

The **Global** **NEW LIGHT** of **MYANMAR**

# Large crowd enjoys final day of Union-Level MSME Product Exhibition and Competition

**E**MPLOYEES from ministries, families, students, local people from all over the country, and MSME entrepreneurs flocked to the Union-Level MSME Product Exhibition and Competition at Tabaung Ground yesterday to commemorate the 78<sup>th</sup> Union Day, as it was the last day of the exhibition, coinciding with a holiday.

Officials at each booth provided explanations and answered questions about local products to visitors from various regions and states, including the Nay Pyi Taw Council Area. Due to the large number of attendees, some local products were sold out.

Similarly, the product showrooms of the manufacturing cooperative societies, the Ministry of Industry, the Myanmar Economic Corporation (MEC), the Myanmar Economic Holdings Public Company Limited, and the Myanmar Oil Millers Association sold food products and consumer goods at special prices, attracting large crowds of buyers.

Local and traditional foods from various regions and states were sold at low prices at ethnic food stalls, drawing large crowds of buyers and consumers, which led to a shortage of these ethnic traditional foods.

During the exhibition, the Ministry of Commerce's booth distributed rice,



People are visiting the booth of agricultural technology and products contributing to MSME at Union-level MSME product exhibition and competition in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: KO AYE THAN**

oil, and chickpeas daily. Yesterday, many festival-goers were seen lining up to receive them.

On the final day of the exhibition, MSME entrepreneurs were making efforts to connect with domestic and foreign markets, attract investment, and access one-stop services from relevant ministries for the development of MSME businesses.

In the evening, artistes from MRTV and the Department of Fine Arts performed a variety of popular songs, providing a peaceful and enjoyable experience for visitors. The audience was seen participating in the event both individually and in groups, enjoying the atmosphere.

— Than Min Aung & Aung Min Tun/TH



## MR upgrading rails and bridges to allow running of high-speed trains on Pyinmana-Toungoo section



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Japan to recruit more than 1,100 Myanmar workers



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Charcoal substitute briquette sells well



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Endangered migratory birds arriving at Inlay Lake Wildlife Sanctuary



# NATIONAL

## Quality Seeds and Techniques: The Backbone of Agriculture

BASICALLY, thriving agriculture requires quality seeds, fertile soil, natural and inorganic fertilizers, an adequate volume of agricultural water, and proper farming techniques.

*(Excerpt from the speech given by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting with the Magway Region government and district-level departmental officials on 24 May 2024 to talk about regional development)*

## Santawshin Myat Mawtinsun Pagoda Festival to be held from late Feb to mid-March

THE Buddha Pujaniya Festival at the Santawshin Myat Mawtinsun Pagoda in Hainggyikyun Town, Ngaputaw Township, Pathein District, Ayeyawady Region, will be held on a grand scale, according to a member of the pagoda’s board of trustees.

The festival takes place every year from the 1<sup>st</sup> Waxing to the Full Moon of Taboung. This year, it will be held from 27 February (the 1<sup>st</sup> Waxing of Taboung) to 13 March (the Full Moon of Taboung).

“As it has been held every year, we will hold the festival again this year. During the festival, 45 members of the Sangha will consecrate the pagoda, followed by the recitation of Maha Patha-



This photo showcases the Myat Mawtinsun Pagoda.

na treatise. On the full moon day of Taboung, we will offer rice to 160 monks to mark the closing ceremony,” said a member of the pagoda’s board of trustees.

Pilgrims can visit the Myat Mawtinsun Pagoda by both water and land routes. — ASH/TH

## MSME loans available for application

MSME business owners in Nay Pyi Taw, the Union Territory, as well as in regions and states, can apply for the necessary loans to expand their businesses, purchase machinery, and procure raw materials. These loans are provided by the Myanmar Economic Bank, Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank, and 16 private banks.

The annual interest rates are 3 per cent for loans where at least 30 per cent is used for fixed capital, 4 per cent for loans used entirely 100 per cent as working capital and 5 per cent for loans issued under the Credit Guarantee Insurance (CGI) system.

MSME business owners who wish to apply for loans are advised to contact the relevant MSME agencies in Nay Pyi Taw, the Union Territory, regions, and states.

**MSME Development Fund Management Committee**

## Gold Market Rate as of 16 February 2025

THE price of one tical (16.329325 grammes) of gold with density of 19.25 grammes per cubic centimetre and above is K5,520,000, as established by the Mineral (Gold) Reference Price Determination Committee.

## MR upgrading rails and bridges to allow running of high-speed trains on Pyinmana-Toungoo section

THE Myanmar Railways reports that the railway tracks and bridges along the Pyinmana-Toungoo section of the Yangon-Mandalay railway are being upgraded to allow high-speed trains to run.

It is reported that the upgrading of the railway tracks to allow high-speed trains to operate has already begun, with the improvement of the rails and bridges within the 59-mile stretch of the Pyinmana-Toungoo railway section.

An official from Myanmar Railways stated, “Within the 59-mile section of the railway line from Pyinmana to Toungoo on the Yangon-Mandalay route, we are upgrading the tracks and

bridges to allow trains to run at higher speeds. In doing so, we are replacing intersections and level-crossings where trains must reduce speed. This upgrade is aimed at ensuring safer train crossings, minimizing risks, and improving overall efficiency with new, reliable junctions and crossings that allow for faster travel”.

Currently, efforts are underway to improve the speed of trains by filling gravels along the route. Moreover, new concrete slippers and steel rails are being installed to replace the old ones. On the section between Toungoo and Thaungtainggon stations, as well as on the Khapaung Bridge, new concrete slippers

are being installed to replace the old wooden ones to allow trains to pass at higher speeds. Moreover, the old 75-pound steel rails are being replaced with new 100-pound steel rails, making the Khapaung Bridge more robust and resilient. — ASH/TTA



Photo shows rail tracks on upgrading Pyinmana-Toungoo section.



# 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)*

## MMPO donates film books to National University of Arts and Culture, Yangon

DEPUTY Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Daw Nu Mra Zan attended a ceremony at the National University of Arts and Culture (Yangon) in Dagon Myo-thit (South) Township, Yangon, where the Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization (MMPO) do-

noted 281 English-language film books to the university library yesterday. The deputy minister said that the books will not only aid in teaching but also provide benefits, such as assisting in paper preparation and enhanc-



Deputy Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Daw Nu Mra Zan speaking at book donation ceremony of MMPO to National University of Arts and Culture (Yangon) yesterday.

ing knowledge. Next, U Kyi Soe Tun, Chairman of the MMPO, explained the book donation, and Dr Kathy Htwe, Rector of the university, expressed her appreciation. — MNA/TH

## Japan to recruit more than 1,100 Myanmar workers



Myanmar workers were seen at the airport in 2024.

OVER 320 Japanese companies will recruit more than 1,100 Myanmar workers, according to a statement on demand letters

released by Myanmar Embassy to Japan on 15 February. The embassy has carried out timely verifications of de-

mand letters received from the Ministry of Labour via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it said. It verifies whether labour supervisory company and factories or companies which offered jobs in Japan are officially established or not, and re-submits its findings and remarks to the Ministry of Labour through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The embassy dispatched 325 demand letters to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after verification until 21 November 2024. According to it, more than 270 Myanmar male workers and more than 870 Myanmar female workers would be employed by up to 325 Japanese companies. In a statement on 31 January 2025, the embassy said up to 450 Japanese companies would recruit about 1,500 Myanmar workers. — MT/ZS

## MCEF invites collaboration for construction sector growth

COOPERATIVE efforts are open for the development of the construction sector, said Myanmar Construction Entrepreneurs Federation (MCEF) on 13 February. After re-electing the central executive committee and its members in January 2025, MCEF issued the invitation on 13 February, in which, it urged construction-related organizations, importers, retail and wholesale distributors, brick and sand businesses, cement and concrete businesses, interior decorators and logistic

companies to cooperate with it for the construction sector development. Inquiries are welcomed to MCEF's email, mcef1996@gmail.com or 09 266823226 and 09 893217109, and MCEF office located at No 3, corner of Thanthuma Road and Waizayanda Road, Thuwunna intersection in Yangon Region's Thingangyun Township. — MT/ZS



MCEF LOGO



# NATIONAL

## Illegal teak, vehicles seized nationwide

UNDER the supervision of the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee, authorities continue to take effective legal action against illegal trade.

With the management of the Ayeyawady Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force, combined teams conducted inspections on 13, 14, and 15 February in Myanaung, Kyonpyaw, Maubin, and Pathein districts. They seized 9.664 tonnes of timber, estimated at K1.78 million, and are taking action in accordance with the Forest Law.

On 15 February, a team under the management of the Customs Department conducted an inspection at the Myawady permanent checkpoint. Officials seized a Higer Bus worth K40 million carrying two types of foodstuffs worth K6.21 million from Mawlamyine to Nay Pyi Taw without official documentation. Legal action is being taken in line with customs procedures.



Seized smuggled goods.

Similarly, under the management of the Kayin State Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force, combined teams conducted inspections at the Zathapyin checkpoint. They intercepted two vehicles transporting four types of industrial goods, three types of consumer goods, and two types of foodstuffs without valid documents. The total estimated value, in-



cluding a Higer Bus and a KIA Pregio Mini Bus used for transportation, amounted to K312.32 million. Action is being taken in accordance with customs regulations.

Likewise, Mandalay Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force oversaw inspections at the Yadanabon Bridge checkpoint in Mandalay Region. A Hino Rainbow Bus worth K28

million carrying 18 types of industrial goods from Mandalay to Monywa without proper documentation was seized. At the 16<sup>th</sup>-Mile tollgate, a Doh Shwe Myanmar Mini Bus worth K30 million transporting five types of foodstuffs was also intercepted. The total estimated value of the seized goods including vehicles was K128.73 million. Legal proceedings are underway per

customs procedures.

In Taninthayi Region, the Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force, in collaboration with combined teams, inspected a riverside port in Aye Yeik Nyein Ward, Kawthoung. They seized two types of smuggled consumer goods and two types of industrial goods, worth approximately K73 million, and are taking action in line with customs regulations.

In Bago Region, the Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force managed inspections in Toun-goo and Pyay districts. They confiscated 3.9 tonnes of teak, 6.625 tonnes of gum-kino, and 0.59 tonne of other types of timber, totalling an estimated K4.78 million. The authorities are handling the case under the Forest Law.

From 13 to 15 February, authorities recorded a total of 27 cases, with illegal goods valued at K566.82 million. — MNA/KZL

## PDF terrorists open fire in Pakokku, killing a 14-year-old and injuring two others

IT has been reported that PDF terrorists have been committing brutal killings in some townships across regions and states. They target innocent civilians, aiming to spread fear among the public by accusing those with differing views of being “informants or spies” and adopting an extremist mindset that labels anyone who does not align with them as an enemy. Using weapons such as batons, knives, and firearms, these armed terrorists have carried out ruthless attacks.

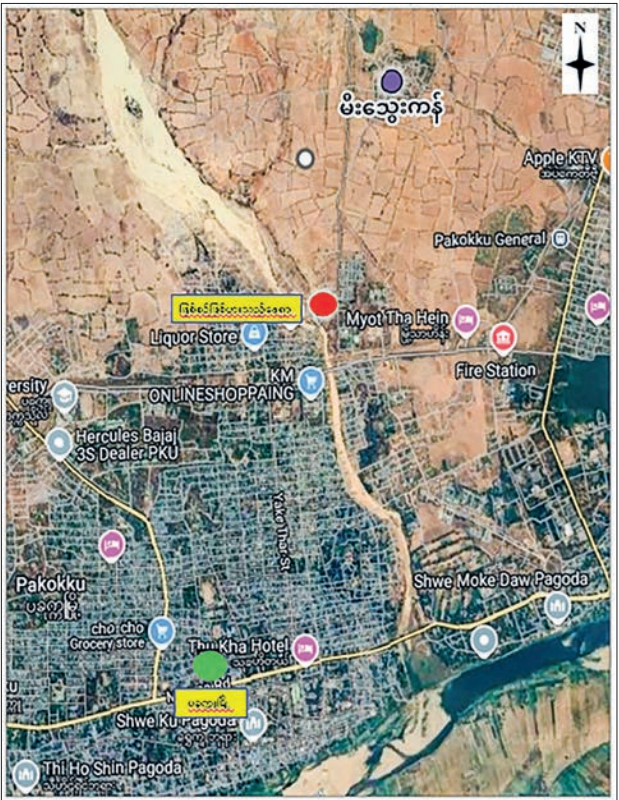
One such incident occurred at around 11:00 am on 15 February in Pakokku Township, Magway Region. PDF terrorist groups, with small arms, riding five motorcycles opened fire at a house in Kwetthit Ward, where people, including donor U Sithu Tun, were preparing meals for charity. The attack was allegedly motivated by the victims’ refusal to support the terrorists’ violent acts. As a result, 14-year-old Maung Pho Khwa was killed, and two other locals, including a six-year-old child named Maung Kyaw Moe, sustained injuries.

The deceased and the injured victims were taken



Two civilians were wounded in attacks of PDF terrorists in Pakokku on 15 February.

to Pakokku People’s Hospital for necessary medical treatment. In response to this inhumane and brutal attack, security forces have launched an operation in the village and surrounding areas to track down and arrest the perpetrators as soon as possible. — MNA/KNN



A google map shows reasonless attacks of PDF terrorists in Pakokku.

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NATIONAL



A social media page shows sale of vehicles in instalment.

Car instalment plan attracts buyers

A plan of selling cars in instalment plan is good for those who can't pay a single payment at once, said Myanmar Automobile Manufacturer and Distributor Association's general secretary U Kyaw Swa Tun Myint.

It is undeniable that car instalment plan has expanded lately, he said.

"Beyond COVID-19 period, automotive showrooms have tried to lure customers by using different marketing styles including instalment payment. Cars that are sold in instalment or bank loans are mostly brand new (zero kilo)," he said.

"Those who can't pay a lump sum are more interested in the instalment plan. And prices have changed now. So, the instalment plan can catch many attentions," he added. — MT/ZS

Charcoal substitute briquette sells well

THE briquette market has reported that charcoal substitutes are selling well.

"The price of charcoal is very good, and briquettes sell well as they are a little cheaper. Compared to charcoal, they are more durable. Fuel briquettes are increasingly used as a substitute for charcoal. They don't have issues like burning, misfiring and smoking too much like ordinary charcoal," said an official of the Ngwe Oh Premium Briquette Trading in Mandalay.

The fuel briquettes are waste-based products of split plums, which are cost-effective for both homes and shops, while its usage helps protect the envi-



A convenient and easy-to-use charcoal substitute briquettes for cooking.

ronment. It is more productive as it can be used for two hours more than ordinary briquettes, and it is easy to pack, store and carry. So, it is widely used in food industries that mainly use firepower.

Last year, a local entrepreneur in Myanmar successfully developed the first paddy husk gasifier with his own design. — Thit Taw/ZN

Launching ceremony for 'Nway Udann' series held at Botahtaung Pagoda on 15 February

THE launching ceremony for the television series titled 'Nway Udann' (Prelude to Summer) took place on 15 February at the Botahtaung Pagoda in Botahtaung Township, Yangon Region, according to actress Hnin Yati Htet.

The storyline of 'Nway Udann' was written by Euclid, with Thet Oo and Aye Aye Han contributing to the script. Director Thet Wai Linn will be in charge of filming the series for KUNYAT Creation House, it was learned.

"As for me, I previously acted in the film 'Mone Khwint', where I played a leading role for the first time. Both of us are working hard to ensure that we portray our characters convincingly. In my past projects, the roles I played were light-hearted, but this one carries greater responsibility as I take on a lead role. This series will also feature traditional Myanmar dances," said actress Hnin Yati Htet.

The series will feature Jared, Hnin Yati Htet, and many other artistes. Filming is set to begin in Mandalay from the last week of February. — ASH/KNN



Artistes attending the launching ceremony of the filming of the 'Nway Udann' series.

# Weather

## Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 16 February 2025)

**BAY INFERENCE:** Weather is partly cloudy over the South Andaman Sea and South Bay, a few cloud over the North Andaman Sea and generally fair elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 17 February 2025:** Light rain will be isolated in Kachin State. Degree of certainty is 80 per cent. Weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions and Kayin, Mon and Northern Shan States and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

**STATE OF THE SEA:** Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about 4-6 feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

**OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS:** Likelihood of isolated light rain in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions and Kachin State.

**FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 17 February 2025:** Generally fair weather.

**FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 17 February 2025:** Generally fair weather.

**FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 17 February 2025:** Generally fair weather. — DMH



NATIONAL

Endangered migratory birds arriving at Inlay Lake Wildlife Sanctuary

ENDANGERED migratory bird species and forest migratory birds are arriving at the Inlay Lake Wildlife Sanctuary, according to the sanctuary’s warden office.

Regular monthly bird species surveys and inspections are being conducted within the Inlay Lake natural conservation area and surrounding areas. According to records from last month’s survey, a total of 375 species were recorded, including 273 species of forest birds and 102 species of waterbirds.

Among the 102 waterbird species in the Inlay Lake region, 41 species were identified as migratory birds, while 12 species were recorded as forest migratory birds. Some of these migratory birds are classified as endangered species, including the Baer’s Pochard (critically endangered), Sarus Crane (which faces potential endangerment), Common Pochard, Northern Lapwing, Ferruginous Duck (near-threatened) and Black-headed Ibis.

Amidst the forest migratory

birds, species facing global extinction threats include the Yellow-breasted Bunting, with over 500 population recorded, and the Grey-headed Parakeet, with approximately 100 individuals observed.

The Inlay Lake Wildlife Sanctuary is a wetland conservation area that includes Inlay Lake, Sanka Lake, Pekhon Lake, and the Balu Creek. In 2018, the Inlay Lake section was designated as Myanmar’s fifth Ramsar site and is part of the East Asia-Australasia Flyway Network. — ASH/KZL



Sarus Cranes seen of a wetland.

Bagan to host Mekong-Lancang Cultural Activity 2024 in Myanmar

THE Mekong-Lancang Cultural Activity 2024 in Myanmar will be held from 22 to 28 February in Bagan, NyaungU District, Mandalay Region, according to the National University of Arts and Culture, Yangon.

The event, held under the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation Special Fund (2024) programme, will also feature an art exhibition on 25 February at the Archaeological Museum in Bagan, with participation of artists from the Mekong-Lancang region.

“The programme will include

Mekong-Lancang countries such as Myanmar, China, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam. Many art exchange programmes will be carried out in collaboration with artists from these countries,” said an official from the National University of Arts and Culture, Yangon.

At the exhibition, the Mekong-Lancang region will showcase their artistic works of 12 artists from Myanmar, four each from China, Cambodia, and Thailand, and two each from Laos and Vietnam. — ASH/TH



Art Exhibition of Mekong-Lancang Cultural Activity.



The certification presentation ceremony for winners in the general knowledge about Buddhology nationwide exam was in progress last year.

Announcement released to hold general knowledge about Buddhology nationwide exam on 10 April

A plan is underway to hold a nationwide exam on the general knowledge about Buddhology this year for the 12<sup>th</sup> time, according to the All Myanmar Thutasonlin Buddhology Body (Central).

Primary school students wishing to sit for the primary and middle level qualification tests of the exam must be under 12 years and six months old and the middle school students must be between the aged 12 years and six months and 15 years and six months old.

The primary and middle level qualification written tests will be held at all exam centres across the nation from 9 am to 10:30 am on 10 April 2025. Hence, interested students can take out the entrance application from relevant exam centres starting from 17 February.

Eight books in six volumes of the Maha Buddhology compiled by Mingun Tipitaka Dhammabhandagarika Sayadaw are designated as the primary texts for students. The students must study over 2,000 questions across seven genres, including Abhidhamma, culture, Etadag, Jataka, and general subjects, to prepare for the written and oral exams. — ASH/TTA

Hot Shot Night music show to feature vocalists May Sweet, Connie and Hae Lay

RENOWNED vocalists May Sweet, Connie and Hae Lay will perform at the “Hot Shot Night” music show, set to take place at The Heart of Rangoon — THOR Bar in Mingala Taungnyunt Township, Yangon, on 20 February.

Guest vocalist Paing Thit will also join the performance, adding to the musical lineup. The LuckyHand Music Band will

provide instrumental support for the event, ensuring a high-quality live performance.

Hae Lay expressed gratitude for the opportunity, saying, “I have admired my senior vocalists since childhood, and I am thankful to the organizers for making this possible. Ko Paing Thit will also be there to support the show.”

The music show will begin at 6:30 pm

at The Heart of Rangoon — THOR Bar. — ASH/KZL

Hot Shot Night music show advertisement.





NATIONAL

Authorities verify and detain 231 more foreigners who illegally entered Myanmar

THE government is effectively combatting crimes including online gambling and telecom frauds in border regions.

In doing so, a total of 231 more foreigners who entered Shwe Kokko and KK Park of Myawady through illegal routes were verified and detained yesterday, and departmental teams are carrying out collection of personal profiles and documents of those detainees to be handed to relevant countries as quickly as possible.

During the period from 30 January to 16 February 2025, a total of 1,030 foreigners who illegally entered Myanmar were exposed and detained. Of them, 61 persons were systematically handed to relevant countries under the law and procedures. Now is ready to hand over remaining 969 foreigners to relevant countries and they are now detained well.

The interviews with those foreigners were as follows: -

**Mr Qian Le Ping (Chinese citizen)**

I wanted to get a good job with a high salary in Mongla, so when I saw job advertisements offering good opportunities and high wages, I illegally entered Mongla via a route from China on 12 March 2018. Upon arriving in Mongla, I worked for five years at an online gaming company called Yong Le Gong, founded by Xiao Mu, a Chinese citizen. On 3 December 2023, I reached Shwe Kokko through Mongla and began working for Chinese Xiao Duo Duo's Hong Tu Guo Ji company, where I advertise computer games online. I

work from 12 noon to 12 midnight every day. I only receive a salary of 7,000 Baht per month, which is paid for three months, but I haven't received any wages for the remaining months.

**Mr Zhuo Li (Chinese citizen)**

The job I was doing was with a Chinese-owned company called Jin Man Tang, where I had to work online, engaging in fraud and sending messages for about 16 hours a day. I worked there for around nine months. In the first month, I earned 5,000 baht, but I didn't receive any salary in the following months. The path I took to enter Shwe Kokko began with travelling from China to Laos. From Laos, I left by car to Bangkok, Thailand. In Bangkok, with the help of a Thai driver, I continued to Mae Sot. Upon reaching Mae Sot, with the

arrangement of a Thai person, I crossed a river by motorboat and reached Shwe Kokko. In Thailand, I was told I would earn 10,000 yuan per month, and it was through a connection with a Chinese person that I ended up here. On 15 February, I was detained.

**Mr Xu Yuan Shun (Chinese citizen)**

A Chinese national contacted me online, offering a job that would pay 12,000 yuan per month in Thailand. As a result, I arrived in Bangkok, Thailand, on 3 May 2024, via flight from China. Upon arrival, a Chinese driver took me to Mae Sot. I reached Mae Sot on 4 May. From Mae Sot, with the help of a Thai national, I made my way to Shwe Kokko. Before reaching Shwe Kokko, I had to cross a river by boat. Once in Shwe Kokko, I got a job

at a company owned by a Chinese national, where I worked online assisting in the recruitment of people. The job required 16 hours of work per day, and I earned 2,000 baht per month. I worked there for about nine months.

**Mrs Karungi Deborah Nich Adrona (Ugandan citizen)**

My friend, Joel Kagoro, was supposed to work as an interpreter for a customer service company in Bangkok, Thailand. The salary was to be 25,000 Baht, so I responded positively and agreed to take the job. After contacting the company, I left Uganda by plane on 15 June 2024, and arrived at Bangkok airport on 16 June. A man, whom I was connected with, drove me to Mae Sot by car. During the journey, we passed through two security gates. At these gates,

they only took my photo and did not conduct any questioning or further checks. I spent about eight hours in the car, and when I arrived in Mae Sot, I stayed at a hotel for one night. The next day, I crossed a river (Thaungyin river) by boat, and once I reached the other side, a man picked me up by car and took me to the job site Shwe Kokko. I then attended a two-week training session at Hong Tu Yuan Gu company, where I worked for about a month doing computer-based communication tasks. Later, I moved to another company, Yahtaik, and in the first week, I earned 6,000 Baht as salary.

**Mr Phimsanduk (Thai citizen)**

I graduated with a specialization in Electronics. After graduating, I worked in my hometown, Lam Phun. While working, I was contacted online by someone who offered me a job with a good salary in a place called Shwe Kokko. The job was to find people online, and I was told the monthly salary would be 30,000 baht. I was contacted through Facebook by a woman who explained the offer. So, on 5 January 2025, I left Lam Phun by passenger bus. When I arrived in Mae Sot, a Thai man picked me up by car and took me to the riverside. We crossed Thaungyin river by boat, and when we reached the other side, a Chinese man picked me up in a car and took me to the Hong Chu company in Shwe Kokko. There, I was learning computer skills to work in an online gaming job. While I was still learning, I was detained. — News Team



Foreign nationals under scrutiny.



Mr Phimsanduk.



Mr Xu Yuan Shun.



Mr Qian Le Ping.



Mr Zhuo Li.



Mrs Karungi Deborah Nich Adrona.



OPINION

Global intangible list for Myanmar’s Thanaka and tea leaves

TRADITIONAL Myanma Ata Thingyan Festival was recognized as a world intangible cultural heritage on 5 December 2024, marking a great victory for Myanmar in the cultural sector. Reportedly, a plan is underway to submit a proposal for Myanma Thanaka to be recognized as an intangible cultural heritage of the world. As the third step, Myanmar’s tradition of consuming tea leaves and related products will be submitted to seek recognition in the world’s list next year for consideration.

As Myanmar has been home to hundreds of ethnic groups

Currently, a total of 2,289 intangible cultural heritage elements from all ethnic groups across Myanmar have been recorded in five categories: languages and dialects, oral traditions and narratives, entertainment and fine arts, social traditions and performing arts, and knowledge and customs related to nature and humanity. Hence, preparations are being made to submit the proposal to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity of UNESCO.

proposal to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity of UNESCO.

The tea culture in Myanmar is one of the oldest among global tea traditions. There is a saying in Myanmar: “Pork is the best meal, mango is the best fruit, and tea is the best leaf for delicious consumption.” The latter has been a traditional delicacy in Myanmar culture regarding dried and fresh tea leaves. During the monarchical era, Myanmar kings recognized fresh tea leaves as a royal delicacy, often displaying them at royal ceremonies. Moreover, people from all walks of life consume fresh tea leaves in various forms, keeping tea leaves in pots at their homes. Even in the royal court in Myanmar’s monarchical era, judges sometimes ordered disputes to be settled over a shared consumption of tea leaves. Moreover, tea leave is essential for all occasions and social and religious ceremonies in Myanmar.

As countries around the world strive to preserve their cultural heritage, they also work hard to submit their intangible cultural practices for recognition on the global list. However, countries that fail to their intangible cultural heritage systematically may risk other nations with similar practices claiming them as their own.

for thousands of years, historically and culturally valuable ancient landmarks, sites, and artefacts are scattered across the nation. These represent both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. In 2014, Myanmar signed UNESCO’s Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. As a member, the country has been actively working to protect and preserve its intangible cultural heritage while continuing to identify more.

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The Value of Myanma Thanaka

By Dr Than Lwin Tun

I READ a very interesting topic in the Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper and this topic is preparation for

the submission of the Myanma Thanaka cultural tradition to UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Herit-

age of Humanity before March 2025, educational programmes on Thanaka culture are being conducted throughout February

at museums and libraries under the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture.

Thanaka is an iconic symbol



Thanaka has been a part of Myanmar’s culture for over two thousand years. PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ MOLGOV.MM

of Myanmar’s cultural heritage, deeply interlaced into the country’s history, identity, and daily life. For centuries, it has been used as a beauty treatment, sunscreen, and even as a cultural expression of status. The value of Thanaka extends beyond its physical benefits; it holds significant cultural, social, and historical importance to the people of Myanmar. In this essay, we will explore the various dimensions of Thanaka’s value, from its uses in daily life to its role in traditional practices and its symbolic importance.

Historical and Cultural Significance: Thanaka has been a part of Myanmar’s culture for over two thousand years. The tradition of using Thanaka is thought to date back to the Bagan period (around the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD). It is believed that the earliest use of Thanaka was in the royal courts, where it was applied as a sign of beauty and purity. Over time, this practice spread to all levels of society, and Thanaka became a main feature of Myanmar’s cultural landscape.

The name “Thanaka” refers to the paste made from the powdered bark of the Thanaka tree, which is native to Myanmar and parts of neighbouring Thailand and Laos. The bark is ground into a fine powder, mixed with water, and applied to the face and sometimes the body. The

geometric patterns created by the paste are both artistic and practical, reflecting the balance between beauty and function in Myanmar society.

Practical Uses of Thanaka: One of the most important values of Thanaka lies in its practical benefits. It has been used for centuries as a natural skincare product. The paste has cooling properties and helps to protect the skin from the harsh tropical sun, preventing sunburns and skin damage. In a country like Myanmar, where the climate can be extremely hot and sunny, Thanaka serves as an important protective agent against the sun’s ultraviolet rays.

In addition to its sun protection benefits, Thanaka has been credited with having anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and anti-ageing properties. It is often used to treat skin conditions like acne, rashes, and blemishes. Many people apply it regularly, not only for its protective effects but also for its potential to improve the skin’s appearance, making it smooth and healthy.

Thanaka’s cooling sensation makes it especially desirable during the summer months. It is common for people, especially women and children, to wear Thanaka as a facial mask to reduce the discomfort of the heat. In rural areas, the tradition of applying Thanaka is especially prevalent, where the natural

product is easily accessible and commonly used in everyday life.

**Health Benefits of Thanaka:** Applied over the cheeks, nose, and neck, Thanaka doubles as both a cosmetic beauty product and a skincare regimen. Marmesin, one of its active ingredients, acts as a natural sunblock against the sun’s harmful ultraviolet rays while also providing a refreshing, cooling effect in hot weather.

**Symbolic and Social Importance:** Thanaka also carries deep symbolic significance. It has become a defining feature of Myanmar’s national identity. When one thinks of the traditional appearance of the Myanmar people, the image of individuals with their faces painted with Thanaka paste is almost universally recognized. This simple yet characteristic practice speaks to a cultural unity that transcends class, gender, and age. In fact, it is a universal symbol of Myanmar’s indigenous heritage, connecting people across generations.

**Economic and Environmental Value:** Beyond its cultural and social importance, Thanaka also holds economic and environmental value. The production of Thanaka offers economic opportunities for people in rural areas, where Thanaka trees are grown and harvested. Environmentally, the Thanaka tree is also an essential part

of the landscape in Myanmar. Thanaka cultivation promotes the growth of trees that provide shade, help preserve biodiversity, and prevent soil erosion. The tree itself is considered a renewable resource, as it can be harvested sustainably, providing both economic and ecological benefits to the local communities.

Moreover, the value of Thanaka in Myanmar is multi-faceted, encompassing its practical benefits for skin care, its role as a cultural and social marker, and its historical and economic importance. This simple paste of powdered bark carries with its centuries of tradition, offering a glimpse into the country’s rich heritage and its deep connection to the natural world. Moreover, Thanaka serves as a protective skincare product, a symbol of beauty, or a reflection of national identity. And it also holds a valuable place in the hearts and minds of the Myanmar people.

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New insights into Alzheimer’s brain inflammation: Study

Recent research highlights significant differences in how the brain’s immune system responds to amyloid-beta (Ab) plaques, a key feature of Alzheimer’s, compared to responses to bacterial infections.

BRAIN inflammation, while an important aspect of the immune response, plays a negative effect on Alzheimer’s disease. Unlike the acute, short-lived inflammation that fights infection, the inflammation associated with Alzheimer’s is chronic and persistent. Scientists have been trying to figure out why this happens.

New research reveals key differences in how the brain’s immune system responds to the disease compared to a bacterial infection. The work is presented at the 69<sup>th</sup> Biophysical Society

Annual Meeting in Los Angeles.

The study focuses on how immune cells react to amyloid-beta (Ab) plaques, a hallmark of Alzheimer’s, and how this immune response differs from the reaction to bacterial toxins. “Bacteria cannot enter our brain because of the blood brain barrier,” said Arpan Dey, PhD, a postdoctoral associate in the lab of Professor David Klenerman at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom. “But small proteins could be acting like bacteria in our brain and giving rise to neuroinflammation,

which could be contributing to dementia,” he added.

Dey and colleagues used a model system of immune cells and exposed the cells to Ab aggregates or lipopolysaccharide (LPS), a component of bacterial cell walls that triggers a strong immune response. They focused on the formation of structures called myddosomes, which are crucial for initiating inflammation.

The team discovered that larger Ab clumps trigger more myddosome formation in immune cells. Smaller Ab clumps, even af-

ter longer exposure, failed to trigger this response. This suggests that the size of the Ab clump is critical for activating the immune system in Alzheimer’s.

In contrast, LPS triggered a much faster and stronger myddosome response than even the large Ab aggregates. This difference in timing and intensity may explain why inflammation in Alzheimer’s is chronic and drawn-out, whereas the response to a bacterial infection is typically more acute and resolves more quickly.

“Our findings reveal a crucial distinction in how the brain’s immune system reacts to a bacterial infection versus Ab clumps,” said Dey. “The slower, more sustained immune activation by large Ab aggregates may contribute to the chronic inflammation seen in Alzheimer’s disease.”

The team’s next step is to start looking at markers of myddosomes in blood samples from people with dementia and brain samples from the UK Brain Bank.

By understanding the mechanisms driving inflammation in

Alzheimer’s, they hope to contribute to the development of new therapies that can specifically target the chronic inflammation associated with the disease, potentially slowing its progression.

“This work opens up new avenues for drug discovery,” Dey said, he added, “by understanding and targeting the pathways involved in the inflammatory response, we may be able to develop treatments for Alzheimer’s and other neurodegenerative diseases.”

SOURCE: ANI



The blood-brain barrier prevents bacteria from entering the brain, but small proteins, such as amyloid-beta, may mimic bacterial behavior and trigger neuroinflammation, potentially contributing to dementia.

ILLUSTRATION: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE / CONCEPT ART



# SCI/ENVIRON: WORLD

## Nearly 50 Texans infected with measles in growing outbreak

*The outbreak is a sign of the resurgence of the once-eradicated disease due to declining vaccination rates.*



A one dose bottle of measles, mumps and rubella virus vaccine, made by MERCK, is held up at the Salt Lake County Health Department on 26 April 2019 in Salt Lake City, Utah / © **GETTY IMAGES NORTH AMERICA/AFP/FILE**

A measles outbreak in west Texas has infected 48 people, mostly unvaccinated children, as declining vaccination rates fuel the resurgence of the once-eradicated disease.

A growing measles outbreak in west Texas has infected 48 people, according to official state data released Friday — the latest sign that the once-vanquished childhood disease is making a comeback as vaccination rates decline.

The outbreak comes as vocal vaccine skeptic Robert F. Kennedy Jr — who has re-

peatedly and falsely linked the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine to autism — was confirmed as the United States’ health secretary, a position that grants him significant authority over immunization policy.

The patients are overwhelmingly children, all were either unvaccinated or had unknown vaccination status, and 13 have so far been hospitalized. Health officials expect additional cases to emerge.

Childhood vaccination rates have been declining across the United States, a trend that

accelerated during the Covid-19 pandemic, when concerns over the rapid deployment of mRNA vaccines, coupled with mountains of misinformation, further eroded trust in public health institutions.

“There are pockets in the US that are susceptible, and it’s not surprising to me that it’s occurring in a county where there are the lowest rates of vaccination in the state — these are kindling for such outbreaks,” Amesh Adalja, a senior scholar at Johns Hopkins University, told AFP. — AFP

## Ghana ups measures to protect pangolins from extensive poaching

GHANAIAN authorities and local organisations are upping their efforts to combat the poaching of pangolins, an endangered mammal whose meat and scales are among the most trafficked internationally.

An estimated one million of the animals — also known as scaly anteaters — were poached worldwide over the last decade, mainly due to demand for their scales, particularly in Asia.

In addition to increased patrols in protected areas, “we engage with local communities to raise awareness about the importance of pangolin conservation and the negative impacts of illegal hunting and trade,” Ernestina Anie, a public relations officer at the Ghana’s wildlife conservation

agency, told AFP ahead of World Pangolin Day on 15 February.

All eight species of pangolin are included on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, with six listed as endangered.

Ghana is no exception. The country is home to three pangolin species the giant pangolin, ground pangolin and white-bellied pangolin, all of which are endangered and at risk of extinction.

According to the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), an estimated 5 to 10 tonnes of pangolin scales are illegally exported each year from Ghana. Although national and international laws protect pangolins, enforcement remains weak in the country. — AFP



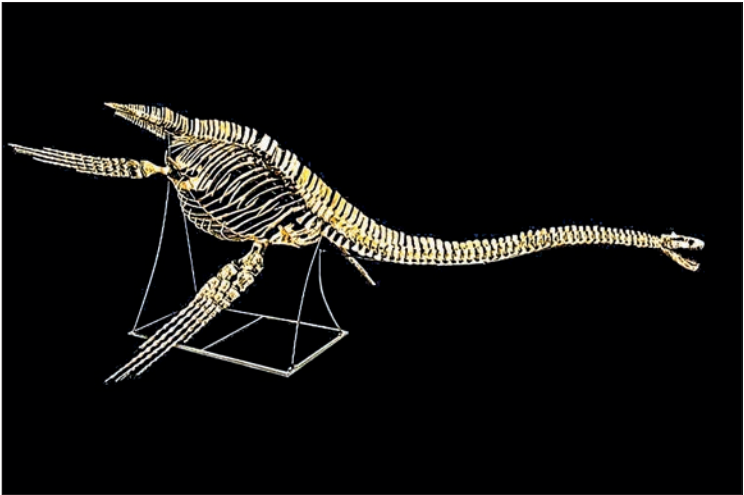
Ghanaian authorities and local organisations are upping their efforts to combat the poaching of pangolins, an endangered mammal whose meat and scales are among the most trafficked internationally. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

## France finds smuggled dinosaur teeth in parcels bound for Italy

FRENCH customs officers seized nine dinosaur teeth last month from a courier truck transiting through the country from Spain on its way to Italy, they said on Friday.

The teeth, probably from Morocco, were found during a routine check along a highway running along France’s Mediterranean coastline near the Italian border, customs official Samantha Verduron said.

Using sniffer dogs and opening some parcels at random, inspectors have been known to find cannabis or even cocaine among



The smuggled fossils included the tooth of a plesiosaurus, one expert said / © **COURTESY BINOCHÉ AND GIQUELLO/AFP**

such truckloads of hundreds of parcels travelling from Spain to Italy, she said.

But on 27 January, officials from the French border town of Menton found nine enormous teeth in two parcels that were destined for addresses near the Italian cities of Genoa and Milan, French customs said.

An expert at the Menton prehistory museum helped identify the fossils as probably dating back tens of millions of years and originating from what is now Morocco.

They included the tooth of

a long-necked marine reptile called a zarafasaura oceanis, a type of plesiosaurus at least 66 million years old first discovered in Morocco.

Some people believe plesiosaurs, which lived in different parts of the globe, inspired the legend of the Loch Ness monster in Scotland.

Three other teeth would have once belonged to a mosasaurus, an extinct aquatic lizard with a long snout. The remaining five teeth were thought to belong to a dyrosaurus, an ancestor of the crocodile. — AFP



# Tech weary Brits revive apple tree ‘wassailing’ tradition

“WASSAIL!” yelled the crowd. “Cider for everyone!” In an orchard by a Welsh castle, hundreds of people gathered to wish good health to the apple trees in a centuries-old tradition enjoying a revival.

As mulled cider — a warm alcoholic drink made from fermented apple juice — was handed around, a dozen hobby horses swayed eerily to folk music.

Made from real horses’ skulls mounted on poles and carried by someone cloaked in a bed sheet, they are bedecked in ribbons with shiny baubles glinting in the eye sockets.

Singing, drinking, banging saucepans and hanging toasted bread on tree branches are all part of wassailing, along with the colourful horses’ heads, which are a Welsh variation.

“It’s a celebration of life, na-

*Tech-weary Brits are reviving the ancient tradition of wassailing, which involves singing, drinking, and celebrating around apple trees to ensure a good harvest.*



ture and the community,” said amateur folk dancer Richard Worrin who helped organise this year’s wassail in the Welsh border town of Chepstow.

The tradition, which has Pagan roots, is a far cry from Worrin’s day job as a murder squad detective.

“You need an antidote,” he laughed, stressing participants did not need to be a folklore expert to join in. Wassailing was for everybody, he said, a mid-winter opportunity to get together and have fun.

“I just love the feel to it all, lots of drinking, meeting people and having a laugh. Simple as that,” he told AFP. — AFP

The centuries-old ceremony has enjoyed a revival in recent years.  
**PHOTO: PAUL ELLIS / AFP**

## Jessica Chastain tackles US-Mexico politics in new film ‘Dreams’



‘I’ve kind of made it my desire to play characters who make a lot of mistakes,’ said Chastain. **PHOTO: AFP**

ACADEMY Award-winning US actor Jessica Chastain on Saturday said her latest movie, about a Mexican ballet dancer who longs to move to the US, was “undeniably political” as it premiered at the Berlin film festival.

“Dreams”, from Mexican director Michel Franco, follows the story of Fernando (Isaac Hernandez), a young ballet

dancer from Mexico City who dreams of international fame.

Fernando believes that his lover Jennifer (Chastain), a wealthy socialite based in San Francisco, will support him in his ambitions and makes the fateful decision to cross into the US illegally to be with her.

Fernando leaves everything behind, crossing the border in a cramped lorry

and narrowly escaping death when he gets dumped on the side of the road on a blisteringly hot day.

Once he has arrived in San Francisco however, he struggles to find a place in Jennifer’s carefully controlled world and relations between the lovers quickly turn sour.

Speaking to reporters ahead of the premiere of “Dreams” in Berlin, Chastain said the film “really does delve into the relationship between the United States and Mexico”.

The story is “incredibly political, (partly) because of what’s happening right now... not just the United States, all over the world”, she said.

When US President Donald Trump began his second term in January, he issued a slew of executive orders aimed at reshaping how the United States deals with immigration — especially from Mexico.

Trump declared a national emergency at the US-Mexico border and said he would send troops there “to repel the disastrous invasion of our country”. — AFP

## Bordeaux wine harvest drops to lowest level since 1991

COLD weather, disease and capacity cuts pushed wine production in France’s Bordeaux region last year to a low not seen in three-and-a-half decades, the local industry body said Friday.

Often called the world’s most famous wine country, Bordeaux — France’s biggest wine region — produces the iconic Medoc, Saint-Emilion, and Pomerol high-end wines, as well as larger quantities of lower-priced produce.

In total, Bordeaux winemakers produced 3.3 million hectolitres of wine last year,

after 3.8 million in 2023, a drop of 14 per cent.

Unfavourable weather, especially episodes of frost, weighed on production, while a high level of rainfall in the spring favoured the spread of disease, notably mildew.

Another major factor was a government-subsidised reduction in the size of vineyards amid efforts to curb over-production.

Just 95,000 hectares of Bordeaux wine country was cultivated in 2024, down from 103,000 the year before. — AFP



In total, Bordeaux winemakers produced 3.3 million hectolitres of wine last year. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**



ECONOMY  
WORLD

NEWS IN BRIEF

Italian prosecutors open tax fraud case against Amazon: media

ITALIAN prosecutors have launched a tax fraud investigation into retail giant Amazon, alleging the company evaded taxes amounting to 1.2 billion euros (US\$1.3 billion), Italian media reported on Friday.

According to Corriere della Sera, citing sources from Milan prosecutor's office, Amazon is accused of underpaying its Italian value-added tax over a three-year period ending in 2021.

If the allegations are upheld, Amazon could face a total financial liability of up to three billion euros, including penalties and interest, the report said.

The investigation could compel Amazon in Italy to apply value-added tax on all sales of goods produced outside the European Union, potentially affecting its business model, Corriere della Sera noted.

This is not the first time Amazon has faced scrutiny from Italian tax authorities. In 2017, the company agreed to pay 100 million euros to settle tax disputes related to the period between 2011 and 2015. (1 euro = US\$1.05) — Xinhua



A drone photo taken on 15 January 2025 shows the cruise ship Adora Flora City under construction at Shanghai Waigaoqiao Shipbuilding Co Ltd in Shanghai, east China. PHOTO: FANG ZHE/XINHUA

China's tax cuts boost high-tech, manufacturing growth in 2024

The total tax cuts, fee reductions, and tax refunds amounted to 2.63 trillion yuan (approximately US\$366.75 billion).

CHINA'S main policies supporting sci-tech innovation and the development of the manufacturing industry saw tax cuts, fee reductions and tax refunds totalling 2.63 trillion yuan (about US\$366.75 billion) in 2024, official data showed on Wednesday.

These policies accelerated the cultivation of new quality productive forces and promoted the high-quality devel-

opment of the manufacturing industry, according to the State Taxation Administration.

In 2024, the sales revenues of China's high-tech sectors grew 9.6 percentage points faster than the overall national growth rate, reflecting the rapid development of innovative industries.

The sales revenues of manufacturing enterprises in China grew 2.2 percentage

points faster than the overall national growth rate.

Specifically, the sales revenues of the equipment manufacturing, digital product manufacturing and high-tech manufacturing sectors rose 6.2 per cent, 8.3 per cent and nine per cent respectively, indicating the national manufacturing industry is advancing steadily toward high-end and intelligent development. — Xinhua

Soaring prices for Vietnamese coffee raise concerns over market speculation



This photo taken on 22 July 2023 shows egg coffee with patterns of Hanoi's landmarks at a coffee shop in the Old Quarter in Vietnam's capital Hanoi. PHOTO: PHAM DINH DUC/XINHUA

THE coffee prices in Vietnam are soaring at an unprecedented pace, surpassing expert predictions and raising concerns over market speculation, Vietnam News Agency reported Thursday.

Coffee prices in the Central Highlands region climbed to 131,000 Vietnamese dong (US\$5.1) per kilogramme this week.

On the London exchange, Robusta coffee prices fluctuated between 5,573 dollars and 5,696 dollars per tonne, while Arabica coffee on the New York

exchange surged by 540 dollars, reaching 9,460 dollars per tonne for the March 2025 contract.

Despite soaring prices, Vietnamese coffee farmers remain cautious about selling.

Vietnam News Agency cited Nguyen Thi Chien, a coffee grower in Kon Tum province, as saying that her family sold only one tonne at 115,000 Vietnamese dong per kilogramme, keeping the rest in storage in hopes of further gains. Market volatility has left many farmers uncertain about the optimal time to sell. — Xinhua

OPEC maintains oil demand forecasts for 2025, 2026

THE Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) announced on Wednesday that it is maintaining its previous forecasts for global oil demand growth in 2025 and 2026.

In its February monthly oil market report, OPEC projects a "healthy" increase in global oil demand, estimating growth of 1.45 million barrels per day (bpd) in 2025, followed by a rise of 1.43 million bpd in 2026, figures unchanged from last month's assessment.

"Growth this year is expected to be driven by transportation fuels on the back of strong air travel demand and healthy road mobility. Support is also expected to come from the industrial, construction and agricultural sectors in non-OECD (the Organization for Economic

Co-operation and Development) countries," OPEC said.— Xinhua



Photo taken on 30 November 2023 shows the headquarters of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in Vienna, Austria. PHOTO: HE CANLING/XINHUA



# Vietnam’s two biggest cities among Asia’s least affordable cities for homebuyers

*The two Vietnamese cities have surpassed Singapore in the gap between housing prices and average income.*

VIETNAM’S two biggest cities, HCM City and Hanoi, are among Asia’s least affordable cities for homebuyers, Vietnam News cited a report by property consultancy CBRE as saying on Friday.

The two Vietnamese cities have surpassed Singapore in the gap between housing prices and average income.

The average price for an apartment in the capital Hanoi is about \$2,600 per square metre, while the typical annual income

stands at \$6,300, which results in a concerning income-to-housing price ratio of 2.4.

In HCM City, the average apartment price is \$2,800 per square metre, with an average annual income of \$7,500, yielding a ratio of 2.7.

Although housing prices in Vietnam are comparable to those in other Asian countries, the average income remains significantly lower, resulting in these concerning affordability ratios, said CBRE. — Xinhua



This combo picture created on 14 February 2025, shows a night view of Ho Chi Minh City (left), Vietnam, on 25 April 2023, and a train running on the Cat Linh-Ha Dong urban railway line in Hanoi, capital of Vietnam, on 23 June 2023. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

## ‘US tariff hike on steel imports violates multilateral trade rules’



In this 23 March 2023, file photo, a technician operates a production management system at a workshop of Dewei Stainless Steel in Jiaxing, east China’s Zhejiang province. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

THE move by the United States to impose additional tariffs on steel imports is in violation of multilateral trade rules, the China Iron and Steel Association said on Friday.

Steel is a basic industrial material, and trade

protectionism in the sector will undermine the United States’ own interests, the association said in a statement.

It said that the US trade protectionist measures on steel have resulted in persistently high domes-

tic steel prices compared to other markets, raising costs for downstream manufacturers and hindering the country’s efforts to adjust domestic inflation levels.

It said that the US has violated multilateral trade

rules and World Trade Organization rulings by imposing tariffs on steel and aluminum imports. This practice has severely undermined the rules-based multilateral trading system and impacted the global supply chain.

The association opposes such unilateral and protectionist actions, it said.

It expressed the hope that steel trade would be brought back to the right track of multilateral trading system, calling for addressing each party’s concerns through equal consultation.

The association also hopes to enhance communication and dialogue with the American Iron and Steel Institute to increase mutual understanding and trust, according to the statement. — Xinhua

## Tourism boom sends prices soaring at Japan’s famed Niseko ski resort

A record influx of overseas visitors has descended on the famed Niseko ski resort on Japan’s northern island of Hokkaido, driving food and other costs to exorbitant heights, to the concern of residents.

In one restaurant, an Australian woman said she felt satisfied after spending 10,000 yen (\$66) on sushi. A Chinese visitor remarked that while it was not cheap, the prices were reasonable considering how expensive things are in Europe. The price hikes extend to accommodations in the area, with a private lodging operator in Rankoshi, a town in the Niseko area, saying he raised his nightly rates by more than 10 per cent from 88,000 yen to 99,000 yen due to the weaker yen. — Kyodo

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V Kuo Lin Voy.No. (0UVBYS1NC)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V Kuo Lin Voy.No. (0UVBYS1NC)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **17-2-2025** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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# ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

## Munich Security Conference highlights Europe’s struggle for strategic realignment

*German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier emphasized that ending the war will significantly impact Europe’s and the US’s security and power dynamics.*



Munich Security Conference (MSC) Chairman Christoph Heusgen speaks during the closing of the 60th MSC in Munich, Germany, 18 February 2024. **PHOTO: ZHANG FAN/XINHUA**

THE 61<sup>st</sup> Munich Security Conference, which kicked off on Friday, has underscored the complex challenges facing Europe and the urgent need for the continent to define its strategic role in an increasingly volatile global landscape.

From the persistent conflict in Ukraine to rising uncertainties in the transatlantic alliance, as well as mounting pressures on the EU’s vision for the international order, the conference focused on the multiple crises Europe faces. It also highlighted the need for the continent to navigate these complexities and assert its place on

the world stage.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, speaking at the conference, said that once Ukraine reaches an agreement with the United States and Europe on how to end the conflict, he will be ready to hold direct talks with Russia. “I am ready to meet only in this case,” he stressed.

The announcement came days after US President Donald Trump had held separate phone calls with Russian President Vladimir Putin and the Ukrainian leader.

Following a 90-minute phone call with Putin, Trump

announced that negotiations to end the conflicts would start “immediately.”

However, concerns ignited in Europe over being sidelined in peace talks.

On Wednesday, a joint statement by multiple European countries and the European Commission stated, “Ukraine and Europe must be part of any negotiations.”

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz echoed this sentiment on Thursday, stating that “a dictated peace will never find our support” and stressing that peace must last and ensure Ukraine’s sovereignty. — Xinhua

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Thousands mark Serbian Statehood Day with anti-corruption protest

THOUSANDS of Serbians blocked the main boulevard of the central city Kragujevac on Saturday, the latest in a series of student-led protests to rock the Balkan country after the deadly collapse of a train station roof.

Crowds gathered in the city’s centre on the start of Serbia’s national Statehood holiday calling for greater government accountability and reforms.

Protesters filled the streets well into the afternoon, waving flags marked with bloody handprints – the protests’ logo – as they organised performances and shouted “pump”, indicating that they are not giving up.

The university student-led movement has put increasing pressure on Serbia’s government, spurring the resignation of several high-ranking officials, including prime minister Milos Vucevic at the end of January. — AFP

#### Stampede death toll rises to 18 in Delhi, India

THE death toll in Saturday’s stampede at the New Delhi railway station rose to 18, confirmed a government official on Sunday.

Among the dead were 10 women, four children and four men.

Besides, around two dozen people were injured in the tragedy which struck late on Saturday night.

The victims had gathered at the railway station to board a special train to Prayagraj district of the northern state of Uttar Pradesh to take the holy dip in “Triveni Sangam,” the confluence of three rivers of Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati during the ongoing spiritual festival “Maha Kumbh.” — Xinhua

#### Shooting kills one in Brussels district plagued by drug violence

BELGIAN authorities said Saturday one person had been killed in a shooting in a Brussels district at the centre of a spree of drug-linked violence.

The Brussels prosecutor’s office said shots were fired in the evening near the Clemenceau metro station in the working-class, southwestern district of Anderlecht, killing one person.

Federal police had been put on the case, it added.

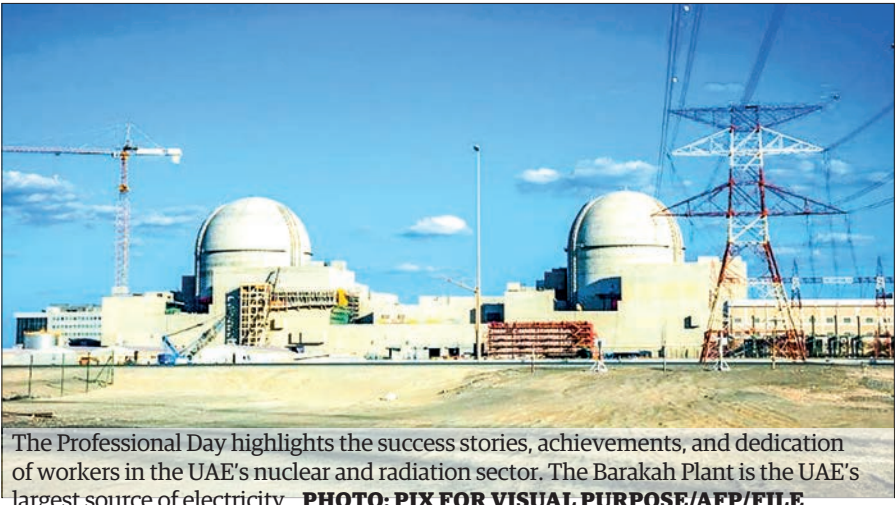
A wave of shootings in the same area have already claimed one life.

Last week two gunmen set off a manhunt after firing automatic rifles near Clemenceau, sending early-morning commuters fleeing into the metro tunnels. — AFP

## UAE marks professional day of Nuclear and Radiation sector workers

THE UAE on Sunday observed the Professional Day of the Nuclear and Radiation Sector Workers, which was approved by the UAE Cabinet in January 2023 to mark the anniversary of the 16<sup>th</sup> of February 2020, when the Federal Authority for Nuclear Regulation (FANR) issued the licence to operate unit 1 of the Barakah Nuclear Power Plant.

The Professional Day highlights the success stories, achievements, and dedication of workers in the UAE’s nuclear and radiation sector. It aims to recognise their contributions to the development of the UAE Peaceful Nuclear Energy Programme,



The Professional Day highlights the success stories, achievements, and dedication of workers in the UAE’s nuclear and radiation sector. The Barakah Plant is the UAE’s largest source of electricity. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/AFP/FILE**

which has positioned the country as a global model for emerging nuclear nations.

Christer Viktorsson, Director-General of the Federal Authority for Nuclear Regulation (FANR), said, “The Professional Day of the Nuclear and Radiation Sector Workers is an opportunity to honour the relentless efforts of some 20,000 nuclear and radiation workers in the UAE for their dedication, expertise, and unwavering commitment to ensure the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear and radiation materials and technologies. Their contributions not only drive innovation and progress but also safeguard lives and the environment.” — ANI



SPORTS

Women's Football: Myanmar to face Lebanon today



Myanmar Women's National Football Team under training session. PHOTO: ANFA

THE Nepal Four-Nation Women's Invitational Football Tournament will start today, with Myanmar set to compete against Lebanon, while Nepal will play against Kyrgyzstan.

The tournament will follow a round-robin format, with matches taking place today. Myanmar will face Lebanon at 2:15 pm Nepali Standard Time (NST), while the host team Nepal will play Kyrgyzstan at 6:15 pm NST. The group-stage matches will be held on 17, 20,

and 23 February, with the final showdown scheduled for 26 February.

A press conference was held on 16 February, where Myanmar Women's National Team head coach Yuki Tetsuyoshi and team captain Win Theingi Htun participated. Head Coach Yuki expressed gratitude to the host team Nepal and the participating teams from Lebanon and Kyrgyzstan. Yuki said, "Each team has come well-prepared, so we will focus

on one match at a time and approach each game with respect for our opponents."

Captain Win Theingi Htun also shared her excitement about playing in Nepal again, stating, "In 2024, we only had domestic games, and we didn't compete in international tournaments. So, this tournament will provide a great opportunity for our team. We are committed to giving our best effort against every opponent". — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

Bochum upset Dortmund as Bayern hold off Leverkusen in Bundesliga title battle

A brace from Giorgos Masouras in the first half lifted bottom club Bochum to a 2-0 win over Borussia Dortmund, while leaders Bayern Munich held second-placed Bayer Leverkusen to a goalless draw in the top-of-the-table clash of the 22<sup>nd</sup> round of Bundesliga on Saturday.

Both sides were desperate for points, with Bochum fighting relegation and Dortmund looking for a new spark under new coach Niko Kovac.

Bochum came out with a vigor and pressed Dortmund right from the kick-off. Matus Bero had a shot blocked after four minutes following a clever build-up by Masouras. Moments later, Masouras himself forced a save from Dortmund goalkeeper Gregor Kobel with a low shot.

Dortmund's best early chance came in the 11<sup>th</sup> minute when Serhou Guirassy's shot

was palmed away by Bochum goalkeeper Timo Horn, who was making his Bundesliga debut for Bochum.

The deadlock was finally broken in the 33<sup>rd</sup> minute when Philipp Hofmann found Masouras, who calmly slotted past Kobel to give the hosts a deserved lead.

Masouras struck again just two minutes later, capitalizing on a defensive lapse by Niklas Sule to double Bochum's advantage and leave Dortmund stunned.

Dortmund pushed forward in the second half in search of an answer, but the Bochum defense held firm, with debutant Horn making several crucial saves to keep the clean sheet. Masouras almost completed his hat-trick in the 70<sup>th</sup> minute, but Kobel was on hand to deny him. — Xinhua

LIV Golf to stay in Adelaide till 2031 with Norman designing new course

LIV Golf on Sunday extended its agreement with Adelaide until 2031, with new chief executive Scott O'Neil calling the Australian tournament "the embodiment" of everything the Saudi-backed league represents. Adelaide's Grange Golf Course is currently hosting its third edition of LIV, with more than 100,000 fans expected through the gates over the three days.

"This event is the embodiment of what LIV Golf represents: the biggest stars, the best courses, unmatched experiences, and of course, the best fans in the world," said O'Neil.

"LIV Golf Adelaide is our showcase and brings the vision for all our events across the globe to life".

Adelaide has been named

World's Best Golf Event at the World Golf Awards for the past two years.

As part of a new agreement with the South Australia state government, the downtown North Adelaide Golf Course will be redeveloped so it can host LIV tournaments.

The design will be led by Australia's Greg Norman, who was instrumental in establishing LIV Golf but was replaced by O'Neil last month.

"I've dreamed of building a global golf league for 30 years," said Norman, a polarising figure in the rift between the established PGA Tour and LIV Golf, which is owned by the Saudi Public Investment Fund.

LIV Golf Adelaide is the realisation of what LIV Golf can be around the world. — AFP

Meillard underlines Swiss dominance with slalom gold

LOIC Meillard streaked to victory in the men's slalom at the World Ski Championships in Saalbach on Sunday to underline the Swiss team domination.

Meillard, second fastest after the first run, held his nerve to clock a winning aggregate time of 1min 54.02sec.

He had already won team combined gold with teammate Franjo Von Allmen, the newly-crowned downhill champion. Of the 11 titles up for grabs in Saalbach, Switzerland won five, netting 13 of the 33 medals on offer.

Norway's Atle Lie McGrath took silver, at 0.26sec, with German Linus Strasser claiming bronze (+0.52).

"It's crazy, I know slalom can be tough, it's incredible," said Meillard, the first Swiss slalom gold medallist since Georges Schneider 75 years ago in 1950.

"I'm just happy, it's hard to put it into words, it's been a crazy week. I was nervous at the finish — if it was gold, perfect" he added.

France's Clement Noel had put himself in prime position to secure an elusive world medal by topping the times in the first run. — AFP

Swiss slalom world champion Loic Meillard. PHOTO: AFP





## A VITAL NATIONAL INDUSTRY

### Trump tariffs loom large in South Korea's 'steel city'

SMOKE billows from chimneys as factories churn in South Korea's steelmaking heartland, now under threat from Washington's swingeing new tariffs on the port city's largest export.

The city of Pohang on South Korea's east coast for decades pumped out the steel that fuelled the country's breakneck economic rise.

South Korea was the fourth largest exporter of the metal to the United States last year, accounting for 13 per cent of its total steel imports.

But the industry has faced intense strain in recent years from foreign competition.

And businesses, officials and workers in the city now fear a planned 25 per cent tariff on all steel imports to the United States beginning next month could have devastating impacts – and major knock-on effects on South Korea's economy. "The steel industry is a vital national industry that serves as a fundamental material for key sectors such as construction, automotive and shipbuilding," Pohang's mayor Lee Kang-deok told AFP. — AFP

## Brazil to host BRICS summit in Rio de Janeiro in July

*Vieira announced that Rio de Janeiro will host heads of state from 20 BRICS countries to discuss development, cooperation, and improving living conditions.*



Leaders from Ethiopia, Egypt, South Africa, China, Russia, India, UAE, Iran, and Brazil pose during the BRICS summit in Kazan on 23 October 2024. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

BRAZIL will host the BRICS leaders' summit in Rio de Janeiro on 6 and 7 July, Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira announced Saturday.

Brazil took over the rotating presidency of BRICS on 1 January and is leading working groups to prepare the agenda and topics for the summit, which will bring together heads of state and government.

The announcement came after Vieira met with Rio de Janeiro Mayor Eduardo Paes on Saturday. The decision follows the city's successful hosting of the G20 Leaders' Summit last November.

"We will welcome the heads of state from the 20 countries that are full members and partners of BRICS, where we will make important decisions on development,

cooperation, and improving living conditions in these nations. Once again, Rio de Janeiro will be the stage for a major international gathering," Vieira said. Paes, who has created a commission to oversee the event's organization, said that the BRICS summit would strengthen international relations while fostering cultural, trade and tourism exchanges. — Xinhua

## China completes world's first FPSO vessel with carbon capture, storage capabilities



A view of an FPSO vessel which is close to completion in Qidong, Jiangsu province.

**PHOTO: XU CONGJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY**

*The world's first FPSO vessel, measuring 333 metres, will be delivered by February's end, producing 120,000 barrels daily.*

AN innovative floating, production, storage, and offloading (FPSO) vessel equipped with a carbon capture and storage facility has been completed in Shanghai, according to Science and Technology Daily.

The vessel is the first of its kind in the world and is scheduled for delivery by the end of February, according to the newspaper.

The FPSO, measuring 333 meters in length and 60 metres in width, has a daily production capacity of up to 120,000 barrels of crude oil.

It has a unique ability to capture car-

bon dioxide emissions generated during both navigation and oil production processes. Additionally, it utilizes the heat energy from exhaust gases to generate electricity, achieving dual objectives of environmental protection and energy efficiency, the news report stated.

Offshore oil and gas operations are known to produce substantial amounts of carbon dioxide annually. The deployment of carbon capture and storage facility on such vessels offers a promising solution to reduce emissions from offshore production and processing activities. — Xinhua