted that measures had been taken to ensure free voting and explained that, according to the electoral fraud in the 2020 general election, the State duties had been served in accordance with the law, and it should strengthen the multiparty democratic path. Preparations were therefore made to ensure that the current election would be free, fair and dignified.

He further stated that electoral fraud is a serious and disgusting issue in a democracy, and so the current election was held with firm determination to uphold electoral integrity.

He continued that a government is responsible for the state's stability, peace and development. He explained that when the government assumed responsibilities, it faced numerous challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, staff shortages in health and education sectors, political unrest, armed violence, and natural disasters such as floods, storms and earthquakes. Despite these challenges, progress was achieved through the dedication of civil servants and the cooperation of citizens who love peace.

Regarding economic development, he noted that despite economic sanctions imposed by certain countries and organizations, the government prioritized domestic agriculture and livestock-based production, resulting in gradual economic improvement and a shift in the trade balance from deficit to surplus.

The GDP of the country is lower than that of other regional countries, and that shows that all should make more efforts practically. The measures for domestic production can ensure an increase in GDP. During the period in which the government has assumed responsibilities, efforts have also been made to repay outstanding foreign loans. Without domestic production, the future of the country would be a matter of concern; therefore, the government is actively promoting and supporting production-based industries, particularly agriculture and livestock, to ensure their development. If all want growth in



Acting President and State Security and Peace Commission Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets departmental officials and town elders at the City Hall in Kengtung, Shan State (East) yesterday.

the country's economy, it is essential to genuinely implement these measures. By producing sufficient food, beverages, and consumer goods domestically to meet internal demand, reliance on foreign expenditure will be significantly reduced, and the economy will improve. Similarly, the annual importation of oil to meet domestic needs is also a burden on the country. Since oil crops can be successfully cultivated and produced domestically, it should make an effort to ensure sufficient production to meet the local demand.

He stated that eastern Shan State has a population of about one million, and underscored the need to ensure regional food security, warning that imbalances between supply and demand could lead to rising commodity prices. Officials were urged to continuously plan for socioeconomic development, ensure affordable food access for residents, and promote local production.

In doing so, the educated human resources are essential. It can be seen that the grade progression in the eastern Shan State becomes lower, and it must try hard to increase the school enrollment rate and grade progression rate.

Only when basic education is in place can vocational and technical skills be ef-

fectively taught. Without such skills, it will be difficult to achieve economic development. As the country mainly operates agriculture and livestock, the government places special emphasis on cultivating knowledgeable and skilled professionals in these areas.

Many illegal narcotics production sites have been discovered in Mongyai and Hsipaw. These operations were generating income through unlawful means, and the cultivation of narcotics, which negatively impacts entire communities, had been allowed to continue due to a lack of education and awareness. The language barriers have caused significant weaknesses in education in ethnic regions, and so preparations are being made to nurture qualified teachers to meet the needs of teachers.

For economic development, in addition to guidance and instructions provided by the government, it is necessary for local communities to take action to increase the production of agricultural, livestock, and other local products in ways suitable to their region. In Shan State (East), potential industries include rubber cultivation, coffee, tea cultivation, and local roof tile manufacturing. If rubber cultivation is successfully carried out and local and domestic demand for rubber-based products

can be met, it will greatly contribute to regional development. Similarly, coffee and tea cultivation can also be successfully expanded. Existing local roof tiles can be produced to higher standards through cooperation with the Ministry of Industry and the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development.

As agricultural and livestock production increase in the region, industries based on these products will also develop. This will also create more employment opportunities and significantly improve the socioeconomic lives of the local population. Production activities should not be undertaken individually but collectively, following a cooperative system. When working together as a team on similar enterprises, the government will provide necessary financial and capital support.

He also pledged that the government will continue implementing its commitments made politically, and the education of the country must be encouraged regardless of the government.

The Senior General cordially greeted departmental officials, town elders and locals. The Senior General and the party observed the booths of MSME products and provided proper instructions. – MNA/ KTZH

NATIONAL



State Security and Peace Commission Chairman and Defence Services Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing holds the meeting with Tatmadaw personnel and family members at the Triangle Region Command yesterday.

Tatmadaw must be a fully qualified force with strong combat effectiveness

All Tatmadaw members must faithfully carry out the responsibilities entrusted to them, thereby fulfilling their duty to the nation and to Tatmadaw.

Chairman of the State Security and Peace Commission and Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, accompanied by senior Tatmadaw officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief, yesterday morning inspected security measures taken in the area of the Triangle Region Command and met families of the station.

At the meeting hall of the command headquarters, Commander Maj-Gen Soe Hlaing reported on border region security, cooperation with neighbouring countries, combatting telecom fraud and online gambling, seizures of narcotic drugs, and anti-drug measures, efforts to reopen basic education schools, successful holding of Phases I and II of the general election, preparations for Phase III of the election, arrests of illegally foreign entrants, seizures of illegal commodities, military affairs, public healthcare services, undertakings of military-owned agriculture and livestock businesses, sales of meat, fish and eggs to Tatmadaw members and families as well as residents at fair prices.

In his response, the Senior General gave guidance to emphasize prevention of online fraud and gambling activities, and drug production and trafficking in the area of the command, make efforts to reopen the basic education schools,

systematically manage local peace and stability and security measures, and provide Tatmadaw members and families with welfare facilities.

In the afternoon, the Senior General met Tatmadaw members and families of the station at Pyi Nyein Aye Hall of the command headquarters.

In his speech, the Senior General said that regardless of how political governments may change, Tatmadaw must continue to shoulder the responsibilities of national security and defence. Tatmadaw is serving the duties of national defence, and to do so, it must possess adequate capabilities and strength. Tatmadaw must be a fully qualified force with strong combat effectiveness, and to achieve such competence, it must maintain thorough and constant training.

Concerning the entitlements of Tatmadaw members, he noted that these are duly provided fairly and appropriately. Those who enter and serve in Tatmadaw do so of their own free will. He recognized all Tatmadaw members who had joined with the desire to defend their country.

The Senior General underscored that just as military skills must be continuously practised to maintain combat readiness, it is also necessary to train in competitive sports and exercises that develop strength and resilience. This en-

sures that personnel can fully apply the military techniques they have learned on the battlefield.

He highlighted that skills make a person capable, and knowledge makes a person virtuous. Experts who are proficient in their respective subjects are considered capable and accomplished individuals. Skills can only be acquired through a solid foundation of education, and advanced skills are attained only through higher levels of learning. He urged Tatmadaw members to encourage their children to receive a high level of education.

For the development and progress of the national economy, successfully managing military-owned and individually-run farming and breeding operations must be a complementary support to the overall production sector, he added.

He noted that all Tatmadaw members must faithfully carry out the responsibilities entrusted to them, thereby fulfilling their duty to the nation and to Tatmadaw. By performing their duties diligently and effectively, they help maintain the quality and the standards of Tatmadaw. Next, the Senior General asked about the requirements of the Tatmadaw members.

Also, present at the meeting were Commission Secretary General Ye Win Oo, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral

Htein Win, Commander-in-Chief (Air) General Tun Aung, senior Tatmadaw officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief and officials.

The Senior General presented food-stuffs for Tatmadaw members and the families of the station to the commander.

Next, the Senior General inspected the local Tatmadaw advanced training depot in Kengtung Station. The commandant reported to the Senior General on the functions of the depot, conducting the People's Military Servant courses, providing nutritious foods to trainees, welfare measures and undertakings of agriculture and livestock farming.

After hearing the reports, the Senior General stressed that the soldiers trained by the depot must be physically and mentally healthy, strong, and capable, so that the nation and Tatmadaw can rely on them. The field of national defence is very broad, and it is emphasized that training responsibilities must be carried out with utmost seriousness.

He emphasized that, in today's era of technology, research and development must be conducted to enable the adaptation of military strategies based on the continuously evolving and advancing military equipment. Conventional military strategies must be modernized to keep pace with the times, and specialized military tactics must also be applied in accordance with current developments.

The Senior General inspected the mess hall of the training depot and gave necessary guidance to officials. The Senior General and party viewed the depot in a motorcade. — MNA/TTA

NATIONAL

General Aung San Declares Firm Stand Against Election Disruption

"Our Government shall not permit any disruption of the forthcoming election. The electoral process shall remain free and fair, and no interference shall be exercised upon those who participate in it. Yet, let it be firmly declared that any attempt to disturb or sabotage the election shall be met with the full weight of authority".

(An excerpt from the radio address regarding the election, delivered by General Aung San on 13 March 1947)



Acting President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and SSPC Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing offers Sithu title and insignia to Kengying Sayadaw of Kengtung

Acting President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and State Security and Peace Commission Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing presented honorary titles to the individuals who diligently served the interests of the State and defence and security duties of the State, as well as monks and laypersons, for their outstanding performances on 4 January 2026.

In this regard, a ceremony to offer the Sithu title to Presiding Patron of the Kengying Monastery of Kengtung long-life Sayadaw Aggamaha Saddhammajotikadha Bhaddanta Khemacara was held at Dhammayon of Kengying Monastery this morning, attended by the Senior General.

The ceremony was also attended by members of the Sangha, Commission Secretary General Ye Win Oo, the entourage of the Senior General, the Chief Minister of Shan State, the commander of Triangle Region Command, officials and residents.

The Senior General and party took the Five Precepts from the State Ovadacariya of Kengtung Tuya Monastery Sayadaw Aggamaha Ganthavacaka Pandita.

Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Tin Oo Lwin read the paper to offer the title to the Sayadaw.

The Senior General offered the Sithu title and insignia, offerings, and cash for nine pre-

requisites to the Sayadaw, who returned the Dhamma gift to the Senior General.

The Commission Secretary and officials offered alms to members of the Sangha.

The title recipient, Kengying Sayadaw, gave an Ovada Katha, saying that looking back at history from the Bagan period through the Konbaung period, it is neither seen nor heard that a long-lived senior monk has been conferred a state honour by the government. Therefore, this must be recorded as a unique and significant event for both himself and the government that administers the country. At present, he has reached the age of 101, and he was deeply pleased and honoured that the Acting President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Chairman of the State Security and Peace Commission, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, personally came to confer the "Sithu" title and its insignia upon him. He also extended prayers and loving-kindness, wishing the Acting President and all the people of the country good health and prosperity, success in carrying out their duties, and the fulfilment of all their wishes and aspirations.

The Senior General and attendees listened to the Anumodana from Presiding Patron of Sasa-na Weponla Pariyatti Buddhism Learning Centre of Kengtung Aggamaha Ganthavacaka Pandita Aggamaha Saddhammajotikadha Bhaddanta Vijaya and shared merits gained.

The title recipient Sayadaw established Peinsan Buddhism Learning Centre in Mongping, Yanglao and Palyanlon Buddhism Learning Centres in Yanglao Village-tract in Kengtung Township to perpetuate Buddhism in the state. The Sayadaw is the chief of Gon Shan Sangha and leads the drawing of the yearwise Samdittha calendar in Gon Shan language and renovation of Hnee



Acting President and SSPC Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing offers the Sithu title to the Presiding Patron of the Kengtung long-life Sayadaw.

Buddha Image in Mongkhat as part of serving the religious duties as well as the interests of the region. As such, the Acting President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar offered Sithu title to the Sayadaw.—MNA/TTA

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NATIONAL

Sam-Bloom Cooper Presents Submissions at ICJ

MR Sam-Bloom Cooper, Advocate for Myanmar, submitted his pleadings on key locations outlined in Chapter 8 of Myanmar's written submissions in The Gambia versus Myanmar case to the International Court of Justice in The Hague, the Netherlands, yesterday.

He stated: My colleague Ms Lawrie and I will now address The Gambia's allegations of genocidal acts committed during the counter-terrorism operations in northern Rakhine State in 2016 and 2017. I will focus on events in and around the three villages of Min Gyi, Chut Pyin and Maung Nu. Following this, Ms Lawrie will deal with the other 43 specific locations where The Gambia alleges acts of violence to have been committed.

I refer to Min Gyi, Chut Pyin and Maung Nu as the 'main locations'. This is because, out of the 509 locations in northern Rakhine State inhabited wholly or in part by Bengalis, The Gambia focuses predominantly on these three, the populations of which were, at the time, respectively 4,300, 1,200 and 4,600 people.

Throughout these proceedings, The Gambia has repeatedly sought to claim that what happened in these three locations was typical and representative of what happened in many locations throughout northern Rakhine State. It claims repeatedly that there was a "consistent pattern of conduct" in 2016 and 2017, from which a genocidal intent can be inferred. Events in these three locations were not as alleged by The Gambia.

Events in the vast majority of the other 43 locations referred to by The Gambia were of a completely different quality by way of alleged violence, and where loss of life was either minimal or even non-existent. As for the hundreds of other locations in northern Rakhine State inhab-

ited by Bengalis, The Gambia presents no evidence at all of any violence.

They are words that guide what we say about the allegations in this case now, just as those words were central to the careful village-by-village analysis of each location in Chapters 8 & 9 of Myanmar's Counter-Memorial. We know that The Gambia read those chapters, because its Reply then radically resiled from its unsubstantiated, initial claims of "hundreds of villages" being subject to a "consistent pattern of conduct" of extreme brutality and sexual violence. The Gambia's Reply refers to just 13 locations.

There had been attacks by ARSA in the region in October and November 2016, and ARSA was known to be planning further attacks. An increased presence in security forces in the region was therefore understandable, indeed inevitable.

The evidence shows that ARSA initiated the violence with a series of attacks across northern Rakhine State, and the military responded to it. No responsible sovereign State could, or would, sit back and permit such pervasive violence to go unchecked. Myanmar acted in necessity, and justifiably, to protect its citizens and the integrity of the State.

The counter-terrorism operations against ARSA and its supporters were conducted only in locations where ARSA was active. That is a profoundly important point in this case. They were conducted not over months or years but over a short period of time: just three days in October 2016; two days in November 2016, and for just the last week of August and the first days of September 2017. That was the full extent of the military operations – to be measured in days – and undertaken in re-

sponse to ARSA's widespread campaign of violence. The vast majority of Bengali villages and communities were not subject to any form of military intervention at all.

The Gambia omits any details about events that took place in or around this village in the hours, days and weeks prior to 8 am on 30 August 2017. The Gambia omits to mention that this was just five days after ARSA had commenced its coordinated attacks throughout northern Rakhine State.

ARSA's latest campaign of violence began by the early hours of 25 August, with a focus on Maungtaw Township. In the days leading up to 30 August, witnesses noted that there was a "heavy ARSA presence in the Kha Maung Seik area and surrounding village tracts", following ARSA's massacre of nearly a hundred Hindus at Kha Maung Seik itself, a village 10 kilometres up the Pyuma river valley from Min Gyi itself.

Witnesses "consistently described seeing large groups of ARSA fighters gathered ... in the village tracts of Ta Man Thar and Thit Tone Nar Gwa Son" on 25 August and the days following. The Gambia's own witness, Andrew Riley, had himself noted the "strong ARSA presence" in that particular area. Military records show that two days later, some 300 Bengalis attacked and set fire to the Thet Kaing Nyar Police outpost.

In the early hours of 25 August, ARSA attacked the Net Chaung police post that neighbours Min Gyi, and the following day, ARSA conducted a further attack on the Wat Kyein police post. Each of these attacks is corroborated by Myanmar's own contemporaneous military reports, often recorded within hours of the events taking place, which detail the involvement in

the attacks of up to 600 armed Bengalis from the surrounding villages of La Baw Wa, Pa Da Khar and Min Gyi. Police officers fled from their posts at Net Chaung and Min Gyi, which were both then burnt.

Following its massacre of the Hindus at Kha Maung Seik on 28 August, ARSA fighters attacked Wat Kyein once more, detonating an IED and burning down 30 houses. Contemporaneous reports describe approximately 400 ARSA militants participating in the attack upon Khu Daing, during which they murdered seven Mro villagers.

The threat posed by ARSA also emanated from other villages south of Min Gyi, where hundreds of ARSA-led fighters engaged in violence. Ms Lawrie will address events in and around the villages of Ree Dar, Don Peik, Kyein Chaung, and Laung Don, where confrontations with the Myanmar Defence Services occurred.

In accordance with the Rules of Engagement distributed to all combat personnel, which The Gambia accepts are consistent with internationally recognized standards, warning shots were fired in repeated attempts to ward off advancing attackers, before any use of force was deployed. Even then, the military continued to be fired upon until well into the evening of 30 August, before the attackers finally withdrew southwards.

Each and every one of the 21 witness statements taken by Legal Action Worldwide, which were provided years after these events took place, positively denies any suggestion whatsoever of armed activity by even a single Bengali, or even the presence of ARSA at all, at any stage. Even more starkly, 53 out of the 54 anonymous witnesses interviewed by the FFM likewise make no mention of ARSA's

presence, let alone any of its violent activity.

There are only three plausible explanations for The Gambia's witnesses to so systematically hide the truth: First, there has been coordinated management and control of those witnesses presented to the organizations who interviewed or took statements from them; Second, fear of ARSA, or loyalty to ARSA, as described by Ms. Lawrie, is so entrenched that those interviewed were too afraid or unwilling to provide a truthful account of what occurred. The third is that there was a combination of those factors: of management, of fear, of loyalty.

This Court will appreciate why, given that his account includes ARSA's murder of a fellow informant, like him, shortly before its August attacks. ARSA members from Maung Nu had cut the informant's throat, placed him in a sack, and then thrown him down a hill.

As far as fatalities in and around the area of Maung Nu is concerned, Myanmar's contemporaneous reports record that 15 terrorists died during clashes with the Myanmar Defence Services. This was out of a population of approximately 4,600. It is not disputed that Rules of Engagement, accepted as being consistent with international standards, were distributed to security services personnel prior to engagement with ARSA and its mobilized supporters.

Events in Min Gyi, Chut Pyin and Maung Nu were not typical of events during the counter-terrorism operations elsewhere in northern Rakhine State, and, as Ms Lawrie will demonstrate this afternoon, there was no consistent "pattern of conduct" throughout northern Rakhine State mirroring what occurred in these three main locations.

Democracy and federalism must reflect the nation's context

❖ “It is important not to simply imitate the practices of other countries. Instead, we must establish democratic and federal systems that are suited to our nation in building a Union founded on democracy and federalism.”

(Excerpt from the speech delivered by Acting President (On Duty) and Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the 3/2025 meeting of the National Defence and Security Council of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on 31 July 2025)

Christopher Staker Delivers Oral Argument at ICJ

MR Christopher Staker, Lead Counsel for Myanmar, presented his submissions to the ICJ in The Hague, the Netherlands, yesterday.

He said: Other than the FFM reports, the documents relied on by The Gambia as evidence of the claimed events of 2016 and 2017 consist primarily of witness statements, interview records, reports and documents of the United Nations and other official bodies and NGOs, and media articles.

Myanmar's written pleadings individually address each annex cited as evidence in the chapters of The Gambia's pleadings relating to the claimed events of 2016 and 2017.

Myanmar says that, as in the case of the FFM reports, little or no weight can be given to any of the other material relied on by The Gambia to prove the core facts central to its claim of genocide.

In all of this other material, as in the FFM reports, the information concerning alleged atrocities overwhelmingly has as its ultimate source people living in the camps in Bangladesh. The witness statements are largely from people in the camps in Bangladesh. The reports of the United Nations, official bodies and NGOs, like the FFM report, are largely based on interviews of people in the camps in Bangladesh. The witness statements also predominantly come from such persons.

In all of this material, those providing the information are almost entirely anonymous. As I said on Friday, the FFM interviewed hundreds of witnesses, and almost all of them are anonymous. In the reports and documents of the United

Nations and other official bodies and NGOs, the sources of information about atrocities are also largely anonymous.

With rare exception, even the witness statements provided by the IIMM are redacted to conceal identities. That is truly remarkable because the IIMM is meant to be producing evidence for use in judicial proceedings, and it is difficult to see what use can be made in judicial proceedings of anonymous witness statements. The witness statements prepared by Legal Action Worldwide were also originally annexed to The Gambia's written pleadings in anonymized form.

The Gambia filed new versions of 15 of these witness statements so that they now disclose the identities of these 15 witnesses. By doing this, The Gambia appears to acknowledge that anonymous statements lack evidential weight. However, the fact remains that many of the Legal Action Worldwide witness statements are still anonymous.

Due to the presence and influence of ARSA in the camps in Bangladesh, it is unlikely that anyone living there would give an account contradicting the ARSA narrative. Some living there will be members or sympathisers of ARSA, while others live in fear of ARSA. In either case, either loyalty to ARSA, or fear of ARSA, or a combination of both, will make it unlikely that accounts given are true and objective. ARSA has attacked and even killed others in the camps who oppose its views. At least two IIMM witnesses, when asked about those responsible for the ARSA attacks in northern Rakhine State, have stated openly that

they are not able to speak about this because those concerned are present in the camps in Bangladesh.

The Gambia has claimed that this pervasive anonymity has been required because witnesses are at risk from the authorities in Myanmar, yet The Gambia has in fact presented no evidence to the Court to establish such a claim, nor has the Court ever made any finding that any such objective risk exists. Even the Head of the IIMM does not state that any such objective risk exists: rather, he says that witnesses express a subjective fear of such a risk. In fact, there is a large amount of evidence that witnesses in the camps in Bangladesh are at risk from ARSA, but none at all is presented of any actual risk from the authorities of Myanmar.

Having identified overarching features of the material relied on by The Gambia to establish the core elements of its claim, I now proceed to examine particular types of materials in turn. I begin with the reports and other documents of United Nations bodies, other official bodies, and NGOs.

I have already mentioned that the witnesses giving the witness statements prepared by Legal Action Worldwide are all clients of that organization, which is providing legal services to them in what is said to be their quest for “justice and accountability”. The purpose of preparing the Legal Action Worldwide witness statements is said by the executive director of Legal Action Worldwide to be “to gather witness testimony evidencing the physical acts of genocide”.

Legal Action Worldwide has

also received support from the Government of Canada, which provided investigators from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to take some of the witness statements prepared by Legal Action Worldwide. Canada has also stated that its intervention in this case would be to “support [the] efforts” of The Gambia, which Canada says has taken the “laudable step” of bringing this case before the Court. Canada, therefore, overtly sides with The Gambia.

Myanmar's written pleadings highlight other issues with the lack of neutrality of this organization.

Myanmar also does not accept the impartiality of Fortify Rights. Mr Smith of Fortify Rights is officially part of The Gambia's delegation at this hearing. The evidence in the case includes documents produced by Fortify Rights, a witness statement by Mr Smith, an article authored by Mr Smith, and a witness statement that was taken by Mr Smith.

The position of Myanmar is that any evidential weight that might otherwise be given to any materials produced by the IIMM, Legal Action Worldwide, Fortify Rights, and certain other organizations, is seriously diminished by the lack of impartiality of these organizations.

Contrary to what The Gambia suggests, Myanmar does not take the position that witness statements taken by a party to the case, or by someone overtly siding with a party to the case, must necessarily be rejected out of hand. Rather, Myanmar asks the Court to apply its settled jurisprudence. The Court does not simply accept everything stated in a witness statement. The settled juris-

prudence is that witness statements and affidavits are treated with caution. The weight such a document is given will depend on a consideration of various factors, including the form and the circumstances in which it is made.

I need not speak in detail about the witness statements of persons other than those in the camps in Bangladesh. These are addressed in detail in Myanmar's written pleadings, to which The Gambia provides no substantive response.

The Gambia also has evidence from several defectors or deserters from the military. However, this material also lacks evidential weight. Apart from anything else, it is not possible to know whether the claimed defectors are in fact the persons that they claim to be, or whether they were actually in northern Rakhine State at the time of the events.

It seems The Gambia simply received documents from third parties or took them from public sources, and then unquestioningly and uncritically annexed them to its pleadings. There is no suggestion that The Gambia undertook investigations of its own, or steps to verify the accuracy, credibility and reliability of the information in the material received from third parties.

As to the witness statements, when all relevant factors are considered, including the form and the circumstances in which they were made, no evidential weight can be given to these either, or at least, none that could come anywhere near meeting the standard of proof required for a finding of genocide in proceedings against a sovereign State.

Eradicate narcotic drugs threatening the nation and region

Due to the historical background and the political situation, armed terrorist groups have emerged in Myanmar. Tatmadaw, acting like a family with patience and endurance, continues to prioritize and implement peace and ceasefire efforts. Taking advantage of this situation, opportunistic individuals, together with local ethnic armed groups, have engaged in establishing drug operations, producing and selling narcotics, extracting natural resources, running online scams and gambling, and carrying out other criminal activities.

The State Government, Tatmadaw, and the Myanmar Police Force, in collaboration with neighbouring countries and the public, were able to uncover and seize it in a historic operation. While the

The operation related to the seizure took place from 8 to 12 January. The amount of seized ICE accounts for 33.44 per cent of the total ICE that was produced and distributed across Myanmar in 2025. As a result, the three locations where the drugs were seized are believed to be primary production sites within the country. Various trafficking routes have been identified from these locations: via the sea to foreign countries involving AA members; via the Loikaw and Toungoo routes to Thailand involving KNU/KNLA, NUG, and PDF personnel; and via the Kalay-Kalewa route involving PDF and CDF members.

Since 2025, Tatmadaw, in coordination with MPF, neighbouring countries, and local communities, has carried out operations to locate, uncover, and dismantle sites involved in online scams and drug production. This recent operation represents the largest and most significant anti-narcotics campaign in Myanmar's history in terms of scale, clarity, destruction, and arrests. During the operation, Tatmadaw battalions and Myanmar Police commando companies served their missions under challenging conditions.

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Utmost efforts are underway to effectively wipe out drug production, trafficking and distribution, as well as telecom fraud and online gambling activities, which tarnish the image and prestige of the State. Hence, the government takes severe action against any organizations mainly concerned with the cases of recently-seized narcotic drugs.

The Evolving Social Values of Myanmar Youth

As the French proverb goes, "Rome was not built in a single day", a saying that dates back to the 12th century, Rome could not have been constructed overnight. In the same way, great accomplishments are never achieved instantly; they require patience, persistence, and sustained effort over time.

Rebuilding a nation is far more complex than even our personal routines. Consider something as simple as changing our bedsheets every two or three weeks. Do we always manage to do it as planned? Personally, I frequently fail, and for many reasons, the task is delayed.

Similarly, constructing a country composed of numerous ethnic groups cannot be completed quickly. It is a monumental endeavour that demands time, careful planning, and the ongoing participation of many generations.

Rebuilding a nation is not a task that any single individual can shoulder alone, much like changing one's bedsheets or doing the laundry. In the work of nation-building, responsibility does not rest solely on the shoulders of leaders – it belongs to every citizen. Each person must cultivate the willingness to contribute actively, see themselves as an agent of change, and understand clearly the role they can play. For young people in particular, taking initiative and embracing responsibility forms a vital force capable of shaping the nation's future.

First and foremost, young people are the driving force who will shape the nation's future with their full energy and intellectual capacity. It is therefore especially important for them to fulfil their civic duties. In addition, they should actively exercise their rights to education and healthcare and

cordance with their own talents and capacities. Moreover, it is essential to respect the law and to fulfil one's civic duties conscientiously.

Youths & Civic Duties

"Civic duty" refers to the responsibilities and obligations that a citizen must undertake for the benefit of society and the nation. For example, obligations such as respecting and obeying the law or paying taxes are mandatory and must be fulfilled. At the same time, actions like voting, engaging in volunteer work, and honouring the rights and opinions of others are voluntary responsibilities – carried out willingly, guided by personal choice and commitment.

Every citizen carries a responsibility for the development of their nation. Among them, young people deserve particular emphasis, for they are the ones who will shoulder the most crucial roles in shaping the country's future.

Furthermore, it is essential for young people to become law-abiding and responsible citizens. By adhering to school rules, obeying traffic regulations, and learning from a young age not to damage public property, they contribute positively to society as a whole. We have learnt an important lesson:

strive to develop their full potential, becoming capable and well-qualified individuals. The attitudes, behavior and mindset of today's youth will ultimately determine the image of the nation tomorrow.

Secondly, young people possess the ability to engage meaningfully in social and community work. In Myanmar, for instance, when natural disasters such as floods, fires, or earthquakes strike, youth often step forward as volunteers to assist in rescue and relief efforts. Their active involvement in such endeavours stands as a powerful example of fulfilling one's civic duties.

Thirdly, young people serve as guardians of the public values and properties. Across towns and villages in Myanmar, youth groups come together to carry out activities such as street cleaning and environmental conservation. These collective efforts demonstrate their sense of responsibility to create public values.

In summary, young people are the lifeblood of the nation and the architects of its future, making it vital for them to actively embrace and fulfil their

By Daw Khaing Khaing Shwe (Public Policy, NUS)



Young participants register for 2026 Youth Peace Forum Signature Campaign.

while it may take great effort and time to build something, it can be destroyed very easily, highlighting the value of responsibility and care in preserving what has been created.

The future of a nation lies in the hands of its youth. Therefore, if every young person understands their responsibilities and participates with wisdom, discernment, and the ability to distinguish right from wrong, they can gradually help build a stable, strong, and just nation.

Furthermore, it is essential for young people to become law-abiding and responsible citizens. By adhering to school rules, obeying traffic regulations, and learning from a young age not to damage public property, they contribute positively to society as a whole. We have learnt an important lesson:

When the sense of responsibility of each young individual combines into a collective force, we can be confident that the nation's future will shine ever brighter.

The future of a nation lies in the hands of its youth. Therefore, if every young person understands their responsibilities and participates with wisdom, discernment, and the ability to distinguish right from wrong, they can gradually help build a stable, strong, and just nation.

An excessive focus on "likes, views, followers", and similar online metrics has eroded young people's real-life social skills. As interpersonal communication weakens, misunderstandings between individuals increase, giving rise to greater mistrust. When thoughts and feelings that should be shared within a community are withheld or expressed inaccurately, conflicts become more likely to occur.

Furthermore, divisions between groups may emerge, diminishing the spirit of collaboration. In any society, without mutual understanding, trust, and cooperation, social cohesion inevitably suffers.

In the age of globalization, constantly following the information delivered by the



Young participants compete in cybersecurity puzzle challenge.

In today's era, society has grown increasingly attentive to the actions, behaviours, and social attitudes of young people. Modern youth are more willing to question injustice, form independent opinions, and resist practices they perceive as impractical. At the same time, re-

smartphones in our hands has led to a decline in interest in our traditional culture, literature, and history. Young people increasingly adopt foreign cultural practices without reflection, which poses a serious risk of eroding their own cultural identity.

Furthermore, a noticeable decline in responsibility and perseverance among young people has been observed in workplaces. When faced with difficulties, some tend to give up easily, showing less willingness to strive for long-term goals in their careers and education. A mindset that seeks quick results through shortcuts further exacerbates this problem.

On the other hand, an increasing focus on self-interest and self-centeredness among young people has become a matter of serious concern. The mindset of "as long as it works out for me" has become more common, while the willingness to engage in socially beneficial activities or to consider the welfare of others has declined.

This trend is particularly evident online and on social media, where harsh language and blame are often used to gain more likes and views. Such behaviours not only harm cultural values but also raise serious concerns regarding interpersonal relationships and social cohesion.

The role of each young person is vital in restoring the social values of youth. Fame and likes on social media should not be treated as measures of self-worth; instead, young people should build their value through truly useful skills and abilities. The ability to persevere and work diligently towards goals that do not yield immediate success enhances personal and social worth. Moreover, accepting differing opinions and engaging in respectful discussions can strengthen social cohesion and cultural values.

Education is a fundamental human right that must be made available to every child. Through learning, individuals develop the ability to think critically, solve problems, and make informed decisions throughout life. Educated youth enjoy greater opportunities in selecting careers and are better equipped to shape their own lives independently. Every child and young person should have the freedom to ac-

cess education without restriction. Moreover, educated youth are more capable of understanding social issues and becoming responsible, engaged citizens. In this way, education benefits not only the individual but also fosters the development of society and secures the future of the nation as a whole.

Furthermore, under the current circumstances of unstable social conditions, generational limitations, political and economic pressures, and the lack of understanding from parents and elders are all factors that can negatively influence the behaviour and perspectives of young people.

Therefore, rather than criticizing young people, it is important to understand them, provide guidance, and create a positive environment. Doing so will help shape a better and stronger society in the future.

At the same time, parents, teachers, and elders should also seek to understand the difficulties faced by young people. By creating an environment where they can be listened to and guided, rather than judged or criticized youths' sense of responsibility and respect can naturally flourish.

In conclusion, the evolving social values of today's Myanmar youth can be restored only through understanding, guidance, and trust. At the same time, young people themselves must learn to exercise their rights, accept their responsibilities, acknowledge and correct their mistakes, consider the advice of elders, and actively participate in socially beneficial activities. When society recognizes that youth are a vital resource for the future, and when young people understand their own value and demonstrate responsibility and mutual respect, a truly meaningful and socially cohesive community can emerge. In an environment where both elders and youth interact constructively, combining the wisdom of experience with the creativity of the younger generation, the progress and development of our nation can accelerate.

NATIONAL



Anti-Corruption Commission Chairman U Lwin Oo receives Chinese Ambassador Ms Ma Jia yesterday.

Anti-corruption chief meets Chinese Ambassador in Nay Pyi Taw

ANTI-CORRUPTION Commission Chairman U Lwin Oo received Ms Ma Jia, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Myanmar, yesterday afternoon at the meeting hall of the Anti-Corruption Commission Office in Nay Pyi Taw.

The two sides held frank and cordial discussions, exchanging views on cooperation between Myanmar and China in the field of anti-corruption, knowledge and

awareness exchange related to anti-corruption efforts, staff capacity-building, and other matters concerning bilateral cooperation.

The meeting was also attended by Commission Member U Kyaw Win Thein, the Permanent Secretary, the Director-General, and responsible officials from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Myanmar. — MNA/MKKS

Myanmar delegation's presence at ICJ underscores government's legitimacy

THE hearings concerning the case between The Gambia and Myanmar are being held at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague, the Netherlands, from 12 to 29 January.

Here is the interview with Senior Advisor of Myanmar Institute of Strategic and International Studies, Founder and Executive Director of the Thayninga Institute for Strategic Studies, and Director Dr Nai Swe Oo of the Myanmar Narrative Think Tank.

I would like to discuss first that I personally conducted field research in Buthidaung and Maungtaw areas in 2018 and 2019 regarding the Bengali issue that occurred in Rakhine State. I am someone who has directly observed and understood the ground realities.

Moreover, we, Think Tank, are involved in discussions on the repatriation of Bengalis.

While holding regular dialogues between the Think Tank of Bangladesh and Myanmar, I have regularly taken part in the discussions since 2018 and 2019.

I would like to briefly discuss the current situation in which Myanmar is facing legal proceedings at the ICJ. On 11 November 2019, The Gambia, a small country located in West Africa, initiated legal proceedings against Myanmar at the International Court of Justice with the support of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

The Gambia made allegations claiming that Myanmar violated the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Genocide Convention) and filed the lawsuit on that basis.

The main point is that the case was filed based on allegations related to incidents that oc-



curred in northern Rakhine State in 2016 and 2017. However, when we look at The Gambia, it is a small country located thousands of miles away from Myanmar in West Africa. From Myanmar's perspective, The Gambia has no legal obligation or standing to bring a case against Myanmar. The Gambia is merely acting as a proxy of the OIC. The next fact is

that there is no dispute between The Gambia and Myanmar. The place alleged by The Gambia did not occur within Gambian territory, nor did it have any impact on Gambian citizens. It can therefore be seen that The Gambia's accusations are solely one-sided.

However, in January 2020, the ICJ issued Provisional Measures, and Myanmar had to submit reports every six months.

Myanmar, as a responsible member of the international community, has regularly submitted the required reports. However, on the other hand, The Gambia and some other countries have criticized these measures as insufficient. Nonetheless, it can be seen that Myanmar has faithfully fulfilled its obligations.

In July 2022, the Court rejected Myanmar's preliminary objections and confirmed that it has jurisdiction over the case. It was

also observed that, in addition to The Gambia, 11 countries, including Canada, Denmark, France and Germany, had the right to intervene in the case under Article 63.

I will continue to discuss the current situation. At present, the case has reached the hearings stage. A Myanmar delegation led by Union Minister U Ko Ko Hlaing for the Ministry 2 of the President's Office, currently in The Hague, the Netherlands, is serving as Agent of Myanmar and presenting the defence at the ICJ.

However, it should be noted that cases at the ICJ are not resolved in a short period of time and often take many years.

In other words, the presence of a Myanmar delegation at the ICJ in The Hague, the Netherlands, represents the legitimacy of the Myanmar government. — MNA/KTZH

Myanmar maize export to commence on 1 Feb under zero duty

MYANMAR'S maize export to Thailand with zero-tariff benefit will restart on 1 February, according to the Myanmar Corn Industrial Association.

Thailand gives green light for maize imports under zero tariff (with Form-D), between 1 February and 31 August. Myanmar ships maize to Thailand through the Yangon-Bangkok, Kawthoung-Ranong and Tachilek-Meisai maritime routes. The Myawady trade channel that was previously used is currently suspended.

Maize export annually generates over US\$500 million. There are over one million acres of maize farms across the country. Domestic consumption accounts for 35 per cent of total production, and the remaining 65 per cent is designated for exports.

Maize exports amounted to over \$500 million in the 2023-2024 financial year, over \$400 million in the 2024-2025 financial year, and over 400 million so far in the current 2025-2026 financial year. — ASH/KK



This picture captures farm workers harvesting heap of dried maize.

NATIONAL

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Union Election Commission Announcement 18/2026

2nd Waxing of Tabodwe, 1387 ME
19 January 2026

Announcement on List of Individuals Elected as Region or State Hluttaw Representatives

In the multiparty democratic general election conducted in phases starting 28 December 2005, the region and state election subcommissions have announced that the following individuals are elected as Region Hluttaw or State Hluttaw representatives, listed alongside their names in accordance with the statement under the Region or State Hluttaw Election Law Section 49 (b).

| No | Name | CSC | Representative No | Representing Party/Independent |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------|--|--|
| Magway Region (FPTP) | | | | |
| 1 | U Lay Maung | 8/HsaPhaNa (C) 000037 | Seikphyu Township Representative 1 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 2 | U San Nyunt Aung | 8/MaKaNa (C) 000672 | Natmauk Township Representative 1 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 3 | U Soe Min Tun | 8/MaThaNa (C) 084826 | Myothit Township Representative 1 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 4 | U Aung Naing Lin | 8/TaTaKa (C) 088967 | Ngaphe Township Representative 1 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 5 | U Win Myaing | 8/SaLaNa (C) 100295 | Salin Township Representative 1 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 6 | U Myint Aung | 8/SaTaRa (C) 008785 | Sedoktara Township Representative 1 | National Unity Party |
| 7 | U Myint Shwe | 8/KaMaNa (C) 020032 | Kanma Township Representative 1 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 8 | U Thein Zaw | 8/MaTaNa (C) 003999 | Mindon Township Representative 1 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 9 | U Thaik Soe Oo | 8/MaLaNa (C) 070021 | Minhla Township Representative 1 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 10 | U Aye Naing | 12/KaMaYa (C) 028233 | Sinbaungwe Township Representative 1 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| Magway Region (PR) Constituency 1 | | | | |
| 11 | U Khin Maung Nyo | 8/PaMaNa (C) 000151 | Pakokku Township Representative 2 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 12 | U Thein Lwin | 8/RaSaKa (C) 121397 | Yesakyo Township Representative 2 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 13 | U Myint Naing | 8/RaSaKa (C) 004306 | Myaing Township Representative 2 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 14 | U Win Naing Oo | 8/KaMaNa (C) 104147 | Pauk Township Representative 2 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 15 | U Thein Tun | 8/HsaMaNa (C) 044069 | Chauk Township Representative 2 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 16 | U Aung Myint | 5/MaLaNa (C) 028593 | Gangaw Township Representative 2 | National Unity Party |
| 17 | U Tun Naing Soe | 8/PaKhaKa (C) 202676 | Yenangyoung Township Representative 2 | National Unity Party |
| 18 | Daw Muya Tun | 8/PaKhaKa (C) 173478 | Seikphyu Township Representative 2 | National Unity Party |
| 19 | U Myint Soe | 8/RaNaKha (C) 010246 | Saw Township Representative 2 | Shan and Nationalities Democratic Party (SNDP) |
| 20 | U Aung Myo Min | 8/KhaMaNa (C) 115979 | Htilin Township Representative 2 | Shan and Nationalities Democratic Party (SNDP) |
| Magway Region (PR) Constituency 2 | | | | |
| 21 | U Tint Lwin | 8/MaKaNa (C) 008722 | Salin Township Representative 2 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 22 | U Aung Naing | 8/PaPhaNa (C) 025143 | Minbu Township Representative 2 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 23 | Daw Nwe Ni Naing | 8/SaLaNa (C) 068362 | Pwintphyu Township Representative 2 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 24 | U Thaung Win | 8/MaBaNa (C) 011907 | Ngaphe Township Representative 2 | National Unity Party |
| 25 | U Thein Htet Wai | 8/MaBaNa (C) 082050 | Sedoktara Township Representative 2 | People's Party |
| Magway Region (PR) Constituency 3 | | | | |
| 26 | U Tin Ko Ko | 12/MaBaNa (C) 138772 | Magway Township Representative 2 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 27 | U Kyi Tun | 13/MaMaTa (C) 028095 | Natmauk Township Representative 2 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 28 | U Nyan Thein | 8/TaTaKa (C) 038268 | Taungdwingyi Township Representative 2 | National Unity Party |
| 29 | U Aung Lin Oo | 8/PaMaNa (C) 003077 | Myothit Township Representative 2 | People's Party |
| Magway Region (PR) Constituency 4 | | | | |
| 30 | U Aung Chein | 12/ThaKaTa (C) 081238 | Aunglan Township Representative 2 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 31 | U Thein Toe | 8/KaMaNa (C) 036925 | Sinbaungwe Township Representative 2 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 32 | U Naing Min Thu | 8/ThaRaNa (C) 065285 | Minhla Township Representative 2 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 33 | Dr Nyo Win | 8/ThaRaNa (C) 017791 | Thayet Township Representative 2 | National Unity Party |
| 34 | Daw Yee Yee Lwin | 8/MaTaNa (C) 038030 | Mindon Township Representative 2 | National Unity Party |
| 35 | U Aung Hlaing Than | 8/ThaRaNa (C) 003184 | Kanma Township Representative 2 | People's Party |
| Mon State (FPTP) | | | | |
| 36 | U Kyaw Zeyar Min | 10/ThaPhaYa (C) 079884 | Bilin Township Representative 1 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 37 | U Htay Naing (aka) Na Am Tha | 10/MaDaNa (C) 054475 | Mudon Township Representative 1 | Mon Unity Party |
| 38 | U Shwe Lu | 10/ThaPhaRa (C) 027181 | Thanbyuzayet Township Representative 1 | Mon Unity Party |
| 39 | Mi La Wihan | 10/RaMaNa (C) 046156 | Ye Township Representative 1 | Mon Unity Party |
| 40 | U Than Khaing | 10/PaMaNa (C) 081617 | Paung Township Representative 1 | Mon Unity Party |

NATIONAL

FROM PAGE 11

| No | Name | CSC | Representative No | Representing Party/Independent |
|--|--|------------------------|--|--|
| Mon State (PR) Constituency 1 | | | | |
| 41 | U Thet Htwe | 10/MaDaNa (C) 021252 | Mawlamyine Township Representative 2 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 42 | Min Aung Myint | 10/KaMaYa (C) 020733 | Ye Township Representative 2 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 43 | U Min Myint Maung Lay | 10/KhaHsaNa (C) 029679 | Thaton Township Representative 2 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 44 | U San Tin | 10/KaMaRa (C) 013324 | Paung Township Representative 2 | Mon Unity Party |
| 45 | Nai Layi Tama (aka) Nai Khin Maung Zin | 10/ThaPhaYa (C) 155509 | Mudon Township Representative 2 | Mon Unity Party |
| 46 | Min Aung Htoo | 10/YaMaNa (C) 006598 | Kyaikto Township Representative 2 | Mon Unity Party |
| 47 | U Tin Yee | 10/KaHtaNa (C) 037367 | Bilin Township Representative 2 | National Unity Party |
| 48 | U Thant Zaw | 14/LaPaTa (C) 047369 | Kyaikmaraw Township Representative 2 | National Interest Development Party |
| 49 | Dr Soe Moe Aung | 10/BaLaNa (C) 005212 | Thanbyuzayat Township Representative 2 | People's Pioneer Party (PPP) |
| 50 | U Aung Ko Win Than | 10/KaMaRa (C) 064675 | Chaungzon Township Representative 2 | People's Party |
| Yangon Region (FPTP) | | | | |
| 51 | U Thein Naing | 12/BaHaNa (C) 006482 | Shwepyitha Township Representative 1 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 52 | U Taing Ya | 12/HtaTaPa (C) 019953 | Htantabin Township Representative 1 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 53 | U Aung Myo Naing | 12/LaKaNa (C) 155778 | Hlegu Township Representative 1 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| Yangon Region (PR) Constituency 5 | | | | |
| 54 | U Kyaw Lin Zaw | 12/TaKaNa (C) 135985 | Hmawby Township Representative 2 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 55 | U Soe Win Aung | 12/HtaTaPa (C) 073103 | Taikkyi Township Representative 2 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 56 | U Min Ko Ko | 12/TaKaNa (C) 193510 | Htantabin Township Representative 2 | National Unity Party |
| Yangon Region (PR) Constituency 6 | | | | |
| 57 | U Aung Win Htoo | 13/RaSaNa (C) 004760 | Shwepyitha Township Representative 2 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 58 | Daw Lay Lay Myint | 12/MaGaDa (C) 097852 | Mingaladon Township Representative 2 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 59 | U Kyaw Min Tun | 7/KaWaNa (C) 114012 | Hlegu Township Representative 2 | People's Party |
| Shan State (FPTP) | | | | |
| 60 | U Yan Aung | 13/MaKhaNa (C) 022311 | Mongkhat Township Representative 1 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 61 | U Sai Tun Sein | 13/MaPaTa (C) 001067 | Mongping Township Representative 1 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 62 | U Nyunt Win | 13/MaPhaNa (C) 001022 | Mongphyat Township Representative 1 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 63 | Saw Moola | 13/MaTaNa (C) 004446 | Mongton Township Representative 1 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 64 | Sai Bon Si | 13/TaKaNa (C) 164884 | Mongyawng Township Representative 1 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 65 | Sai Hlaing Kham | 13/MaYaNa (C) 006650 | Mongyang Township Representative 1 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| Shan State (PR) Constituency 4 | | | | |
| 66 | U Aik Paleik | 13/LaRaNa (C) 129191 | Kengtung Township Representative 2 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 67 | Nang Naw | 13/KaTaNa (C) 066870 | Monghsat Township Representative 2 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 68 | U Htin Aung Naing | 13/MaPaTa (C) 011132 | Mongton Township Representative 2 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 69 | Daw May Hnin Thet | 13/MaPaTa (C) 000146 | Mongping Township Representative 2 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 70 | U Sai Naw Khe | 13/MaPaTa (C) 037601 | Mongkhat Township Representative 2 | Shan and Nationalities Democratic Party (SNDP) |
| Shan State (PR) Constituency 5 | | | | |
| 71 | Sai Wan Hlaing Tip | 13/MaPhaNa (C) 011803 | Tachilek Township Representative 2 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 72 | Sai Ri Tik | 13/MaPhaNa (C) 001021 | Mongyang Township Representative 2 | Union Solidarity and Development Party |
| 73 | U Tun Paw Thein | 13/TaKhaLa (C) 000455 | Mongyawng Township Representative 2 | Shan and Nationalities Democratic Party (SNDP) |
| 74 | Sai Khit Nwet | 13/MaYaTa (C) 009885 | Mongphyat Township Representative 2 | Shan and Nationalities Democratic Party (SNDP) |

Sd/Than Soe
Chairman
Union Election Commission

Rebuilt Pyinmana Sangha Hospital to open on 25 Jan

THE reconstruction of the earthquake-damaged Pyinmana Sangha Hospital has reached 100% completion, and a grand opening ceremony is scheduled to take place on 25 January, Dr Than Min Htut, a prominent physician widely known as the "Lamp of Pindaya", announced on his social media page.

Venerable monks recited Paritta to mark the soft opening of the Dialysis Department, the Outpatient Department, and the Inpatient Department on 5 January.

"The reconstruction of the hospital has completed. Preparations are underway for the main opening on

25 January," he said.

During the reconstruction, a new major operating theatre was added to the existing four. Surgeries in this new facility are expected to commence on the grand opening day.

Dr Than Min Htut expressed his gratitude to the various donors who contributed to the rebuilding efforts after the hospital was damaged by the earthquake. He extended an invitation to donors from both near and far to attend the opening ceremony on 25 January. - MT/ZN

The Pyinmana Sangha Hospital, now fully restored after suffering earthquake damage.



NATIONAL

People's Military Service Training 21 begins nationwide

THE opening ceremonies for People's Military Service Training 21 were held yesterday at various military commands, with the commandants of the training depots delivering the opening speeches.

The ceremonies were attended by the Nay Pyi Taw Council chairman, chief ministers of the respective regions and states, the commanders of the relevant commands, and other officials. Trainees were presented with cash awards, foodstuffs and essential items.

The People's Military Ser-

vice Law was enacted as every citizen has a duty to safeguard the Our Three Main National Causes: non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity, and the perpetuation of sovereignty. The law came into effect on 10 February 2024 to facilitate the organization of military training courses. Those who have completed the People's Military Service Training are now serving in various military units, fulfilling their responsibilities for national defence and security. — MNA/ KTZH



The opening event of the People's Military Service Training 21 in progress at the Coastal Region Command yesterday.

45 foreign nationals repatriated for telecom fraud and online gambling



The ongoing process of deportation of undocumented foreign entrants.

ENTERING Myanmar illegally via border routes in Thailand and other neighbouring countries, some foreign nationals committed online gambling, online fraud and other crimes in the Myawady-Shwe Kokko area of Kayin State. A total of 45 foreign nationals – 17 Ethiopians, 16 Ugandans, 11 Filipinos, and one Malagasy – were transferred back to their respective countries via the Myanmar-Thailand Friendship Bridge II, in accordance with legal procedures, in consideration of humanitarian support and mutual goodwill between the countries.

To ensure that the transfer operations were conducted in an orderly, efficient and smooth manner, members of the Myawady District Admin-

istration and Management Committee, Lt-Col San Shwe and other responsible officials met with the relevant departments and reviewed the lists and data to ensure accuracy and completeness, coordinating and making necessary arrangements.

The handover ceremony was then held, attended by Head of Myawady District Immigration and Population Office Deputy Director U Kyaw Kyaw Than and responsible officials, Police Colonel Mr Neftaly Adia Donato from the Office of the Police Attaché of the Philippines, representative of the Madagascan Embassy Ms Kritiya Jantanamalaka, representative of Ethiopian and Ugandan embassies Mr Tana Judah Hira, and responsible

personnel from Tak Province Immigration Office of Thailand. Myanmar officials formally handed over the relevant documents and evidence related to the transfer to the representatives of the respective countries.

From 30 January 2025 to 19 January 2026, a total of 14,151 foreign nationals who entered Myawaddy Township illegally were reportedly detained. All of them were investigated, and 12,152 of them were transferred systematically to their respective countries via Thailand in accordance with legal procedures. The remaining 1,999 foreign nationals are ready to be transferred to their countries, and they are being properly detained and cared for.

The government of Myanmar is actively cooperating with neighbouring and regional countries, as well as international organizations, in order to identify, arrest and take strong action against those involved in online scam centres and the foreign nationals who are controlling them. At the same time, it is also coordinating effectively to ensure that foreign nationals who are suffering for various reasons and those who have been trafficked are transferred to their respective countries as soon as possible. — MNA/MKKS

Yangon Region possesses 2,000 acres of winter sunflower cultivation

YANGON Region sees cultivation of oil crops and various pulses in winter, and this season, sunflower cultivation for oil production has covered about 2,000 acres in seven districts of the region.

Last year's sunflower farming was targeted at 10,969 acres, and 4,500 acres were successfully harvested. Sunflower cultivation has reached 2,000 acres as of early January this winter. Various pulses such as peanut, sesame, black gram, green gram, black-eyed peas, lentil, chickpea and cowpea are also planted. The region primarily grows paddy, yet certain crops are also planted to meet self-sufficiency and boost exports.

“Of two sunflower varieties (Yezin hybrid 1), Hsinshweikya-2

variety is commonly grown. The Department of Agriculture is cooperating with the Crop Protection Division to ensure no chemical residues by raising awareness of chemical fertilizers and applying methods to farmers. Winter crops are constantly cultivated in the region to provide seed production and conduct on-farm trials,” said an official of the Department of Agriculture.

Green gram designated for the EU market is primarily grown in Thanlyin District. Taikkyi District is the main producing area of black gram. Sunflower cultivation can be seen in Dagon Myothit, Thanlyin, Twantay, Hmawby, Hlegu, Taikkyi and Mingaladon districts. — Thitsa (MNA)/KK



A thriving plantation of winter sunflower in Yangon Region in the previous year.

Singapore's Changi Airport to add 600 extra flights to China ahead of Chinese New Year

SINGAPORE'S Changi Airport will work with multiple Chinese airlines to operate more than 600 supplementary flights to 15 cities in China from 1 February to 8 March, more than double the number added during the same period in 2025, amid an anticipated increase in travel demand over the coming Chinese New Year holiday, Changi Airport Group said on Monday.

China is Singapore's largest visitor source market, it said, adding that the Chinese New Year period has long been a key travel window for Chinese visitors, sup-

ported by the continued implementation of the China-Singapore mutual visa-free policy and the overlap with winter school holidays.

Some of the additional services will be operated by wide-body aircraft, increasing seat capacity and passenger comfort, it said.

The increase in capacity "reflects the strong travel demand we continue to see between China and Singapore," said Lim Ching Kiat, executive vice president for Air Hub and Cargo Development at Changi Airport Group, citing close partnerships with airline partners. —Xinhua

Cambodia makes US\$15.5 bln from exports of garments, shoes, travel goods in 2025

CAMBODIA exported garments, shoes, and travel goods totally worth US\$15.5 billion in 2025, a year-on-year rise of 15.7 per cent, said a Ministry of Commerce's report obtained on Monday. Garments worth \$11.4 billion were exported in 2025, a year-on-year increase of 16.5 per cent, the report said, adding that footwear products worth \$2.09 billion were shipped

to international markets, up 24.5 percent. Also, travel goods equivalent to \$2.02 billion were exported last year, up 3.8 per cent, the report said. The garment, footwear, and travel goods industry is Cambodia's largest foreign exchange earner, accounting for approximately 50 per cent of the kingdom's total export value, according to the report. —Xinhua

China's retail sales up 3.7% in 2025

CHINA'S retail sales of consumer goods, a major indicator of the country's consumption strength, climbed 3.7 per cent year on year in 2025, official data showed Monday.

The total retail sales of consumer goods reached 50.12 trillion yuan (about US\$7.15 trillion) last year, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

In December alone, the retail sales of consumer goods rose 0.9 per cent year on year, according to the NBS.

In 2025, the contribution rate of final consumption expenditure to economic growth stood at 52 percent, up five percentage points from the previous year, Kang Yi, head of the NBS, told a press confer-



Customers select vegetable at a supermarket in Tangshan City, north China's Hebei Province, 15 October 2025.

PHOTO: XINHUA

ence.

China's economy expanded by five per cent year on year last year, meeting the annual target of around five per cent.

Retail sales in the country's urban regions rose 3.6 per cent year on year in 2025, while those in rural areas expanded 4.1

per cent. This trend is being driven by nationwide efforts to innovate in consumer services and improve the overall consumption environment, with vibrant growth in sectors like culture, tourism, entertainment and sporting events, he said.

Kang noted that e-commerce, live-streaming commerce and online entertainment drove robust growth in online consumption last year. Online retail sales jumped 8.6 per cent year on year to 15.97 trillion yuan last year. In particular, online retail sales of physical goods rose 5.2 per cent year on year to 13.09 trillion yuan, accounting for 26.1 per cent of the total retail sales of consumer goods. —Xinhua

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY.NO. (221N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY.NO. (221N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **20-1-2026** 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 A.M to 11:20 A.M and 12 NOON to 4 P.M 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
Myanmar Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V UNIVERSE RELIANCE VOY.NO. (2512)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V UNIVERSE RELIANCE VOY.NO. (2512)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **20-1-2026** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT-4** 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 A.M to 11:20 A.M and 12 NOON to 4 P.M 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: 2301928

Shipping Agency Department
Myanmar Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S ELDER TRIUMPHANT SHIPPING LINES PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V KANG YAO VOY.NO. (10625)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V KANG YAO VOY.NO. (106245)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **21-1-2026** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 A.M to 11:20 A.M and 12 NOON to 4 P.M 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: 2301928

Shipping Agency Department
Myanmar Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S CHUN AN INTERNATIONAL LOGISTICS LTD

Mandalay to host 2026 Yoma-Mandalay International Marathon on 24 Jan

UNDER the supervision of the Mandalay Region Government, the 2026 Yoma-Mandalay International Marathon will be held on the morning of 24 January at the Bahtoo Stadium in Mandalay.

This year, the event will feature three categories: the half-marathon (21 kilometres), the challenge run (10 kilometres) and the fun run (5 kilometres). In the half-marathon (men's and women's) competition, the first prize will be awarded K3 million, the second prize K15 million, the third prize K10 million, and the fourth to tenth prizes K5,000,000 each. In the challenge run (men's and women's) competition, the first prize will be K1.5 million, the second prize K1 million, the third prize K5,000,000,



Marathoners take their marks at last year's starting line.

and the fourth to tenth prizes K2,000,000 each.

Registered runners for the Mandalay Marathon will be able to collect their competition items at the Bahtoo Gymnasium from 9 am to 4:30 pm from 22 to 23 January.

On the day of the 2026 Yoma-Mandalay International Marathon, on

24 January, the following roads will be temporarily closed for the race route: 30th street (between 68th and 73rd streets), 29th street (between 68th and 73rd streets), 28th street (between 68th and 73rd streets), 73rd street (between 30th and 26th streets), 26th street (between 66th and 80th streets), 12th street (between 66th and 80th streets), 66th street (between 12th and 26th streets), and 71st street (between 30th and 26th streets). — Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-Printing House)/MKKS

Real Sociedad beats Barcelona as La Liga title race tightens



Barcelona's English forward (14) Marcus Rashford and Real Sociedad's Venezuelan defender (2) Jon Aramburu (C) fight for the ball during the Spanish league football match between Real Sociedad and FC Barcelona at Anoeta Stadium in San Sebastian on 18 January 2026. **PHOTO: AFP**

REAL Sociedad beat FC Barcelona 2-1 at home on Sunday to cut Barcelona's lead at the top of La Liga to one point after Real Madrid won a day earlier.

Mikel Oyarzabal and Goncalo Guedes scored for Real Sociedad, while

Marcus Rashford netted Barcelona's equalizer. Barcelona had three first-half goals ruled out by VAR, including one for a marginal offside against Lamine Yamal, and hit the woodwork several times.

Oyarzabal put Real

Sociedad ahead in the 32nd minute with a volley at the far post, with Barcelona protesting a foul on Dani Olmo in the build-up.

Barcelona controlled long spells after the break, with Olmo hitting the post twice in quick succession and goalkeeper Alex Remiro saving from Robert Lewandowski. Rashford equalized in the 70th minute, but Guedes restored the lead a minute later with a volley after Joan Garcia failed to hold Carlos Soler's header early in the second half.

Barcelona pressed again but hit the woodwork through Jules Kounde and Rashford, who also struck the post directly from a corner. Soler was sent off late for a challenge on Pedri, but

Real Sociedad held on.

Real Madrid won 2-0 at home to Levante on Saturday with goals from Kylian Mbappe and Raul Asencio. The match at the Santiago Bernabeu was also marked by boos from sections of the crowd, including criticism aimed at Jude Bellingham and Vinicius Jr.

Elsewhere, Atletico Madrid drew level on points with Villarreal in third place after a 1-0 home win over Deportivo Alaves, sealed by an Alexander Sorloth header.

Celta Vigo beat Rayo Vallecano 3-0 to strengthen its hold on seventh, while Valencia climbed out of the bottom three with a 1-0 win at Getafe. Betis beat Villarreal 2-0 at home. — Xinhua

CONDOLENCES

U Thurein Hla Htwe (55 years)

Nikkei Shimbun

THE Foreign Correspondents Club of Myanmar would like to express our deepest condolences at the loss of our member U Thurein Hla Htwe (Nikkei Shimbun) at 4:30 pm on 11 January 2026. Our thoughts and prayers are with the bereaved family.

Members of Foreign Correspondents Club of Myanmar

Djokovic launches latest bid for record 25th Grand Slam title



Serbia's Novak Djokovic celebrates after victory against Spain's Pedro Martinez during their men's singles match on day two of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne on 19 January 2026. **PHOTO: AFP**

A defiant Novak Djokovic launches his latest bid to win a record 25th Grand Slam crown while title contenders Coco Gauff and Iga Swiatek are also in action at the Australian Open on Monday.

A bumper second day at Melbourne Park sees three-time finalist Daniil Medvedev, home hope Alex de Minaur and fourth seed Amanda Anisimova also enter the fray.

The 38-year-old Serbian great Djokovic faces Spain's 71st-ranked Pedro Martinez on the final match of the day on Rod Laver Arena.

A former world number one, now ranked four, Djokovic is the undisputed king of Melbourne's hard courts, having won a record 10 Australian Open crowns.

He has won 24 major titles, equal for the most

ever with Australia's Margaret Court, but a 25th has remained agonisingly out of reach.

With Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner now dominant, Djokovic's last Grand Slam victory came at the US Open in 2023.

Despite age and injury catching up with him, Djokovic said on the eve of his favourite tournament: "I know that when I'm healthy, when I'm able to put all the pieces of the puzzle together on a given day, I feel like I can beat anybody."

He added: "I like my chances always in any tournament, particularly here."

Russia's 11th-seeded Medvedev, runner-up in 2021, 2022 and 2024, warmed up for Melbourne with victory in Brisbane and believes he could be hard to beat. — AFP



China's Shenzhou-20 return capsule touches down on Earth

THE return capsule of the Shenzhou-20 spaceship, carrying no astronauts, touched down at the Dongfeng landing site in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region at 9:34 am (Beijing Time) on Monday, according to the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA).

On-site inspections confirmed that the return capsule's overall appearance was normal and that items inside were in good condition. The Shenzhou-20 spaceship return mission was a complete success, the CMSA said.

"With the return of the Shenzhou-20 spaceship, all main tasks of the space emergency response for China's space station have been successfully completed," it announced.

The Shenzhou-20 crewed spacecraft was launched from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in northwest China on 24 April 2025, and it later successfully docked with the space station. Its return was postponed in early November due to a suspected space debris impact incident, and it remained in orbit to conduct related experiments.

At 12:23 am (Beijing Time) on Monday, the spacecraft undocked from the space station combination and began its unmanned return journey. With a total



The return capsule of the Shenzhou-20 spaceship is pictured at the Dongfeng landing site in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region on 19 January 2026. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

orbital duration of 270 days, the mission verified the spacecraft's capability to remain docked in orbit for nine months, the CMSA noted.

China on 31 October 2025, launched the Shenzhou-21 crewed spaceship, send-

ing three astronauts to its orbiting space station on a six-month mission.

To mitigate risks during the return of the Shenzhou-20 spacecraft, the Shenzhou-21 astronaut crew took the opportunity of extravehicular activities on 9 De-

cember 2025, to capture close-up images of the return capsule's window using a high-definition camera, further investigating the condition of window cracks stemming from a suspected collision with space debris. — Xinhua

Japan PM calls snap election on 8 Feb to seek stronger mandate

JAPANESE Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said Monday she would dissolve parliament this week ahead of a snap election on 8 February, hoping for a stronger mandate to push through her ambitious policy agenda.

The country's first woman leader is banking on her high poll numbers to lead the unpopular ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to victory.

"Is Sanae Takaichi fit to be prime minister? I wanted to ask the sovereign people to decide," she told a news conference.

"Following the dissolution of the lower house on 23 January, the schedule will be set for campaigning to start on 27 January and voting and counting held on 8 February."

If elected, Takaichi pledged Monday to cut a tax on food for a two-year period to "alleviate the burden" on people



Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi (C) speaks during a press conference at the Prime Minister's Office in Tokyo on 19 January 2026. **PHOTO: AFP**

struggling with inflation.

Takaichi's cabinet approved a record 122.3-trillion-yen (\$768 billion) budget for the fiscal year from April 2026,

and she has vowed to get parliamentary approval as soon as possible to address rising prices and shore up the world's fourth-largest economy. — AFP

Two babies dead after incident forces evacuation of Israel nursery

ISRAELI doctors declared two babies dead after medics evacuated 55 children from a daycare centre in Jerusalem on Monday, with local media reporting the incident may have been linked to the facility's heating system.

A baby girl was pronounced dead after being brought to hospital in "critical condition", Gal Pachis, head of the emergency centre at Shaare Zedek Hospital, told journalists in a statement broadcast live on television.

A baby boy, approximately six months old, was declared dead despite resuscitation efforts, the Hadassah Medical Centre said in a statement. Medics did not specify the cause of the deaths. Earlier, Israel's Magen David Adom emergency medical service said paramedics were "providing medical treatment and evacuating 55 casualties to hospitals in the city, including two infants in critical condition". — AFP