

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.



The second-day meeting of the Third Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's first regular session is underway at the Hluttaw Complex in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw to Elect President Today

The Joint Bill Committee, the Joint Public Accounts Committee, and the Hluttaw Representative Scrutiny Committee were established at the second-day meeting of the first regular session of the Third Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

THE second-day meeting of the first regular session of the Third Pyidaungsu Hluttaw took place at the convention hall of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw at the Hluttaw Complex in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw U Aung Lin Dwe stated that a total of 584 out of 586 Pyidaungsu Hluttaw represent-

atives attended the second-day meeting, and the number of representatives eligible to attend the meeting was over half of all representatives. So he declared that the quorum had been met and the meeting was opened.

Jeng Phang Naw Taung from the Kachin State Constituency 2 (FPTP System) explained the formation of the Joint

Bill Committee.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker read out the nomination list of the Bill Committee sent by the Pyithu and Amyotha Hluttaws to establish the Joint Bill Committee with 15 members in accord with the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Rules.

The Speaker announced that the Joint Bill Committee was chaired by Pyidaungsu

Hluttaw Deputy Speaker Jeng Phang Naw Taung, together with First Vice-Chair Daw Nwe Nwe Oo from the Ayeyawady Region Constituency 2 (FPTP System), Second Vice-Chair Dr Nanda Kyaw Swa from the Dagon Constituency, Secretary U Zin Min Htet from the Bago Region Constituency 1 (PR System) and Joint Secretary

SEE PAGE 3

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.

Republic of the Union of Myanmar National Defence and Security Council

Amendment to the People's Military Service Law (National Defence and Security Council Law 51/2026)

1st Waning of Tagu 1387 ME
2 April 2026

THE National Defence and Security Council enacts this law under Section 427 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

1. This law shall be called the Amendment to the People's Military Service Law.
2. Clause (iv) shall be inserted immediately after Clause (iii) of Subsection (f) of Section 2 of the People's Military Service Law as follows: -
“(iv) In Islam, religious personnel such as Mawlawi, Hafiz, and Imam are those who hold certificates officially recognized by the relevant Islamic religious authorities.”
3. The expression “ward or village-tract Peace and Development Council” mentioned in Section 8 of the People's Military Service Law shall be replaced with the expression “relevant ward or village-tract administrator”.

I hereby sign this law under Section 427 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Sd/ Min Aung Hlaing
Senior General
Acting President

National Planning and Union Budget Laws for FY2026-2027 approved and promulgated

THE National Defence and Security Council, on 31 March, approved and promulgated the National Planning Law for the 2026-2027 financial year as the National Defence and Security Council Law 21/2026, and the Union Budget Law for the 2026-2027 financial year as the National Defence and Security Council Law 22/2026.

These laws are reported to have come into effect from 1 April 2026.
— MNA/MKKS

Myanmar Gazette

Appointment of Head of Service Organization confirmed

THE National Defence and Security Council has confirmed the appointment of U Tin Latt Soe as Managing Director of the Myanma Pearl Enterprise under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation after the one-year probationary period.

Mandalay Thingyan 2026 to showcase cultural photo contests on Laphet and Thanaka

THE 2026 Mandalay Walking Thingyan Festival will feature special photography competitions highlighting intangible cultural heritage, with a particular focus on the traditions of laphet and Thanaka, according to the Mandalay City Development Committee.



People and artistes participating in the Mandalay Maha Thingyan festival in the previous year.

As part of the festival programme, a “Laphet Cultural Celebration” and an “Intangible Thanaka Beauty Mandalay Thingyan Photo Contest” will be held to honour these cultural elements. In addition, the annual “Happy Mandalay Thingyan Photo Contest” will be held,

continuing its tradition from previous years. Entries for both competitions will be assessed by professional photographers through a multi-stage judging process.

Each competition will offer three main prizes — first,

second and third — as well as seven consolation prizes.

The festival will take place around the Mandalay Palace moat and will feature 45 pavilions, including the central Mandalay Maha Thingyan Pavilion and various ethnic

pavilions. The event will also include performances by well-known artistes, traditional dance troupes and Myanmar orchestras, along with public donation feasts, creating a vibrant and festive atmosphere.
— ASH/KZL

Request for Free Use of Copyrighted Works

THE traditional Myanmar Thingyan Festival, celebrated nationwide with respect and joy, will be observed in 2026 following the same customs as in previous years. During the celebrations, entertainment programmes, including performances of Thingyan songs, will be presented by Union-level organizations, ministries, state and regional governments, and relevant departments.

At official events, such as the city mayor's pavilions representing the government, and the parade floats in Nay Pyi Taw, performances of Thingyan songs will be broadcast to the public free of charge via radio and television.

Therefore, for public entertainment rather than commercial gain, we respectfully request that copyright holders grant permission for the free use of the songs performed and broadcast at these events.

The Ministry of Information extends its sincere gratitude to all copyright holders who kindly grant permission for such use.

Ministry of Information

Domestic airlines refocus on local routes as Myitkyina, PutaO flights resume

DOMESTIC airlines, including Myanmar National Airlines (MNA), Myanmar Airways International (MAI), Mingalar Airlines, Mann Yadanabon Airlines and Air Thanlwin Airlines, have been prioritizing scheduled flights to Kengtung,

Tachilek, Kawthoung, Kyaukpyu, Sittway, Kalay, Homalin and Khamti since 25 March.

The report also read regular services to Myitkyina will resume on 4 April, followed by flights to PutaO on 5 April. — MNA/MKKS

NATIONAL

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw to Elect President on 3 April

FROM PAGE 1

U Thein Tun Oo from the Amrapura Constituency, and 10 other Hluttaw representatives will be assigned as members of the committee. The approval will be sought for the committee from the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw at its meeting.

U Chit Swe from the Ayeyawady Region Constituency 2 (PR System) reported on the formation of the Joint Public Accounts Committee.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker read out the lists sent by the Pyithu and Amyotha Hluttaws to form the Joint Public Accounts Committee with 15 members under the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Rules.

The Speaker announced that the Joint Public Accounts Committee will be established with Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker Jeng Phang Naw Taung as Chair, U Chit Swe from the Ayeyawady Region Constituency 2 (PR System) as First Vice-Chair, U Teza Kyaw from the Aungmyaythazan Constituency as Second Vice-Chair, U Than Aung from the Taninthayi Region Constituency 2 (FPTP System) as Secretary and U Tin Aung Chit from the Aunglan Constituency as Joint Secretary.



Hluttaw representatives are seen ascending the stairways of the Hluttaw Complex in Nay Pyi Taw.

The remaining 10 Hluttaw representatives will be assigned as members of the committee. The formation of the committee will seek approval from the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw meeting.

U Aung Tin Myint from the Ayeyawady Region Constituency 1 (PR System) explained the formation of the Scrutiny Committee for Hluttaw Representative.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker read out the 15-member list sent by the Pyithu and Amyotha Hluttaws to continue

the scrutiny and approval for Hluttaw representatives.

The Speaker stated that Dr Kyaw Kyaw Htay from the Dawei Constituency will be assigned as Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee for Hluttaw Representatives and U Aung Tin Myint from the Ayeyawady Region Constituency 1 (PR System) as Secretary of the committee. The formation of the committee will seek approval from the meeting of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

The Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw read out

the Scrutiny Team's report, which confirmed that the three vice-presidential nominees, selected and submitted by the three groups of Hluttaw representatives in accordance with the Law and Rules for Election of the President and Vice-Presidents, meet the qualifications prescribed for the office of the President.

The Vice-Presidents scrutinized and submitted by the Scrutiny Team were Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Nan Ni Ni Aye from the Kayin State

Constituency 1 (PR System) and U Nyo Saw from the Cocokyun Constituency.

Subsequently, the Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw announced that, as the Presidential Electoral College comprising all Pyidaungsu Hluttaw representatives, and under the Constitution and the Election Laws for the President and Vice-Presidents, groups of representatives from relevant Hluttaws will vote to select one of the three vice-presidential nominees of their choice as President. This election and nomination will be held on 3 April.

Furthermore, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker explained the procedures for the Presidential election and nomination to be held on 3 April, including how to cast ballots, the ballot format, and how to mark a vote as invalid, in accordance with the laws and rules on the election and nomination of the President and Vice-Presidents.

The second-day meeting of the first regular session of the Third Pyidaungsu Hluttaw was adjourned. The presidential election of the Third Pyidaungsu Hluttaw will take place on 3 April. — MNA/TTA

2nd day of 3rd Ayeyawady Region Hluttaw's 1st regular session held

THE second day of the first regular session of the Third Ayeyawady Region Hluttaw was organized yesterday, with the attendance of all 72 region Hluttaw representatives.

A Defence Services Personnel Representative took affirmations in front of the Speaker and signed the form of affirmations. The Speaker read out a congratulatory message sent by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Office, and recorded the message.

The Speaker submitted the proposal to Hluttaw regarding the number of members, name lists, committee chair and secretary, terms, responsibilities,

authority, and rights of the legislative committee and the public accounts, planning and finance, economic and trading development committee, and Hluttaw approved to form these two committees.

The chairpersons of the legislative committee and public accounts, planning and finance, and economic and trading development committee briefed their terms, responsibilities, authority and rights to the Hluttaw.

The second-day meeting of the first regular session of the Third Ayeyawady Region Hluttaw was adjourned. — IPRD/KTZH



The Third Ayeyawady Region Hluttaw holds the first regular session's second-day meeting.

NATIONAL

MR adds parcel carriages to boost goods transport

UNDER the guidance of the Acting President, Myanma Railways of the Ministry of Transport and Communications is undertaking measures to ensure ease of travel for passengers and cost-effective transport of goods. These include operating battery electric locomotives on the Yangon Circular Railway, introducing special parcel trains on the Yangon-Mandalay and Yangon-Mawlamyine routes to prioritize the transport of food supplies, and increasing the number of parcel coaches on passenger trains running along the Yangon-Pyay and Thazi-Shwemyaung-Taunggyi routes.



An active train operated by Myanma Railways is seen in this image.

On the Yangon Circular Railway, a train set consisting of four ordinary-class coaches and one brake van, hauled by a BEL locomotive (C Class), has been in operation since 25 March. To further improve convenience for commuters in Yangon, another similar train set (B Class) will be added to four ordinary-class

coaches and one break van and will be operated starting from 4 April.

On the Yangon-Mandalay route, Special Parcel Trains 35 Up and 36 Down will operate with 10 parcel coaches and one break van, and they will stop at Bago,

DaikU, Nyaunglebin, Kyaukdaga, Penwegon, Pyu, Toungoo, Myohla, Pyinmana, Nay Pyi Taw, Tatkon, Yamethin, Pyawbwe, Thazi, Thaeday, Myittha and Kyaukse railway stations. Each trip will carry up to 151,700 viss (243 tonnes) of goods, and the

service will begin on a round-trip basis starting 4 April.

Similarly, on the Yangon-Mawlamyine route, Special Parcel Trains 85 Up and 86 Down will operate with nine parcel coaches and one break van, and they will stop at Bago, Waw,

Theinzayet, Kyaikto, Taungzun, Hninpale, Thaton and Paung railway stations. Each trip will carry up to 128,200 viss (206 tonnes) of goods, and the service will begin on a round-trip basis starting on 4 April.

Moreover, starting 3 April, mail trains 63 Up and 64 Down running on the Yangon-Pyay route carried 30,600 viss of goods per trip with three parcel coaches, and the mail trains 141 Up and 142 Down running on the Thazi-Shwemyaung-Taunggyi route carried 25,200 viss of goods with two parcel coaches.

These measures are being implemented in line with the Acting President's guidance to prevent rising commodity prices due to high transportation costs, to encourage greater use of rail transport as a public service, to enable faster and more efficient movement of goods in larger quantities, to reduce transport costs, and to decrease fuel consumption. — MNA/KTZH



Myanmar reports no new COVID-19 cases

THE Ministry of Health tested 250 samples from 8 pm on 28 February 2026 to 8 pm on 31 March 2026, and no new cases were detected.

Currently, there is no need to worry about infection and deaths from COVID-19, but all need to follow personal hygiene methods, and the high-risk groups.

- Elderly people (aged 60 and above)
- People with diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases, and cancer
- Pregnant women (especially those beyond the third month of pregnancy) are prioritized to receive COVID-19 booster shots.

More detailed COVID-19 information can be found on the website of the Ministry of Health, moh.gov.mm.

Myanmar CDC
Public Health Department,
Ministry of Health

Public Notice

TO promote systematic fuel consumption and minimize losses, a digital fuel distribution and sales system was launched on 12 March 2026. The system was upgraded on 27 March 2026 to allocate and sell fuel according to fixed quotas for each vehicle.

Efforts are also being made, including online monitoring and alerts, control measures, and gathering public feedback, to upgrade the technology and expand the usage nationwide to address the technical difficulties encountered during implementation and to prevent malpractices.

Out of 2,943 petrol stations currently operating across the country, 879 stations have already adopted a system that allows sales through scanning Bar Codes/QR Codes. Starting this week, the system will also be implemented in Patheingyi and towns along the Yangon-Pyay-Magway highway.

Fuel quotas are being set based on engine capacity for each vehicle. To ensure convenience in the public transportation and logistics sectors,

higher fuel quotas have been allocated to taxis, three-wheeled vehicles, and cargo trucks, and they are allowed to refuel three times per week.

However, due to misuse of this system, which has caused inconvenience and losses to the public, fuel sales for these vehicles will be based on the actual distance travelled starting from 3 April 2026.

As this system relies on technology to manage individual shortcomings and prevent malpractice, the public is kindly requested to cooperate by providing suggestions and reporting.

Ministry of Energy

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NATIONAL

Hpa-an-Kawkareik-Myawady Asian Highway section reopens



These photos show officials cutting the ceremonial ribbon to reopen the Hpa-an-Kawkareik-Myawady Asian Highway (L), with vehicles passing along the reopened road.

THE Hpa-an-Kawkareik-Myawady Asian Highway, part of the Greater Mekong Sub-region East-West Economic Corridor and a main communication route in Kayin State, was reopened yesterday morning by officials from the Kayin State government, Commander of the South-East Command Maj-Gen Kyaw Lin Maung, and other officials.

The road is a vital lifeline for local communities, carrying the largest volume of trade with neighbouring Thailand. It stretches 165.360 kilometres from the Myanmar-Thailand Friendship Bridge I in Hpa-an

Township to the Myanmar-Thailand Friendship Bridge II. The road, which had been closed due to fighting, landmine damage, and disruptions to the flow of goods and tourists, has now been reopened after Tatmadaw columns, in cooperation with local communities, restored stability, regained the territory, and repaired the damaged roads and bridges using Union and state funds.

At the opening ceremony, an official from the Kayin State government delivered the opening speech, the Commander of the South-East Command explained

the efforts made to reopen the Hpa-an-Kawkareik-Myawady (Asian Highway) section, and a resident expressed gratitude.

Kayin State government officials and other officials cut the ribbon to open the road, presented awards to the bands, pom-pom dance groups, and cultural troupes that participated in the opening ceremony, and took a group photo.

Officials then watched the passing of passenger vehicles, cargo trucks, and private cars travelling from Hpa-an to Myawady, and distributed drinks and snacks.

The Hpa-an-Kawkareik-Myawady Asian Highway was opened yesterday, and as of 5:30 pm yesterday, a total of 640 vehicles had passed along the highway, including 269 passenger vehicles, cargo trucks, and private cars travelling from Hpa-an to Myawady and 371 travelling from Myawady to Hpa-an.

Vehicles arriving from Hpa-an and Myawady are inspected at the Tadakyoe Joint Inspection Checkpoint in Kawkareik Township by officials from the Tatmadaw, the Myanmar Police Force, the Road Transport Administration Department, and

Customs Department to ensure that the public can travel with peace of mind and that the flow of goods is smooth and efficient.

Similarly, to ensure the safety and peace of mind of those using the Hpa-an-Kawkareik-Myawady (Asian Highway) section, Sayadaws recited Paritta at the marketplace in Thingan-Nyinaung Village at the end of the Asian Highway yesterday morning. Monks in vehicles also recited Paritta along the Asian Highway from Thingan-Nyinaung Village to Hlaingwa Village in Kawkareik Township. — MNA/TH

Trading amount and foreign exchange rate in the FE market on 31 March 2026

| | US\$ | Chinese yuan | Thai baht | Indian Rupee |
|--|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| Money exchange rate | 3,658.00 | 557.00 | 125.30 | 43.60 |
| Trading amount in the market | 13,140,671.56 | 7,855,250.00 | 27,455,916.54 | 11,239,621.51 |
| The amount sold by CBM into the market | 3,414,429.36 | | 4,103,328.98 | |

SUCH a large amount of trading foreign currencies in the market was sold for the import of edible oil, fuel oil, fertilizers, animal feedstuff, drugs and raw materials for animal medicines, electronic products, raw industrial materials, auto/motorcycle parts, agri-

cultural equipment, foodstuff commodities and packaging materials.

The Central Bank of Myanmar sold an amount of foreign exchange in the market – US\$2 millions to the LNG sector; \$1.41 million to the auto/motorcycle parts, animal feeds

and materials, fertilizers and pesticides, industrial materials, medicines and medical equipment, raw materials for foodstuffs, printing materials, and electricity sectors, and 4.10 million baht to the construction, foodstuff and industrial sectors. — MNA/TTA



The Central Bank of Myanmar sells foreign exchange

Post Date: 2 April 2026

The Central Bank of Myanmar is slated to sell US\$49 million to the entrepreneurs of the fuel oil sector in the foreign exchange market.

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NATIONAL

Minbu opens heatwave shelters amid soaring temperatures in Magway Region



Images show elderly residents taking shelter at the heatwave prevention centre, where healthcare services are also available.

MINBU (Sagu) Township in Minbu District, Magway Region, has recently been listed among the world's hottest places. In response to guidance from the Head of State, heatwave shelters have been opened since the morning of 2 April to help residents, particularly the elderly, avoid extreme temperatures.

Initially, shelters are operating daily from 8 am to 6:30

pm at Pynnya Alinyaung Private High School and Sasana Beikman in Minbu Township, as well as Mogok Dhamma Yeiktha in Saku. These facilities are equipped with lounges, meditation rooms, dining areas and television rooms. Healthcare services are being provided by the Department of Traditional Medicine and the District General Hospital. In addition, the

Department of Information and Public Relations is supplying books and daily newspapers for reading and study, along with transport assistance. On the first day, 20 elderly residents were accommodated at Pynnya Alinyaung Private High School, where they received the necessary support and medical care.

Township Administrator and Chairman of the Township

Management and Administration Committee U Aung Myin stated that there are plans to accommodate around 400 people in the shelters, noting that more than 850 residents aged 85 and above live in Minbu (Saku) Township. Depending on demand, additional reserve shelters have been arranged in Kyauktan, Phalanyon and Aukyaung villages. He also highlighted con-

tributions to the initiative. The Acting President donated K30 million and K9.1 million worth of rehydrated salt and juices, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement provided over K7.3 million worth of purified water, juices and personal hygiene items, and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation contributed K10 million in cash and K6.1 million worth of energy drinks. The total value of donations amounts to K62.55 million. The administrator added that the authorities will continue to work closely with relevant departments, township leaders, social welfare organizations and volunteers to ensure the effective operation of the shelters.

Residents experiencing symptoms of heat exhaustion or heatstroke are advised to seek immediate medical attention at nearby hospitals. The District General Hospital in Minbu and the Public Hospital in Sagu have prepared dedicated screening and treatment rooms. Furthermore, public awareness campaigns on heatstroke prevention are being carried out through daily loudspeaker announcements in neighbourhoods and villages, the distribution of pamphlets in busy areas, and the display of informational posters. — Maung Maung (Minbu) /MKKS

ME in Seoul supports case of worker who died in industrial accident

MAUNG San Yu, a Myanmar national working at Maru Tech, a metal materials and components manufacturing factory in Hwaseong, Gyeonggi Province of Korea, was seriously injured on 24 March when his body was caught in a machine during work. He sustained severe injuries, including skull and facial bone fractures and a dislocated cervical vertebra, and as a result, he suffered brain haemorrhaging and oxygen deprivation, which led to cardiac arrest.

He was urgently transported by his employer to Ajou University Hospital in Suwon, where medical staff managed to restore his heartbeat through cardiac arrest treatment. However, due to se-

vere injuries to his lungs and major blood vessels, he remained in a state where only his heart was functioning while brain activity had ceased. The employer contacted the Myanmar Embassy in Seoul on 27 March regarding his condition.

Officials from the Myanmar Embassy coordinated with relevant authorities, and the embassy's labour attaché visited Ajou University Hospital on 28 March to meet hospital officials and observe the patient in the ICU. It was found that the patient was only being kept alive with medical support equipment.

Similarly, the embassy also contacted his relatives residing in Seoul to explain his condition



Charge d'Affaires ad interim/Ambassador U Myo Myint Maung expresses condolences and support to the widow and aunt of the deceased.

and arranged a video call with his wife, Daw Ei Ei Thwe, in Myanmar. Based on her decision regarding his medical treatment, the embassy coordinated with the Korean Embassy in Yangon to facilitate her travel to Seoul.

Maung San Yu passed away at 9:30 am on 31 March. The Min-

istry of Labour and the overseas employment agency assisted in ensuring a smooth travel for his wife and aunt to travel to Seoul. They arrived in the afternoon, where they were received at Incheon International Airport by the embassy's labour attaché. Chargé d'Affaires ad interim/

Ambassador U Myo Myint Maung met the deceased's wife and aunt, offering condolences and support, and arranged necessary assistance.

As Maung San Yu was a legally employed worker under the permission of the Government of Myanmar, efforts will be made in coordination with relevant authorities to ensure that he receives full entitlements and compensation due for a workplace-related death.

The Myanmar Embassy in Seoul continues to provide assistance and coordination for Myanmar nationals in Korea, including workers, students, and others, based on the needs and situations they encounter. — MNA/KTZH

Palm oil distributors meet to ensure adequate supply

THE meeting of palm oil distributors held on 1 April at UMFC-CI's Mingala Hall highlighted managing palm oil distribution and ensuring sufficient supply during Thingyan holidays.

Yangon Region Minister for Economic Affairs U Myo Myint Aung delivered the opening remarks that the demand for palm oil would increase during Thingyan holidays. Therefore, he urged distributors to sell the oil allocated by the government for the holidays at the right value and accurate measurement. He also warned against unfair practices such as price hikes, selling underweight, or hoarding to cause shortages. The relevant government departments would effectively carry out market monitoring and inspections. U Aye Win, President of the



The meeting of palm oil distributors is underway at the UMFC-CI office yesterday.

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, also emphasized the importance of

cooperation in the palm oil distribution process and the need for coordination among organizations to ensure market stability.

U Maung Maung Zaw, Chairman of the Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers and Oil Millers Association, also shared practi-

cal solutions regarding possible challenges in oil distribution, including transportation and storage issues.

Furthermore, U Kyaw Swa Win, Head of the Regional Consumer Affairs Department, clarified the regulations for consumer rights protection and the requirements for price display. General Secretary U Zaw Ko Ko recommended systematic record-keeping and accurate information reporting in operational processes.

If any difficulties in purchasing palm oil arise in various townships, immediate notification should be made to the association. Timely reporting would be a crucial driver for effective distribution adjustments in supply chain, inventory and logistics, he added. — NN/KK

Fertilizer reference prices stable in Jan-Apr

THE Myanmar Fertilizer, Seed and Pesticide Entrepreneurs Association (MFSPEA) announced that fertilizer reference prices for April 2026 remained unchanged, indicating constant prices this year.

The reference prices set in January-April 2026 were K94,000 per 50-kilogramme bag of Urea fertilizer (large granular), and K115,000 per 50-kilogramme bag of Di Ammonium Phosphate. The prices may vary a bit depending on transport charges in other regions and states, as the aforementioned prices are set for the Yangon Region, MFSPEA stated. Additionally, reference prices will be further announced as per rules and regulations. For overcharging, consumers can complain to the committee through contact numbers 067 410032 and 09 988539360. MFSPEA has already asked



A diligent farmer applying fertilizers on the field.

the member companies to stick to the reference prices. At present, the Fertilizer Committee holds a quarterly meeting to ensure quality fertilizer for growers without facing shortages. Under the approval of the Fertilizer Technology Group, 12,297 fertilizer registrations have

been granted after the 43rd meeting of the Fertilizer Committee. With individuals' consent, 2,088 registrations were voluntarily cancelled. The department revoked 2,867 registrations for expiration of validity, and 7,342 registrations are still under processing. — NN/KK

Safe Farm Market hosts local seed exchange on 4 Apr

FARMERS, gardeners and individuals are invited to join the Local Seed Exchange Programme at the Safe Food from Safe Farm Market from 9 am to 12 noon on 4 April in Myaypadethakyun, Yangon, to showcase and share their best varieties and acquire new ones.

Locally adapted seeds are key for food sufficiency and regional climate resilience. Therefore, preservation of locally adapted seeds is crucial to long-term sustainability.

Those who have difficulties visiting the Myanmar Seed office and farms are invited to participate in the Seed Exchange Programme. The Safe Food from Safe Farm Weekend Market, jointly im-

plemented by the Department of Agriculture and MFVP, was opened on 13 September 2025. Fresh produce, vegetables and value-added products, seedlings, fertilizer, eggs, frozen meat, fish, onion, rice, edible oil and rice are available at the farm.

Naturally produced fresh produce in the Safe Food from Safe Farm Market must be produced under Good Agricultural Practices or in compliance with an Organic Certificate. Chemical contamination is prohibited at the farm to ensure food safety.

Those business entities can register through <https://forms.gle/AsWzuJjcdRjYyb2G7> to sell their products and can enquire details at 0943034894. — NN/KK

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Gold Market Rate as of
2 April 2026

THE price of one tical (16.329325 grammes) of gold with density of 19.25 grammes per cubic centimetre and above is K7,100,000, as established by the Mineral (Gold) Reference Price Determination Committee.

OPINION

Forging Myanmar's best chapter in a new era

IN IMPLEMENTING the multiparty democratic system chosen by the people, the State must be built through the three pillars – the executive, legislative, and judicial branches – while ensuring mutual checks and balances among them. All efforts undertaken must be guided solely by the national interest for the country's development and progress.

At a time when successive national leaders are striving to enhance the State's interests and development, the success of nation-building efforts is of critical importance. For these efforts to succeed, nationwide peace and stability must prevail. Only then can development activities be carried out across all regions of the country. As long as some disrupt and undermine the State's initiatives, efforts to advance the nation will not achieve success. As a consequence, the benefits of development will not be enjoyed equally by the entire population.

Various groups and organizations within the country are acting in accordance with their own stances and positions. However, it is now time to reassess how many of their actions and stances truly benefit the public as a whole. It is necessary to reconsider whether acts such as the disruption and destruction of infrastructure, damage to the lives and property of civilians, and armed conflicts are beneficial to the country in either the short or long term.

As a democratically elected government is set to emerge, it is necessary to reassess whether the paths being pursued and the directions being taken are aligned with the current situation. Only when there is stability and peace at the regional level can there be nationwide stability, allowing citizens to live in peace and well-being. It can be understood by all that a stance is only correct if it can bring about stability and peace for one's region and ethnic communities. The absence of stability leads to armed conflicts, forcing civilians to sacrifice their lives and limbs, and in doing so, writes a painful chapter in the nation's history.

can there be nationwide stability, allowing citizens to live in peace and well-being. It can be understood by all that a stance is only correct if it can bring about stability and peace for one's region and ethnic communities. The absence of stability leads to armed conflicts, forcing civilians to sacrifice their lives and limbs, and in doing so, writes a painful chapter in the nation's history.

Therefore, every citizen and every organization should not prioritize only their own self-interest, but should act with selflessness in undertaking all actions that benefit their region, the country, and their fellow citizens. Whatever actions their organizations take are, in effect, writing their own history. That history will be judged by future generations based on the country's development, its stability and peace. Hence, the present time is a valuable opportunity for all citizens and for various organizations with differing beliefs to make their best efforts in shaping a positive legacy for their nation and its people.

BALANCING EXCESS AND OBSESSION THROUGH THE MIDDLE WAY TO REACH MODERATION AND FREEDOM

By AUGUSTIN

IN THIS article, I explore two Myanmar sayings that champion the Middle Way by showing how moderation turns habits into medicine and how selfless admiration, when balanced with equanimity, fosters true freedom and harmony within ourselves and our relationships.

I wrote this article for foreign readers who are studying the Myanmar language, so I have presented it in a bilingual format using both Myanmar and English.

တန်ဆေး လွန်ဘေး

မြန်မာလူမျိုးတို့ ကြားဖူးနားဝရှိကြတဲ့ "တန်ဆေး လွန်ဘေး" ဆိုတဲ့ စကားပုံဟာ ရိုးရှင်းပေမဲ့ အင်မတန် အဓိပ္ပာယ် နက်နဲပါတယ်။ ဘယ်အရာမဆို အတိုင်းအတာတစ်ခုအတွင်းမှာ မျှတစွာ လုပ်ဆောင်ရင် ဆေးသောက်သလို အကျိုးရှိစေပေမဲ့ လိုတာထက် ပိုသွားရင်တော့ ဘေးဥပဒ် ဖြစ်လာတတ်တယ်လို့ သတိပေးနေတာပါ။ ဒါကြောင့် ဘဝမှာ ဘယ်ဘက်ကိုမှ အစွန့်မရောက်စေဘဲ အလယ်အလတ် လမ်းစဉ် (မချီမပဋိပဒါ) အတိုင်း နေထိုင်တတ်ဖို့က အရေးကြီးတဲ့ ဆင်ခြင်တုံတရားပဲ ဖြစ်ပါတယ်။

"တန်ဆေး" ဖြစ်ဖို့ အတိုင်းအရှည် သိပါ "တန်ဆေး" ဆိုတဲ့ အပိုင်းမှာ စားသောက်မှုပုံစံက အကောင်းဆုံး သာမကပါ။ ရှေးလူကြီးတွေ ပြောဖူးတဲ့ ပုံပြင်လေးတစ်ပုဒ် ရှိပါတယ်။ တစ်ခါက လူတစ်ယောက်ဟာ အားဆေးကို တစ်နေ့တစ်လုံး သောက်ရမယ့်အစား "မြန်မြန်အားရှိချင်စေ" နဲ့ တစ်ခါတည်း အများကြီး သောက်မိလိုက်ပါတယ်။ ရလဒ်ကတော့ အားရှိလာဖို့ နေနေသာသာ ဆေးရှိန်လွန်ပြီး အိပ်ရာထဲ လဲသွားရရှာပါတယ်။ အားဆေးတွေက ကိုယ်ခန္ဓာအတွက် အကျိုးရှိပေမယ့် အလွန်အကျွံ အသုံးပြုတာဟာ အသုံးပြုနေတဲ့ ကျောက်ကပ် ထိခိုက်တာ၊ ဖိုက်အောင့်တာနဲ့ ဗီတာမင်အဆိပ်သင့်တာမျိုးတွေ ဖြစ်တတ်တယ်။

လက်ရှိမှာ AI Chatbots တွေကို ကျွန်ုပ်တို့အကြား အကြံပေးတဲ့ အခါမှာ သွေးတုံ့ပမာဏ (Doseage) တွေ ညွှန်ကြားမိလို့ လွန်အောင် ဘေးဖြစ်ရတဲ့ သတိပေးချက်တွေ (ECRI Health Technology Threats 2026) ထွက်ပေါ်နေပါတယ်။ "အတိုင်းအရှည်" ကို သိမြင်ဖို့ လိုအပ်ပုံဟာ အခုခေတ်သစ်မှာ ပိုပြီးတောင် အရေးကြီးလာပါတယ်။

နေ့စဉ်စားသောက်မှုမှာလည်း ဒီလိုပါပဲ။ ပျားရည်ဟာ ဆေးဖက်ဝင်တယ်ဆိုပေမဲ့ တန်ရုံစားရင် အကျိုးပြုပြီး၊ အလွန်အကျွံ စားမိရင်တော့ ဝမ်းဗိုက်မကောင်း ဖြစ်တတ်ပါတယ်။ အခုခေတ် ဖုန်းနဲ့ အင်တာနက် အသုံးပြု

မှုကို ကြည့်ရင်လည်း အကျိုးရှိအောင် သုံးနိုင်ရင် "ဆေး" ဖြစ်ပေမဲ့ လိုတာထက်ပိုပြီး အလွန်အကျွံ သုံးစွဲမိရင်တော့ အချိန်ပြုန်းတီးရာ ရောက်သလို ကျန်းမာရေးနဲ့ လူမှုဆက်ဆံရေးကိုပါ ထိခိုက်စေပါတယ်။ ၂၀၂၆ ခုနှစ်ရဲ့ World Happiness Report မှာ ဆိုရှယ်မီဒီယာ အလွန်အကျွံသုံးစွဲခြင်းဟာ လူငယ်တွေရဲ့ စိတ်ကျန်းမာရေးကို တစ်ကမ္ဘာလုံးအတိုင်းအတာနဲ့ ထိခိုက်စေနေကြောင်း သတိပေးထားပါတယ်။ တစ်နေ့ကို ဆိုရှယ်မီဒီယာ ၃ နာရီထက်ပိုသုံးရင် စိတ်ကျန်းမာရေးပြဿနာဖြစ်နိုင်ခြေ ၂ ဆ မြင့်တက်လာတယ်လို့ ဆရာဝန်တွေက ထောက်ပြကြပါတယ်။

ကျွန်တော်တို့ရဲ့ နေ့စဉ်ဘဝမှာ အလုပ်ကိုပဲ စိလုပ်ပြီး မိသားစုနဲ့ ကျန်းမာရေးကို လျစ်လျူရှုမိရင် ကျန်းမာရေး ပျက်ပြားသွားတာ၊ မိသားစု အဆင်မပြေ ဖြစ်သွားတာမျိုးတွေဟာ ရလဒ်တွေပါပဲ။

အခုအခါမှာ ကုမ္ပဏီအများအပြားဟာ Burnout (အလုပ်ပန်းပြီး စိတ်ကုန်ခြင်း) ကို ကာကွယ်ဖို့အတွက် "Psychological Safety" နဲ့ အလုပ်ချိန် လျှော့ချခြင်းတွေကို မဟာဗျူဟာမြောက် လုပ်ဆောင်လာကြပါတယ်။ "Quiet Cracking" လို့ခေါ်တဲ့ အလုပ်ထဲမှာ စိတ်ဓာတ်ကျပြီး လှုပ်ရှားတဲ့ အခြေအနေကို ကာကွယ်ဖို့ "မျှတမှု" ကို အဓိကထားလာကြတာပါ။

တစ်ခါတလေမှာ စေတနာလာလည်း "ဘေး" ဖြစ်တတ်ပါသေးတယ်။ အပင်စိုက်တဲ့အခါ မြန်မြန်ကြီးစေချင်တဲ့ စေတနာနဲ့ ရေကို တစ်နေ့ကုန် လောင်းနေမယ်ဆိုရင် အပင်လေးဟာ လန်းဆန်းမလာဘဲ အမြစ်ပုပ်ပြီး သေသွားတတ်ပါတယ်။

၂၀၂၆ ခုနှစ်ဟာ ကုလသမဂ္ဂက သတ်မှတ်ထားတဲ့ International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists ဖြစ်ပါတယ်။ မြေယာတွေကို အလွန်အကျွံ အသုံးမချဘဲ စနစ်တကျ ပြန်လည်ပြုစုပျိုးထောင်ဖို့ (Land Degradation Neutrality) ကမ္ဘာတစ်ဝန်းမှာ ကြိုးပမ်းနေကြတာဟာ "တန်ရုံပဲ အသုံးပြုတတ်ဖို့" ဆိုတဲ့ သင်ခန်းစာနဲ့ ဆက်စပ်နေပါတယ်။

လူမှုဆက်ဆံရေးမှာလည်း တစ်ဖက်လူကို ကူညီချင်တဲ့ စေတနာက ကောင်းပေမဲ့ သူတို့ရဲ့ ကိုယ်ပိုင်လွတ်လပ်ခွင့်ကို ထိပါတဲ့ အထိ ဝင်ရောက်စွက်ဖက်မိရင် အဲဒီစေတနာဟာ ဝန်ထုပ်ဝန်ပိုးဖြစ်စေပြီး ရန်သူလိုတောင် ဖြစ်သွားတတ်ပါတယ်။

"တန်ဆေး လွန်ဘေး" ဆိုတာ ကျွန်တော်တို့ ဘဝအတွက် လမ်းပြပေးနေတဲ့ အိမ်ခြေခွင်တစ်ခုပါပဲ။ စားသောက်တာ၊ အလုပ်လုပ်တာက အစ အပြောအဆို၊ အပြုအမူနဲ့ စိတ်နေစိတ်ထားတွေအထိ အရာရာမှာ "တန်ရုံပဲ" ဆိုတဲ့ အသိတရားလေး ရှိနေဖို့ လိုပါတယ်။ ဘယ်အရာမဆို အတိုင်းအရှည်ကို သိမြင်တတ်သူဟာ ဘေးအန္တရာယ်တွေကနေ ကင်း

ဝေးပြီး သာယာတဲ့ဘဝကို တည်ဆောက်နိုင်မှာပါ။ ဒါကြောင့် မိမိတို့ရဲ့ နေ့စဉ်ဘဝမှာ ဆင်ခြင်တုံတရားလက်ကိုင်ထားပြီး အေးအေးချမ်းချမ်း ရှေ့ဆက်သွားကြရအောင် လိုတိုကဲတွန်းချင်ပါတယ်။

"In moderation, medicine; in excess, danger"

The Myanmar proverb "Tan Say, Lun Bay" — "In moderation, medicine; in excess, danger" — teaches us that balance turns good things beneficial, like the right dose of medicine, while extremes make them harmful. Living



တန်ဆေး လွန်ဘေး

the "Middle Way" keeps life peaceful by avoiding overdoing anything.

The key is knowing the proper "dosage." A man once gulped a whole bottle of vitamins to build strength fast; he ended up sick in bed from an overdose. Today, 2026 health reports warn against trusting AI chatbots blindly for medical advice, as wrong dosages can prove deadly. Honey aids health in spoonfuls but upsets stomachs in excess.

Smartphones boost productivity in limits, yet endless scrolling steals time — the 2026 World Happiness Report notes that over three hours daily on social media doubles youth mental health risks.

In work, nonstop focus burns out families and health. Success built on exhaustion breeds "Quiet Cracking," where people show up but fade inside. Smart firms now enforce shorter hours and "Psychological Safety" to fight burnout and restore balance.

Even nature suffers extremes. Overwatering a plant from eagerness

rots its roots, killing it — just as overusing land harms ecosystems. The 2026 International Year of Rangelands stresses "Land Degradation Neutrality," urging measured resource use.

Kindness, too, needs limits. Helping crosses into burden when it invades privacy, sparking resentment. "Tan Say, Lun Bay" guides eating, working, relating, and thinking. Spot the right limits, dodge life's traps, and craft true harmony.

The Myanmar proverb "Tan Say, Lun Bay" delivers a timeless lesson:

ချင်တယ်။ ဒါက ကောင်းတဲ့အဆင့်ပါ။ ဒါပေမဲ့ အတိုင်းအဆ မရှိတော့တဲ့အခါ ပိုင်းပိုင်းနင်းစိတ်တွေ ဝင်လာတတ်တယ်။ ဒါကို "တဏှာကျွံ" တယ်လို့ ဆိုလိုတာပါ။

လောကမှာ ချစ်တာပဲဖြစ်ဖြစ်၊ ကြည့်ညှိတာပဲဖြစ်ဖြစ် အစွန်းရောက်သွားရင် ကိုယ့်စိတ်က ပူလောင်လာရတယ်။ ကိုယ်က ကောင်းစေချင်လို့ လုပ်ပေးတာပဲဆိုတဲ့ အကြောင်းပြချက်နဲ့ တစ်ဖက်လူကို ချုပ်ကိုင်မိသလို ဖြစ်သွားတတ်လို့ပါ။

လူတစ်ယောက်ကို ခင်တာ၊ ကြည့်ညှိတာဟာ အပြစ်မဟုတ်ပေမဲ့ "ကိုယ်ချင်းစာတရားနဲ့ အသိတရား" တော့ လိုပါတယ်။ အဲဒီလိုမှမဟုတ်ရင် ကိုယ့်ရဲ့ သဒ္ဓါတရား



"သဒ္ဓါလွန်တော့ တဏှာကျွံ"

က အချစ်များ၊ အစွမ်းတွေဖြစ်တဲ့ တဏှာဘက်ကို ရောက်သွားနိုင်တယ်လို့ ဆိုလိုတာပါပဲ။

"သဒ္ဓါလွန်တော့ တဏှာကျွံ" ဆိုတဲ့ စကားလေးက အင်မတန်မှန်ကန်တဲ့ စိတ်ပညာတစ်ခုပါပဲ။

အစပိုင်းမှာတော့ လူတစ်ယောက်ကို သဒ္ဓါတရားနဲ့ စုံကြည့်ညှိကြတာပါ။ ဒီအဆင့်မှာက ကိုယ်က ပေးဆပ်ချင်တယ်၊ သူ့အတွက် ကောင်းပေးချင်တယ်၊ စေတနာတွေ သန့်စင်နေသေးတယ်။

ပြဿနာက အဲဒီကြည့်ညှိစိတ်မှာ Balance (မျှခြေ) မရှိတော့တဲ့အခါ စတာပါပဲ။ "ငါက သူ့အပေါ် ဒီလောက် စေတနာထားတာ၊ သူကတော့ ငါ့ကိုပဲ ပြန်နို့စားပေးသင့်တယ်" ဆိုတဲ့ အတွေ့ဝင်လာပြီဆိုရင် ဒါ သဒ္ဓါ မဟုတ်တော့ဘူး။ "တဏှာ" ဘက်ကို ကူးသွားပြီ။ ဒီလိုမျိုး ပိုင်းပိုင်းနင်းစိတ် ဝင်လာတာကို "တဏှာကျွံတယ်" လို့ ခေါ်တာပါ။

တကယ်တော့ အဲဒီစေတနာတွေထဲမှာ "ကိုယ့်စိတ်တိုင်းက ဖြစ်စေချင်တဲ့ အတွဲ" က ဝင်နေတာပါ။ အဲဒီအခါမှာ ကိုယ်တိုင်လည်း မရောင့်ရဲနိုင်တော့ဘဲ ပူလောင်လာရသလို၊ တစ်ဖက်လူအတွက်လည်း နာကျင်စရာ အနေအထားတွေ ဖြစ်သွားတော့တာပါ။

လောကမှာ "လွန်ကဲခြင်း" မှန်သမျှဟာ ဘေးဥပဒ် ဖြစ်စေတာချည်းပါပဲ။ ဥပေက္ခာ/ မျှတတဲ့စိတ် ဆိုတာလေး ခံထားဖို့ လိုပါတယ်။

"သဒ္ဓါလွန်တော့ တဏှာကျွံ" ဆိုတဲ့ သဘောတရားဟာ မြန်မာ့ယဉ်ကျေးမှုဝင် မကဘဲ တစ်ကမ္ဘာလုံးက လူသားတွေရဲ့ စိတ်နေစိတ်ထားမှာလည်း ရှိနေတတ်ပါတယ်။

ရှေးဟောင်းဂရိပြင်ထဲက ပန်းပုပညာရှင် Pygmalion ရဲ့ အကြောင်းဟာ "သဒ္ဓါလွန်" တာရဲ့ ပြယုဂ်ပါပဲ။ သူဟာ သူထူဆစိတ်ထားတဲ့ ဆင်စွယ်ရုပ်တုလေးကို အရမ်းတတ်တယ်၊ အရမ်းလှတယ်ဆိုပြီး အားပေးကြည့်ညှိရာကနေ (သဒ္ဓါ) နောက်ဆုံးမှာ အဲဒီရုပ်တုကို "ငါ့အပိုင်ပဲ ဖြစ်ရမယ်။ သက်ရှိဖြစ်လာရမယ်" ဆိုတဲ့အထိ အစွဲအလမ်းကြီးသွားခဲ့တာ (တဏှာကျွံခြင်း) ပါ။ အခုခေတ်မှာဆိုရင် Celebrity တွေကို

But imbalance creeps in silently. Thoughts shift: "I've given so much; they owe me their focus." Faith morphs into raw craving that demands control over their choices, friends, or time. This "Tanhar Kywan" stage turns care into ownership, breeding jealousy and demands.

A timeless proverb captures it: "In moderation, medicine; in excess, poison." Balanced love nurtures; extremes scorch the mind, leaving restlessness. You justify it as "their best interest," yet you trap them, dimming your own peace too.

Stories echo this truth. Pygmalion's love for his statue grew obsessive, craving life from stone — beauty became torment. Fans idolize stars with respect, then stalk or dictate romances, poisoning fandom. In Japan's Crane Wife tale, a husband's awe at his wife's weaving turned greedy; his pressure unravelled their bond. Overparenting cages kids in "love," stifling growth for parental pride.

Balance is key. Cultivate equanimity — a steady mind honouring others' freedom. Pure faith thrives here, free of fire. Neglect it, and kindness burns into selfish chains, harming all.

The key lesson from "Excessive faith leads to excessive craving" is clear: pure admiration and love thrive only with balance and equanimity. Cherish someone's qualities through selfless support, but always respect their independence — never let devotion twist into control or ownership. A calm, steady mind honours freedom, turning care into true nourishment; without it, even kindness ignites a selfish fire that scorches relationships and leaves everyone trapped. Practice awareness daily to keep faith healthy and light.

NATIONAL

MR to initiate ORTP online ticket service fee from 4 Apr



This image displays Myanmar Railways' announcement stating that it will charge a service fee for purchasing train tickets through the ORTP system.



Passengers are pictured boarding the train at the Yangon Railway Station.

MYANMA Railways has announced that, from 4 April, a service fee will be charged for on-line train ticket purchases made through the ORTP system on the Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw-Mandalay route.

A service fee of K200 will apply, although children under the age of three and passengers without seats will be exempt.

An official from Myanmar Railways explained that no additional charges apply beyond the service fee. Tickets can be purchased either online or at railway stations via the ORTP system, and no intermediary or

representative is required for individuals or organizations. The system has been under trial at stations along the Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw-Mandalay route since 1 February, making ticket purchasing easier and more convenient.

At present, services operating on this route include trains 7 Up/8 Down Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw-Yangon DEMU, 31 Up/32 Down Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw-Yangon DEMU, 33 Up/34 Down Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw-Yangon DEMU, 11 Up/12 Down Yangon-Mandalay-Yangon, and 27 Up/28 Down Nay Pyi Taw-Mandalay Airbag. — ASH/MKKS

Yangon Zoo leads efforts to save brown-headed spider monkeys

THE Yangon Zoo has invited visitors to explore the world of brown-headed spider monkeys, which are critically endangered and need human protection.

Brown-headed spider monkeys inhabit tropical and humid forests at elevations above 100 to 1,700 metres in Central America and northern South America. They possess a thin body with extremely long arms and legs, and their tail is longer than their body. They use it as a fifth arm to swing, climb among trees, and look for food.

They prefer living in thick forests, and they are now threatened with extinction due to the depletion of natural forests and poaching, said the zoo.

They are active during the day and spend most of their time in the trees. They can jump nearly nine metres or more than 30 feet with the help of their long and thin body.

It depends on the responsibility and ability of humans to give protection and help their reproductive process to succeed, the zoo stated.

Visitors are welcome to come and learn about brown-headed spider monkeys, as they need the protection of humans, said the zoo. — MT/ZS



This photo captures brown-headed spider monkeys facing the threat of extinction at the Yangon Zoo.

MPT's 'Zein Zein' New Year Promo offers EV, K45M, iPhone 17s, and data

TO celebrate the Myanmar New Year, MPT launched its new 'Zein Zein' promotion on 2 April, offering customers the chance to win a brand-new electric vehicle (EV), cash prizes totalling K45 million, iPhone 17s, and numerous data rewards.

The promotion runs from 2 April to 30 June and consists of three main categories: Join & Get: Register and receive immediate gifts; Top Up & Play: Top up your mobile balance to play games for prizes; and Buy Packs & Win: Purchase data packs to enter the grand lucky draw. Through these programmes, users can compete for the Grand



This image highlights the launching ceremony of MPT's Zein Zein promotion.

Prize (one brand-new EV), monthly cash prizes of K3 million per winner, iPhone 17s, and daily data bonuses.

All MPT users can join for free through their preferred method. MPT noted that the more packs a customer purchases, the more lucky draw tickets they earn, signif-

icantly increasing their chances of winning the grand prizes. Winners will be selected transparently via a random system during live-stream events.

Mr Yoshinori Yagi, Chief Commercial Officer of MPT-JO, stated, "Every action we take is centred around our customers. To welcome

the Myanmar New Year and show our gratitude to the users who have consistently trusted and supported MPT, we are proud to introduce the 'Zein Zein' promotion". This campaign is designed not only to offer exciting prizes but also to provide better value and joyful digital experiences in our customers' daily lives, strengthening the bond between us."

Customers interested in this promotion can visit the official MPT website, use the Tu Tu Chat bot for instant queries, check the MPT4U App, visit the MPT Viber channel, or contact the 106 Call Centre. — MT/ZN

MPA calls for entries to 2026 Quarterly Photographic Competition

THE Myanmar Photographic Society in Yangon is inviting photographers to take part in its 2026 Quarterly Photography Competitions.

The first competition, open until 3 April, features the Black and White (B/W) category for Portraits and the Colour category for Landscapes.

The second competition will run until 30 June, with themes of Daily Life in the B/W category and Flowers in the Colour category. The third competition, open until 30 September, will include Human and Animal subjects in the B/W category and Ethnic themes in the Colour category.

The fourth and final competition will accept entries until 31 December, featuring Human and Work in the B/W category and Festivals in the Colour category.

Participants may submit only one photograph, either eight inches or 12 inches in size, and entries must be sent to



A black and white photo. PHOTO - KO LWIN
mps1950domain@gmail.com. — Oktha/MKKS



An artisan displays an eggshell porcelain bowl in Jingdezhen, east China's Jiangxi Province, 10 March 2026. **PHOTO: ZHOU MI/XINHUA**

Jingdezhen's answer to AI: What makes us truly human?

Jingdezhen's resilience lies in its paradox: it embraces innovation while preserving unpredictability and emotion as essential human qualities.

JINGDEZHEN, China's 1,700-year-old "porcelain capital", embodies the enduring relationship between human skill and creation. The city's pottery tradition rests on the unity of mind and hand — where porcelain becomes an expression of human thought passing through earth and fire.

Though modern technology now shapes parts of the craft — AI-assisted kilns, data-driven precision, and blockchain authentication —

the city resists full automation.

Craftsmen like kiln master Hu Jiawang stress that while machines can enhance efficiency, only humans impart "soul" through imperfection and feeling.

Jingdezhen's resilience lies in its paradox: it embraces innovation while preserving unpredictability and emotion as essential human qualities.

The kiln's fire remains alive, producing unique results each time, reflecting

the artisan's mood and spirit. In a world dominated by algorithms, the city offers a counterpoint — celebrating the tactile, the imperfect, and the true.

Attracting artists worldwide, Jingdezhen has evolved into a laboratory of humanity, where tradition and technology coexist. Its diverse creators draw from science, mythology, and culture yet submit their works to the same fire.

— Xinhua

Indian painting sells for record \$17.9 million

AN Indian oil painting by celebrated 19th century artist Raja Ravi Varma has sold for a record \$17.9 million at auction in Mumbai, the highest price ever paid for a modern Indian artwork.

Mumbai-based auction house Saffronart said the painting, "Yashoda and Krishna", depicting the Hindu god Krishna with his mother while she milks a cow, was also the highest paid for a Varma artwork in an auction worldwide.

The oil on canvas painting was put up for auction on Wednesday, far surpassing its estimated price of \$8.6 million-\$12.9

million.

"It is... the highest value work by an Indian artist sold at auction globally," Saffronart said.

The Times of India newspaper said the painting was bought by industrialist and vaccine tycoon Cyrus Poonawala.

"This national treasure deserves to be made available for public viewing periodically," Poonawala told the newspaper, adding that he would "endeavour to facilitate this".

Varma, born in 1848, is known for his use of European technique in the context of Indian narratives. — AFP



Raja Ravi Varma's Yashoda and Krishna (1890s) is now the most expensive Indian painting sold at auction. **PHOTO: SAFFRONART**



A cyclist is stopped by police officers in Tokyo on 1 April 2026. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Japan launches "blue ticket" system targeting rule-breaking cyclists

JAPAN launched a "blue ticket" system Wednesday allowing police to crack down on cycling violations such as using smartphones while riding as the country toughens its measures to curb accidents amid a cycling boom.

The system under the revised Road Traffic Act targets a total of 113 relatively minor violations with fines of up to 12,000 yen (\$76). They range from ignoring

traffic lights and stop signs to entering closed railroad crossings and riding on sidewalks. It applies to people aged 16 and older.

Under the law, police are allowed to bypass written or verbal warnings and immediately fine people for high-risk offences that can cause accidents.

The maximum 12,000 yen fine is set for distracted cycling, which covers not

only making phone calls while riding but also staring at a screen fixed on a bicycle phone mount.

Other offences expected to result in immediate fines without warning include entering a railway crossing while its barriers are lowered, with a penalty of 7,000 yen, and riding fixed-gear bicycles and other brakeless bikes, with a 5,000 yen penalty. — Kyodo

ECONOMY WORLD

India-Australia ECTA completes four years, India's exports to Australia more than double



Indian-made ready-made garments, cotton fabrics, and consumer textiles hold a major share in the Australian market. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ANI/FILE**

Over the past four years, the Agreement has continued to strengthen bilateral economic engagement.

THE India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (Ind-Aus ECTA) completes four years since its signing on Thursday, marking an important milestone in the evolving economic partnership between India and Australia, stated the Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

Since its signing on 2 April 2022, the Agreement has played a pivotal role in enhancing trade flows, fostering industry linkages, and creating new opportunities for businesses, entrepreneurs, and employment in both countries.

Over the past four years, the Agreement has continued to strengthen bilateral economic engagement, with both sides benefiting from improved market access and reduced trade barriers. India's exports to Australia have more than doubled, rising from US\$4 billion in FY 2020-21 to US\$8.5 billion in FY 2024-25.

During 2024-25, total bilateral trade stood at US\$24.1 billion, while India's exports to Australia recorded an eight per cent growth over the previous year. In FY 2025-26 (up to February), India's total trade with Australia stood at US\$19.3 billion. — ANI

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mideast tensions cloud Malaysia's manufacturing growth

ECONOMISTS cautioned on Thursday that rising costs linked to ongoing Middle East tensions could weigh on Malaysia's economic momentum, even as the manufacturing sector returned to expansion in March with the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) climbing to its highest level in nearly four years.

The March rebound suggests February's weakness was largely seasonal. Activity has normalized and should extend into April, Kenanga Research said in a note.

However, the research house noted that the demand remains uneven with rising logistics, energy and raw material costs due to Middle East tensions, which will remain a key headwind and could limit the pace of recovery. — Xinhua

S Korea's online shopping hits new high in February

SOUTH Korea's online shopping hit a new high in February due to the effect of the Lunar New Year's holidays, statistical ministry data showed Wednesday. Shopping online increased 5.9 per cent over the year to 22.60 trillion won (US\$14.95 billion) in February, according to the Ministry of Data and Statistics. It surpassed all previous records for the month since relevant data began to be compiled in 2017. The record figure was attributed to strong demand for food, driven by the Lunar New Year's holidays.

Online sales of food and beverages and the agricultural, livestock and fishery products surged in double digits, while demand for food delivery service and leisure and transport service advanced in single figures. — Xinhua

20 local govts including Hokkaido introduce new lodging tax

TWENTY local governments including Hokkaido and Hiroshima prefectures on Wednesday introduced a new lodging tax for people staying in hotels and other accommodations.

The move more than doubles the number of local governments adopting the tax system from 19 previously, highlighting a growing effort to

improve tourism infrastructure and address overtourism as the number of foreign visitors rises. In Hokkaido, northern Japan, a prefecture-wide system has been implemented, with visitors charged a tax ranging from 100 yen (\$0.6) to 500 yen, depending on the cost of their accommodation.

In addition, 15 municipal-

ities in Hokkaido have introduced their own tax systems. For example, in the capital Sapporo, visitors must pay the prefectural accommodation tax plus an additional 200 yen for stays costing 50,000 yen or less per night per person, or an additional 500 yen for stays costing more than 50,000 yen per night per person. — Kyodo



The Niseko ski resort in Hokkaido's Kutchan is crowded with visitors, including foreign tourists, on 2 February 2026. **PHOTO: KYODO**

India waives customs duty on key petrochemicals amid ME crisis

THE Indian government on Thursday announced full customs duty exemption on a range of critical petrochemical products to ensure supply stability and shield the domestic industry and consumers from the impact of disruptions caused by the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

The exemption, which covers 40 key products, including anhydrous ammonia, methanol, toluene, styrene, vinyl chloride monomer and polybutadiene, will remain in force until 30 June. According to the federal Ministry of Finance, the move was a temporary

and targeted relief measure aimed at ensuring the continued availability of

key petrochemical inputs, reducing cost pressures on downstream sectors and

safeguarding supply stability amid global volatility. — Xinhua



The Indian government announced full customs duty exemption on a range of critical petrochemical products to ensure supply stability. PHOTO: ANI

Citigroup orders telework as US banks in Paris tighten security

CITIGROUP has urged staff in Paris and Frankfurt to work from home, a company spokeswoman said Thursday, as US banks step up security following a thwarted attack against another US financial institution over the weekend.

“The safety of our employees is our number one priority, and we are taking the necessary measures to keep our employees safe,” she said.

“Employees in Paris/Frankfurt are working remotely, as a precautionary measure,” she added.

Police have also deployed surveillance outside the Paris office-

es of US bank Goldman Sachs in the city’s 8th arrondissement, near the Champs-Elysees, a police source said.

The operation is part of heightened police vigilance to protect US interests and Jewish community sites in France over concerns about potential attacks linked to the war in the Middle East.

French authorities have charged four people — a young adult and three minors — and placed them in pre-trial detention after someone placed an explosive device outside a Bank of America branch in Paris before dawn on Saturday. — AFP



Citigroup has urged staff in Paris and Frankfurt to work from home. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V EAST BANGKOK VOY.NO. (SW2604)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V EAST BANGKOK VOY.NO. (SW2604)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **2-4-2026** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT-2** where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 A.M to 11:20 A.M and 12 NOON to 4 P.M to Claim’s Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

Phone No: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S WILHELMSSEN PORT SERVICES (S) PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SITC GUANGDONG VOY.NO. (2606S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SITC GUANGDONG VOY.NO. (2606S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **3-4-2026** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 A.M to 11:20 A.M and 12 NOON to 4 P.M to Claim’s Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SITC CONTAINER LINE CO., LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V FSL SINGAPORE VOY.NO. (240N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V FSL SINGAPORE VOY.NO. (240N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **3-4-2026** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 A.M to 11:20 A.M and 12 NOON to 4 P.M to Claim’s Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V UNI ACCORD VOY.NO. (844N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V UNI ACCORD VOY.NO. (844N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **3-4-2026** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 A.M to 11:20 A.M and 12 NOON to 4 P.M to Claim’s Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S EVERGREEN MARINE (ASIA) PTE., LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MTT SAPANGAR VOY.NO. (611W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MTT SAPANGAR VOY.NO. (611W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **3-4-2026** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 A.M to 11:20 A.M and 12 NOON to 4 P.M to Claim’s Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S MAERSK A/S.

ROLLING UPDATES WORLD

War in the Middle East: latest developments

Here are the latest developments in the Middle East war:

Chinese FM says to work with Bahrain to promote end of war

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Thursday that China stands ready to work with Bahrain to promote the end of war, restore peace and achieve lasting stability in the Middle East.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made the remarks in a phone call with Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani.

Trump threatens to hit Iran "extremely hard"

While saying the United States is "nearing completion" of its core objectives in Iran, US President Donald Trump on Wednesday night threatened to hit Iran "extremely hard over the next two to three weeks", a timeline he has recently set for ending the monthlong war.

"I can say tonight that we are on track to complete all of America's military objectives very shortly. We are going to hit them extremely hard over the next two to three weeks. We're



Iranians gathered in Tehran on Wednesday to attend a funeral ceremony for Alireza Tangsiri, chief commander of the Navy of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), and other armed forces personnel killed in recent US and Israeli strikes. **PHOTO: SHADATI/XINHUA**

going to bring them back to the Stone Ages where they belong," Trump said in a primetime address to the nation.

Iran condemns deadly US bombing of sports hall

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei

on Thursday condemned a US attack on a sports hall in the southern Fars province, which killed 21 teenagers, calling it a "despicable war crime".

In a post on social media platform X, Baghaei said the strike on 28 February marked the combat debut of

the US Precision Strike Missile (PrSM), which exploded above the crowded hall in the city of Lamerd, "dispersing thousands of lethal fragments (tungsten pellets) to maximize casualties".

Iran vows unrelenting war

until "enemies" surrender

Iran's main military command, Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, said on Thursday the war will continue until the "enemies" surrender, according to the semi-official Fars news agency.

The headquarters spokesman Ebrahim Zolfaghari warned of "more crushing, expanded and devastating actions" in response to the US and Israeli attacks.

Strikes across Iran hit civilian infrastructure

Strikes across Iran hit civilian infrastructure, compounding relief needs as Middle East aid workers struggle with access constraints, UN humanitarians said on Wednesday.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said the airstrikes in Iran have severely affected essential services. Iran's Ministry of Health reported 309 health facilities and 42 ambulances have been damaged, with seven hospitals evacuated since the attacks began on 28 February. — Xinhua

World-class pile-driving vessel delivered in east China

A dynamic positioning pile-driving vessel, featuring a pile frame height of 156 metres, has been delivered in Nantong, east China's Jiangsu Province.

Invested and built by the China Railway Construction Bridge Engineering Group Co., Ltd, the vessel measures 130.5 metres in length, 40.8 metres in width, and 8.4 metres in depth.

The vessel has a maximum operational water depth of 70 metres and can install pile foundations with a diameter of 7 metres and a weight of 700 tonnes. — Xinhua

France considers reform for New Caledonia

FRANCE'S parliament rejected a proposed law Thursday to grant New Caledonia partial statehood under the Bougival Accord, aiming to stabilize the Pacific archipelago amid independence tensions.

New Caledonia, a French overseas territory since 1853 with 270,000 residents between Australia and Fiji, is rich in nickel vital for EV batteries. Indigenous Kanaks (40 per cent of population) face poverty disparities compared to European descendants (Caldoches).

Tensions trace to 1878 uprisings and 1980s violence, leading to the 1998 Noumea Accord granting autonomy and three referendums (2018-2021) favouring staying with France — though Kanaks boycotted the last.

2024 riots killed 14 after voting reforms threatened Kanak electoral power. The accord proposed a "State of New Caledonia" with local nationality, no more referendums, and voting rights for post-1998 residents after 10 years. Pro-independence FLNKS opposes it as blocking sovereignty. — AFP



Indigenous Melanesians known as Kanaks make up around 40 per cent of the population, according to a 2019 census. **PHOTO: AFP**

SPORTS

League champions earn spots in international competitions



This image highlights Shan United – a team with multiple record achievements in domestic competitions. **PHOTO: SOE NYUNT THAW**

THE 2025-2026 Myanmar National League champions Shan United and Myanmar Women's League winners Ayeyawady Women's Team will represent Myanmar in international club competitions next season.

Shan United will compete in two tournaments – the ASEAN Club Championship organized by the ASEAN Football Federation, and the AFC Challenge League organized by the Asian Football Confederation. The ASEAN Club Champion-

ship is being revived after nearly two decades, and Shan United will take part for a third consecutive time.

Under the AFC's revamped club competition structure introduced from the 2024-2025 season, Myanmar clubs qualify for the AFC Challenge League. Shan United previously competed in the group stage, while Yangon United featured in the qualifying round, with Shan United set to participate again next season. Despite strong do-

mestic success, the club will need improved preparation to achieve better results internationally.

Meanwhile, Ayeyawady Women's Team will compete in the qualifiers for the AFC Women's Champions League, also organized by the Asian Football Confederation. The team not only secured their first domestic league title but will also make their debut appearance in Asia's top women's club competition. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL



This image features Joshua Van celebrating his victor. **PHOTO: UFC**

Joshua Van to defend title for first time on 12 Apr

MYANMAR fighter Joshua Van will make his first world title defence, facing Japanese fighter Tatsuro Iro on 11 April (12 April Myanmar Time) at UFC 327 in Miami, USA.

Joshua Van joined the renowned UFC in 2023 and became a world champion within just over two years. In his professional MMA career, he has fought 18 matches, winning 16 and losing two, while in 10 UFC fights, he has won nine and lost one. Van went

on a six-fight winning streak in UFC before becoming champion.

He won the world title after defeating Brazilian fighter Pantogar by knockout on 6 December, and now, four months later, he will defend his title for the first time. His opponent, Japanese fighter Tatsuro Iro, has fought 19 professional MMA matches, winning 18 and losing one, and once achieved a 16-fight winning streak in his career. — Shine Htet Zaw/KZL

France moves to No 1 in FIFA rankings

FRANCE has returned to the top of the FIFA world rankings for the first time in nearly eight years, climbing to No 1 in the latest standings released Wednesday following a strong run of results in the March international window.

Friendly wins over Brazil and Colombia lifted France above Spain and Argentina, with Les Bleus reclaiming top spot for the first time since September 2018 in a tightly contested top three separated by only marginal points differences. Spain, which had held the lead since September 2025, slipped to second after a 0-0 draw with Egypt, while world champion Argentina dropped to third.

England remains fourth, while Portugal moves up to fifth ahead of Brazil after taking a win and a draw in its latest fixtures, capitalizing on Brazil's defeat to France. The remainder of the top 10 is unchanged, with the Neth-



Desire Doue struck twice as a much-changed France beat Colombia 3-1 in a friendly in the United States on 29 March. **PHOTO: AFP**

erlands, Morocco, Belgium and Germany holding their positions.

Morocco stays eighth in the rankings with 1,755.87 points, maintaining its status as Africa's highest-ranked team. Senegal follows in 14th, with Nigeria (26th), Algeria (28th) and Egypt (29th) completing the continent's top five. — Xinhua

FA Cup quarterfinals on the return to international break

THE Premier League pauses after the international break for FA Cup quarterfinals this weekend, creating an unusual three-week gap for some top clubs amid the season's climax.

Chelsea hosts League One's bottom side Port Vale at Stamford Bridge. Coach Liam Rosenior faces mounting pressure after recent losses to Newcastle, Everton, and an 8-2 Champions League thrashing by PSG. A convincing win is expected but vital.

Manchester City welcomes Liverpool in the marquee clash. Pep Guardiola eyes a cup double post-Carabao Cup success, with City out of Europe and trailing Arsenal by nine points. Arne Slot must



The Premier League pauses after the international break for FA Cup quarterfinals this weekend. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

balance FA Cup hopes against a midweek Champions League trip to PSG, boosted by returns of Hugo Ekitike, Mohamed Salah, Alisson, and nearing Alexander Isak.

Arsenal travels to second-division Southampton, with injury concerns over Declan Rice, Bukayo Saka, and

others from internationals—though Martin Odegaard is fit. Mikel Arteta needs a strong lineup.

West Ham vs. Leeds United pits relegation battlers in a tight affair, where cup progress offers respite but league survival trumps all. — Xinhua

War in the Middle East:
latest developments

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WORLD

Iranian president writes to American people

President Pezeshkian emphasized that Iran has “never chosen the path of aggression” in its modern history, despite facing invasions and international pressure.

IRANIAN President Masoud Pezeshkian has issued an open letter to the American public, calling on them to look beyond the “machinery of misinformation” amid the ongoing US-Israeli war against his country.

Portraying Iran as a threat is “the product of political and economic whims of the powerful - the need to manufacture an enemy in order to justify pressure, maintain military dominance, sustain the arms industry, and control strategic markets”, he said.

“If a threat does not exist, it is invented.”

Throughout its modern history, Iran “has never chosen the path of aggression, expansion, colonialism, or domination”, despite having endured occupation, invasion, and sustained pressure from global powers, he noted.

“The Iranian people harbour no enmity towards other nations, including the people of America, Europe, or neighbouring countries.”

The open letter was posted on X just hours before US President Donald Trump’s national address, in which he claimed “decisive, overwhelming victories” in the war. — Xinhua



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian argues that global powers often manufacture an “enemy” to justify military spending, sustain the arms industry, and maintain strategic dominance over foreign markets. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Astronauts head for Moon flyby in 1st manned exploration since Apollo era

A US spacecraft carrying four astronauts was launched Wednesday for a flight around the Moon in the first manned lunar exploration since the Apollo era half a century ago.

The astronauts of NASA’s Artemis II mission are scheduled to fly on the Orion spaceship for around 10 days, passing the Moon some 380,000 kilometres away before circling its far side and returning to Earth.

As the four — three Americans and one Canadian — are set to travel far beyond the Moon as part of the flight path, they are likely to surpass the current deep-space record for any human, made by the crew of Apollo 13 as it ventured some 400,000 kilometres away from Earth in 1970.

The Orion spacecraft, atop a 98-metre-tall Space Launch System rocket, took off from Kennedy Space Centre in Cape Canaveral, Florida, late Wednesday afternoon.

According to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Orion will spend approximately four days travelling to the Moon after circling Earth twice, during which the crew will test equipment and adjust its trajectory.

While circling behind the Moon, the spacecraft will change its trajectory toward Earth using lunar gravity, and spend around another four days travelling back home. It will splash down in the Pacific Ocean. Humankind last landed on the Moon in 1972, with Apollo 17. — Kyodo



The Orion spacecraft, atop a Space Launch System rocket, takes off from Kennedy Space Centre in Cape Canaveral, Florida, on 1 April 2026. **PHOTO: THE NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION/KYODO**

Extreme heat linked to low birth weights

EXPOSURE to extreme heat is increasing the risk of babies being born underweight, according to new research led by Australia’s Adelaide University.

The study analyzed health data from more than 85,000 mothers and babies in Pakistan, combining 10 years of birth records (2008-2017) with temperature data to assess how extreme heat affects birth weight, a statement from Adelaide University said Thursday.

The findings showed that 18 per cent of babies were found to have low birth weight, defined as weighing less than 2.5 kilogrammes or being described as smaller than average in size at birth.

The research, published in BMC Medicine, linked about 13 per cent of low-birth-weight cases to hot weather, a figure projected to rise by 8-10 per cent by the 2060s due to climate change. — Xinhua