

2/80 Thread Factory Branch begins quality thread production

Tatmadaw Textile Factory (Meiktila) manufactures military apparel for the entire Tatmadaw by using cotton wool while the newly-opened 2/80 thread factory will fulfil the clothing requirement of the nation.



State Administration Council Chairman Defence Services Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing tours production line at newly-established 2/80 Thread Factory Branch in Meiktila yesterday.

SENIOR General Min Aung Hlaing underlined that only when Myanmar uses cotton textiles in garment industries as well as exports them will the government reduce spending on foreign currency and earn foreign exchange.

A ceremony to inaugurate the 2/80 Thread Factory Branch of the Tatmadaw Textile Factory (Meiktila) took place at the venue yesterday morning, attended by Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

Director Maj-Gen Win Myat of Ordnance Services of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) first reported to the Senior General on the construction of the factory branch.

The Senior General and dignitaries viewed a documentary video clip on the factory branch.

Speaking on the occasion, the Senior General said that the 2/80 Thread Factory can produce 4,840 pounds of thread per day in its operation at full capacity. The thread can be used in the production of necessary textiles for the people and sell surplus threads to the market at fair prices, he added.

He unveiled that, currently, the factory manufactures necessary uniforms for Tatmadaw members and other textiles for the people.

He emphasized that due to opening the 2/80 Thread Factory Branch, the Tatmadaw Textile Factory (Meiktila) will produce quality thread to meet local demand.

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Salient points from the speech delivered by the Senior General at the opening of 2/80 Thread Factory Branch

- Tatmadaw Textile Factory (Meiktila) manufactures military equipment for the entire Tatmadaw with the use of cotton wool while the newly-opened 2/80 Thread Factory will fulfil the clothing requirements of the nation.
- Cotton gins and textile factories must be upgraded to initiate the cotton-based industries.
- The 2/80 Thread Factory can produce 4,840 pounds of thread per day in its operation at full capacity.
- Due to the opening of the 2/80 Thread Factory Branch, the Tatmadaw Textile Factory (Meiktila) will produce quality thread to meet local demand.

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By Dr Than Lwin Tun

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Palin Kanthaya anticipates increased visitors for Xmas & Kayin New Year

NATIONAL

Education: The Foundation of a Nation's Strength and Future

- The strength of a country lies in its education.
- Students with five key capabilities are not only the nation's strength but also the future of the State.

(Excerpt from the speech given by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the opening of the Myanmar National Education Conference 2024 on 25 June 2024)

Sales of sand paintings high in Bagan

ACCORDING to local sand painters, the interest and purchases of Bagan's sand paintings are high among local and foreign travellers.

Bagan is famous for its ancient heritages, pagodas, temples and mural paintings. These mural paintings are changed into sand paintings and so they have gained popularity among tourists.

In Bagan, the people usually run sand painting, mural painting, lacquerware, curving and puppets, and the sand painting with affordable investment lured the interest of locals more in recent years.

The sand painting (cloth painting) emerged over 30 years ago during the period of taking records with paper on mural paintings of temples and pagodas by the Archaeological Department.

An artist invented sand painting by spreading sand on cloth and it became the art of sand painting.

The artist first coats a piece of cloth with glue and then sprinkles sand over the surface. Once the newly created sand canvas has dried in the sun, the artist then paints an image onto the

sandpaper. It takes two to three days to finish the painting depending on the size and design. The price for a 10-inch by 25-inch sand painting starts from K25,000.

There are three types of painting: sand painting, sand sculpting and mural painting. The sand painting and mural paint-



Images of Buddha sand paintings, now popularly on sale. PHOTO:KANU



A glimpse of the sand painting.

ing show the culture of Myanmar in the Bagan era. Moreover, the sand sculpting attracts tourists although it is hard to create. Recently, the sales of ancient sand paintings and sand sculptures of Buddha images are in good condition.

Sand painting is said to be a business in the Bagan region, and the painters make efforts to get a firm market with their modern and iconic artworks. — Nyein Thu (MNA)/KTZH

Rise in bamboo handicrafts attributed to growing market demand



This photo showcases some bamboo handicrafts.

BAMBOO expert U Kyaw Win stated that more people are interested in making bamboo handicrafts as the market share for bamboo handicrafts increases.

"More people have become interested in bamboo handicrafts. The market share has also increased. With more interest and higher consumption,

demand increases. Local demand rises with good trading," he said.

More tea shops, tourism businesses, and restaurants were seen to use bamboo handicrafts widely, and individuals bought them a lot. Some entrepreneurs are exporting bamboo products while some are focusing on domestic sales as local

consumption is increasing.

With the current rising costs of labour and raw materials, the price of bamboo handicrafts has increased slightly.

"Recently, the costs have changed, so the prices of handicrafts have increased by about one-third. Higher costs include costs for skilled labour, raw materials and chemicals," he said.

In the domestic market, there is a strong demand for bamboo handicrafts, and if more products with prices ranging from a few thousand to a hundred of thousands are produced, demand and supply will favour an easier condition to the entrepreneurs for business continuity, he added. — MT/ZN

Gold Market Rate as of 16 December 2024

THE price of one tical (16.329325 grammes) of gold with a density of 19.25 grammes per cubic centimetre and above is K5,370,000, as established by the Mineral (Gold) Reference Price Determination Committee.

COVID-19 report, 16 December 2024

NEW TESTS	NEW CASE	CASUALTIES
5,799	NIL	NIL

Myanmar National Centre for Diseases Control
Department of Public Health

Low-Pressure Area Condition

Issued at (19:00) hours MST on 16 December 2024

ACCORDING to the observations at (17:30) hrs MST today, the low-pressure area over South Bay of Bengal still persists. It may further intensify and move west-northwestwards and reach to Tamil Nadu Coasts, India during next two days. — DMH

NATIONAL

Residents Urged to Prioritize Public Safety Amid Armed Terrorist Threats

ARMED terrorists have been launching attacks by using residential homes and administrative buildings in towns and villages as cover, where they have forcibly settled. They aim to shield themselves from Tatmadaw counterattacks while also persuading temporarily displaced persons to return to their native areas and recruiting new members. That enables terrorists to use civilians as human shields. Tatmadaw is committed to safeguarding the sovereignty of the State and will respond to these threats based on intelligence and prevailing conditions. Therefore, residents in areas where terrorists have taken control must prioritize their safety and protect themselves from being exploited by these groups.

(Excerpt from guidance given by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to Shan State cabinet members and state-level departmental officials on 3 September 2024)

2/80 Thread Factory Branch begins quality thread ...



SAC Chair Defence Services C-in-C Senior General Min Aung Hlaing addresses the unveiling ceremony of the 2/80 Thread Factory Branch at the Tatmadaw Textile Factory (Meiktila).

FROM PAGE 1

The Senior General noted that only when Myanmar uses cotton textiles at garment industries as well as exports them will the government reduce spend-

ing on foreign currency and earn foreign exchange.

He explained that Tatmadaw Textile Factory (Meiktila) installed the necessary machinery to produce military apparel sim-

ilar to international Tatmadaws. He pointed out that Myanmar needs to systematically grow quality cotton to increase the per-acre yield of crops and produce advanced textiles.

On the other hand, he continued that cotton gins and textile factories must be upgraded to initiate the cotton-based industries.

The Senior General disclosed that Tatmadaw Textile Factory (Meiktila) manufactures military equipment for the entire Tatmadaw with the use of cotton wool while the newly-opened 2/80 thread factory will fulfil the clothing requirement of the nation.

The Senior General stressed the need to raise sown acreage of cotton and production of cotton wool.

An official from China Texmatech Co Ltd handed over documents related to the factory to the factory manager.

The Senior General presented a fruit basket to an official from CTMTC Company

while an official from the company presented a gift to the Senior General.

The Senior General gave gifts to the project chief engineer who supervised the machinery installation process.

The Senior General viewed round cultivation of cotton crops, production of thread, and the products of the 2/80 Thread Factory Branch.

SAC Member Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Maung Maung Aye, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Htein Win, Commander-in-Chief (Air) General Tun Aung, Council Joint Secretary General Ye Win Oo and Council Member General Nyo Saw cut the ribbon to open the ceremony.

The Senior General sprinkled scented water on the signboard of the factory.

The Senior General viewed round production line of thread in the factory and gave necessary guidance to officials.

He presented cash awards for employees of the factory to

an official.

Also present at the ceremony were union-level dignitaries, union ministers, the Mandalay and Magway regional chief ministers, senior Tatmadaw officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief and officials.

Tatmadaw Textile Factory (Meiktila) was built in 1966-67 under the agreement between China and Myanmar governments so as to fulfil the clothing requirements of the people and reduce textile imports. The factory was handed over to the Directorate of Ordnance Services under the Commander-in-Chief (Army) on 1 October 1991.

Tatmadaw Textile Factory (Meiktila) manufactures uniforms for Tatmadaw members and Myanmar Police Force members as well as school uniforms and other textile products. The 2/80 Thread Factory Branch will produce quality thread and textiles to meet the demand of textile industries in the country to some extent. — MNA/TTA



The Senior General presents souvenir to the official from China Texmatech Co Ltd.

NATIONAL

SAC Member attends MCCOC's 115th anniversary on behalf of SAC Chair PM

THE dinner event commemorating the 115th anniversary of the establishment of the Myanmar Chinese Chamber of Commerce (MCCOC) took place at Lotte Hotel in Yangon yesterday.

It was attended by State

Administration Council Member General Nyo Saw, on behalf of SAC Chairman Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister U Win Shein, Union Ministers U Maung Maung Ohn, Dr Charlie Than and U Tun Ohn, Yangon



SAC Member General Nyo Saw and dignitaries review the photo display at yesterday's event in Yangon.



The handover ceremony of MCCOC's donations to hospitals in progress yesterday.

Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein, Myanmar Economic Holdings Public Company Limited Chairman Lt-Gen Hsan Oo, Deputy Minister Dr Wah Wah Maung, regional ministers, the Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Ms Ma Jia, the Chinese Consul-General, MCCOC President U Aing Tun, senior vice-president, patrons and invitees.

Attendees first viewed the displayed photos depicting the MCCOC history, and SAC Member General Nyo Saw

posed for a documentary photo together with the attendees.

The ceremony opened with the Myanmar National Anthem. They then watched the video clip of MCCOC. SAC Member General Nyo Saw made a speech on behalf of the SAC Chairman and Prime Minister, and the Chinese Ambassador also gave a speech. They all had dinner together.

The Myanmar Chinese Chamber of Commerce president donated cash for Yangon General Hospital, Yangon Chil-

dren's Hospital and Waibargi Hospital under the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and Ministry of Health, and the relevant officials accepted the cash donation.

Afterwards, SAC Member General Nyo Saw, the Chinese ambassador and the MCCOC president cut the ceremonial cake. The dinner event featured Myanmar-China friendship songs and group dances. — MNA/KTZH

'Beautiful and Pleasant Myanmar' colour photo contest awarding held



Deputy Minister U Ye Tint tours the winning photo display at yesterday's event in Nay Pyi Taw.

DEPUTY Minister for Information U Ye Tint and Deputy Minister for Education Dr Zaw Myint, accompanied by departmental officials, judges, winners and invitees, attended the award-giving ceremony of 'Hlapa Thaya Pyi Myanmar' (Beautiful and Pleasant Myanmar) colour photo competition marking the 77th Independence Day in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

First, Deputy Minister U Ye Tint, on behalf of the Union Minister, said the photo contest was organized with photos depicting the significant development, pleasure and the coun-

try's peaceful situation, unity and culture of national people, significant symbols, places and people for independence. The judges also analyzed the photos following characteristics of the photo many times and selected the best ones.

He then appreciated the youths who participated in the competition and highlighted the intention of competition as one can enjoy the peace and tranquillity, development and beauty of rural areas of Myanmar at the same time in one photo.

Deputy ministers also pre-

sented awards to winners of the photo contest.

First prize winner U Myo Min Htike (The Eagle) expressed gratitude on behalf of the recipients.

The deputy ministers and party then viewed the award-winning photos and displayed photos at the event.

A total of 18 prizes — first, second, and third — and 15 other special awards were awarded at the event.

A total of 163 contestants participated in the contest, with 599 entry photos. — MNA/KTZH

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NATIONAL

SAC Members meet teachers in Sittway

ON a visit to Sittway, State Administration Council Members Dr Hmuh Thang, Dr Ba Shwe, and Khun San Lwin, alongside Union Ministers Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung and Jeng Phang Naw Taung, Rakhine State Chief Minister U Htein Lin, SAC Central Advisory Body member Daw Aye Nu Sein, Deputy Ministers Daw Nu Mra Zan and U Zaw Aye Maung, and other state officials, engaged in significant activities.

The delegation visited Sittway University, where they held a meeting with teachers from both higher and basic education at the convocation hall. During the meeting, SAC Member Dr Ba Shwe addressed the teachers, emphasizing the importance of not only being skilled in their academic subjects but also instilling proper

mental and emotional values in students. He highlighted the role of teachers as dedicated and caring mentors, encouraging them to help students develop the five strengths. Dr Ba Shwe expressed his hope that teachers can carry out their noble profession in peace and happiness.

Teachers at the meeting shared their working conditions and needs, which were subsequently discussed by Rakhine State Chief Minister U Htein Lin and SAC Member Dr Ba Shwe.

In recognition of their hard work, Dr Ba Shwe presented cash awards and basic foodstuffs to the teachers. The visit concluded with a tour of the university campus by motorcade.

— MNA/TS



The meeting between SAC Members and teachers from higher and basic education underway in Sittway.

MCBA businesspeople visit Thilawa SEZ



MCCOC President U Aing Tun explores investment opportunities in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone.

A total of 250 members of the Myanmar-Chinese Chamber of Commerce (MCCOC), and international businesspeople currently in Yangon for the 115th anniversary of association, visited the Thilawa Special Economic Zone in Thanlyin Township yesterday morning.

At the Thilawa SEZ Management Committee office,

Committee Chair U Yan Naing Tun made a greeting speech, and MCCOC President U Aing Tun briefed the purpose of the visit.

Thilawa SEZ officials then clarified zone operations, international investments, benefits under the Myanmar SEZ Law, job opportunities, investments and timely services of

the Thilawa SEZ Management Committee and the One-Stop Service Centre in detail. Business leaders also observed the Thilawa SEZ compound.

A total of 117 companies from 21 countries have invested in the Thilawa SEZ, and the committee also permits new local and foreign investments regularly. — MNA/KTZH

Yangon to launch EV bus services

POWER Eleven company has planned to use EV buses in its public transportation service in Yangon, said an official of the company.

“It is still underway. We need to seek approval for some requirements. The process is very strict so we need to ensure making our proposal more complete,” he said.

Power Eleven is willing to test EV buses in YBS service so that weaknesses and advantages can be identified, and current buses are old, he said.

“We can identify weaknesses and advantages if we test it now. We will use EV buses in YBS services. It is very expen-

sive and no one will consider trying it. But we won't give up. It is less possible but we need to acquire feasibility. The problem is the project is very expensive so it might be difficult to ensure cost-effective. But we have planned to run on a trial so that we can identify its feasibility. It was not easy to run air-conditioned buses last seven or eight years, but we acquired feasibility to implement but lost as expected. However, we will have to try again after making calculations based on the data we acquired. It is impossible to do public transport like a commercial business,” he said. — Htet Oo Maung/ZS



This image showcases some EV buses in India.

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

NATIONAL

Two race walkers who broke records in XXXII SEA Games honoured



Union Chief Justice U Tha Htay offers awards.

FINAL matches at the Inter-Ministry and Inter-State and Region levels of the Fifth National Sports Festival 2024 were held in conjunction with the prize-presentation ceremonies at relevant sports venues in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Officials of the Myanmar Athletics Federation presented a motorcycle each as a special prize to Maung Naing Lin Tun of the Ministry of Construction and Ma Zin May Htet of the Ministry of Home Affairs who broke the records for racewalking in the XXXII SEA Games by setting new records in the Fifth National Sports Festival.

Union Chief Justice U Tha Htay, Deputy Minister U Ko Ko Kyaw, Supreme Court Judge U

Thein Ko Ko and Myanmar Billiards and Snooker Federation President Dr Min Naing presented prizes to the winners in the 9 Ball Pool Double, 9 Ball Pool singles, snooker 6 Red double, snooker 6 Red singles events in the billiard-snooker sports at the Inter-State and Region level at Wunna Theikdi Stadium yesterday.

At Wunna Theikdi Stadium, Union Ministers Dr Soe Win, U Min Thein Zan, Dr Nyunt Pe and U Myint Naung, deputy ministers and officials awarded winners in the men's and women's 5,000-metre races, men's and women's 400-metre hurdles, women's discus, men's marathon, men's and women's 800-metre races, men's discus,

women's marathon, men's and women's 100-metre race events, respectively.

At the weightlifting gymnasium, Union ministers U Min Thein Zan and Dr Thet Khaing Win, deputy ministers and regional ministers offered prizes to winners in the Inter-State and Region weightlifting sports.

Likewise, the deputy minister, the Nay Pyi Taw Council member and regional and state ministers handed prizes to winners in the Inter-State and Region Wushu sports at Shwekyapin Stadium.

Final matches and awarding ceremonies will occur at relevant stadiums and gymnasiums on 17 December. — MNA/TTA



Union Minister U Myint Naung bestows prizes.



Union Minister Dr Thet Khaing Win presents awards.



Nay Pyi Taw Council Member U Myint Soe awards prizes.



Photos above showcase sports fans cheering the match at the Fifth National Sports Festival yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

NATIONAL

5th National Sports Festival: Athlete competition gains momentum



Kayin versus Shan in table tennis match.



Nay Pyi Taw versus Ayeyawady in ISR men's football tourney.

SPORTS events of the fifth National Sports Festival 2024 continued at relevant stadiums and gymnasiums in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area yesterday.

Officials presented prizes to winners in the men's and women's marathons, discus, 5,000-metre races, 800-metre races, 400-metre hurdles and 100-metre races at the Inter-Ministry level at Wunna Theikdi Stadium.

The Inter-State and Region Wushu sports were held at Shwekyapin Gymnasium. Winners were awarded in men's and women's Jianquan and Nanquan events and men's and women's Taijiquan events.

The Inter-Ministry Men's Open Volleyball Tournament continued quarterfinals at Wunna Theikdi stadium's volleyball court.

The Inter-State and Region men's and women's singles Kata events, men's and women's team Kata events, women's 61-kilogramme and above Kumite and men's under 55-kilogramme Kumite events were held at TC-1 Karate hall of Wunna Theikdi stadium.

At the same time, Wunna



Futsal match between MoI & MoHT.



Female players from Bago display their talents in traditional Myanmar Chinlone.

Theikdi Sports Complex hosted the second leg matches of the Inter-State and Region traditional Chinlone contest, snooker 6 Red singles and double, 9 Ball Pool singles and double, snooker 15 Red singles and billiard double, and snooker 15 Red double of the billiards and snooker event.

Moreover, the semifinals of the Inter-State and Region men's and women's table tennis tournament took place at the boxing hall of Wunna Theikdi stadium.

The Inter-State and Region U-21 men's football tournament continued to semifinals at the training grounds 3 and 4 of Wunna

Theikdi Stadium. Quarterfinals of the Inter-Ministry Men's Open Football Tournament were held at Paunglaung, Shwekyapin and Lewe TC-3 stadiums.

The first-round knockout matches of the Inter-Ministry men's futsal tourney took place at the futsal ground of Wunna

Theikdi Stadium.

Men's regu Sepak Takraw events at the Inter-Ministry level were held at the Wunna Theikdi Gymnasium A.

The Inter-State and Region Tennis Team-wise Tournament continued semifinals at the central tennis court while the Inter-State and Region weightlifting contest was held at the weightlifting gymnasium of Wunna Theikdi Sports Complex.

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



Enthusiastic crowd cheers on ISR futsal match.



ISR Sepak Takraw competition.



A demonstration match of Karate.



ISR women's volleyball tournament.

OPINION

Protect soil layer for the global interest

MORE than 828 million people worldwide suffered from the severe impacts of famine in 2021, with one in ten facing critical situations and struggling to access nutritious food. In this context, the loss and degradation of soil used for crop cultivation exacerbate global hunger, according to the press release of the Food and Agriculture Organization.

The growing global population and soil degradation may result in less individual sown acreage by 2025, potentially amounting to just a quarter of the land available in 1960, according to the United Nations FAO. This highlights the critical role soil plays in the agricultural sector to ensure a steady food supply for the world.

Although agricultural technologies are improving, excessive use of chemicals is degrading the soil layer, leading to the loss of arable land and deforestation. Additionally, the process of global warming is further degrading fertile soil. To date, 33 per cent of the world's soil has been deteriorating. Scientists have warned that if countries do not take action to conserve soil layers in time, the world will face food shortages, which could lead to significant social problems.

Everyone should recognize that the soil layer is an invaluable natural resource for society, essential in producing agricultural food. Healthy soil is the lifeblood of the Earth. Scientists have stated that it takes more than 500 years to form just one inch of soil. Therefore, all countries worldwide must implement effective policies to prevent soil degradation as a crucial strategy. Only when people round the world prioritize soil protection will the loss of arable land for food production be halted.

As a result, the quality of soil declines, reducing fertile land available for crop cultivation. This can lead to food shortages and reliance on low-quality food. Additionally, soil erosion may contribute to desertification, environmental degradation, and the loss of biodiversity. These environmental challenges can further worsen the socioeconomic conditions of affected communities.

Everyone should recognize that the soil layer is an invaluable natural resource for society, essential in producing agricultural food. Healthy soil is the lifeblood of the Earth. Scientists have stated that it takes more than 500 years to form just one inch of soil. Therefore, all countries worldwide must implement effective policies to prevent soil degradation as a crucial strategy. Only when people round the world prioritize soil protection will the loss of arable land for food production be halted.

ONE of the objectives of the Social Affairs of the State Administration Council: "To elevate the Health and Sports sectors inclusive of all the people, improving the longevity and health of the nation". The first National Sports Festival was held in Yangon from 3 to 16 May 1992 with 22 sports events, the second from 25 January to 6 February 1994 with 24 sports events, the third in Yangon from 11 to 24 January 1997 with 29 sports events, and the fourth in Nay Pyi Taw from 13 to 28 February 2015 with 27 sports events.

In 2024, the Fifth National Sports Festival is being held on a grand scale to aim at enhancing the nation's sports standards, achieving success in the 33rd Southeast Asian Games and other international competitions, and turning out outstanding athletes and new-generation athletes who can bring national honour, fostering greater collaboration and unity between regions, states, and ministries to promote sports activities further and stipulating public interest in sports to join in sports activities.

Sports have long been a cornerstone of human culture, from ancient Olympic Games to modern global competitions. The journey from mass participation in sports to excellence in sports is a complex and multifaceted process that involves not only individual effort but also systemic support, training, and access to resources. The shift from mass involvement to select performance is shaped by various factors such as talent identification, the development of specialized skills, institutional support, and the psychological and physical demands of high-level competition.

Mass Participation in Sports
The foundation of sports excellence lies in mass participation. The widespread engagement in sports is essential for identifying talent and fostering a culture of physical activity. At the grassroots level, sports serve as a recreational activity, contributing to physical fitness, teamwork, and social inclusion. When people of all ages and backgrounds participate in sports, they gain essential life skills, from discipline to leadership. Mass participation provides a large pool of athletes from which exceptional talent can emerge.

In many countries, mass participation programmes are designed to encourage children and young adults to engage in physical activity, whether through school programmes, community leagues, or local clubs. These activities are often structured in ways that allow everyone to play, without focusing initially on performance. At this stage, the emphasis is on fostering enjoyment, participation, and personal growth. However, while mass participation is essential for physical health and social cohesion, it is also the breeding ground for future elite athletes.

Transitioning to Excellence
Moving from mass participation to sports excellence is a gradual process. While many people participate in sports, only a small percentage will reach the level of excellence. This transition requires significant changes in how athletes train, compete, and live. It is at this stage where specialized training, professional coaching, and access to world-class facilities become crucial.



From Mass Participation to Excellence in Sports

In 2024, the Fifth National Sports Festival opens with fireworks, aiming to elevate the nation's sports standards. **PHOTO: GNL**

By Dr Than Lwin Tun

Coaching plays a crucial role in the journey from mass participation to sports excellence. Coaches are responsible not only for improving technical skills but also for shaping the athletes' mindset. The psychological aspect of exclusive sports is often as important as the physical one. Athletes at the highest levels must demonstrate resilience, persistence, and a strong will to succeed in the face of challenges and setbacks. Coaches help athletes develop these qualities through mental conditioning, goal-setting, and stress management techniques.

In addition to coaching, athletes benefit from comprehensive support systems that include nutritionists, physiotherapists, psychologists, and strength and conditioning specialists. These professionals ensure that the athlete's body and mind are prepared for the demands of competition. Moreover, they help prevent injury and promote long-term career sustainability.

Infrastructure and Institutional Support
Institutional support is also vital for athletes aspiring to achieve excellence. Governments, sports federations, and private organizations all play a significant role in providing the necessary infrastructure, funding, and competitive opportunities for athletes. Many countries invest in exclusive sports programmes to ensure that their top athletes receive the best possible training and competitive experience.

The Role of Coaching and Support Systems
Coaching plays a crucial role in the journey from mass participation to sports excellence. Coaches are responsible not only for improving technical skills but also for shaping the athletes' mindset. The psychological aspect of exclusive sports is often as important as the physical one. Athletes at the highest levels must demonstrate resilience, persistence, and a strong will to succeed in the face of challenges and setbacks. Coaches help athletes develop these qualities through mental conditioning, goal-setting, and stress management techniques.

The Global Competitive Field
In the context of global sports, excellence is not only about national recognition but also international competition. Athletes who excel domestically must prove themselves on the world stage, competing in tournaments, world championships, and the Olympics. These competitions are a testament to the level of dedication, sacrifice, and perseverance required to achieve excellence.

The global nature of sports means that athletes are not only competing against each other but also facing a diverse array of training philosophies,

opportunities to train under expert supervision, access front-line technology, and compete at higher levels. Financial investment in sports infrastructure allows for the development of state-of-the-art training facilities, equipment, and transport, ensuring that athletes have every advantage as they aim for excellence.

High-performance sports academies, exclusive training centres, and national sports organizations are essential for nurturing talent. These institu-

tions provide athletes with the opportunity to train under expert supervision, access front-line technology, and compete at higher levels. Financial investment in sports infrastructure allows for the development of state-of-the-art training facilities, equipment, and transport, ensuring that athletes have every advantage as they aim for excellence.

The global nature of sports means that athletes are not only competing against each other but also facing a diverse array of training philosophies,

cultural influences, and technological advancements. As competition intensifies, so too does the pressure to perform at the highest level. In this field, even the smallest margin of improvement can make the difference between victory and defeat. The athletes must continually innovate, adapting their training techniques, nutrition, and recovery methods to maintain their competitive edge.

Moreover, the journey from mass participation to excellence in sports is a dynamic and multifaceted process that involves the intersection of individual talent, systemic support, specialized training, and global competition. While mass participation serves as the foundation for sports development, transitioning to excellence requires a commitment to intense training, coaching, and mental fortitude. With the right support systems, access to resources, and the drive to succeed, athletes can make the leap from recreational sports to the highest levels of global competition, achieving excellence in the world of sports.

Reference
The Global New Light of Myanmar Newspaper (10 December 2024)

ARTICLE

Russian scientists develop new energy conservation technique

Researchers from Russia's National University of Science and Technology MISIS have developed a new thermoelectric material with improved performance at high temperatures.

INDUSTRIAL production is accompanied by the release of significant amounts of thermal energy, which in most cases is irretrievably lost, dissipating into the surrounding environment. Currently, more and more attention is being paid to the development of technologies aimed at utilizing waste heat.

A new approach to the development of thermoelectric materials that may potentially be used to convert industrial heat into electricity has been proposed by researchers from Russia's National University of Science and Technology MISIS.

The results of the new study have been published in the Journal of the European Ceramic Society.

Industrial production is accompanied by the release of significant amounts of thermal energy, which in most cases is irretrievably lost, dissipating into the surrounding environment. Currently, more and more attention is being paid to the development of technologies aimed at utilizing waste heat. These technologies not only improve the energy efficiency of productive processes but also significantly reduce their environmental impact.

A promising solution to this challenge is the use of thermoelectric materials, according to MISIS scientists. These materials have the unique ability to convert thermal energy directly into electrical energy.

The MISIS scientists have developed a new material that, according to them, demonstrates improved thermoelectric characteristics at high temperatures compared to existing analogs.

This improvement is achieved through the optimal porosity (10-22 per cent), which affects both thermal conductivity and electrical conductivity. The base of the material is calcium manganite perovskite with additions of marokite, a manganese-rich mineral.

"Our approach is not only more cost-effective and environmentally friendly but also provides additional tools for precise control of the structure and composition of materials, allowing for targeted improvement of their properties," said project leader and leading expert at The Research Centre of Engineering Ceramic Nanomaterials (RC ECN) at NUST MISIS, Sergey Yudin.

Source : SPUTNIK



There is growing attention on technologies that capture and utilize waste heat to improve energy efficiency and reduce environmental impact. **PHOTO : ILLUSTRATION: VISUAL ART**

NATIONAL

Botahtaung hosts consecration, Maha Pathana recitation, and 51st alms-rice offering



This photo depicts the 51st Consecration Ceremony being held at the Botahtaung Pagoda.

THE consecration ceremony, the 51st alms-rice offering ceremony, and the Maha Pathana recitation ceremony are being held at Botahtaung Pagoda in Botahtaung Township, Yangon Region, from 15 to 22 December, according to U Aung Ko Zaw, a member of the pagoda

board of trustees.

The consecration ceremony began on 15 December, attended by 90 Sayadaws. The Maha Pathana recitation ceremony is taking place from 16 to 20 December.

The 51st alms-rice offering ceremony is scheduled for 3

pm on 22 December, during which offerings will be presented to 108 Sayadaws, including Sayadaws from the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, Tipitaka Sayadaws and Ovadacariya Sayadaws, and 36 nuns. — ASH/MKKS

Artistic Space Art Gallery hosts 'Duet Show' group art exhibition

THE 'Duet Show' art exhibition is being held at the Artistic Space Art Gallery in Botahtaung Township, Yangon Region, from 14 to 18 December.

The exhibition showcases paintings by artists Min Mahaw and Ye Min, featuring a range of styles, colours, and themes.

"The Artistic Space Art

Gallery is hosting a group exhibition by two artists. The exhibition is open daily from 10 am to 5 pm, and we warmly invite everyone to visit," said the gallery manager.

The exhibition includes a diverse collection of paintings in various sizes, created using watercolours, oilcolours, and acrylics. — ASH/TKO



This image shows visitors to the 'Duet Show'.

Preliminary interviews for 2024 Academy conclude; Second-round candidates announced

THE preliminary personal interviews for applicants aspiring to become Academy Award attendants for the 2024 Myanmar Film Academy Awards, scheduled to be held in Nay Pyi Taw, were completed on 15 December.

The list of candidates selected for the second-round competition will be announced on 18 December, according to Vice-Chair U Aye Kyu Lay of the Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization (MMPO).

"More than 300 individuals applied to be Academy Award attendants, and nearly 280 attended the interview," said U Aye Kyu Lay. "Being selected as an Academy Award attendant is often seen as a first step towards



Photos showcase the preliminary in-person interviews between judges (right) and candidates (left).



pursuing a career in the arts," he added.

The judging panel for the

selection process includes experienced artistes, such as Academy Award winners Yan Aung, Ye

Aung, Khant Si Thu, Soe Myat Thuzar, May Than Nu, Nyo Min Lwin, and Nyein Min.

The 2024 Academy Awards Ceremony is set to take place in February 2025. — ASH/TMT

YGN palm oil reference rate set at K7,250 this week

THE wholesale reference rate of palm oil for the Yangon market for the week ending 22 December dipped to K7,250 per viss from K7,255 last week ending 16 December.

The Supervisory Committee on Edible Oil Import and Distribution under the Ministry of Commerce has been closely observing the FOB prices in Malaysia and Indonesia, adding transport costs, tariffs and banking services to decide the wholesale market reference rate for edible oil weekly. Despite the reference price, the market price is way too high.

To control overcharging, the Consumer Affairs Department under the Ministry of Commerce informed the consumers of lodging the complaints for overcharging through the call centre hotline in late August. The Department urges consumers not to buy palm oil at high prices. The Committee notified that any person who is involved in price gouging and oil storage to attempt market manipulation will face legal action under the Essential Goods and Services Law.

The department is working together with the Myanmar Oil Dealers' Association and the cooking oil importing companies to offer affordable rates of imported palm oil for consumers.

The complaints for overcharging can be lodged over Hot Line: 1535 of the call centre of the Consumers Affairs Department or sent to the Facebook Page of the Department and the region and state departments concerned.

The domestic consumption of palm oil is estimated at one million tonnes per year. The local palm oil production is just about 400,000 tonnes. About 700,000 tonnes of palm oil are yearly imported through Malaysia and Indonesia to meet domestic demands. — NN/KK



A vendor arranges cooking oil for sale.

Taninthayi expands Robusta coffee plantations by 1,800+ acres this year



This photo highlights the thriving coffee beans in Taninthayi Region.

ACCORDING to the regional Department of Agriculture, a total of 1,874 acres of lowland coffee (Robusta) that is marketable in international markets were added this year in Taninthayi Re-

gion.

The coffee plantation acres reached 3,022 in the 2024-2025 financial year, up from 1,148 acres in the 2023-2024 FY. Coffee plantations cover 470 acres in

Dawei District, 1,200 in Myeik, 845 in Bokpyin and 507 in Kawthoung. As of November, 53 acres can be harvested, with an estimated production of 6,760 visses (127 visses per acre). Last year's output was 43,386 viss from 290 acres.

Robusta thrives in regions around the equator so it is suitable for Taninthayi Region. They can be harvested during four to five years of cultivation. The harvest season is from December to January. Myanmar exports coffee beans to foreign markets," said an official of the department.

Coffee is grown between perennial crops (rubber and betel plants) under an intercropping system. The department provides seedlings and technical assistance to growers to help increase their income, create jobs for locals and enhance the socioeconomic status of the community. — Myint Oo/KK

Bihar Business Connect 2024 in India welcomes Myanmar businesspeople

BIHAR Business Connect 2024 — A Global Investors Summit, which is scheduled to take place on 19-20 December 2024 in Bihar, India, invites the participation of Myanmar businesspeople, according to the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization.

It will feature keynote speeches, panel discussions, B2B meetings, tour programmes and exhibition stalls, showcasing investment and business potential. The chief minister,

ministers and officials concerned of Bihar State of India will attend this as well.

Individuals can enquire about details through Mr Rahul Ojha, Investment Promotion Team at +91 9021386108 and email invest-bihar@gov.in, and they can register through the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization at 067 408622 and email: event.td.myantrade@gmail.com. — NN/KK

Nawaday Sugar Mill announces current season sugarcane purchase price

NAWADAY Sugar Mill notified sugarcane growers that it will offer K180,000 per tonne of sugarcane in the 2024-2025 sugarcane season.

The sugar mill requested them to supply sugarcane only after cleaning dirt and roots.

The hike is to adapt to high sugar prices in domestic markets and cover the input costs of the growers.

Mya Bayin sugar mill has already announced to growers to offer K200,000 per tonne of sugarcane, up from the previous rate of K150,000 in the 2023-2024 sugarcane season. The increase in the purchase price is to adapt to high sugar prices in domestic markets and cover the input costs of the growers.

Myanmar's annual sugar production is estimated at 450,000 tonnes. Myanmar earlier sent sugar to China



Pictured: Sugar sacks from Nawaday Sugar Mill.

and Vietnam beyond self-sufficiency. At present, it is delivered to Vietnam only, U Win Htay, vice chair of Myanmar Sugar and Cane Related Association said.

Before the COVID pandemic, Myanmar's sugar was sent to China's border province. Later, sugar export was completely halted amid China's strict policy on import items. Therefore, Myanmar's sugar traders call for a quota to have a legitimate export to China. Myanmar enjoyed tax exemption for preferential origin rules while exporting sugar to Vietnam.

Sugarcane is commonly found in the upper Sagaing Region, followed by northern Shan State. It is also found in the western and eastern Bago Region, Yangon Region and Mandalay Region.

The sugarcane is grown in December-January. It can be harvested from November to February of the following years. The sugarcane growing rotation cycle lasts four years in Myanmar. — NN/EM

NATIONAL

Palin Kanthaya anticipates increased visitors for Xmas & Kayin New Year

DURING the coming Kayin New Year and Christmas holidays, it is expected that there will be an increase in tourist arrivals to the Palin Kanthaya Elephant Camp.

The camp received more visitors than normal during Thadingyut in October and Tazaungdaing in November and is now planning to welcome more tourists in the coming holidays.

“The camp received more visitors than normal during Thadingyut in October and Tazaungdine in November. We expect more tourists in the coming holidays of Christmas and



Kayin New Year. For the convenience of visitors, we made detailed arrangements for rest areas, photo booths, and restaurants,” said U Myo Min Ko, who is in charge of the camp.

Anya (upcountry) food and other services will be provided for the tourists while real ele-

phant tusks and skeletons will be displayed in the elephant museum.

“For visitors, we have arranged elephant buffets, rides, resting places, restaurants with Anya foods, and the elephant museum showing tusks and bones,” he added.

This elephant camp is located near Palin Village (West) on the Myingyan-Pakokku highway, NyaungU Township, Mandalay Region, on the bank of the Ayeyawady River and due to its interesting programmes, it is one of the most attractive destinations. — Thit Taw/ZN



Photos showcase welcoming ladies from the camp (top), a demonstration of intelligent pachyderms (above left), and visitors enjoying the camp (above right).

3-day illegal trade crackdown confiscates items worth K167M

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

On 13 and 16 December, the combined teams impounded an unregistered Honda Insight (worth approximately K6 million) near the Ayeyawady bridge in Magway Township, illegal metal weighing 3.159 tonnes worth K94.77 million in Dawei Township and industrial materials worth K30.447 million in Myeik Township. The action was conducted under the Export-Import Law, the Myanmar Mines Law and Customs procedures.

Additionally, on 15 and 16 December, the combined teams conducted inspections and seized illegal teak weighing 0.608 tonne, illegal hardwood weighing 0.202 tonne and illegal other timbers weighing 0.801 tonne worth K507,372 in Nyaunglebin and Thayawady Districts, and a Hyundai bus, heading to Yangon from Thaman-

ya, carrying foodstuffs valued at K6.11 million without official documents at the 38th Milepost on Yangon- Mandalay expressway. The action was taken under the Forest Law and Customs procedures.

The Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee reported seven arrests on 13, 15 and 16 December, seizing illegal goods worth approximately K167 million. — MNA/MKKS



Officials check illegal teak logs.

Counter-argument to false information

Media defames security forces

MALICIOUS media intentionally spread false news, claiming that a woman riding a motorcycle was shot and killed by security forces in Inzauk Village, Launglon Township, Taninthayi Region, on 13 December.

According to the investigation, security forces conducting security measures were attacked by PDF terrorists near the vicinity of Inzauk Village. PDF terrorists retreated after the armed engagement.

Subversive media outlets

intentionally spread misinformation to affect the peace and stability of the region and mislead the public about security forces. — MNA/KTZH



This screenshot validates misinformation.

China maintains high utilization rates of wind, solar power



This photo taken on 19 June 2024 shows workers installing the blade of a 16-megawatt wind turbine of the phase II project of Zhangpu wind farm in southeast China's Fujian Province. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

CHINA has maintained high utilization rates of wind and solar power, official data showed Sunday, suggesting the world's renewables powerhouse has

ensured both speed and quality in its green drive. The utilization rates of wind and solar power remained above 95 per cent this year, according

to data of the National Energy Administration. By the end of 2024, the country's installed wind power capacity reached 510 million kilowatts, while its

solar power capacity stood at 840 million kilowatts.

In the first seven months of 2024, wind and solar power generation totalled 1.05 trillion kilowatt hours, accounting for roughly 20 per cent of China's total electricity generation.

China's new energy industry has experienced rapid growth in recent years, maintaining a double-digit annual growth rate.

Since 2013, the country's wind power installed capacity has grown six-fold, while solar power installed capacity has surged more than 180 times. Its annual new installations account for more than 40 per cent of the global total, significantly contributing to world's green development. — Xinhua

New Zealand sees increased prices for domestic flights, accommodation

NEW Zealand saw increased domestic air and hotel prices, which means the cost of exploring the country has become more expensive, according to the statistics department Stats NZ on Monday.

New Zealand's do-

mestic air transport prices were up 10.8 per cent in November 2024 compared with October 2024, the highest increase in domestic flight prices since July 2023, Stats NZ said.

New Zealand's domestic accommodation

prices also rose, up 6.9 per cent over the month, it said.

The increased prices for domestic flights coincided with performances by several global artists around New Zealand, Stats NZ prices and defla-

tors spokesperson Nicola Growden said.

However, international airfares and international accommodation prices decreased 2.7 per cent and 4.6 per cent respectively, statistics show. — Xinhua

UK officially joins Asia-Pacific trade bloc CPTPP

THE United Kingdom officially joined the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) on Sunday, becoming the first European nation to join the Asia-Pacific trade bloc.

The 12-country landmark trade agreement is expected to boost the British economy by two billion pounds (about US\$2.52 billion) annually in the long term, according to the Department for Business and Trade.

The department noted on its website that the UK's accession to CPTPP is a cornerstone of the government's Plan for Change, which aims to deliver economic growth and increase household incomes. The

plan is projected to raise household wages by 1 billion pounds (\$1.26 billion) annually while benefiting all regions of the country.

"Agreements like this boost trade and create opportunities for UK companies abroad, supporting jobs, raising wages, and driving investment across the country," said British Business and Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds.

Ian Stuart, CEO of HSBC UK, underscored the significance of the trade bloc, stating: "Since the announcement of the UK's accession in July 2023, we have seen an increase in payments between CPTPP markets and the UK, and we expect this growth to continue." — Xinhua

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MCL 9 VOY.NO. (10N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MCL 9 VOY. NO. (10N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **16-12-2024** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **TMT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

**Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority**

Agent For:

**M/S MAWLAMYINE CENTURY LOGISTICS
COMPANY LIMITED**

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ISEACO GENESIS VOY.NO. (245N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ISEACO GENESIS VOY.NO. (245N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **17-12-2024** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

**Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority**

Agent For:

M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V HONG JIA 21 VOY.NO. (2446)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V HONG JIA 21 VOY.NO. (2446)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **17-12-2024** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

**Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority**

Agent For:

M/S OCEAN SALUTE SHIPPING PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V BANGKOK VOY.NO. (195N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V BANGKOK VOY.NO. (195N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **17-12-2024** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

**Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority**

Agent For:

M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

Nations step up outreach to Syria's post-Assad rulers

GOVERNMENTS worldwide are stepping up efforts to engage with Syria's new interim rulers, just over a week after Islamist-led rebels ousted president Bashar al-Assad, ending decades of brutal rule and civil war.

The lightning offensive that captured the capital Damascus on 8 December led to celebrations across the country and beyond.

At Damascus university on Sunday, Yasmin Shehab told AFP that she and fellow students felt "optimistic".

"We feel liberated, and the chains have been broken," she said. "Fear has been shattered."

But the surprise ouster caught many governments by surprise, and has left them scrambling for a new policy.

Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), the Islamist group that led the offensive, is rooted in Al-Qaeda's Syrian branch, and

is still designated a terrorist group by several Western governments.

Diplomats, including UN envoy Geir Pedersen who was in Syria on Sunday, have urged an inclusive new administration focused on nation-building and justice.

Pedersen met HTS chief Ahmed al-Sharaa — previously known as Abu Mohammed al-Jolani — and called for "justice and accountability for crimes".

"We need to make sure that that goes through a credible justice system, and that we don't see any revenge," he said.

A Qatari delegation also landed in Syria on Sunday to meet transitional government officials and pledge "full commitment to supporting the Syrian people".

Qatar's embassy is set to resume operations Tuesday, 13



This handout photo provided by Syria's Interim Government shows UN Special Envoy Geir Pedersen meeting with Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) leader Abu Mohammed al-Jolani, now using his real name Ahmed al-Sharaa in Damascus on 15 December 2024. **PHOTO: SYRIAN INTERIM GOVERNMENT / AFP**

years after it closed in the early stages of an anti-government uprising that sparked years of civil war.

Unlike other Arab countries, Qatar never restored ties with

on Saturday.

Both Britain and the United States also confirmed they were in touch with HTS despite officially considering the organisation a terrorist group.

"We can have diplomatic contact and so we do have diplomatic contact," British Foreign Minister David Lammy said as he announced an aid package for Syrians.

A French diplomatic team is also due in Damascus on Tuesday to "retake possession of our real estate" and make "initial contact" with the new authorities, said acting Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot.

They will also be "evaluating the urgent needs of the population", he added.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky meanwhile said his country was coordinating on providing aid including wheat, flour and oil to Syria. — AFP

Rescuers race to France's Mayotte as hundreds feared dead in cyclone

RESCUERS raced against time Monday to reach survivors and supply urgent aid after a devastating cyclone ripped through the French Indian Ocean territory of Mayotte, destroying homes across the islands, with hundreds feared dead.

Images from Mayotte, which like other French over-

seas territories is an integral part of France and ruled from Paris, showed scenes of devastation, with homes reduced to piles of rubble.

The crisis, which erupted at the weekend the day after President Emmanuel Macron appointed Francois Bayrou as the sixth prime minister of his mandate, poses a major chal-

lenge for a government still only operating in a caretaker capacity.

The cyclone left health services in tatters, with the main hospital extremely damaged and health centres knocked out of operation, Health Minister Genevieve Darrieussecq told broadcaster France 2. — AFP



A photo taken on 15 December 2024 shows residents sitting among piles of debris of metal sheets and wood after homes were destroyed by the cyclone Chido that hit France's Indian Ocean territory of Mayotte. **PHOTO: AFP**

News in brief

Bangladesh plans national election by late 2025 or mid 2026

BANGLADESHI interim government's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus Monday said it may be possible to hold the next national elections at the end of 2025 or the first half of 2026.

"The election can be scheduled between the end of 2025 and the first half of 2026," he said in a televised speech to the nation at 10 am local time on Monday marking the country's Victory Day.

Yunus said he repeatedly appealed to all to arrange the elections after completing all the necessary major reforms.

But, due to political consensus, it may be possible to hold the elections by the end of 2025 after completing minor reforms based on the preparation of an accurate voter list, he said.

Yunus urged the Election Commission and all social institutions and political parties to take various creative programmes to achieve this goal.

He suggested creating such a tradition that first-time voters in all elections, including local government polls, will ensure about 100 per cent voting in all centres. "If we can ensure this, no government in the future will dare to snatch the people's voting rights," the chief adviser added. — Xinhua

Sri Lanka issues early landslide warnings for multiple areas

SRI Lanka's National Building Research Organization (NBRO) on Monday issued early landslide warnings for multiple areas in four districts.

The warnings were issued following heavy rainfall that continues in parts of the island, the NBRO said.

The NBRO issued the warnings for several Divisional Secretariats and surrounding areas in the Badulla, Kandy, Kurunegala and Matale districts in the Central and North Western provinces.

Meanwhile, the country's meteorological department said the rains are due to prevailing disturbance over the southeastern Bay of Bengal sea. — Xinhua

SPORTS

Leganes stuns Barca, Real Madrid held and Atletico goes level at top in La Liga

LEGANES produced the shock of the season on Sunday night when the side that won promotion to La Liga last season won 1-0 away to FC Barcelona.

Sergio Gonzalez headed in the only goal of the game in the fourth minute after he was left completely unmarked after a corner, and from then, Leganes held on with some last-ditch defending and some incredible saves from goalkeeper Marko Dmitrovic.

Dmitrovic produced two fine saves in the first half to deny Robert Lewandowski and an even better stop to tip Raphinha's shot onto the woodwork. Barcelona had 80 per cent of the ball but failed to find a way through and is now level on points with Atletico Madrid. They will also be worried after Lamine Yamal seemed to pick up another ankle injury in the first half, although he played on until the 75th minute.

Atletico Madrid moved into



Atletico de Madrid players celebrate scoring during the La Liga football match between Atletico de Madrid and Getafe CF in Madrid, Spain, on 15 December 2024. PHOTO: XINHUA

second place above Real Madrid after a hard-fought win at home to Getafe, which was decided by Alexander Sorloth's towering

header that gave Getafe goalkeeper David Soria no chance of making a save.

Real Madrid missed the

chance to go top for 24 hours after a thrilling 3-3 draw away to Rayo Vallecano on Saturday night.

Unai Lopez and Abdul

Mumin put Rayo 2-0 up with goals after four and 35 minutes, but Madrid was level before the break through Fede Valverde and Jude Bellingham.

Rodrygo fired Madrid 3-2 up in the 55th minute, but Rayo fought back and levelled when Isi Palazon directed Florian Lejeune's shot past Thibaut Courtois in the 63rd minute, with Rayo defending well to claim a point.

Athletic Club Bilbao saw their six-game winning streak come to an end with a 1-1 draw in their Basque derby away to Alaves on Sunday afternoon.

Unai Gomez put Athletic ahead early in the game, and the visitors rarely looked in trouble until Unai Simon, making his first start of the season in La Liga after a wrist operation in the summer, failed to hold Jon Guridi's second-half shot through a crowd of players, allowing Joan Jordan a simple finish. — Xinhua

Man Utd stuns City in derby as Chelsea closes gap on Liverpool in Premier League



Manchester United's Portuguese midfielder (8) Bruno Fernandes (2L) Manchester United's Dutch striker (11) Joshua Zirkzee (C) and Manchester United's Danish striker (9) Rasmus Hojlund (2R) celebrate following the English Premier League football match between Manchester City and Manchester United at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, north west England, on 15 December 2024. PHOTO: AFP

MANCHESTER United stunned Manchester City with two late goals to claim the Manchester derby and deepen the crisis in Pep Guardiola's side on Sunday evening.

City looked to be in complete control after Josko Gvardiol headed them ahead in the 36th minute, but a moment of madness from Matheus Nunes,

who brought down Amad Diallo after a poor back-pass, allowed Bruno Fernandes to equalize from the penalty spot in the 88th minute.

Just under two minutes later, Diallo scored the winner for United when he got onto a ball over the top, prodded it past Ederson, and finished from a tight angle to make it 2-1 and send the

visiting supporters wild.

Chelsea moved to within two points of the top of the table after a 2-1 win at home to Brentford. Marc Cucurella scored a rare header to put Chelsea in front two minutes before half-time.

It looked as if Nicolas Jackson's finish from Enzo Fernandez's pass on the break 10 minutes from time would seal the win, but Brian Mbeumo's shot in the 90th minute ensured a tense end to the match, which saw Cucurella sent off for two yellow cards in injury time.

Tottenham showed their positive side as they raced into a 4-0 lead away to Southampton, with James Maddison, Son Heung-Min and Dejan Kulusevski putting them 3-0 up after just 14 minutes. Pape Sarr added a fourth after 25 minutes as Southampton fell apart, and some fans started to leave St. Mary's Stadium well before halftime. Those who left missed Maddison making it 5-0 in first-half injury time. — Xinhua

Maeda scores, buries penalty as Celtic lift League Cup



Celtic's Daizen Maeda (R) scores in the second half of a Scottish League Cup football match against Rangers on 15 December 2024, in Glasgow, Scotland. PHOTO: KYODO

JAPAN forward Daizen Maeda scored before sealing the Scottish League Cup title in the shootout as Celtic edged Old Firm rivals Rangers 5-4 on penalties after an epic 3-3 draw in Sunday's final.

Maeda pounced on some defensive confusion from Rangers to net on the hour mark at Hampden Park as Celtic came from behind to lead 2-1. Compatriot Reo Hatate and Maeda both scored in the shootout while Kyogo Furuhashi came off in the 76th minute in Glasgow as Celtic claimed the title for the 22nd time.

"We had wonderful support

from the fans and owe them the win," Maeda said after winning the title for the first time in two years.

"My penalty was a total miss-hit but things turned out nicely. We've had lots of matches and I was feeling fatigued, but luck was on my side."

Nedim Bajrami rolled in a rebound for Rangers' 41st-minute opener and Greg Taylor's deflected shot brought Celtic level in the 56th before Maeda struck. The Japanese striker showed good control to bring a loose ball down before firing into the bottom corner with his left foot. — Kyodo

Nations step up outreach to Syria's post-Assad rulers

PAGE 14



WORLD

Germany urges Israel to 'abandon' plan to step up Golan Heights settlement

GERMANY on Monday urged Israel to "abandon" a plan to double the population living in the occupied and annexed Golan Heights at the southwestern edge of Syria.

A foreign ministry spokesman said "it is perfectly clear under international law that this area controlled by Israel belongs to Syria and that Israel is therefore an occupying power".

The spokesman, Christian Wagner, added that Berlin therefore called on its ally Israel "to abandon this plan" announced Sunday by the Israeli government.

As Islamist-led rebel forces swept Syrian president Bashar al-Assad from power last week, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered troops to seize the demilitarized zone on the Golan Heights.



Israeli troops are seen in the buffer zone in the Golan Heights on 15 December 2024. The Israeli government approved a plan on Sunday to expand settlements in the Golan Heights, a Syrian territory currently occupied by Israel, according to a statement by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Israel has also launched hundreds of strikes on Syria targeting strategic military sites and weapons, including chemical weapons.

Wagner said that "it is absolutely crucial now, in this phase of political upheaval in Syria, that all actors in the region take into account the territorial integrity of Syria and do not call it into question".

Speaking at a regular press conference, he added that the situation is "complex" and that Israel had an interest to ensure that the Assad regime's weapons "do not fall into the wrong hands".

But he stressed that Germany was "now calling on all actors in the region to exercise restraint" and that war-ravaged "Syria has been a plaything of foreign powers for far too long". — AFP

Russia prepares air defence expansion in response to US missile base in Poland

THE infrastructure of the US missile defence base in Poland's Redzikowo some 165 kilometres (102 miles) from the Russian border, will allow the alliance to use Tomahawk missiles, Russian Defence Minister Andrei

Belousov said on Monday.

"The buildup of combat capabilities of elements of the US global missile defence system continues. In November of this year, a US missile defence base was opened 165 kilometres from Russia — in the Polish village of Redzikowo, which allows the use of Tomahawk sea-based cruise missiles with minor modifications to

its infrastructure," Belousov said at an expanded meeting of the board of the Russian Defence Ministry. The medium-range missiles that the United States will deploy in Germany will be able to reach Moscow in eight minutes, Belousov said. The experience of building an air defence system around Moscow should be taken into account in other regions, Andrei Belousov said. — SPUTNIK



A 9K35 Strela-10 (Arrow) air defence system used by Russian servicemen of the 27th Motor Rifle Brigade, 1st Guards Tank Army of the West group of forces, is seen at a position amid Russia's military operation in Ukraine, at an unknown location, in Russia. **PHOTO: SPUTNIK**

Malaysia, Thailand reaffirm commitment to economic cooperation, regional stability

THE prime ministers of Malaysia and Thailand reaffirmed their commitment to economic cooperation and regional stability following a bilateral meeting here on Monday.

In line with this, the two countries will seek to deepen cooperation in a number of key areas including digital economy, tourism, commodities especially rubber, and management of their common border to combat transnational crime, Prime Minister of Malaysia Anwar Ibrahim and Prime Minister of Thailand Paetongtarn Shinawatra stated in a joint statement following the 7th Annual Consultation.

The leaders also stressed the need to maintain ASEAN centrality, improve regional integration and connectivity, and expedite negotiations on several memorandums of understanding (MOUs) regarding the cross-border transport of goods and passengers.

"Both sides agreed to facilitate permit requirements for plant-based goods transiting through Thailand via the ASEAN Express freight train service between Malaysia and China," it said. — Xinhua

German politician slams anti-Russian sanctions as 'state coup' against European industry

THE European Union's continued sanctions against Russia harms member states that still import Russian oil and is akin to a "state coup" against Europe's industry, Ralph Niemeyer, head of the German Council for the Constitution and Sovereignty, told Sputnik.

On Wednesday, the Hungarian EU presidency announced that ambassadors from member states had agreed on the EU's 15th package of sanctions against Russia. Dutch Foreign Minister Caspar Veldkamp said the new package of restrictions targeted Russia's "shadow fleet".

After these sanctions were imposed, Russia began manufacturing many goods at home. Now even European companies are eager to return to the Russian market, Niemeyer told Sputnik, adding that this situation shows that these restrictions "no longer impress anyone". — SPUTNIK