

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

Four Objectives of the National Defence and Security Council

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

Hlawga Park draws up to 5,000 visitors on public holidays

In addition, the park also receives foreign tourists, with most international visitors arriving from China.



or 700 people. However, on major public holidays, the crowd reaches between 4,000 and 5,000 visitors,” the official explained. Additionally, the park welcomes foreign tourists, with the majority of international visitors coming from China. “Some visitors come specifically to see the suspension bridge or to observe where migratory birds feed and nest, depending on their interests. Those who enjoy boating come for SUP (Stand Up Paddleboarding), while others come for cycling. Some foreign tourists visit simply because they want to walk along the park’s circular path,” he added. Hlawga Park (Yangon) is divided into two main sections: the Mini Zoo and the Safari Park. As a popular public recreation spot, the park is open daily from 8 am to 5 pm with no closing days. Entry fees are K4,000 for adults, K2,500 for children, and K1,000 for buggy service. — MT/ZN

Photos above and below right feature holiday-goers cycling and boating at Hlawga Park, which is open daily from 8 am to 5 pm with no closing days.

THE officer in charge of Hlawga Park (Yangon) told The Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM) that the park sees up to 5,000 visitors during public holidays. According to the official, while the park receives around 500 visitors daily from Monday to Friday, that number surges to approximately 5,000 during the weekends. “Since there are many public holidays this month, the number of visitors to Hlawga Park has increased on those days. On Saturdays and Sundays, we see between 2,000 and 3,000 visitors. From Monday to Friday, the numbers are usually in the hundreds – around 300, 500,



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Daily Life and Tradition in Myanmar: A Living Tapestry of Culture

By Yin Nwe Ko

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Myanmar, China discuss expanded energy cooperation and joint refinery project

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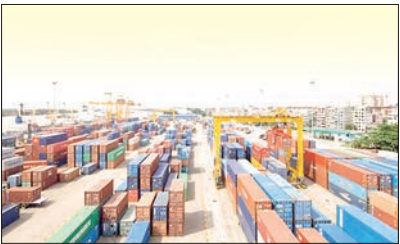
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6 more illegal buildings destroyed; scam-related materials seized & burned in KK Park

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63 container vessels slated to arrive at Yangon Port in Jan 2026

NATIONAL

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

Four National Objectives for 78th Independence Day 2026

1. To safeguard the non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty by all citizens, as they are the most essential and suitable national objectives and national duties
2. To strive forward for national unity and Union peace to implement sustainable and balanced development
3. To establish a genuine, disciplined democratic system completely by exercising the freedom and justice in accordance with the laws and regulations
4. To advance other economic sectors and promote MSMEs based on regional products

Myanmar Gazette

Appointment of Head of Service Organization

THE National Defence and Security Council has appointed U La Raw, Deputy Director-General of the Petroleum Products Regulatory Department under the Ministry of Energy, as Director-General of the same organization, from the date he assumes charge of his duties.

Bank Holiday and Working day

ALL Banks will be closed on 3 (Saturday) January 2026, being a public holiday. All Banks will be open on 10 (Saturday) January 2026, a working day under the Negotiable Instruments Act.

Central Bank of Myanmar

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.

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Union Election Commission

Announcement 180/2025

12th Waxing of Pyatho 1387 ME
30 December 2025

Notice for Electoral Speeches and Campaigns

1. The Union Election Commission released Announcement 151/2025 on 28 November 2025, containing the dates for electoral campaigns and on which the campaigns must be suspended in the townships included in Phases I and II of the Multiparty Democratic General Election that started on 28 December 2025.
2. UEC also released Announcement 170/2025 on 25 December 2025, containing the 63 townships for Phase III. The period for electoral speech and campaigns for Phase III will start on 12 January 2026, and must be suspended starting midnight of 23 January 2026 until the completion of the election on 25 January 2026. All campaign advertisements and posters for Phase III townships must be removed no later than midnight on 23 January 2026.
3. During the designated campaign period, the printing, distribution of pamphlets, installation of billboards and vinyl posters, campaign gatherings and media-based campaigning must be carried out in accordance with the provisions of Section 30 (a) of the relevant Hluttaw Election Law and Chapter (10) of the Rules, and the campaign advertisements and posters for the townships in Phases I and II must be removed by the final dates allowed for each phase.
4. If campaign advertisements and posters are not removed by the stipulated deadlines, the township election subcommissions, in coordination with the relevant City Development Committees or Township Development Committees, will arrange for their removal. Any removal costs incurred will be charged to the relevant political party or Hluttaw candidate.

Sd/ Than Soe
Chairman
Union Election Commission

Visitors flock to ‘sea of clouds’ spots during cold season

The interest of visitors in visiting sea of clouds destinations has increased during the cold season, according to the tourism community.

Seeing a sea of clouds in the cold season gives relaxation, and going on a sightseeing tour has been popular among young people.

“Sea of clouds can be seen in the cold season. The culture of enjoying the sea of clouds has been popular among young people. And they like to see the beautiful landscape with clouds in the early morning by staying overnight in a tent, with friends, colleagues and loved ones. Especially, they enjoy taking photos of nature. The view of the sea of clouds can be seen in Nay Pyi Taw, PyinOoLwin and Kalaw,” said a person who provides travel service.

Many people have planned to go on vacation in PyinOoLwin, Taunggyi, Kalaw, Bagan, Kyaiktiyo, Hpa-an, Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Bago, Chaungtha and Ngwehsaung in the coming New Year holidays, and bookings for hotel rooms and bungalows have already been made, predicting

the number will rise, according to the tourism community.

“We’ve planned a three-night-four-day trip to Mon and Kayin states in the coming holidays,” said a woman who prepares a planned trip.

During this year’s Kayin New Year and Christmas holidays, the number of visitors arriving also increased, and hotels in some popular tourist destinations were full. — MT/ZS

This image captures an enchanting view of a sea of clouds in Myanmar.



NATIONAL

For a nation to achieve development and stability, it is essential that every citizen be fully equipped with knowledge, skills and critical thinking. In particular, for a country like Myanmar undergoing a democratic transition, it is crucial for all of our national brethren to think critically, discern right from wrong and work together for the benefit of the nation.

(Excerpt from the speech delivered by Acting President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Chairman of the State Security and Peace Commission, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the opening ceremony of Dawei City Hall held on 18 September 2025)



Republic of the Union of Myanmar
National Defence and Security Council Office

Order 54/2025

12th Waxing of Pyatho 1387 ME
30 December 2025

Reassignment to Original Military Duties

THE National Defence and Security Council has reassigned U Zaw Myo Tin, Chief Minister of Kayah State, to the original military duties under Subsection (b) of Section 427 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

By Order,
Aung Lin Dwe
Executive Chief

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
National Defence and Security Council Office

Order 55/2025

12th Waxing of Pyatho 1387 ME
30 December 2025

Appointment and Duty Assignment for
Kayah State Chief Minister

THE National Defence and Security Council has appointed and assigned U Sein Oo to the duties of the Kayah State Chief Minister under Subsection (b) of Section 427 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

By Order,
Aung Lin Dwe
Executive Chief

Myanmar, China discuss expanded energy cooperation and joint refinery project

UNION Minister for Energy U Ko Ko Lwin received Ms Ma Jia, Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China, at the Ministry of Energy (Lower Myanmar Office, Sein Lae May) in Yankin Township, Yangon Region, yesterday morning.

During the meeting, the Union minister said that, with advances in technology, oil and natural gas accumulations have been identified more accurately in the Ayeyawady sedimentary basin, the Gulf of Mottama basin, and related offshore areas, leading to increased investment from Thailand. He added that India is also conducting oil and natural gas exploration activities around the Andaman Islands. As the leaders of Myanmar and China have agreed to enhance



Chinese Ambassador Ms Ma Jia calls on Union Minister U Ko Ko Lwin yesterday.

cooperation in the energy sector, he said that the present period offers a favourable opportunity to expand investment. He also

noted that Myanmar is currently strengthening cooperation in offshore oil and gas projects with China, India, Thailand, Russia,

and Middle Eastern countries.

The Union minister further said that, as demand for natural gas continues to rise in Myanmar

as well as in China and Thailand, Myanmar is seeking cooperation in both technology and capital to increase natural gas production from its offshore blocks. He also discussed boosting production at mature oil and gas projects through the application of technology, a joint project to build a new refinery that will process crude oil supplied via the Myanmar-China crude oil pipeline, the upgrading and construction of oil refineries and fertilizer plants, and the conditions for investment and intergovernmental cooperation between the two countries. The two sides exchanged views openly on these matters.

Relevant officials from the Ministry of Energy and the Chinese Embassy attended the meeting. — MNA/KZL

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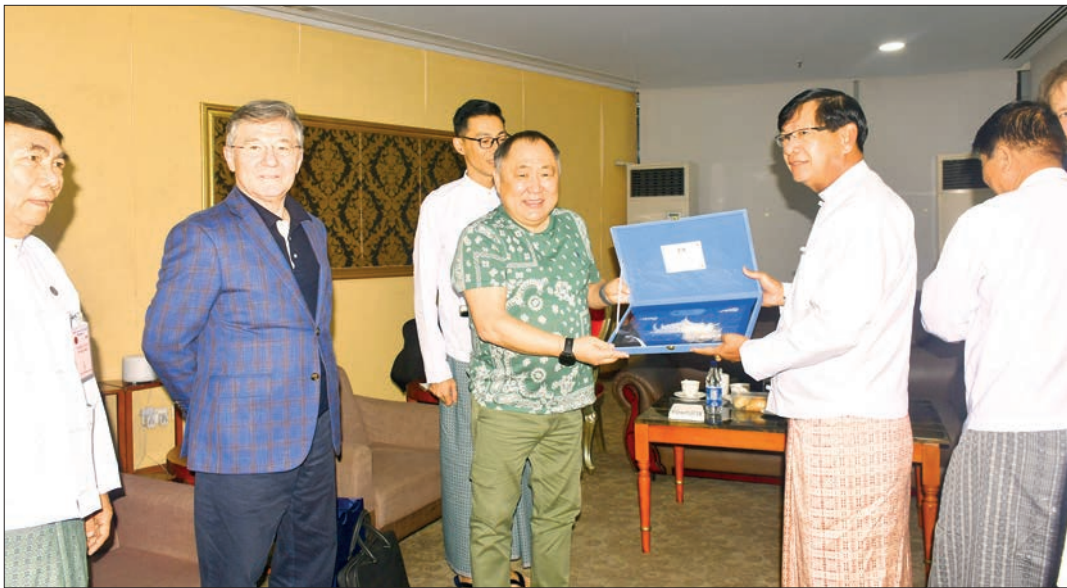
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NATIONAL

Residents Urged to Prioritize Public Safety Amid Armed Terrorist Threats

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

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



Russian State Duma Deputy Chairman Mr Sholban Kara-Ool is pictured before leaving Yangon yesterday.

Election observation mission led by Russian State Duma Deputy Chairman departs Yangon

THE election observation mission, led by Mr Sholban Kara-Ool, Deputy Chairman of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, left Yangon for the Russian Federation by air yesterday morning.

They were seen off at Yangon International Airport by Yangon

Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein, Union Election Commission Member U Aung Saw Win, regional ministers, Mr Iskander Azizov, Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Myanmar, and officials from the Regional Election Subcommission. — Zwe Htet Ko (IPRD)/YHT(NLM)

YCC to host Myanmar Jewellery & Lifestyle Show 2026

THE Myanmar Jewellery & Lifestyle Show 2026 will take place at the Yangon Convention Centre (YCC) from 6 to 8 February, featuring Myanmar's gems, finished jewellery products, and accessories.

The objective of this show is to showcase Myanmar's high-quality and valuable gemstones integrated into premium designs that meet international criteria.

The show is scheduled to take place in early 2026, with an expected attendance of ten thousand visitors and high demand for jewellery and accessories. It will bridge connections between exhibitors and resellers.

Under the jewellery and gemstone category, fine jewellery, premium gemstones, jade,

diamond, fashion jewellery, handmade jewellery, boutique designer, jewellery manufacturer and OEM jewellery are included.

The lifestyle and design category will cover gemstones, tools, machinery, packaging, display props and jewellery technology for fashion accessories, watches, leather goods, home décor, craft, luxury lifestyle products, raw material and equipment.

Interested exhibitors and sponsors can enquire about details through the Facebook page messenger and contact numbers at 09 70733234, 09 254277355, 09 790614713, 09 450045003, 09 777773929, 09 777737923, and through Ms Sarapee Sripankaew (Thailand) at +66 619616587. — NN/KK

Efforts underway to revive ageing refineries, petrochemical and fertilizer plants

THE Ministry of Energy has been exerting continuous efforts to fully restart ageing oil refineries, petrochemical plants and large fertilizer factories.

Thanlyin refinery is being implemented as a refinery capable of processing three million tonnes per year. As part of the initial phase (Phase 1), the refinery will operate soon with a production capacity of 500,000 tonnes per year.

The Ministry of Energy, in collaboration with national entrepreneurs and modern technologies, is endeavouring to systematically drill oil wells and upgrade the network of oil and natural gas pipelines. Moreover, the ministry is intensifying its efforts in adopting technologies (AI, 3D Seismic) for oil



This image shows a glimpse of the Thanlyin Oil Refinery.

and gas exploration, developing new oil refineries to produce high-grade fuel oil domestically, and setting up new fertilizer factories.

Myanmar is trying to pro-

mote electricity generation from renewable energies like solar and wind power. The country is committed to reducing fuel oil consumption by encouraging electric vehicles. — ASH/KK

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CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION
(+95) (01) 8604532,
Hotline - 09 255597511

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

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gnlmnews@gmail.com,
newsroom@gnlm.com.mm
www.gnlm.com.mm

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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

NATIONAL

General Aung San Declares Firm Stand Against Election Disruption

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

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



6 more illegal buildings destroyed; scam-related materials seized & burned in KK Park



Demolition measures ongoing in the KK Park Section 3, Myawady, Kayin State.

THE Myanmar government is systematically dismantling illegal buildings used for online scams and gambling in Shwe Kokko and KK Park areas through a joint team comprising security forces, administrative bodies and local officials. As part of the ongoing effort, six more illegal buildings in the KK Park area were demolished yesterday.

The latest demolitions took place in Section III of the Myawady-Maethawta-

lay (KK Park) area, where one four-storey building, two two-storey buildings and three single-storey buildings used for online fraud and gambling were dismantled. With these actions, a total of 525 illegal buildings were systematically demolished out of 635 identified in the KK Park area.

Besides, illegal buildings that were demolished using heavy machinery were further destroyed with fire barrels from

14 December to ensure destruction. As of today, five more two-storey buildings were fully destroyed, bringing the total number of buildings completely demolished by this method to 76.

Moreover, materials seized from online fraud and gambling activities in the KK Park area were also systematically destroyed yesterday by burning to prevent any reuse. The government is undertaking the eradication of online

An illegally built two-storey flat is seen before and after demolition.

fraud and gambling as a national duty and will continue coordinated efforts with domestic forces, as well as the governments of neighbouring countries to ensure that such activities cannot take root anywhere in Myanmar. — MNA/KZL

Monthly financial aid planned for Thabin artistes aged 90 and above

AS of January 2026, monthly financial support of K100,000 will be provided for senior theatrical performers aged 90 years and above, according to the Myanmar Theatrical Association (Central).

Under a nationwide survey, there are 53 elderly Thabin artistes aged 90 years and above, and K100,000 will be given to them monthly from a fund for veteran theatrical performers.

As the first contribution to the fund, Shwe Mann Thar Phoe Chit has already provided K5 million.

Depending on the funding,



The fourth paying homage ceremony to senior Thabin artistes.

the age limit will be relaxed, and the theatrical social welfare committee has provided assistance for Thabin performers' health, social and other issues, said the

Myanmar Theatrical Association.

Interested donors can contact the association to send their contribution to the fund, it urged. – MT/ZS

29th 5-digit online lottery waits first winner of the new year

THE 5-digit online lottery tickets can be bought at K1,000 from 16 to 31 December to be the first winner of the new year 2026 at the coming 29th opening, said the 5-digit Aung Bar Lay online lottery.

It opens on the 1st and 16th day of the month.

“Just a few days away, you will be the first winner of the new year 2026. Ticket sales will be closed by 11:59 am on 31 December. You will have a chance to find your luck only with K1,000 and win K100 million and other prizes, plus spin & win promotion,” it said.

At the previous 28th opening, Ko Thura Aung from Yangon Region's North Okkalapa Township won the jackpot prize of K200 million. He is a lottery enthusiast and buys Aung Bar Lay lottery since it was sold in printed paper, and he won the grand prize at the 28th opening of the online lottery from 9 tickets he bought with KBZPay.

Aung Bar Lay lottery tickets can be bought by dialling *117# by Mytel SIM or by Aung Bar Lay application. – MT/ZS

NATIONAL

Most Academy Award attendants lack knowledge of Myanmar cinema, says judge

MOST candidates who passed the first-round selection to serve as ceremonial attendants at the Academy Awards ceremony lack knowledge of Myanmar cinema, and some do not even watch Myanmar films, said two-time Academy Award winner May Than Nu, who served as a judge at the selection event.

The second-round selection of ceremonial attendants for the 2025 Myanmar Motion Pictures Academy Awards Ceremony to be held in Nay Pyi Taw took place on 29 December at the Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization's Golden Jubilee Hall in Bahan Township, Yangon Region.



Scene from the second-round selection event for Academy Awards attendants.

The remarks were made by May Than Nu in her capacity as a judge while assessing the majority of the candidates.

“Today, we asked questions related to general knowledge about cinema. Many of the young participants lack sufficient preparation. I have explained the selection system many times: the scores awarded by all judges are added together, and those with the highest marks are selected. Those who fail to advance simply have lower scores. It is encouraging to see that everyone is making an effort. What is interesting this year is the large number of male contestants. Selection for Academy Awards attendants is not about choosing actors; rather, we focus on physical appearance and how presentable the contestants look on stage,” May Than Nu added.

The judging panel for the second-round selection comprised Academy Award winners Khant Si Thu, Yan Aung, May Than Nu and Soe Myat Thuzar, along with Academy Award-winning directors Nyunt Myanmar Nyi Nyi Aung and Maung Thi.

Nearly 300 applicants have applied for the selection, and the Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization has announced that candidates who meet the stipulated criteria will be selected through successive rounds.

— ASH/KNN

East Yangon University to offer vocational courses for job-ready skills

EAST Yangon University will conduct vocational courses (Job-Ready Skills) starting from 5 January 2026 for the 2025-2026 Academic Year.

Those three-month courses include Basic Electrical Skills Course at the Department of Physics (every Tuesday, Thursday, Friday), Natural Fertilizer Production Course at Department of Botany (every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday) and Soil Measurement and Surveying Course at Department of Geology (every Monday, Wednesday, Friday), with a training fee of

K90,000 per course.

The trainees must be Myanmar citizens who have taken the matriculation exam. There is no age limit for attending the course. Each course will accept 40 trainees. Individuals can submit applications through the Academic Affairs Department between 29 December 2025 and 2 January 2026. They can enquire about details through the Department of Physics at 09 799631629, the Department of Botany at 09 448559113 and the Department of Geology at 09 450022435. — NN/KK



The facade of East Yangon University.

Popular vocalist to ring in New Year with countdown concert in Yangon

SINGER Ni Ni Khin Zaw will hold a New Year Countdown music concert at Judson Entertainment Bar in Mingala Taungnyunt Township, Yangon Region, according to information released by the singer.

At the concert, Ni Ni Khin Zaw's performances will be presented with top-quality musical backing by the Judson Band, and the show will also be enhanced by performances from the Secret Pieces dance crew.

“Are you ready to welcome Happy New Year 2026 together with Ni Ni? I'll be singing many of my songs, and we'll also count down to the New Year together. You'll also get to enjoy the amazing performances by the Secret Pieces Dance Crew, so don't forget the night of the 31st,” said Ni Ni Khin Zaw.

Ni Ni Khin Zaw also performed on 28 December, the fourth day of the 'Lucky Diamonds Myanmar December New Year's Eve Market', which is being held from 25 to 31 December at the Shwe Pyi Sone Hall, located on Union Road in Myitkyina. — ASH/KNN



A promotional poster for Ni Ni Khin Zaw's New Year Countdown music concert.

CTD to offer ASEAN National Assessor Training on 19-23 Jan 2026

THE Centre for Tourism Development (CTD) under the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism will open ASEAN National Assessor Training on 19-23 January (9 am to 4 pm), with a view to enhancing and certifying skills in competency-based assessment for professionals in the hotels and tourism sector.

The training fee is K100,000. The application form is available at the CTD or can be downloaded from <https://shorturl.at/3SrRl>. Applications can be sent to Gmail (tts.yangon@gmail.com). Individuals can enquire about details of the training through the following contact number 01 8377559 during office hours. — NN/KK

NATIONAL

Humanitarian assistance must be transitioned into a social protection system

- ❖ Humanitarian assistance should not stop merely after providing temporary relief.
- ❖ Such assistance must be transitioned into a social protection system.

(An excerpt from the speech delivered by State Administration Council Chairman, Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the opening ceremony of the Forum on Rebuilding Myanmar: Post-Earthquake Economic Recovery held on 30 May 2025)

A total of 63 container vessels are scheduled to call at the Yangon Port in January 2025, the Myanma Authority announced.

Eleven container vessels run by M/S Cosco Shipping Line, eight each by M6S CMA CGM Aaia Line and M/S SITC Shipping Line, six each by MSC One Line and M/S Samudera Shipping Line, five by M/S Maersk A/S Line and four each by M/S MSC Line and M/S Ti2 Logistics Line, three each by M/S BLPL Shipping Line, M/S Evergreen ASIA Line and M/S RCLL Line, and two by M/S Land and Sea are scheduled to dock at the Yangon Port in January.

Myanmar Port Authority has arranged maritime trade channels to handle increasing imports to meet domestic demand, to bolster exports, and to improve port capacity for sig-

63 container vessels slated to arrive at Yangon Port in Jan 2026



Containers are seen at the container yard at Yangon Port.

nificant arrivals of ships. Myanmar Port Authority notified that it will inform exporters and importers of ship arrival schedules in a timely manner upon an extended schedule. Yangon Port handled 59 container vessels in December 2025.

After the new navigation channel (Kings Bank Channel) accessing the inner Yangon River was found, the draft

extension work was accelerated. After that, the port can now handle larger ships. The container vessel MV SITC Zhaoming (185.99-metre LOA, 35.25-metre Beam, 29,232 GRT and 2,698 TEUs) of Hong-Kong based SITC Shipping Line docked at Asia World Port Terminal for the first time on 22 June, which is the largest ship that AWPT Port has handled.

From May 2021, the arrival of the ships at terminals in Yangon has increased again. Three new container vessels by Maersk Line Myanmar (SeaLand Maersk) started to run to fulfil the seaborne trade requirements in 2021. Earlier, the larger ships had draft problems, preventing sailing on the Yangon River. With the draft being extended up to 10 meters, the larger ocean liners can enter the Thilawa Port. — NN/KK

CBM sells US\$2.8M to import companies on 29 Dec



The general view of the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) in Yangon.

THE Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) sold over US\$2.3 million to edible oil-importing companies and over US\$464,000 to fuel oil-importing companies on 29 December.

CBM announced on 24 December that it would sell US\$23 million to fuel oil-importing companies.

Furthermore, CBM sold over \$540,000 to edible oil-importing

companies and \$550,000 to fuel oil-importing companies on that day.

CBM sold over \$358,000 to edible oil-importing companies and \$349,000 to fuel oil-importing companies on 23 December.

CBM sold over \$1 million to edible oil-importing companies and over \$653,000 to fuel oil-importing companies on 22 Decem-

ber, in addition to an injection of \$30,000 from CMP companies into the market.

CBM sold eight million baht to business entities on 18 December.

CBM made an injection of over \$21 million, 2.4 million yuan and 1.5 million baht in November.

CBM injected over \$2.48 million, 5.75 million yuan and 4.98 million baht in October, along with sales of over \$54 million purchased from CMP companies.

CBM aims to curb the instability in the foreign exchange market and currency devaluation. According to CBM's notification on 15 March 2024, it has been collaborating with law enforcement agencies to combat and prosecute those who attempt to manipulate the currency market under the existing laws. CBM allowed authorized dealers (private banks) to operate online foreign exchange trading freely as per the market rate, depending on supply and demand, starting from 5 December 2023. — NN/KK

Myeik University to recruit trainees for vocational courses

UNIVERSITY of Myeik will offer three-month vocational courses to provide job-ready skills starting from 5 January 2026.

University of Myeik will conduct soap and liquid soap making courses at the Department of Chemistry and artificial spawning in clams and meat yield enhancement courses at the Department of Marine Science in the 2025-2026 Academic Year.

Those who have taken the matriculation exam are eligible to attend the courses. The course fee is K90,000. The number of trainees is limited to 30.

The soap and liquid soap-making course will be open from 9 am to noon every weekend. Artificial Spawning in Clams and Meat Yield Enhancement Course will be offered from 9 am to 4 pm, with a maximum number of 40 trainees. Weekend classes will provide theory, and weekday classes will be conducted with practical approaches.

Those interested can enquire about details through the contact numbers of the Department of Chemistry and the Department of Marine Science at 09 422195339 and 09 429094006 respectively, and applications must be submitted to the Academic Affairs Department of University of Myeik by 2 January 2026. — NN/KK

Assess positive direction through Myanmar's elections

MYANMAR has conducted phase I of the multiparty democratic general election successfully. Even this single phase of the election established an important milestone for the nation. At the same time, it marks a political and historical milestone in which voters exercised their right to vote, expressed their will, and were able to experience and realize the essence of democracy.

An election is not solely about selecting national leaders or Hluttaw representatives; it is a process that highlights and reflects democratic values such as inclusive public participation, freedom and fairness, responsibility, and accountability. Owing to the collective efforts of elected representatives, political parties, administrative bodies, and international election observers who monitored and documented the various aspects of the election process, phase I of the election was successfully conducted and deserves to be commended and recorded.

Thanks to the international election observers and all media, the efforts of subcommissions of the Election Commission, polling station staff, security personnel, civil society organizations, those who assisted in all sectors to ensure the success of the election, political parties, and in particular the voters who came to cast their ballots with a strong sense of civic duty, were made known to the international community in a timely manner. As a result, the true conditions of Myanmar's election have now become known worldwide.

Commission, polling station staff, security personnel, civil society organizations, those who assisted in all sectors to ensure the success of the election, political parties, and in particular the voters who came to cast their ballots with a strong sense of civic duty, were made known to the international community in a timely manner. As a result, the true conditions of Myanmar's election have now become known worldwide.

A total of 4,863 candidates from 57 political parties, including independent candidates, will contest in relevant phases of the election. All political parties and Hluttaw candidates have been granted equal opportunities to campaign in accordance with the law and relevant regulations. Nationwide, there are a total of 21,517 polling stations, each staffed with systematically trained officers and polling station members. Arrangements have been made to ensure that voters at polling stations are able to cast their ballots freely, transparently, conveniently, and with ease. It is firmly believed and hoped that the successful conduct of the election will help advance Myanmar in a positive direction.

AS THE sun rises over quiet streets in Myanmar, monks walk barefoot through neighbourhoods, their alms bowls cradled in silence, while households wait at doorways with rice and curry in their hands. This simple morning scene, repeated daily across towns and villages, captures the rhythm of life in Myanmar, where tradition is not preserved in museums but lived through ordinary actions. Daily life here is shaped by long-held customs, shared responsibilities, and deep respect for community and belief. Even as modernization introduces new habits and technologies, these traditions continue to guide how people eat, dress, work, celebrate, and relate to one another. To understand Myanmar, therefore, is to look closely at everyday life, where heritage and modernity exist side by side.

Morning Rituals and Community Bonds

In many towns and villages, the day begins with the sound of temple bells or the chants of monks collecting alms. The practice of 'almsgiving' is not only a religious duty but also a social bond: households prepare rice and curry to offer monks, reinforcing generosity and spiritual merit.

Tea shops, meanwhile, serve as the heartbeat of community life. From dawn until late evening, locals gather to sip sweet, milky tea or strong black brews, accompanied by snacks like Samusas or Mohinga (Myanmar's beloved fish noodle soup). These tea shops are more than eateries – they are spaces for conversation,

Daily Life and Tradition in Myanmar: A Living Tapestry of Culture

By Yin Nwe Ko

storytelling, and informal debate, reflecting the communal spirit of Myanmar society.

Food as Cultural Identity

Cuisine is central to daily life, with meals reflecting both regional diversity and shared traditions. 'Mohinga', often considered the national dish, is enjoyed at breakfast, while curries, salads, and fermented fish paste (Ngapi) dominate lunch and dinner tables. Food preparation is often communal, especially during festivals or ceremonies. Neighbours and relatives gather to cook large pots of rice and curries, reinforcing the value of 'collective effort'. Traditional snacks like *Mont lone yay paw* (sticky rice balls served during the water festival) highlight how food is tied to seasonal celebrations and symbolic meanings.

Traditional Attire and Social Etiquette

Clothing in Myanmar reflects both practicality and cultural pride. The 'Longyi', a cylindrical piece of cloth worn by men and women, is versatile and comfortable in the tropical climate. Patterns and colours often signal regional identity or social occasions.

Social etiquette is deeply rooted in respect. Elders are greeted with bowed heads and polite language, while shoes are removed before entering homes or religious sites. These gestures embody humility and reverence, values that permeate everyday interactions.

Festivals and Seasonal Rhythms

Myanmar's calendar is punctuated by vibrant festivals that blend religious devotion with communal joy. The 'Thingyan Water Festival', marking the Burmese New Year, is perhaps the most famous. Streets transform into arenas of playful water-throwing, symbolizing purification and renewal. Families also prepare traditional foods and visit pagodas, reinforcing both spiritual and social ties.

Other festivals, such as *Thadingyut* (Festival of Lights) and *Tazaungdine* (celebrating the end of Buddhist Lent), illuminate towns with lanterns and candles. These events are not only religious observances but also opportunities for families to reunite, neighbours to collaborate, and communities to celebrate shared identity.



Work, Livelihoods, and Craft Traditions

Daily life is shaped by liveli-

hoods that often blend tradition with necessity. In rural areas, farming remains central, with

rice cultivation dominating the landscape. Farmers follow seasonal cycles, guided by ancestral

knowledge of weather and soil. Craft traditions also thrive. From weaving silk longyis in Amarapura to carving intricate wood designs in Mandalay, artisans preserve skills passed down through generations. These crafts are not merely economic activities – they are cultural expressions that embody patience, artistry, and pride.

Religion and Spiritual Practices

Buddhism permeates daily life, influencing values, rituals, and community structures. Pagodas, large and small, dot the landscape, serving as focal points for meditation, merit-making, and festivals. Families often dedicate time to visiting pagodas, offering flowers, and lighting candles. Spiritual practices extend beyond Buddhism. In many regions, animist traditions coexist, with offerings made to Nats (spirits) believed to protect households and villages. This blend of beliefs reflects Myanmar's cultural pluralism and resilience.

Family and Social Structures

Family remains the cornerstone of daily life. Extended families often live together, with grandparents playing active roles in raising children. Respect for elders is deeply ingrained, and decisions are often made collectively. Marriage ceremonies, funerals, and other life-cycle events are community affairs, where traditions guide rituals and reinforce social bonds. Even in urban areas, where nuclear families are more common, the sense of extended kinship remains strong.

Modern Influences and Adaptations

While tradition anchors daily life, modern influences are reshaping routines. Smartphones and social media connect people across distances, while urban youth experiment with global fashion alongside traditional Longyis. Education and migration also introduce new perspectives. Students in Yangon or Mandalay may balance traditional ceremonies with modern aspirations, reflecting the dynamic interplay between heritage and progress. Yet, even amid change, traditions remain resilient, adapting without losing their essence.

In Myanmar, tradition is not a distant memory but a living presence woven into daily routines. From early-morning almsgiving and lively tea shop conversations to festive water-throwing during Thingyan and quiet family meals at home, ordinary moments carry cultural meaning. These practices teach generosity, respect for elders, patience, and a strong sense of community. While modern influences are reshaping lifestyles, they have not erased these values; instead, traditions continue to adapt and endure. In a rapidly globalizing world, Myanmar's daily life offers an important reminder that progress does not require the loss of identity. By honouring the past while embracing change, Myanmar shows how culture can remain alive – not frozen, but evolving – passed from one generation to the next through the simple acts of everyday living.

The voice of the people is the heartbeat of democracy.

IN considering the role of elections in society, it is essential first to define the key concepts at hand. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, an **election** is “a formal and organized choice by vote of a person for a political office or other position”, while *Merriam-Webster* describes it as “the act or process of choosing someone for office by voting”. The word **democracy** denotes “government by the people, exercised either directly or through elected representatives,” highlighting the principles of participation, representation, and accountability.

I Say What I See: Election – Part of Perfection Towards Restoration of Democracy

The emergence of capable and responsible representatives through elections is widely regarded as a vital step in advancing national development and restoring democratic governance.

By @ Editor

Meanwhile, **restoration** refers to “the act of returning something to a former condition or position.” Drawing from an English-Myanmar dictionary, these terms resonate similarly in the local context, emphasizing that an election is

not merely a procedural event but a vital instrument in the journey towards reinstating democratic governance. Understanding these definitions provides a foundation for exploring how elections serve as both a practical and symbolic

step towards the broader goal of political and social restoration.

In the real-world context of our society, elections are far more than procedural exercises; they are a mirror reflecting the aspirations, concerns, and collective voice of the people. Democracy, in practice, is not an abstract ideal but a lived experience, visible in

how communities engage in discussions, express opinions, and participate in decision-making processes that shape their daily lives. Restoration, therefore, extends beyond the mere reestablishment of political structures; it signifies the renewal of trust, accountability, and hope within the social fabric. In this light, each election becomes

both a practical mechanism and a symbolic milestone, marking steps towards a governance system that resonates with the values, needs, and voices of the society it serves.

While each society navigates its unique path, there are valuable lessons to be drawn from nations striving to establish flourishing democracies. In such contexts,

the absence of robust participation, transparency, or civic education often leads to stagnation or mistrust in governance systems. Observing these patterns, even in a general sense, underscores the importance of vigilance, inclusivity, and informed engagement in electoral processes. By reflecting on both successes and setbacks observed elsewhere, citizens and stakeholders can better appreciate that elections are not isolated events but integral components of a broader, ongoing effort to strengthen democratic institutions and restore public confidence in governance.

Elections, in their ideal form, represent a moment of alignment

between the will of the people and the structures of governance – a step towards what might be called the “perfection” of democratic restoration. This perfection does not imply flawlessness but rather the harmonious convergence of participation, fairness, and accountability, where citizens feel empowered to shape the trajectory of their society. When conducted with integrity and embraced with civic responsibility, elections become more than a formal procedure; they become a unifying experience that reaffirms the social contract and strengthens the moral foundation of governance.

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ESSAY/SCI/ENVIRON:
WORLD

I Say What I See: Election – Part of Perfection
Towards Restoration of Democracy

FROM PAGE 9

In this sense, each electoral cycle is both a reflection of societal maturity and a building block in the gradual, cumulative process of restoring a democracy that is responsive, resilient, and reflective of its people’s aspirations.

Central to the effectiveness

of any election is the active participation of the public, for democracy cannot thrive through structures alone. Citizens’ engagement, through informed voting, civic dialogue, and vigilance over the electoral process, ensures that elections reflect genuine collective will rather than mere formalities. Public par-

ticipation transforms elections from procedural exercises into powerful instruments of social renewal, reinforcing accountability and encouraging transparency. In essence, it is the involvement of every member of society that breathes life into the mechanisms of democracy and sustains the momentum of restoration, mak-

ing the promise of governance by the people not just theoretical but tangible.

In conclusion, elections serve as a cornerstone in the ongoing journey towards democratic restoration, embodying the convergence of individual voices, collective aspirations, and societal responsibility. By understanding their significance, learning from global experiences, and embracing the call for active participation, citizens contribute to a

process that is both practical and symbolic – a process that gradually strengthens the foundations of accountable, representative governance. Ultimately, each election is more than a moment in time; it is a reaffirmation of the enduring human pursuit of justice, equity, and the perfection of a democracy restored to serve its people.

Every vote casts a stone in the river of restoration, rippling towards a stronger democracy.

Public chooses names for
China’s space-travelled mice

News agency Xinhua invited the public to propose names online



This file photo shows a mice, which took part in a recent mission aboard China’s space station. PHOTO: XINHUA

A research team from the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) revealed the names of the four mice, which were part of a

recent mission aboard China’s space station, during a public science event on Saturday.

The mice have been named

Wangtian, Lanyue, Zhuiyun, and Zhumeng, which respectively translate to “gaze at the sky”, “reach for the moon”, “chase the clouds” and “follow the dream”. The announcement was accompanied by the release of cartoon illustrations of the mice, co-created with Xinhua News Agency.

On 31 October, the four mice — numbered 6, 98, 154 and 186 — were chosen from 48 candidates and flown aboard the Shenzhou XXI crewed spacecraft to their temporary habitat in space. During the mission, Xinhua invited the public to propose names for the mice, with the final selections based on popular submissions online.

The mice safely returned to Earth with the Shenzhou-20 crew on 14 November. — Xinhua

Kyrgyzstan launches
waste-to-energy plant

A Chinese-funded waste-to-energy plant, which generates electricity from solid waste recycling, was launched Saturday in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan.

Speaking at the launch ceremony, Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov said the factory would help solve waste processing issues while generating electricity and creating jobs.

He added that the project would significantly improve the environmental conditions in the capital and contribute to the electricity supply for the population.

In an interview with the press, Vice-Mayor of Bishkek Ramiz Aliev said that the project would aid the city’s fight against smog by converting waste into clean energy. — Xinhua

Iraqis cover soil with clay
to curb sandstorms

DEEP in Iraq’s southern desert, bulldozers and earthmovers spread layers of moist clay over sand dunes as part of a broader effort to fight increasingly frequent sandstorms.

Iraq has long suffered from sand and dust storms, but in recent years they have become more frequent and intense as the country falls prey to the effects of climate change.

Sand and dust storms — driven by severe drought, rising temperatures and deforestation — have cloaked cities and villages in an endless ochre haze, grounded flights and filled hospitals with patients suffering from breathing difficulties. Iraqi authorities have warned that these suffocating storms will intensify further, adding urgency to address the root of the problem. — AFP



A short-term objective is to shield a southern highway where many traffic accidents have occurred due to poor visibility during dust storms. PHOTO: AFP

David Sacks: Trump’s AI power broker

FROM a total Washington novice, Silicon Valley investor David Sacks has against expectations emerged as one of the most successful members of the second Trump administration.

He is officially chair of President Donald Trump’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology.

However, in the White House he is referred to as the AI and crypto tsar, there to guide the president through

the technology revolutions in which the United States play a central role.

“I am grateful we have him,” OpenAI boss Sam Altman said in a post on X.

“While Americans bicker, our rivals are studying David’s every move,” billionaire Salesforce CEO Marc Benioff chimed in.

Those supportive posts responded to a New York Times investigation highlighting

Sacks’s investments in technology companies benefiting from White House AI support.

Sacks dismissed the report as an “anti-truth” hit job by liberal media.

But the episode confirmed that this South African-born outsider has become a force in Trump’s Washington, outlasting his friend Elon Musk, whose White House career ended in acrimony after less than six months. — AFP

Thailand leverages nighttime economy to boost tourism

The success of the festival reflects the role of major cultural events in stimulating travel demand and strengthening Bangkok's international appeal.

AS thousands of fireworks illuminated the sky over the Chao Phraya River, marking the finale of the annual light festival, Thailand has signaled a step forward in its strategy to revitalize the tourism sector through the “night economy”.

The Vijit Chao Phraya 2025 festival transformed Bangkok’s main riverbank into an open-air cultural stage, with 15 curated locations ranging from historic

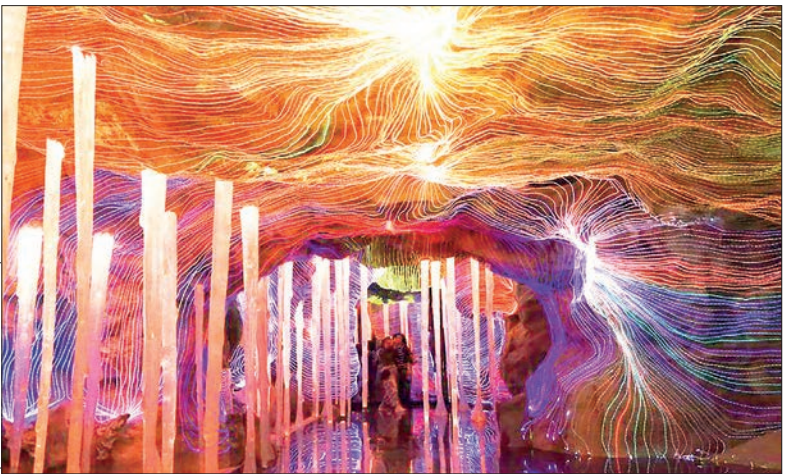
sites and temples to bridges and contemporary landmarks adorned with multimedia light installations, laser effects, projection mapping, and drone shows.

Speaking at the closing night on Tuesday, Minister of Tourism and Sports Atthakorn Sirilatthayakorn said the success of the festival reflects the role of major cultural events in stimulating travel demand and strengthening Bangkok’s

international appeal.

Thailand’s 45-day Bangkok riverside light festival drew 1.7 million visitors, generating 5.5 billion baht (\$177M) in revenue, per TAT. — Xinhua

Lights are seen at Nasatta Park in Ratchaburi province, Thailand, 21 November 2025. Rachen Sageamsak **PHOTO: RACHEN SAGEAMSAK/XINHUA/FILE**



How crane games conquered Japan’s arcades



This picture taken on 14 November 2025 shows staff members of Stand-by Amusement Company standing by claw crane game machines during the Amusement Expo 2025 in Tokyo. **PHOTO: AFP**

TOKYO’S arcades thrive on claw machines (crane games), which dominate floors and sustain the industry amid 80 per cent closures since 1989. Revenues from these games rose from 20 per cent in 1993 to over 60 per cent per the Japan Amusement Industry Association. Expert Morihiro Shigihara credits them for supporting operators, manufacturers, and suppliers.

Celebrating 60 years, the machines evolved from pre-WWII cigarette dispensers to

Sega’s 1985 “UFO Catcher” with plush toys, licensed anime, manga, and Disney characters. Student Suzuna Nogi spends up to 3,000 yen (\$19) weekly for the thrill and accomplishment, despite adjustable claw difficulty.

Fuelled by “oshikatsu” fan culture, prizes target demographics like Pokemon enthusiasts. Arcades transformed from dark, male-only spots to family-friendly hangouts, attracting women and redefining urban leisure. — AFP

Elephants take part in penalty shootout competition at annual mammoth festival in Nepal

ELEPHANTS in Nepal on Friday took part in a penalty shootout competition during the annual elephant festival of the Himalayan nation in the tourist town of Sauraha.

The elephants marched along the streets from the Chitwan National Park gate to the festival venue, where they participated in the penalty shootout competition, draw-

ing hundreds of spectators.

Held after a gap of several years following objections from animal rights activists, the 19th edition of the Elephant and Tourism Festival this year introduced the penalty shootout competition.

A major tourist destination in Chitwan, Sauraha has revamped its tourism campaign this year, which is

expected to help revive tourism and promote elephant conservation.

“The Chitwan elephant festival has been driving people from all across the nation. It is a celebration for us as well as the people who come here to attend this,” Sante Mahato, an elephant caretaker of Sauraha, told ANI. — ANI



The elephants marched along the streets from the Chitwan National Park gate to the festival venue. **PHOTO: ANI**

French actress Brigitte Bardot dead at 91

FRENCH film legend Brigitte Bardot, a cinema icon of the 1950s and sixties who walked away from global stardom to become an animal rights protector, has died aged 91, her foundation said Sunday.

Bardot had rarely been seen in pub-

lic in recent months but was hospitalized in October and in November released a statement denying rumours that she had died. The foundation did not say when or where she died.

“The Brigitte Bardot Foundation announces with immense sadness the

death of its founder and president, Madame Brigitte Bardot, a world-renowned actress and singer, who chose to abandon her prestigious career to dedicate her life and energy to animal welfare and her foundation,” it said in a statement sent to AFP. — AFP

European stocks climb, silver rebounds

EUROPEAN stock markets rose Tuesday after Tokyo closed out a strong year, as silver prices rebounded amid volatile trading for the precious metal.

The dollar steadied against main rivals awaiting minutes from the Federal Reserve's most recent policy meeting, set to be scanned later in the day for clues on the outlook for US interest rates next year.

"Perhaps one of the biggest threats to stock indices for 2026 is an end to interest rate cuts, or even rate hikes in the major economies," Kathleen Brooks, research director at trading group XTB, noted Tuesday.

Investors, including central banks, have been piling into dollar-denominated silver and gold on expectations of more cuts



A man takes photographs of an electronic quotation board displaying the Nikkei Stock Average closing price on the Tokyo Stock Exchange in Tokyo on 30 December 2025. PHOTO: AFP

to US interest rates next year.

Gold, in particular, has rocketed to record highs this year thanks to its status as a safe haven investment amid geopolitical unrest.

The price of silver jumped more than three per cent to \$74.47 an ounce Tuesday, having reached a record-high \$84 on Monday before tumbling as investors booked profits.

Silver, a key industrial metal as well as being used for jewellery, has won additional support from tight supply concerns.

Equity traders were taking it easy in the last few days of 2025 following a stellar 12 months that have seen tech firms push several stock markets to all-time highs. — AFP

Türkiye enters 2026 with cooling inflation, lingering risks

TÜRKIYE is entering the new year with a significantly lower inflation rate and sustained economic growth, yet financial vulnerabilities, political uncertainty, and currency pressures continue to pose challenges to its economic outlook.

Official data from the Turkish Statistical Institute show the economy grew by 3.7 per cent year-on-year in the third

quarter of 2025, maintaining a prolonged growth streak, while the second quarter's annual growth was revised to around 4.9 per cent. Meanwhile, annual consumer inflation has retreated from a peak of around 75 per cent in May 2024 to about 31.07 per cent in November 2025, its lowest level in about four years.

This disinflation follows a period of aggressive monetary

tightening. The central bank's policy rate, which stood around 50 per cent in late 2024, was gradually cut to about 38 per cent by December 2025 as price pressures eased. "The decline in inflation is significant, but price growth is still very high by international standards," Senol Babuscu, a scholar at Ankara's Baskent University, told Xinhua. — Xinhua



People shop for clothes at a store in Ankara, Türkiye, 29 December 2025. PHOTO: XINHUA

Laos emphasizes agriculture sector to strengthen development

AGRICULTURAL production has continued to grow, contributing to socio-economic development, with the Lao government emphasizing the vital role of agriculture and forestry as the foundation for sustainable national development.

Speaking at a ceremony on Monday to mark 60 years of agricultural and forestry development, Lao Minister of Agriculture and Environment Linkham

Douangsavanh highlighted the significant progress of the sectors over the past six decades.

Over the past five years, the agricultural sector has grown at an average rate of 2.75 per cent per year, contributing about 19 per cent to the country's gross domestic product (GDP), according to a report issued by the Lao Ministry of Agriculture and Environment on Tuesday. — Xinhua

Mongolia's foreign tourist arrivals up 5% in 2025

TOURIST arrivals to Mongolia grew by five per cent year-on-year in 2025, according to official data released by the Mongolian Tourism Organization on Tuesday.

Mongolia recorded a total of 846,103 inbound tourist visits by foreign passport holders from January to December, the data showed. According to the Ministry of Culture, Sport, Tourism and Youth, the Mongolian government has decided to continue the

"Years to Visit Mongolia" tourism programme until 2028 to promote the development of four-season tourism in the country.

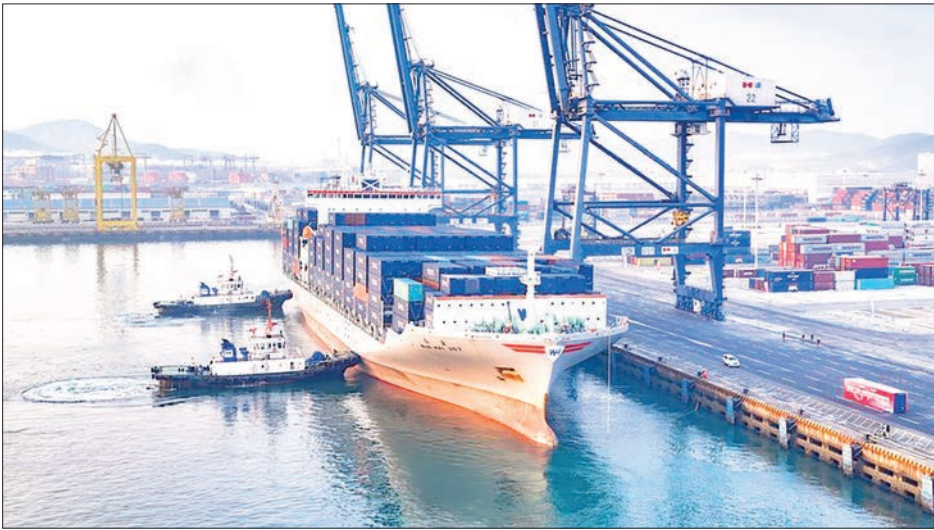
Currently, Mongolia's economy remains heavily dependent on the export of mineral resources. Tourism promotion is considered one of the priorities for diversifying the country's economy and increasing the competitiveness of its tourism in the context of global competition. — Xinhua

China a key engine of global trade growth: UN trade official

AS lingering uncertainty and rising protectionism continue to weigh on the global economy, China remains a key engine of global trade and economic growth, a senior United Nations trade official has said.

In a recent interview with Xinhua, Luz Maria de la Mora, director of the Division on International Trade and Commodities at UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), warned that shifts in US tariff policy since the beginning of this year have generated significant uncertainty for international trade and investment.

According to de la Mora, the United States has raised average tariff levels from 2.6 per cent at the start of this year to 17.9 per cent currently.



This photo taken on 2 January 2024 shows a container ship named “Wan Hai 357” berthing at the Dalian port in northeast China’s Liaoning Province. The container ship arrived at the Dalian port on Tuesday, marking the launch of a regular container ship route linking the port and the west coast of South America. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

“That kind of uncertainty normally has an impact on investors, on trade partners, and also on the way in which supply chains are working,” she said, add-

ing that such disruptions not only affect US imports and global trade but also weaken trade’s contribution to overall economic growth.

Looking ahead, de la Mora said global economic growth is expected to slow further. “Moving towards 2026, we are expecting to see a slowdown in the

rate of growth of the global economy,” she said, noting that the trend has already been evident throughout 2025.

According to UNCTAD’s Trade and Development Report 2025, global economic growth is projected to decelerate from 2.9 per cent in 2024 to 2.6 per cent in 2025 and remain subdued at around 2.6 per cent in 2026, well below the pre-pandemic trend of about three per cent.

De la Mora predicted that the main drivers of trade growth in 2026 will increasingly come from the Global South. Trade among developing economies, known as South-South trade, now accounts for more than 40 per cent of global trade, she noted. — Xinhua

Pakistan’s GDP grows 3.71% in first quarter of FY2026: minister

PAKISTAN recorded a gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 3.71 per cent in the first quarter of fiscal year 2025-26 (FY2026), Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal said on Tuesday.

The minister said the growth rate was 2.15 percentage points higher than that recorded in the corresponding quarter of FY2025, describing it as a qualitative improvement in the country’s economic trajectory. He said the growth was driven mainly by the industrial sector, which expanded by 9.38 per cent in the first quarter of FY2026, compared with 0.12 per cent in the same period of the previous fiscal year. — Xinhua

SoftBank Group to acquire data centre investor DigitalBridge for \$4 bln

SOFTBANK Group Corp said Monday it will acquire US data centre investment company DigitalBridge Group Inc for roughly \$4 billion to beef up its ability to build and finance infrastructure for new artificial intelligence services. SoftBank will indirectly acquire all the

outstanding DigitalBridge common stock for \$16 per share, with the purchase expected to close in the second half of 2026. The Japanese conglomerate led by CEO Masayoshi Son has focused its investment on artificial intelligence-related ventures. — Kyodo

Thailand’s industrial output turns downward in Nov

THAILAND’S industrial output contracted in November, weighed down by lower petroleum production and a sharply stronger baht currency, official data showed on Monday.

The Southeast Asian country’s manufacturing production index (MPI) sank 4.24 per cent last month compared to a year earlier, according to

the Ministry of Industry.

The decline was primarily attributed to major turnaround maintenance of oil refinery plants, while the strengthening of the baht hampered export competitiveness by raising prices abroad, said Supakit Boonsiri, director-general of the ministry’s Office of Industrial Economics. — Xinhua

India’s industrial production grows 6.7% in Nov

INDIA’S factory activity growth, determined by the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), grew 6.7 per cent in November, according to the latest government data.

The IIP growth rate for November is 6.7 per cent compared with a quick estimate of 0.4 per cent in October, reads the data issued by the federal Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation on Monday.

The ministry stated that the surge in industrial output was driven by an eight-per-cent growth in the manufacturing sector. The growth rates of the three sectors, mining, manufacturing and electricity, for November are 5.4 per cent, eight per cent and minus 1.5 per cent, respectively, data from the ministry showed. — Xinhua

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V TC MESSENGER VOY.NO. (158N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V TC MESSENGER VOY.NO. (158N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **31-12-2025** 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 A.M to 11:20 A.M and 12 NOON to 4 P.M to Claim’s Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES

Notice for change of distributor

We, **Pilarquim (Shanghai) Co., Ltd**, would like to change the Distributor of the following products, which registered under Pesticide Registration Board, Myanmar, from **Marga Min Co., Ltd** to **Buffalo Agro Science Co., Ltd**. If any objection or enquiry, please contact to Co-Secretary, Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Department of Agriculture, West Gyogone, Insein township, Yangon from here to next two weeks.

No	Old Distributor	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Reg. Type	Reg. Number	New Distributor
1	Marga Min Co., Ltd	Pilarich	Chlorothalonil 75% WP	Full	FF2025-597	Buffalo Agro Science Co., Ltd
2		Pilarzeb	Mancozeb 80% WP	Full	FF2025-595	

Buffalo Agro Science Co., Ltd. (Address: No (1), Block-22, Nawaday Garden Housing, Hlaing Thar Yar Township, Yangon Region, Myanmar. Ph: 09755779581, 09403723854)

ROLLING UPDATES
WORLD



US President Donald Trump greets Russian President Vladimir Putin on the tarmac after they arrived to attend a meeting at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Anchorage, Alaska, the United States. PHOTO: SPUTNIK

Putin, Trump hold phone call
on progress in latest
US-Ukraine talks: Kremlin aide

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin held a phone call with US President Donald Trump on the progress in the latest US-Ukraine negotiations, Russian Presidential Aide Yuri Ushakov said Monday.

“President Trump and his key advisors participating in the call provided a detailed, comprehensive briefing on the main outcomes of the previous day’s negotiations with the Ukrainian delegation held at Mar-a-Lago,” Ushakov told the press.

Trump also informed Putin that

he had advised Zelensky against seeking a military respite for Ukraine, urging instead a focus on reaching comprehensive and binding agreements, Ushakov said.

Putin emphasized that the Russian side intends to continue engaging in close and productive cooperation with its US partners to explore pathways towards achieving peace, Ushakov said.

Ushakov also revealed that Trump was shocked and outraged by the news of Kyiv’s overnight drone

attack on the Russian presidential residence in Novgorod, saying that the US president “could never have imagined such reckless actions on the part of Ukraine”.

In 2025, Putin held 17 contacts with US representatives, including 10 phone calls with Trump, according to Ushakov. The White House also confirmed the phone call between Trump and Putin on Monday morning, the second conversation between the two presidents in the past two days. — Xinhua

NEWS IN BRIEF

Over 3,000 nomination papers collected for Bangladesh’s 13th general election

MORE than 3,000 nomination papers have been collected from 69 returning officers to contest the polls for Bangladesh’s 13th general election to be held on 12 February next year, according to the Bangladeshi Election Commission. The deadline for submitting nomination papers for the election expired on Monday.

The Election Commission last month said that more than 127 million voters had been registered for the election for the first time since a mass uprising toppled then Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina last year. — Xinhua

India authorities undertake strict measures to control avian flu in Kerala

INDIAN authorities have undertaken strict measures in the southern state of Kerala following the outbreak of bird flu (avian influenza H5N1), officials said Tuesday.

The outbreak has been reported mainly in Alappuzha district, about 154 kilometres north of Thiruvananthapuram, the capital city of Kerala. Officials from the animal husbandry department have ordered the culling of poultry birds within a one-kilometre radius of the epicentre. — Xinhua

Global climate change causes more flood incidents in Malaysia

GLOBAL climate change had multiple environmental impacts in Malaysia in 2024, including an increase in flood incidents to 1,345 cases from 809 cases in 2023, official data showed Tuesday.

The maximum mean temperature recorded from 42 stations showed a decrease in 33 stations between 0.1 degrees Celcius and 1.3 degrees Celcius, while only two stations recorded a marginal increase as compared to 2023, the Department of Statistics Malaysia said in a statement. — Xinhua

Saudi Arabia condemns ‘dangerous’ UAE moves in Yemen, bombs arms shipment

SAUDI Arabia declared a UAE-backed separatist advance in Yemen a threat to the kingdom’s national security on Tuesday and called Abu Dhabi’s actions “highly dangerous”, as the rivalry between the Gulf monarchies boiled over into an open dispute.

The strongly worded foreign ministry statement came hours after the Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen said it had struck a United Arab Emirates weapons shipment destined for separatist forces.

“The steps taken by the UAE are considered highly dangerous,” it said, adding “the Kingdom stresses that any threat to its national security is a red line, and the Kingdom will not hesitate to take all necessary steps and measures to confront and neutralize any such threat”.

In recent weeks, separatists backed by the UAE seeking to revive the formerly independent state of South Yemen have made sweeping territorial gains in a lightning offensive.

Experts say their successes have embarrassed Saudi Arabia, a regional heavyweight and the main backer of the internationally recognized Yemeni government. — AFP

This video screenshot shows militants affiliated with the Southern Transitional Council (STC) near the site of airstrikes in Hadramout, Yemen, 26 December 2025. PHOTO: STC/HANDOUT VIA XINHUA



SPORTS

Infantino defends World Cup ticket prices, cites 'crazy' demand

FIFA President Gianni Infantino on Monday defended controversial ticket prices for the 2026 World Cup, revealing that organizers had received a record 150 million requests for tickets in the past two weeks.

Speaking at the World Sports Summit in Dubai, Infantino stressed that all revenues from next year's tournament in the United States, Mexico and Canada would be pumped back into football around the world.

Infantino's comments were his first public remarks since the ticketing furore erupted earlier this month, with fan groups branding ticket prices as "extortionate" and "astronomical".

FIFA later responded to the criticism by announcing that a



FIFA President Gianni Infantino speaks during the FIFA World Cup 2026 official match schedule announcement in Washington, DC, on 6 December 2025. PHOTO: AFP

sliver of tickets on sale would be priced at \$60. "In the last few days, you've probably seen there is a lot of debate about ticketing and ticket prices," Infantino told the Dubai conference on Monday. "We have six, seven million

tickets on sale and we started two weeks ago. I can tell you in two weeks, 15 days, we received 150 million ticket requests. This shows how powerful the World Cup is."

Infantino said the majority of ticket requests had come from the United States, followed by requests from Germany and Britain.

"If you think that in 100 years of history of the World Cup, FIFA has sold 44 million tickets in total, so in two weeks for the next World Cup, we could have filled 300 years of World Cups," Infantino said. "This is absolutely crazy."

"And what is important, what is crucial is that the revenues that are generated from

this are going back to the game all over the world and FIFA is the only organization in the world...that finances football in the entire world.

"Without FIFA there will be no football in 150 countries in the world. There is football thanks to these revenues that we generate from the World Cup which we reinvest all over the world."

Fan group Football Supporters Europe (FSE) had been among the most prominent critics of FIFA's pricing strategy for 2026.

The group said earlier this month tickets would cost almost five times more than tickets for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar. — AFP

Hosts Morocco cruise as South Africa reach Cup of Nations last 16



Tunisia's midfielder (11) Ismael Gharbi scores a penalty during the Africa Cup of Nations (CAN) Group C football match between Tanzania and Tunisia at Rabat Olympic Stadium in Rabat on 30 December 2025. PHOTO: AFP

AYOUB El Kaabi's brace helped Morocco to a 3-0 win over Zambia on Monday as the Africa Cup of Nations hosts cruised into the last 16 while South Africa beat Zimbabwe 3-2 to also secure a berth in the knockout phase.

African player of the year

Achraf Hakimi made his comeback from almost two months out injured for Morocco as Mali also qualified for the next round and Mohamed Salah was rested for Egypt's 0-0 draw against Angola.

Morocco are the tournament favourites as the host

nation and Africa's top-ranked team but they were booed off by supporters following a 1-1 draw against Mali in their last outing.

Nevertheless, Walid Regragui's team knew a win against Zambia at the Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium in capital Rabat would guarantee their progress to the next round in first place in Group A and they outclassed their opponents.

Olympiakos striker El Kaabi nodded in an early opener and scored an overhead kick shortly after half-time, with both of his goals set up by the outstanding Azzedine Ounahi.

In between, Real Madrid attacking midfielder Brahim Diaz swept home Morocco's second goal on 27 minutes at the end of a fine team move, again involving Ounahi. — AFP

Liverpool specialist coach exits after set-piece struggles

LIVERPOOL set-piece coach Aaron Briggs has left the club with immediate effect following the Premier League champions' poor performance in that area, it was announced Tuesday.

Santiago Bueno's goal for relegation-threatened Wolves on Saturday was the 12th time in 18 league matches Liverpool had conceded from a corner, free-kick or throw-in.

No team in Europe's top five leagues has conceded more this season, with Arne Slot's men scoring just three goals from set-pieces this term.

It is understood Briggs, a former Manchester City analyst who became an exclusive set-piece coach in September, and

Liverpool reached an agreement over his departure from Anfield.

"Having joined the club in July 2024 — initially in the role of individual development coach — Briggs contributed to our Premier League title success last season as a member of Arne Slot's backroom staff," said a Liverpool statement.

"He leaves with the appreciation and best wishes of everyone at the club."

Only 18th-placed West Ham (10) have conceded more than Liverpool's seven goals from corners in this season's Premier League. The Reds' three goals conceded from throw-ins is the joint-most in the league alongside Newcastle. — AFP



Liverpool's German midfielder (7) Florian Wirtz shoots to score their second goal during the English Premier League football match between Liverpool and Wolverhampton Wanderers at Anfield in Liverpool, north west England, on 27 December 2025. PHOTO: AFP

Elche's Barcelona loanee Hector Fort sidelined after shoulder operation

ELCHE defender Hector Fort has undergone an operation on a dislocated left shoulder, the club has confirmed.

The 19-year-old, who is on loan from FC Barcelona

with the recently promoted club, suffered the injury as he scored the opening goal in Elche's 4-0 win at home to Rayo Vallecano on 21 December.

"Hector Fort has been operated on by the FC Barcelona medical services after the injury suffered against Rayo Vallecano," explained Elche in a statement. — Xinhua

Putin, Trump hold
phone call on progress in latest
US-Ukraine talks: Kremlin aide
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WORLD

BRICS in 2025: Building a new multipolar world order brick by brick

2025 WAS a banner year for BRICS – the group of emerging economies aiming to counter-balance Western-dominated economic and financial institutions and geopolitical hegemony.

In the outgoing year, the bloc grew to include Indonesia, the massive, \$1.5T Southeast Asian economy in the top ten of countries globally by PPP GDP. It also welcomed ten new partner countries: Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Nigeria and Uganda. More countries have applied for partner and full member status.

2025 was also a year of institution building, including the creation of new financial mechanisms, and increased trade using local currencies to minimize the risk of pressure from the West, and the US dollar, often used as a tool of financial warfare.

Together, BRICS represents a massive and growing counterweight to Western institutions, and a transition to global multipolarity. — SPUTNIK



Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chinese Premier Li Qiang, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi attend a family photo opportunity during the 17th BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. **PHOTO: SPUTNIK**

India says its economy has overtaken Japan, eyes Germany

INDIA has overtaken Japan as the world's fourth-biggest economy -- and officials hope to pass Germany within three years, the government's end-of-year economic review calculates.

Official confirmation however depends on data due in 2026 when final

annual gross domestic product figures are released, with the International Monetary Fund suggesting India will cross over Japan next year.

"India is among the world's fastest-growing major economies and is well-positioned to sustain this momen-

tum," read the government economic briefing note, which was released late Monday.

"With GDP valued at \$4.18 trillion, India has surpassed Japan to become the world's fourth-largest economy, and is poised to displace Germany from the third rank in the next two-and-a-half to three years, with projected GDP of \$7.3 trillion by 2030."

IMF projections for 2026 put India's economy at \$4.51 trillion, compared with Japan's \$4.46 trillion.

New Delhi's upbeat assessment comes despite economic worries after Washington in August hit New Delhi with huge tariffs over its purchases of Russian oil.

India said continued growth reflects its "resilience amid persistent global trade uncertainties".

But other measurements offer a less rosy outlook.

In terms of population, India overtook neighbouring China as the most populous nation in 2023. — AFP

France pushes back plastic cup ban by four years

THE French government on Tuesday postponed a ban on plastic throwaway cups by four years to 2030 because of difficulties finding alternatives.

The ban was meant to start on 1 January. But the ministry for ecological transition said that results from a recent review into the "technical feasibility of eliminating plastic from cups" justified pushing back the deadline.

It said in an official decree that a new review would be carried out in 2028 of "progress made in replacing single-use plastic cups". It added that the ban would now start 1 January, 2030, when companies would have 12 months to get rid of their stock.

France has gradually rolled out bans on single-use plastic products over the past decade as environmental campaigners step up warnings about their impact on rivers and oceans. — AFP



An aerial view shows the city's skyline in Bengaluru on 20 November 2025. **PHOTO: AFP**