

Population declines slightly over 10 years  
Says Myanmar citing 2024 census

REUTERS

Myanmar said its 2024 census found a population of 51.3 million, slightly smaller than 10 years ago, as the junta prepares for promised elections amid ongoing conflict and unrest across the country, state media reported yesterday.

The census, which was held in October, will be used to compile voter lists for the elections planned for this year that opposition groups have widely condemned as a sham.

"I am striving to successfully organise a free and fair election, which is the ultimate goal of the State Administration Council," junta chief Min Aung Hlaing said in his New Year speech that was published in state media.

The 2024 population of 51.3 million



Police investigators surround a white truck that crashed into a work lift in the French Quarter of New Orleans, Louisiana, US yesterday. At least 10 people were killed and 30 others injured when the vehicle plowed into a New Year's crowd in the heart of the thriving New Orleans tourist district.

PHOTO: AFP

## Russia launches drone attack on Kyiv

Two killed; apartment blocks in Pechersky district hit; Ukraine downs 109 of 111 drones

AFP, Kyiv

Russia launched an aerial attack on the centre of Kyiv in the first hours of 2025, killing two people, Ukrainian authorities said yesterday.

The attack -- a rare strike on the heart of the Ukrainian capital -- came just hours after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky vowed in a New Year's message that he would do everything possible to bring the war to an end over the next 12 months.

"One person has been killed as a result of an enemy attack on Kyiv. The number of wounded has increased to 7, including two pregnant women," the Prosecutor General's office said in a post on Telegram.

Local officials said the damage was caused by falling debris, suggesting the drones had been intercepted.

AFP journalists in the city heard multiple powerful explosions early yesterday morning.

Ukrainian officials said Russian drones targeted the capital's Pechersky district, home

to the presidential palace and government quarter.

Apartment blocks were hit and Ukraine's central bank said one of its buildings was damaged in the attack.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly threatened to strike at the heart of Kyiv in recent weeks -- an attack he said would be a response to Ukraine firing US-supplied weapons on Russian territory.

Zelensky blasted the Russian drone attack.

"Even on New Year's night, Russia only cares about hurting Ukraine," he said in a post on Telegram.

A total of 111 Russian drones were fired at Ukraine overnight, with 109 either shot down or disabled by Ukraine's air defence systems, the Ukrainian air force said.

Both sides have ramped up their aerial attacks over the last two months, seeking to gain an upper hand in the conflict ahead of US President-elect Donald Trump coming to power later in January.

AP, Kyiv

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