

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

Tatmadaw (Air) commissions aircraft and helicopters into service

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing underscored that superior air power not only allows for dominance, control, and suppression of the enemy but also significantly enhances the morale and combat effectiveness of own forces.

In commemoration of the 77th Anniversary of Tatmadaw (Air), a ceremony to commission aircraft and helicopters into service took place at Flying Training Base in Meiktila Station yesterday morning, attended by Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

Speaking on the occasion, the Senior General highlighted that commissioning

The newly commissioned aircraft and helicopters should be handled with care, elevating the honour of the Tatmadaw.



Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing sprinkles scented water on already-commissioned aircraft of Tatmadaw (Air) yesterday.

Salient points in the speech delivered by the Senior General at the ceremony to commission aircraft and helicopter into service

1. Commissioning aircraft and helicopters into service at the Tatmadaw (Air) aims to improve its capacity of military operations and other flight duties as well as combat power and capacity of the Tatmadaw.
2. Tatmadaw (Air) needs to continuously monitor, analyze, and evaluate the evolving situations and adapt progressively and appropriately to achieve development.
3. Superior air power not only allows for dominance, control, and suppression of the enemy but also significantly enhances the morale and combat effectiveness of own forces.

aircraft and helicopters into service at the Tatmadaw (Air) aims to improve its capacity of military operations and other flight duties as well as combat power and

capacity of the Tatmadaw.

He noted that in analyzing ongoing wars and armed conflicts across the globe in the present era, it becomes evident that

aviation and space power play a critical role in achieving victory of wars.

The Senior General emphasized that superior air power not only allows for

dominance, control, and suppression of the enemy but also significantly enhances the morale and combat effectiveness of own forces.

SEE PAGE 3

Article

A Visit to the Shwedagon Pagoda

By Maung Maung Aye

PAGE 8-9

NATIONAL

PAGE 11



National Kandawgyi Garden's centenary event features entertainment programme

NATIONAL

PAGE 12



Efforts underway to control movement of wild elephants in Yangon Region

NATIONAL

Investing in Agriculture and Livestock: A Path to National Prosperity and Food Security

AGRICULTURAL and livestock products have a robust market. These products bolster national food security and boost income through exports. Entrepreneurs with financial capacity should invest in the stable agriculture and livestock sectors.

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

30th annual graduation ceremony celebrates at State Pariyatti Sasana University (Mandalay)

THE 30th annual graduation ceremony of the State Pariyatti Sasana University (Yangon and Mandalay), under the auspices of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, was held yesterday afternoon at the university's convocation hall in Mandalay.

The ceremony was attended by a distinguished gathering, including Chancellor of the State Pariyatti Sasana Universities Aggamaha Pandita Aggamaha Saddhammajotikadhaja Dr Bhaddanta

Candima Bhivamsa, members of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, university administrators, Ovadacariya Sayadaws of Theravada Buddhist missionaries, the Rector of the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University, regional Sangha Nayaka Committee members, external examiners, university faculty, graduating monks, and scholars. Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Tin Oo Lwin, along with regional government officials, was also present.

On the occasion, the Union Minister assured that the ministry would continue to provide all possible support for religious endeavours.

He also expressed his commitment to fostering the annual production of graduates from the State Pariyatti Sasana Universities and to promoting the propagation of Buddhism in the border regions.

After Venerable Dr Bhaddanta Candanasara, Chair of the administration bodies of the universities, verified and signed

the degree certificates, the graduates received their degrees from the rectors.

Following a sermon by Venerable Bhaddanta Candanasara, the Union Minister and the attendees shared merits and offered alms to the monks.

A total of 128 monks graduated yesterday, earning MA (Buddhism) and BA (Buddhism). Over the past 30 convocations, the State Pariyatti Sasana Universities have graduated a total of 3,316 monks. — MNA/ TRKM

Chongqing hosts first Myanmar-China (Chongqing) Cultural Exchange



Theatrical experts from Myanmar perform Myanmar Thingyan dance at first Myanmar-China (Chongqing) Cultural Exchange event in China.

THE first Myanmar-China (Chongqing) Cultural Exchange event, themed "The Art of Connection from Myanmar to Chongqing", was held at the Chongqing Art Theatre on 14 December 2024. The event was jointly organized by the Consulate General of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in Chongqing and the Yuzhong District Government of the People's Republic of China.

During the ceremony, U Kyaw Zay Yar Lin, Consul General of the Myanmar Consulate in Chongqing, and Mr Lai Liang, Deputy Mayor of Yuzhong District, delivered opening speeches.

Representatives from various government departments attended the event, including Mr Zhang Yongwu, Director-General of the Chongqing Municipal Economic Commission, officials from

the Chongqing Foreign Affairs Office, Yuzhong District Foreign Affairs Office, Chongqing Yuzhong Tourism and Culture Committee, and other government agencies. Additionally, representatives from foreign consulates in Chongqing also participated in the event.

At the cultural event, 21 theatrical experts from Myanmar, led by U Pho Chit, Chairman of the Myanmar Theatrical Association, presented a series of Myanmar's traditional cultural performances.

These included Myanmar traditional puppet shows, Myanmar duet dance, Kyaukse elephant dance, Pyapon Royal Ramayana drama, traditional folk dance, and Myanmar Thingyan dance, all performed to accompaniment of Myanmar's traditional orchestra.

The Chinese cultural team also participated in the performances, enhancing the cultural exchange between the two nations. — MNA



Bay of Bengal Condition

Issued at 14:00 hours MST on 15 December 2024

ACCORDING to the observations at 12:30 hours MST today, a low-pressure area may form over southeast Bay of Bengal during next 24 hours and it is forecast likely to move west-northwestwards and reach to Tamil Nadu Coasts, India. — DMH

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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)

Tatmadaw (Air) commissions aircraft and ...



This photo shows aircraft and helicopters commissioned into service for Tatmadaw (Air) yesterday.

FROM PAGE 1

He pointed out that Tatmadaw (Air) needs to continuously monitor, analyze, and evaluate the evolving situations and adapt progressively and appropriately to achieve development.

He stated that the newly commissioned aircraft and helicopters should be handled with care, elevating the honour of the Tatmadaw, urging efforts to build and strive for a modern and highly capable Tatmadaw (Air) that can effectively defend and safeguard the nation at all times.

The Senior General highlighted that the full capacity in utilizing owned aircraft, helicopters, and weapon systems to their maximum capability is a key requirement for conducting operations effectively.

Currently, he continued that competition among powerful nations continues, leading to consequences such as interference and attempts to exert influence over small countries

in various sectors.

Commander-in-Chief (Air) General Tun Aung spoke words of appreciation for commissioning the aircraft while Chief of Staff (Air) Lt-Gen Zaw Win Myint declared commissioning the aircraft and helicopters into service.

Two freighter helicopters bearing the State flag and Tatmadaw flag flanked by two light freighter helicopters saluted the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.

Four light freighter helicopters in Composite Box Formation, two reconnaissance aircraft manufactured by the Tatmadaw (Air) and one training aircraft in Composite Trail Formation, one freighter and two medium freighter aircraft in Composite Arrow Head Formation, three jet fighters in Composite Trail Formation, two interceptors and two multipurpose jet fighters in Composite Box Formation, three fighters in Composite Arrow Head For-

mation, one training aircraft, and one multi-purpose jet fighter and post fourth generation multipurpose heavy jet fighter in Composite Arrow Head Formation saluted the Senior General.

A fighter demonstrated skills of Zoom Climb Maneuver in speed of 900 kilometres per hour whereas Su-30 SME fighter flew in Oblique Loop Maneuver, Multi Roll, High AOA Loop, displaying flares.

The Senior General and party released 77 birds in commemoration of the 77th Anniversary of Tatmadaw (Air) and viewed round the commissioned aircraft and helicopters. He cordially greeted the pilots and gave cash awards.

Also present at the ceremony were Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, the wife of the Senior General, Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Maung Maung Aye and his wife, retired Commanders-in-Chief (Air) and their wives, Commander-in-Chief

(Navy) Admiral Htein Win and his wife, Commander-in-Chief (Air) General Tun Aung and his wife, union-level dignitaries and their wives, Union ministers and their wives, the Mandalay Region Chief Minister and his wife and officials.

MTX-1A and MTX-1B reconnaissance aircraft were manufactured by the Tatmadaw (Air) through reverse engineering technology. MTX-1A was successfully operated on 25 March 2021.

Based on experiences of manufacturing MTX-1A, Tatmadaw members from Tatmadaw (Air) manufactured MTX-1B aircraft installed Turboprop engine and Glass Cockpit System with modern communication systems. MTX-1B was successfully operated on test in March 2024.

On the evening of 14 December, the Senior General and party viewed round aviation documents, uniforms of Tatmadaw (Air) used in suc-

cessive eras, documentary photos, documentary photos of Commanders-in-Chief (Air), historic aircraft and helicopters and their battle records, avionics equipment from aircraft and helicopters, scale models of new generation fighters, arms and ammunition used at Tatmadaw (Air), documentary photos of gallantry medal and title winners of Tatmadaw (Air), photos on commissioning aircraft and helicopters into services, training of Tatmadaw members, international relations, development of Tatmadaw (Air), presentation of pilot awards and aviation electronic machinery produced by Tatmadaw (Air) at the commemorative exhibition.

The Senior General, his wife and party visited the souvenir shops, traditional food-stuff shops and the book store of relevant airbases and sales of personal goods produced by Tatmadaw and cordially greeted Tatmadaw members and families. — MNA/TTA

NATIONAL

Golden Jubilee of Rakhine State Day observed in Sittway

THE 50th Anniversary of Rakhine State Day was held at U Otama Hall in Sittway yesterday.

The ceremony was attended by members of the State Administration Council Dr Hmuh Thang, Dr Ba Shwe, and Khun San Lwin, Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt Gen Tun Tun Naung, Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs Jeng Phang Naw Taung, Rakhine State Chief Minister U Htein Lin and his wife, Deputy Ministers Daw Nu Mra Zan and U Zaw Aye Maung, Daw Aye Nu Sein, a member of the SAC Central Advisory Body, the Chief Justice of the Rakhine State High Court, Rakhine State government ministers, senior Tatmadaw officers, departmen-

tal officials, invited guests, and recipients of honorary awards.

The event opened with the song "Golden Jubilee Rakhine State".

SAC member Dr Ba Shwe read the message sent by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Thadde Maha Thray Sithu Thadde Thiri Thudamma Min Aung Hlaing to the ceremony to mark the 50th Anniversary of Rakhine State.

Rakhine State Chief Minister U Htein Lin delivered a speech. The Union Minister for Border Affairs then handed over a 50W solar panel and related items to the Chief Minister. Outstanding awards in various



SAC member Dr Ba Shwe presents gifts to a patient at specialist OPD at Sittway General Hospital (500-bed) yesterday.

sectors, such as administration, industrial economics, and social affairs, were also presented to the winners.

Afterward, the Rakhine traditional dance troupe performed song and dance entertainment.

In the afternoon, the SAC

members visited Sittway General Hospital (500-bed) and the Cultural Museum and Library under the Department of Archaeology and National Museum in Sittway.

They also toured the multipurpose port in Sittway to in-

spect the arrival of consumer goods transported by ships and vessels. In the evening, they attended the Golden Jubilee Rakhine State Day commemorative dinner held at Khine Thazin Hall in Sittway. — MNA/TMT

MoBA Union Minister inspects Rakhine State development

UNION Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung visited the Rakhine State development projects, including a border area youth development training school in Sittway.

He reviewed the progress of local development efforts and interacted with staff, teachers, and students. During his visit, he emphasized the importance of free education and the nurturing of good citizens for the country's future development.

The Union minister also inspected facilities like class-



Union Minister Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung presents cash awards for trainees through an official.

rooms, dormitories, and agricultural projects, coordinating necessary issues to improve them. — MNA/KZL

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 15 December 2024)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 16 DECEMBER 2024: Rain will be widespread in eastern Shan State, fairly widespread in Taninthayi Region and Southern Shan and Kayah states, scattered in Nay Pyi Taw, Bago and Yangon regions, isolated in Mandalay, Magway and Ayeyawady regions and northern Shan, Rakhine, Kayin and Mon states. Degree of certainty is 80%. Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining regions and states.

STATE OF THE SEA: Squall with moderate to rough seas are likely at time in Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coast. Surface wind speed in squall may reach 30-35 mph. Wave height will be about 7-9 feet in Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coast. Sea will be slight to moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about 4-7 feet in Deltaic, off and along Rakhine Coasts. — DMH

Global NEW LIGHT of MYANMAR
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Printed and published at the Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the Global New Light of Myanmar Daily under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.
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NATIONAL

Winners awarded in bodybuilding, athletics sports

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

The Bodybuilding and Fitness Physique sports

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

Among the spectators were State Administration Council members Mahn Nyein Maung, U Shwe Kyein and U Yan Kyaw, Union Minister U Min Thein Zan

and officials at the Bodybuilding and Fitness Physique sports events.

The Myanmar Bodybuilding and Physique Sports Federation president, regional and state ministers and SAC members U Shwe Kyein and Mahn Nyein Maung presented prizes to the winners in the men's 70-kilogramme bodybuilding event, men's 75-kilogramme event, men's 75-kilogramme and above event, men's 160-centimetre sport physique, men's 160-centimetre and above sport physique and women's 160-centimetre model physique, respectively.

SAC Members U Shwe Kyein and Mahn Nyein Maung awarded winners in the women's 160-centimetre and above Model Physique event and women's Fitness Physique event.

Similarly, the awarding ceremonies in the Inter-Ministry Athletics Sports of the Fifth National Sports Festival 2024 took place at Wunna Theikdi Stadium.

Union Minister U Myint Kyaing, Union Auditor General Dr Khin Naing Oo, members of Union Election Commission and the member of Union Civil Service Board presented prizes to winners in the men's javelin, men's 110-metre hurdles, men's chained shot put, women's chained shot put, men's high jump, men's 200-metre race, women's 200-metre race, women's 400-metre relay race, men's 400-metre relay race, and women's high jump events, respectively.

The final matches and awarding ceremonies of the 2024 Fifth National Sports Festival will continue on 16 December at the respective stadiums and gymnasiums.

— MNA/KZL



State Administration Council Member Mahn Nyein Maung presents prizes.



State Administration Council Member U Shwe Kyein awards prizes.



Union Minister U Myint Kyaing hands out prizes.



Union Auditor General Dr Khin Naing Oo delivers awards.



Sagaing Region government Social Affairs Minister U Nyunt Win Aung presents prizes.



Photos show sports fans cheering the Inter-State and Region competition in Bodybuilding event yesterday.

NATIONAL

Competitions heat up at Fifth National Sports Festival 2024

SPORTS competitions of the Fifth National Sports Festival took place at relevant stadiums and gymnasiums in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Officials awarded winners in the men's and women's chained shot put, high jump, 400-metre x 4 relay race and 200-metre race events at the Inter-Ministry level.

The volleyball court of Wunna Theikdi Stadium hosted the men's and women's group matches of the Inter-Ministry Open Volleyball Tournaments.

The first round knockout matches of the Inter-Ministry men's futsal sports and group matches of the Sepak Takraw men's regu event were held at the same venue.

At the Inter-State and Region level sports, the men's and women's first leg matches of traditional Chinlone sports, and semifinal matches of snooker 6 Red singles, snooker 15 Red singles, quarterfinal matches of billiard singles, semifinals of 9 Ball Pool singles, snooker 6 Red double and 9 Ball Pool double were held at Wunna Theikdi Stadium (C).

At MICC 2, officials presented prizes to winners in the men's and women's bodybuilding and fitness physique, and table tennis sports at the Inter-State and Region level.

Semifinal matches of the Inter-State and Region

U-25 women's football tournament took place at Bawgawady Stadium and Lewe Stadium.

Quarterfinals of the Inter-State and Region Tennis Tournament were held at the central tennis court.

Moreover, Inter-State and Region weightlifting contest was held at the weightlifting court in Wunna Theikdi Stadium.

These sports competitions were attended by Union-level dignitaries, deputy ministers, regional and state ministers, departmental officials, those from relevant sports federations, staff, students and sports fans. — MNA/TTA



Players from Nay Pyi Taw and Kachin State compete during the Inter-State and Region Table Tennis event.



Players from Shan and Mandalay compete in the Inter-State and Region Tennis event.



Inter-State and Region Billiards match.



Photos show sports fans cheering the Inter-Ministry competition in Volleyball event at the Fifth National Sports Festival yesterday.



The Inter-Ministry men's 400-metre relay race.



Nan Phyu Pyar Myint from Ministry of Defence competes in the women's high jump of Athletics Sports yesterday.

NATIONAL

MoH Union minister visits Universities' Hospital (Yangon), new Yangon General Hospital

UNION Minister for Health, Professor Dr Thet Khaing Win, visited the Universities' Hospital (Yangon) on 14 December to inspect the opening of the Dental Department, which is now available for faculty members, students, and the public.

The Union Minister also observed the fitting of dentures for 29 elderly individuals, 15 retired university teachers from various universities, and staff family members, totalling 44. These individuals were invited by the Yangon Region Maternal and Child Welfare Supervisory Committee.

The Union Minister toured the eye surgery ward, where 15 cataract patients underwent surgery as part of the community-based primary eye health

care programme. Together with Daw Maw Maw Than, the patron of the Yangon Region Maternal and Child Welfare Supervisory Committee, Chairperson Daw Nu Nu Swe, and other committee members, the Union minister provided eyeglasses and nutritious food to the patients after their surgeries.

The Union Minister next visited the outpatient department, laboratory, operating theatre, medical ward, and specialist outpatient department of the Universities' Hospital (Yangon), where they made recommendations for improvements.

At the new Yangon General Hospital, he inspected the layout of the rooms in the newly constructed four-story medical wards within the hospital com-



Union Minister for Health Professor Dr Thet Khaing Win encourages the patient at the Universities' Hospital (Yangon) on 14 December 2024.

pound. He also discussed allotments of each room in the new building in detail.

The four-story reinforced

concrete building measuring 182 feet by 64 feet was constructed by the Building Task Force 1 of the Buildings Department under

the Ministry of Construction. It was built at a total cost of K2.116 billion, funded by the Ministry of Health. — MNA/TKO

FROM PAGE 6



Winners of in the women's 160-centimetre and above Model Physique event.



Winners of in the men's 170-centimetre and above Sport Physique event.



Nanda Aung from Bago Region competes in the Inter-State and Region men's 85-kilogramme weightlifting event.



The Inter-Ministry women's Volleyball match.



The Inter-Ministry Sepak Takraw match.



Rakhine State traditional Chinlone team compete in the Inter-State and Region traditional Chinlone event.

OPINION

Forge unity among ethnic national brethren

RAKHINE State is rich in cultural heritage and artistic treasures, reflecting its long history. As a region where Buddhism is flourishing, Rakhine State has abundant ancient stupas and temples as cultural heritage.

Rakhine State, located on the nation's western coast, spans 14,200 square miles and shares borders with neighbouring countries, making it a strategic area. Renowned for its natural beauty, the state boasts lush forests, mountains, rivers, and a scenic coastline. Its abundant natural and water resources support the production of valuable goods.

The government has allocated K10 billion from the State Economic Promotion Fund to support agriculture, livestock, cooperatives, and industrial projects in Rakhine State. The funds are currently being distributed to farmers, cooperatives, and industries to carry out their initiatives.

Improving agriculture and livestock sectors in Rakhine State can uplift the socio-economic conditions of its predominantly rural population and strengthen the country's manufacturing sector. This effort reflects the State's goodwill toward the people of Rakhine, fostering national unity, genuine patriotism, and a shared spirit of Union.

Rakhine State has long struggled with transport and infrastructure challenges. Consequently, successive governments have prioritized its development, resulting in significant progress over time. Unity is crucial, as division weakens the nation and risks reducing us to mere followers, left behind by history. To safeguard our future, everybody must heed this warning and collaborate for the nation's greater good.

The State Administration Council formed the Rakhine State Peace, Stability, and Development Central Committee to enhance socio-economic development in agriculture, livestock, education, health, communication, and electricity. Following Cyclone Mocha in May 2023, the committee launched immediate rehabilitation efforts, enabling swift recovery and progress. Rakhine State continues to rebuild and improve conditions, surpassing pre-disaster levels.

The actions of MNDA, TNLA, and AA, which began in October 2023, have worsened the socioeconomic conditions of ethnic communities. The sabotage by these armed groups has forced many innocent civilians into poverty and hardship. Their politically driven armed attacks, rooted in misguided ideologies, have led to ongoing violence. Rather than fostering unity through a multiparty democratic path, these groups have chosen isolation. Many young people have been manipulated into violent conflicts, often through the use of drugs. It is evident that their goals cannot be achieved through terrorism but through political dialogue and negotiation. A peaceful resolution is the only viable solution, and these groups are urged to abandon armed struggle in favour of constructive political engagement.

Rakhine State has long struggled with transport and infrastructure challenges. Consequently, successive governments have prioritized its development, resulting in significant progress over time. Unity is crucial, as division weakens the nation and risks reducing us to mere followers, left behind by history. To safeguard our future, everybody must heed this warning and collaborate for the nation's greater good.

A Visit to the Shwedagon Pagoda

Maung Maung Aye

WHEN I came out of the lift, I found myself on the bridge-like roofed passageway which connected the lift shaft with the pagoda platform. From the passageway, I got a bird's eye view of the sprawling Yangon City. I espied in the distance some skyscrapers rising starkly into the sky and a medley of red roofs of the houses hidden amongst the greens of the trees. The entire landscape was bathing dreamily in the golden rays of the rising sun. Our team headed slowly towards the pagoda glistening in the glow of the morning sun.

It was a day to be remembered by our family members, for it was the 79th birthday of our beloved mother. We were now on the platform of the Shwedagon Pagoda to celebrate her birthday. As it was a weekday, there were only a few pilgrims on the pagoda platform. I saw a couple of lovers paying homage to the pagoda, sitting on the victorious ground (အောင်မြင်မြေ). Buddhists believe that the victorious ground can bring the fulfilment of our wishes. With this thought in our minds, we also sat down on this sacred ground and paid homage to the pagoda wishing that our mother would enjoy good health, happiness and longevity. Then, leaving behind

my mother and sisters who were telling beads in the victorious ground, I walked clockwise round the base of the pagoda. I found shrine rooms housing the Kakusandha Buddha, the Konagamana Buddha, the Kassapa Buddha and the Gotama Buddha at the four cardinal points of the pagoda and some rest houses and pavilions surmounted by a multi-tiered roof round the pagoda platform. Inside these buildings were some devotees meditating, reciting discourses (Sutta) and doing other religious services.

While walking, I had a chance to observe the Shwedagon Pagoda at a close range. I was filled with awe and wonderment at the great height of the pagoda and its excellently artistic works. Its body coated in gold plates was erected on three receding terraces. Its part above the bell-shaped dome was decorated with projected lotus flowers, banana buds, etc. and tapered towards the spire crowded with a gem-studded sacred umbrella. Its base was encircled by 64 small stupas. Some devotees were pouring water over small seated Buddha images next to the planetary posts near the base of the pagoda.

The building on the platform

which attracted my attention most was the Rakhine Prayer Hall, a pavilion with a multi-tiered roof. It lies between the southern and western covered stairways. It was built entirely of wood and richly decorated with elaborate and exquisite floral designs. It is said that it was donated by two Rakhine brokers in 1910.

I saw the Buddha Museum next to the entrance to the western-covered stairway. Out of curiosity, I entered it and found the walls and the ceiling depicting some episodes of the Ten Major Jataka Stories. Moreover, many antique Buddhist artefacts like Buddha images, miniature stupas etc made of gold and silver were put on display in the showcases. Then I weaved my way through the buildings on the platform and noticed some Buddha images and small pagodas standing in the yards behind the rest houses and Tazaungs. Among them were the Shin Saw Pu Buddha images, the Naungdawgyi Pagoda and the Shinmaatee Buddha Image. I also noticed some Nat shrines under the Banyan trees growing at the edges of the top of the pagoda hill. It is thought that the Shin Saw Pu Buddha Image

was built by Queen Shin Saw Pu while she was living a peaceful life in a make-shift palace not far from the Shwedagon Pagoda after she had handed over her Hamsavati throne to King Dhammaceti, her son-in-law. Legend has it that the Shinmaatee Buddha Image was built by a monk named 'Shinmaatee', who was an alchemist, about 1,000 years ago. The Naungdawgyi Pagoda was built by King Naungdawgyi, a son of King Alaungphaya, during the 18th century AD.

I got into a Tazaung in the northeast corner of the precincts. I found there the historic King Thayawady Bell which was decorated with four-lion figures. It was donated by King Thayawady and it weighs 25,940 visses and 49 teicals or 42 tonnes. It was cast in the year 1204 of the Myanmar Era. Its official name is Mahatisadhaghanta. It measures nine cubits in height, five cubits in diameter at the mouth and 15 cubits in circumference. It contains one hundred lines. This bell inscription is about the eulogy on nine attributes of Lord Buddha, benefits of the life of the monks, birth stories of the Buddha, his donations made at the Shwed-

agon Pagoda, his aspirations to the Bodhisatta etc.

A little down from the platform, there was a shed in which a three-stone inscription was erected near the entrance to the eastern covered stairway. It was the Shwedagon Stone Inscription inscribed by King Dhammaceti in 1485. It is about the history of the Shwedagon Pagoda: the two merchants brothers Tapussa and Balikkha crossed the ocean, came upon the newly-enlightened Buddha in Majjhimesa and got eight hair relics. On their return to their native Okkalapa, King Okkala and his mother Meihlamu had the Shwedagon Pagoda built, enshrining these eight hair relics in the relic chamber.

Then, I walked back to the zayat near the victorious ground where my mother and elder sister were waiting for me. We left pagoda at 11 am. On the way back, we stopped over at a restaurant to celebrate our mother's birthday. We had lunch merrily there. Then, we returned home straight.

To conclude, it was worthwhile to visit the Shwedagon Pagoda. We enjoyed a good time on our mother's auspicious birthday. Moreover, we could earn the merits and also get historical and archaeological knowledge.



Naungdawgyi Pagoda on the platform of Shwedagon Pagoda.

Flu virus remains infectious in refrigerated raw milk: Study

Raw milk may contain hidden hazards, as flu viruses can remain infectious for up to five days, raising health concerns.



Researchers found that the H1N1 flu virus can survive and remain infectious in raw cow's milk for up to five days.

ILLUSTRATION: VISUAL ART

ACCORDING to a new study, raw milk, which is marketed as a natural and healthful alternative to pasteurised dairy, may contain hidden hazards. The research found that the influenza or flu virus can remain infectious in refrigerated raw milk for up to five days.

The findings come at a time when outbreaks of bird flu in dairy cattle have raised concerns about the potential for a new pandemic. The study was conducted by Stanford University.

"This work highlights the

potential risk of avian influenza transmission through consumption of raw milk and the importance of milk pasteurization," said study senior author Alexandria Boehm, the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Professor of Environmental Studies in the Stanford Doerr School of Sustainability and the Stanford School of Engineering.

More than 14 million Americans consume raw milk annually. Unlike pasteurized milk, raw milk is not heated to kill potentially harmful pathogens. Proponents of

raw milk claim that it leaves more beneficial nutrients, enzymes, and probiotics than in pasteurized milk, and can boost immune and gastrointestinal health.

The Food and Drug Administration has tied raw milk to over 200 outbreaks of illnesses, and – together with the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention – warns that germs, such as E. coli and Salmonella, in raw milk present "serious" health risks, especially for children, the elderly, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems.

The researchers explored the persistence of a strain of human influenza virus in raw cow's milk at typical refrigeration temperatures. The flu virus, called H1N1 PR8, survived and remained infectious in the milk for up to five days.

"The persistence of infectious influenza virus in raw milk for days raises concerns about potential transmission pathways," said study co-lead author Mengyang Zhang, a postdoctoral scholar in civil and environmental engineering. "The virus could contaminate surfaces and other environmental

materials within dairy facilities, posing risks to animals and humans."

Additionally, the researchers found that flu virus RNA – molecules that carry genetic information but are not considered a health risk – remained detectable in the raw milk for at least 57 days.

By comparison, pasteurization completely destroyed infectious influenza in the milk and reduced the amount of viral RNA by almost 90 per cent, but didn't eliminate the RNA entirely. Although exposure to influenza virus RNA does not pose a health risk, RNA-based testing methods are often used to conduct environmental surveillance of pathogens like influenza.

"The prolonged persistence of viral RNA in both raw and pasteurized milk has implications for food safety assessments and environmental surveillance, particularly because many of the techniques used in environmental surveillance detect RNA," said study co-lead author Alessandro Zulli, a postdoctoral scholar in civil and environmental engineering. The research grew out of an earlier project – funded by the Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment's Environmental Venture Projects program – focused on human norovirus and the subfamily of viruses responsible for the Covid-19 pandemic. In the US alone, flu viruses infect more than 40 million people and kill more than 50,000 every year. These types of viruses can spread from animals to humans, as in the case of swine flu, which led to as many as 1.4 billion human infections globally in 2009-2010.

SOURCE: ANI

NATIONAL

Myanmar repatriates two citizens from Vietnam



THE government has been making efforts to repatriate Myanmar nationals who are encountering difficulties abroad by coordinating with the Myanmar Consulate-General and relevant embassy to ensure their safe return to Myanmar. The Myanmar Embassy to Vietnam communicated with the authorities of Vietnam to repatriate two Myanmar female citizens, Ma Nweni Win and Ma Chit Su Su Kyaw, who faced hardships in Cao Bang Province, by Tatmadaw aircraft, and arrived back in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday evening.

On arrival in Myanmar, the returnees shared the experiences they encountered in other countries and thanked the government, the Myanmar Embassy and the Consulate-General for helping them. — MNA/KTZH

Myanmar female citizens Ma Nweni Win and Ma Chit Su Su Kyaw and officials from the Myanmar Embassy to Vietnam seen in Vietnam on 14 December 2024.

Train services resume after mine blast on Tawwi-Peinzalok rail segment

TERRORISTS blew up the railway section at milepost 99/6-7 between Tawwi and Peinzalok railway stations on the Yangon-Mandalay railway in Nyaunglebin Township, Bago Region, at 11:40 pm on 13 December, causing the railway section between Tawwi and Peinzaloke temporarily closed.

Due to the explosion, about 1.5 feet long two rail tracts on the down route were damaged and it caused about a six feet wide pit under the rail tracts.

Local authorities and security forces rushed to the scene



The explosion places of railway lines at mileposts 99/6-7 between Tawwi and Peinzalok stations on the Yangon-Mandalay railway destroyed by terrorists.



Workers repairing damaged rail tracks.

of the incident and performed security measures of the area. Myanmar Railways staff con-

ducted the maintenance to reopen the railway section as quickly as possible.

The railway section was reopened and the train schedules resumed as usual at noon on 14 December.

Since 1 February 2021, terrorist groups have been perpetrating 79 mine attacks and explosions within railway areas and stations, 174 blasts on railway bridges and rail tracts, and 16 instances of blazing stations and employee housings.

Their terror acts are aimed at destabilizing the rule of law and endangering the safety of travellers, drawing widespread condemnation from the public. — MNA/KTZH

Illegal goods confiscations include timbers, foodstuffs, materials, consumer goods, fuel, unlicensed vehicles

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

On 11 and 12 December, combined teams under the management of the Magway Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force conducted inspections in Minbu and Thayet districts in Magway Region, and seized a total of five unlicensed motorcycles (estimated value K 1.3 million) and action is taken in accordance with the Import and Export Law.

On 12 December, combined squads under the management of the Nay Pyi Taw Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force seized 2.079 tonnes of illegal teak and 40.802 tonnes of other timber (estimated value K5.10 million) in Lewe and Uttara districts. Action is being taken in accordance with the Forest Law.

In addition, combined teams under the management of the Mandalay Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force on 12 December conducted inspection at Shwekyin Tollgate, and confiscated one item of commercial goods (estimated value K12.88 million) without legal documentation from a vehicle, and one Man Tractor Head and one trailer (estimated value K151 million) carrying the goods. On 13 December, at Milepost 364 of the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway, 12 items of consumer goods (estimated value K87.86 million) without legal documentation were seized from a Nissan Diesel truck worth K55 million near Max Filling Station in Paleik. On 14 December, officials impounded commercial goods (estimated value K33.33 million) without legal documents from one Daewoo Bus (estimated value K50 million) at Milepost 364 of the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway. Action is being taken in accordance with customs procedures.

Moreover, on 12 December, combined teams seized seven types of food products (estimated value K25.429 million)



Confiscated illegal timber in Bago Region.

without official documents in two warehouses in Bago, and one commercial equipment (estimated value K10.15 million) without official documents from Paya vehicle (estimated value: K20 million) near Shwethan Lwin Tollgate in Phayagyi. A total of 25 barrels of diesel and 18 barrels of gasoline (estimated value K28.24 million) were confiscated in Letpadan Township. A total of 128 barrels of aircraft fuel and two Nissan bowsers (estimated value: K59,52 million) at the Tagwa combined checkpoint in Pyay, and 51 unlicensed motorcycles (estimated value: K331 million) in Bago and Thanatpin townships. In Nyaunglebin and Toungoo districts, 0.302 tonne of illegal teak timber, 4.020 tonnes of hardwood, and 5.081 tonnes of other timber (estimated value K4.16 million) were seized.

On 13 December, duty-assigned teams led by the Customs Department conducted inspections at the Myanmar Industrial Port, and seized 63 types of commercial goods and two types of consumer goods (estimated value of K84.16 million) from 17 containers without official documents.

Similarly, a special team led by the Sagaing Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force impounded one unlicensed Hitachi backhoe, one Honda Fit Shuttle, one Nissan Diesel Tractor Head and one trailer, (estimated value K734.50 million) at the Yadanabon Bridge Combined Checkpoint in Sagaing.

A total of 59 cases of illegal goods (estimated value of K2.193 billion) were seized from 11 to 13 December. — MNA/TKO

NATIONAL

MoST Deputy Minister discusses boosting techno sector in Kunming

A Myanmar delegation, led by Deputy Minister for Science and Technology Dr Aung Zeya, arrived at the Yunnan Energy Investment Group Company (YEIG) in Kunming, Yunnan Province, People's Republic of China, on 10 December.

The Vice Chairman and central-level officials clarified the construction of power plants and electricity systems, as well as EV-related businesses, both domestically and in Southeast Asian countries, including Myanmar, along with future plans for carbon reduction initiatives. The Deputy Minister then discussed the need for technological research and surveys. Afterwards, they talked about joint research initiatives to further strengthen Myanmar-China friendship on the occasion of



MoST Deputy Minister Dr Aung Zeya and an official of KUST exchange gifts.

the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations and exchanged commemorative gifts.

The Deputy Minister visited the famous Dianchi Lake

where thousands of migratory birds from Siberia have been hibernating since 1985, arriving each October.

In the afternoon, the dele-

gation toured Kunming University of Science and Technology (KUST), visiting the electrical engineering department and witnessing advanced research,

including AI-powered language translation and robotics. The Deputy Minister engaged in discussions with department heads, expressing interest in the university's technological advancements.

He also visited the university library and viewed its facilities. The library showcases historical artefacts and features advanced technology.

Furthermore, the Deputy Minister congratulated Kunming University of Science and Technology on its 70th anniversary and proposed student and faculty exchange programmes to strengthen cooperation and cultural exchange, particularly in anticipation of the 75th anniversary of Myanmar-China diplomatic relations. — MNA/TRKM

'Zawgani' film on cinemas in 3rd week of

A new Myanmar film titled 'Zawgani', produced by Lucky Seven Production, will be screened in cinemas in the third week of December.

The film was directed by Director Academy Ko Zaw (Aryonoo), with a screenplay adapted by Nay Soe Thaw from an original plot by Angel (ISY).

"This film is for audiences who enjoy thrilling and mysterious tales. When a person suffers from insomnia and encounters strange occurrences, modern medicine attributes it to a men-

tal illness. However, paranormal experts may diagnose it as being haunted or cursed. This film explores the question of whether it's a psychological or paranormal issue. The film is scheduled for release on 20 December, though the date may be subject to change," said a responsible person of Lucky Seven Film Production.

The cast of the film includes Academy Myint Myat, Academy May Myint Mo, Academy May Than Nu, Naw Phaw El Htar, Sabei Moe, and other artistes. — ASH/TRKM



This photo showcases artistes from the 'Zawgani' movie.

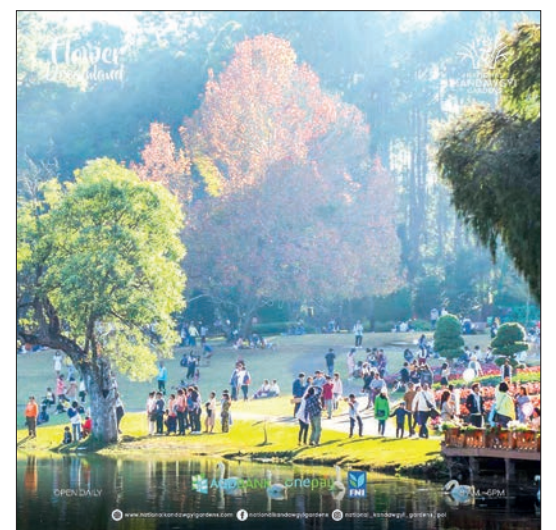
National Kandawgyi Garden's centenary event features entertainment programme

THE 17th 'Floral Fantasia' flower festival, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the National Kandawgyi Garden (PyinOoLwin) in PyinOoLwin Township, Mandalay Region, will feature an entertainment programme titled 'Floral Song of a Century'.

The flower festival will be held from 14 December 2024 to 14 January 2025, and the programme will begin on the opening day, 14 December.

"On the morning of the opening day of Floral Fantasia 2024, 14 December, flower lovers will be entertained by cultural dances organized by Phoe Chit, along with performances by famous singers Phoe Thauk Kya, Ye Yint Wai Lwin, Ei Ei Chun, and Mae Chit Thet. In the evening of the same day, famous singers Thar Dee Lu, Nya Lin Htel, and others will also perform," said U Zaw Min Tun, warden of the PyinOoLwin National Kandawgyi Garden.

During the month-long celebration of the 17th Floral Fantasia, musical performances and other entertainment programmes will take place on busy days, including the opening ceremony. In addition, during the weeks of Christmas, New Year, and Independence Day, there will be mu-



This photo captures the 16th "Floral Fantasia" Flower Festival 2023 in PyinOoLwin.

sical performances, magic shows, and dancing performances.

The flower festival will also feature a market selling consumer goods and food, as well as an exhibition area displaying local products and plants that support the local economy. — ASH/TKO

NATIONAL

Doh Eain Youth Space screens short films supporting mental health



The programme "The Intersection of Culture, Tradition, and Gender Issues" by Doh Eain Organization in progress on 7 December.

DOH Eain Youth Space screened short films aimed at supporting young people's mental health and psychosocial well-being on 15 December.

The films were shown in Yangon's Botahtaung Township, where the Doh Eain or-

ganization is based, from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm on the same day. Counsellors, who are experts in both film and mental health, also facilitated emotional discussions.

"Mental health is an essential part of overall health.

It influences every aspect of daily life, including how people think, feel, and interact with their environment. It also affects physical health. Given the pressures of modern life, such as job stress, financial strain, and social media, mental health support is increasingly necessary.

Due to space constraints, only a few young partners were able to attend the discussion," said an official from the Doh Eain organization.

Moreover, Doh Eain held a programme titled "The Intersection of Culture, Tradition, and Gender Issues" on 7 December, with primary support from the Embassies of the Netherlands and Australia to Myanmar. — ASH/TKO

Efforts underway to control movement of wild elephants in Yangon Region

THE Yangon Region Forest Department has reported that measures will be taken to control the movement of wild elephants in townships bordering forest reserves in Yangon Region.

In Hlegu and Taikkyi townships, which are adjacent to the Bago Yoma forest area, a herd of approximately 30 wild elephants has been roaming, leading to conflicts with residents.

These incidents have resulted in fatalities among locals and injuries or deaths of the wild elephants. To address these issues, the Forest Department, in collaboration with NGOs, plans to install electric fences in areas where human-elephant conflicts occur. These efforts aim to control the movement of wild elephants and reduce conflicts between humans and elephants.

"During this season, as wild elephants are likely to enter crops plantations, we are conducting awareness campaigns in villages and farmlands. These campaigns include installing electric fences to prevent their intrusion, educating locals on



Wild elephants seen near the forest reserves located within Yangon Region.

how to respond if they encounter elephants, and sharing preventive measures.

In particular, the installation of electric fences on farms and in villages is being demonstrated practically to ensure that they pose no danger to either humans or elephants. These demonstrations are aimed at raising awareness among students and young people. Additionally, villagers have shown increasing interest in installing electric fences over the past few years," said an official from the Forest De-

partment.

Furthermore, elephants are classified as fully protected animals under the Protection of Wildlife and Conservation of Natural Areas Law, enacted in 1994.

Due to the frequent human-elephant conflicts in areas where elephants forage, the Forest Department has been continuously conducting awareness programmes to help local communities understand elephant behaviour and implement effective mitigation measures. — ASH/TMT

Myanmar sour tomato price falls, trade increases

PRICE of Myanmar sour tomato produced from central Inlay in Shan State's Nyaungshwe Township has fallen and the trade has increased in the meantime.

At present, the tomato's farm price has declined nearly half and the demand has been on the rise.

"Currently, the Myanmar sour tomato price has climbed

down. So, brokers have made repeated purchases and the demand has been on the rise. Price per viss was K6,000 a month ago but dropped nearly half now," said Ko Zaw Nyi Nyi Aung, a tomato farmer from central Inlay in Nyaungshwe Township.

Due to the weather, just one third of tomato plantations could make this year and the yield declined. It will need to wait and see the price over next months, he said.

"This year's production wasn't good due to the weather. High rainfalls hindered plants from producing blossoms, just one third of plantations could produce fruits. Brokers come to farms to purchase and then transport to Nyaungshwe, from there, tomatoes are distributed to other regions and states. It is uncertain to say about the tomato price so we will need to wait and see over next months," he said. — Thit Taw/ZS



Myanmar sour tomatoes produced from Inle.

Stimulant tablets confiscated in Thazi, Ye townships

A combined team from the anti-narcotics squad inspected a Daihatsu ATRAI vehicle driven by Win Zaw Aung (also known as Nanda), who was accompanied by Thet Naing and Min Min Aung, near Kywetetson Village in Thazi Township at 7:40 pm on 13 December. They seized 110,000 stimulant tablets and K1.85 million in the vehicle.

Additionally, at 4:15 pm on the same day, the combined team conducted an inspection at the house of Soe Mon (also known as Palai) in Ywathit Daminseik Village, Ye Township, where they seized 10,000 stimulant tablets and K500,000. The individuals involved have been charged under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. — MNA/TKO



Offenders are seen alongside seized stimulant tablets and vehicles.

Products from Russia's Leningrad Region may be showcased in the UAE in 2025

Over the past three years, the centre has facilitated two business missions to the UAE, where 11 small and medium-sized enterprises held negotiations.

EXPORTERS from Russia's Leningrad Region may have the opportunity to participate in an international exhibition in the United Arab Emirates next year to present their products, the regional government's press service said.

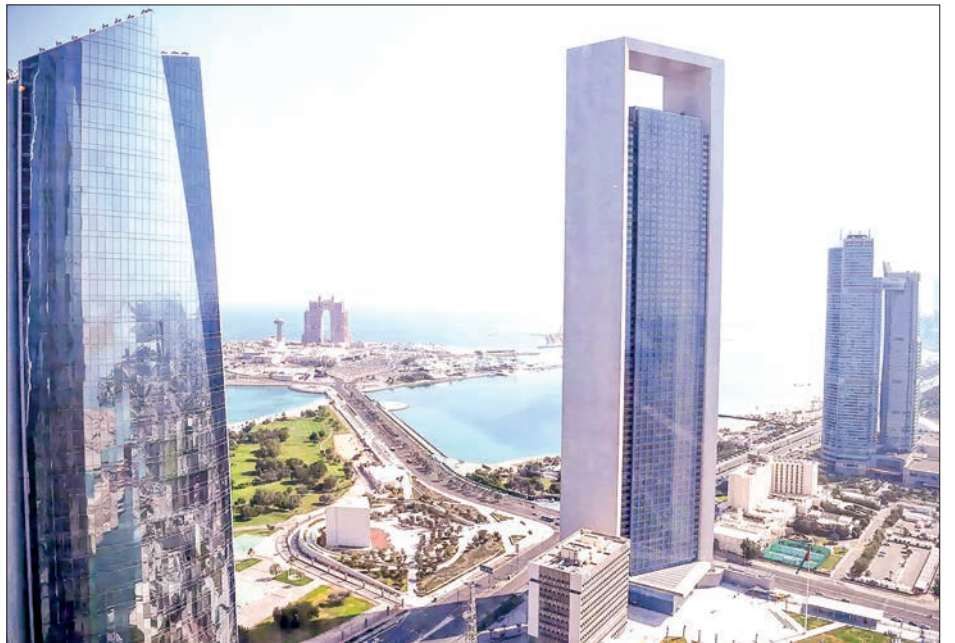
"In 2025, the Regional Export Support Centre will continue developing cooperation with the United Arab Emirates. Plans are already underway to

visit the country to participate in an international exhibition with a collective booth showcasing the products of exporters from the Leningrad region," the statement reads.

Over the past three years, the Export Support Center of the Leningrad region organized two business missions for regional companies to the UAE (Dubai and Abu Dhabi in 2022 and 2023), the press service noted. During

these missions, 11 small and medium-sized enterprises conducted business negotiations. As a result, two regional companies signed export contracts for the supply of cookies and polyurethane.

Additionally, export-oriented companies utilized the service to find foreign buyers in the UAE. This led to four companies exporting timber, rubber crumb, and confectionery products. — SPUTNIK



The Regional Export Support Centre plans to organize a collective booth for Leningrad region exporters at the event. PHOTO: KARIM SAHIB/ SPUTNIK

3D-printed toys witness manufacturing upgrade at "world's supermarket"



This photo taken with a mobile phone shows the shop of Jinqi toy company in Yiwu City, east China's Zhejiang Province, 14 December 2024. PHOTO: LYU XULIAN/XINHUA

CRACK open a palm-sized "dinosaur egg" with its scales reflecting a colorful sheen from every angle, and you'll find a tiny, adorable dinosaur nestled inside.

This "dinosaur egg," one of the most iconic 3D-printed toys, has quick-

ly become a market sensation in the United States and Europe. Its creator is a newly established company from Yiwu, the eastern Chinese city famed as the "world's supermarket."

Stepping into the shop of Jinqi toy company at the Yiwu International

Trade Market, visitors are greeted by shelves overflowing with thousands of 3D-printed toys.

The products are mainly sold to European and American countries, and "dinosaur egg" is the most popular one, said Zeng Hao with Jinqi. The

daily production of "dinosaur eggs" is about 30,000 sets, of which 70 per cent are sold to European and American markets.

The product has already been in short supply due to "Black Friday" and the year-end shopping season for Christmas and New Year. "Some customers went straight to the factory and packed the products directly off the production line," Zeng said.

Beyond the creative design and exquisite colors and details, the high level of "playability" is a key factor in its popularity, said Zeng, adding that the design resonates with European and American consumers who enjoy assembling and disassembling toys for a hands-on experience.

Compared with traditional toys, 3D-printed ones feature brighter colors, finer textures, more realistic appearances and greater joint flexibility. — Xinhua

Japanese sake in spotlight as tourists enjoy brewing experiences

HANDS-ON experiences of brewing Japanese sake has been a hit with tourists in central Japan even before the techniques used to produce the traditional alcoholic beverage were added to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

One such experience organized by a travel firm in Saku, Nagano Pre-

ecture, offers visitors the chance to become a "kurabito," or sake brewer. Participants stay in a traditional-style home where brewers once lived during the brewing season and take part in the processes of sake-making, including rice washing, steaming and fermenting using "koji" mold. — Kyodo

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V CAPE FELTON VOY.NO. (923N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V CAPE FELTON VOY.NO. (923N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **16-12-2024** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

(ONE) OCEAN NETWORK EXPRESS LINE

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

China's 2024 grain output tops 700 mln tonnes, a record high



Harvesters work in rice paddies in Fangzheng County, northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, 22 September 2024. **PHOTO: WANG SONG/XINHUA**

China's 2024 grain output hit a record 706.5 million tonnes, driven by increased planting areas, favourable conditions, and productivity.

CHINA'S 2024 grain output hit a record high of 706.5 million tonnes, an increase of 1.6 per cent from the output last year, official data showed Friday.

The year 2024 also marks the first time that the country registered a grain harvest of over 700 million tonnes, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) data. Previously, the country's annual grain output had been above 650 million tonnes for nine consecutive years.

In grain categories, the output of cereals rose 1.7 per cent year on year, with rice, wheat and corn all reporting production rises. The output of tubers rose 1.5 per cent. Soybeans, however, saw a decrease

of 0.9 per cent in output, the data showed.

This year's bumper harvest was accompanied by a rise in grain planting areas in the country, which stood at over 119 million hectares, up 0.3 per cent year on year. Meanwhile, grain output per unit area also increased 1.3 per cent, the data showed.

NBS official Wei Fenghua said that despite some areas experiencing floods, droughts, typhoons and other disasters over the past year, most agricultural regions in the country had relatively good sunshine as well as temperature and water conditions that were conducive to the growth of crops. — Xinhua

News in brief

Italy grants citizenship to Argentine President Javier Milei

THE Italian government has granted Argentine President Javier Milei citizenship in recognition of his Italian heritage, a move that has sparked outrage across Argentina, according to a report by The New York Times.

Javier Milei, whose grandparents migrated from Italy to Argentina, was granted Italian citizenship based on his ancestral ties, according to Italy's foreign ministry.

The decision has provoked criticism, particularly from opponents of Italy's citizenship policy, who argue that the law, which allows descendants of Italians to obtain citizenship, is unfair. — ANI

ABC News settles defamation lawsuit with Donald Trump

ABC News has agreed to settle a defamation lawsuit filed by US President-elect Donald Trump, and will pay US\$15 million to a "presidential foundation and museum," according to a report by CNN.

The lawsuit, which also involved network anchor George Stephanopoulos, emerged from statements made in a March 2024 interview. As part of the settlement, ABC News will also pay US\$1 million to cover Trump's attorney fees and will issue an apology. — ANI

Slovakia seeks to secure gas transit through Ukraine for 2025

THE current agreement on the transit of Russian gas to Europe via Ukraine expires at the end of 2024, and Kyiv has repeatedly stated that it does not plan to extend it.

Slovakia is conducting intensive talks on natural gas supplies in 2025 and hopes that transit through Ukraine will continue, Prime Minister Robert Fico said.

"We are conducting extremely intensive international negotiations on gas supplies in 2025. These decisions have a huge number of obstacles, because there are political statements from the Ukrainian side, pressure to stop supplies from the east to the west, proposals for gas supplies, which are however significantly more expensive, including transit duties, which we reject, we do not see any reason for geopolitical reasons to pay more for gas than required," Fico said in a statement for the press following a government meeting on Friday.

He said that in the coming days,



Employees work at the gas metering units of the Gazprom's Amur Gas Processing Plant near the town of Svobodny, Amur Region, Russia. **PHOTO: SPUTNIK**

talks will be held at different levels and in different countries.

"I am convinced that even if there were a short-term interruption of gas supplies from the east, we are sufficient-

ly supplied, we will find a joint solution for several countries of the European Union and maintain gas transit through the territory of Slovakia and Ukraine," the prime minister said. — SPUTNIK

South Korea's parliament votes to impeach President Yoon

SOUTH Korea's parliament passed an impeachment motion against President Yoon Suk Yeol on Saturday over his short-lived declaration of martial law, after enough ruling party lawmakers responded to growing public calls for his ouster and crossed the party line.

Yoon's presidential authority was subsequently suspended, immediately putting Prime Minister Han Duck Soo in charge of state affairs as acting president. Yoon will be removed from office if the impeachment is approved by the Constitutional Court. The court has 180

days to decide.

In the 300-member unicameral National Assembly, 204 voted in favour of the motion and 85 against, with three abstentions and eight invalid votes. At least two-thirds of the lawmakers needed to vote for the motion to pass. — Xinhua

SPORTS

Ex-Brazil midfielder Renato to retire in 2025

FORMER Brazil international midfielder Renato Augusto said Saturday that he is likely to retire when his contract with Fluminense expires next December.

The 36-year-old said that he hoped to win silverware with the Rio de Janeiro club next year after a disappointing 2024.

"I will stay at Fluminense in 2025, which will probably be the last year of my career,"

Renato said. "I will try to bow out of my playing career in the best way possible".

Renato arrived at Fluminense in January after two and half years with Corinthians, whom he joined from Beijing Guoan in 2021. In 2024, the versatile midfielder scored a goal and provided an assist in 32 matches across all competitions for Fluminense. — Xinhua



Myanmar players to rejoin for last two ASEAN Cup group matches

SOME players will return to Myanmar's team for the remaining two group-stage matches in the 2024 ASEAN Cup.

Soe Moe Kyaw and Win Naing Tun, who missed previous games due to injury and club commitments, will rejoin the squad. Win Naing Tun will arrive in Yangon on 16 December and will be able to play the matches against the Laos and Vietnam.

However, Wai Lin Aung will miss the match with Laos due to a suspension. Myanmar's remaining group-stage games are on 18 December (home against Laos) and 21 December (away against Vietnam). —Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

Soe Moe Kyaw, a key defender of the Myanmar national team, returns to training ahead of the upcoming ASEAN Cup matches. PHOTO:MFF

Belgium, New Zealand athletes win 2024 Ironman 70.3 World Championship

THE Ironman 70.3 World Championship 2024 concluded on Sunday in the North Island city of Taupo, New Zealand.

This marks the first time the event has been held in New Zealand. The race covered a total distance of 70.3 miles, including a 1.9-kilometre swim, a 90-kilometre bike ride, and a 21.1-kilometre run, attracting thousands of participants from around the globe.

In the men's race, Belgium's Jelle Geens demonstrated exceptional all-around strength, crossing the finish line in three hours, 32 minutes and nine seconds to win the event.

Buoyed by the enthusiastic support of his home crowd, New Zealand's Hayden Wilde secured second place with a time of 3:33:22. France's Leo Bergere finished third in 3:35:08.

American athlete Taylor Knibb won the gold medal in the women's race in 3:57:34.

Britain's Kat Matthews took second place in 3:58:49, while Australia's Ashleigh Gentle finished third with 4:03:01. — Xinhua

Premier League strugglers Wolves sack manager O'Neil

WOLVERHAMPTON Wanderers on Sunday sacked manager Gary O'Neil after a run of four straight Premier League defeats.

The club are second from bottom of the table with nine points from 16 games after Saturday's 2-1 home loss to fellow

strugglers Ipswich. "Wolves have parted company with head coach Gary O'Neil and his backroom staff," the club said in a statement.

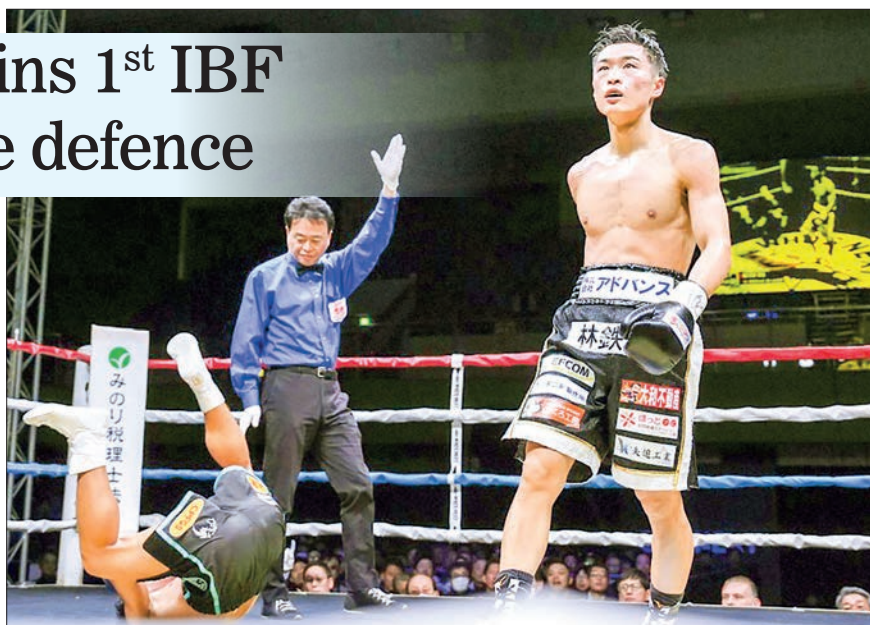
"O'Neil arrived at Molineux just three days before the start of the 2023/24 Premier League season, taking on a significant

challenge and ultimately guiding the Old Gold to a successful campaign." Chairman Jeff Shi said: "We're very grateful to Gary for all of his effort, dedication and hard work during his time at the club, and we wish him and his team the best of luck for the future". — AFP

Japan's Nishida wins 1st IBF bantamweight title defence

JAPAN'S Ryosuke Nishida knocked out Thailand's Anuchai Donsua in the seventh round Sunday to win the first defence of his IBF bantamweight world title.

The 28-year-old Nishida, who claimed the bantamweight belt in May, exploited his reach to keep an effective distance from his opponent from the start and got into a good rhythm at Sumiyoshi Sports Center in Osaka. He knocked Anuchai, the IBF's 14th-ranked contender, down with a counter punch in the fifth inning and finished him off with a body blow in the seventh. Nishida remains unbeaten in 10 fights with two knockouts, while Anuchai suffered his first loss in 17 pro bouts. — Kyodo



Japan's IBF bantamweight champion Ryosuke Nishida (R) walks away after sending Thailand's Anuchai Donsua to the canvas in the seventh round of their world title fight at Osaka's Sumiyoshi Sports Center on 15 December 2024. PHOTO: KYODO

Real Madrid misses chance to go top of La Liga after Rayo thriller

REAL Madrid failed to capitalize on the chance to go top of La Liga on Saturday, drawing 3-3 with Rayo Vallecano in a thrilling match. Rayo took a surprising early lead, with Unai Lopez scoring in the fourth minute, and Abdul Mumin doubling the advantage just before halftime.

However, Madrid responded quickly, with Fede Valverde pulling one back and Jude Bellingham equalizing just before the break. Rodrygo then put Madrid ahead early in the second half, but Isi Palazon leveled things up for Rayo in the 63rd minute. — Xinhua

China's 2024 grain output tops
700 mln tonnes, a record high

PAGE 14



WORLD

Rise of Global South to push global economy through headwinds

THE rise of the Global South countries pushes the global economy through expected headwinds and keeps international trade vibrant, a Malaysian official said here on Saturday.

These developments, in turn, will help unlock potential and facilitate cooperation in addressing a range of pressing issues, including managing climate change, enhancing supply chain resilience, ensuring food security, and shaping the governance of emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), said Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) Chairman Reezal Merican Naina Merican in his remarks at a conference in Kuala Lumpur.

“For Malaysia, the rise of the Global South is a unifying force that brings together our diversity, differences, and discretion. Contrary to the perspectives of detractors, the Global South is not a movement of exclusion but one of inclusion,” he said.

“Its purpose is not to isolate the Global North but to advocate for a more balanced and equitable global system. Our mobilization is grounded in the recognition of our growing agency and the desire to collaborate as equals, navigating complex strategic contexts together,” he added.

Reezal emphasized Malaysia's commitment to strengthening its engagement with regional mechanisms, particularly ASEAN, which Malaysia will chair in 2025.

The statement emphasizes advocating for a more balanced and equitable global system rather than isolating the Global North.



Initiatives aim to secure sustainable and equitable access to food, addressing global hunger and agricultural challenges. Vendors are seen at a food market in Bangkok, Thailand, on 30 March 2022. **PHOTO: RACHEN SAGEAMSAK/XINHUA/FILE**

He highlighted Malaysia's focus on enhancing ASEAN's institutions to address evolving challenges and fostering

synergies with other frameworks for regional prosperity. BRICAP President Ong Tee Keat lauded ASEAN's commitment

to neutrality and centrality, emphasizing its role in fostering economic growth and common prosperity. — Xinhua

Lips, teeth and breasts: Albania cashes in on medical tourism



French patient Nathalie Gangloff (second) talks to a stomatologist at the Gremi Clinic in Tirana. **PHOTO: AFP**

ONCE known as Europe's North Korea, Albania has transformed into a growing hub for medical and cosmetic tourism.

While the country was once isolated under a communist regime, it now attracts millions of tourists, many seeking affordable treatments such as dental care, cosmetic surgery, and aesthetic procedures.

Dritan Gremi, who runs a dental clinic in the capital, Tirana, prefers to call this trend “happiness tourism”.

He emphasizes that his clinic offers high-quality care with certified European-standard equipment at a fraction of the price found in Western countries. Tourists from Italy, France, Belgium, and Switzerland flock to Albania, often booking package deals that include travel and accommodation. — AFP

A PUBLIC ADDRESS

S Korean acting president says will leave no vacuum in state affairs

SOUTH Korean's Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, the country's acting president, said Saturday he would do his best to stabilize state affairs in accordance with the Constitution and laws, vowing to leave no vacuum in the country's politics.

Han made the remarks during a public address after Yoon Suk-yeol was officially suspended from his duties as president when the impeachment resolution, adopted in parliament Saturday afternoon, was delivered to his office, making the prime minister the acting president. — Xinhua