

# The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

## All stakeholders have to nurture youths to become new generations capable of defending future State

THE following is the full text of the message sent by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min

Aung Hlaing to the ceremony to mark the 77<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Shan State Day, today.

**Esteemed ethnic national brethren in Shan State,**

I extend my greetings and best

wishes to all national people from Shan State and the entire nation for physical and mental well-being with peace and prosperity on the 77<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Shan State Day, which falls on 7 February today.

Shan State is larger than any other region or state and home to the most significant number of ethnics. Shan State, where Shan tribes such as Shan, Palaung, Pa-O, Wa, Danu, Kokang, Lahu,

**SEE PAGE-3**



Inlay Traditional Boat Racing in action on a grand scale. SAC members, Union ministers and dignitaries are also present on the occasion at Inlay Lake in Nyaungshwe Township, Shan State, on 5 February 2024.

## Inlay traditional boat racing marks 77<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Shan State Day

THE Inlay traditional boat racing was held at Inlay Lake in Nyaungshwe township on 5 February to hail the 77<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Shan State Day, which falls on 7 February.

Among the attendees were members of the State Administration Council, including Dr Ba Shwe and Khun San Lwin, Union Ministers U Min Thein Zan, Dr

Soe Win, and Jeng Phang Naw Taung, as well as the chief minister of the Shan State government.

Also present were Chinese Minister Counsellor to Myanmar Dr Zheng Zhihong, Deputy Ministers Dr Zaw Myint, Dr Aye Tun, and U Zaw Aye Maung, along with ministers from various states and regions, invitees, and local ethnic groups,

all gathered to cheer on the boat racing. Following the races, prizes were awarded to the winners.

Subsequently, members of the State Administration Council, Union ministers, and other officials visited the historic Inlay PhaungdawOo Pagoda, offering golden robes and other donations. — MNA/TRKM

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DPM MoFA Union Minister receives ICRC Resident Representative, UNHCR Representative in Myanmar

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Myanmar provides insight into current situation at 24<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting

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Spain-made carriages to be employed on Yangon circular railway

# NATIONAL

## National Objectives of 77<sup>th</sup> Union Day 2024

- To protect the perpetuity of the Union by the entire ethnic people through the Union spirit
- To join hands in harmony with the government, Tatmadaw, and the entire people to ensure the state stability and the rule of law
- To promote all-inclusive livestock breeding-based manufacturing industries and MSMEs, ensuring the socioeconomic development of the entire ethnic people
- To make collaborative efforts of all ethnic nationals to ensure the prosperity of the nation and food security which are the two national visions
- To strive to emerge a modern and developing country, as well as a Union based on democratic and federal systems, by all ethnic nationals

## Mottos of 77<sup>th</sup> Union Day 2024

1. Unity is strength  
Power of Union
2. Drifting in one boat, on the same voyage we float  
Ethnic brethren of the land joining hand in hand
3. Marching towards with unity  
Ensuring the destination of the Union
4. Let's firmly join hands among ethnic national brethren  
of the Union
5. Let's go forward with unity of the ethnic nationals



The traditional Pa-O lighting ceremony was held in the previous year.

## Lwebaung, Shan State (South) to host traditional Pa-O lighting ceremony

THE Pa-O traditional lighting ceremony will take place on the full moon day and the 1<sup>st</sup> waning day of Tabodwe in Lwebaung, Naungpi village-tract, Pinlaung Township of the Pa-O Self-Administered Zone in southern Shan State, according to (U) Sai Ngin, the head of the Pa-O Ethnic Literature and Culture Association.

“There are seven Pa-O villages in the Lwebaung area. These seven villages jointly organize this traditional ceremony. The cultural groups from these villages assemble at the Buddha Garden of Lwe-

baung Monastery, where they set up the light pole (flambeau or flaming torch) and perform traditional music and dances. The joint lighting festival will be observed from the full moon day (24 February) to the 1<sup>st</sup> waning day (25 February),” said (U) Sai Ngein.

While this ceremony was once attended exclusively by middle-aged and older residents of the seven villages in Lwebaung, younger people from the Pa-O villages are now actively involved. The traditional Pa-O lighting ceremony is at risk of fading away. — ASH/MKKS

## Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council

### Order No 18/2024

12<sup>th</sup> Waning of Pyatho 1385 ME  
6 February 2024

#### Substitution of Member of Nay Pyi Taw Council and Minister for Security and Border Affairs

The State Administration Council has substituted Nay Pyi Taw Council member and minister for Security and Border Affairs of the Magway Region government shown against each of their names under Section 419 of the Constitution.

- (1) Member of Nay Pyi Taw Council  
Colonel Myo Win (BC 23767) instead of Colonel Min Naung (BC 21111)
- (2) Minister for Security and Border Affairs of Magway Region government  
Colonel Moe Min Thein (BC 22405) instead of Colonel Kyaw Kyaw Lin (BC 28707)

By Order,

Aung Lin Dwe  
Lieutenant-General  
Secretary

## Shwethaungyan Beach draws over 28,000 travellers in Jan 2024

ACCORDING to an executive member of the Myanmar Tourism Entrepreneurs Association (Shwethaungyan Beach), Daw Cherry Myint, 28,555 domestic and foreign travellers visited Shwethaungyan Beach in January 2024, marking an increase compared to previous periods. With over 20 hotels and guesthouses, Shwethaungyan Beach welcomes travellers throughout the year.

“The beach hosted 28,555 visitors in January 2024, up from 20,556 in December 2023. Visitors, especially those on day trips, choose the beach as their destination. The presence of the Kyaukmaung Nama Elephant Camp Resort contributes to the steady increase in visitors,” said Daw Cherry Myint.

Efforts are underway to

maintain cleanliness, landscape the hotel compound, clean hotel corridors, beaches, and public areas and offer local cuisine to visitors. Additionally, rental services for bikes, motorboats, and horses are available, along with stalls selling local souvenirs, food, and gifts. — ASH/ TMT



Visitors at the Shwethaungyan Beach.

## All stakeholders have to nurture youths to become new generations capable of defending future State

### FROM PAGE-1

Arkha and Inntha, together with many other ethnics such as Kachin, Kayah and Lisu, have been residing together in unison for many years with their relevant own culture and customs, is blessed with beautiful scenes of the natural environment.

It is a state with favourable climatic conditions where hill stations are located. In addition to natural lakes and prolonged urbanization, Stone Age cultural heritage such as Pyadalin Cave, Loiwun Cave, and many limestone caves can be seen in Shan State with various cultures and characters of ethnic groups and abundant natural resources.

The emergence of the Shan State Day is concerned with the history that highlights national unity in the nation's struggle for independence. It is because the British attempted to continue implementing the divide-and-rule policy for keeping hilly regions under its colonial rule even if they had to give independence to Myanmar.

British invited the Myanmar delegation led by General Aung San in 1947 to London and talked about the future issues of Myanmar. General Aung San demanded that they give independence to Myanmar and all hilly regions, including Shan State, simultaneously. The Executive Council of the Shan Feudal Council objected that General Aung San did not represent Saophas, but leaders of the Shan State People's Freedom League held rallies in Taunggyi and adopted decisions that only General Aung San was representative of hilly people. When they sent a telegram fully supporting General Aung San, the agreement (Aung San-Atlee Agreement) could be signed.

During the period from 3 to 6 February 1947, Saophas, who were members of the executive committee of the council and Shan public delegates held talks, and Shan, Kachin and Chin delegates formed the subcommittee on 7 February and signed the meeting decisions to take independence together with the mainland of Myanmar.

As such, as a gesture of honouring the 7 February when leaders of Shan, Kachin and Chin ethnics adopted the decisions to take independence together with the mainland of Myanmar, such a significant day was designated to hold the Shan State Day for 77 years. Hence, Shan State Day is a prominent day concerned with the entire Myanmar people and all ethnicities adopting the provisions of the Panglong Agreement, which is basic for the historic Union Day.

Now is the time for all to walk on the correct path in harmony by taking lessons from past events in order to ensure the perpetuation of the sovereignty of the State and to develop the nation. Varieties of ethnic national brethren have been residing in the Union of Myanmar for many years with serenity and prestige. However, the whole of Myanmar fell under colonial rule after fighting the three aggressive wars. So, Myanmar was exploited for more than 100 years.

Although the country has been independent for more than 70 years, it is suffering from the evil legacy of the divide-and-rule policy of British colonialists. All ethnic people in the entire nation, including Shan ethnics, fought against the oppression of colonialists with sacrifice of life, blood and sweat with patriotic spirit and regained independence. However, it is noticeable that the evil legacy of the divide-and-rule policy has been triggering the disintegration of the national unity in the Union, causing internal armed conflicts till today.

Especially attempts to cause armed conflicts, clashes, unrest, and violent attacks in ethnic areas, including Shan State, bring plights to local ethnic people. Moreover, everybody needs to accept and review that such conflicts can deteriorate local peace and stability as well as the development process in addition to harming the State.

As terrorists not only focus on their interests but commit deterioration of local peace and stability and destroy pagodas, stupas, as well as roads, bridg-

es, schools, hospitals and buildings, residents are experiencing myriad hardships. Hence, now is the time for all stakeholders and ethnic people to deeply consider the prevalence of peace and stability and forging durable peace. I would like to urge everyone that if they do so late, they will face greater disadvantages, and the country will face danger.

Currently, the State Administration Council is striving to forge peace and stability, improve socioeconomic life, restore durable peace across the nation, and build a Union based on democracy and federalism. The council is implementing two political visions: strengthening the genuine, disciplined multiparty democratic system and building a Union based on democracy and federalism.

As such, all ethnic nationalities in the Union have to build the Union based on democracy and federalism with the Union spirit through mutual understanding and unity. National unity is very important because our country was built with a Union system. I want to stress that forging the Union spirit is essential for unity among all ethnic nationalities.

The genuine aspiration of all ethnic people residing in Myanmar is to ensure peace and stability, rule of law, socioeconomic development and food security. The government, on its part, is implementing the national vision: ensuring the prosperity of the State and food sufficiency. While striving for improvement of agriculture and livestock breeding sectors, the government is implementing all-round development of other businesses. Primarily, as it is necessary to boom micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises based on agriculture and livestock farms, ethnic people in Shan State need to emphasize greater development of MSME businesses in order to develop socio-economy.

### Esteemed national people,

All ethnic people, including youths, have knowledge, technology, and the

capacity for critical thinking to build a Union based on democracy and federalism. The government is implementing a comprehensive education system to turn out human resources necessary for nation-building tasks. As education is a basic foundation for the development of the nation, efforts are being made to create the learning opportunity for all school-age children to pursue education and to complete the KG+9 scheme of at least middle school education and acquire vocational education such as industrial, agriculture and livestock farming tasks at the middle school level.

It can be seen that the learning opportunities are less in ethnic areas, including rural areas and border regions. Hence, the government is making efforts to enhance the education sector across the nation. Nurturing the youth is vital to making future generations have a national spirit and patriotic spirit in addition to knowledge and technology with a high capacity of rationality to differentiate between right and wrong and between good and bad. As such, I would like to urge all to nurture the youths to become new generations capable of defending the future State.

In conclusion, as armed conflicts in the country and all attacks and disturbances can lead to the disintegration of the nation and utter devastation of all ethnic people, I would like to send this message, urging all stakeholders to protect the State and the people with the patriotic spirit and national spirit and nurture new generation youths of the nation to become precious human resources, with best wishes for entire Shan State to be peaceful, prosperous and developed in all aspects and for all ethnic people to enjoy improvement of socioeconomic life.

**Senior General  
Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu  
Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma  
Min Aung Hlaing  
Prime Minister  
Chairman,  
State Administration Council**

### Daily newspapers available online

FOR those who would like to read the Myanma Alinn, the Kyemon and the Global New Light of Myanmar, published daily by the Ministry of Information, please visit [www.moi.gov.mm/mal](http://www.moi.gov.mm/mal), [www.moi.gov.mm/km](http://www.moi.gov.mm/km), [www.moi.gov.mm/nlm](http://www.moi.gov.mm/nlm) and [www.gnlm.com.mm/e-paper](http://www.gnlm.com.mm/e-paper).

News and Periodicals Enterprise

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

# NATIONAL

## DPM MoFA Union Minister receives ICRC Resident Representative, UNHCR Representative in Myanmar

DEPUTY Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe received Ms Elena Ajmone Sessera, Resident Representative of the International Committee of the Red

Cross (ICRC), yesterday at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw.

They exchanged views on matters related to ICRC's activities, including providing humanitarian assistance in Myanmar.

Also present at the meeting were senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Mr Christophe Ami Leon Taramarcas, Deputy Resident Representative of ICRC.

Moreover, U Than Swe, Deputy Prime Minister and the Union Minister for Foreign Affairs, received Ms Noriko Takagi, UNHCR Representative in Myanmar, yesterday at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw. They exchanged views on



Deputy PM Union Minister U Than Swe receives the UNHCR Representative in Myanmar yesterday.



The ICRC Resident Representative calls on Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister U Than Swe yesterday.

UNHCR's ongoing activities in Myanmar and ways and means for further cooperation between the Government of Myanmar and the UNHCR. Senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials were also present at the meeting. — MNA

### Counter-argument to false information

#### Misinformation: Ward administrators collect household censuses to reinforce security forces in Wakema

FALSE information is spreading on social networks that the ward administrators and members are going door to door to collect the number of family members in Wakema Township, Ayeyawady Region to force the people to attend military training and to strengthen the security forces.

According to an official of the Ayeyawady Region government, it is just the process of recording the location of the house and recording the population in the house with the officials of the relevant ministry and ward administrators to ensure the accuracy of the latest situation and population statistics in that township.

The malicious news media is only spreading propaganda with false information to scare the people of the peaceful villages and towns of the country. — MNA/KZL



Screenshot validates false claims.

#### False claims: Over 60 houses destroyed by Tatmadaw's airstrikes, artillery fire in Yanbye

FALSE information is spreading on social networks to mislead the public that Tatmadaw and AA armed insurgents are fighting fiercely, and more than 60 houses in Yanbye have been burned down due to the Tatmadaw's airstrikes and heavy fire in Yanbye, Rakhine State.

AA armed insurgents attacked the military and security bases by dropping bombs with drones and shooting wildly with heavy

weapons. There have been cases of explosions falling into villages and destroying homes. In addition, AA armed insurgents are attacking civilian buildings and people who are not military targets, and according to the statements of the local people, they burned houses to prevent the security forces from attacking them during the retreat.

The malicious news media is purposefully circulating false news on social



Screenshot validates misinformation. networks to scare the people, cause instability in the country, and tarnish the reputation of Tatmadaw. — MNA/KZL

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Printed and published at the **Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory** at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the **Global New Light of Myanmar Daily** under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.  
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# NATIONAL

## IPRD celebrates 33<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary

THE 33<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the Information and Public Relations Department (IPRD) was held at the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn, Deputy Minister U Ye Tint, Permanent Secretary U Myo Myint Maung, heads of department, heads of region and state head offices, outstanding employees who won awards in competitions and training courses, other officials in person, and deputy directors from district offices via online attended the ceremony.

First, the documentary video “Unity and Friendship” was introduced to the audience at the event.

In his speech, the Union minister said the IPRD can stand tall due to the unity among the leading personnel and the staff serving their responsibilities dutifully.

The IPRD is a vast net-



Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn poses for the group documentary photo at the IPRD 33<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary celebration yesterday.

work comprising 435 offices in regions, states, districts and townships, serving the three main tasks of the Ministry of Information – to inform, to educate and to entertain.

Similarly, the department actively participated in national-level ceremonies. Moreover, it distributes text messages and television news through social

media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Telegram, the MOI website, the MOI application, and MTube for the public to receive trustworthy information.

Moreover, the relevant IPRD offices spread the news regarding regional development activities, government announcements, and other ed-

ucational programmes on their Facebook pages.

The Union minister also talked about upgrading community centres, the guidance of the Head of State in holding awareness programmes and youth talk shows across the nation and launching training courses, including capacity-building training.

Then, he presented the appointment letters for the promotion to director positions.

Then, the permanent secretary and departmental officials presented excellent performance awards and cash awards to outstanding personnel in the region, township-level management, civil servants, social affairs, short story and article competitions, photo competitions and so on.

The deputy minister presented the first, second, and third prizes and special prizes of district-level news coverage awards to the district offices.

Then, the Union minister awarded the excellent work performance prizes to the township-level, district-level, region and state-level offices.

The Union minister had a documentary photo taken with the relevant officials and awardees and enjoyed lunch with them. — MNA/KTZH

## MoIP UM receives UNHCR Resident Representative



The UNHCR Resident Representative calls on Union Minister U Myint Kyaing yesterday.

UNION Minister for Immigration and Population U Myint Kyaing received Resident Representative Ms Noriko Takagi of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Myanmar and party at the reception hall of the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

They frankly and cordially discussed the Union government’s undertakings to accept IDPs from Rakhine State, a tripartite memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed

between the ministry and UNDP-UNHCR to support these processes, the implementation status of projects in designated areas within Buthidaung and Maungdaw townships, coordination between the ministry and other relevant departments, UNHCR’s understanding of the obstacles to the readmission process, limitation to carry out activities due to the current security situation in the area, and the status of the work done. — MNA/TS

## Myanmar provides insight into current situation at 24<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting

MYANMAR attended the 24<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting and explained the terrorist attacks happening in Myanmar and the measures aimed at autonomy, self-determination and arrangements of free and fair multiparty democratic elections, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Ambassador of Myanmar to Belgium U Soe Lin Han attended and participated in the meeting held at the SQUARE Brussels Meeting Centre in Brussels, Belgium, on 2 February. Speaking at the meeting, the Myanmar ambassador expressed Myanmar’s gratitude for the EU’s Trade Special Tax Exemption Programme (GSP/EBA) and the country’s awareness of the labour rights of workers in Myanmar in line with the due diligence required under the GSP/EBA programme and actions taken by the government under the existing laws.

The causes of terrorist attacks in Myanmar include online fraud gangs and drug trade issues, so the three countries, Myanmar-China-Thailand, are



The photo depicts the 24<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting.

coordinating to suppress and clear these problems effectively, he said. He said that efforts are being made politically to have the autonomy of ethnic groups and the right to self-determination before they are discussed in the parliament for enactment. He also explained the country’s continuous effort to hold a free, fair, multiparty democratic election.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Laos and the rotating chair of ASEAN, Mr Saleumxay Kommasith, said he would commit to finding a long-term sustainable way based on Myanmar’s implementation process.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of

Thailand, Mr Parnpree Bahidha-Nukara, said Thailand believes that increasing humanitarian aids will improve the situation in Myanmar. He also urged the EU to have positive interactions with the community in Myanmar and international community in the process of providing humanitarian aid to the country.

In the meeting, Mr Josep Borrell, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/ Vice-President of the European Commission-HR/VP, and the ASEAN and EU foreign ministers discussed the positions of their respective countries. ASEAN Secretary-General Dr Kao Kim Hourn also attended the meeting. — ASH/TH

# NATIONAL

## Confessions on drug-related cases committed by AA group

THE government has raised, as a national duty, the momentum of effectively eradicating trafficking in narcotic drugs, which are posing a great menace to the entire mankind, including new generation youths.

Moreover, it has also been extensively conducting inspections, exposures and seizures on the routes of transporting narcotic drugs, and seized ICE, more than two tonnes of methamphetamine, and 800 kilogrammes of precursor chemical caffeine, valued at K51.87 billion, from members of the Arakan Army (AA) group, which is trafficking them on various legs of road and water routes, from Shan State to Rakhine State.

Below are the statements of detained AA members regarding drug-related charges:



Confession of Ma Ei Ei Khin (alias) Ma Ei (daughter of U Maung Nel), who transported narcotic drugs from Shan State to Yangon

“Nan Shwe Phyu and I went to Lashio to meet a person called Maung Naing. At that time, I didn't have a job, and it was difficult to get a job. I was asked, “We have a job. Will you do it?” Then, I happened to meet that person, Maung Naing. He told us, “You will get K10 million for the trip.” As it was a big amount, we accepted the job. I asked him whether it was heroin or raw opium. He said it was not the sort of narcotic drugs, and they had arranged everything, having packaged them all. He said we had only to sit in and ride the car. Nan Shwe Phyu fetched the packages from the forest. In Lashio, we hired a car. We put the things in the hired car and also in our car.

“We went up to Aungban in that car. He hired the car for us for K600,000. On the previous trip, we brought only a small amount, depending on the situation along the route. I was to-

gether with Nan Shwe Phyu. As we came to know that it was safe for us on the previous trip, we brought a larger volume on the current trip. When we arrived in Yangon, it was nighttime. In the morning, Nan Shwe Phyu got a telephone connection with the person at the destination. I called her and asked, “Where are you?” She said she was on her way to the 10<sup>th</sup>-Mile where she would transfer the packages. I had had some dispute with her, and she had not brought me with her. But when I called her again. She was not at the 10<sup>th</sup>-Mile. It was Danyingon, she told me to come to Danyingon. So, I hired a taxi to follow her up to Danyingon.

“After leaving Lashio, we had to pass by Mongyei, Nam-pao, Indaw, Kyaukgu, and Yaksawk. But before we reached Yaksawk, we stopped in a forest for the night, where there was a food shop and a hot spring. After sleeping there for one night, we left in the morning. After going across Yaksawk, we reached Aungban. In Aungban, there was a car from Yangon waiting for us. The car driver, called Yan Naing Soe, telephoned us. He said he slept in Aungban because it was already dark. He said he would give us a phone number in the morning. In the morning, we contacted that phone number. The person who answered the telephone gave us another phone number. The owner of the phone was called “Naw Naw”, a young male Rakhine national. We told Naw Naw to come to Danyingon to collect the packages. It was at the Danyingon junction.

“I'm very repentant. It was worse when my family came to know about it. I'm now every repentant.”



Confessions of U Hla Win (alias) Thar Gyi, a friend of Kyaw Myat Oo (alias) Thar Thar (alias) Wai Thar Tun, who is in the rank of a colonel, in charge of Economic Affairs of AA, who



The vessel Taninthayi offenders used in the case.

gave instructions on accepting the narcotic drugs that arrived Yangon and transporting them to Sittway, Rakhine State.

As instructed by Kyaw Myat Oo (a) Thar Thar, who is in the rank of a colonel, I had to transport narcotic drugs from Yangon to Rakhine State. Kyaw Myat Oo (a) Thar Thar and I have been friends since childhood as neighbours. In the first week of August 2023, Kyaw Myat Oo (a) Thar Thar contacted me by phone. He said narcotic drugs were going to arrive and gave me the telephone number of Second Lieutenant Naw Naw, his subordinate. He said Naw Naw would contact me. Then, I got links with Naw Naw. Car drivers also telephoned me. I connected the car drivers with Naw Naw, the second Lieutenant of AA. Second-Lt Naw Naw went to fetch the drugs. He called me when he arrived at the warehouse. He said 25 sacks of ICE were already in the warehouse. As I had been told by Kyaw Myat Oo (a) Thar Thar, I asked Second-Lt Naw Naw to bring out the 1-kilogramme sacks from paper boxes and re-package them neatly.

“For the second time, Kyaw Myat Oo (a) Thar Thar rang me in the third week of August 2023 and told me that more narcotic drugs had arrived.

“Second-Lt Naw Naw contacted the car driver to fetch the drugs. When he arrived at the

warehouse, he called me and said he had received 16 sacks of ICE. In the fourth week of August, Kyaw Myat Oo (a) Thar Thar rang me and told me to bring the ICE in the warehouse to the vessel “Taninthayi”. Then, I called Second-Lt. Naw Naw and told him to transport the things in the warehouse to Mottama Port in Shwepyitha. He called me again when he had dropped off the stuff at the port. Only at that time did Kyaw Myat Oo (a) Thar Thar ask a person who was travelling to Yangon to hand K10 million over to me. He said it was the award for my performance in August.

“Again, in the first week of November 2023, Kyaw Myat Oo (a) Thar Thar contacted me and said more narcotic drugs would arrive soon. He also gave me the phone number of the car driver. Then, I got in contact with the car driver. The driver told me to transfer the drugs near Ocean Hotel at 9<sup>th</sup>-Mile. So, I rang Second-Lt Naw Naw of AA and asked him to come to Ocean Hotel at 9<sup>th</sup>-Mile. I did not remember the place where this hotel was. He said there was a car in the underground parking lot. I didn't see any person there. I told Naw Naw I would bring the Super Custom car there.

“Then, I brought Naw Naw's car. I told him I had received 57 sacks of ICE. In the second week of November, Second-Lt. Naw

Naw informed me that he had received 40 sacks of the drug. One or two days later, Naw Naw told me that the Shwepyitha Industrial Zone Management Committee would inspect the warehouses in the zone. I relayed the information to Thar Thar. Naw Naw told me that he wanted to put cement in the warehouse and transfer the drugs to a car. I told Thar Thar what Naw Naw had said. So, Thar Thar asked me to buy a car and cement and transfer them to Naw Naw. So, I bought a truck of Canter brand for K32 million. The cement I bought cost K4.9 million. I received the money by phone from a person near the Insein Market under Thar Thar's arrangement. We loaded the drugs in paper boxes onto the truck and asked the driver to go to Lanmadaw. The truck was parked in Lanmadaw for seven days and in Pabedan for another seven days. Because the clutch of the truck was not good, we had it repaired at a workshop on Myitta Street in South Okkalapa Township. The drugs were seized by the police there. But according to Naw Naw's words, he received the drugs three times within the month, totalling 38 sacks. “In the second week of November, Kyaw Myat Oo (a) Thar Thar in the rank of a colonel of AA, contacted me by phone.

“He told me he would send a person called Soe Tun, who was to work together with Naw Naw.

# NATIONAL

He asked me to rent a house for Soe Tun. Soe Tun and I went to North Dagon to look for a house to rent. We found a house, which Soe Tun liked, in Ward 34. Thar Thar sent the rental money to me through a person and asked me to sign a one-year agreement at K650,000 per month.

“In February 2022, Kyaw Myat Oo (a) Thar Thar rang me and said narcotic drugs would be transported by water. He asked me to buy a motorboat. He also said he would also send a person. We got in contact with the owner of a vessel called “Taninthayi”. The owner mentioned the price of the motorboat as K80 million.

“In August 2023, we transported narcotic drugs for the first time on motorboat “Taninthayi.” Kyaw Myat Oo (a) Thar Thar, in charge of the Economic Affairs of AA, gave money for all the costs — the costs for warehouses in which narcotic drugs were to be kept, for the cars and trucks, for the houses for AA members to live in, and for the motorboat, including service money “K10 million” for me. I assume that the proceeds from selling the narcotic drugs are used for buying arms and ammunition and for recruiting.

“Now, I am repentant of my collusion with the AA group, harming the nation and the young people.”

You will now hear the confessions of Kyaw Soe (a) Nay Lin Tun (a) Naw Naw, in the rank of Second Lieutenant of the AA group, who received the narcotic drugs that arrived in Yangon and transported them to Rakhine State in person, under the instructions of Kyaw Myat Oo (a) Thar Thar (a) Wai Tha Tun, in the rank of a colonel, in charge of Economic Affairs of AA.



Confessions of Kyaw Soe (a) Nay Lin Tun (a) Naw Naw (AA – 0104), in the rank of Second Lieutenant of the AA terrorist group

“I’m Kyaw Soe (a) Nay Lin

Tun (a) Naw Naw, in the rank of Second-Lieutenant of AA. My personnel No is 0104. I joined AA in 2010 and attended a 45-day military training course. Then, I served as a private in a section. I went to Sein Yu Bone Mountain to join in an operation. I served the duty of caring for agriculture and livestock breeding at the AA base unit up to 2022. Afterwards, I was sent by Colonel Kyaw Myat Oo (a) Thar Thar (a) Wai Thar Tun, in charge of Economic Affairs, to Yangon for the transport of narcotic drugs. Colonel Kyaw Myat Oo (a) Thar Thar (a) Wai Thar Tun asked me to rent a warehouse in Shwepyitha for storing narcotic drugs. I rented a warehouse for K2.5 million per month and stored narcotic drugs in it. I had to bring the drugs to Mottama Port in Shwepyitha Township and load them onto the motorboat.

“Colonel Kyaw Myat Oo (a) Thar Thar (a) Wai Thar Tun said I must receive narcotic drugs from Than Win (a) Yan Naing. I received 620 (one-kilo) sacks of ICE at Danyingon junction on 5 August one time; 400 (one-kilo) sacks of ICE at the same junction on 15 August one time; 140 (one-kilo) sacks of the drug at the car parking lot of Ocean Hotel on 7 November one time, under the instruction by phone of Colonel Kyaw Myat Oo (a) Thar Thar (a) Wai Thar Tun; 40 sacks of the drug near a market at Danyingone junction on 10 November one time; 175 (one-kilo) sacks of the drug at the same junction on 23 November one time; 90 (one-kilo) of the drug at the same junction on 24 November one time; and 600 (one-kilo) sacks of ICE at the same junction on 25 November 25; totalling seven time.

“I brought 3,025 sacks of ICE and 40 sacks of narcotic drugs and stored them in the warehouse. Under the instruction of Colonel Kyaw Myat Oo (a) Thar Thar (a) Wai Thar Tun, I put the narcotic drugs in paper boxes and stored them in the warehouse. Colonel Kyaw Myat Oo (a) Thar Thar (a) Wai Thar Tun asked me to send the narcotic drugs in 51 paper boxes to Mottama Port in Shwepyitha. So, I hired a Hijet to transport the drugs. I entrusted the narcotic drugs to a person called Soe Paing (a) Soe Soe, who was on the motorboat “Taninthayi”.

“Colonel Kyaw Myat Oo (a)

Thar Thar (a) Wai Thar Tun directly asked me to take charge of the drugs in Yangon. He gave me K300,000 per month during my service. In the past, we didn’t get any salary. It was only in my service with the narcotic drugs that I got a monthly salary of K300,000. Maj-Gen Tun Myat Naing also knew about our activities in the narcotic drug trade. Actually, we were doing them under his command.

“AA members also sent the narcotic drugs to other regions and countries. Before I was arrested, I had heard about the seizure of narcotic drugs, which were about to be sent to Malaysia.

The seizure took place when they were about to be sent by water. The traffickers were AA members. In fact, we, AA members, felt self-conscious in using the money, the proceeds from the sales of narcotic drugs. I feel upset for my having sent the narcotic drugs to Sittway by water for the first time. I also feel repentant.

You will now hear the confessions of Soe Paing (a) Soe Soe, who sent the narcotic drugs from Yangon to Sittway by water.



Confessions of Soe Paing (son of U Aung Tun Hla)

“In April 2022, Ko Thar Gyi contacted me and asked me to work in Yangon. The work was to drive a motorboat. Then, I arrived in Yangon in May. He made contact with a person called Ko Kyaw Han, who was in Yangon. Ko Kyaw Han and I went to the motorboat. On the motorboat, there were three persons on security. They went back home when we took over the boat.

“On the following days, more persons arrived to work on board through the connections of Ko Kyaw Han and Ko Thar Gyi. My salary was K500,000 per month. In addition to the salary, they occasionally issued me K300,000 to K500,000 in advance as necessary. I made seven trips between Yangon and Sittway on Taninthayi-I motorboat.

“Up to the sixth time, I had transported 5,000 bags of cement

on the motorboat from Yangon to Sittway. On the seventh time, 460 bags of rice were loaded onto the motorboat at the Shwepyitha port. Then, more bags of cement were loaded at Miba Myitta port near the Shwepyitha port. At that port, 51 paper boxes were loaded after cement.

“When the paper boxes were about to be loaded, Ko Thar Gyi called me and said the paper boxes were important, and asked me to take care of them. He also gave me the phone number of the person who would send the paper boxes to the port. He said that person would come to contact me.

“A person, whom I later came to know as Naw Naw, contacted me and dropped off the 51 paper boxes from a Hijet. He said Ko Thar Gyi would give me K5 million on completion of the trip. On my trip from Yangon to Sittway, I cruised from the Yangon River to Khanaungto Creek, where I laid the anchor. At the time of flood tide, I cruised along the Twantay Canal, passing Maubin, Wakema and Myaungmya. After passing from below Ngapudaw, I proceeded to Hainggyi, Mawtinsun, and cruised along the Ngayokkang-Chaungtha-Gwa coast. Then, I went straight to Sittway.

“When I was young, beginning in 2003, I drove motorboats in Taungup and worked honestly. Then, jobs were scarce, and I arrived here through the contacts of Ko Thar Gyi, who said I was just to transport legal goods. I would not have chosen this work if I had known that the goods were illegal. Only now did I know that AA members and transport of illegal goods were involved. I feel really upset. I have two sons. I feel greatly sorrowful for our existence and my sons’ future. I was told I had only to transport cement and work within the framework of law. This happened without knowing that narcotic drugs would be involved. I must say that they have used me. I feel really upset about transporting the goods without knowing they were illegal. I beg the pardon of young people and parents of Rakhine for my wrongdoing.

I want to tell them not to abuse these things. I think that these things would be sent from Sittway to other countries across the border. I have heard about the seizures of such narcotic drugs at the border. I also as-

sume that AA should not use the proceeds from selling narcotic drugs for young Rakhine people and arms and ammunition.

You will also hear the confessions of Kyaw Han (a) Hsan Shay, who was in the rank of sergeant in the AA group, who transported the narcotic drugs from Yangon to Sittway by water.



Confessions of Kyaw Han (a) Hsan Shay (AA – 0287), in the rank of sergeant, of the AA group

“I’m a member of the AA group, Sergeant Kyaw Han, with personnel No 0287. On 5 January 2016, an AA member came to fetch me. Then, I was made to attend a course in Kyauktaw Township. The course was completed after May. They gave me a personnel number on completion of the course. I had to take care of the plantations. In May 2016, I had to live at Meewah Camp and participate in building more camps. That was a time when more and more camps were built near Padauk.

“Armed clashes took place when Myanmar Tatmadaw columns entered the area. At that time, two privates fell on our side. We fled the scene of engagement.

“On fleeing, we reached Kokesi. It was within MraukU Township, and we stayed there. We did casual work. As I didn’t have a secure job, staying with other persons, I moved to Pauktaw Township. I was staying there in hiding. While staying there, I rode boats carrying sand and stones. In 2021, a person called Aung Hsan Oo contacted me and asked whether I wanted to work. He said I had to ride a motorboat, by which AA transported goods.

“I replied to him that I would work. Then, he sent me to Yangon after giving me K200,000. After arriving in Yangon, I was sent to Seikkyi-Khanaungto. The place where there was the “Taninthayi” motorboat.

SEE PAGE-12

# OPINION

## Eradicate money laundering for a prosperous society

**M**ONEY laundering stands as a criminal activity with far-reaching implications, adversely affecting both the socioeconomic fabric of society and the State's revenue streams. This illicit practice directly impacts the economic and financial sectors, giving rise to financial crises and elevated commodity prices that burden the populace.

Perpetrators of money laundering exploit various avenues, transforming their illegal gains into seemingly legitimate assets through investments, business operations, and acquiring goods and materials, often disregarding the resulting spike in commodity prices. The dwindling stocks of commodities in the market become a primary catalyst for inflation, thereby destabilizing the nation's economic sector.

Recognizing the gravity of this issue, the government has launched concerted anti-money laundering campaigns domestically and internationally, collaborating with relevant organizations and seeking assistance from neighbouring countries. The Financial Intelligence Unit of the Myanmar Police Force, the Anti-Corruption Commission, and legal bodies collaborate closely with the government in the battle against money laundering.

The detrimental effects of money laundering extend beyond mere financial losses, making it crucial to address this issue comprehensively. Technological advancements in modern times have heightened the complexity of crime cases, necessitating specialized training for investigators to enhance their efficiency. As a member of the United Nations Convention against Corruption-UNCAC, Myanmar's commitment to combating money laundering aligns with implementing UNCAC provisions, emphasizing the collaboration between the Financial Intelligence Unit and the Anti-Corruption Commission to fight corruption and money laundering effectively.

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Money laundering's impact on Myanmar's economic sector underscores the urgency for a collective effort from all segments of society. It is imperative that individuals from all walks of life unite in a conscientious fight against money laundering, transcending social strata, to eliminate these illicit practices from society.

Money laundering encompasses actions that violate the proceeds of crime (POC), involving the illicit transfer, concealment, and conversion of the origin, appearance, location, and ownership of funds to present them as clean money. Unlike the direct commission of crimes, money laundering involves processing proceeds obtained through the perpetration of an original offence. To combat money laundering effectively, law enforcement agencies, in their pursuit of the primary criminal activity, must ascertain whether money laundering has occurred. This necessitates conducting thorough financial investigations, especially in cases related to corruption. Establishing laws and procedures to enhance financial investigations concurrently with corruption cases is imperative.

**I**DIOMS, expressions, and sayings are important in everyday conversations. They go beyond literal meanings, sharing cultural knowledge and making language more interesting.

Idioms are like colourful tools that create vivid pictures, making conversations memorable.

When people use idioms, it helps them connect and understand each other better. Idioms also make language rich, showing the diversity of different cultures.

They are powerful for effective communication, making conversations dynamic and expressive. Using idioms in everyday language helps with cultural understanding and makes social communication easier.

In the intricate tapestry of human communication, words weave the fabric of understanding and connection.

Each conversation is a rhythmic dance, transcending borders and cultures, creating a harmonious symphony of shared experiences.

Through the artistry of language, we connect, express, and explore the vast landscapes of our thoughts, fostering unity and embarking on a journey of shared humanity.

“စန်းပွင့်” (san: pwin) ရင်းမြစ်

Pali-စန္ဒ+Myan-ပွင့်

MYANMAR MEANING

လူချစ်လူခင်များသည်။ ထင်ပေါ်သည်။

“စန်းပွင့်” (sanpwin) is a Myanmar



stative verb, and it is categorized as an idiom.

**MEANING**

The term is rendered in English as 'be popular,' 'be widely known,' or 'be well-liked.' Another meaning for the term is 'like a shining moon'.

The moon is considered a symbol of love and charm in astrology. If the moon occupies

# Connecting on the Universal Dance of Words

By Augustin

a favourable position when a person's horoscope is cast, it is believed that the individual will be fortunate in romantic affairs. Consequently, someone who is either attracting love or is dearly loved by others is said to be in a state resembling a shining moon.

**ENGLISH EXPRESSIONS**

“Under a lucky star in love”: Similar to the favourable positioning of the moon, this expression suggests someone fortunate in matters of the heart.

“Basking in the moonlight of love”: Reflecting the idea of being in a state resembling a shining moon, this phrase conveys someone experiencing the warmth and radiance of affection.

“Love's celestial alignment”: Drawing a parallel to astrology, this saying emphasizes the positive influence of cosmic forces on one's romantic fortunes.

“In the glow of love's orbit”: Similar to being in a state resembling a shining moon, this expression highlights the radiant and captivating nature of someone deeply loved.

“Under love's enchanting



Through the artistry of language, we connect, express, and explore the vast landscapes of our thoughts, fostering unity and embarking on a journey of shared humanity. ILLUSTRATION: PIXABAY

**MYANMAR MEANING**

- ဟင်းအမျိုးမျိုးကိုအရသာလေးအောင် ရောကု၍ထားသောဟင်း
- ဗဟုသုတစုံလင်သူ။ စာပေဟင်းလေးအိုးကြီး။

**MEANING**

The term is rendered in English as 'a pot of mixed curries: a knowledgeable person.'

**ENGLISH EXPRESSIONS**

Here are some English expressions for “a pot of mixed curries”:

- Assorted curry pot
- Medley of curries
- Mixed curry assortment
- Potpourri of curries
- Diverse curry pot
- Variety of curries in a pot
- Curry blend pot
- Eclectic curry mix
- Assortment of curry flavours

- Pot of diverse curries

**LITERAL EXPRESSIONS**

- “A melting pot of curries.”
- “Throwing everything into the curry pot.”
- “Stirring up a curry storm.”
- “All curries in one basket.”
- “Currying favour with variety.”
- “A curry mishmash.”
- “Putting all the curries in the same pot.”
- “A curry medley that's a real potluck.”
- “Mixing curries like there's no tomorrow.”
- “Curries from all walks of spice.”

**FIGURATIVE EXPRESSIONS**

Here are figurative expressions associated with the term “knowledgeable person”.

- “A walking encyclopedia”.

- “Fountain of wisdom”.
- “A font of knowledge”.
- “A book of knowledge”.
- “A mind like a library”.
- “Well-read and well-bred”.
- “Brains of the operation”.
- “A walking dictionary”.
- “Full of pearls of wisdom”.
- “A walking repository of information”.

**IDIOMATIC EXPRESSION CURRY FAVOUR**

“Curry favour” is indeed an idiomatic expression. The phrase means to seek to gain favour or approval through flattery, special attention, or other manipulative means. It is often used to describe someone who is attempting to win someone's favour or approval, sometimes with an ulterior motive.

မြက်နှာပြောင်တိုက် (myakha-praungtaik)

- compound verb
- မျက်နှာ(n) + ပြောင်(v) + တိုက်(v)
- မရှက်မရွံ့ အားမနုတ်ပြုသည်။

The term is rendered in English as **behaving brazenly**.

If someone commits a disgraceful act, they would typically feel guilty and might avoid facing their associates. However, some individuals can boldly confront others despite committing shameful offences. Doing something dishonourable without showing remorse or guilt is referred to as confronting with a bare face.

Here are some English expressions related to acting or behaving brazenly: -

1. “Bite off more than one can chew” - This expression means taking on more than one can handle or being overly ambitious without considering the consequences. For example, “She has really bitten off more than she can chew by taking on three jobs at once.”
2. “Throw caution to the wind” - This phrase is used to describe taking a risk without considering the possible adverse outcomes. For instance, “She threw caution to the wind and quit her job without having another one lined up.”
3. “Burn bridges” - This idiomatic expression means to ruin a relationship or connection, often by behaving disrespectfully or audaciously. An example would be, “He burned his bridges with the company when he publicly criticized his manager.”
4. “Let the cat out of the bag” - This saying means to reveal a secret or disclose information that was meant to be kept confidential. For example, “She accidentally let the cat out of the bag about the surprise party.”
5. “Go out on a limb” - This expression is used to describe taking a risk or making a bold decision. For instance, “She has really gone out on a limb by investing all her savings in that business venture.”
6. “Make a scene” - This idiom refers to causing a public disturbance or drawing attention to oneself through dramatic behaviour. An example would be, “He made a scene at the restaurant when his meal was not cooked to his liking.”

**SOURCES:**

မြန်မာစာလုံးပေါင်းသတ်ပုံကျမ်း (မြန်မာစာအဖွဲ့၊ ၂၀၀၃ ခုနှစ်) Myanmar Idioms, written by Sayya Hla Thamein THEIDIOMS.COM

## EU states greenlight landmark new AI rules

After resolving concerns from key member states, EU ambassadors unanimously approved the final compromise text during a meeting in Brussels, with the EU's tech enforcer, Thierry Breton, praising the rules as a “historical, world-first, pioneering” achievement that strikes a balance between innovation and safety.

EU member states on Friday approved landmark rules on reining in artificial intelligence, after tough last-mile negotiations on the legislation billed as a world first.

Brussels first proposed an AI law in 2021 but spent most of last year racing to greenlight the text after chatbot ChatGPT exploded onto the scene.

EU states and lawmakers had agreed on a draft set of rules back in December, and their approval after that should have been a formality.

But some countries, including France and Germany, flagged concerns that raised fears the AI law would fail in the final stretch — leading to a new round of talks to nail down its contents.

EU ambassadors finally signed off on the text during a meeting Friday in Brussels, after French and German concerns were assuaged.

“We are very happy to announce that... ambassadors just unanimously confirmed the final compromise text,” Belgium, which holds the EU's rotating

presidency, said. The EU's top tech enforcer, Thierry Breton, hailed the “historical, world-first, pioneering” rules. “The AI Act unleashed a lot of passion ... and rightly so! Today member states endorsed the political agreement reached in December — recognizing the perfect balance found by the negotiators between innovation and safety,” he said.

**Protecting innovation**

The EU law will regulate AI systems based on risk assessments of the software models involved — to be carried out by the firms themselves. The higher the identified risk to individuals' rights or health, for example, the greater the systems' obligations.

Berlin and Paris had been particularly keen to protect AI startups, to prevent the rules from inhibiting future “European AI champions”.

Seeking to address their concerns, the EU's executive arm in late January launched a package of pro-innovation measures to support European startups in AI development.

SOURCE: AFP



EU member states approved groundbreaking regulations on artificial intelligence (AI) on Friday, marking a global first and concluding tough negotiations after the proposal was introduced in 2021. ILLUSTRATION: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ SHUTTERSTOCK



# NATIONAL

## Kyat depreciation bites pharma industry, worsens drug prices

AMID the import permit by the authorities, the imported drug prices rocketed owing to the Kyat weakening against the US dollar. Consumers stressed that there is a shortage of some drugs for chronic diseases in the market.

“The traders set the price depending on the forex market. The pharma industry is bracing for a scarcity of some drugs used in chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. Even drugs containing the same chemical properties cannot be found. When we found them in the market, the price tripled. Some even manipulate the price. Big pharmacies set the price. There is a two-fold or three-fold price gap between the big pharmacies and the small shops”, Daw Tin Tin Wai, suffering a heart disease from Thingangyun Township, told The Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM).

Among the more than 50 million population of Myanmar, over 2 million people have chron-



Imported medicines are seen being displayed on the shelf at a store.

ic diseases. They can maintain their health condition only with regular treatment and taking medicines. Consequently, they are forced to buy the medication at an exorbitantly high rate.

“We have challenges selling them. Consumers also face price

rises. The pharma industry has to deal with hard blows amid the upswing in prices”, the GNLM quoted Ko Naing Min Than.

Myanmar imported over 440 tonnes of medicines worth US\$4.898 million by sea between 20 and 26 January. The import

volume was up by 80 tonnes compared to the previous week’s.

Myanmar brings in pharmaceuticals from China, India, Pakistan and Thailand. Eighty per cent of local drug consumption relies on imports. Therefore, the forex market weighs on the

pharma industry, causing the prices to rise significantly.

Vulnerable patients with chronic diseases have the burden of rising drug costs.

Locally produced BPI drugs worth approximately K40 billion are distributed to the domestic market. The purchase orders of the departments are estimated at K81.418 billion in the current financial year 2023-2024, beginning 1 April. As of January 2024, drugs worth K41.95 billion have been sold, the Ministry of Industry stated.

“The price of eye drops for glaucoma treatment increased to K12,000 from K5,000. The price is likely to continue rising. Some shops hiked the price up to two times. I would like to call for authorities concerned to make a surprise check to those shops to control the volatile market as people are struggling with the surging drug prices,” U Thein from South Okkalapa Township pointed out. — TWA/EM

## Over 10,000 unclaimed prizes from 48<sup>th</sup> Aungbarlay Lottery face forfeiture

THE Lottery Directorate of the Internal Revenue Department has announced that a total of 10,000 unclaimed prizes from the 48<sup>th</sup> Aungbarlay Lottery will be forfeited to the national revenue if they remain unclaimed by the end of February.

During the 48<sup>th</sup> Aungbar Lay Lottery draw on 1 March 2023, a total of 10,745 prizes were not claimed. These prizes include one valued at K50 million, one at K20 million, one at K10 million, one

at K5 million, two at K2 million, three at K1 million, ten at K300,000, 126 at K200,000, 803 at K100,000, 605 at K50,000, and 9,192 at K10,000.

Winning lottery tickets can be submitted to the Aung Bar Lay Lottery branches in Yangon and Mandalay before 29 February 2024, to claim the cash awards. Any tickets not claimed by this date will be considered State revenues. — TWA/MKKS

## MoALI to confiscate vacant lands for overdue tax



Farmers at work on the permitted vacant land.

THE Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation stated at the central committee meeting on 1 February that the ministry would

confiscate vacant, fallow and virgin lands in line with the law if the owners failed to pay tax promptly.

If owners falter in paying taxes once the tax exemption period expires or do not follow regulations, they may forfeit both the security fees and the land. Additionally, they could be subject to legal action.

The government grants vacant land permits for agriculture, livestock, mining and other official businesses.

Owners are required to start their proposed business to full capacity within the specified timeframe. Farmlands are barred from infrastructural use since they are vital for food security. — TWA/NT

## Spain-made carriages to be employed on Yangon circular railway

MYANMAR Railways will deploy carriages imported from Spain for trains operating on the Yangon Circular Railway.

DEMU (diesel-electric multiple unit) carriages, manufactured by Spain-based Construcciones y Auxiliar de Ferrocarriles (CAF), are poised for immediate use pending the completion of the circular railway upgrade.

The initial shipment, comprising a six-carriage unit, arrived at Thilawa Port in Yangon on 5 February and will soon un-

dergo test runs.

While the railway renovation nears completion, ongoing efforts include platform elevation and station maintenance work.

Myanmar Railways signed a contract with Mitsubishi Corporation to construct 66 carriages for the Yangon Circular Railway and 180 for the Yangon-Mandalay Railway on 7 December 2020. Initial reports suggest that, under the agreement, CAF will produce the carriages with some equipment made in Japan. — TWA/NT



Carriages seen arriving at Thilawa Port.

## Red kidney bean price jumps to K4.5 mln per tonne on foreign demand

THE price of red kidney beans has constantly increased in the Mandalay market on the back of robust domestic and foreign demand, hitting K4.5 million per tonne.

Beyond domestic consumption, China and India have been increasingly purchasing Myanmar's kidney beans, elevating the price to the highest.

The price rally started in the last week of January. It surged to K4.558 million per tonne on 6 February from K3.855 million per tonne on 19 January.

The figures reflected a sharp rise of over K700,000 per tonne in the past three weeks.

Myanmar exports kidney beans to China, India, Japan, Singapore and other foreign countries via border and maritime trade channels. Myanmar shipped 59,425.711 tonnes of kidney beans worth US\$50.31 million to foreign markets in the financial year 2022-2023 (April-March), the Ministry of Commerce's statistics indicated.

Myanmar conveyed over 24,163 tonnes of kidney beans worth \$29.77 million to foreign trade partners between



Myanmar exports kidney beans to China, India, Japan, Singapore and other foreign countries via border and maritime trade channels.

1 April and 26 January of the current FY 2023-2024, with an export volume of 12,147 tonnes worth \$12.4 million through maritime trade and over 12,016 tonnes worth \$17.364 million via border, as per the Ministry of Commerce's statistics.

Kidney bean cultivation begins in October-November, and the beans are

harvested in early February. They are grown in the upper Sagaing Region, Bhamo in Kachin State, Kayin State and along the Ayeyawady River. The beans produced from Katha and Bhamo townships are highly demanded in the domestic market because of their large size. — NN/EM

## Fertilizer prices flat in domestic market in non-growing season

ACCORDING to Ko Aung Tun, a fertilizer retailer from Thanlyin Township, the domestic fertilizer prices for cultivating paddy, pulses, and oilseeds such as onions and chillies are stable. The market is quiet at the beginning of this month because the planting season has not yet begun, as the Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM) reported.

In the first week of January, GBS (50 kilogrammes per bag) was purchased at K120,000, Shwe Taung Pale fertilizer (50 kg per bag) at K76,500, a bag of Armo fertilizer at K145,000, a bag of Pale fertilizer at K78,000, and a bag of Shwe Pwa fertilizer at K75,000. At the beginning of February, GBS fertilizer (50 kg per bag) was purchased at K120,000, a bag of Shwe Taung Pale fertilizer at K76,500, a bag of Armo fertilizer at K145,000, a bag of Pale fertilizer at K78,000, and a bag of Shwe Pwa Pale fertilizer at K75,000. Fertilizer prices remain stable compared to last month.

From 20 to 26 January, Myanmar imported almost 7,500 tonnes of fertilizer valued at US\$3.498 million through sea routes.

Myanmar's fertilizer imports were higher, totalling about 7,000 tonnes compared to the previous period. The fertilizer imports came from China, Viet Nam, Thailand, Germany, South Korea, Chinese Taipei, Norway, and Malaysia. — TWA/MKKS

## Myanmar's rice exports top 1.16M tonnes worth US\$574M in ten months



Export rice bags seen being loaded on the merchant vessel at Yangon Port.

THE value of Myanmar's rice and broken rice exports amounted to US\$574 million from over 1.16 million tonnes in the past ten months of the current financial year 2023-2024 beginning 1 April, comprising 1.08 million tonnes by seaborne trade and 80,000 tonnes

at border, as per the Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

The export volumes were registered at 87,648 tonnes worth \$36 million in April, 110,706 tonnes worth \$48 million in May, 62,725 tonnes worth \$28 million in June, 58,334 tonnes worth

\$26 million in July, 59,971 tonnes worth \$28 million in August, 84,773 tonnes worth \$42 million in September, 119,526 tonnes worth \$63 million in October, 175,990 tonnes worth \$90 million in November, 195,829 tonnes worth \$99 million in December and 213,605 tonnes worth \$111 million in January respectively.

Therefore, the rice export volume was recorded as the highest in January, followed by December and November. The figures showed a drop in June, July and August.

The federation aims to achieve 2.5 million tonnes of rice export in the current FY, expecting to earn \$1 billion.

Myanmar exported 2,261,203 tonnes of rice and broken rice to foreign trade partners in the past 2022-2023 FY (April-March), estimated at \$853.472 million.

Myanmar bagged over \$809.135 million from approximately 2.164 million tonnes of rice export in the 2021-2022 FY (Apr-Mar). — NN/EM



The photo shows a fertilizer shop in Nay Pyi Taw.

# NATIONAL

## Confessions on drug-related cases committed by AA group

### FROM PAGE-7

Then, I started working on-board. The motorboat transported goods. On the last voyage from Yangon to Sittway, 7,000 bags of cement, 460 bags of rice and 51 paper boxes of narcotic drugs. They were loaded at Mottama port in Shwepyitha. After arrival at Sittway, our motorboat was anchored amid the water, and members of AA came to fetch the goods on motorboats and small-engine boats. The narcotic drugs and goods were owned by AA. It took five days (four nights) to cruise from Yangon to Sittway.

I am an AA member.

The private number is AA 0178.

The officer's number is AC 0304



I am Soe Tun, and I'm in the rank of second lieutenant.

I joined the AA course in 2012. I started the course in August and completed it in October. In January 2015, after being promoted to the rank of sergeant, Thar Thar (a) Wai Thar Tun, who was the rank of a colonel, called the AA headquarters and told us that we had to do drug trafficking in Mandalay. So we



Photos show offenders alongside seized drugs and a vehicle they used in the case.

came to Mandalay from the AA Laiza base to do drug trafficking. One day or two after I arrived, a person named Kyaw Min Htay from the AA group came to me. After being there about three or five months later, drugs arrived there with 12-wheeler trucks. We opened the narcotic drugs carried by the trucks, took pictures and then we showed it to in the rank of Colonel Wai Thar Tun via WeChat. After we showed it, we had to recheck it there. The drugs came to us by 12-wheeler trucks. Sometimes, they were carried by cars like bowser and 4-wheel vehicles. During 2015 and 2016, we received the drugs once a month or once in two months. We had first received 20 sacks of drugs and kept them in the warehouse. At the instruction of Colonel Wai Thar Tun, we had to send the drugs to MraukU, Kyauktaw and Sittway in Rakhine State by trucks. After I was promoted to the rank

of second lieutenant in 2019, I went to northern Rakhine State in around 2020 at the request of Thar Thar (a) Colonel Wai Thar Tun, and when I arrived in the north of Maungtaw, AA group planned for me to stay there. Then, I had to work with Ko Aung Gyi, Ko Naing Shay, and Ko Pu. There, I had to send drugs and motorbikes to the Bangladesh border by motorbikes. And so we reached the border. We sent them to the Bangladesh border about five times. About 20 to 30 were sent once. In our words, we called one box, two boxes, etc... Ten rods are called a box. We used to send 20 rods or 30 rods once. When we reached the border, the brokers from Bangladesh picked them up. When I lived in Maungtaw, Rakhine State, I used to send narcotic drugs to Bangladesh for about a year. Around November, Thar Thar (alias) Wai Thar Tun, who was in the rank of colonel in the AA group, said



that I must do drug trafficking in Yangon. Arriving in Yangon, I stayed with Lieutenant Tun Lin and Second Lieutenant Naw Naw in a warehouse in Kanaung Minthagyi Street, Zone 1.

On 23 November 2023, Second Lieutenant Naw Naw went by taxi and took the ICE — three bags containing one kilogramme (20) packets and one bag containing 15 packets, totalling 75 packets. When they arrived at the warehouse, Naw Naw, Lieutenant Tun Lin, and I packed them with paper. On 25 November, Naw Naw left me at a tea shop at the Pearl Street intersection. He took the drugs in another car and dropped them at that warehouse. After that, he picked me up by car. When I arrived at the warehouse, Second Lieutenant Naw Naw, Lieutenant Tun Lin, and I packed and stored 600 bags, one-kilo 20 packets in the warehouse.

The car that brought the

drug was called Second Lieutenant Naw Naw. Since the drugs had already arrived, we went to pick them up with the Alphard car. At first, he arranged to meet at Pearl intersection, but later, he arranged to meet at the 14<sup>th</sup> Street intersection, so we went. They asked for the type and number of the car, and in the rank of Second Lieutenant Naw Naw said the type and number of the car. At the 14<sup>th</sup> Street intersection, one person waved and stopped our car. As soon as I got out of the car, I was arrested. The person who is a prominent leader of this drug business is in the rank of Colonel Thar Thar (a) Wai Thar Tun, who is in charge of the economic affairs of the AA group. It is not possible for the rank of Major General Tun Myat Naing to know that we are doing drug smuggling. He has known that. We have done it. But I regret it. I had to do as instructed. In fact, we don't want to do it.

## Interest surges in Mt Popa clean-up campaign

THE garbage collection effort for a clean Mount Popa campaign is gaining interest from the people, according to the data. This campaign will commence in the early morning of 18 February and will see environmentalists share their knowledge with an audience of nearly 100, including invited local people. "People coming on their own are requested to arrive by the evening of 17 February. The Maha Giri mountaineering team will set up a camping ground at the foot of the hill, and as many tents as they have will be provided. Another



The image captures volunteers participating in a clean-up campaign on the slopes of Mt Popa.

camp will be arranged in front of Popa horse riding camp. Veteran mountaineers will start climbing Mt Popa on the night of 17 Febru-

ary. Those staying at the base will collect garbage while climbing. Those staying at the summit will collect rubbish in difficult areas like mountain-top, slopes and valleys. So, only experienced people will be invited there. Small groups will be formed depending on the number of participants," U Myo Myint Bo, a campaign leader, said in a Facebook post. Many have commented on their interest and willingness to join it, along with some advice. Easily degradable gunny sacks will be used instead of garbage bags, and rented motorbikes

will take the sacks to the base. "I want locals, environment-lovers, mountaineers, adventurers, cyclists, runners, cycle tourists, bird watchers, landscape photographers, painters, writers, artists, etc to join the campaign. I especially want travel bloggers to come and share about ethics for travellers in their blogs," he said. The campaign is organized by the One Myanmar Adventure and mainly sponsored by Changan Auto Myanmar together with other companies and civil society organizations. — Htet Oo Maung/ZN

# China's Chery launches new EV model in Indonesia

CHINA'S Chery, a leading automaker, launched here on Monday its new electric vehicle (EV) model Omoda E5, a move that will help expand its business in the Indonesian market.

"Chery Omoda E5 is a real symbol of the fusion of technological innovation, futuristic design and ecological awareness through sustainable mobility. By bringing this technological innovation, we want to invite various parties to jointly contribute to creating a better environment through sustainable mobility with Chery Omoda E5,"

said Rifkie Setiawan, head of Brand Department PT Chery Sales Indonesia, at the launching ceremony.

According to Qu Jizong, executive vice president of PT Chery Sales Indonesia, Chery Omoda E5 is available on the Indonesian market at 498.8 million rupiah (31,800 US dollars).

In his remarks via video link, Indonesia's Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs Airlangga Hartarto said that the government appreciated Chery for reaching a 40-per cent local production.

"We push for Chery to



Chery's electric vehicle model Omoda E5 is seen during roll-off ceremony in Bekasi, West Java province, Indonesia, on 2 December 2023. PHOTO: XINHUA

be a brand that can support our domestic market, so that Indonesia can benefit from developing EV batteries here. And the government encourages the commitment of Chery to keep investing and increasing local content in Chery products," Hartarto said.

Chery returned to the Indonesian market in November 2022. On 2 December 2023, the automaker's first locally produced electric vehicle rolled off the production line at its production base in Bekasi, a city east of the capital Jakarta. — Xinhua

## Nintendo ups FY 2023 net profit forecast to 440 bln yen



Visitors pose at Universal Studios Japan's "Super Nintendo World," an attraction based on Nintendo Co's "Super Mario Bros", in Osaka on 10 November 2022 ahead of the start of winter events. PHOTO: KYODO

NINTENDO on Tuesday revised upward its net profit forecast for the current business year through

March to 440 billion yen (\$296.5 million) from its earlier projection of 420 billion yen, due to robust sales in its Switch consoles and the depreciation of the yen.

Group sales are now expected to climb 1.8 per cent from the year before to 1.63 trillion yen, revised up from the previously estimated 1.58 trillion yen. Operating profit is forecast to grow 1.1 per cent to 510 billion yen, up from the earlier forecast of 500 billion yen, the gaming company said. — Kyodo

## Cambodia, ADB agree to support micro, small and medium-sized enterprises

THE Foreign Trade Bank of Cambodia (FTB) on Tuesday joined the Asian Development Bank (ADB)'s Trade and Supply Chain Finance Programme (TSCFP) to boost trade finance for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in Cambodia. FTB Chief Executive Officer Dith Sochal and ADB Country Director for Cambodia Jyotsana Varma signed the deal in Phnom Penh. "The agreement is part of the ADB's private sector development initiative to promote

the sector's participation in Cambodia's economic diversification," Varma said at the event. "It will fill market gaps by providing financing through partner banks to support trade and MSMEs, representing about 99 per cent of all enterprises in Cambodia," she added.

As a partner bank of the TSCFP, the FTB will provide support to corporate and MSME clients in Cambodia by allowing trade finance instruments issued by the FTB to be covered by TSCFP credit

guarantees, she said, adding that this assistance is expected to help increase the number of international banks engaged in the Cambodian market.

Sochal said the FTB has already been working with the ADB programme to boost its knowledge and skills in trade facilitation, he said, adding that the programme has helped build capacity within the FTB on report preparation, good practices, innovative strategies, training modules, and performance measurement. — Xinhua

<p><b>CLAIMS DAY NOTICE</b> M.V PADIAN 4 VOY.NO. (0UV62E1NC)</p> <p>Consignees of cargo carried on <b>M.V PADIAN 4 VOY.NO. (0UV62E1NC)</b> are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on <b>7-2-2024</b> and cargo will be discharged into the premises of <b>MITT/AWPT</b> where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.</p> <p>Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.</p> <p>No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day. Phone No: <b>2301185</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Shipping Agency Department</b> <b>Myanma Port Authority</b></p> <p>Agent For: <b>M/S CMA-CGM SHPPING LINE PTE LTD</b></p>	<p><b>CLAIMS DAY NOTICE</b> M.V ST. MARY VOY.NO. (2LK0SS1NC)</p> <p>Consignees of cargo carried on <b>M.V ST. MARY VOY.NO. (2LK0SS1NC)</b> are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on <b>7-2-2024</b> and cargo will be discharged into the premises of <b>MITT/AWPT</b> where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.</p> <p>Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.</p> <p>No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day. Phone No: <b>2301185</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Shipping Agency Department</b> <b>Myanma Port Authority</b></p> <p>Agent For: <b>M/S CMA-CGM SHPPING LINE PTE LTD</b></p>	<p><b>CLAIMS DAY NOTICE</b> M.V DRAGON VOY.NO. (1/2024)</p> <p>Consignees of cargo carried on <b>M.V DRAGON VOY.NO. (1/2024)</b> are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on <b>7-2-2024</b> and cargo will be discharged into the premises of <b>WILMAR</b> where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.</p> <p>Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.</p> <p>No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day. Phone No: <b>2301928</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Shipping Agency Department</b> <b>Myanma Port Authority</b></p> <p>Agent For: <b>M/S UNI SPRING LOGISTICS HOLDINGS PTE LTD</b></p>
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# ROLLING UPDATES

## WORLD

## China willing to join global efforts on AI ethics, governance

CHINA is willing to participate in global efforts to promote the ethics and governance of artificial intelligence (AI) so that it will benefit all mankind, a Chinese representative to a United Nations (UN) forum said here on Monday.

China's Vice-Minister of Education Wang Jiayi made the remarks at the Second Global Forum on the Ethics of AI, a two-day event sponsored by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the Slovenian city of Kranj.

Wang said the AI governance plans proposed by various countries reflect their hands-on experience and can provide a basis for gathering global consensus and jointly formulating global governance plans.

China is also willing to listen to all parties, carry out communication, exchanges and pragmatic cooperation on global AI, jointly build an open, fair and effective governance mechanism,



UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay gives a speech at the second Global Forum on the Ethics of AI in Kranj, Slovenia, 5 February 2024. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

and promote AI to benefit all mankind, Wang added.

The forum, themed "Changing the Landscape of AI Govern-

ance," gathered more than 600 representatives from governments, international organizations, academic and research in-

stitutions, NGOs and businesses from 67 countries.

Gabriela Ramos, UNESCO's assistant director-general

for social and human sciences, told Xinhua that China has not only formulated a series of measures and laws to regulate AI but has also actively participated in international efforts addressing the downsides of AI technologies, aiming to deliver better results for people.

In her opening speech, UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay stressed the importance of international cooperation in the new context of climate change and digital revolution. "The question for all of us is whether we will be active participants or just observers of this revolution and how we will direct it to benefit all of us," she said.

Slovenia's Digital Transformation Minister Emilija Stojmenova Duh said she believes the participants all have the "motivation, power, knowledge and responsibility to develop AI that will work for the good of the people." — Xinhua

## Heavy snow leaves more than 100 injured in Tokyo

AT least 109 people were taken to hospital in Tokyo through Tuesday morning after many slipped and fell due to heavy snowfall in eastern Japan, the Tokyo Fire Department said.

The injured, transported to hospital by 10 am, were aged 4 to 92 and none were in a life-threatening condition, it said. In neighbouring Kanagawa Prefecture, five people were severely injured and

34 sustained minor injuries, while 12 were slightly injured in Saitama Prefecture.

The Japan Meteorological Agency lifted its heavy snow warnings across nine prefectures, but snowfall and rain continued in some areas through the morning.

Some sections on East Japan Railway Co's Chuo Line and Ome Line were suspended, while all services on the Yoko-

hama Line were temporarily halted. Tokaido Shinkansen bullet trains were operating at reduced speeds between Tokyo's Shinagawa Station and Odawara Station in Kanagawa Prefecture.

All Nippon Airways and Japan Airlines cancelled around 30 domestic flights, mostly to or from Tokyo's Haneda airport.

Many passengers in Tokyo's Shinjuku Station could be seen asking for refunds and changing to other train lines.

"The train was already cancelled when I arrived at the station. Business negotiations will have to be postponed to another day," said a 32-year-old woman who had planned to go to Kofu Station in Yamanashi Prefecture for work.

Through Monday evening, Maebashi in Gunma Prefecture recorded the highest amount of snowfall at 11 centimetres, while central Tokyo and the city of Saitama saw 8 centimetres each, according to the weather agency. — Kyodo



Photo taken from a Kyodo News helicopter on the morning of 6 February 2024 shows skyscrapers in Tokyo's Shinjuku district after snowfall peaked in the capital. **PHOTO: KYODO**

## EU unveils 2040 climate targets in political tightrope act

THE EU on Tuesday unveils its climate targets for 2040 and a roadmap for the next stage of its energy transition, four months before European elections and with the bloc reeling from a farmer revolt against green reforms.

The 27-nation European Union has pledged to be carbon neutral by 2050, and set a first interim target for 2030: to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 55 per cent compared with 1990 levels.

For the next milestone, 2040, working documents suggest the European Commission will aim for a net drop of 90 per cent -- which would mean roughly the same pace of cuts as it has pledged for 2020-2030.

But this time around, Brussels has to factor in growing discontent -- illustrated by the farmer protests of recent weeks -- over the social and economic impact of its much-vaunted Green Deal. — AFP

## Thai government says will ban recreational cannabis use

THE Thai government will urgently move a bill to ban the recreational use of cannabis, the health minister said on Tuesday, after the kingdom decriminalized the drug in 2022.

Cannabis was taken off the list of banned narcotics in June 2022 under the previous government, which included the pro-legalization Bhumjaithai party. The move prompted hundreds of cannabis dispensaries to sprout around the country, particularly in Bangkok, provoking concern from critics who urged the need for tighter legislation. On Tuesday, the kingdom's health minister said the new bill -- which bans the recreational use of cannabis -- will be proposed to the cabinet meeting next week. "The new bill will be amended from the existing one to only allow the use of cannabis for health and medicinal purposes," Chonlanan Srikaew told reporters. — AFP

# SPORTS

## Jordan stun South Korea to reach Asian Cup final for first time

JORDAN powered past Son Heung-min's South Korea 2-0 on Tuesday to reach their first Asian Cup final and a showdown with Iran or hosts and holders Qatar.

Playing in the semi-finals for the first time and ranked 64 places lower, Jordan were full value for their victory over Jurgen Klinsmann's shell-shocked side.

South Korea's talisman Son endured a frustrating night and his country's wait for a first Asian Cup since 1960 goes on.

Jordan had more of the chances and deservedly went ahead soon after the break, Yazan Al-Naimat scoring his third goal of the tournament after South Korea gave the ball away cheaply.

They had been in a losing position in four of their matches in Qatar, but there was no way

back this time for the Koreans when Mousa Al-Tamari sliced his way through the South Korean defence 13 minutes later.

South Korea simply could not handle the pace and power of the attacking duo of Naimat and Tamari.

Son stood with his hands on his hips at the final whistle in disbelief.

Jordan fans were in the majority among the crowd of 43,000 at Ahmad bin Ali Stadium, a 2022 World Cup venue, and jeered and whistled loudly whenever South Korea had the ball.

Jordan were the underdogs — despite the teams drawing 2-2 in the group phase — but they shaded an entertaining first half in which they racked up 12 attempts at goal to South Korea's four.

On 17 minutes South Korean



Jordan's players celebrate after defeating South Korea at the end of the Qatar 2023 AFC Asian Cup semi-final football match between Jordan and South Korea at the Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium in Al-Rayyan, west of Doha, on 6 February 2024. PHOTO: AFP

goalkeeper Jo Hyeon-woo was forced into a decent save from Noor Al-Rawabdeh after good

work from Montpellier's Tamari. Jo kept out a fierce drive from Naimat after the South Ko-

rean defence opened up, before Tamari blazed over the bar. — AFP

## Messi uncertain to play against Vissel Kobe in Tokyo



Inter Miami's Lionel Messi speaks at a press conference in Tokyo on 6 February 2024, ahead of an international club football friendly against the J-League's Vissel Kobe. PHOTO: KYODO

ARGENTINE superstar Lionel Messi said he was unsure whether he would be fit to play for Inter Miami in Wednesday's friendly against J-League champions Vissel Kobe at Tokyo's National Stadium.

The 36-year-old attacker has been dealing with an adductor issue that prevented him taking part in another exhibition match Sunday in Hong Kong, prompting an angry response at the stadium and online from fans who bought tickets just to see him play.

"I don't know if I'll be able to play yet," Messi said at a press conference in Tokyo on Tuesday. "But I feel much better and I really want to be able to do it."

Inter Miami, partly owned by former England star David Beckham, scheduled the friendlies against Vissel and a select team of Hong Kong players to warm up for the North American Major League Soccer season kicking off later this month. Messi said he had kept tabs on Kobe after former Barcelona teammate Andres Iniesta signed for the club in 2018.

"I was curious about how he was doing and was following their results," Messi said. — Kyodo

## Iran stars facing 'last dance' in Asian Cup semi-finals

IRAN coach Amir Ghalenoei said several of his ageing stars are facing "the last dance" as they prepare to meet hosts and holders Qatar in Wednesday's Asian Cup semi-final.

Iran are trying to lift the trophy for the first time since 1976 and reached the last four after beating pre-tournament favourites Japan 2-1.

South Korea or Jordan await the winners in Saturday's final.

Ghalenoei will on Wednesday welcome back Mehdi Taremi

from suspension after the Porto striker was sent off in Iran's last-16 win over Syria on penalties.

Taremi is 31 and could be playing at his last Asian Cup, with team-mates Saman Ghoddos, Sardar Azmoun and Alireza Jahanbakhsh all of similar age.

Ghalenoei urged them to "use the opportunities that you have (left)".

"For some of the players, maybe it will be the last dance," said the coach on Tuesday. — AFP



Qatar's players lift their teammate goalkeeper (22) Meshaal Barsham after winning the Qatar 2023 AFC Asian Cup quarter-final football match between Qatar and Uzbekistan at Al-Bayt Stadium in al-Khor, north of Doha, on 3 February 2024. PHOTO: AFP

## Djokovic, Nadal to play 'Kings Slam' in Saudi Arabia

NOVAK Djokovic and Rafael Nadal will headline a new exhibition tournament in Saudi Arabia, organizers said, as debate swirls about tennis's push into the conservative country.

The Serb and the Spaniard, with 46 major titles between them, will be joined by Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz and Australian Open winner Jannik Sinner at the 6 Kings Slam.

World number three Daniil Medvedev and seventh-ranked Holger Rune will also play the event in Riyadh in October, oil-rich Saudi Arabia's latest foray into the sport. — AFP



# Security Council convenes to address Middle East tensions after US military actions



A panoramic view of the UN Security Council is seen as it convenes an emergency session to deliberate on the escalating conflict in Gaza at the UN headquarters in New York on 5 February 2024. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

**T**HE UN Security Council on Monday convened an emergency session to address the escalating conflict in Gaza, a situation that is exacerbating tensions throughout the Middle

East and posing significant risks to regional peace and security.

The UN political affairs chief, Rosemary DiCarlo, said that as everyone in the diplomatic world is all too aware, “the

tensions that have engulfed multiple countries in the Middle East continue to rise.”

On 28 January, a drone attack killed three US service members and injured 40 others at a US base in northeast Jordan,

she said, adding that on 2 February, the US carried out 85 airstrikes in Iraq and Syria against reported Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Quds Forces and affiliated groups.

DiCarlo described the febrile situation elsewhere in the region, including the tensions between Israeli Defence Forces and Hezbollah, the continued exchange of rocket fire over the Golan Heights occupied by Israel, alongside airstrikes conducted by Israel in various parts of Syria, as reported by Damascus.

DiCarlo also noted the Houthi drone and missile attacks against ships in the Red Sea and the retaliatory strikes by the US and Britain. “I reiterate the secretary-general’s call on all parties to step back from the brink and to consider the unbearable human and economic cost of a potential regional conflict,” she urged.

“I appeal to the Council to continue to actively engage all concerned parties to prevent further escalation and the worsening of tensions that undermine regional peace and security,” she said.

Russia’s permanent representative to the UN, Vassily Nebenzia, said the US actions in the region were just the latest in a litany of unlawful and irresponsible attacks against the backdrop of an unprecedented escalation of violence. — Xinhua

## Russia to bring new arms, including drones, to world market in 2024

NEW RUSSIAN weapons and military equipment, including drones, are expected to receive export permits in 2024, Russian state arms exporter Rosobornexport CEO Alexander Mikheev told Sputnik.

Mikheev is attending the World Defence Show 2024 trade fair in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Mikheev added that a number of foreign customers showed interest in the Klavesin-IRE autonomous underwater vehicle complex after its demonstration at the International Naval Show in Russia’s Kronstadt and that negotiations were underway. The complex is being presented abroad for the first time at the World Defence Show 2024, and it should attract the attention of countries that have access to the sea, Mikheev said. — Sputnik

## 12 mln people benefit from clean-up of landmine, ERW contaminated land in Cambodia: senior official

SOME 12 million people, or 70.5 per cent of Cambodia’s total population of 17 million, have benefited from the clean-up of landmine and explosive remnant of war (ERW) contaminated land in the last 31 years, a senior official said on Tuesday.

Ly Thuch, senior minister and first vice-president of the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authorities (CMAA), said the Southeast Asian country had cleared 3,024 square kilometres of landmine and ERW contaminated land from 1992 to 2023.

“Seventy-six per cent of the cleared land has been used for agriculture, five per cent for social infrastructure and 19 per cent for housing, villages, schools, and health centres, among others,” he told Xinhua.

Thuch said nearly 1.18 million anti-personnel mines, 26,339 anti-tank mines, and 3.1 million ERWs were found and destroyed in the last 31 years.

He added that the number of landmine and ERW casualties had declined

from 4,320 in 1996 to 32 in 2023 and below 100 a year in the last 10 years. — Xinhua



A deminer searches for mines and unexploded ordnance at a minefield in Siem Reap province, Cambodia, 16 January 2024. **PHOTO: XINHUA**