

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.

Myanmar, China, India, Thailand, Russia, ME nations cooperate to boost natural gas production

MYANMAR is working with China, India, Thailand, Russia and Middle East countries to further increase natural gas production, according to the Ministry of Energy.

At present, Myanmar and Thailand are jointly expanding investments in oil and natural gas projects in the Ayeyawady and Mottama sedimentary basins, as well as related offshore areas of Myanmar. In addition, India is reportedly carrying out oil and gas exploration and drilling activities in areas near the Andaman Islands.

Myanmar is strengthening cooperation with China, India, Thailand, Russia and Middle East countries in offshore oil and natural gas projects. As demand for natural gas continues to rise in Myanmar as well as in China and Thailand, plans are underway to collaborate with China on technology and capital investment to further increase natural gas output from Myanmar’s offshore blocks, sources said.

Discussions have also been held on boosting production at mature oil and gas projects through the application of advanced technologies, jointly con-

structing a new oil refinery using crude oil supplied via the Myanmar-China crude oil pipeline, upgrading and building oil refineries and fertilizer plants, and creating conditions for increased investment. Cooperation frameworks between the governments of Myanmar and China on these initiatives have also been discussed, according to reports.

— ASH/GNLM



This image depicts an offshore oil and natural gas rig operating in Myanmar waters.

Article

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(2025)**

By A Writer (MWA)

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NATIONAL

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

Four National Objectives for 78th Independence Day 2026

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

Public Notice

THE Ministry of Immigration and Population is implementing the Pankhinn Project to ensure that every citizen can obtain and possess a form of citizenship card, and to enable all eligible citizens to cast their votes by holding such an identification card in the ongoing multiparty democratic general election.

Moreover, during the election period, to ensure that voters who have lost or damaged their citizenship scrutiny cards do not lose their right to vote, township Immigration Offices are being opened as a special issue without holidays to urgently scrutinize and process the applications for damaged or lost citizenship cards in accordance with the law. Therefore, voters whose citizenship scrutiny cards have been damaged or lost are informed to contact and proceed with the relevant township Immigration Offices.

However, if any person, without actually having their citizenship scrutiny card damaged or lost, falsely claims such loss or damage and applies again to possess more than one citizenship scrutiny card, they will face action under the law.

Ministry of Immigration and Population

Healthy mother and baby show held in Dawbon to mark 78th Independence Day



The award presentation ceremony is in progress at Dawbon Township's Healthy Mother and Baby Show yesterday.

DAWBON Township organized a healthy mother and baby show yesterday morning at the township's maternity clinic to mark the upcoming 78th Independence Day which falls on 4 January 2026.

The event was organized by the Dawbon Township Maternal and Child Welfare Association, with township officials overseeing the arrangements to ensure the smooth running of the competition. Officials from the association, including the chair and responsible personnel, first measured the babies' weight and checked their personal hygiene. Healthcare staff from the Township Public Health Department then evaluated and scored the babies in accordance with official competition rules, ensuring a fair assessment for all participants.

In the show, babies aged six months to one year were awarded first, second and third prizes by the head of the Township Public Health Department, Dr Myo Myo Khine. Babies aged one year to one year and six months received first, second and third prizes from the chair of the township Maternal and Child Welfare Association, Daw May Zin Phyo. Babies aged one year and six months to two years were presented with first, second and third prizes by the chair of the Botahtaung District Maternal and Child Welfare Supervisory Committee, Daw Khin Win Kyi.

Following the awards ceremony, all participating children were given toys as gifts, and five new mothers received packages containing bananas, eggs, cereal, salt and nutritional supplements to support child nutrition and family well-being. — Chit Su Wai (IPRD)/KZL

Weather

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7 pm Thursday 1 January 2026)

BAY INFERENCE: The weather is partly cloudy to cloudy over the South Andaman Sea, South Bay and Westcentral Bay of Bengal and a few clouds over the North Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF 2 January 2026: The weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing, and Taninthayi Regions and Kachin, Kayin, and Mon 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 Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin, and Shan States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 2 January 2026: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 2 January 2026: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 2 January 2026: Generally fair weather. — DMH

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NATIONAL

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

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



THE flower festival was held in front of the park yesterday morning to develop the tourism sector at the Maw Myay Oo Park in Kalaw Township for the first time.

At the opening ceremony, Shan State Chief Minister U Aung Aung addressed the flower festival displays local and foreign flower species, the festival uses orchid gardens

and many types of flowers to create beautiful landscapes, there is a library for visitors to relax and read books and many places to take beautiful photos and a sports field as well

as children’s playgrounds with local food stalls, so tourists and flower lovers from all over the region visit and enjoy the Kalaw Flower Festival for free. Then, the state chief min-

ister, the Military Commander, the acting Commandant of the Command and General Staff College, the state minister for Transport and respective officials cut the ribbon to open the

flower festival. Afterwards, the chief minister and the commander presented awards to the band and ethnic cultural troupes that performed at the opening ceremony, and toured the flower festival.

The flower festival will be held from 1 to 15 January for free. — Maung Maung Than (Taunggyi)/MKKS

Kalaw hosts first Flower Festival at Maw Myay Oo Park



Enthusiastic visitors are seen exploring Kalaw’s Flower Festival, the First of its kind.

Myanmar honey export generates over US\$1M in Apr-Nov

MYANMAR’S honey export amounted to over US\$1.25 million in the past eight months (April-November) of the current financial year 2025-2026 beginning 1 April, according to the Apiculture Division under the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department.

Myanmar sent over 836.95 metric tonnes of honey to foreign countries by sea, and delivered over 1.29 metric tonnes of honey to neighbouring countries through border checkpoints in the past eight months, totalling 838.24 metric tonnes, the Apicul-

ture Division’s data indicated. Myanmar primarily exports honey to China, Japan, South Korea and Thailand. The country shipped over 2,200 tonnes to international markets in the 2023-2024 FY, the Apiculture Division’s statistics showed.

Sagaing and Mandalay regions are the leading producers of Myanmar’s honey. Myanmar’s beekeeping businesses are also found in Yangon, Bago and Magway regions, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin and Shan states. Myanmar produces sesame honey, jujube honey, Niger

honey, sunflower honey, lychee honey and flower honey. Myanmar’s honey production is

estimated at over 4,000 metric tonnes annually. Sixty per cent went to foreign markets while

the remaining was designated for domestic consumption. Honey is utilized as a traditional medicine in the country.

There are some state-owned beekeeping stations with 6,200 beehives in 31 townships and over 950 private beekeeping businesses operating with nearly 200,000 beehives.

Moreover, two million acres of crops yearly contribute to bee pollination annually. The beekeeping businesses near the crop fields contribute to the successful yield of the crop as well as quality bee production. — NN/KK



This image captures a beekeeper tending a beehive.

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)

Press release

31 December 2025

MYANMAR'S stance on the Taiwan question amid the current tensions is as follows:-

(a) Myanmar was the earliest country to recognize the People's Republic of China following its establishment and has consistently upheld the One-China policy. This position has been reaffirmed during meetings between the leaders of the two countries. Moreover, Myanmar supports China's vision of achieving peaceful reconciliation with Taiwan.

(b) As two countries that have agreed to and

adhere to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, Myanmar and China mutually respect each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty and emphasize efforts to uphold these principles.

(c) Myanmar recognizes that the Taiwan question is an internal affair of China, in line with the principle that the two countries respect each other's internal affairs, and reaffirms that Taiwan is an inseparable part of China. As secessionist activities may give rise to conflict,

it is necessary to prevent and refrain from encouraging such activities.

(d) It was stated that Myanmar has pledged to always stand with China as a good neighbour, a strategic partner, and a co-founder of a kinship community, through thick and thin.

**Information Team
National Defence and Security Council
Republic of the Union of Myanmar**

549 online scam hub-related buildings demolished

THE government of Myanmar manages the combined team comprising security forces, administrative bodies and local authorities to raid illegal buildings in Shwe Kokko and KK Park areas where telecom fraud and online gambling activities are operated, and systematically dismantle the confiscated materials and illegal buildings used in the online scams and gambling activities. Yesterday, the combined team dissolved 11 more illegal buildings: one four-storey building and 10 two-storey buildings used in telecom fraud and on-line gambling activities in the Myawady-Maethawtalay (KK Park) area. Therefore, a total updated number of 549 buildings out of 635 illegal buildings have been demolished in the KK Park area.

To destroy the illegal buildings within the KK Park area,



Photos reveal the dismantling and burning of illegally built facilities and scam-related materials and items in the KK Park area.

these buildings were demolished using machinery and explosive devices starting from 14 December, and as of today, five two-storey buildings have been destroyed. As of yesterday, five more two-storey buildings have been destroyed, and a total of 86 buildings have been totally destroyed. To prevent future reuse of the materials in online scams and gambling activities in KK Park and Shwe Kokko areas, the seized materials were incinerated systematically.

The government considers the eradication of telecom fraud and online gambling crimes as a national responsibility and, to ensure that such activities can no longer operate within Myanmar, will continue its efforts in coordination not only with domestic forces but also with the governments of neighbouring countries. — MNA/KTZH

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NATIONAL

General Aung San Declares Firm Stand Against Election Disruption

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

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



Finalists announced for 2025 Myanmar Motion Pictures Academy Awards receptionists

THE Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization (MMPO) announced on 31 December that it has released the list of male and female candidates who will compete in the final round of selection for Academy Award receptionists for the 2025 Myanmar Motion Pictures Academy Awards Ceremony, which will be held in Nay Pyi Taw, according to MMPO Vice-Chairman U Aye Kyu Lay.

“We have already conducted two rounds of selection, and the final round will be held soon. After the two stages, 58 candidates have been shortlisted. The list of these candidates has already been announced. This year, unlike last year, the number will

not reach around 20 pairs. It is more likely that there will be only about 10 pairs, or possibly eight pairs,” said U Aye Kyu Lay. Nearly 300 applicants applied for Academy Award attendant selection. Candidates who met the prescribed criteria were selected through successive stages. The preliminary round of selection was held on 21 December, followed by the second round on 29 December. The judging panel for the final round will include Academy Award winners Khant Sit Thu, Yan Aung, May Than Nu and Soe Myat Thu Zar, as well as Academy Award-winning directors Nyunt Myanmar Nyi Nyi Aung and Maung Thi. — ASH/MKKS



The second-round selection of the Academy Award receptionists is in progress.

5-day express passport service starts 5 Jan for urgent travellers



This photo shows queues forming at the Myanmar Passport Issuance Centre.

THE Myanmar Passport Issuance Office announced on 1 January that an express service, which allows applicants to receive their passports within five days of applying, will be launched on 5 January 2026. This service is designed for individuals who need to travel abroad for urgent or emergency reasons. Applicants using the express service will not be required to wait for the standard online

booking timeline or follow regular in-office waiting procedures. It has been noted that any citizen, regardless of their household registration location, can apply for this service at the Myanmar Passport Issuance Offices in Yangon, Mandalay, and Nay Pyi Taw. Applicants will receive the book five days after their application is accepted, and the service fee is K545,000. The office has advised the following groups to verify

their eligibility at the offices before applying: individuals on the blacklist, individuals with ongoing criminal investigations or unfinished legal cases, individuals released under amnesty before their full sentence was served, individuals currently banned from travelling abroad, current civil servants, or employees of government departments, NGOs, and private organizations who require specific recommendation letters. — MT/ZN

Couple jailed 10 years for trafficking youths into online scam rings

THE Myanmar Police Force has sentenced a couple involved in online scam activities to 10 years’ imprisonment with hard labour under the Anti-Human Trafficking Law. The case involved Daw Zar Zar San and her husband, Khin Maung Lwin, residents of Kume in Myittha Township, Mandalay Region. The couple recruited four young men from Myittha Township to work in an online slot game operation in Cambodia. They promised the youths a monthly salary of K4 million and full coverage of travel expenses, claiming that

their son, Lwin Min Htet, had connections with the owner of a slot game business in Cambodia. The youths were transported in stages via Mandalay Airport to Tachilek, then onward to Thailand and through illegal routes into Cambodia, where they were forced to work at a slot game facility in Phnom Penh. One of the youths, who was unable to operate a computer, was forced to pay US\$1,900 through a KBZ Pay account under the name Paing Thet Kyaw as “travel expenses” and was threatened with an

electroshock device if he failed to comply or attempted to escape. The remaining three youths were forced to work continuously without rest, carrying out online scam activities, and were threatened with having to perform 200 press-ups if they failed to find victims. The father of the computer-inexperienced youth later transferred K10.5 million through the same KBZ Pay account to secure his son’s release and return to Myanmar. Following investigations, the Manda-

lay Anti-Human Trafficking and Suppression Task Force filed a case under Section 38(b) of the Anti-Human Trafficking Law at Kume Police Station (Case No 51/2025). On 30 December, the Kyaukse District Court sentenced Daw Zar Zar San and Khin Maung Lwin to 10 years’ imprisonment with hard labour each under Section 36 of the same law. Fugitives Swan Lin Htet, Paing Thet Kyaw and Lwin Min Htet were charged under Sections 87 and 88 of the Penal Code for committing related offences. — MNA/KZL

NATIONAL

MFVP to initiate automatic misting system for mushroom farming

MYANMAR Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producer and Exporter Association (MFVP) will implement a pilot project of an automatic misting system for mushroom farming.

Automatic misting system consistently keeps humidity, which is critical for planting and development, ensuring optimal growth conditions, preventing loss from dehydration, saving time and energy and resulting in better yields and reduced labour. Top mushroom varieties suitable for automatic misting are Oyster mushroom, straw mushroom and golden oyster mushroom that require high humidity.

"That system uses built-in

humidistats to maintain specific moisture levels and light sensors. It allows farmers to monitor and remotely control the farm, adjusting based on light, temperature, and humidity levels. The pilot project is underway. MFVP and IT professionals have discussed working on that project. This system is a potential for growers to transform into smart and sustainable forms of agriculture, said an official of the association.

The process can be automated by using agricultural waste products. The system is specifically designed to overcome the unpredictable challenges of varying and extreme climate condi-

tions. It is also a core component of climate-smart agriculture with a technology-driven approach. It will drive better yield and ensure quality mushrooms for consumers throughout the year.

MFVP will continue implementing the Climate Smart Agriculture system for other crops based on technology experiences from this pilot project, with a view to enhancing sustainability, improving farm productivity and incomes. — ASH/KK

This image shows an automated misting system for mushroom farming.



UMTA Travel Fair 2026 to promote global industry awareness

THE Union of Myanmar Travel Association (UMTA) has announced that the UMTA Travel Fair 2026 will be held to increase awareness among international travel organizations and tourism entrepreneurs.

A preliminary coordination meeting was held on 29 December at the Inya Lake Hotel, which was attended by the Union minister and officials from the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs and the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, the president and officials of the Myanmar Tourism Federation (MTF), and UMTA Chairman U Kyaw Phone Naing and officials.

During the meeting, the MTF president stated that the federation would cooperate and provide assistance in the necessary sectors to ensure the fair's success. Additionally, UMTA Chairman U Kyaw Phone Naing presented the plans for the fair, explaining that it will help international



This photo shows the preliminary coordination meeting for the successful hosting of UMTA Travel Fair 2026.

players become more familiar with Myanmar, facilitate the creation of new package tours and support efforts to increase international tourist arrivals. He urged stakeholders to collaborate in establishing Myanmar as an attractive destination.

UMTA officials also provided detailed presentations on current projects for Myanmar's tourism development,

tourism promotion activities, destination marketing, and on-going cooperation with ASEAN countries and international organizations. The Union minister pledged to provide the necessary coordination and support, and the MTF president reaffirmed the federation's support for the fair's success. — MT/ZN

University of Cooperative and Management Thanlyin to offer CABM course on 15 Jan 2026

UNIVERSITY of Cooperative and Management Thanlyin will conduct a certificate course in Agribusiness Management CABM virtually starting from 15 January (from 7:30 pm to 9 pm every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday), according to the university's human resource development committee.

Those who passed the matriculation exam (Grade 12) are eligible to attend this six-month course. The training fee is K150,000. Those interested can register through <https://forms.gle/z3vSaZ6z2PJmdPVc9> by 12 January 2026 and enquire about details by dialling 09 770342865, 09 764603063, and 09 71473716. — NN/KK

YU offers 8th diploma course in political science

YANGON University's International Relations and Political Science Department will open the Diploma in Political Science Course (Batch 8) from Monday to Friday (7-9 am) starting from 19 January.

Those who hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited university are eligible to apply for the diploma course. It is a nine-month course. The application form is available between 5 and 12 January 2026 at the International Relations and Political Science Department, Yangon University. — NN/KK

Gold Market Rate as of 1 January 2026

THE price of one tical (16.329325 grammes) of gold with density of 19.25 grammes per cubic centimetre and above is K6,000,000, as established by the Mineral (Gold) Reference Price Determination Committee.

Producing large quantities with higher quality and at lower price

- ❖ If the products are the same, the price should be lower; if the prices are the same, the quality should be better.
- ❖ Only then will sales in the market increase.
- ❖ It is necessary to produce to sell large quantities of high-quality products.

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

CBM injects over US\$23M into fuel oil business on 31 Dec

THE Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) announced on 31 December that it would sell US\$23 million to those engaged in the fuel oil sector.

CBM sold over \$903,100 to edible oil-importing companies and over \$331,000 to fuel oil-importing companies on that day, along with an injection of 49,200 baht into the market.

The Central Bank of Myanmar sold over \$2.65 million to edible oil-importing companies and \$4 million to fuel oil-importing companies on 30 December.

CBM sold over \$2.3 million to edible oil-importing companies and over \$464,000 to fuel oil-importing companies on 29 December.

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

Furthermore, CBM sold over \$540,000 to edible oil-importing companies and \$550,000 to fuel oil-importing companies on that day.

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

CBM sold over \$1 million to edible oil-importing companies and over \$653,000 to fuel oil-importing companies on 22 December, in addition to an injection of \$30,000 from CMP companies into the market.

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

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

CBM injected over \$2.48 million, 5.75 million yuan and 4.98 million baht in October, along with sales of over \$54 million purchased from CMP companies. CBM aims to curb the instability in the foreign exchange market and currency devaluation. According to CBM's notification on 15 March 2024, it has been collaborating with law enforcement agencies to combat and prosecute those who attempt to manipulate the currency market under the existing laws. CBM allowed authorized dealers (private banks) to operate online foreign exchange trading freely as per the market rate, depending on supply and demand, starting from 5 December 2023. — NN/KK

MRF rolls out door-to-door service to boost parboiled rice consumption



This image displays stacks of parboiled rice sacks at a rice mill.

MYANMAR Rice Federation (MRF) will provide door-to-door delivery service for parboiled rice to boost domestic consumption.

Myanmar's parboiled rice is primarily exported to Russia and the European market. MRF will endeavour to seek parboiled rice consumption domestically through delivery to home systems or sales at retail shops,

said U Thaung Win, MRF's executive committee member.

Parboiled rice, brown rice and fortified rice are healthy and nutrient-dense options compared to regular white rice. Yet, they are in low demand domestically. The federation will try to promote local consumption and reduce foreign reliance.

Parboiled rice is rice that has

been processed by soaking, steaming and drying in its husk. This process resulted in less breakage during milling and a higher yield of whole grains. The parboiled rice alters the physical and chemical properties of rice, retaining vitamins and minerals. It is also prone to spoilage after cooking and can be kept for longer periods. — ASH/KK

CBM lifts blacklist on 29 companies

THE Central Bank of Myanmar announced on 30 December 2025 the removal of 29 companies from the blacklist and their boards of directors from the country's entry-and-exit ban, following their full repatriation of export earnings.

As per the coordination request of the CBM, the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Immigration and Population placed the following companies on the blacklist and imposed a travel ban: 29 companies in 2020, 55 in 2021, and 197 between 2016 and 2020, as they failed to repatriate export proceeds exceeding US\$500,000.

Of them, 29 companies have fully repatriated the export earnings. Therefore, the CBM declared that those companies and their board of directors were removed from the blacklist and Myanmar's entry-and-exit ban.

They are Chit Linn Myaing Toyota Co Ltd, Interunion Myanmar Company Limited, Muse Ko Kang Company Limited, Myanmar Cullet Co Ltd, Saung Hnin Cherry Co Ltd, Shyang Jhuo Yue Company Limited, IIDA Electronics (Myanmar) Co Ltd, Lin & Lee Private Limited, Moot Taung King Co Ltd, Myat Nan Taw Win Co Ltd, Wang Ye Co Ltd Apex World International Co Ltd, Dana

Su Lub Co Ltd, Great Aravind Co Ltd, Myo Zin Zar Co Ltd, Thalawady Co Ltd, Asakura Myanmar Trading Co Ltd, Good Job Co Ltd, Lineage Power (Myanmar) Limited, Myanmar Recycles Co Ltd, Taw Win 77 Co Ltd, The Gazillion Star Trading Co Ltd, Win Nasa Family Trading Co Ltd, Wood Cavers Co Ltd, Rich Farm Co Ltd, Violet Valley Trading Co Ltd, Aung Thaya Phu (Myawaddy) Logistic Co Ltd and Z&D Co Ltd.

Among 29 companies, Chit Linn Myaing Toyota Co Ltd was included twice in the list of companies that failed to repatriate export proceeds. — NN/KK

Invest in education to develop the entire nation

EDUCATION is connected to all sectors and must lead the success of the nation's fundamental economic activities, such as agriculture and livestock, which are primary businesses of the people. There is no genuine development without education.

To successfully carry out agricultural and livestock activities, well-educated and skilled human resources are required. Only those with a classroom education can acquire practical skills. In addition, students will develop a strong character, discipline, and integrity. To produce quality human resources for agriculture and livestock, secondary schools providing students with basic education, high schools, plus industry, agriculture, and livestock breeding have also been opened.

The government emphasizes that investment in education is crucial because it builds a prosperous and developed future for the nation. Regarding education, knowledge makes a good person, and skills make a capable person. To develop knowledge, one must have a basic education. Efforts must be made to enhance knowledge, skills, and foundation-

The goal of basic education is the matriculation examination. The schedule for the 2026 matriculation exam was announced on 19 December 2025. Likewise, the Grade 12-level matriculation exam for industrial, agricultural, and livestock fields will also be conducted in March 2026. The exam will be held from 11 to 17 March 2026, which is an important period during which parents, teachers, and students must all make coordinated and diligent efforts.

teachers should, with a desire to contribute to national development, engage students happily and attractively in learning. As the saying goes, "A good teacher produces outstanding pupils," teachers must continually strive to become good educators.

The goal of basic education is the matriculation examination. The schedule for the 2026 matriculation exam was announced on 19 December 2025. Likewise, the Grade 12-level matriculation exam for industrial, agricultural, and livestock fields will also be conducted in March 2026. The exam will be held from 11 to 17 March 2026, which is an important period during which parents, teachers, and students must all make coordinated and diligent efforts.

True success comes from effort. Since success cannot be achieved without effort, students must cultivate diligence, perseverance, and determination in their studies. Education is important not only for the advancement of one's own life but also for the development and progress of the nation, so students should strive to excel in the field of education.

Alinka Kyawswa Myinmu Maung Naing Moe and the SEA Write Award (2025)

By A Writer (MWA)

* The power of literature, the power of life. Thoughts and feelings flow, Life, spirit and soul aglow.

* Luminous jewels of the land, subtly and craftily interwoven in radiant strands, A shining legend going down in history, the SEA Write Award is glittery.

* Malaysia, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore and Brunei.

* Ten realms with names of splendour and elegance, Literary gems of glittering eloquence. ASEAN glorious in glamorous age, united in the great power of shared realms of grace.

The title of the poem is "The Power of ASEAN", composed by Naowarat Phongphaiboon, SEA Write Awardee and National Artist (and translated by Associate Professor Surapeepan Chatraporn). It is excerpted from the pamphlet of the SEA Write Award (2024-2025) distributed to the awardees who attended the Award Presentation Ceremony held at Sukhothai Palace in Bangkok, Thailand, on Tuesday, 16 December 2025. At this ceremony, Alinka Kyawswa Myinmu Maung Naing Moe was presented the SEA Write Award from Her Royal Highness Princess Sirivannavari Nariratana Rajakanya.

SEA Write Awards for South-east Asian Writers Awards, or more popularly known as "The SEA Write Award", which is designed to honour leading poets and writers in the ASEAN region. The ten countries which comprise the ASEAN region are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.



Myinmu Maung Naing Moe reciting a poem.

Its Background

"The SEA Write Award" was established in early 1979 to encourage writers in the ASEAN countries and to bring recognition to the creative literary talents of the region. The idea emerged from discussions amongst the management of Mandarin Oriental, Bangkok, Thai Airways International Public Co Ltd, and the ItalThai Group of Companies. HH Prince Prem Purachatra was elected as the Chairperson of the Organizing Committee. The Organizing Committee also received valuable support from the PEN International Thailand-Centre under the Royal Patronage of HM The King and from the Writers' Association of Thailand, who took the role of setting the criteria and selecting the winning work and author from Thailand each year. Later on, the Jim Thompson Foundation, Bangkok Bank Public Co Ltd, Thai Beverage PLC, and a number of other private and governmental organizations joined the Organizing Committee. The annual Awards Presentation and Gala Dinner has always been

presided over by a member of the Thai Royal Family. The objectives are:

- To recognize the creativity of writers from countries of the ASEAN region;
- To create a wider awareness and understanding of literary wealth among the ten ASEAN Countries;
- To honour and promote the literary talents of the ASEAN creative writers;
- To bring together the many talents of ASEAN writers. The uniqueness of this award is that the awardees are selected by their own peers in each of the ten ASEAN countries. In Thailand, the Selection Committee members are nominated by the PEN International Thailand-Centre in collaboration with the Writers' Association of Thailand.

In order to enable the readers to get a picture of the SEAWrite Award, I must tell you about the brief history of the emergence of ASEAN. The ASEAN was originally founded with five-member nations Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand on 8 August 1967. Brunei Darussalam on 7 January 1984, Vietnam on 28 July 1995, Laos and Myanmar on 23 July 1997 and Cambodia on 30 April 1999 became the ASEAN members respectively. Consequently, the winners from the ten member nations were awarded from 1999 onwards.

The sponsors were those from private foundations, business companies, economic enterprises and so on. Besides, the return tickets and hotel accommodations (including meals) given to the awardees, each awardee receives Plaque to commemorate the distinction as prizes. The programmes for the delegations to the ceremony include visits to historical places. The award presentation ceremony is held on a grand scale with a Gala Dinner on the night after the end of visiting historical places. A world-renowned writer or poet is specially invited to the ceremony to make a speech. (As for the 2024-2025 SEA Write Award Presentation Ceremony, world-famous Italian

writer Dacia Maraini was invited as guest speaker.)

The nature of Maraini's work evolves in line with women's changing position in Italian society and exposes the use and abuse of power and its effects on women. Maraini's progressive works helped change the general impression that women should solely fulfil domestic roles.

Myanmar and the SEA Write Award

When ASEAN was founded on 8 August 1967, Myanmar did not become a member of the Association. She became an ASEAN member country only on 23 July 1997. To honour the membership of ASEAN, a prominent writer from Myanmar was offered to receive the

SEA Write Award in 1998. (As the award presentation ceremony was usually held in September or October, the Organizing Committee hardly had enough time to offer Myanmar for 1997.)

Myinmu Maung Naing Moe (U Ohn Maung), the recipient SEA Write Award for 2025, was born to U Tun Nyan and Daw Tin Hla in 1952 in Myaung Township, Sagaing Region. He earned a BCom Degree from the Institute of Economics, Yangon University in 1973. He joined the Army in 1975 as a Second-Lieutenant and served as a Lieutenant-Colonel up to 1997.

In 1965, he entered the Literary arena and has written over 2,000 poems and 200 articles, with 24 poems translated into Malay- sian, Korean, Vietnamese, and Cambodian. He also translated "Selected Chinese Poems through the Ages" into Myanmar. (The book won the National Literary Award for the translation genre for 2024.) He has won the National Literary Award nine times in 1981, 1991, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2006, 2010, 2023, and 2024. Because of his literary activities, he received the National Lifetime Award for Literary Achievement, Myanmar's highest



Myinmu Maung Naing Moe seen with the SEA Write Award at Sukhothai Palace in Bangkok, Thailand.

literary honour for 2021. A year later, to honour his outstanding literary works on nation-building endeavours, he was conferred the Title of "Alinka Kyawswa". Since 1998, he has been a member of the Myanmar Writers Association (MWA), and currently, he is serving as the Chairman of the Association.

Being a member of the MWA, I am personally proud of being a recipient of the SEA Write Award (for 2025) and regard it as the success of the MWA. Previously, as soon as the offer of the SEA Write Award reached the MWA through the Ministry of Information (MOI),

the Myanmar awardees were selected systematically by the unanimous decision of executive committee members of the Association under the guidance of the MOI from 1998 to 2015.

Between 1998 and 2015, the programmes for Myanmar awardees to receive the SEA Write Award were officially conducted by the MWA under the guidance of the MOI. In other words, the MWA, being a sole literary organization existing under the leadership of the successive governments, has been taking the responsibilities of the processes of receiving the SEA Write Award for Myanmar writers.

In those days, the noble aims and objects of offering the SEA Write Award sponsored by Thailand were seen and heard through both print and electronic media of Myanmar. However, from 2016 onwards, Myanmar literati did not know about the work programmes with regard to the SEA Write Award simply because the programmes were not publicly carried out. That was why Myanmar writers had lost the chance to know whether the SEA Write Award was offered to Myanmar writers or not.

Today, the Myanmar Writers Association(MWA) has been officially contacted by the SEA Write Award Organizing Committee, as a result of the efforts made by Saya Myinmu Maung Naing Moe. At the Award Presentation Ceremony held on 16 December this year, he was specially requested to recite the following poem composed by Saya Myinmu Maung Naing Moe: -



Myinmu Maung Naing Moe, fourth from left, seen with the Awardees for 2025.

ARTICLE/SCI/TECH:
WORLD

Alinka Kyawswa Myinmu Maung Naing Moe and the SEA Write Award (2025)

FROM PAGE 9

The Wish of the Poet
I had opened the door of the cage that hath con-
fined thee, Wherever you may want to go, Wherever
you may want to alight, You, gold and emerald bird.

From inside my heart.
All obstructions had now been cleared,
So to the lush, shady, green and young forest, Sweet
and smooth, I want to flow,
You, cool spring waters, from inside my heart.
Now with no overhanging shadows,

All around the skies, the sweet fragrant smell of
thee, I want it purely to fill.
You, white flower from inside my heart.
The sweet song of the gold and emerald bird dear,
may it be pleasant and rejoicing to hear
To the steady melody of the cool spring waters, let
all be instilled with new strength inborn.

Like the emerald bird or the blue spring or as an
emphasis, the flower,
That gently moved forth and blossomed from the
heart, a short poem and verse that the man of liter-
ature composed, are for this world of man

To be cool and pleasant,
With a noble benevolence, sweet and fragrant, With
pure love I donate in charity,
So that the world be peaceful in redolence.

In reality, Myinmu Maung Naing Moe has already
paved the way for us, of Myanmar Writers Association,
to have access to the SEA Write Award in future.

Reference:-
(1) *Pamphlet on SEA Write Award (2024-2025)*
(2) *Through the Window of Sarpay Beikman by
Maung Swe Ngae*



Tata Group has proposed the development of a “next generation AI city” in Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh, as part of a strategic push into artificial intelligence and digital infrastructure. **PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA**

2025 will be remembered
for innovation in technology,
AI, data

*Preparations are underway to establish dedicated “AI Cities”
in Lucknow and Noida.*

UTTAR Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday called for investment and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the state, stating that 2025 will be remembered for innovation in technology and data.

In an open letter to UP citizens, CM Yogi said that preparations are underway to establish ‘AI City’ in Lucknow and Noida. He added that 10 lakh citizens are receiving AI training under the ‘AI Pragma’ initiative.

In the letter shared on X, the Chief Minister said, “This is the time to enter the English year 2026. The year 2025 will be remembered for establishing new benchmarks of innovation in technology, AI, and data. Uttar Pradesh is forging new standards of forward-looking development. The reign of good governance in the state has empowered ‘Brand UP’ across the world. Uttar Pradesh has now become a state of trust for investors.”

“Preparations are underway to establish ‘AI City’ in Lucknow and Noida. A semiconductor unit is being constructed in Jewar at a cost of Rs3,700 crore. The success of the data centre policy, made with the focus on ‘Swadeshi Centre’ and secure data, is beginning to be seen. Commercial use of five hyperscale data centre parks has begun. The target is to invest Rs30,000 crore in the data centre sector,” CM Yogi added. — ANI

Bushfire in Western Australia prompts
evacuation order

AUTHORITIES on Thursday morning issued an emergency warning for a life-threatening bushfire burning near the Perth Airport in Western Australia (WA).

A warning issued shortly before 6 am local time by the WA Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) said that residents in the Kalamunda region, 15 kilometres east of central Perth and five kilometres from the city’s international airport, should leave immediately. — Xinhua

France’s Reunion warns
of ‘probable or imminent’
volcanic eruption

FRANCE’S Reunion island warned early Thursday of the “probable or imminent eruption” of its Piton de la Fournaise volcano, one of the most active in the world. All access to the volcano has been closed after the The Piton de la Fournaise Observatory detected a “seismic crisis” starting at around 4:47 am (0047 GMT), the island’s prefecture said on X. “This indicates that magma is leaving the magmatic reservoir and propagating toward the surface,” the observatory said in a statement on Thursday. The prefecture declared an Alert Level 1, warning on X that an eruption is “probable or imminent”. It also ordered the closure of the volcano’s caldera as of 6 am, 1 January. — AFP



All access to the volcano has been closed after the The Piton de la Fournaise Observatory detected a “seismic crisis”. **PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA**

S Africa’s minstrel parade: born from slavery, celebrated in pride

CAPE Town’s annual minstrel parade, known as the Kaapse Klopse, is a vibrant cultural festival rooted in painful history. Originating during the era of slavery, when enslaved people were allowed a single day of rest on New Year’s, the event evolved into a celebration of freedom, resilience, and identity.

Today, thousands of performers dressed in bright satin costumes march through the streets, playing banjos, trumpets, and drums while singing traditional songs.

The parade is both a joyful

spectacle and a reminder of the endurance of marginalized communities. Families pass down participation across generations, reinforcing pride in heritage. Despite criticism over commercialization and logistical challenges, the event remains a cornerstone of Cape Town’s social fabric.

It highlights how a practice born from oppression has been transformed into a symbol of unity, cultural pride, and resistance, drawing locals and tourists alike to witness South Africa’s unique blend of history and festivity. — AFP



Thousands of performers dressed in bright satin costumes march through the streets, playing banjos, trumpets, and drums while singing traditional songs. **PHOTO: AFP**

K-pop stars BTS to release album in Mar ahead of world tour

K-pop band BTS's new album will be released on 20 March.

K-POP megastars BTS will release a new album in March ahead of a world tour, the group announced on Thursday.

South Korea’s biggest musical act has been on self-described hiatus since 2022 as its members undertook national military service required of all men under the age of 30.

All seven members were discharged last year, and the group announced a comeback for the spring of 2026.

They confirmed on Thursday that they would release an album on 20 March before heading on tour.

The exact date was revealed in handwritten letters sent to paid members of the official BTS fan group, and later confirmed by their label Big Hit Music.

“I have been waiting more earnestly than anyone else,” group leader RM wrote in the letter.

No further details about the album or tour were given.

The album will be BTS’s first since the anthology



K-pop megastars BTS will release a new album in March ahead of a world tour. **PHOTO: TOURSETLIST**

“Proof” which became South Korea’s bestselling record of 2022.

Before their military service, BTS generated more

than 5.5 trillion won (\$3.8 billion) in South Korea per year, according to the government-backed Korea Culture and Tourism Institute. — AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

France’s homeless wrap up to survive at freezing year’s end

As France welcomed the New Year, thousands of homeless people faced bitter cold on the streets. With temperatures plunging below freezing, shelters struggled to accommodate rising demand, leaving many forced to wrap themselves in blankets, cardboard, or donated coats. Charities and volunteers distributed hot meals, sleeping bags, and warm clothing, but resources remained stretched thin. The crisis underscored France’s growing housing shortage and the vulnerability of marginalized populations during winter.

In Paris and other major cities, makeshift camps dotted riverbanks and underpasses, where families and migrants sought refuge.

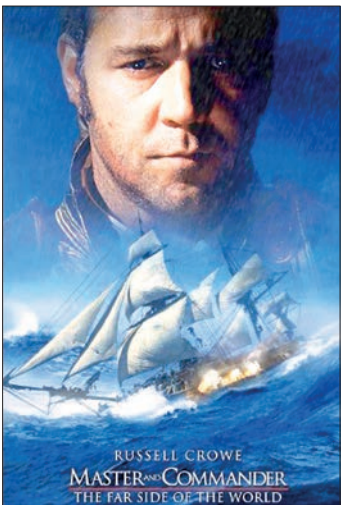
Authorities pledged emergency measures, yet activists criticized the government for failing to address structural causes of homelessness. For those enduring the cold, survival was the only priority, with celebrations of the year’s end overshadowed by hardship. — AFP

Film producer Meyer Gottlieb no more

MEYER Gottlieb, a Holocaust survivor who was the longtime chief of Samuel Goldwyn Films and produced such movies as Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World and 2013’s The Secret Life of Walter Mitty, has passed away. He was 86.

The news of his demise was shared by Meyer’s wife Pattikay Gottlieb, as per The Hollywood Reporter. He breathed his last on Monday at his home in Los Angeles.

Meyer was named pres-



ident and COO of Samuel Goldwyn Co in 1988, having assisted Samuel Goldwyn Jr, son of the Oscar winner and legendary Hollywood mogul, in reviving the label a decade earlier. He served as a co-producer on Master and Commander (2003), a co-production with 20th Century Fox, Miramax and Universal that was directed by Peter Weir and starred Russell Crowe as a brash Royal Navy captain doing battle during the Napoleonic Wars. — ANI

ECONOMY
WORLD



Large retailers, such as IKEA, have signalled plans to ramp up US-based production to mitigate these costs. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ IKEA**

Higher US tariffs on imported furniture take effect

As of Thursday, 1 January 2026, steeper US tariffs on imported furniture have officially taken effect.

STEEPER US tariffs on some imported furniture items took effect Thursday, in a move that could add pressure on households already feeling the pinch from elevated costs of living.

The increase was planned under an earlier tranche of sector-specific tariffs imposed by President Donald Trump, as the US leader widened a slate of duties he has rolled out since returning to

the White House.

Trump's tariffs in 2025 have affected goods ranging from steel to autos, and more investigations — that could lead to even more levies — are underway.

In October, a 10-per-cent duty on imported softwood timber and lumber came into effect, along with a 25-per-cent duty on certain upholstered furniture and kitchen

cabinets. These tariffs, justified by the Trump administration as a means to boost US industries and protect national security, also included a planned increase come 1 January 2026.

Effective Thursday, the rate on certain upholstered furniture rises to 30 per cent, while that on kitchen cabinets and vanities doubles to 50 per cent. — AFP

Turkiye grants visa-free entry to Chinese tourists

TURKIYE has granted visa-free travel to Chinese citizens holding ordinary passports for tourism and transit, according to a presidential decree published in the Official Gazette on Wednesday.

Under the new regulations signed by Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, Chinese travelers will be exempt from visa requirements for stays of up to 90 days within any 180-day period. The policy is set to take effect on 2 January. — Xinhua



Chinese tourists pose for photos at the historical Sultanahmet Square in Istanbul, Türkiye, on 17 August 2023. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

AI, chips boom sent S Korea exports soaring in 2025

SOARING global demand for semiconductors fuelled by a boom in artificial intelligence sent South Korea's exports to their highest-ever level in 2025, official data showed Thursday.

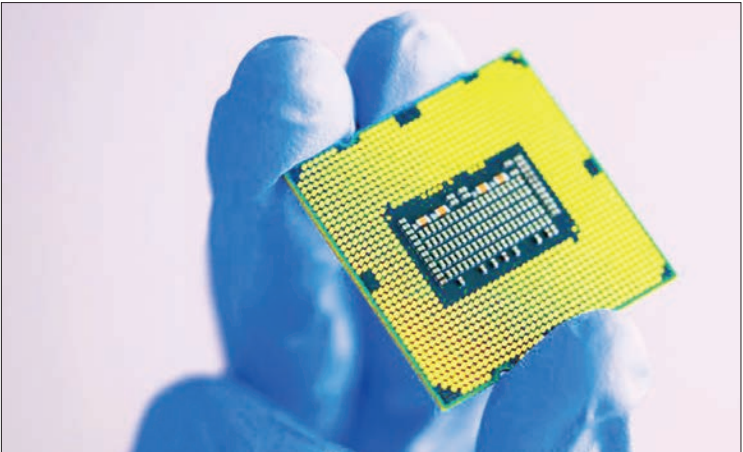
Total exports last year were valued at over \$700 billion, according to data from Seoul's industry ministry, up 3.8 per cent from the previous year. The worldwide surge in interest in artificial intelligence saw semiconductor industry exports reach \$173.4 billion in 2025 — a record high and an increase of more than 20 per cent from the

previous year, the ministry said.

High-priced memory chips used in AI data centres were in strong demand, they added.

Semiconductor exports in December alone rose more than 40 per cent year-on-year, posting gains for a tenth consecutive month and marking the highest monthly figure on record.

South Korean tech juggernaut Samsung Electronics is one of the world's top memory-chip makers, providing crucial components for the AI industry and the infrastructure it relies on. — AFP



The worldwide surge in interest in artificial intelligence saw semiconductor industry exports reach \$173.4 billion in 2025. **PHOTO: PIXABAY**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bulgaria officially adopts euro

BULGARIA joined the eurozone and adopted the euro as its official currency on New Year's Day, becoming the 21st member of the euro area.

To ensure a smooth transition to the new currency, throughout January, the Bulgarian lev will remain in circulation alongside the euro. Starting 1 February the euro will become the country's sole legal tender.

From 1 January to 30 June the exchange of lev for euros is free of charge at banks and post offices. After this period, currency exchanges will be subject to a fee. — Xinhua

Afghanistan approves 29 projects

AFGHANISTAN'S national procurement commission has approved 29 projects valued at 18.5 billion afghanis (around US\$280 million), the office of the deputy prime minister for economic affairs announced in a statement late Wednesday.

The commission, chaired by Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, reviewed 44 proposed procurement projects across various sectors, ultimately certifying 29 of them. — Xinhua

Tata Motors posts strong Dec sales, registers 25% growth

TATA Motors reported robust performance in the third quarter of 2025-26 and December. Total commercial vehicle (CV) sales rose 21 per cent year-on-year to 115,577 units in the October-December quarter, compared with 95,770 units in the same period last fiscal.

The company also recorded strong momentum in December 2025, with domestic and international CV sales reaching 42,508 units, up 25 per cent from 33,875 units sold in December 2024

Tata Motors saw broad-based growth across key segments during Q3FY26:

Heavy Commercial Vehicle (HCV) trucks posted sales of 33,401 units, a 23 per cent increase year-on-year. Intermediate, Light and Medium Commercial Vehicles (ILMCV) recorded 20,033 units, up 26 per cent.

Small Commercial Vehicles (SCV) cargo and pickups rose 15 per cent to 43,793 units. Passenger carriers registered moderate growth of seven per cent, with 10,691 units sold in the third quarter, data showed. — ANI



Commercial vehicle sales momentum continued into December, reflecting healthy fleet replacement cycles and logistics expansion. **PHOTO: ANI**

Finland detains freighter Fitburg over suspected undersea cable damage

FINNISH authorities have detained the freighter Fitburg on suspicion of damaging undersea data cables in the Gulf of Finland early Wednesday, officials said at a press conference in Helsinki. Finnish National Police Commissioner Ilkka Koskimäki said the vessel was being escorted to a Finnish port and that all 14 crew members had been taken into custody. — Xinhua

China-Nepal border port resumes customs clearance 6 months after floods

CHINA-NEPAL Gyirong-Rasuwa Port, one of the largest land ports between the two countries, resumed customs and passenger clearance on Thursday morning, nearly six months after the area was struck by flood.

Gyirong Port in southwest China's Xizang Autonomous Region is a vital trade corridor. Customs data show that the port saw imports and exports worth 4.25 billion yuan (about US\$604 million) in 2024, ranking first among ports in the region and accounting for nearly 30 per cent of the total China-Nepal trade volume.

However, a flood in July 2025 swept away the bridge connecting Gyirong Port and Rasuwa Port in Nepal, suspending bilateral personnel exchanges and goods trade. Since then, the Chinese and Nepalese governments have worked closely to resume customs clearance.

A steel temporary access bridge was built and passed acceptance. Through joint efforts, cross-border services resumed. "Thanks to the makeshift bridge built by China, I can resume my job," said Nepalese truck driver Thokra Rohit, who came to Gyirong to load goods. — Xinhua

Japan Post mulls merging up to 20% of distribution centres nationwide

JAPAN Post Holdings Co. is considering merging 10 to 20 per cent of its roughly 3,000 nationwide mail and parcel collection and delivery centers to improve efficiency, with vacated locations to be used for expanding its real estate business, sources close to the matter said Thursday.

The reorganization of the delivery network is expected to be included in the company's three-year business plan starting in April, they said.

Japan Post is not considering cutting staff or scaling down the network of its 24,000 post offices in the envisaged reorganization, which is part of the company's shift of focus from shrinking postal services to parcel delivery and real estate



This photo taken in central Tokyo on 13 December 2025 shows a signboard of Japan Post Holdings Co. **PHOTO: KYODO**

businesses, according to the sources.

In rural areas, Japan Post would expect to maintain its service coverage by transferring operations of merged delivery centers to larger ones. The company would aim to increase profitability in such areas by accepting parcels from other companies wanting to outsource delivery services. In urban areas, it would consider redeveloping vacated locations into commercial buildings, the sources said. — Kyodo

US imposes sanctions on firms operating in Venezuela oil sector

THE United States announced sanctions on four companies Wednesday over their operations in Venezuela's oil sector, in the latest effort to put pressure on the nation's President Nicolas Maduro.

The US Treasury Department also identified four related oil tankers as blocked property.

"These vessels, some of which are part of the shadow fleet serving Venezuela, continue to provide financial resources that fuel Maduro's illegitimate narco-terrorist regime," the Treasury Department charged in a notice.

It warned that parties involved in the Venezuelan oil trade will continue facing "significant sanctions risks". — AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V AS SOPHIA VOY.NO. (550W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V AS SOPHIA VOY.NO. (550W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **2-1-2026** 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 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 MAERSK A/S

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

Kim Jong-un salutes North Korea's troops serving in Russia as 'invincible alliance' grows firmer



Kim emphasized that North Korea and Russia stand “behind you”, underscoring military and political cooperation. **PHOTO: KCNA**

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un used his New Year's address to praise troops fighting abroad and highlight Pyongyang's deepening alliance with Russia.

NORTH Korea's leader has sent a congratulatory message to officers and soldiers of overseas operations units on the occasion of the New Year, per KCNA.

Kim Jong-un commended North Korea's "proud sons, fighting bravely on the battlefields in the alien lands".

He expressed the certainty that the year 2026 would allow them to perform new "remarkable feats in the overseas battlefields".

While stressing that it was his greatest wish to see all the troops return home safely, Kim Jong-un urged them:

"For the fraternal Russian people, for the mettle and characteristics of our people, for the spirit and dignity of the Korean people and for the immortal honor of our state, and for the undying fame of our army, be brave. Behind you are Pyongyang and Moscow."

— SPUTNIK

NEWS IN BRIEF

Second reactor at Zhangzhou starts

AFTER undergoing 168 hours of full-power continuous operation assessment, the second power generation unit of China National Nuclear Corporation's Zhangzhou nuclear power project in southeast China's Fujian began commercial operations on Thursday, marking the full commissioning of the first phase of the Zhangzhou nuclear power project. — Xinhua

Iran government building attacked

A government building in southern Iran was attacked on Wednesday, authorities said, as the country's top prosecutor warned of a "decisive response" to any attempt to create instability after days of economic protests. Spontaneous protests, driven by dissatisfaction at Iran's economic stagnation, began on Sunday in Tehran's largest mobile phone market, where shopkeepers shuttered their businesses, and have since drawn in students across the country. "A portion of the provincial governors' office door and its glass were destroyed in an attack by a number of people," said Hamed Ostovar, the head of the judiciary in the city of Fasa, as quoted by the justice ministry's Mizan agency, without specifying how the attack was carried out. — ANI

Fire ravages Amsterdam church

A huge inferno gutted a 19th century Amsterdam church Thursday, as the Netherlands endured an unsettled New Year's Eve with two dead from fireworks and "unprecedented" violence against police.

The blaze broke out in the early hours at the Vondelkerk, a tourist attraction that has overlooked one of the city's top parks since 1872.

The 50-metre-high (164-foot) tower collapsed and the roof was badly damaged but the structure was expected to remain intact, Amsterdam authorities said. — AFP

Saudi-backed forces to deploy in seized territories

SEPARATISTS from Yemen's Southern Transitional Council said on Thursday that Saudi-aligned government forces would enter territories seized by the UAE-backed group, in a step that appeared unlikely to satisfy Riyadh after it repeatedly demanded their full withdrawal.

A surprise offensive by the STC, in which the separatists took control of resource-rich Hadramawt and Mahra provinces last month, has brought the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, officially allies in Yemen, to a point of unprecedented escalation.

On Tuesday, the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen struck what it said was a shipment of Emirati weapons destined for the separatists, a claim Abu Dhabi has denied, and called for STC forces to withdraw. — AFP

The separatists of the Southern Transitional Council want to revive the former independent country of South Yemen. **PHOTO: AFP**

SPORTS

Hakimi, Salah and Osimhen head star-packed AFCON last-16 cast

A star-studded cast led by Achraf Hakimi, Mohamed Salah and Victor Osimhen switch to knockout fare from Saturday, when the Africa Cup of Nations resumes in Morocco.

Paris Saint-Germain defender Hakimi was crowned 2025 African player of the year in November. Liverpool attacker Salah and Galatasaray striker Osimhen were the runners-up.

After 36 matches spread across six groups, the 16 survivors from 24 hopefuls clash

in eight second-round matches over four days.

Fit-again Hakimi is set to lead title favourites Morocco against Tanzania, Salah will captain Egypt against Benin and Osimhen-inspired Nigeria tackle Mo-

zambique.

AFP Sport looks at the match-ups that will determine which nations advance to the quarterfinals, and move one step closer to a record \$10 million (8.5 million euros) first prize. — AFP



Morocco captain and defender Achraf Hakimi has recovered from an ankle injury. PHOTO: AFP/FILE



Chelsea manager Enzo Maresca. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Coach Maresca leaves Chelsea after just 18 months in charge

CHELSEA have sacked head coach Enzo Maresca after 18 months in charge, with the club fifth in the Premier League and winless in six of their last seven games.

Enzo Maresca has left his role as Chelsea head coach after 18 months in charge, the Premier League club announced Thursday.

“Chelsea Football Club and head coach Enzo Maresca have parted company,” said a club statement.

The Italian’s exit from Stamford Bridge comes with the club fifth in the Premier League table

— 15 points adrift of leaders and London rivals Arsenal — with one win in their last seven top-flight games.

Speculation about Maresca’s position increased during Chelsea’s poor run of recent results amid reports of a worsening relationship between the coach and the club’s hierarchy.

“With key objectives still to play for across four competitions including qualification for Champions League football, Enzo and the club believe a change gives the team the best chance of getting the season back on track,” said the club statement. — AFP

Ex-boxing champ Joshua discharged from hospital after fatal car crash

FORMER world heavyweight boxing champion Anthony Joshua has been discharged from hospital, state officials said Wednesday, after surviving a car accident in Nigeria that killed two of his close friends.

Joshua was travelling on Monday with friends Sina Ghami and Latif Ayodele on a busy highway linking Lagos and Ibadan in the southwest of the country when their SUV rammed into a stationary truck. He suffered minor injuries, according to the Nigerian police.

Preliminary investigations showed the vehicle was moving at excessive speed and had burst a tyre before the crash, said the Traffic Compliance and Enforcement Agency (TRACE) in Ogun state, where the accident occurred. — AFP



Joshua’s family hails from the southwest Nigeria and he is known to visit there when he is in the country. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Neymar extending Santos deal: reports

NEYMAR has agreed to renew his contract with Santos until the end of 2026, a source close to the negotiations told AFP.

On Wednesday, Santos, Pele’s former club, posted a cryptic video on social media showing an aerial view of their Vila Belmiro stadium with the date 31 December 2026, accompanied by the text: “The time is coming”, without mentioning Neymar, whose initial contract expired at midnight on 31 December.

Neymar’s first season back

at his first club was interrupted by injuries, but the 33-year-old scored four times as Santos won their last three games to move out of the relegation places on the final day of the season in December.

After the season, he underwent an operation to repair a damaged meniscus in his left knee. Santos said on 22 December that the operation was performed by Brazil’s national team doctor and was successful. — AFP

Kim Jong-un salutes North Korea's troops serving in Russia as 'invincible alliance' grows firmer
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WORLD

World leaders usher in New Year with calls for unity, resilience, peace

WITH the world beset by conflicts, economic turbulence and climate crisis, world leaders rang in the new year with renewed appeals for unity, resilience, peace — and hope that better days lie ahead.

President Xi Jinping on Wednesday said the Chinese people on both sides of the Strait of Chinese Taipei share a bond of blood and kinship.

“The reunification of our motherland, a trend of the times, is unstoppable,” Xi said as he delivered his 2026 New Year message in Beijing.

In his annual New Year’s Eve address on Wednesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin said the unity of the Russian people “determines the sovereignty and security of our Fatherland, its development, and its future”.

“The New Year is, above all, a time when we hope for the best, for goodness and good luck,” Putin noted. As South Africa hosted the first G20 summit on African soil in 2025, President Cyril Ramaphosa said Wednesday that the country stands proud that its presidency ensured the voices of Africa and the Global South were “recognized, reflected and respected”.

“Despite the challenges we face, our country is getting stronger, our economy is improving,” he added.

Vowing “a sweeping leap and growth in all fields”, South Korean President Lee Jae Myung pledged commitment to stable growth underpinned by peace in 2026.

Despite fractured trade and rising geopolitical tensions, global economic growth proved “more resilient than anticipated”,

Amid crises, leaders worldwide are calling for solidarity, stability, and optimism as 2026 begins.



A woman poses for a photo in front of a New Year light display in Seoul, South Korea on 31 December 2025. PHOTO: JUN HYOSANG/XINHUA

said Singaporean Prime Minister Lawrence Wong on Wednesday.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer

promised to “defeat the decline and division offered by others” in his New Year message on Wednesday. In his speech,

French President Emmanuel Macron outlined his three wishes for the French people: unity, strength and hope. — Xinhua

Guyana counts on Indian expertise to become a healthcare hub in Caribbean



Indraprastha Apollo Hospital is an Indian healthcare facility owned by the Apollo Hospitals group, India's largest healthcare chain. Established in 1995, it serves as the third super specialty tertiary care hospital launched by the group in partnership with the Government of Delhi. A photo depicts the front view of the hospital. PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/WIKIMEDIA

GUYANA is aiming to emerge as a healthcare hub in the Caribbean and is counting on Indian expertise to strengthen its medical infrastructure, Guyanese High Commissioner to India Dharamkumar Seeraj said, while lauding India’s robust healthcare system.

Underscoring the growing healthcare cooperation between the two countries, Seeraj said that the Guyanese government currently facilitates treatment for patients abroad when specialised care is unavailable domestically, with India emerging as a preferred destination due to its high-quality medical services.

“Currently, we have patients

travelling to India for specialized treatment. If the required care is not available in Guyana, the Ministry of Health assists patients by facilitating treatment abroad. The government supports patients up to a certain amount, and if the cost exceeds that, additional assistance is provided. Many patients, therefore, opt for treatment in India. There is a logistics problem, the quality of care is excellent, and the cost is highly competitive,” he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Guyana in November 2024 gave fresh momentum to bilateral ties, with several MoUs signed in the healthcare sector. — ANI