

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

Four Objectives of the National Defence and Security Council

1. To steadfastly strive for emergence of political forces and the people's representatives who can implement a genuine, disciplined multi-party democratic system while constantly emphasizing on the national interests of the State.
2. To persistently strive for promoting the socio-economic life of the people through the development of agro-based industries in improving the agricultural sector, the vital foundation of the economic growth of the State.
3. To put emphasis on enhancing the national education and health sectors for sustainable development of the State.
4. To implement multi-party democratic system, with the participation of the people, to ensure the success of multi-party democratic general election process and successfully moving towards with the multi-party democratic system aspired by the entire people.



Pyithu Hluttaw representatives, including members of the presidential electoral college, are seen drawing ballot papers to cast their votes in the secret process for electing the Vice-President.

Pyithu Hluttaw Elects Senior General Min Aung Hlaing as Vice-President

THE second-day meeting of the group of the Pyithu Hluttaw representatives comprising the presidential electoral college was held at the convention hall of the Pyithu Hluttaw at the Hluttaw Complex in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

U Khin Yi, Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw, clarified that the nomination proposals for Vice-President candidates were scrutinized by the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw in accordance with Rule 13 of the Election Rules of the President and Vice-Presidents, and were found to be complete. He also explained that the list of the two Vice-President candidates submitted by representatives, arranged in alphabetical order, was Dr Kyaw Swe from the Taungdwingyi Constituency and

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

As more than one candidate has been nominated by the group of elected Pyithu Hluttaw representatives for the position of Vice-President, the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker informed the Hluttaw that one Vice-President will be elected by secret voting, using ballots, in accordance with Rule 16 of the Election Rules of the President and Vice-Presidents.

The Speaker explained the way of voting in accord with the law and rules on election of the President and Vice-Presidents.

An official from the Pyithu Hluttaw Office counted the ballots to be used in the election of the Vice-President in the presence of the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker and members of the group of Pyithu Hluttaw

representatives under the election rules.

Pyithu Hluttaw representatives drew the ballots for the secret voting to elect a Vice-President and cast votes secretly. The Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw also voted secretly.

Officials from the Pyithu Hluttaw Office checked the number of cast votes from the ballot box in comparison with the ballots issued to the representatives in the presence of the Hluttaw under Rule 18 (k) of the Election Rules of the President and Vice-Presidents.

The Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw stated that 260 ballot papers had been issued to members of the group of Pyithu Hluttaw representatives involved in the presidential electoral college, and that 260 ballot papers were retrieved from the bal-

lot box, confirming that the numbers match. Therefore, in accordance with Rule 18 (k) (v) of the Election Rules of the President and Vice-Presidents, the voting process was declared valid.

In the election, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing won 247 votes while Dr Kyaw Swe secured 10 votes among 260 voters. Meanwhile, three votes were cancelled.

As such, the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker approved Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, who was elected with the largest number of votes by the group of Pyithu Hluttaw representatives under Rule 22 of the Election Rules of President and Vice-Presidents.

He also announced that the nomination of the elected Vice-President will be submitted to the Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

The Speaker announced that the meeting of the group of Pyithu Hluttaw representatives involved in the presidential electoral college had concluded. — MNA/TTA

NATIONAL

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

Bagan lacquerware draws strong interest from travellers

INTEREST in traditional Myanmar lacquerware products from Bagan in NyaungU Township, Mandalay Region, is increasing not only among international visitors but also among domestic travellers. Due to growing local demand, lacquerware business owners have resumed their work continuously, according to the U Ba Nyein Lacquerware workshop owner.

Lacquerware is an authentic Myanmar traditional handicraft that requires highly detailed workmanship. There are more than one hundred types of lacquer products. Among them, lacquer betel boxes and lacquer alms bowls are the most commonly produced items, and the Myanmar people from Bagan to the late Konbaung periods widely used various lacquerware products.

The people donate alms using Palo (aka) five-layer alms bowls to date at Shwezigon, Aranda, and Hngetpyittaung, Tuyintaung, and Kantawpalin pagoda festivals, and the Shinpin Sarkyo Hla pagoda festival in Sale of Chauk Township in Magway Region.

Raw materials used in lac-

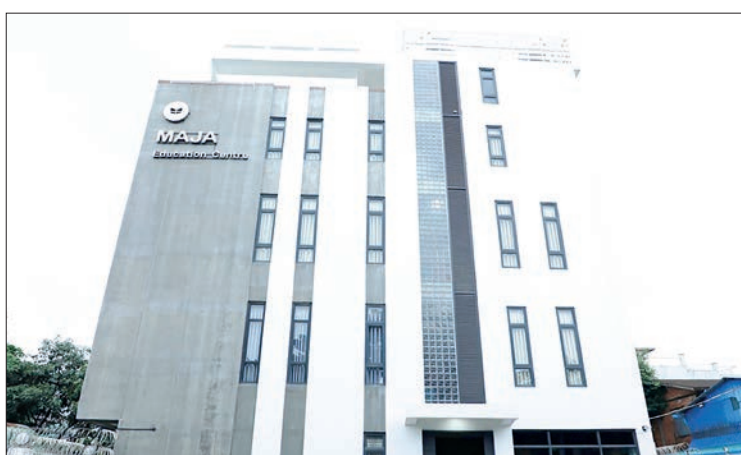


The images showcase skilled artisans meticulously crafting lacquerware and remarkable value-added works they produce. **PHOTO: DIPA LIN**

querware production mainly include various types of bamboo sourced from across Myanmar, such as Metin Kha bamboo, Tin bamboo, Nan Htaung bamboo, and Meza bamboo. However, Metin Kha bamboo is the most commonly and consistently used in lacquerware production.

The production processes of lacquerware include various steps such as smoothing, applying lacquer base, weaving bamboo strips, shaping, coiling, and so on. It costs K1.1 million for a container of resin sap. A lacquerware worker earns around K15,000 per day, while a skilled worker earns about K25,000 per day. Although the products are completed, it takes more than a year before they are ready for sale, as they must be stored in sealed underground conditions to undergo natural curing processes. Despite low sales, business owners continue their operations to support the livelihoods of lacquer artisans and their families.

Interest in Myanmar lacquerware is rising not only among foreign visitors but also among domestic travellers, according to the lacquerware business owners. — Dipa Lin/KTZH



The MJAJ Education Centre

TOP J now accepting online applications

ONLINE applications for TOP J scheduled in May 2026 in Yangon and Mandalay have been accepted now, the Myanmar Association of Japan Alumni (MAJA) announced.

The MAJA Education Centre organises TOP J annually six times in January, March, May, July, September and November, and in the May exam, basic levels N5, intermediate levels N3

and N2 and N4 and advanced levels N1 and above will be tested.

The exam has been planned to be held on 10 May in Yangon and Mandalay, and if there are many candidates from other regions and states, application forms can be submitted to <https://forms.gle/TJ35LT-vRk4EAyL2C8>. The exam fee is K72000.

The deadline for the applica-

tion is 9 April, and the test timetable, place and test voucher will be conveyed by email. Test results will be released online two weeks later, and a certificate will be issued after one month.

For more details, enquiries can be made to the MAJA Education Centre located near Thitsa Road in South Okkalapa Township or 09 428613848. — MT/ZS

Daily newspapers available online

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

News and Periodicals Enterprise



NATIONAL

Amyotha Hluttaw Names Nan Ni Ni Aye Vice-President



The Amyotha Hluttaw is counting the votes for the election of the Vice-President in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

THE group of Amyotha Hluttaw representatives involved in the presidential electoral college held its second-day meeting at the convention hall of the Amyotha Hluttaw at the Hluttaw Complex in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Aung Lin Dwe announced that the two Vice-President candidates – Nan Ni Ni Aye from the Kayin State Amyotha Hluttaw Constituency 1 (PR system) and Dr Manam Tu Ja from the Kachin State Amyotha Hluttaw Constituency 2 (PR system) nominated by the group of the Amyotha Hluttaw representatives of the presidential electoral college on the first-day meeting were scrutinized under Rule 13 of the Election Rules

of the President and Vice-Presidents, and these were found to be complete.

The Speaker explained the voting process for electing the President and Vice-Presidents under the law and rules.

The Deputy Director-General of the Amyotha Hluttaw Office counted the ballots to manage the secret voting. The Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and the representatives from the group took ballots from the staff of the Amyotha Hluttaw Office and cast votes secretly.

The Deputy Director-General counted the ballots in the Amyotha Hluttaw representatives under the rules.

The Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw stated that 155 ballot papers had been

issued to the representatives, and that 155 ballot papers were retrieved from the ballot box. As the numbers matched, it was announced that the voting process was valid in accordance with Rule 18 (k) (v) of the Election Rules of the President and Vice-Presidents.

The Deputy Director-General of the Amyotha Hluttaw Office, in the presence of the Amyotha Hluttaw representatives, separately sorted and counted the ballot papers received by each Vice-President candidate. The list of candidates was then compiled in Form (8) according to the number of votes received, in ascending or descending order, and submitted to the Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw.

According to vote counts, the Speaker announced that Nan Ni Ni Aye from the Kayin State Constituency 1 (PR System) won 117 votes, while Dr Manam Tu Ja from the Kachin State Constituency 2 (PR System) secured 38 votes. So, he approved that Nan Ni Ni Aye from the Kayin State Constituency 1 (PR System) was elected as the Vice-President.

The Speaker stated that he will submit the nomination of Nan Ni Ni Aye from the Kayin State Constituency 1 (PR System) to the Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

The second-day meeting of the group of Amyotha Hluttaw representatives included in the presidential electoral college came to an end. — MNA/TTA

Thai frigate HTMS Kraburi docks in Yangon on goodwill visit



Senior officers, officers, and other ranks from Tatmadaw (Navy), along with the Royal Thai Navy attaché, are seen welcoming the goodwill-visiting frigate HTMS Kraburi as it approaches to dock at Thilawa Port.



THE HTMS Kraburi (FFG-457), a naval vessel of the Royal Thai Navy, arrived yesterday morning at Thilawa Port in Yangon on a goodwill visit to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. The vessel was welcomed by senior officers, officers, and sailors from Tatmadaw (Navy), along with the Thai naval attaché to Myanmar.

The warship is led by Captain Nattawat Wichakul from the 3rd Naval Area Command of the Royal Thai Navy, and is visiting as part of a goodwill mission. During its five-day stay in Yangon until 4 April, the crew will visit notable landmarks in the city and take part in friendly naval sports competitions between the two countries. — MNA/MKKS

NATIONAL

Defence Services Representatives Elect U Nyo Saw as Vice-President



The group meeting of Defence Services Personnel representatives to elect the Vice-President is underway in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

THE group of Defence Services Personnel representatives held a meeting on the selection of the Vice-President in accord with the law and rules of election for the President and Vice-President at the Hsinbyushin Hall in the Nay Pyi Taw Transit Centre yesterday morning.

Maj-Gen Ye Kyaw Thu, Defence Services Personnel Representative of Pyithu Hluttaw, presided over the

meeting. He stated that as all 166 Defence Services Hluttaw representatives who were entitled to attend were present, achieving full attendance, it was announced that the meeting of the group of Defence Services Personnel Hluttaw representatives had a quorum and was duly convened.

The meeting chair explained the law, rules and procedures for the election of the Vice-President. The group of

Defence Services Personnel representatives submitted the proposals to elect the Vice-President to the meeting chair.

Maj-Gen Kyaw Thura Aye, Defence Services Personnel representative of the Amyotha Hluttaw, nominated U Nyo Saw (Pyithu Hluttaw representative of the Cocokyun Constituency) as the Vice-President elected by the group of the Defence Services Personnel representatives and Brig-Gen Soe

Nyunt, Defence Services Personnel representative of the Pyithu Hluttaw, seconded it.

Due to no objection to the proposal, the meeting approved U Nyo Saw (Pyithu Hluttaw representative of the Cocokyun Constituency) as the Vice-President elected by the group of Defence Services Personnel representatives, and it will be submitted to the Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. — MNA/TTA

University of Nursing, Yangon, holds 30th and 31st convocation ceremonies



The 30th and 31st convocation ceremonies of the University of Nursing, Yangon, in progress.

ACCORDING to the Ministry of Health, the University of Nursing, Yangon, has successfully trained and conferred degrees upon a total of four PhDs in Nursing, 279 Master's of Nursing Science, 956

Speciality Nursing Diplomas, and 6,113 Bachelors of Nursing Science, including those from this year's convocation.

The 30th and 31st convocation ceremonies of the university were held on 29

March at its convocation hall. Graduating students recited the nursing oath, and Dr Kyaw Shwe, Rector of the university, formally conferred the degrees. The ministry reported the following figures: PhD in

Nursing 1; Master of Nursing Science 20; BNSc (Bridge) (Distance Education) 76; BNSc (Bridge) (On-Campus) 152; BNSc (Regular) (1/2025) 84; speciality nursing diploma 23; 31st convocation: Diploma in Emergency Nursing 1; and BNSc (Regular) (5/2025) 253.

The 30th Convocation ceremony was attended by the Rector, members of the Board of Academics, and members of the Board of Administration. To date, including this year's graduates, the University of Nursing, Yangon, has successfully produced and conferred degrees upon: four PhD graduates, 279 Master's degree graduates, 956 Speciality Diploma holders, and 6,113 Bachelor of Nursing Science graduates. — MT/ZN



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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

NATIONAL

Pyu Creek Dam supplies water to summer paddy research fields

THE Pyu Creek dam distributes water to Aung Naing Toe, Hnankauk and summer paddy in Lu Nge Arr Marn field in Pyu township of Bago Region through the right channel.

The paddy varieties include Sinthukha, 90-day, Hnankauk, Yadana Toe, Vietnam, Pawsan-1 and Aung Naing Toe, and the Department of Cooperative has also conducted trial cultivation during this summer season, planting 60 acres of Hnankauk and 40 acres of Aung Naing Toe in the Lu Nge Arr Marn field.

“We conducted trial cultivation of Aung Naing Toe and Hnankauk varieties in the Lu Nge Arr Marn field this summer under the guidance of the Union minister. Since these are high-yield varieties, we planted 40 acres of Aung Naing Toe and 60 acres of Hnankauk. This was made possible with funding from the State Economic Promotion Fund. As these varieties have short growing periods and high yields, we plan to expand



An aerial panoramic view of the Pyu Creek Dam, channelling water to summer paddy fields under research in Bago Region. **PHOTO: ZWE MARN**

cultivation next summer based on the results. Our target yield is 100 baskets per acre for monsoon paddy and 110 baskets per acre for summer paddy. The ability to cultivate like this is due to government support. The State Economic Promotion Fund benefits both coop-

erative members and farmers. With consistent irrigation, we expect to achieve good yields,” said Daw Htay Htay Myint, staff officer of the Pyu Township Cooperative Department.

In that field, during the monsoon season, 700 acres were cultivated with rice va-

rieties including Aung Naing Toe, Hnankauk, Sinthukha, 90-day, and 120-day, with 400 acres planted with Aung Naing Toe. In the coming monsoon season, Pawan-1 will be trially cultivated on more than 700 acres of monsoon paddy fields. This summer, the department planted 40 acres

of Aung Naing Toe and 60 acres of Hnankauk, totalling 100 acres, and it will expand high-yield varieties in the summer paddy season if the target is achieved.

“We supply water from Pyu Creek dam to the field of the Department of Cooperative through the right channel. In addition to the Lu Nge Arr Marn field, we also distribute water to the summer paddy fields of farmers. We will do so until the last week of June. We are also satisfied with the improvement of agriculture through departmental cooperation,” said U Thura Soe, staff officer of the Pyu Creek Dam.

The Lu Nge Arr Marn field, located about eight miles from the Pyu Creek Dam, receives water from the Minor Canal 3 of the right channel of the dam. Irrigation water is being continuously supplied to both the trial summer paddy fields and about 18,000 acres of summer paddy fields across Pyu Township. — Thitsa (MNA)/KTZH

THE Department of Fisheries banned fishing for three months starting from 1 April during the fish spawning season, aiming to protect aquatic organism resources, and the fishing vessels returned to the jetties.

“The main reason for designating fishing ban seasons, periods, and zones is to prevent the depletion of fish species and to promote the growth of fishery resources. These measures are carried out as a conservation effort during the breeding season when fish reproduce. This action is based on research findings,” said U Zaw Min Oo, Deputy Director of the Myeik District Department of Fisheries.

All the fishing boats operating in offshore areas

are prohibited from fishing during the non-fishing period and in no-fishing zones for three months from 1 April to 30 June, and they are instructed to return to the jetties no later than 31 March.

Those who fail to follow the instructions will face legal actions. The vessels are being monitored by the VMS Control Centre, and as of today, almost all vessels have returned, with very few remaining at sea.

The designa-

tion of fishing ban periods and zones is based on research conducted to conserve fish and aquatic resources during their breeding season. Studies on marine ecosystems, fish habitats, and fishery resources in Myanmar waters have been carried out by researchers. In February, a 30-day fishery resource survey was conducted in the Taninthayi coastal

waters at depths of below 20 metres.

There are 1,186 offshore fishing vessels in Myeik District. With changes in systems of today, technological advancements, and improved living standards, modern fishing techniques are now widely

used. Fishery products are processed using advanced technologies, exported domestically and internationally, and value-added products are produced through cold storage facilities, along with both surface and underwater fishery resources. — Khine Htoo (IPRD)/KTZH

3-month fishing ban imposed for conservation



There are 1,186 offshore fishing vessels in Myeik District. With changes in systems of today, technological advancements, and improved living standards, modern fishing techniques are now widely used. This photo captures a fleet of fishing vessels.

NATIONAL

7 PDF returnees reintegrate into society

A total of seven members of the PDF group who accepted the peace process returned to the legal fold with arms and ammunition, and were formally handed over to their parents and guardians at a ceremony held at Taing Yan Aung Hall of the Coastal Region Command Headquarters yesterday afternoon.

The State Government has been inviting those involved in armed resistance under various names, including PDF groups, to return to the legal fold, and has been providing the necessary assistance to those who do so. Accordingly, six male and one female PDF members, seven in total, who came to understand the State's and Tatmadaw's peace process, re-entered the legal fold along with weapons and ammunition.

Among those who returned, two were from Dawei, two from Taninthayi, and one each from Bokpyin in Taninthayi Region, as well as one from Hinthada and one from Ingapu in Ayeyawady Region. The ceremony was at-



A welcome and handover ceremony is underway for seven PDF members reintegrating into the legal framework at the Coastal Region Command Headquarters yesterday.

tended by Commander Maj-Gen Kyaw Kyaw Han, departmental officials, the returnees, and their parents and guardians.

At the ceremony, the Commander delivered an address to those who had re-entered the legal fold. The returnees then handed over one HK-33 rifle, one M-16 rifle, five magazines, 188 rounds of 5.56 mm ammunition, one MG-1 hand grenade,

and one bulletproof vest, which were formally accepted by the Commander.

The Commander presented cash awards and assistance, including K10 million for two firearms at a rate of K5 million per weapon, K300,000 for one hand grenade, and K5 million for five unarmed returnees, totalling K15.3 million, together with supporting materials.

The returnees signed pledges and were formally handed over to their parents and guardians. On behalf of the group, one returnee expressed gratitude.

Those who re-entered the legal fold reportedly had been forcibly recruited and coerced by various groups, and could no longer accept acts of violence such as threatening, arresting, and killing innocent civilians

and civil servants, as well as destroying non-military infrastructure, including roads and bridges. They also faced internal oppression, inequality, and hardship within the groups and, having lost morale and being unable to withstand military offensives, chose to abandon the armed struggle.

Believing in the State's and Tatmadaw's peace process, they returned to the legal fold with a desire to contribute positively to the State and the public, who had suffered losses due to their actions.

Authorities continue to warmly welcome those wishing to return to the legal fold and provide the necessary assistance before formally handing them over to their families. Three individuals who wish to return remain, and those willing to do so are encouraged to contact the nearest district or township administrative bodies, military units, or police stations promptly. Rewards will also be granted for arms and ammunition surrendered. — MNA/KZL

Tatmadaw reclaims Winwa Bridge, reopens Dawei-Myeik route

TATMADAW columns have successfully regained full control of the strategically important Winwa Bridge, which had been temporarily seized by insurgents, and have reopened the Dawei-Myeik transport route, enabling the resumption of normal travel and the flow of goods.

The Winwa Bridge, located on the main Dawei-Myeik highway in Thayetchaung Township, Taninthayi Region, serves as a key communication link. Terrorist groups operating under the names of KNLA and PDF launched surprise attacks using drones and superior force against security personnel stationed at the bridge beginning on 17 February 2026, subsequently seizing temporary control of the bridge and surrounding areas and blocking the transport route.

Despite strong resistance by security forces assigned to

bridge security duties, the overwhelming strength of the terrorists led to a tactical and orderly withdrawal to Gonnyinseik on 12 March. Forces then regrouped and coordinated with Tatmadaw columns to undertake the necessary preparations for counter-operations.

Following step-by-step security operations to regain control of the area, Tatmadaw columns successfully recaptured Sidaw Village on 28 March, Yechochaung Village on 29 March, and point-168 hill and Chaungwapyin Village on 30 March. The former Winwa Police Station and the surrounding areas of the Winwa Bridge were fully recaptured and brought under control yesterday.

With the successful clearance operations, the Dawei-Myeik road has now been reopened, allowing travellers and vehicles to resume normal passage.



The above images show a map of Tatmadaw's marching columns to retake the Winwa Bridge, alongside triumphant troops with confiscated weapons and munitions.

The reopening of the transport route is expected to facilitate the smooth flow of goods

in the region. Residents have expressed gratitude and satisfaction towards Tatmadaw for

restoring stability and reopening this vital communication link. — MNA/KZL

CBM injects US\$2.3M into fuel import sector

THE Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) sold over US\$2.3 million to fuel oil importing companies on 30 March, in addition to an injection of over one million baht in the foreign exchange market.

CBM intervened in the market by injecting \$400,000 to edible oil-importing companies and \$3 million into fuel oil-importing companies on 26 March, in addition to selling 4.4 million baht in the market.

CBM announced on 25 March that it would inject US\$26 million to fuel oil-importing businesses. Furthermore, CBM sold \$1 million to edible oil-importing companies and \$289,300 to fuel oil-importing companies, along with an injection of 2.2 million baht.

Furthermore, CBM sold over \$1 million to edible oil-importing companies and \$3 million to fuel oil-importing companies on 24 March, in addition to sales of 5.678 million baht in the foreign



The general view of the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) in Yangon.

exchange market. CBM also made a \$45 million injection into the fuel oil import sector on 23 March to increase oil imports.

CBM's report showed a

transaction of 50 million baht on the foreign exchange trading platform to importers to meet the market's needs, along with selling 2.424 million baht in the market.

CBM also sold \$1.339 million to fuel oil-importing companies on that day.

CBM sold \$1.5 million to edible oil-importing companies and

\$1.16 million to fuel oil-importing companies on 20 March, along with an injection of 3.37 million baht into the market.

In addition to an injection of large amounts of foreign currencies (yuan, dollar, baht) into the foreign exchange market, CBM has been injecting US dollars to stabilize the foreign exchange market and calm the oil prices.

CBM injected forex into the market, with a view to curbing the instability in the foreign exchange market and currency devaluation. According to CBM's notification on 15 March 2024, it has been collaborating with law enforcement agencies to combat and prosecute those who attempt to manipulate the currency market under the existing laws. CBM allowed authorized dealers (private banks) to operate online foreign exchange trading freely as per the market rate, depending on supply and demand, starting from 5 December 2023. — NN/KK

Pyinmana Myoma, Aung Mingala Market shophouses put on the market

SHOPHOUSES and shops will be exhibited for sale during the pre-launch opening ceremony of the Pyinmana Myoma Market and Aung Mingala Market projects, New Home Realty said.

The pre-launch opening ceremony of these projects will be held from 10 am to 5 pm on 1-5 April at Penta Square Office Tower, located at 563, Razahtani Road, Hninsipan Roundabout, Paunglaung Ward 2, Pyinmana Township, Nay Pyi Taw.

Shophouses in the high-density urban dwelling environment and the business-intensive location are available for purchase at the best price prior to the project's official launching event. The buyers will be entitled to hold an Owner Book, which can be passed down from generation to generation. These two projects are also poised for significant growth and profitability over the decades.

The new Aung Mingala Market is located on the Yangon-Mandalay Highway, near Taungnyo Road. The project



This image features a poster inviting visitors to the market shophouses.

area is 4.88 acres, including a total of 30 shophouses. The building is 22 feet by 40 feet wide with a 2 RC plus roof slab.

Moreover, the Pyinmana Myoma Market is located in the busiest place in Pyinmana town, covering 4.375 acres with a total of 12 shophouses. The building is 26 feet by 48 feet with a 4.5 RC building type.

Both projects will be smart investments that can generate good monthly rental yields that provide access to modest returns within a few years. Special privileges, up to 18 per cent

discount, will be offered to those joining the Pre-Launch Sales Event. Moreover, they can also choose locations and can enjoy a one to three-year instalment. There is a total of 1,611 shophouses and shop units for sale. The first five customers will receive a free iPhone 17 Pro Max as a gift. Thus, interested buyers can contact Myanmar's top real estate agency, New Home Realty's hotline 09 774 774 886 for enquiries. Visitors can make reservations at <https://www.newhomerealty.com.mm/events/45>. — NN/KK

Over 46,800 private industries registered with DISI at end-Feb

A total of 46,835 private industries have been registered with the Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection (DISI) as of the end of February 2026, the DISI's data indicated.

Yangon Region, a commercial hub of Myanmar, is home to the private industries with 8,367 registered businesses, followed by Mandalay Region with 7,012 and Ayeyawady Region with 5,941.

The registered private industries grew to 47,609 in the financial year 2023-2024 from 45,015 registered in the 2022-2023 FY. A total of 206 industries were officially listed in the past FY 2024-2025 (April-March), reaching a total of 47,815 private industries. Some were deregistered, and the number of private industries registered with the DISI decreased to 46,835 at the end of the current financial year 2025-2026.

Almost 50 per cent of the registered private industries are engaged in the food group. The lists of registered private industries are classified into 24 business groups; food, tobacco, clothing, wood and finished wooden slabs, printing, chemical, rubber and plastic, basic mineral, computer and electronic device, unclassified machine, beverage, fabric, leather, paper and paper products, charcoal fuel, pharmaceuticals, non-metallic minerals, metal refining equipment, electronics, vehicle and trailer, furniture and machines and equipment repair and installation.

The DISI is providing services for small and medium enterprises to get access to technical assistance and funding, explore markets, register the private industrial enterprises in accordance with existing laws and conduct safety inspections of boilers and electrical usage at worksites and environmental impact assessment. — KK

OPINION

Transform memories of suffering into remarkable strength

28 MARCH 2025 will never be forgotten in the history of Myanmar. It has been one year since the extremely powerful Mandalay earthquake, measuring 7.7 on the magnitude scale, struck. This earthquake was one of the most devastating in the nation's history, causing unprecedented fear and shock across generations.

As a result of the Mandalay earthquake, across 10 regions and states, including Nay Pyi Taw, there were 3,818 deaths, five missing persons, 5,104 injuries, 162,563 affected households, 424,063 affected people, and 279,111 temporarily displaced persons. The total estimated losses amounted to over K7,979 billion. The earthquake had caused extensive damage and suffering not only to the State but also to the population, making it a significant and sobering lesson for Myanmar.

The government has been implementing the earthquake recovery and reconstruction according to sector, and currently, about 84 per cent of the work in each sector has been completed. In the future, the nation and the people will face all potential dangers and challenges, including those from natural disasters, hand in hand with unity and cooperation, to build a resilient and long-term developed country capable of withstanding difficulties.

the earthquake-affected areas and the people. Well-wishers also contributed their utmost efforts and donations to help the affected population recover from the extreme difficulties caused by the disaster.

In the earthquake rescue operations, the love, compassion, bravery, unity, and dedication of the people of Myanmar represented the nation's greatest and most honourable human resources. The entire country's solidarity enabled the nation to overcome the tremendous challenges and difficulties caused by the disaster. In the future, these efforts will serve as a powerful driving force for the nation's development. All the people were able to demonstrate their capabilities and contribute to helping others escape dire situations, leaving behind a legacy of courage and service that can be passed down through generations.

The government has been implementing the earthquake recovery and reconstruction according to sector, and currently, about 84 per cent of the work in each sector has been completed. In the future, the nation and the people will face all potential dangers and challenges, including those from natural disasters, hand in hand with unity and cooperation, to build a resilient and long-term developed country capable of withstanding difficulties.

IN AN era where speed is praised and patience is rare, we are often tempted by what is easy. Quick decisions, simple shortcuts, and immediate rewards surround us every day. Yet, if we pause for a moment and reflect on the kind of people we truly wish to become, we may realize that the easy path does not always lead to a meaningful or honourable life. True character is not built on convenience, but on conscious choices, especially the choice to do what is difficult.

One of the clearest examples of this truth can be seen in relationships. Betraying someone is easy, but being faithful depends on one's morality and self-discipline. Trust can be broken in a moment, sometimes without much thought. However, remaining loyal, even when faced with challenges or temptations, requires inner strength. If we value moral integrity above all, then no matter what situations or opportunities arise, we will always choose to remain faithful. In the same way, deceiving others may appear simple, but being honest and straightforward calls for a noble mindset. When we guard our values carefully and resist the urge to speak lies, we protect not only others but also our own conscience. A clear conscience, after all, is one of the greatest sources of peace.

In a world filled with constant noise, both online and offline, silence has become rare and precious. Many people feel the need to speak loudly, share constantly, or compete for attention. Being noisy is easy, but remaining calm and quiet depends on concentration and emotional maturity. When we train ourselves to stay composed, we begin to understand the strength of silence. A quiet person observes more, listens more, and reacts less impulsively. With a steady and peaceful mind, it becomes easier to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong. Calmness allows clarity, and clarity leads to wiser decisions. In this sense, silence is not weakness; it is a quiet form of strength.

Another area where the difference between easy and difficult choices becomes clear is in the act of giving. Taking is easy, but giving depends on generosity and faith. In an era where desires and expectations often shape interactions, it is natural to wonder what can be gained from others. However, a shift in perspective can transform this way of thinking. When we begin to ask, "How much can be given?" instead of "What can be received?" we develop a

warmer and more generous outlook on life. This does not mean that giving must always be grand or material. Simple gestures can carry deep meaning – a sincere smile, a kind greeting, a moment of attentive listening, or offering help without expecting anything in return. These small acts reflect a spirit of generosity that enriches both the giver and the receiver. A person who gives with sincerity often carries a quiet joy within, a sense of fulfilment that cannot be measured by material gain.

In contrast, modern life also presents many opportunities for self-display. Boasting is easy, especially in a time when social platforms encourage people to share achievements, happiness, and success. While there is nothing wrong with celebrating positive moments, constantly displaying them without awareness of others' feelings may reflect a lack of

The Courage to Choose the Harder Path

By Laura Htet (UDE)

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empathy. Being humble, on the other hand, requires a thoughtful and cultured heart. It invites us to recognize that our achievements belong to us and do not always need to be presented for approval or admiration. There is a simple wisdom in the idea that a pot filled with water makes little noise. Similarly, a person who is truly fulfilled often lives quietly and modestly. Such a person understands that genuine value does not need to be announced; it is reflected naturally through actions and character.

Equally important is the way we respond to mistakes and challenges. It is easy to blame and criticize others when something goes wrong. However, taking responsibility and resolving mistakes requires courage and accountability. No one is free from error. In fact, it is through mistakes that valuable lessons are learned. When difficulties arise,

or outward success. Rather, it is reflected in the clarity of one's conscience and the consistency of one's values. When we choose what is difficult, we strengthen our inner principles. Over time, these choices form a solid foundation for a life of dignity and respect. Each decision, no matter how small, becomes a step towards becoming a better version of ourselves.

It is also important to remember that choosing what is difficult does not mean seeking hardship for its own sake. Instead, it means being mindful of what is right, even when it requires extra effort. It means choosing honesty when dishonesty would be easier, choosing patience when frustration arises, and choosing kindness even when it is not returned. These choices may not always be noticed by others, but they shape who we are in the most meaningful ways.

In the end, the path of ease may offer quick rewards, but the path of effort offers lasting worth. As the saying goes, things that are easily obtained are often of lesser value. When we begin to embrace the challenges that come with doing what is right, we discover a deeper sense of purpose and fulfilment. The journey may not always be simple, but it leads to a richer and more meaningful life.

Choosing what is difficult is, in essence, choosing growth over comfort, integrity over convenience, and depth over surface. It is a quiet commitment to becoming better each day. And in that commitment, there is a strength that speaks louder than any words – a strength that defines true character and leaves a lasting impact on the world around us.

When you leave your Comfort Zone, you will start to feel more confident. When you finish a difficult task, you will realize that you are stronger than you thought. You will also find new opportunities. You will meet new people, find better jobs, and learn things you never knew before. Even though it is hard at the beginning, it will help you become a better and more mature person in the long run. Therefore, do not be afraid of new things. Great opportunities are waiting for you outside of your daily routine. Start today – be brave, face your fears, and step out of your Comfort Zone to reach your goals.

By Kyaw Ye Aung

Leaving Your Comfort Zone: The Secret to Success

LEAVING our "Comfort Zone" is not an easy thing to do. However, it is one of the most important steps we can take to improve our lives and our careers. A Comfort Zone is a situation where we feel safe and relaxed. In this zone, we do the same things every day and face no stress. While being comfortable feels good, stay-

ing there for too long can stop us from growing. We cannot learn new skills or gain new experiences if we only do what is easy. Real progress happens only when we step outside the circle of what we already know.

Many people stay in their Comfort Zone because they are afraid. It is not just the fear of change, but the fear of feeling uncomfortable

when starting something new. It takes a lot of courage to leave a life that we are used to. Often, we see other people becoming successful, and we feel jealous. We make excuses by saying, "He is just lucky," or "She has a wealthy family." We use these excuses to stay where we are because we are afraid to take a risk.

If we stay in our Comfort Zone

for too long, we will lose our energy and our passion. By the time we decide to change, we might be too old or too tired. It is very sad to look back at our lives and feel regret. We should not wait for the "perfect time" to start. We should use our energy and time right now to step out and try something new.

You do not have to change

everything in one day. The best way to leave your Comfort Zone is to try small challenges every day. Spend just 15 minutes a day doing something that scares you or interests you. These small steps will help you become brave. Don't spend too much time just planning; the most important thing is to take action today.

ARTICLE

Bhutan monks turn to AI chatbot for Buddhist guidance



Photo shows (from R) Kyoto University professor Seiji Kumagai, Choten Dorji, secretary of the Bhutanese Monastic Council for Administration and Development Affairs, and Teraverse CEO Toshikazu Furuya at the launch of "BuddhaBot" AI in Kyoto in February 2026. **PHOTO: KYODO**

HIGH in the Himalayas, in the Buddhist kingdom of Bhutan, monks are turning to an unlikely source for spiritual guidance: artificial intelligence.

An AI-powered chatbot called BuddhaBot is being used to answer questions and offer advice based on the words of the Buddha, allowing users to seek guidance anytime and anywhere.

The system was developed by a professor at Kyoto University who also serves as a temple abbot, part of an effort to merge advanced technology with religious practice and encourage people to remain engaged with Buddhism.

On a cold afternoon in late January, in Bhutan's capital of Thimphu, Choten Dorji, secretary of the Bhutanese Monastic Council for Administration and Development Affairs, sat at his computer and opened the BuddhaBot website.

Asked how to stop feeling jealous of others, the system responded within seconds.

"Ultimately, that will cause suffering. Therefore, it is important to follow the teachings of the (Buddhist scripture) Dhammapada and strive for purification of mind and the practice of compassion."

The chatbot draws on Buddhist scriptures to produce responses designed to guide users through everyday dilemmas and spiritual questions. For Dorji, the appeal lies in its clarity.

"It's logical and ideal," he said. "BuddhaBot is truthful and never lies."

BuddhaBot was developed by the research laboratory of Seiji Kumagai, 45, a professor of Buddhist studies at Kyoto University, in collaboration with the Kyoto-based AI startup Teraverse. Kumagai said the idea grew from a simple but ambitious concept: creating a system that would allow people to converse with the Buddha through technology.

The project began taking shape around 2014, when a temple acquaintance approached Kumagai with concerns about the declining state of Buddhism in Japan. Some estimates suggest that as many as 30 per cent of temples in the country could disappear by 2040.

The conversations prompted Kumagai to consider how technology might help. By 2019, discussions with colleagues and collaborators had produced the idea of a conversational AI system that could provide guidance rooted in Buddhist teachings.

SOURCE: Kyodo

NATIONAL

Belarus keen on importing Myanmar mangoes and products

ENTREPRENEURS from Belarus have reportedly made offers to purchase Myanmar mango products, according to the Myanmar Mango Market and Technology Development Association.

Businesspeople from Belarus have proposed to buy whole mangoes, including varieties such as Seintalone, Machitsu, Shwehintha, and Padamya Ngamauk mango, produced in Myanmar.

“Belarus is not only interested in fresh mangoes, but has also expressed interest in dried mango and mango squash. We have requested them to share technology so that production can meet their national guidelines. Similarly, exports to China require compliance with GACC standards. Therefore, for ex-



Myanmar's Seintalone mangoes are seen prepared for exporting to foreign markets.

ports to Belarus, we have requested information on the re-

quired standards so that we can scale up production accordingly.

On our side, there is already sufficient raw material avail-

able for export; what is needed from them is the relevant technology. For dried mango, there are both mechanical drying methods using dryers and traditional sun-drying methods. For mango squash, there are also variations depending on whether preservatives are used or not. At present, we are awaiting their guidelines and technical specifications,” said an official from the association.

During the previous export season, mango squash from Seintalone, Machitsu, Shwehintha, and Padamya Ngamauk varieties was also processed, canned, and frozen for trial exports to several countries, including China, Russia, and Singapore, where it reportedly fetched good prices. — ASH/MKKS

EV YBS buses begin trial runs in Yangon

EV buses have been substituted on trial for YBS buses currently running in the Yangon Region, according to the Yangon Region Public Transport Committee (YRTC).

Two EVYBS buses were purchased under the approval of the Leading Committee on Development of Electric Vehicles and Related Businesses, said YRTC joint secretary U Lyan Cing Mang.

“In place of current YBS buses,

we have used two EV YBS buses as a shuttle bus on trial for students of the Space Museum and the University of Nursing,” he said.

The government has researched the EV bus project, which aims to meet 32 per cent in 2030, 67 per cent in 2040 and 100 per cent in 2050.

The total cost of an EV bus is US\$95,150 per unit, according to YRTC. — MT/ZS



EV buses undergo test runs by YRTC.

Undocumented foreign immigrants linked to online scams deported

THREE foreign nationals – two from the Philippines and one from Bangladesh – who had entered Myanmar illegally via border routes through neighbouring countries, including Thailand, and were involved in illegal online gambling, online fraud, and other criminal activities in the Myawady-Shwe Kokko area of Kayin State, were deported yesterday. The transfer was carried out through the Myanmar-Thailand Friendship Bridge II in accordance with legal procedures, on humanitarian grounds and in the spirit of bilateral friendship. In addition, one Indian national was newly identified and detained and is undergoing verification for deportation.

The handover ceremony was attended by the Chairman of the Myawady District Administration and Management Committee, the Head of the District Immigration and Population Office, officials from the Bangladesh Embassy and the Philippine Embassy to Thailand, and immigration officers from Tak Province, Thailand. Myanmar officials systematically handed over the necessary documents related



Immigration process is underway for the deportation of undocumented foreign nationals.

to the deportation process to the respective authorities.

Similarly, another Indian national who had entered illegally near Myawady in Kayin State was identified and detained, and arrangements are being made for deportation.

Between 30 January 2025 and 31 March 2026, a total of 14,617 foreign nationals who had entered Myawady Township illegally were apprehended. All have been verified, and 13,404 of them have been systematically deported to their respective countries via Thailand in accordance with legal procedures.

Of the remaining 1,213 foreign nationals yet to be deported, 741 have already been

prosecuted under Section 3(1)/13(1) of Myanmar's immigration laws. The remaining 472 are ready for transfer to their respective countries and are being properly accommodated and cared for.

The government is actively cooperating with neighbouring and regional countries, as well as international organizations, to identify, arrest, and take effective action against those involved in online scam operations and their foreign masterminds. At the same time, efforts are being made to promptly repatriate foreign nationals in distress and victims of human trafficking to their respective countries through effective coordination. — MNA/MKKS

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New literary voices emerge from everyday life in China

ON a mild spring morning in Beijing, a group of writers gathered at the National Museum of Modern Chinese Literature. They had travelled from across the country.

Some were from rural villages in the northwest and others from factory towns in the south. Some had spent years working as domestic helpers, construction workers or delivery riders.

They did not look like a traditional literary circle. But on

this day, they shared a single name: writers.

The occasion, a special event hosted by the China Writers Association, brought together 35 participants representing what is increasingly described as China's "new forms of literature and art for the general public", a term that has appeared not only in cultural discussions but also in the country's policy documents, including this year's government work report.

At its simplest, the idea re-



Writers share their experiences during an event hosted by the China Writers Association at the National Museum of Modern Chinese Literature in Beijing, capital of China, 25 March 2026. PHOTO: YU JUNJIE/XINHUA

flects a quiet but far-reaching change: in today's China, more people are writing and sharing their work, often drawing directly from their own lives.

For much of modern literary history, writing in China, as elsewhere, was often associated with scholars, intellectuals or those with the time and training

to pursue it. But this boundary has begun to blur, shaped by the rapid spread of digital platforms and broader social changes. — Xinhua

Massive fountain opens on Tokyo Bay waterfront, set to become new landmark



A massive fountain featuring elaborate water shows opened on Tokyo's Odaiba waterfront on Saturday and is expected to become a new landmark in the capital. PHOTO: KYODO

A massive fountain featuring elaborate water shows opened on Tokyo's Odaiba waterfront on Saturday and is expected

to become a new landmark in the capital.

The Tokyo Aqua Symphony, described by the metro-

politan government as one of the world's largest fountains, can shoot water as high as 150 metres, spans 250 metres and features a cherry blossom motif.

Shows featuring water jets choreographed to music and lights are planned at the fountain, with the potential to attract 30 million people annually and generate an economic impact of 9.8 billion yen (\$61 million), according to the Tokyo government.

Construction at Odaiba Seaside Park began in July last year, costing about 2.6 billion yen. Annual operating costs are expected to total around 200 million yen. — Kyodo

Britney Spears returns to Instagram after DUI arrest, shares video with son

FOLLOWING her arrest earlier in March for driving under the influence while impaired by alcohol and drugs, Britney Spears has made her return to Instagram. On Saturday, the pop singer shared a video featuring herself and her 19-year-old son, Jayden, dancing together in front of a mirror. In the clip, Spears can be heard remarking on her composure while posing, while Jayden is seen enjoying the moment and even attempting a Michael Jackson-style dance move.

Accompanying the video, Spears included a message of gratitude for her fans, emphasizing the importance of family and friends during challenging times. She described spending time with loved ones as a "blessing" and urged her followers to "stay kind". Shortly after the initial post, she shared a similar clip with the same message, reinforcing her plea for kindness.

This social media appearance follows an incident on 4 March in Ventura, California, where Spears was arrested on suspicion of a DUI. After being released the following morning, her representative issued a statement to PEOPLE, labeling the event "unfortunate" and "inexcusable".

The representative confirmed that Spears intends to comply with the law and take the necessary steps to seek the help and support required for a long-overdue change in her life. — ANI



Authorities pulled her over after reports of a black BMW driving "erratically at a high rate of speed" on the 101 Freeway. PHOTO: ANI

Delhi saved 216 MW on account of Earth Hour: BSES

THE BSES on Saturday said that the national capital as a whole saved 216 MW on account of Earth Hour.

Additionally, 174 MW was saved in the BSES area.

Earth Hour is a worldwide movement organized by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). According to the website of the same, Earth Hour has been known for the "lights off" moment, with individuals from around the globe

switching off their lights to show symbolic support for the planet and to raise awareness of the environmental issues affecting it.

Over these 20 years, Earth Hour has evolved from awareness to action, mobilizing individuals, communities and institutions to adopt more sustainable lifestyles and accelerate the transition to a low-carbon future. In many ways, it reflects the journey the world must take from intent to impact. — ANI

ECONOMY WORLD

Japan industrial output in Feb falls 2.1%, Iran conflict clouds outlook

JAPAN'S industrial output in February fell 2.1 per cent from the previous month, the first contraction in three months, dragged down by weak output in the motor vehicle sector, government data showed Tuesday, with the impact of the Iran conflict likely to be felt in the coming months.

The decrease followed an upwardly revised expansion of 4.3 per cent in January. The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry maintained its basic assessment of industrial production from the month before, saying it "fluctuates indecisively".

Output dropped in 12 of the 15 sectors, falling 3.6 per cent in the motor vehicle sector after an 8.1 per cent rise in the previous month, amid a decline in orders for small trucks and a decrease in production of car engines for



This photo taken on 15 May 2025 from a Kyodo News helicopter shows a Nissan Motor Co plant in Yokosuka in the eastern Japan prefecture of Kanagawa **PHOTO: KYODO**

overseas markets, a ministry official said.

Reduced production of fabricated metals, including aluminium for industrial use, and of electronic parts and devices such as liquid crystal display panels contributed to the overall fall, while the iron, steel and nonferrous metals sector saw an expansion.

According to a poll of manufacturers, output is expected to rise 3.8 per cent in March and 3.3 per cent in April, the ministry said. But the official cautioned that the survey, conducted in early March, may not have factored in the impact of the war against Iran launched by the United States and Israel on 28 February, which remains "highly unpredictable" and warrants "exceptional attention". — Kyodo

Singapore's electricity, town gas tariffs to rise in Q2

SINGAPORE residents will face higher electricity and town gas tariffs in the second quarter, with further increases likely later this year as the Middle East conflict drives up global fuel costs, the Energy Market Authority (EMA) said on Tuesday.

Singapore sets regulated electricity and town gas tariffs each quarter based on the

average cost of fuel over the first 2.5 months of the previous quarter. That means tariffs for April through June largely reflect fuel prices from January to mid-March. Town gas refers to the piped fuel mainly used by households and businesses for cooking and heating.

Natural gas prices began rising more sharply after 28 February as the conflict

strained global supply chains, so second-quarter tariffs have only been partially affected by the recent surge, said the EMA.

However, the EMA said fuel prices are expected to stay elevated given ongoing disruptions to oil and gas production in the Middle East, warning of "further and potentially sharper increases" in tariffs in the coming quarters. — Xinhua



A general view shows private and public residential high-rise buildings in Singapore on 27 February 2026. **PHOTO: AFP**

Dubai announces over \$270 mln in economic support for business

DUBAI will provide support worth over \$270 million to help businesses and families, authorities announced Monday, with the Gulf states facing economic disruption from Iran's aerial attacks and closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

"Today, we approved support measures worth AED 1 billion (\$272 million) for the economic sector, aimed at assisting individuals, families, and businesses in navigating these exceptional

circumstances," Dubai's media office said in a statement.

It added: "Long-term government planning reflects Dubai's unwavering commitment to its citizens, residents."

The United Arab Emirates and other Gulf countries have faced waves of drone and missile salvos from Iran after Tehran unleashed a retaliatory aerial campaign on its neighbours in response to US and Israeli strikes beginning on 28 February. — AFP

Sri Lanka unemployment falls to 3.8%, mixed output trends persist

SRI Lanka's labour market improved in the fourth quarter of 2025, with the unemployment rate falling to 3.8 per cent from 4.2 per cent in the previous quarter, while labour force participation rose to 48.8 per cent from 47.7 per cent, according to the latest weekly economic indicators issued by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka. The data pointed

to stronger economic activity as more people entered the workforce. Sectoral output trends, however, remained mixed. Tea production declined year-on-year for the third straight month in January 2026, while rubber production increased during the same period, supported by fewer rainy days that helped tapping activities. — Xinhua

Panama Canal sees traffic boost over Iran war

THE war in the Middle East has prompted a surge in ships utilizing the Panama Canal, an executive for the interoceanic waterway said Monday.

The month-long conflict that began on 28 February has seen Iran effectively blockade the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of world oil and gas exports normally transit.

“We had expected around 34 daily passages” for this year, but in the last two weeks “we’ve been having 38, 39, 40,” the deputy administrator of the canal, Ilya Espino de Marotta, told the channel Telemetro in an interview.

Five per cent of global maritime trade passes through the Panama Canal, whose main users are the United States and China. The route primarily con-

nects the east coast of the United States with the Asian giant, South Korea, and Japan.

“The Panama Canal is a safe, short route, that with gas prices” still reduces costs, Espino de Marotta said.

Nonetheless, the canal executive warned that the passage of 40 daily boats “isn’t sustainable” given the limited space on the route. She added that by April, the canal should see renewed growth in the number of boats carrying liquified natural gas (LNG), after a slump due to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. “We were going over 500 passages a year,” but then it dropped away “because of the war in Ukraine and Russia, though it’s now coming back,” Espino de Marotta said. — AFP



A gas cargo ship sails through the Miraflores Locks on the Panama Canal in Panama City on 8 April 2025. PHOTO: AFP

Malaysia’s central bank foresees 4 to 5% growth in 2026 amid Mideast tensions

THE Malaysian economy is projected to grow between four per cent and five per cent in 2026 amid the challenging and uncertain global landscape, its central bank said Tuesday.

The Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) said in a statement that Malaysia is entering this challenging period from a position of strength, supported by robust domestic demand, moderate inflation, a sound financial sector, and a resilient external position.

It also said BNM will remain vigilant against the rapidly evolving Middle East conflict.

“There are key risks to the growth outlook that we must continue to monitor, assess and manage. Downside risks are mainly external in nature, arising from slower global trade due to the Middle East conflict and tariffs, alongside lower commodity output,” its governor Abdul Rasheed Ghaffour said.

On the Middle East conflict, he said the situation is highly

fluid. He noted the developments on this front change by the day, and the effects on the world and Malaysia will depend on the length and the severity of the conflict.

“There is, however, some upside potential that could arise from better global growth, stronger electrical and electronics (E&E) demand and more robust tourism,” he added.

He also said the Malaysian economy is resilient, recording growth of 5.2 per cent in 2025 despite an extremely challenging external environment.

Stable domestic economic, monetary and financial conditions have helped cushion the impact of external shocks and paved the way for important reforms to take place, he said.

“We must continue to strengthen our economic fundamentals and policy buffers to better position Malaysia to navigate prevailing and future headwinds,” he said. — Xinhua

Microsoft plans over \$1 bln cloud, AI investment in Thailand

MICROSOFT announced Tuesday it plans to invest more than \$1 billion in cloud and AI data centre infrastructure and operations in Thailand over the next two years.

As demand for artificial intelligence heats up, tech giants are racing to invest billions of dollars in South-East Asia, attracted by a growing plugged-in user base.

New data centres — warehouse-like facilities that store online files and power AI tools from chatbots to image generators — are springing up worldwide, and the sector is growing particularly fast in Asia.

“Our ambition is for Thailand to grow as a regional driving force in Asia’s digital and AI economy,” Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said

in a statement after meeting with Microsoft president Brad Smith. He called the Microsoft announcement a “clear expression of confidence in Thailand’s future”. Google launched a new “cloud region” in Bangkok in January, saying its data centres would contribute more than \$40 billion in economic value to Thailand over five years. — AFP

Vietnam’s fruit, vegetable exports up 27% in Q1

VIETNAM’S fruit and vegetable export turnover was estimated at US\$1.48 billion in the first three months of 2026, up 27 per cent year on year, according to local media VnEconomy, citing the Vietnam Fruit and Vegetable Association. The sector’s import turnover reached US\$761.4 million, up 25.7 per cent year on year in the first quarter, according to the report. Vietnam is targeting US\$10 billion in fruit and vegetable exports in 2026, the government portal reported. — Xinhua



A labourer tends to vegetables in an agriculture field in Hanoi on 13 January 2026. PHOTO: AFP

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD



Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi (L) speaks during a meeting of Cabinet ministers to discuss the situation in the Middle East held at the prime minister's office in Tokyo on 31 March 2026. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Japan PM willing to cooperate with Asian nations to secure oil products

JAPANESE Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi on Tuesday expressed her willingness to cooperate with other Asian nations to secure petroleum products, amid crude oil supply disruptions stemming from the US-Israeli conflict with Iran.

Takaichi made the remarks at the second meeting of related Cabinet members

to discuss ways to alleviate the repercussions of the Middle East war on Japan's economy, such as concerns over the stable procurement of fuel.

"We will consider mutual cooperation with Asian countries and support for them," Takaichi said, with the aim of also preventing a negative impact on the overseas eco-

nomical activities of Japanese businesses.

She said her government has set up a taskforce led by industry minister Ryosei Akazawa involving related ministries to review the supply conditions of medical supplies and naphtha, a crude oil-derived raw material for plastics, among other items. — Kyodo

Trump "quite interested" in asking Arab countries to help pay for US-Israeli war with Iran: White House

US President Donald Trump "would be quite interested" in calling on Arab countries to help pay for the costs related to the ongoing US-Israeli war against Iran, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said Monday.

"I won't get ahead of him (Trump) on that," Leavitt said at a White House press briefing.

"But certainly it's an idea that I know that he has and something that I think you'll hear more from him on."

Pentagon officials told the US Congress earlier this month that the Trump administration spent more than US\$11.3 billion in the first six days of its war against Iran.

The figure does not include

battle damage and replacement of losses, which likely costs the Pentagon roughly \$1.4 billion to \$2.9 billion over the first three weeks of the war, according to a Wall Street Journal report, quoting Elaine McCusker, former Pentagon budget official who has been tracking the cost for the American Enterprise Institute. — Xinhua

Indonesia urges UN to convene emergency Security Council meeting after peacekeepers killed in Lebanon

INDONESIA has called on the United Nations (UN) to convene an emergency Security Council meeting following the deaths of three Indonesian peacekeepers in Lebanon, officials said.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Sugiono conveyed the request to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Monday through a phone call, stressing the need for a swift, transparent, and comprehensive investigation into the incident. "We request an emergency Security Council meeting and a prompt, thorough, and transparent investigation process," Sug-

iono said in a statement posted on his social media account.

Sugiono also held a telephone conversation with Lebanese Foreign Minister Youssef Rajji, expressing Indonesia's deep concern over the attacks. Both sides agreed to maintain close coordination in responding to the situation while supporting efforts to de-escalate tensions and safeguard regional stability.

Indonesia strongly condemned the attacks, underscoring that UN peacekeepers must be protected in accordance with international law. — Xinhua

Thai King endorses new cabinet after PM Anutin re-election

THAI King Maha Vajiralongkorn has endorsed a new cabinet under the leadership of Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul, a royal command said on Tuesday.

According to the official Royal Gazette, the king appointed the 35-member cabinet as selected by Anutin, including seven deputy prime ministers and other ministers, following his re-election for a second term earlier this month.

The Bhumjaithai Party, whose leader, Anutin, also serves as interior minister, will lead the coalition government, holding the majority of cabinet seats. Its

main coalition partner, the Pheu Thai Party, will command eight ministerial posts.

Key ministers from the previous administration remain in place, including Finance Minister Ekniti Nitithanprapas, Commerce Minister Suphaje Suthumpun, and Foreign Affairs Minister Sihasak Phuangketkew. The endorsement paves the way for the new cabinet to take an oath of allegiance before the king and present its policy statement to parliament, a final step required before a new administration officially takes office. — Xinhua



White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt gestures during a press briefing at the White House in Washington, DC, the United States, 30 March 2026. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

SPORTS

Myanmar beat Pakistan away in Asian Cup qualifier 3rd round

IN the final Group E match of the 2027 Asian Cup third-round qualifiers, the Myanmar national team defeated Pakistan 2-1 away on 31 March at Jinnah Stadium in Islamabad, Pakistan.

Myanmar secured the victory with second-half goals and completed a double win over Pakistan across both legs. Although Myanmar did not qualify from the third-round qualifiers, they managed to win both home-and-

away matches against Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Head coach U Myo Hlaing Win fielded the main players in the starting lineup, making only two changes from the match against Afghanistan on 26 March.

In the first half, Pakistan controlled possession at times, allowing Myanmar to apply more pressure, but poor coordination in attack prevented clear scoring chances, and the half ended



Myanmar national team players celebrate their win against Pakistan in this photo. PHOTO: MFF

goalless.

At the start of the second half, Myanmar opened the scoring capitalizing on a defensive mistake by Pakistan, when a back pass led to a mishit clearance by goalkeeper Hannis that went

into the net. Myanmar continued to dominate, and in 59 minutes, Than Paing scored the second goal following an assist from Lwin Moe Aung.

Near the end of the match, Pakistan pulled one goal back

through a header by Sharjeel Durrani.

After all Group E matches, Myanmar finished with 12 points from six matches, while Pakistan collected two points. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

Germany facing striker problem ahead of World Cup



Germany's forward (7) Kai Havertz shoots and scores his team's first goal during the international friendly football match between Germany and Ghana in Stuttgart, southwestern Germany on 30 March 2026. PHOTO: AFP

GERMANY coach Julian Nagelsmann faces growing concerns over his striking options ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup, with no clear first-choice forward emerging.

Nagelsmann travelled to Eindhoven to watch group opponent Ecuador in a friendly against the Netherlands, but questions persist over Germany's attacking line, particularly the lack of a reliable penalty-box striker.

The coach has been relying on Newcastle's Nick Woltemade, Arsenal's Kai

Havertz and Stuttgart's Deniz Undav. However, Woltemade and Havertz have struggled for form at club level, while Nagelsmann has indicated he sees Undav as a backup option.

Woltemade remains in a dip in form, and Havertz is working his way back after a lengthy injury absence. Of Germany's attacking midfielders, Galatasaray's Leroy Sane, and Bayern Munich pair Serge Gnabry and Lennart Karl, have also lacked consistency. Karl, 18, showed prom-

ise in Monday's 2-1 win over Ghana, but attacking midfielder Florian Wirtz has been the brightest spark, producing two goals and two assists in last week's 4-3 victory over Switzerland, despite mixed form at club level with Liverpool.

Undav, meanwhile, has impressed for Stuttgart, registering 23 goals and 13 assists in 38 appearances, and scoring a late winner for Germany in Stuttgart. Yet Nagelsmann has suggested the forward is most effective as an impact substitute. — Xinhua

Australia head to World Cup on a high after crushing Curacao 5-1

WATFORD striker Nestory Irankunda bagged a brace as Australia hammered fellow World Cup qualifier Curacao 5-1 Tuesday in Melbourne, ensuring they head to North America on a high.

It was the Socceroos final home game before the global showpiece in June-July, building on a 1-0 win against Cameroon last week.

Curacao have now crashed to consecutive defeats after losing 2-0 to China, with new Dutch coach Fred Rutten facing a formidable task at the Caribbean island nation's maiden World Cup.

"A wonderful send off. We

wanted to win this game and go off on a high note, and scoring five is a nice bonus," said Australia coach Tony Popovic.

"We considered a soft goal ... things to work on, but there was a great reaction after that."

Australia are in World Cup Group D with co-hosts the United States, Paraguay and either Kosovo or Türkiye. Curacao are in a challenging Group E with Germany, Ivory Coast and Ecuador.

The Socceroos started slowly but got the breakthrough on 23 minutes after a loose pass from Curacao captain Leandro Bacuna. — AFP



Australia's Ajdin Hrustic (R) kicks the ball during the international friendly football match between Australia and Curacao at the Melbourne Rectangular Stadium in Melbourne on 31 March 2026. PHOTO: AFP

Japan PM willing to cooperate with Asian nations to secure oil products

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WORLD

UN SECRETARY-GENERAL Antonio Guterres on Monday called on the international community to build zero-waste food systems that “we need to nourish both people and planet”.

“The world wastes far too much food,” Guterres said in his message on the International Day of Zero Waste, observed annually on 30 March.

He said that every day, people across the globe throw away food enough to prepare 1 billion meals while letting nine per cent of humanity go hungry, putting the climate, ecosystems and health at risk, and threatening the ability to feed ourselves in the future.

Guterres urged consumers to make a big impact with small changes in their shopping and cooking habits, retailers to optimize their operations and redistribute surplus food, cities to scale organic waste separation and strengthen procurement for schools and hospitals, and national governments to drive systemic change by addressing food waste in their climate action and biodiversity plans and forging public-private partnerships.

Through initiatives like the Food Waste Breakthrough and No Organic Waste, the international community can halve food waste by 2030, cut the methane emissions by up to seven per cent, and build circular, resilient food systems, he said.

These efforts, beyond protecting our planet, will create green jobs, reduce food insecurity and climate impacts, and prevent up to US\$1 trillion in economic losses each year, according to the secretary-gen-

UN chief calls for building zero-waste food systems



Palestinians wait to receive food in the Al-Rimal neighbourhood of central Gaza City, on 20 July 2025. PHOTO: XINHUA

eral. “We cannot take food for granted,” he stressed.

Every year, humanity generates be-

tween 2.1 billion and 2.3 billion tonnes of municipal solid waste, and some 2.7 billion people lack access to waste col-

lection, according to figures released by the UN Human Settlements Programme. — Xinhua

India to begin world’s biggest population count

INDIA will launch the world’s largest census on Wednesday, with more than three million officials to take part in a vast counting exercise over the next

year.

The South Asian nation, home to an estimated 1.4 billion people, faces mounting challenges in providing elec-

tricity, food and housing to its growing population.

Many of its sprawling megacities are already grappling with water shortages, air and water pollution, and overcrowded slums.

India’s government calls the \$1.24 billion count a “gigantic exercise of national importance” that could support “inclusive governance and evidence-based policy formulation”.

The enumeration will also include the politically sensitive issue of caste, the millennia-old social hierarchy that divides Hindus by function and social standing.

The upcoming census presents a formidable logistical challenge. India’s 2024 general election, the largest democratic exercise in history, was conducted in seven phases over six weeks.

The census will be carried out in two phases. — AFP

Vietnam’s capital logs 29 COVID-19 cases since start of year

VIETNAM’S capital Hanoi has recorded 29 COVID-19 cases since the start of the year, with no deaths reported, local daily Tuoi Tre reported Tuesday.

The Hanoi Centre for Disease Control reported 17 new infections across 12 communes and wards between 20 and 27 March, up from three cases in the previous week, according to the report.

Regarding the BA.3.2 variant, which is currently being monitored by the World Health Organization (WHO), the local health department advised the public not to panic while remaining vigilant. The WHO said the variant shows some antigenic changes and immune escape characteristics under laboratory conditions. — Xinhua



A pedestrian walks past a population clock board displayed outside the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) in Mumbai on 2 June 2023. PHOTO: AFP