

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.



NATIONAL PAGE 4

Bagan welcomes surge of local, foreign visitors during extended Feb holidays



NATIONAL PAGE 7

Myanmar fish exports top 264,000MT in Apr-Jan, generate over US\$320M

ARTICLE

Living for the Next Hello

By Laura Htet (UDE)

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Madagascar Emerges as Top Buyer of Myanmar Rice, Followed by Philippines

Five- and 10-point rice of the local Aemahta and Ngasein varieties account for about 22 per cent of Myanmar's monthly rice exports, while 25-point rice comprises roughly 34 per cent, Myanmar broken rice (A+B) represents up to 41 per cent, and parboiled rice contributes around three per cent of total shipments.

Myanmar rice is purchased in the largest quantities by Madagascar in Africa. The second-largest buyer is the Philippines, while China ranks third, according to the Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF). In addition, Poland, Spain, Turkiye, Vietnam and Italy also purchase Myanmar rice regularly.

A total of 31 countries across Asia, Africa, Europe and ASEAN import Myanmar rice. In addition to rice, broken rice is also exported, with China being one of the largest buyers of Myanmar's broken rice.

In terms of export categories, five-point and 10-point rice belonging to the local species Aemahta and Ngasein account for approximately 22 per cent of total monthly exports, while 25-point rice makes up about 34 per cent of total exports each month. Myanmar broken rice (A+B) represents up to 41 per cent of total exports, whereas Myanmar parboiled rice accounts for around three per cent of overall exports. — ASH/MKKS



This photo showcases Myanmar rice being exported to foreign countries.

NATIONAL

Union based on democracy and federalism must reflect political dialogue outcomes

❖ “The essence of the NCA is to prioritize Our Three Main National Causes and, in accordance with the union spirit based on freedom, equality, and justice, to build a democratic and federal union that fully guarantees democracy, national equality, and the rights of self-determination, in line with the outcomes of political dialogue.”
(An excerpt from the opening speech delivered by Acting President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Chairman of the State Security and Peace Commission, Chairman of the National Solidarity and Peacemaking Central Committee, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the ceremony to mark the 10th Anniversary of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement-NCA on 15 October 2025)

- 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.

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

Issued at 7 pm Tuesday, 17 February 2026

BAY INFERENCE: According to the observations at 5:30 pm MST today, the low-pressure over the East Equatorial Indian Ocean and adjoining South-West Bay of Bengal still persists. It is likely to move west-northwestwards and further intensify over South-West Bay of Bengal and adjoining East Equatorial Indian Ocean on 18 February 2026. Weather is generally fair over the North Bay of Bengal, a few cloud over the Central Bay of Bengal and partly cloudy to cloudy over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF 18 February 2026: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered are likely in Taninthayi Region and isolated in Kayin, Mon States with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls in Taninthayi Region. The degree of certainty is 80 per cent. Weather will be partly cloudy in Yangon, Bago, Upper Sagaing, Ayeyawady Regions and Kachin, Kayah States and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: The sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about 3-5 feet off and along the Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR THE SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of isolated light rain in Yangon, Bago, and Taninthayi Regions and Kayah, Kayin, Mon, and (southern and eastern)Shan States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 18 February 2026: Generally fair weather.

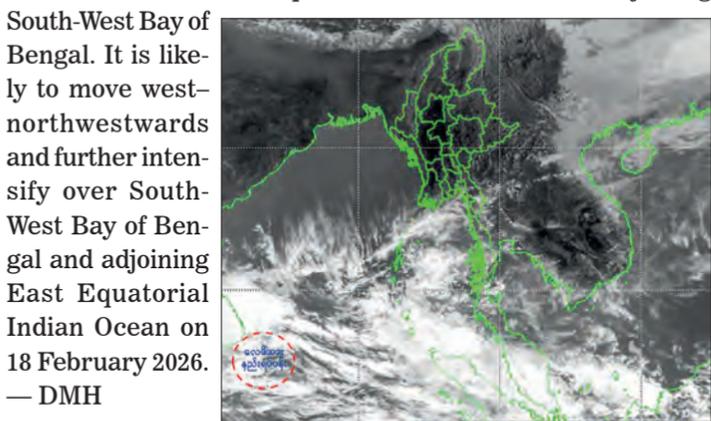
FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 18 February 2026: A few clouds.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 18 February 2026: Generally fair weather. — DMH

Low-Pressure Area Condition

Issued at 2 pm MST on 17 February 2026

ACCORDING to the observations at 1:30 pm MST today, the low-pressure over the East Equatorial Indian Ocean and adjoining South Bay of Bengal has moved west-northwestwards and reached over the East Equatorial Indian Ocean and adjoining South-West Bay of Bengal. It is likely to move west-northwestwards and further intensify over South-West Bay of Bengal and adjoining East Equatorial Indian Ocean on 18 February 2026.



Myanmar Gazette

Appointment of Head of Service Organization confirmed; Heads of Service Organization appointed

1. The National Defence and Security Council has confirmed the appointment of Dr Min Thein, Director-General of the Department of Rehabilitation under the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, after the one-year probationary period.
2. The National Defence and Security Council has appointed the following individuals as Heads of Service Organizations shown against each of their names on probation from the date they assume charge of their duties.

Name	Appointment
(a) U Thet Tun Deputy Director-General Protocol Department Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Director-General Protocol Department Ministry of Foreign Affairs
(b) Dr Tun Min Deputy Permanent Secretary Union Minister’s Office Ministry of Health	Rector (Medical Superintendent/ Treatment) Yangon General Hospital Department of Medical Services Ministry of Health
(c) Professor Dr Thae Nu Htwe Pro-Rector University of Medicine (Taunggyi) Department of Human Resources for Health Ministry of Health	Rector University of Medicine (Taunggyi) Department of Human Resources for Health Ministry of Health

EARTHQUAKE

A slight earthquake of magnitude 3.6 Richter Scale with its epicentre inside Myanmar (about 26 miles west of Sidoktaya), latitude 20.49°N, longitude 93.84 °E, depth 56 kilometers, about 85 miles southwest of NyaungU Seismological Observatory was recorded at 5:39:6 am MST on 17 February 2026. — DMH

Department of Meteorology and Hydrology
Seismological Division
Nay Pyi Taw
Tel 067-3411269 Fax 067-3411253



Earthquake Information	
Date	17.2.2026
Time (MST)	05:39:06
Magnitude	3.6 (Slight)
Latitude	20.49 N
Longitude	93.84 E
Depth	16 km
Region	About 26 miles W of Sidoktaya.

For More detail Information
<https://www.moezala.gov.mm/>

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)

NDSC enacts Amendment to Private Health Care Services Law (2026)

THE National Defence and Security Council enacted the Amendment to the Private Health Care Services Law (2026) on 17 February 2026, and it was signed by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Acting President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, under Section 427 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of

Myanmar.

The law introduces amendments to Sections 2, 7, 8, and 25 and substitutes provisions in Sections 13, 17, 31, and 33.

The law also replaces certain expressions in the Private Health Care Services Law, which was enacted

on 5 April 2007: the expression “Government” is substituted with “Union Government”; the expression “Health Department” with “Medical Services Department”; the expression “prior authorization” with “prior recommendation”; and the expression “State, Division” with “Nay Pyi Taw, Region or State”, respectively. — GNLM

Mawtinsun Pagoda festival welcomes huge holiday crowds



Pilgrims and visitors throng the Santawshin Myat Mawtinsun Pagoda festival during the long holiday.

THE Buddha Pujaniya festival of the Santawshin Myat Mawtinsun Pagoda, located in Hainggyikyun Town, Ngaputaw Township, Patheingyi District, Ayeyawady Region, started on 16 February (1st waxing of Taboung), and the pagoda was crowded with pilgrims, whereas the guesthouses were fully booked during the holidays.

The pilgrims take rest near the vicinity of the pagoda, and pay homage to the pagoda in early and evening sessions, doing good deeds such as meditating,

reciting Paritta, Maha Pathana, donating oil lamps, flowers, water, and alms at dawn. They also donate cash for the all-around renovation of the pagoda and the expansion of the pagoda platform.

Visitors enjoy the natural beauty of the sea, take photos on the huge stones, and also visit Kyaukkalat, historic sites and pagodas around Hainggyikyun, and the Ngwetaung beach. — Hlaing Myo Aung (Hainggyikyun IPRD)/KTZH

9th 47-Member SSMNC holds second-day session of 4th meeting



The second day of the fourth plenary meeting of the Ninth 47-Member State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee is underway yesterday in Yangon.

THE second-day session of the fourth plenary meeting of the Ninth 47-Member State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee was administered at the Wizaya Mingala Dhamma Thabin of Thiri Mingala Kaba Aye Hill in Yangon yesterday.

Present at the occasion were members of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee led by Presiding Nayaka Sayadaw of Thanlyin Min Kyaung Pahtamapyan Monastery, Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Aggamaha Saddhamma jotikadhaja Dr Bhaddanta Candima Bhivamsa, Union

Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Tin Oo Lwin and other relevant officials.

Chairman of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Dr Bhaddanta Candima Bhivamsa presided over the meeting. Joint Secretary Sayadaw Aggamaha Pandita Aggamaha Saddhammajotikadhaja acted as the master of ceremonies. Union Minister U Tin Oo Lwin reported on religious affairs-related matters.

Then, Sayadaws reported on Vinicchaya, religious affairs and educational matters. The Sayadaws discussed Vinic-

chaya affairs and concluded the first session.

The Vinicchaya affairs, religious-related matters and educational matters were discussed by the Sayadaws at the second session at 1 pm.

Disciples under the auspices of Kyaikkasan Wailuwun (Shwegyin) Monastery, Sayadaw Maha Saddhammajotikadhaja Bhaddanta Manita offered alms for the whole day to the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee member Sayadaws who attended the ceremony yesterday. — MNA/KTZH

NATIONAL

Bagan welcomes surge of local, foreign visitors during extended Feb holidays

DURING the extended public holiday period from 12 to 17 February 2026, the Bagan cultural heritage zone experienced a continuous influx of domestic and international visitors, according to the pagoda boards of trustees. Travellers from across the country visited prominent pagodas and temples, contributing to a notable increase in tourism activity.

Among 18 famous sites, Shwezigon Pagoda welcomed more than 90,000 visitors, while Htilominlo Temple recorded over 60,000 visitors during the holiday period. Officials reported that pilgrims and tourists showed strong interest in observing and paying homage to the ancient monuments of Bagan.

Chairperson U Thein Aung of the Shwezigon Pagoda Board of Trustees expressed appreciation for the growing number of visitors. He noted that the long holiday encouraged both local pilgrims and foreign travellers to visit Myanmar's cultural her-



Travellers through the Bagan-NyaungU Ancient Cultural Heritage Zone during the extended holiday. PHOTO: ZWE MARN

itage sites and highlighted the importance of preserving and valuing the nation's historical legacy.

Pagoda boards of trustees stated that foreign visitors mainly came from China, Japan, Russia, the Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Switzerland, France, Spain, Germany, Poland, Italy, Slovenia and Brazil. The

steady flow of visitors significantly boosted the local tourism sector.

Locals benefited from the increased arrivals, as higher tourist numbers generated more business opportunities for vendors, transport services and tour guides. Community members reported improved sales and stronger economic activity

compared with the same period last year.

U Tin Hla Oo, Secretary of the Htilominlo Temple Board of Trustees, said the sustained visitor turnout had brought encouraging results for the region. He expressed optimism that tourism would continue to grow alongside national stability and extended an invitation to travellers to ex-

plore Bagan.

Although visitor numbers may decline slightly in March as the tourism season gradually approaches its conclusion ahead of the April Thingyan period, officials anticipate that Bagan will remain vibrant with domestic and international visitors during the Myanmar New Year festivities. — Thitsa (MNA)/KZL



A welcome ceremony for the trainees of the People's Military Service Training 22 is in progress yesterday.

Trainees of People's Military Service Training 22 welcomed

A welcoming ceremony for the "nation's worthy sons", who will attend the People's Military Service Training 22 from various townships in Shan State, was held at a local training school in Kengtung yesterday morning.

The event was attended by Brig-Gen Kyaw Naing Soe, Deputy Commander of the Triangle Region Command, along with responsible personnel, officers, other ranks and their family members, state-, district- and township-level departmental officials, members of the Myanmar

Police Force, representatives of war veterans' organizations, and members of ethnic cultural groups.

The deputy commander and attendees first warmly welcomed the trainees for the People's Military Service Training 22 by presenting them with garlands of eugenia flowers and refreshments.

The deputy commander and responsible officials made the necessary organizational and administrative arrangements for those who would attend the training course. — MNA/MKKS

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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,
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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

Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda Festival thronged with visitors

The Mann Shwesettaw Buddha Pujaniya Festival in Minbu (Sagu) Township, Magway Region, welcomed about 30,000 visitors to date during the festival period, and the guest houses were also fully reserved, according to the Pagoda Board of Trustees.

The pagoda festival is held from the 5th waxing of Tabodwe to the 1st day of Myanmar New Year (22 January to 17 April 2026) for 86 days. During the holidays, up to 16 February, about 30,000 pilgrims visited the pagoda. Arrangements have been made to ensure that visitors can stay comfortably in the guesthouses. Pilgrims have arrived not only by coaches from major cities such as Yangon and Mandalay but also by private vehicles from across the country. Daily vehicle entry ranges between 50 and 100 cars. Compared to last year's festival period, this year has been noticeably more crowded. During weekends and the current long public holiday period, all lodging rooms were fully occupied. The number of pilgrims is expected to increase after the Grade 12 matriculation examinations conclude, said U Aye Ko, chairman of the Pagoda Board of Trustees.

Throughout the festival period, the busiest days each year are the opening day, the full moon day of Tabodwe, the full moon day of Taboung, and the Thingyan public holidays in Tagu. During this year's festival, the Maha Pathana reciting event will be included. The locals from



Images capture an aerial drone view of the Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda Festival (top) and holidaymakers enjoying the festivities during the extended holiday.

Minhlakyin village near the pagoda also arrange to visit the pagoda by carts. They visit before the full moon day of Taboung and return 1st waning of Taboung.

Those who want to study the tradition of pilgrimage tour to Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda using bullock carts should visit before the full moon day of Taboung,

he added.

“We make a day trip from Magway with our family. After arriving, we paid homage to the two sacred footprints, offered

flowers, donated gold robes, and alms. We also made a food donation for Naga and gave food to the monkeys at the pagoda. Seeing our children relax and bathe in Mann Creek after walking around the pagoda made us feel joyful and content,” said Ko Zaw Htay Hlaing, a pilgrim from Magway.

“Mann Shwesettaw is a famous pagoda in Myanmar, and our family came together with friends by pilgrimage bus. As the festival takes place during the transition from the cold season to the hot season, we can truly feel the essence of summer. Along the journey, the sight of trees shedding old leaves and sprouting new ones is very beautiful. We will try to come again with our family next year,” said Daw Myint Kyi from Yangon.

“We have long wanted to visit Mann Shwesettaw. Since we had never visited the Shwesettaw Pagoda Festival before, we came with our children so they could experience it. The journey was peaceful and pleasant, and upon reaching the pagoda, we felt calm and happy in our hearts. During our pilgrimage, we performed acts of charity and merit, visited the festival market stalls, and enjoyed bathing in the Mann Creek. The Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda is a peaceful and joyful place to visit, so I would like to invite both those who have been here and those who have not yet visited to come and pay homage,” said Daw Htay Htay Hlaing from Kyimyindine. — Maung Maung (Minbu)/KTZH

Preparations in full swing for 77th Pa-O National Day, Taboung Festival in Kayin State

PREPARATIONS are underway to mark the 77th Pa-O National Day and the Pa-O traditional Taboung Festival in the Thamanya area of Kayin State, according to a member of the Pa-O Literature and Culture Organization (Kayin State).

The 77th Pa-O National Day will fall on 2 March 2026, which coincides with the full moon day of Taboung, when the traditional Taboung Festival will also be held.

A responsible official said the commemorative events would be organized with traditional Pa-O performances, including songs, dances and cultural displays, in areas where Pa-O people mainly reside, such as the Pa-O Self-Adminis-



Preparations are in progress for the 77th Pa-O National Day ceremony in Thamanya Region, Kayin State.

tered Zone and towns across southern Shan State, as well as in other regions.

In Kayin State, organizers are making arrangements to hold the celebrations in a lively and grand manner in the Thamanya area. The programme for the 2026 event will begin on the 13th waxing day of Taboung (28 February) with traditional cultural dance performances and competitions.

In addition, a women's football tournament will be included as part of the 77th Pa-O National Day commemorative activities at the Pa-O National Multipurpose Ground in Myaingkalay Village. — ASH/KZL

NATIONAL



Photos show damage to the Thanlwin Bridge (Pasawng) following a mine attack perpetrated by KNPP, KNDF and PDF terrorists.

Thanlwin Bridge (Pasawng) damaged by mine attack in Mese

THE Thanlwin Bridge (Pasawng), located near Pasawng in Mese Township, Kayah State, was damaged in a mine attack carried out yesterday morning by KNPP, KNDF groups and PDF terrorists, according to reports.

The incident occurred at approximately 7:20 am on the western side of Pasawng, about 320 metres from the town, between mileposts 0/3 and 0/4 on the Pasawng-Mese-BP 13 Road. The bridge, an iron-reinforced concrete structure measuring 1,260 feet in length and 24 feet in width, serves as a key public crossing for residents and the flow of goods.

Due to the explosion, a section of the bridge near the western abutment, measuring 250 feet in length and 24 feet in width, collapsed and sustained severe damage. No casualties or injuries were reported.

The attack caused significant disruption to local transport, and at present, neither pedestrians nor vehicles can pass through the crossing. The relevant road and bridge authorities have stated that repair works will be carried out as swiftly as possible.

Security personnel have intensified measures to ensure stability and safety in the surrounding area. — MNA/KZL

Heavy rain expected across Myanmar as low-pressure area forms in Bay of Bengal

THE low-pressure area formed over the South Bay of Bengal may lead to heavy rain in southern Myanmar; there is no possibility of high rainfall or a cold wave, said meteorologist U Win Naing.

The upper air cyclonic circulation (UACC) in the South Bay of Bengal near the equator led to the formation of a low-pressure area on 16 February and moved west-northwestwards, with the possibility of developing into a stronger, more marked low-pressure area on 18 February, he said.

Due to these conditions, it will rain in Tanintharyi Region and Mon State in seven days from 17 to 23 February, but the rainfall will not exceed 1 inch while it will rain showering in southern Shan

State, eastern Bago Region and Kayah State and mostly dry in the Central Myanmar- Mandalay, Magway, Sagaing and western Rakhine State and Chin State, he said.

The formation of clouds has increased in the Indian Ocean, and so has the possibility of rain along the equator. He said OLR values are between 230 and 250, so the chance of rain is still low for South-East Asia/Indochina Peninsula, which includes Myanmar.

The slight impact of La Nina remains until March 2026, and the temperature at night and early mornings is low as of January this year, except for it; there is no possibility of a cold wave, he said. — MT/ZS

Seminar held on structures of red-level buildings and high-pressure welding



Speakers and engineers from member companies conducting on-site inspections at construction projects.

THE Myanmar Construction Entrepreneurs Federation (MCEF) announced that a seminar titled "Study and Discussion of Structures for Red-Level Buildings and High-Pressure Welding" was held at the Grand Ballroom of the Mingala Thiri Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw on 16 February.

It was organized by the Project Operation Unit of the Technical Development Committee under MCEF.

During the event, U Win Tint, Patron of the MCEF and Vice-President of the Federation of Myanmar Engineering Societies (Fed MES), along with U Htin Aung, a structural engineer

from the High-Rise and Public Building Projects Committee (HPBC), led the discussions under the aforesaid theme.

According to the MCEF, the seminar was attended by over 70 participants, including professional engineers, registered senior engineers, and site engineers from companies managing MCEF projects in Nay Pyi Taw, as well as members of the Nay Pyi Taw Construction Entrepreneurs Association (NRCEA).

Following the seminar, the speakers and engineers conducted field visits to various construction sites. — MT/ZN

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NATIONAL

Myanmar fish exports top 264,000MT in Apr-Jan, generate over US\$320M

Seafood exports, including hilsa, rohu, catfish, seabass, eel, shrimp and crab, are shipped to international markets, with more than 140 fishery cold-storage facilities in operation and annual licence renewals granted by the relevant department, according to the Myanmar Fisheries Federation.



Fishery workers are seen diligently operating in the processing line at the cold storage facility.

MYANMAR conveyed more than 264,000 metric tonnes of fish in the past ten months of the current financial year 2025-2026, beginning 1 April, generating an income of over US\$323.586 million, according to the Department of Fisheries.

Myanmar sent over 129,000 metric tonnes of fish by sea, with an estimated value of \$203.29 million. Over 135,000 metric tonnes of fish worth \$120.289 million were exported to neighbouring countries via the border channel.

Myanmar's fish export amounted to US\$421 million from about 400,000 tonnes in the

past FY 2024-2025 (April-March).

Myanmar steadily exports seafood to 40 countries, including China, Thailand, Bangladesh and Japan through maritime and border trade channels. Myanmar exported over 376,430 tonnes of fishery products during April-January of the current financial year.

Seafood, including hilsa, rohu, catfish, seabass, eel, shrimp and crab are conveyed to foreign markets, according to the Myanmar Fisheries Federation. There are over 140 fishery cold storage facilities, and the department grants annual licence renewals. — NN/KK

LBVD to take legal action against unauthorized veterinary services

THE Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department announced that legal action will be taken against individuals or organizations operating veterinary service businesses without a valid license.

"The directive related to Animal Healthcare Services has been approved and issued under Section 55 (c) of the Animal Health and Livestock Development Law.

Consequently, new applications and renewals for Animal Healthcare Service Operation Licenses in Nay Pyi Taw Council Territory, regions and states are being processed promptly after being reviewed by the Work Scrutiny Team and approved by the Central Supervisory Committee.

Individuals or organizations wishing to operate any animal healthcare-related business must submit applications to the relevant Township Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department, along

with the following documents.

They must present a 2-inch-by-1.5-inch colour photo taken within the last six months, the business address, and details of the building and land, colour photographs of the building exterior, sides, and all interiors, list of supervisors with their full personal details and educational qualifications, list of staff with their full personal details and educational qualifications, any other documents requested by the department according to business type and a commitment pledge to cooperate with the department in infectious disease prevention and control procedures and public health activities as periodically announced.

The department notified that any person or organization found operating veterinary service businesses without a valid licence will be prosecuted under Section 42 (b) of the Animal Health and Livestock Development Law. — NN/KK

YCDC invites bids for sale of unserviceable assets

THE Urban Environmental Conservation and Cleansing Department under the Yangon City Development Committee called for bids to sell unusable operational items as seen.

Tender Lot (1) includes 1,889 units of 660-litre old dustbin (body), 4,224 units of 660-litre old dustbin (wheel), 1,700 units of 660-litre old dustbin (lid), 257 units of 240-litre old dustbin (body), 232 units of 240-litre old dustbin (wheel) and 130 units of 240-litre old dustbin (lid), while 1,772 units of old tyres (various sizes) in Lot 2, 1,269 units of old batteries (various sizes) in Lot (3), and 1,094 units with approximately 12 tonnes of broken hand-pushed three-wheeled garbage collection carts (garbage tricycles) in Lot (4).

Tender forms and regula-



The City Hall, Yangon's landmark building houses the Yangon City Development Committee offices.

tions can be obtained at YCDC's 12-storey office in Botahtaung Township by 1 pm on 10 March. The payment order deadline is 10 March. Tender opening will be held at 11 am on 13 March at the meeting hall of the 12-storey

office of the YCDC.

Individuals can enquire about details through the Urban Environmental Conservation and Cleansing Department at 09 254017105 and 09 250283877. — NN/KK

Daily newspapers available online

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OPINION

ARTICLE ESSAY

Enjoy the pleasantness and natural beauty of Taboung

Taboung is a month distinguished by abundant pleasantness and natural beauty. According to the Myanmar calendar, it is the twelfth and final month of the year, marking the closing chapter before the New Year begins. Astrologically, Taboung falls under the sign of Pisces, symbolized by the fish. Its corresponding lunar mansion is Phalguni, and its seasonal flower, Calophyllum, is blossoming during the month in harmony with the changing climate. As the cool season gradually gives way to summer, the days grow noticeably hot while the nights remain refreshingly cool, creating a unique and balanced atmosphere.

In Myanmar's central dry zone, known as the Anyar region, the name of the month Taboung is closely associated with traditional rural livelihoods. During this month, sap collected from toddy palm trees is boiled and processed into palm jaggery, an important local product and source of income. The clear skies of Taboung are also said to reveal all twelve constellations, adding a sense of cosmic completeness to the month. Regardless of differing explanations about the origin of its name, Taboung is widely regarded as a time that harmoniously gathers the beauty and charm of all seasons into one.

As the weather shifts, pagoda festivals across Myanmar come alive with the resonant sounds of gongs and drums. Among religious celebrations, Taboung festivals are the most vibrant and well-attended. Many annual Buddha Pujaniya festivals, regularly held at temples and stupas throughout Myanmar, take place during this month. These events are not only expressions of devotion to the Lord Buddha but also treasured cultural traditions through which Buddhists seek to help Buddhism flourish and endure.

Taboung also marks the completion of the agricultural cycle. For farmers, it is harvest time – the season when paddy is gathered, and earnings are realized. With financial relief after months of labour, communities engage in acts of charity, merit-making, and joyful celebration. Traders travel widely by various means of transport, taking advantage of the dry roads and favourable conditions for commerce.

As schools close for holidays due to gradual raising the temperature of the weather, families embark on pilgrimages to visit ancient pagodas and sacred sites. Thus, Taboung is not merely a time for leisure, but a season of spiritual reflection, communal unity, and shared happiness. For the people of Myanmar, it stands as a distinguished month that blends worldly fulfilment with spiritual uplift, truly deserving its description as a time adorned with abundant grace and beauty.

A year may seem long, but in reality, it is only thirty-six periods of ten days. At first, I never thought about it. But when I reflected on it, I was amazed by how swiftly time moves. Time keeps passing, and we can no longer afford to waste it lightly. If we meet once every ten days, we only meet thirty-six times a year. In this vast and magnificent journey of life, each meeting is quietly moving, step by step, towards separation as we count backwards. How precious every moment of life truly is.

Long-distance relationships have a way of teaching us arithmetic we never wished to learn. We begin counting days instead of memories, hours instead of embraces, phone calls instead of shared dinners. What once felt like an endless calendar suddenly becomes a narrow corridor of numbered chances. Thirty-six meetings a year. Thirty-six opportunities to look into the eyes of the person who feels like home.

When love lives in the same city, time feels generous. There is always tomorrow. There is al-

Living for the Next Hello

By Laura Htet (UDE)

ways next week. There is always another evening to walk side by side without thinking about how many such evenings remain. But when distance stands between two people, time transforms into something sharper and more visible. Every ten days is like a single grain of golden sand in the hourglass of time. While waiting ten days to meet again, while planning ten days for a journey, while counting ten days from “I miss you” to “I finally get to see you”, time continues to slip away.

Time never stops. Like a silent river, it flows steadily forward, carrying people along with it, quietly leaving behind a destiny that never allows us to meet in time. Flights get delayed. Work becomes demanding. Unexpected obligations arise. Sometimes

we miss a planned meeting and the arithmetic changes again. Thirty-six becomes thirty-five. Or thirty-four. Each lost meeting feels heavier than it should, because in a long-distance relationship, meetings are not ordinary events — they are the heartbeat of the relationship itself.

Yet every meaningful encounter leaves a beam of light in our lives, forming for us a sky filled with stars. The station platform where we wave goodbye becomes sacred ground. The small café where we talk for hours becomes a memory we revisit on lonely nights. The scent of their perfume on our jacket lingers longer than it should, as if even the air understands how rarely we are together.

Life is a cycle of meeting and

parting. And because separation is inevitable, every meeting becomes even more precious. Those who love across distance understand the quiet miracle of ordinary moments. Sitting in silence next to each other. Sharing a simple meal. Walking without speaking. These become treasures because they are limited.

Distance tests patience, but it also refines love. It removes the superficial and exposes what truly matters. We learn to communicate more honestly, because misunderstandings cannot be solved with a quick hug. We learn to listen more carefully, because tone carries more meaning than touch. We learn to trust more deeply because we cannot watch over each other's daily lives.

There are nights when longing feels heavier than hope. Nights when the phone screen becomes a fragile substitute for presence. Nights when the word

“soon” feels both comforting and painfully vague. But there are also mornings when a simple message – “Good morning” – feels like a promise that love is still alive, still waiting, still enduring.

Do not wait for “later”. The best time is now. The longing we feel at this moment, the courage we have at this moment, the hands we can still reach out with at this moment – the present is the most valuable time of all.

In long-distance relationships, postponement becomes a dangerous habit. “We will travel together next year.” “We will celebrate properly when we finally live in the same city.” “We will take photos when life is less busy.” But what if life never becomes less busy? What if next year carries its own storms? The present moment is fragile. It does not wait politely for our convenience.

Let us meet while we still can. In these thirty-six encounters, let us create rich memories. Let us fill every meeting with warmth and meaning. Every sincere encounter is the gentlest way to resist life's hardships – resisting forgetfulness, resisting loneliness, resisting distance, resisting longing, and resisting the regret of missing what should have been cherished.

When we finally stand face to face after days of waiting, the world seems to pause. The airport crowd fades into the background. The noise of traffic becomes distant. In that embrace, ten days of longing dissolve into a single breath. We realize that love is not measured by proximity, but by presence – by the depth of attention we offer when we are together.

And yet, even in the joy of reunion, there is a quiet awareness that the clock is already ticking

again. Another countdown has begun. Another farewell waits somewhere in the near future. This awareness could make love anxious and fragile. Instead, it often makes love deliberate.

We speak more sincerely. We laugh more freely. We take more photos, not because we are obsessed with capturing moments, but because we understand how rare they are. We memorize the curve of their smile, the rhythm of their voice, the warmth of their hand in ours. We gather these details like treasures to carry back across the distance.

The beauty of life does not exist in some distant future, but in every “present moment” in which we are still able to meet. When the sunlight is bright, when longing still stirs in our heart, when it is not yet too late to say, “It's been so long,” go and meet the one we miss, the one we long to see.

In a world that moves quickly and demands productivity, love can easily be postponed. But love is not an appointment to be rescheduled without consequence. It is a living connection

that requires time, attention, and courage. Especially in long-distance relationships, effort is not optional – it is essential.

Thirty-six meetings a year may not seem like much. But within those thirty-six meetings lie countless conversations, shared dreams, whispered reassurances, and silent understandings. Within those thirty-six meetings lies the strength to endure another ten days apart. Within those thirty-six meetings lies the decision, repeated again and again, to stay.

Perhaps the true lesson of distance is not about sadness or sacrifice. Perhaps it is about clarity. When we know we cannot meet every day, we begin to understand the value of every single day we can. When we know time is limited, we stop treating it as infinite.

A year may seem long, but it is only thirty-six periods of ten days. Thirty-six chances to hold hands. Thirty-six chances to say, “I am here.” Thirty-six chances to choose each other again. And maybe that is enough – if we cherish them.

Before we speak about practice, we must first understand the meaning.

The Oxford University Press Dictionary defines *respect* as “a feeling of deep admiration for someone or something elicited by their abilities, qualities, or achievements,” and also as “due regard for the feelings, wishes, or rights of others”. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary expands the meaning further, describing it as “high or special regard”, “esteem”, and “consideration”. These definitions, though concise, underline two essential elements: recognition of value and acknowledgement of rights.

Turning to our local understanding, an English-Myanmar dictionary commonly renders *respect* as “လေးစားမှု” (Lay-zar-mu) — a term that conveys reverence, regard, and mindful consideration. The Myanmar expression does not merely imply admiration; it carries a cultural weight of humility and restraint. In our social context, to “လေးစားသည်” is not only to admire but also to behave properly towards others according to moral and social boundaries.

When we combine these

I Say What I See: Mutual Respect – The Measure of Our Maturity

By @Editor

perspectives – global definitions grounded in rights and esteem, and local interpretations rooted in humility and conduct — we begin to see that *mutual respect* is more than politeness. It is reciprocal recognition. It is the conscious balance between self-worth and the worth of others. It is neither submission nor superiority, but an equilibrium.

This, at least, is what the dictionaries say. What I say – and what I see – may go further.

During my years with an international organization, I had the opportunity to travel abroad to attend meetings, seminars, workshops, fora, conferences, and congresses. Before each gathering, I would carefully read the agenda documents circulated to delegates. These documents were often de-

tailed, outlining procedures, speaking time, seating arrangements, voting mechanisms, and codes of conduct.

Yet among all procedural matters, one principle was consistently highlighted: **Mutual Respect**.

It was not presented as a decorative phrase. It appeared as a clear reminder – sometimes even as a formal rule – urging delegates to uphold mutual respect throughout the event, regardless of gender, nationality, political system, or the relative size and influence of their countries. The wording was simple, but its implication was profound. Participants came from across the globe — large nations and small states, developed and developing countries, men and women alike — yet within the con-

ference hall, equality in dignity was emphasized.

What struck me most was that this reminder was necessary. These gatherings involved highly educated individuals – diplomats, policymakers, experts, and senior officials. And still, the organizers found it essential to underline mutual respect at the very beginning.

Why? Because diversity, while enriching, also carries the potential for misunderstanding. Differences in culture, language, economic power, and political standing can quietly influence tone, posture, and even listening habits. Without mutual respect as a conscious guideline, discussion can easily shift from dialogue to dominance.

Inside those halls, each country had its nameplate. Some nameplates represented powerful nations; others represented small countries rarely mentioned

in global headlines. Yet when the chair recognized a speaker, each delegate was granted the same floor, the same microphone, the same allotted time. In that moment, respect was institutionalized. It was procedural. It was protected.

From this small but meaningful experience, I began to see that mutual respect is not automatic. It must be declared. It must be structured. And, above all, it must be practised – not only internationally, but also within our own communities.

This is what I saw.

If mutual respect is essential in international halls, it is even more crucial at home, especially in the aftermath of an election.

An election naturally produces two visible groups: winners and losers. The winners celebrate; the losers reflect. Victory brings confidence; defeat often brings disap-

pointment. Yet democracy, at its core, is not designed to humiliate one side or glorify the other. It is designed to allow peaceful competition and orderly transition.

This is where mutual respect becomes a true test of maturity.

For the winners, respect means restraint. It means recognizing that triumph at the ballot box does not erase the dignity of those who voted differently. It means governing not only for supporters, but for the entire nation, including those who stood on the opposite platform.

For the losers, respect means acceptance. It means acknowledging the outcome without resorting to hostility or bitterness. It means understanding that disagreement does not justify division.

In many societies, I have observed that elections do not create division; they reveal it. The real question is what happens after-

wards. Do citizens speak to one another with civility? Do leaders choose language that heals rather than inflames? Do institutions function with fairness and composure?

Mutual respect in such moments is not weakness. It is discipline. It prevents political competition from turning into social fracture.

In those international conferences I once attended, countries with vastly different systems and ideologies still agreed to speak with respect under one roof. If nations can do so across borders, surely citizens within one country can do the same after an election.

Victory is temporary. Opposition is temporary. But the nation is permanent.

This is what I see.

In the end, mutual respect is not tested when we agree. It is tested when we do not.

It is easy to respect those who think like us, vote like us, and stand beside us. The true measure of our maturity is how we treat those who stand across from us, politically, socially, or ideologically. A nation does not weaken because of differing opinions. It weakens

when disagreement turns into disdain.

History has shown that power changes hands. Governments rise and fall. Political tides shift. Today's winner may be tomorrow's opposition. But if mutual respect remains constant, stability endures beyond any electoral cycle.

Respect does not silence criticism. It refines it. Respect does not eliminate competition. It civilizes it. Respect does not demand surrender. It demands dignity.

If we expect fairness when we lose, we must practise humility when we win. If we demand recognition of our rights, we must recognize the rights of others. Mutual respect is reciprocal; it cannot move in only one direction.

From international conference halls to our own communities, I have seen one simple truth: where mutual respect is upheld, dialogue continues. Where it collapses, division deepens.

In the quiet space between victory and defeat, between agreement and disagreement, lies a choice. That choice defines not only our politics, but our character.

This is what I see.

SCI/ENVIRON: WORLD

Antarctic drilling peers deep into ice shelf's past

SCIENTISTS say they have drilled deeper than ever beneath the West Antarctic Ice Sheet, peering back millions of years to reveal signs it was once, at least in part, open ocean.

The vast expanse is estimated to hold enough ice to raise global sea levels by four to five metres (13 to 16 feet), said the international team of 29 researchers.

By drilling through the ice and the sediment below, they retrieved samples showing what it was like up to 23 million years ago.

The hope is that by studying how it melted in Earth's past, they can determine the factors that drove its retreat, including the ocean temperature at the time.

This may help determine how fast the ice sheet will melt in the future in Earth's warming climate.

"Satellite observations over recent decades show the ice sheet is losing mass at an accelerating rate, but there is uncertainty around the temperature increase that could trigger rapid loss of ice," they said in a



This handout photo dated 27 December 2025 and released by Ana Tovey/SWAIS2C on 17 February 2026 shows researchers installing the riser at the drilling site in West Antarctica. Scientists say they have drilled deeper than ever beneath the West Antarctic Ice Sheet, peering back millions of years to reveal signs it was once, at least in part, open ocean. **PHOTO: HANDOUT / ANA TOVEY/SWAIS2C / AFP**

report released Wednesday of their initial observations.

"Up until now, ice sheet modellers have relied on geological records from further afield."

They drilled through 523

metres of ice and 228 metres of ancient rock and mud at Crary Ice Rise on the Ross Ice Shelf, said the team led by Earth Sciences New Zealand, Wellington's Victoria University, and Antarctica New Zealand.

Marine organisms

"Some of the sediment was typical of deposits that occur under an ice sheet like we have at Crary Ice Rise today," said co-chief scientist Molly Patterson of the United States' Bingham-

ton University.

But they also found shell fragments and the remains of marine organisms that need light -- material more typical of an open ocean, an ice shelf floating over ocean, or an ice-shelf margin with icebergs calving off, Patterson said.

Scientists already thought the region was once open ocean, indicating a retreat of the Ross Ice Shelf, and potential collapse of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet.

But there was uncertainty about when this happened.

The new record provided sequences of environmental conditions through time, and direct evidence of the presence of open ocean in this region, Patterson said.

Huw Horgan, a fellow co-chief of the project from Victoria University of Wellington, said initial indications were that the samples spanned the past 23 million years.

This included periods when Earth's global average temperatures were significantly higher than two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial times, Horgan said. — AFP

Chinese researchers create advanced transistor with ultralow power consumption

A team of Chinese researchers has developed the world's smallest ferroelectric transistor with ultralow power consumption, offering new insights into progress in the semiconductor industry, according to a study published recently in the journal Science Advances.

In advanced semiconduc-

tor manufacturing processes, the operating voltage of logic chips has been reduced to 0.7 volts to achieve high energy efficiency. However, mainstream non-volatile memory, such as NAND flash, previously required five volts or higher to complete write operations.

This mismatch lead to

the integration of complex circuits for voltage step-up or step-down to enable collaboration between logic and memory units. Such integration resulted in additional power consumption, wasted space, and data transfer bottlenecks between logic and memory. — Xinhua

Australia speeds genome sequencing to fight biodiversity loss

SCIENTISTS harness rapid genome sequencing to decode the blueprints for Australia's native species, combatting biodiversity loss from invasives, climate change and habitat destruction.

Scientists can sequence genomes faster than ever be-

fore, and it is revolutionizing research into pests and wildlife, said a statement from the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO), Australia's national science agency, on Tuesday.

"Even small insects like

grasshoppers can have huge genomes ... We run sophisticated algorithms and computational pipelines to deliver a complete genome," said Tom Walsh, principal research scientist and co-leader of CSIRO's Applied Genomics Initiative. — Xinhua

Breathing in microplastics can cause inflammation, damage to lungs, study warns

BREATHING in microplastics can cause inflammation and damage to the lungs, new research showed.

This potentially increases the risk of respiratory diseases such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, pulmonary fibrosis and lung cancer, said a statement from Australia's University of Technology Sydney (UTS) on Tuesday.

World Health Organization data links air pollution to around seven million premature deaths yearly, and airborne microplastics from synthetic carpets, clothing and household dust may worsen respiratory risks,

it said.

"Microplastics are tiny fragments of plastic, smaller than 5mm, that are released when larger plastic items break down or shed fibers," said lead author Keshav Raj Paudel, a UTS senior researcher on chronic respiratory diseases.

"The lungs are particularly vulnerable to microplastic damage due to their large surface area and limited ability to clear particles, particularly smaller ones that travel deep into the lungs," he said, adding lung cancer tumours contain more microplastics than healthy tissue. — Xinhua

“Wuthering Heights” tops North American box office in opening weekend

WARNER Bros Pictures’ “Wuthering Heights” took the top spot at the North American box office with an estimated three-day cume of US\$34.8 million in its opening weekend, according to figures released by Comscore on Sunday.

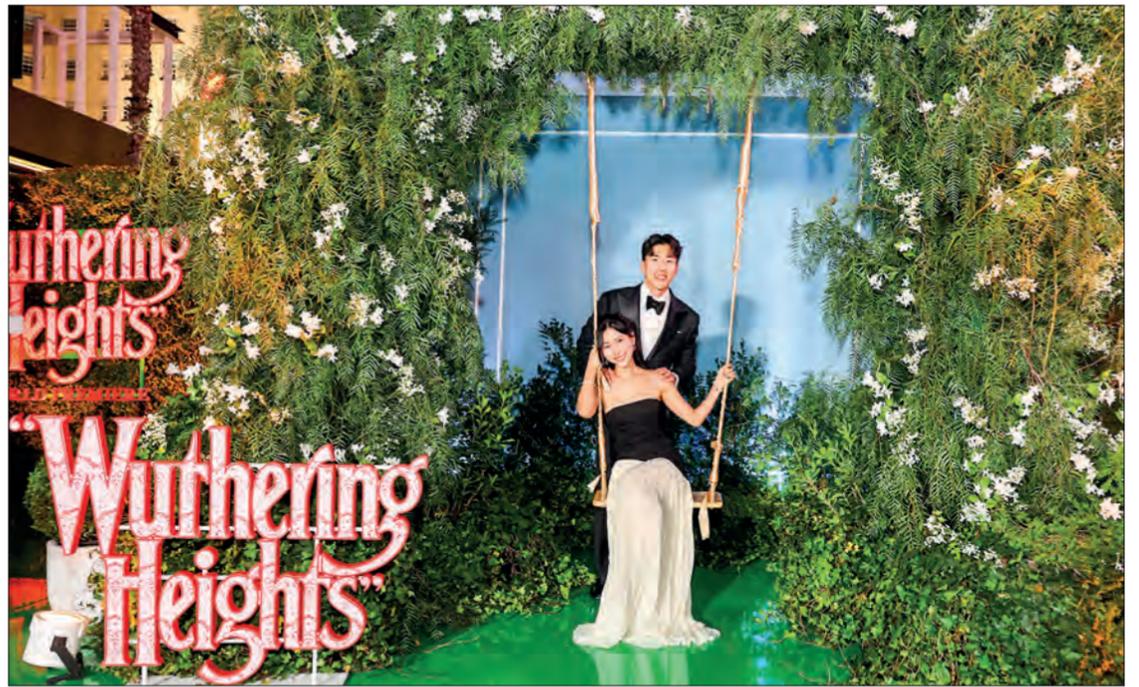
The period romantic drama is also projected to collect \$42 million internationally over the Valentine’s Day weekend.

Directed by Emerald Fennell and adapted from Emily

Bronte’s 1847 novel, the film stars Margot Robbie and Jacob Elordi as Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff, respectively.

It holds an approval rating of 63 per cent on review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes currently and received a “B” grade from audiences on an “A+” to “F” scale polled by CinemaScore.

Another newcomer, Sony Pictures’ animated sports comedy “GOAT” landed in second place with \$26 million



(L-R) Hana Sim and David Cho attend Warner Bros Pictures and MRC Presents World Premiere of “Wuthering Heights” at TCL Chinese Theatre at TCL Chinese Theatre on 28 January 2026 in Hollywood, California. PHOTO: AMY SUSSMAN/GETTY IMAGES/AFP

this weekend.

Rounding out the top three,

Amazon MGM Studios’ new thriller “Crime 101” opened with

\$15.1 million through Sunday. — Xinhua

Pokemon card sold at auction for world-record \$16.49 mln

A rare Pokemon card fetched a record \$16,492,000 including the buyer’s premium on Monday in New Jersey, making it the most expensive Pocket Monster trading card ever sold in a public auction.

The Pokemon Illustrator card, which depicts the iconic cartoon character Pikachu, has a hobby card authenticator rating of 10, the highest possible grade. It is one of only 39

of the illustration cards given to winners of a 1998 drawing contest held by the Japanese magazine CoroCoro Comic.

The card was consigned to the New Jersey-based Goldin Auctions house by Logan Paul, an American social media influencer with millions of fans. He bought the card in 2021 for \$5.27 million, earning the Guinness World Record title for “most expensive Pokemon card sold at a private sale”, according to the Guinness website.

The successful bidder, who won the Pikachu card with a diamond necklace it hangs from, appeared at a livestream watch party for the auction on Paul’s YouTube channel to collect the item. However, the auction house did not reveal his identity Monday morning when the auction ended.

In recent years, prominent social media influencers have engaged with fans by opening boxes containing multiple packs of Pokemon cards, hoping to find rare cards that could be worth hundreds or even thousands of dollars. — Kyodo



Photo taken in December 2025 shows the Pokemon card that fetched a record \$16,492,000 at an online auction held by a New Jersey-based auction house on 16 February 2026. PHOTO: KYODO

New sightseeing train to Mt Koya unveiled, to begin run on 24 Apr

A Japanese railway operator on Monday revealed the exterior of its new sightseeing train, set to begin running from 24 April to Mount Koya, a UNESCO world heritage site in Wakayama Prefecture, bedecked in dark red with gold ornamentation.

The four-carriage Gran Tenku, successor of the current Tenku train, will be able to carry 70 passengers on an approximately 90-minute journey between Namba Station in Osaka and Gokurakubashi Station in Koya, Wakayama, the final stop on the Koya Line, according to Nankai Electric Railway Co.

The new train, with a gold emblem shaped like a compass at the front with the letters K

and W to denote Mount Koya — a Buddhist pilgrimage site and tourist spot — and Wakayama, was unveiled to media at a factory in Kawachinagano, Osaka

Prefecture. The first carriage will have reclining seats, while seats in the second will be arranged for passengers to better enjoy the scenery. — Kyodo



The sightseeing “Gran Tenku” train is shown in Kawachinagano, Osaka Prefecture on 16 February 2026. PHOTO: KYODO

‘Train Dreams’, ‘The Secret Agent’ nab Spirit wins to boost Oscars campaigns

PERIOD drama “Train Dreams” took home the Spirit Awards win for best feature Sunday, as both it and “The Secret Agent” gathered momentum ahead of the Academy Awards.

“The Secret Agent”

notched best international film as its team hopes to win in the same category at the Oscars next month.

The annual Film Independent Spirit Awards ceremony only celebrates movies made for less than \$30 million.

“Train Dreams”, director Clint Bentley’s adaptation of the Denis Johnson novella, follows a railroad worker and the transformation of the American northwest across the 20th century. — AFP

ECONOMY WORLD

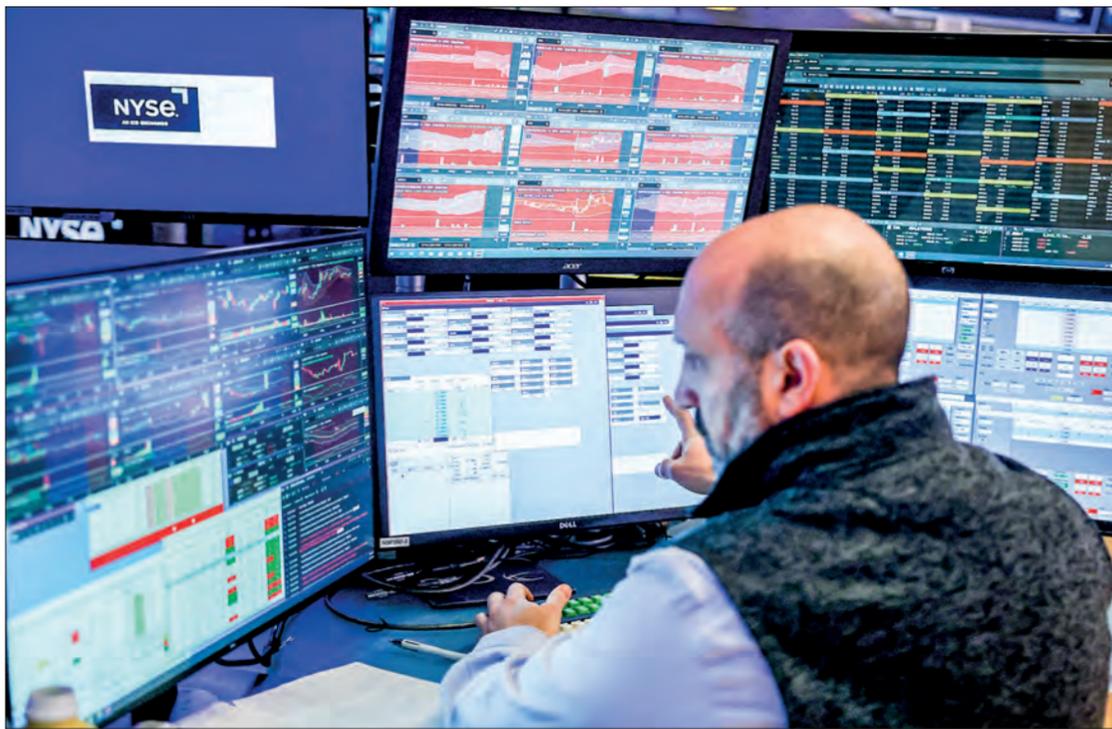
Trillion-dollar Wall Street crash sounds alarm over AI mob mentality

SIGNIFICANT losses in the US technology sector this month have sparked an international debate among regulators and experts over the potential risks of artificial intelligence (AI) fostering groupthink in financial markets.

As of Friday, Microsoft shares have fallen about 17 per cent year-to-date, wiping roughly US\$613 billion off its market value. Amazon has shed around 13.85 per cent so far this year, erasing about \$343 billion in market value and leaving the company valued at roughly \$2.13 trillion.

According to data reported by Investing.com, the S&P 500 software and services index lost approximately \$1 trillion in market value between 28 January and early February.

While some investors questioned whether heavy spending on AI would generate sufficient returns to justify lofty valuations, other market analyses linked the



A trader works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) at the opening bell on 13 February 2026 in New York City. **PHOTO: AFP**

latest sell-off to the unveiling of a specialized legal AI tool by AI firm Anthropic on 3 February.

Some market commentators described the release as a catalyst for a sudden exit from soft-

ware and services stocks, amid broader concerns that limited AI models used by traders could

contribute to groupthink in the financial sector.

Groupthink refers to a phenomenon in which members of a group prioritize consensus over independent judgment. In financial markets, such behaviour can lead to herding, where investors adopt similar strategies simultaneously, amplifying volatility.

Some observers warned that if most analysts rely on the same few AI models to interpret data, the diversity of opinion necessary for healthy markets could diminish. Bloomberg Opinion columnist Parag Mehta described this risk as a “market monoculture” in a recent article.

“If market participants are all drawing from the same models trained on largely the same historic data, it’s probable they’ll not only miss the black swan events that have never happened before, but reach similar conclusions and investment strategies,” Olson wrote. — Xinhua

Survey of German businesses shows bleak outlook on 2026

GERMANY’S economy is unlikely to rebound in 2026 as geopolitical uncertainty, high costs and weak domestic demand weigh on growth, the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce (DIHK) said Tuesday.

“The German economy will not take off in 2026,” the DIHK stated in a press release, citing a survey it conducted earlier this year of 26,000 German companies across all sectors.

According to the survey, only a quarter of the companies surveyed assessed their overall business situation as good, while another quarter considered it poor. “Despite the reforms announced by the federal government, the outlook is only slightly more optimistic than it was in the autumn,” the DIHK noted, with one in four companies surveyed anticipating a deterioration in the economic situation.

Germany, Europe’s largest economy, returned to weak growth in 2025 after two years of recession.

Based on its survey, DIHK forecasts “weak growth of one per cent in 2026,” according to the group’s director. At the end of January, the German government also revised its growth forecast for the current year downward to one per cent, instead of the 1.3 per cent announced in the autumn. German investor confidence has also dipped, according to a new survey from the ZEW economic research institute released on Tuesday.

ZEW’s regular indicator, which measures investor expectations for the German economy, dropped to 58.3 points in February, down 1.3 points month-on-month – disappointing analysts, who largely expected an improvement. — AFP

Nikkei stock index falls for 4th day, prime minister’s policy speech eyed

TOKYO stocks fell Tuesday, with the Nikkei index slipping for a fourth consecutive trading day, as investors awaited a policy speech by the Japanese prime minister following a rally after the ruling party’s election victory.

The 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average ended down 239.92 points, or 0.42 per cent, from Monday at 56,566.49. The broader Topix index finished 25.83 points, or 0.68 per cent, lower at 3,761.55.

On the top-tier Prime Market, the main decliners were bank, information and communication, and service issues.

The US dollar briefly strengthened to the upper 153 yen range in Tokyo as speculation receded about an early interest rate hike by the Bank of Japan following the release Monday of weaker-than-expected Japanese gross domestic product data.

It later fell back to the upper 152 yen level as the yen was bought back before again hitting the 153 yen line, dealers said.

At 5 pm, the dollar fetched 153.08-09 yen compared with 153.45-47 at 4 pm in London and 153.34-35 yen in Tokyo at 5 pm

Monday.

The euro was quoted at \$1.1832-1834 and 181.13-17 yen against \$1.1854-1855 and 181.90-93 yen in London and \$1.1862-1863 and 181.90-94 yen in Tokyo late Monday afternoon. — Kyodo



Japan’s Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi (R) meets with Bank of Japan Governor Kazuo Ueda at the Prime Minister’s Office in Tokyo on 16 February 2026. **PHOTO: AFP**

UK unemployment rises to five-year high of 5.2%: official

BRITAIN'S unemployment rate rose to a five-year high of 5.2 per cent in the final quarter of 2025, official data showed Tuesday, as the country's economy struggled to grow.

It was a slight increase from the 5.1 per cent jobless rate seen in the three months to end-November, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said.

It was the highest level since January 2021, which coincided with the Covid pandemic.

"The number of workers on payroll fell further in the final quarter of the year, reflecting weak hiring activity," ONS director of economic statistics Liz McKeown said in a statement.

Analysts said the

data increased chances of the Bank of England cutting its benchmark interest rate next month, a forecast that weighed on the pound on Tuesday.

Official figures last week showed that Britain's economy grew less than expected in the final quarter of 2025.

"Continuing the recent trend, the UK labour market... is showing signs of creaking at a time when economic growth is difficult to come by," said Jonathan Raymond, an investment manager at Quilter Cheviot.

The ONS added that wage growth slowed further in the fourth quarter, to 4.2 per cent, while overall UK inflation is expected to retreat further in the coming months. — AFP

India's Adani Group to invest \$100 billion in AI data centres by 2035

INDIA'S Adani Group said Tuesday it plans to invest \$100 billion by 2035 to develop "hyperscale AI-ready data centres", a boost to New Delhi's push to become a global artificial intelligence hub.

The announcement comes as India hosts a five-day global AI summit that will see deliberations over issues ranging from job disruption to child safety.

The summit will gather 20 national leaders and 45 ministerial-level delegations -- with the key day on Thursday -- who will rub shoulders with tech CEOs including Sam Altman of OpenAI and Google's Sundar Pichai.

The \$100 billion investment would catalyze an additional \$150 billion



This photograph taken on 7 November 2025 shows a corporate building at the Adani Shantigram Township on the outskirts of Ahmedabad. PHOTO: SHAMMI MEHRA / AFP

in spending across "server manufacturing, advanced electrical infrastructure, sovereign cloud platforms

and supporting industries", the Adani Group said in a statement. "Together, this is projected to

create a \$250 billion AI infrastructure ecosystem in India over the decade," the statement noted. — AFP

Japan prefecture signs nation-1st partnership with Nvidia amid AI boom

KAGAWA Prefecture in western Japan and the Japanese unit of semiconductor giant Nvidia Corp on Tuesday signed a partnership, the first for a local government in the country,

as they seek to expand the use of artificial intelligence among companies in the region and court the development of data centres.

The local government has been promoting the

prefecture as an ideal area to work, particularly toward technology companies, due to its low risk for natural disasters and stable electricity supply. It also hopes to improve the productiv-

ity of firms located within the prefecture by gathering companies utilizing graphics processing units developed by Nvidia, the prefectural government said. — Kyodo



People cross the road as cars are driven on Oxford Street, in central London, on 11 February 2025. PHOTO: AFP

Copper powers profit surge at Australia's BHP

AUSTRALIAN resources giant BHP reported Tuesday a jump in half-year net profit boosted by demand for copper to meet the world's need for electrical power.

BHP says it is the world's largest copper producer after raising output by about 30 per cent in the past four years, including from its vast Escondida mine in Chile.

"This is allowing us to maximize increased earnings from the recent run up in copper prices as well as gold," BHP chief executive Mike Henry said.

Copper is in demand as countries expand electrical networks to harness renewable energies.

The red metal is now the biggest contributor to overall earnings at BHP, Henry said. — AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MCL 9 VOY.NO. (20N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MCL 9 VOY. NO. (20N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **18-2-2026** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **YIGTL** 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 MAWLAMYINE CENTURY LOGISTICS COMPANY LIMITED

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SITC ZHENGDE VOY.NO. (2604N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SITC ZHENGDE VOY.NO. (2604N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **18-2-2026** 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 SITC CONTAINER LINE CO., LTD

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

India govt discussing age restrictions with social media platforms



This photo illustration shows a person holding a smartphone bearing the logo of X, formerly known as Twitter, in front of the Indian national flag in Bengaluru on 15 January 2026. **PHOTO AFP**

INDIA is discussing age-based restrictions with social media companies, following Australia's move to ban under-16s from popular platforms, IT minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said Tuesday.

"This is something which has now been accepted by many countries that age-based regulation has to be there," Vaishnaw told reporters at the AI Impact Summit.

"Right now we are in a conversation regarding deepfakes, regarding age-based restric-

tions with the various social media platforms and... what is the right way to go about this," he said.

Australia in December enforced a ban that required TikTok, YouTube, Snapchat and a host of other top social media services to remove accounts held by young teens, or face heavy fines.

Vaishnaw also signalled tougher oversight of manipulated content online.

"We need much stronger regulation on deepfakes," he

said.

"I think it's a problem which is growing day by day. And certainly there is a need for protecting our children, protecting our society from these harms."

India already last week tightened rules regulating artificial intelligence, requiring social media platforms to clearly label AI content and comply with takedown requests by authorities within three hours.

— AFP

Life-threatening bushfire prompts emergency warning north of Melbourne

RESIDENTS of three small towns north of Melbourne in the Australian state of Victoria were on Tuesday afternoon ordered to take shelter immediately due to the threat posed by an out-of-control bushfire.

Emergency warnings issued shortly after 1 pm local time said that the fire near the town of Trawool, 80 kilometres north of Melbourne, was threatening homes and lives.

A separate emergency warning issued shortly before 2 pm said that it was too late to leave Trawool and the neighbouring towns of Kerrisdale and Tallarook and that residents and visitors must take shelter indoors immediately. "You are in danger and need to act immediately to survive," the warning said. "You must take shelter before the fire arrives. The extreme heat is likely to

kill you well before the flames reach you."

Trawool, Kerrisdale and Tallarook had a combined population of around 900 people at the time of the last national census in 2021. Authorities warned on Monday that most of Victoria was facing extreme fire danger on Tuesday, with temperatures exceeding 35 degrees Celsius exacerbated by strong winds and dry conditions. — Xinhua

AI analysis of "Pokemon Sleep" data identifies problematic sleep patterns

A leading Japanese sleep researcher has analyzed the relationship between sleep and work performance using data collected through the "Pokemon Sleep" smartphone app, identifying sleep patterns that negatively impact productivity.

Masashi Yanagisawa, a University of Tsukuba professor of neuroscience who supervised the app's development, used artificial intelligence to assist his team's analysis of a vast dataset on sleep quality, which was previously difficult to measure.

The game app enables users to raise and befriend Pokemon by recording their sleep time, detecting body movements to determine sleep and wake states when placed on the bed. It can also measure how long it takes the user to fall asleep, their sleep depth and how often they wake up during the night. Yanagisawa and his university research team analyzed around 2.1 million nights of sleep data, collected over 28 days from over 79,000 working adults in Japan who consented to participate in the study.

The five sleep phenotypes of healthy, long, fragmented, poor, and social jetlaggers -- characterized by misaligned sleep rhythms between weekdays and weekends -- were identified using AI to analyze sleep char-



Supplied photo shows a screenshot of the smartphone app "Pokemon Sleep". (Copyright 2023 Pokemon. Copyright 1995-2023 Nintendo/Creatures Inc./GAME FREAK inc. Developed by SELECT BUTTON inc.) **PHOTO: KYODO**

acteristics. According to a paper released in December last year, when compared with survey responses about work efficiency, men and women in the latter two groups showed the worst scores for insomnia, daytime sleepiness, and presenteeism, defined as reduced work productivity despite being physically present at work. — Kyodo

Belarus reaffirms support for Cuba, rejects unilateral sanctions

BELARUS on Monday reaffirmed its full solidarity with Cuba, telling Cuba's ambassador that Minsk rejects all unilateral sanctions.

Belarusian Foreign Minister Maxim Ryzhenkov met Cuban Ambassador to Belarus Santiago Perez Benitez to discuss the situation around Cuba and restate Belarus' unwavering support for the Cuban people.

Ryzhenkov reiterated

Minsk's opposition to any unilateral coercive measures and stressed that disputes must be resolved through peaceful dialogue within the framework of international law. Both sides pledged to maintain the positive momentum generated by last year's high-level visits, confirming plans to advance the 2025 bilateral agreements across trade, health and education. — Xinhua

SPORTS

Barcelona loses La Liga leadership after losing to Girona

FC Barcelona surrendered top spot in La Liga on Monday night after a 2-1 defeat to Girona which exposed the defensive fragility that has troubled Hansi Flick's side in recent weeks.

Pau Cubarsi's header put Barcelona ahead just before the hour, but Girona hit back almost immediately through Thomas Lemar before Fran Beltran's late strike sealed the comeback. The result leaves Real Madrid top of the table following Saturday's win over Real Sociedad.

If Flick was looking for signs of improvement after Thursday's 4-0 Copa del Rey loss to Atletico Madrid, he did not find them in an open, chance-filled game in which both sides created plenty and neither managed to impose control.

The first half was played at a frantic pace. Raphinha dragged an early effort wide for Barcelona, while Lamine Yamal shot straight at Paulo Gazzaniga after breaking through on goal.

Girona responded with a series of dangerous moments down Barcelona's right, with Hugo Rincon's crosses causing problems. Viktor Tsygankov set up Vladislav Vanat for a good opening, but the striker failed to connect cleanly, and goalkeeper Joan Garcia then had to react sharply to keep out Vanat after another low delivery from Rincon. Barcelona went close in 43 minutes when Raphinha struck the post as he tried to slide the ball past Gazzaniga. The best chance, though, arrived in first-half stoppage time when Daley Blind fouled Dani Olmo to concede a penalty. Yamal stepped up, sent Gazzaniga the wrong way, but also hit the post as Girona escaped again. — Xinhua

Joshua Van to defend flyweight title at UFC 327

MYANMAR fighter Joshua Van, the reigning UFC flyweight champion, will make his first world title defence at UFC 327, scheduled for 11 April in Miami, United States. He is set to face Japanese contender Tatsuro Taira.

Joshua Van claimed the flyweight championship after knocking out Brazilian fighter Alexandre Pantoja on 6 December. The upcoming bout marks his first title defence, occurring just over four months after capturing the belt. Since joining the Ultimate Fighting Championship in 2023, Van has rapidly risen through the ranks to become a world champion in less than two years.

In his professional MMA career, Van has competed in 18 fights, securing 16 wins and suffering two losses. Under the UFC banner, he has fought 10 times, recording nine victories and one defeat. Notably, he enters UFC 327 on a six-fight winning streak, a run that culminated in his championship triumph.

His opponent, Tatsuro Taira of Japan, brings an impressive professional record of 18 wins and one loss from 19 bouts. Taira previously achieved a 16-fight winning streak and is widely regarded as one of the division's top rising contenders.

The flyweight title clash is expected to be one of the headline attractions at UFC 327, drawing significant attention from MMA fans worldwide. — Shine Htet Zaw/KZL



Miura, Kihara win Japan's 1st pairs gold with record free skate

RIKU Miura and Ryuichi Kihara won Japan's first gold medal in pairs figure skating at the Milan Cortina Winter Olympics on Monday, jumping four places from the short programme with a world-record free skate performance.

The world champion pair scored 158.13 points, the highest-ever mark, for their free programme for a total of

231.24, finishing 9.49 points ahead of silver medallists Anastasiia Metelkina and Luka Berulava of Georgia at Milano Ice Skating Arena.

Minerva Fabienne Hase and Nikita Volodin of Germany won bronze with a 219.09 total.

The Japanese pair's victory marked a dramatic turnaround from Sunday's

short programme, when they failed to execute their high-scoring signature lift and finished in fifth place, 6.90 points behind segment winners Hase and Volodin.

Miura and Kihara had no such problems with their longer routine, staying in sync as they completed their technical elements without a hitch. — Kyodo

Arsenal to face third-tier Mansfield, Newcastle host Man City in FA Cup



Wigan Athletic's English defender 32 Jack Hunt (2nd L) heads the ball for an own goal, Arsenal's third of the game, during the English FA Cup fourth round football match between Arsenal and Wigan Athletic at the Emirates Stadium in London on 15 February 2026. PHOTO: AFP

LEAGUE One Mansfield were handed a home draw against Premier League leaders Arsenal in the FA Cup fifth round draw on Monday as Newcastle face Manchester City.

Mansfield produced the only shock of note so far in the fourth round by coming from behind to win 2-1 at top tier Burnley on Saturday.

Arsenal put third tier opposition to the sword on Sunday as four first-half goals beat Wigan 4-0 at the Emirates.

Mikel Arteta's men remain on course for an unprecedented quadruple, as do City, but Pep Guardiola's men face a far tougher fifth draw draw. City dumped Newcastle

out of the League Cup earlier this month and the sides will meet for a fifth time this season in the last 16.

Chelsea face a trip to Hollywood-backed Wrexham, who have already taken a Premier League scalp this season in Nottingham Forest.

Liverpool will be confident of progress despite being handed an away tie at the Premier League's bottom club Wolves.

Sixth-tier Macclesfield, who ended Crystal Palace's defence of the competition in round three, are aiming to produce another massive upset when they host Brentford on Monday. The winner of that tie will travel to West Ham in the fifth round. — AFP



AS China ushers in the Year of the Horse, millennia-old Spring Festival traditions are blending seamlessly with cutting-edge technology, expressing enduring wishes through both heritage and innovation.

Ahead of the 2026 Chinese New Year, a waterfront tourist dock in Chun'an County, east China's Zhejiang Province, came alive as over 200 performers, adorned in traditional attire, danced with vibrant "bamboo horses". These were colourful cloth-covered steeds mounted on bamboo frames, which the performers tied around their waists.

In the Chinese zodiac, the horse symbolizes speed, endurance and an enterprising spirit. To jubilant music, the colourful troupe pranced and leaped, forming a lively, joyful procession that offered a fresh and exhilarating experience for the audience.

Pan Yongxia, director of the Chun'an County cultural centre, explained that the performance gathered bamboo horse dancers from across the county, marking the largest-ever showcase of Bamboo Horse Dancing. Hundreds of such performances will continue in villages and townships throughout the festival period.

Originating in the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279), Chun'an Bamboo Horse Dancing has long been a staple folk activity during traditional holidays like the Spring Festival and Lantern Festival. It was listed as a National Intangible Cultural Heritage item in 2014. "Performances have evolved from small groups of five people into large-scale square dances with dozens or even hundreds of participants, actively engaging all age groups. Incorporating modern elements like street dance has made the art more accessible and appealing to younger

China celebrates Spring Festival with fusion of tradition, technology



A child plays at a square in Jingning County, northwest China's Gansu Province, 13 February 2026. China is alive with vibrant celebrations during the Spring Festival. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

generations," said Pan.

"It is essential to preserve traditional performance techniques while innovatively blending them with contemporary dance for broader appeal," said Fang Bingkun,

86, a former representative inheritor of the art. Over seven decades, he has documented its traditions and streamlined its formations, making it easier to learn and perform. While this intangible heritage

thrived in the ancient county in east China, a high-tech tribute to the Year of the Horse lit up the sky over Shenzhen, a major tech hub in southern China's Guangdong Province. — Xinhua

2nd round of indirect Iran-US talks begins in Geneva

THE second round of indirect nuclear talks between Iran and the United

States began in Geneva on Tuesday, Iran's semi-official Fars news agency



Police officers stand guard outside of the Oman ambassador residency where the indirect nuclear talks between the United States and Iran are taking place in Geneva on 17 February 2026. **PHOTO: AFP**

reported.

The negotiations are being held at Oman's embassy in the Swiss city and mediated by Omani Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamood Albusaidi, the report said.

US presidential special envoy Steve Witkoff and President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner represent Washington in the negotiations.

Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi leads a "diplomatic and specialized" delegation to the talks. After entering the Omani embassy, Araghchi met with the Omani foreign minister, Fars said.

According to Fars, the talks are focused solely on Iran's nuclear issue and the removal of US sanctions. — Xinhua

Geneva negotiations on Ukraine to begin within couple of hours: Kremlin

NEGOTIATIONS on Ukraine in Geneva will begin within the next couple of hours, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Tuesday.

"They will definitely start within a couple of hours," he told reporters, responding to a question, adding that the parties are finalizing the exact start time on the ground.

The negotiations will be closed to the press, the spokesman noted. The talks are set to continue on Wednesday, the official said, cautioning not to anticipate any news following Tuesday's meetings. — SPUTNIK