

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.

Press release

THE Acting President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Chairman of the State Security and Peace Commission, and Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, was diagnosed with lumbar spondylosis accompanied by spinal stenosis caused by nerve compression.

He consequently underwent a two-hour emergency surgical procedure on 20 March 2026 at the No 2 Defence Services General Hospital (1,000-bed) in Nay Pyi Taw. The operation was jointly performed by medical specialists from India and the Tatmadaw medical team.

The surgery was successful, and the Senior General is reported to be in good health. He continues to carry out his State and Tatmadaw duties.

Information Team
National Defence and Security Council

Pyithu Hluttaw establishes Bill Committee, Public Accounts Committee



The second-day meeting of the first regular session of the Third Pyithu Hluttaw is underway yesterday, presided over by Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Khin Yi.

The first regular session of the Third Pyithu Hluttaw continued its second-day meeting at the convention hall of the Pyithu Hluttaw at Hluttaw Complex in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

The Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw announced that, out of a total of 373 Pyithu Hluttaw representatives eligible to attend the second day of the First Regular Session of the Third Pyithu Hluttaw, 371 representatives were present at today's meeting. With an attendance rate of 99.46

per cent, the session met the quorum requirement and was declared open. The attendance record was then submitted to the Hluttaw for approval and officially documented.

The Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker explained the formation of the Bill Committee while the Deputy Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw clarified the responsibilities, authority, rights, term and meetings of the Bill Committee.

The Speaker submitted a proposal

to the Hluttaw, stating that the Bill Committee will be formed with 15 members, chaired by Dr Nanda Kyaw Swa of Dagon Constituency, together with U Thein Tun Oo of Amarapura Constituency as the Secretary.

The Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker also explained the formation of the Public Accounts Committee, whereas the Deputy Speaker clarified the responsibilities, authority, rights, term and meetings of the Public Accounts Committee.

The Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker presented a proposal to the Hluttaw that the Public Accounts Committee will be constituted with 15 members led by U Teza Kyaw of Aungmyaythazan Constituency as the Chair and U Tin Aung Chit of Aunglan Constituency as the Secretary.

The second-day meeting of the first regular session of the Third Pyithu Hluttaw was adjourned, and the third-day meeting will be held at 10 am on 24 March. — MNA/TTA

NATIONAL

Regions Without Peace and Stability Cannot Achieve Development

* Just as development can be achieved in regions with stability and peace, no matter what political system is implemented, regions without stability and peace cannot achieve progress or development.

(An excerpt from the speech delivered by Acting President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Chairman of the State Security and Peace Commission Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting with Kayin State-level departmental officials and town elders in Hpa-an on 15 November 2025 to talk about regional development)

- 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.

Objectives of 81st Armed Forces Day

- (a) To participate in national politics in a leadership role of the country, not to deviate from the path of democracy in accordance with the fundamental principles of the Constitution, safeguarding the national policy, the Our Three Main National Causes
- (b) To cooperate with the government and people in performing measures for State stability, ethnic unity and the nation's development
- (c) To act with utmost care based on the agreements of NCA without deviating from the Our Three Main National Causes while serving duties for durable peace, as the resolution of armed conflicts play key role in moving towards a genuine and disciplined multiparty democratic pathway
- (d) To continuously improve three main tasks of Tatmadaw – Study, Practise, Comply – and the ability to apply modern technologies in structuring Tatmadaw into a Standard Army

6 special civil appeal cases passed judgements; 2 special criminal appeal cases, 3 special civil appeal cases heard

A special appeal tribunal consisting of U Tha Htay, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Union and Judges of the Supreme Court of the Union: U Myo Tint, Daw Khin May Yi, U Win Myint and Daw Soe Khet Khet was convened yesterday morning at the Supreme Court of the Union in Nay Pyi Taw and passed judgements for six special civil appeal cases — Nos 37/2025 (Mandalay), 46/2025 (Yan-

gon), 50/2025 (Kachin), 51/2025 (Kachin), 52/2025 (Yangon) and 54/2025 (Ayeyawady).

With regard to a total of five special appeal cases, two special criminal appeal cases — Nos 8/2025 (Mandalay) and 1/2026 (Yangon) and three special civil appeal cases — Nos 42/2025 (Yangon), 49/2025 (Sagaing) and 55/2025 (Yangon) were heard. — MNA

Thai Expo Yangon 2026 set for 3-day Jun run

WITH more than 135 booths, Thai Expo Yangon 2026 has been planned to hold in June for three consecutive days.

It is the fourth time and

has been scheduled from 9 am to 5 pm on 5-7 June at the Yangon Convention Centre (YCC).

Different businesses – food and beverage, cosmetics and beauty, household and home-ware, machinery and tools, estate and travel and tourism service– will be included. It will offer a chance to establish a network with many potential business partners as well as business opportunities, and it is the best place for a brand to showcase without spending much on marketing budget. The event will also bring an opportunity to meet Thai buyers, distributors and decision makers, through business match-

ing, it will create a chance to share diverse business cultures among different kinds of businesses and also help with surveying on customer feedback from thousands of visitors.

It is beyond a trade fair but a festival of exchanging business cultures between Thai and Myanmar businesses. Booths are being started selling, and booking can be made to Ms Sarapee Sirpankaew (Thailand) at +66 6 19616587 as well as +95 9 970733234, +95 9 254277355, +95 9 790614713, +95 9 450045003, +95 9 777773929 and +95 9 777737923, according to Thai Expo Yangon. — MT/ZS



This image showcases a poster for the Thai Expo Yangon 2026, featuring famous actor Paing Tagun.

59th All-Myanmar Photo Show opens in Yangon, features panel talks

THE Award-Winning Photos Exhibition of the 59th All-Myanmar Photography Contest, along with a panel discussion organized by the Myanmar Photography Association, was held at 9 am yesterday at the promotion area of the Junction City Shopping Mall in Yangon.

The chair and executive members of the Myanmar Photography Association first cut the ceremonial ribbon to open the event. This was followed by a congratulatory speech delivered by the association's patron, multiple Academy Award winner and

Lifetime Academy Award-winning director Pagyi Soe Moe. The association's chair, U Than Tun Oo (Tet Nay Win), then gave a speech about the exhibition and the competition.

Afterwards, the patrons, chair, and executive members viewed the award-winning photographs, as well as entries from the quarterly and trainee competitions. In addition, a photography panel discussion will be held at 2 pm from 23 to 25 March, and all interested participants are welcome to attend free of charge. — Bala/MKKS



Officials are seen viewing the photographs on display at the exhibition.

NATIONAL

Residents Urged to Prioritize Public Safety Amid Armed Terrorist Threats

ARMED terrorists have been launching attacks by using residential homes and administrative buildings in towns and villages as cover, where they have forcibly settled. They aim to shield themselves from Tatmadaw counterattacks while also persuading temporarily displaced persons to return to their native areas and recruiting new members. That enables terrorists to use civilians as human shields. Tatmadaw is committed to safeguarding the sovereignty of the State and will respond to these threats based on intelligence and prevailing conditions. Therefore, residents in areas where terrorists have taken control must prioritize their safety and protect themselves from being exploited by these groups.

(An excerpt from guidance given by Chairman of the State Administration Council, Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to Shan State cabinet members and state-level departmental officials on 3 September 2024)

66th Anniversary of World Meteorological Day

THE ceremony of "The 66th anniversary of World Meteorological Day (WMD), organized by the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology (DMH), the Ministry of Transport and Communications, was celebrated in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The ceremony was attended by Deputy Ministers for Transport and Communications, for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, for Natural Resources, Environmental Conservation and for Education and heads of relevant departments and guests.

Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Aung Kyaw Tun delivered the opening address, saying that World Meteorological Day is celebrated every year on 23 March all over the world. The theme of World Meteorological Day 2026 is "Observation Today, Protecting Tomorrow". As the natural disasters such as earth-



The 66th Anniversary of World Meteorological Day celebrated in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, addressed by Deputy Minister U Aung Kyaw Tun.

quakes, floods, storms and forest fires are increasing all over the world, it is important to protect people's lives and property by monitoring and preparing. It is very important to monitor and prepare for the daily weather and hydrological news to prevent natural disasters. The most reliable weapon for all of us in preparing is "The Observation data". Disaster prevention is not

only something that can be done by governments or individual organizations, but also by the participation of all people. He urged everyone to cooperate in natural disaster prevention activities, as this will help prevent damage to homes.

The deputy minister then gave prizes to winners in the 2026 World Meteorological Day commemorative article contest,

and the deputy ministers and party enjoyed the video message of the Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization and the World Meteorological Day video clip and visited the exhibition to mark the World Meteorological Day 2026.

In the afternoon, the paper reading session was conducted, and 29 research papers were presented on relevant

meteorological, hydrological and seismological topics from the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Science and Technology, the experts from the Myanmar Earthquake Committee and the Myanmar Geosciences Association. — MoTC

Myanmar, Thai discuss repatriation, reintegration of trafficking victims, bilateral SOPs

DEPUTY Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Than Soe presided over the 33rd Myanmar-Thailand Case Management Meeting on the Repatriation and Reintegration of Victims of Trafficking and Review Meeting on Bilateral Standard Operating Procedures yesterday at the Parkroyal Hotel in Yangon.

Speaking at the event, the deputy minister stated that Myanmar and Thailand have been cooperating in combatting human trafficking since signing a Memorandum of Understanding on 19 April 2009. Both countries have worked together on prevention efforts and the protection and care of trafficking victims.



The 33rd Myanmar-Thailand Case Management Meeting on Repatriation and Reintegration of Trafficking Victims and Review Meeting on Bilateral SOPs are underway yesterday in Yangon.

Myanmar also actively collaborates with Thailand and other regional countries, achieving

positive results despite ongoing challenges. He highlighted the importance of cooperation be-

tween the two countries to shorten the rehabilitation period for victims and to help them secure

sustainable livelihoods.

Ms Sunee Srisangatrakullert, head of the Thai delegation, stated that Thailand is providing the best possible assistance to trafficking victims and will continue working closely with Myanmar to combat human trafficking and minimize harm to victims.

Compensation amounting to 45,000 baht, received for one trafficking victim repatriated from Thailand, was handed over to the concerned individual.

The meeting was attended by representatives from ministries concerned and organizations of Myanmar and Thailand. The meeting will continue on 24 March. — MNA/KTZH

NATIONAL

People's Military Service Training 23 begins nationwide

THE opening ceremonies for People's Military Service Training 23 were held yesterday at various military commands, with commandants of the training depots delivering opening speeches. Ceremonies were attend-

ed by chief ministers of the respective regions and states, commanders of the relevant commands, and other officials. Trainees were presented with cash awards, foodstuffs and essential items.

The People's Military Service Law was enacted as every citizen has a duty to safeguard Our Three Main National Causes: non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity, and the perpetuation of sovereignty. The law came into effect on 10 February 2024 to facilitate the organization of military training courses. Those who have completed the People's Military Service Training are now serving in various military units, fulfilling their responsibilities for national defence and security. — MNA/KTZH



The opening ceremony for People's Military Service Training 23 is in progress yesterday in Yemon, Hlegu Township, Yangon Region.

Public Notice

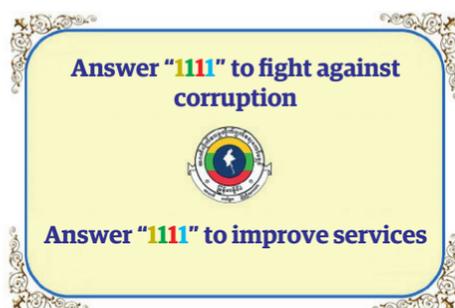
THE Anti-Corruption Commission has established corruption prevention units within ministries to curb corruption effectively.

The ACC used SMS on mobile phones to ask the public who sought services at an office of the department of the relevant ministries via short code No "1111" for feedback, including the public feedback programme (PFP).

According to the PFP, the proper replies of the citizens via short code No "1111" will provide the quality of services of each department and the requirements for corruption prevention to be fixed.

Therefore, the public should reply to the questions of the ACC and corruption prevention units of the ministries via SMS at short code "1111". Such doing is a supportive measure for PFP, and the people are urged to cooperate in the operations.

Anti-Corruption Commission



TikTok user held over incitement, propaganda undermining stability

IT has been officially announced that effective legal action will be taken under the law against CRPH, NUG, their affiliated organizations, associated groups, and individuals designated as terrorist entities for engaging in incitement and spreading propaganda intended to undermine State stability and peace and disrupt government mecha-

nisms. It was further stated that those involved in such incitement and propaganda activities will be continuously identified and prosecuted under the law.

Despite this announcement, on 22 March 2026, disregarding the official notice, an individual named Si Thu Hein (aka) Hmae Gyi, a resident of Ward 8, New Oktha Town

Township, Bago Region, and the owner of the 'Ah Yoe Lay' TikTok account, committed acts of incitement and propaganda on social media, intending to destabilize State peace and stability. He was arrested at 5:30 pm at the No 3 Area Police Station in Bago, has been charged and taken into custody under the law. — MNA



Information Centre for Trafficked Persons (Yangon, Mandalay)

The trafficked persons can contact and ask for help.

Yangon	64, Kaba Aye Pagoda Road, Mayangon Township. ☎ 01 8666619
Mandalay	Near Shwegyin Than Lan, Bhonetawtoe Ward, Aungmyaythazan Township. ☎ 02 2830423

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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



Lampi Marine Park's coral reefs show strong resilience

Coral reefs, often depicted as the rainforests of the sea because they are home to more than a quarter of marine species, are being preserved along Myanmar's coastal areas. Among these, the coral reefs in the Lampi Marine National Park, located in the Myeik Archipelago of Taninthayi Region, are reported to be thriving.

The Lampi Marine National Park is an ASEAN Heritage Park rich in biodiversity and surrounded by numerous small islands. It is a vast marine park composed of evergreen forests, mangrove forests, seagrass, beach forests, amphibians, rare species, and beautiful coral reefs. It is also home to many of the coral reefs, especially along Myanmar's coastline. Coral reefs support the long-term survival of marine species. They are formed by the

accumulation of numerous tiny organisms called coral polyps, which build calcium carbonate skeletons that create rocklike structures and reef formations. These reefs enrich underwater ecosystems and biodiversity, while also supporting the development of marine life.

"If the coral ecosystem is well established, it sustains marine life, providing ideal habitats for fish species to breed and survive within the food chain. As a two-mile marine area around Lampi Marine National Park is protected, the coral reefs surrounding the island remain healthy. They are relatively less disturbed. Around the island, both hard and soft corals can be found. As restoring coral reefs is costly, the best approach is to conserve and protect them from damage. Coral reefs near humans are more affected by human activities, so measures are taken to prevent human and boat access. Currently, the coral reefs around the Lampi Marine Island are in strong condition," said U Kyi Oo, warden of the park.

Rising sea temperatures can damage coral reefs, and changes in ocean chemistry, natural disasters, overfishing, and marine pollution. However, the coral reefs act as natural underwater barriers that help reduce the impact of strong currents, sea-level rise, storms, and waves. Although coral reefs cover only about one per cent of the world's ocean area, about 25 per cent of marine species depend on them for survival.

Compared to other coastal coral reefs, those in the Lampi Marine National Park are less affected. Their beauty and rich marine biodiversity also support the tourism industry. — Thitsa (MNA)/KTZH



From top to bottom, these images showcase the vibrant coral reefs and thriving underwater ecosystems of Lampi Marine National Park in the Myeik Archipelago. **PHOTOS: ZWE MARN**

MAI cuts baggage allowance to keep international flights running

MYANMAR Airways International (MAI) announced on 22 March that it had reduced passenger baggage weight limits to ensure international flights could continue operating without disruption.

Due to ongoing Jet A1 aviation fuel shortages in Myanmar, MAI has implemented mandatory reductions to prevent flight cancellations that have recently affected the domestic aviation market.

These temporary adjustments for all international flights are effective immediately and will remain in place until further

notice: Economy Class – 20 kilogrammes (one bag); Business Class – 30 kilogrammes (one bag); hand-carry seven kilogrammes (maximum two bags); Excess Baggage – maximum five kilogrammes. The acceptance of any additional baggage beyond these limits will be at the sole discretion of duty staff at the airport.

MAI noted that due to operational flight requirements, some baggage may be rejected or unable to be loaded. In such cases, the airline will make its best effort to deliver the offloaded baggage to the passengers within 72 hours. Passengers who

have already purchased excess baggage that cannot be accommodated will be issued refunds. MAI emphasized that they are working their best to ensure smooth travel, clarifying that the current situation left them with only two choices: maintain the flight schedule with weight restrictions or cancel flights entirely, and MAI chose to implement these restrictions rather than cancel service. — MT/ZN

This image shows MAI's temporary baggage limits due to the current fuel situation.



WE'RE SORRY & REMAIN COMMITTED TO SERVING YOU DURING THIS TIME

Due to the current Jet A1 fuel situation in Myanmar, temporary baggage restrictions apply. We appreciate your understanding & support during this tough period. eff. 22 Mar 2026

	Business Class	Economy Class	Cabin Baggage
Total Weight (KG)	30KG	20KG	7KG
No. of Pieces	1	1	2

*Remarks: Extra baggage acceptance will be strictly determined by our airport team

Checked Baggage



Maximum Dimension per Piece L + W + H = 158 cm

Cabin Baggage



Maximum Dimension per Piece L + W + H = 115 cm

NATIONAL

Myanmar bags US\$1.479M from honey exports in Apr-Feb FY2025-26

MYANMAR generated revenue of US\$1.479 million from honey export in 11 months of the current 2025-2026 financial year beginning 1 April.

“Myanmar’s annual honey production is 7,000 tonnes, and about 2,600 tonnes are exported. This FY, honey export has earned \$1.479 million so far. As the beekeeping business is lucrative, the number of beekeepers has increased. At present, those engaged in beekeeping integrated with flower cultivation (agro-apiculture) have also grown,” said an official of the Apiculture Division under the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department. Myanmar’s



These images illustrate a beekeeping site and its beekeepers tending hives and harvesting honey.

honey is conveyed to Japan, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, China and Saudi Arabia. Myanmar produces sesame honey, jujube honey, Niger honey, sunflower honey, lychee honey, rubber honey and flower honey. — ASH/KK

42 accidents claim 26 lives on Yangon-Mandalay Expressway in early 2026

A total of 42 road traffic accidents occurred on the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway between 1 January and 19 March 2026, according to the Expressway Police Headquarters.

During this period, 26 people lost their lives, and 46 others were injured as a result of these accidents.

“A total of 16 accidents were recorded in January 2026, another

16 in February, and 10 up to 19 March, making 42 accidents in total,” said an official from the Expressway Police Headquarters.

The majority of accidents on the expressway were reportedly caused by speeding, careless driving, and drowsy driving.

The Yangon-Mandalay Expressway was opened in December 2010 and is 587 kilometres in length. — ASH/MKKS

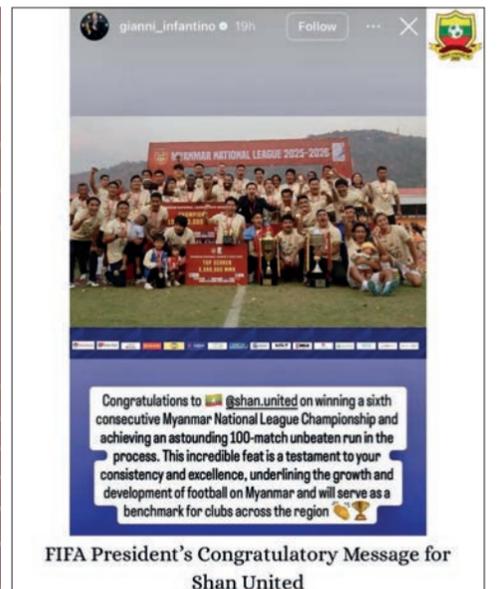


A vehicle is involved in an accident on the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway.

FIFA Chief hails Shan United’s six-title streak, 100-match unbeaten run



Poster for the trophy presentation ceremony and celebratory music concert for Shan United fans.



FIFA President’s Congratulatory Message for Shan United

FIFA President Gianni Infantino has reportedly congratulated Shan United for winning the Myanmar National League title for six consecutive seasons and for setting a record of 100 matches unbeaten throughout the league’s history. He conveyed his praise through his social media page.

The FIFA President re-

marked that Shan United’s achievement represents a milestone that can serve as a model for clubs across Asia. In response, Shan United expressed their sincere gratitude to the FIFA President for recognizing and honouring the club’s historic success.

Shan United also stated that their achievements are a

testament to consistent hard work and reflect the excellence of both the players and the coaching staff.

In addition, the club held a trophy presentation ceremony and a celebratory music concert for football fans in Shan State on the evening of 21 March in Taunggyi, featuring well-known singers. — ASH/KZL

Daily newspapers available online

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

News and Periodicals Enterprise

MT Tirtasari docks at KIP Port to secure timely fuel distribution

OIL tanker MT Tirtasari has arrived at KIP Port in Yangon, and the distribution of edible oil and industrial raw materials has commenced to ensure domestic edible oil sufficiency and facilitate the timely distribution, said Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association (MEODA).

A team combining officials of the Edible Oil Import, Storage and Distribution Supervisory Committee, the Department of Consumer Affairs and the Myanmar Inspection and Testing Service team and members from MEODA conducted an on-site inspection to ensure the right quality and import volume of the oil discharged from the vessel.

The vessel's cargo discharge operations were undertaken from 10:54 pm on 21 March to 11 pm on 22 March. MEODA affirmed that such a systematic inspection and importation will enable the continuous distribu-

tion of quality edible oil to the public. The wholesale reference rate of palm oil for the Yangon market was set at K6,600 per viss during a week ending 26 March, according to the Supervisory Committee on Edible Oil Import and Distribution.

The Supervisory Committee on Edible Oil Import and Distribution under the Ministry of Commerce has been closely observing the FOB prices in Malaysia and Indonesia, adding transport costs, tariffs and banking services to decide the wholesale market reference rate for edible oil weekly. Despite the reference price, the market price is still high. To control overcharging, the Consumer Affairs Department under the Ministry of Commerce informed consumers of lodging complaints for overcharging through the call centre hotline in late August. The department urges consumers not to buy palm oil at high prices.

The committee notified that any person who is involved in price gouging and oil storage to attempt market manipulation will face legal action under the Essential Goods and Services Law. The department is working together with the Myanmar Oil Dealers' Association and the cooking oil importing companies to offer affordable rates of imported palm oil for consumers. The complaints for overcharging can be lodged over hotline 1535 of the call centre of the Consumers Affairs Department, or sent to the Facebook page of the department and the region and state departments concerned.

The domestic palm oil consumption is estimated at one million tonnes per year. The local palm oil production is just about 400,000 tonnes. About 700,000 tonnes of palm oil are annually imported through Malaysia and Indonesia to meet domestic demands. — NN/KK



The USD exchange rate has steadied following the CBM's announcement, allowing for free trading at market prices. PHOTO: XINHUA

CBM injects US\$96M into fuel oil sector in Mar

THE Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) announced on 21 March that it has pumped US\$96 million into the fuel oil import sector so far in March.

The statement revealed the transaction amount on the FX Market Online Trading Platform, totalling \$257.78 million, 103.7 million yuan, 826.42 million baht and 11.99 million rupees. CBM intervened in the market by injecting \$3.84 million, 0.77 million yuan and 37.76 million baht this month.

The commodities purchased with foreign currency in the market include edible oil, fuel oil, fertilizer, pharmaceuticals and pharmaceutical raw materials, industrial raw materials, consumer goods, malt, animal feed, packaging materials, construction materials, bitumen, liquefied petroleum gas, vehicle/motorcycle spare parts, engine oil, agricultural inputs, pesticides, household goods, telecommunications equipment, electronic devices, other goods, and non-trade transactions. — NN/KK



Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) refinery set to meet local demand

THE MGDN solvent extraction and oil refinery plant in Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) Township will contribute to the domestic needs of edible oil and regional economic development. Under the guidance of the Yangon Region Government, the MGND Solvent Extraction & Refinery Plant operated by Mandalay Global Network Distribution Co Ltd (MGND) for producing rice bran oil was opened on 19 March in Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) Township.

Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein delivered a remark that this is a crucial basic industry for Myanmar's edible oil sufficiency and the integration of agricultural and industrial development. Producing high-quality edible oil and value-added by-products from oil-bearing crops, including rice bran, would help boost gross domestic product and contribute to regional eco-

economic development and employment. First, the opening ceremony of the solvent extraction and oil refinery plant was inaugurated by cutting the ceremonial ribbon and by pressing the button to unveil the plant signboard by Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein, Yangon Command Commander Brig-Gen Tin Min Latt, Yangon Region Minister for Development Affairs U Bo Htay, Minister for Economic Affairs U Myo Myint Aung, Minister for Natural Resources U Zaw Win, and CEO of MGND U Tun Tun Win, officially opened the plant, followed by officials sprinkling scented water. The chief minister also presented honorariums to the entertainment troupe.

A team led by the chief minister looked around the plant and observed the stages of crude oil production and oil refining operations. MGND CEO U



Officials are seen inspecting the South Dagon Palm Oil Refinery.

Tun Tun Win gave a PowerPoint presentation explaining details about the plant during the briefing session. — NN/KK

OPINION

Bring prestige to Pyidaungsu Hluttaw as a recordable history

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is the top structure in the legislative sector of Myanmar's parliamentary institutions. In the democratic practice in Myanmar, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is established with Hluttaw representatives from the Pyithu and Amyotha Hluttaws.

In accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw carries out legislation and oversight in exercising the three branches of State sovereign power, which are legislative, executive, and judicial, as its primary responsibilities to the extent possible through separation of powers and mutual checks and balances.

At present, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, for its third term, is functional due to facts that the Hluttaw representatives have been elected by the people in the 2025 multiparty democratic general election in three phases. At a time when the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is operated, elected Hluttaw representatives and Defence Services Personnel Representatives from relevant Hluttaws have to be Pyidaungsu Hluttaw representatives who must serve duties to approve bills submitted and debated in the Pyithu Hluttaw and the Amyotha Hluttaw, as well as make final decisions on important matters of the State. The State and the majority of the people ultimately aim to establish a Union based on genuine, disciplined democracy and a federal system. Flourishing the multiparty democracy is very important for reaching the goal as early as possible. As such, all representatives from the Hluttaw representatives must be mindful of preventing disunity and fragmentation in their conduct and decisions. It is because those Hluttaw representatives were trustfully elected by the people. They have to strictly note that, as the role of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is of high significance, Hluttaw representatives must comply with the established laws and rules and conduct themselves as role models.

Hluttaw representatives have to serve their responsibilities in accord with the Constitution in cooperation and unity with each other without committing inappropriate activities harnessing the image of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. When addressing any issue, representatives must be mindful of preventing disunity and fragmentation in their conduct and decisions. It is because those Hluttaw representatives were trustfully elected by the people. They have to strictly note that, as the role of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is of high significance, Hluttaw representatives must comply with the established laws and rules and conduct themselves as role models.

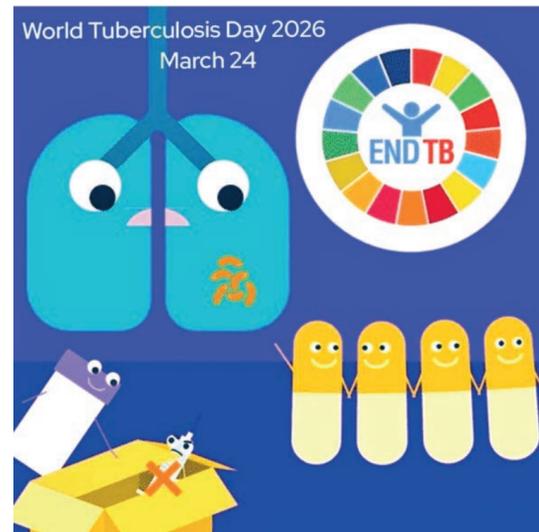
Without personal bias or party bias, the representatives should prioritize only the national interest and the interests of the State and its citizens, and engage in mutual respect and dialogue to ensure that better decisions emerge from differing viewpoints. If so, their actions will bring honour to both themselves and the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, setting a historic precedent in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Without personal bias or party bias, the representatives should prioritize only the national interest and the interests of the State and its citizens, and engage in mutual respect and dialogue to ensure that better decisions emerge from differing viewpoints. If so, their actions will bring honour to both themselves and the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, setting a historic precedent in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

WORLD TUBERCULOSIS DAY

Yes! We Can End TB: Led by Countries, Powered by People

By Dr Aung Tun



1. Overview

Tuberculosis (TB) is one of the oldest and most lethal infectious diseases in human history. Caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, it primarily attacks the lungs, yet it is capable of affecting virtually any organ. Despite the existence of effective vaccines, diagnostics, and treatments for decades, TB continues to claim more than one million lives every year — the vast majority in low- and middle-income countries.

Every year on 24 March, the global health community marks World Tuberculosis Day. The date honours the 1882 announcement by German physician Dr Robert Koch, who identified *M. tuberculosis* as the causative agent of TB — a discovery that fundamentally shaped modern medicine. In 2026, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Stop TB Partnership set the theme: “Yes! We Can End TB: Led by Countries, Powered by People.” This theme signals a decisive shift from global aspiration to concrete, country-owned, community-powered action.

TB is preventable, diagnosable, and curable. Yet it remains the world's second deadliest infectious disease after COVID-19 during pandemic years. The paradox of a curable disease killing over a million people annually is a moral, political, and public health failure — one that World TB Day 2026 calls every nation to correct.

2. Global Prevalence

According to the WHO Global Tuberculosis Report 2025, approximately 10.7 million people developed TB globally in 2024 — the fourth consecutive year of elevated incidence following the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Of these, an estimated 1.23 million people died: roughly 1.08 million HIV-negative individuals and 150,000 people living with HIV. Drug-resistant TB (DR-TB) remains a critical challenge, with an estimated 150,000 new DR-TB cases recorded in 2024.

Global reduction in TB incidence from 2015 to 2024 stands at only 12.3 per cent — far short of the WHO End TB Strategy milestone target of a 50 per cent reduction by 2025. South-East Asia alone, home to less than a quarter of the global population, accounts for more than one in every three new TB cases worldwide. Encouragingly, coordinated global TB control efforts have saved an estimated 83 million lives since 2000, demonstrating the transformative impact of sustained international action. However, COVID-19 disruptions reversed hard-won progress and accelerated undetected transmission, making the recovery period of 2022–2026 critically important.

TB is fundamentally a disease of inequity, driven by poverty, overcrowding, malnutrition, and limited access to healthcare. Ending it will demand not only medical interventions but comprehensive, multisectoral strategies that address these upstream social determinants.

3. Tuberculosis in Myanmar

Myanmar carries one of the heaviest TB burdens in the world and is designated as one of the WHO's 30 high-TB-burden countries. According to the WHO South-East Asia Regional Office, Myanmar's TB incidence rate in 2024 was approximately 480–500 cases per 100,000 population — far above the regional average of 201 and the global average of 131 per 100,000. In absolute terms, an estimated 263,000 people developed TB in Myanmar in 2024. Approximately 50,000 deaths annually are attributed to the disease.

Myanmar faces what public health experts describe as a “triple burden” — drug-susceptible TB, drug-resistant TB, and HIV-associated TB — making its TB response among the most complex in the region. The fourth National TB Prevalence Survey conducted between 2017 and 2018 found a bacteriologically confirmed TB prevalence of 468 per 100,000 adults, though this represented a notable 51 per cent reduction

from the 2009–2010 survey, reflecting an average annual decline of 7.6 per cent. This steady progress demonstrates that Myanmar's National TB Programme, with international support, has been making significant gains.

The COVID-19 pandemic severely disrupted that trajectory. In 2020, case detections fell by approximately 40 per cent compared to the prior year, reversing years of achievement and leading to increased rates of undiagnosed and untreated TB — particularly among vulnerable populations in urban slums, and hard-to-reach communities. Recovery since 2022 has been notable, and a 2025 hybrid WHO review commended the Ministry of Health for maintaining essential TB services under exceptionally difficult conditions. Myanmar is now in the process of developing its National Tuberculosis Strategic Plan 2026–2030, which aims to close detection gaps, scale up preventive treatment, and restore the downward trend in incidence.

4. Signs and Symptoms

The clinical presentation of TB varies by the site of infection and the immune status of the individual. Pulmonary TB — the most common form — primarily manifests with respiratory and systemic symptoms. Extrapulmonary TB, in which the bacterium spreads beyond the lungs, can affect virtually any organ and may present with diverse, organ-specific features.

Pulmonary TB

The hallmark of pulmonary TB is a persistent productive cough lasting two weeks or more, sometimes with blood-streaked sputum or frank haemoptysis. Chest pain, tightness, and progressive shortness of breath are also common. Systemic symptoms accompanying pulmonary TB include prolonged low-grade fever (often worse in the evenings), drenching night sweats, significant unexplained weight loss, loss of appetite, and persistent fatigue. The combination of these symptoms in a patient from a high-burden country like Myanmar should prompt immediate TB evaluation.

Extrapulmonary TB

When TB disseminates beyond the lungs, it may present as painless cervical lymph node swelling (scrofula), back pain and spinal deformity in Pott's disease, severe headache and neck stiffness in TB meningitis,

joint pain and swelling in musculoskeletal TB, abdominal pain and ascites in abdominal TB, or haematuria and flank pain in genitourinary TB. In young children under five and immunocompromised individuals — including people living with HIV — TB may present atypically, and severe disseminated or miliary TB can develop rapidly, with non-specific systemic features that may not suggest the diagnosis without a high index of suspicion.

5. Risk Factors

TB infection and disease progression are shaped by a complex interplay of host vulnerability, pathogen exposure, and environmental conditions. The following groups carry the highest risk and are priority targets for screening and preventive intervention.

Immunosuppressed states markedly increase the risk of progression from TB infection to active disease. HIV infection remains the single most powerful individual risk factor for TB — a person living with HIV is up to 18 times more likely to develop active TB than an HIV-negative individual. Diabetes mellitus is an increasingly significant risk factor in Asia, where its prevalence is rising rapidly. Other immunosuppressive conditions and treatments — including renal failure, malnutrition, corticosteroids, and tumour necrosis factor-alpha inhibitors — similarly elevate risk.

Beyond medical vulnerabilities, social and environmental determinants are equally critical. Poverty, overcrowding, poor housing, food insecurity, and incarceration create conditions in which TB spreads readily and goes undetected. Smoking and alcohol use disorder are independent risk factors. Healthcare workers exposed to active TB cases, miners at risk of silicosis, and migrants or displaced persons from high-burden settings are among the occupational and demographic groups requiring particular attention. In Myanmar's specific context, populations in urban slums and individuals in hard-to-reach communities are among the most vulnerable.

6. Diagnosis

Early and accurate diagnosis is the cornerstone of TB control. Delayed diagnosis sustains transmission, worsens outcomes, and drives drug resistance. Multiple modalities are available, and their appropriate use depends on available resources and clinical context.

Sputum smear microscopy — examining sputum for acid-fast bacilli — is rapid and widely available but offers limited sensitivity, particularly in HIV-positive patients and children. Sputum culture on Lowenstein-Jensen or liquid MGIT media remains the diagnostic gold standard, detecting TB and drug susceptibility with high accuracy, but takes two to eight weeks. The Xpert MTB/RIF and Xpert MTB/RIF Ultra assays represent a transformational advance: these WHO-recommended rapid molecular tests detect *M. tuberculosis* and rifampicin resistance within two hours and are now widely used in Myanmar's TB diagnostic network. Line probe assays provide additional drug resistance profiling.

Chest X-ray is an indispensable screening and diagnostic tool, identifying pulmonary infiltrates, cavitations, and pleural effusions characteristic of TB. CT scanning offers higher resolution for complex or atypical presentations. For the detection of latent TB infection, the Tuberculin Skin Test (Mantoux) and Interferon-Gamma Release Assays (IGRAs) are used, with IGRAs offering greater specificity in BCG-vaccinated populations such as Myanmar's.

A landmark development for World TB Day 2026 is the WHO's Call

to Action, urging Member States to fast-track the rollout of the first-ever WHO-recommended near point-of-care diagnostic tests. These tests are designed to be deployed at health centres and community-level facilities, dramatically reducing diagnostic delays that fuel transmission and preventable deaths — a critical development for high-burden settings like Myanmar.

7. Treatment

TB is curable. Treatment success depends on timely initiation, accurate drug susceptibility testing, and full adherence to the prescribed regimen. Myanmar's National TB Programme delivers treatment through the directly observed therapy, short-course (DOTS) strategy.

Drug-Susceptible TB

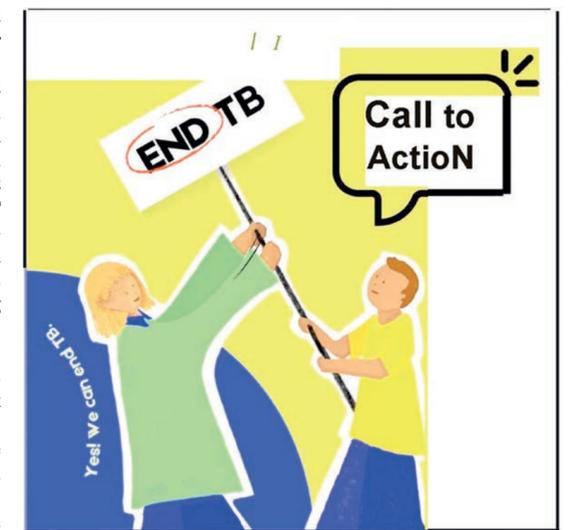
The standard first-line regimen for drug-susceptible TB is a six-month course: two months of Isoniazid, Rifampicin, Pyrazinamide, and Ethambutol, followed by four months of Isoniazid and Rifampicin (2HRZE/4HR). When completed as prescribed, treatment success rates exceed 85 per cent. HIV-positive TB patients require concurrent antiretroviral therapy — initiated within two to eight weeks of starting TB treatment — alongside cotrimoxazole preventive therapy.

Drug-Resistant TB

Multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB), resistant to at least isoniazid and rifampicin, and extensively drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB) represent the most challenging treatment scenarios. New all-oral regimens — BPaL (Bedaquiline, Pretomanid, Linezolid) and BPaLM (with Moxifloxacin) — have transformed the management of MDR/XDR-TB, reducing treatment duration from 18–24 months to as little as six months with improved outcomes. WHO recommends these regimens as priority options, and their rollout in Myanmar is a strategic priority.

TB Preventive Treatment

For individuals with latent TB infection — those infected but not yet ill — TB Preventive Treatment (TPT) is a proven strategy to prevent progression to active disease. Recommended regimens include six months of daily isoniazid (6H), three months of weekly rifampentine plus isoniazid (3HP), or one month of daily rifampentine plus isoniazid (1HP). Scale-up of TPT for household contacts and PLHIV is central to Myanmar's 2026–2030 strategic plan. **SEE PAGE 10**



ARTICLE/ENVIRON: WORLD

Healing Nairobi's "kidney": How Chinese tech is reviving the "place of cool waters"

Kenyan officials praise their efficiency: capital costs one-third of Western rivals, ideal for land-scarce Africa.

ONCE named for its "cool waters", Nairobi now grapples with megacity waste overwhelming its rivers. At Dandora Estate Sewage Treatment Works, processing 80 per cent of the capital's wastewater, a Chinese-engineered upgrade has turned a failing system into a lifeline.

The plant, likened to an urban "kidney", was clogged by sludge and debris, forcing workers into hazardous manual labour. Jiangxi Zhongmei Engineering Group's automated bar screens now intercept 95 per cent of solids and 90 per cent of silt, doubling capacity without the stench or risk. "We control the city's pulse with clicks,"

said engineer Denis Kioko.

Despite brutal odors that deterred rivals, the Chinese team persisted, reclaiming the site with green lawns. Kenyan officials praise their efficiency: capital costs one-third of Western rivals, ideal for land-scarce Africa.

This "China Solution" eyes a "resource revolution" — biogas, fertilizers, and compact tech like Anammox. As Nairobi's untreated waste hovers at 45 per cent, Dandora's success deepens Sino-Kenyan ties under FOCAC's green partnerships. Clear waters now flow back to the Nairobi River, honoring its ancient name amid rapid urbanization. — Xinhua



Nicknamed the "Green City under the Sun", Nairobi is uniquely notable for being the only capital city in the world that hosts a national park within its boundaries. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS**

Yes! We Can End TB: Led by Countries, Powered ...

FROM PAGE 9

8. Prevention

Preventing TB requires a layered strategy spanning vaccination, early case detection and treatment, infection control, TB preventive therapy, and action on the social conditions that sustain the epidemic.

The BCG vaccine, administered to neonates at birth under Myanmar's Expanded Programme on Immunisation, offers substantial protection against severe childhood TB, including TB meningitis and miliary TB. However, protection against adult pulmonary TB is variable, and newer, more effective TB vaccines remain under active development, with several promising candidates in advanced clinical trials.

The most powerful prevention strategy remains finding and treating active TB cases rapidly, thereby interrupting transmission at the source. Community-based active case finding, systematic contact tracing for every diagnosed case, and expansion of diagnostic access to underserved populations are high-yield interventions. Complementing case detection, TPT for high-risk individuals prevents new cases

before they develop. Environmental measures — ensuring adequate ventilation in homes, hospitals, and congregate settings, implementing respiratory hygiene practices, and applying the WHO FAST strategy (Find cases Actively, Separate safely, Treat effectively) in healthcare facilities — reduce nosocomial and community transmission.

Ultimately, sustainable TB prevention requires multisectoral action on poverty, malnutrition, housing, and social protection. These upstream determinants create the conditions in which TB flourishes. A health system capable of delivering universal TB services is itself a prerequisite — meaning that ending TB demands political will far beyond the confines of the health ministry.

9. World TB Day 2026: WHO Call to Action and the Path to Ending TB

World TB Day 2026, observed on 24 March carries the resounding theme: "Yes! We Can End TB: Led by Countries, Powered by People." WHO and the Stop TB Partnership call on every Member State to translate political commitments into concrete, measurable action — and

on every community, healthcare worker, civil society organisation, and citizen to be part of the solution.

WHO's specific 2026 Call to Action centres on several urgent priorities. First, Member States are urged to fast-track the roll-out of newly WHO-recommended near point-of-care TB diagnostics — the first of their kind — that will extend early detection to the community level and reduce the diagnostic delays that cost lives. Second, countries must increase domestic and international TB financing, protect essential services from budget cuts, and ensure accountability for the commitments made at successive United Nations High-Level Meetings on TB. Third, accelerated uptake of new WHO recommendations — including shorter MDR-TB treatment regimens and TPT scale-up — is imperative. Finally, WHO calls for stronger primary health care integration, so that TB services are accessible, stigma-free, and delivered as close to patients as possible.

To end TB in Myanmar, these global priorities must be grounded in local reality. Every stakeholder has a role: community members must know TB's

signs and break the culture of stigma surrounding the disease; healthcare workers must actively screen high-risk populations and offer TPT; policymakers must prioritise and fund the National TB Strategic Plan 2026-2030; civil society must extend services to conflict-affected and hard-to-reach communities; and every person who has ever experienced TB must be empowered as an advocate rather than silenced as a patient.

The economic case is clear: every dollar invested in TB control generates up to US\$ 43 in economic and health returns. Myanmar's TB programme has proven its resilience through years of crisis. With renewed political will, strengthened country ownership, and communities at its centre, the goal of ending TB — fewer than 10 cases per 100,000 by 2035 — is not a distant dream but an achievable reality.

"Yes! We Can End TB — Led by Myanmar. Powered by Our People."

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Antarctic microbes found to survive on air in extreme temperatures

SCIENTISTS in Australia have found Antarctic microbes can survive by consuming gases from the atmosphere across an extraordinary temperature range, revealing new clues to life's resilience in extreme environments.

The new research shows Antarctic microbes can survive in temperatures ranging from minus 20 to 75 degrees Celsius, a staggering 95 degrees Celsius temperature span, according to a statement from Australia's Monash University on Monday.

"It's a bit like seeing a penguin thrive in a tropical jungle," said Monash University scientist Ry Holland, who

co-authored the study published in The ISME Journal.

The study shows that microbes' ability to live from gases in the atmosphere, including hydrogen and carbon monoxide, is likely active year-round across East Antarctica and forecast to increase with climate warming.

This process, known as aerotrophy, allows them to not only survive but thrive during Antarctica's dark, freezing winters, and also makes them suited to a future shaped by rising temperatures, it said.

The findings help explain how life survives in one of Earth's most extreme environments, Holland said. — Xinhua

China's Smart Dragon-3 rocket launches satellites from sea



A Smart Dragon-3 rocket carrying the satellite group CentiSpace O2 blasts off from the sea near the city of Haiyang, east China's Shandong Province, 22 March 2026. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

A Smart Dragon-3 rocket lifted off on Sunday in east China's Shandong Province, sending the satellite group CentiSpace

02 into the planned orbit.

The rocket blasted off at 11:49 pm (Beijing Time) from the sea near the city of

Haiyang. Taiyuan Satellite Launch Centre conducted the offshore launch mission. — Xinhua



On 21 March, a bright fireball streaked across the evening sky over parts of Texas. **PHOTO: ANI**

Meteor sighting lights up Texas sky, triggers sonic booms

A celestial event unfolded across parts of Texas on 21 March, as a bright fireball streaked across the evening sky, drawing widespread attention from residents and sparking scientific interest, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Centre (NASA) reported.

Eyewitnesses reported spotting the luminous object at approximately 4:40 pm CDT (local time), describing it as a fast-moving blaze cutting through the atmosphere. According to preliminary data, the meteor first became visible at an altitude of around

49 miles above Stagecoach, located northwest of Houston.

The fragmentation reportedly occurred at an altitude of 29 miles above Bammel, an area situated just west of Cypress Station. Experts indicate that the meteor, weighing nearly a tonne and measuring approximately three feet in diameter, disintegrated due to the immense pressure and heat generated upon entering the Earth's atmosphere.

The breakup resulted in a powerful pressure wave, which led to audible booms heard by several residents across nearby regions. — ANI

Cambodia registers 4th newborn rare Mekong dolphin in 2026

A Mekong Irrawaddy baby dolphin has been sighted, bringing the number of newborn dolphins in Cambodia to four so far this year, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) said in a news release on Sunday.

The new calf was spotted on Saturday afternoon at the Koh Santuk dolphin pool in northeast Stung Treng province's Siem Bouk district by a

research team of the Fisheries Administration and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

Of the four baby dolphins born in 2026, three were spotted in Kratie province and one in Stung Treng province, the news release said.

"With the new arrival of this calf, the total number of Mekong River dolphins in Cambodia has reached 116," it added.

The Mekong Irrawaddy dolphins have been listed as critically endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species since 2004.

These aquatic mammals currently live along a 120-kilometre main channel of the Mekong River in northeast Kratie and Stung Treng provinces, according to the MAFF. — Xinhua

Alert raised over Bulusan volcano in Philippines

THE Philippine authorities on Sunday raised the alert

status of Bulusan volcano in Sorsogon province to Alert

Level 1, signalling low-level unrest.



The Philippine authorities on Sunday raised the alert status of Bulusan volcano in Sorsogon province to Alert Level 1, signalling low-level unrest. **PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS**

In an advisory, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said the volcano has recorded 475 volcanic earthquakes since 15 March. Most of these were weak volcano-tectonic earthquakes that are associated with rock fracturing at shallow depths beneath the volcano edifice.

Bulusan volcano is located in the Bicol Region on the island of Luzon. The Philippines has 24 active volcanoes, four of which are under close monitoring. — Xinhua

ECONOMY WORLD

US enterprises are welcome to seize development opportunities in China: vice-premier



Chinese Vice-Premier He Lifeng, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, meets a delegation of the US-China Business Council (USCBC) in Beijing, capital of China, 22 March 2026. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

ENTERPRISES from the United States are welcome to seize the development opportunities in China and deepen mutually beneficial cooperation with the country, Chinese Vice-Premier He Lifeng said on Sunday.

He, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made the remarks when meeting with a delegation of the US-China Business Council (USCBC).

Noting that China-US ties are the world's most important

bilateral relations, He said it is hoped that the USCBC will continue to play its role as a bridge to promote friendly exchanges and the stable and healthy development of economic and trade relations between China and the United States.

It is also hoped that US enterprises can fully seize the development opportunities in China, make good use of the potential of the Chinese market, and inject more stability and positive energy into China-US economic and trade relations,

He added.

Rajesh Subramaniam, board chair of the USCBC, Sean Stein, president of the USCBC, and other members from the delegation noted that the US business sector is optimistic about China's economic development prospects. They expressed the willingness to further explore the Chinese market, play an active role, and continuously deepen the economic and trade cooperation between the two countries. — Xinhua

NEWS IN BRIEF

Indian rupee hits record low against USD

AMID increasing global uncertainty, the Indian rupee Monday recorded a lifetime low as it hit 93.96 against the US dollar.

Experts attribute the move to the sharp surge in crude oil prices amid ongoing Middle East tensions, which have significantly increased India's import costs, driving higher demand for dollars.

The rupee's depreciation hints at growing pressure on India's external accounts, driven by rising energy costs and the ongoing grim geopolitical situation.

Since the conflict erupted in late February, the rupee has lost nearly three per cent of its value.

"Foreign portfolio investors have been selling Indian assets and moving money out. When they exit, they convert rupees into dollars, increasing demand for the US currency and putting pressure on the rupee," a market analyst said.

Traders are watching the 94.00 per dollar mark closely, a level widely regarded as a key psychological barrier in currency markets.

"Easing in geopolitical tensions could lead to a short-term recovery of 1.00-1.50 rupees, while continued escalation may keep the currency under sustained pressure," the analyst further said. — Xinhua

Foreign trade grows in Nepal in first eight months of FY 2025-26

NEPAL reported year-on-year growth in foreign trade in the first eight months of the current 2025-26 financial year with increases in both exports and imports, the Department of Customs said on Sunday.

Total trade increased by 13.55 per cent to 1.48 trillion Nepali rupees (US\$9.91 billion) between mid-July 2025 and mid-March 2026, up from 1.30 trillion rupees during the same period in the previous financial year, according to the report.

Exports grew by 20.83 per cent to 191.11 billion rupees in the period, compared to 158.17 billion rupees in the previous financial year.

Similarly, imports rose year-on-year by 12.54 per cent to 1.28 trillion rupees, up from 1.14 trillion rupees. (1 Nepali rupee equals US\$0.0067) — Xinhua

Tokyo stocks sink after Trump threatens Iran over Strait of Hormuz

TOKYO stocks plunged Monday, with the Nikkei stock index ending at its lowest level since 8 January, as crude oil futures surged after US President Donald Trump said power plants will be attacked if Iran does not lift the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

The 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average ended down 1,857.04 points, or 3.48 per cent, from Thursday at 51,515.49, after briefly losing over 2,600 points. The broader Topix index finished 122.96 points, or 3.41 per cent, lower at 3,486.44.

On the top-tier Prime Market, the main decliners were marine transport, nonferrous metal and real estate issues.

Japanese markets were closed Friday for a public holiday.

The Nikkei index lost over 3,700 points in two trading days amid the escalation in the Middle East conflict.

The US dollar at one point rose to the upper 159 yen range in Tokyo as a flight to safety dominated, but its upside was limited by wariness over possible currency intervention



A screen in Tokyo displays the closing price of the Nikkei stock index, which ended at its lowest level in about two and a half months on 23 March 2026. **PHOTO: KYODO**

by Japanese authorities after Atsushi Mimura, vice finance minister for international affairs, said earlier in the day that Japan will take "all possible steps" to address speculative moves in the foreign exchange market.

At 5 pm, the dollar fetched 159.58-60 yen compared with 159.18-28 yen in New York at 5 pm Friday.

The euro was quoted at \$1.1527-1529 and 183.96-184.00 yen against \$1.1565-1575 and 184.19-29 yen in New York late Friday afternoon. — Kyodo

Chinese automakers overtake Japanese counterparts to lead global sales for 1st time: media

CHINESE automakers have surpassed their Japanese counterparts in global vehicle sales for the first time, marking a significant shift in the global automo-

tive industry, according to a recent report by Nikkei.

The report said that total global sales by Japanese automakers fell slightly to around 25 mil-

lion units in 2025, causing Japan to lose its long-held top position for the first time since 2000. Meanwhile, Chinese car manufacturers recorded nearly

27 million units in global sales last year, rising to the top spot worldwide.

The conclusion was based on data released by major automakers and research conducted by automotive data platform MarkLines, Nikkei said.

Among individual companies, BYD surpassed Ford to rank sixth globally in 2025, while Geely overtook Honda to secure the eighth place, the report said. Six Chinese automakers entered the global top 20 rankings, including Chery, Changan Automobile, SAIC Motor, and Great Wall Motors, outnumbering Japan's five. — Xinhua



A worker assembles a new energy vehicle at the workshop of Chinese Automaker Chery in Shijiazhuang, north China's Hebei Province, 8 January 2026. PHOTO: XINHUA

Japan convenience store sales rise 1.6% in Feb, up for 12 months

CONVENIENCE store sales in Japan rose 1.6 per cent from a year earlier in February for the 12th straight month of increase, as higher spending per customer offset fewer customer visits, industry data showed Monday.

According to the Japan Franchise Association, same-store sales at

seven major convenience store operators totalled 868.86 billion yen (\$5.4 billion).

Average spending per customer grew 2.7 per cent to 762.5 yen, supported by strong sales of self-service coffee, soft drinks and ice cream amid warmer-than-usual weather this year. — Kyodo



Photo taken on 9 September 2025, shows a worker robot cleaning the floor at a Seven-Eleven Japan Co. convenience store in Tokyo. PHOTO: KYODO

S African business body says Mideast conflict hurts global economic recovery prospects

THE South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SACCI) on Monday warned that the conflict in the Middle East has increased instability in global financial markets and could weigh on economic recovery prospects in South Africa and beyond.

Alan Mukoki, the chief

executive officer of SACCI, said in a statement that disruptions to major supply routes and supply chains are likely to negatively affect the business cycle and lead to a clear deterioration in inflation, interest rates, economic growth, exchange rates and commodity prices.

"This does not bode

well for any prospect of recovery that we would have anticipated as South Africa," said Muloki.

There are multilateral institutions that have been built over the years to resolve conflicts, he said, urging parties to the conflict to exercise restraint and have an immediate ceasefire. — Xinhua

Transferring Distributorship For Registered Pesticides

We, **Jiangxi Zhengbang Crop Protection Co.,Ltd** and **Guangxi Baikai Biochemical Products Co.,Ltd** would like to change the distributor of the following product, which registered under Pesticide Registration Board, Myanmar from **Myanmar Shwe Thein Trading Co.,Ltd** to **Agro Golden Rose Co.,Ltd**. If any objection or enquiry, please contact to Co-Secretary, Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Department of Agriculture, West Gyogone, Insein township, Yangon from here to next two weeks.

No	Trade Name	Active Ingredients	Registration Type	Registration No
1	ZB-Winner Plus 32.5 % SC	Azoxystrobin 20% + Difenconazole 12.5% SC	Full	F2024-4802
2	ZB-Academay	Emamectin Benzoate 5.7% EW	Provisional	P2023-6159
3	ZB-Nimble 240 SC	Spirodiclofen 240 g/l SC	Proviaional	P2021-5304
4	ZB-Combined Strength 70 % WG	Cymoxanil 20 % + Dimethomorph 50 % WG	Provisional	P2022-4795

Agro Golden Rose Co.,Ltd (Add: No 78/A, Apaing (1), Myaungtagar Village, Hmawbi Township, Yangon. Ph : 09778307449)

Transferring Distributorship For Registered Pesticides

We, **Jiangxi Zhengbang Crop Protection Co., Ltd** would like to change the distributor of the following product, which registered under Pesticide Registration Board, Myanmar from **Myanmar Shwe Thein Trading Co.,Ltd** to **Sunrise Agri-Science Co.,Ltd**. If any objection or enquiry, please contact to Co-Secretary, Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Department of Agriculture, West Gyogone, Insein township, Yangon from here to next two weeks.

No	Trade Name	Active Ingredients	Registration Type	Registration No
1	ZB-Delicate 30 SC	Indoxacarb 30 % SC	Provisional	P2022-5740
2	ZB-Quick	Haloxfop-P-methyl 108 g/l EC	Full	F2023-4278

Sunrise Agri-Science Co.,Ltd (Add: No 64, 5 floors, Yadanar Street, Kamayut (1) Qtr, Kamayut Township, Yangon, Myanmar. Ph no. 09-789505363, 09-401562282)

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V CAPE FORBY VOY.NO. (159W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V CAPE FORBY VOY.NO. (159W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **24-3-2026** 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.

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ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

Trump says US delays strikes on Iran's energy sites for 5 days

US President Donald Trump said Monday that he had ordered the military to delay strikes on Iranian power plants and energy facilities for five days after what he called "productive" talks with Iran.

Iran, however, denied any such contact soon after Trump's remarks, saying there had been no negotiations, "direct or indirect" with Washington as described by Trump, according to Iran's semi-official Fars news agency.

In a Truth Social post, Trump said the two sides had held "very good and productive conversations" over the past two days aimed at resolving hostilities in the Middle East.

Based on the "in-depth, detailed, constructive" nature of the talks, he had instructed the Pentagon to postpone any strikes on Iranian energy infrastructure for five days, pending further discussions.

The conflict between the United States, Israel and Iran escalated sharply after Trump on Saturday gave Tehran 48 hours to fully reopen the Strait of Hormuz, warning that otherwise Washington could strike Iranian power infrastructure. Tehran responded by signalling it would retaliate across the region if such attacks went ahead.

Iran's primary military command, Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, said Sunday that power plants in



People take part in a rally to protest against US-Israeli attacks on Iran and demand an end to all acts of war in Tel Aviv, Israel, 14 March 2026. PHOTO: TOMER NEUBERG/JINI VIA XINHUA

countries hosting US bases would be treated as legitimate targets if the United States attacks Iran's electricity facilities. Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf also warned that energy and oil infrastructure across the region could face "irreversible" damage if Washington follows through on its threat.

The war began on 28 February, when the United States and Israel launched joint strikes on Tehran and other Iranian cities, triggering Iranian missile and drone attacks on Israel and US assets

in the Middle East. The fighting has also severely disrupted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, a chokepoint for roughly a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas trade.

The conflict has rattled global markets, sending oil prices on a rollercoaster this week and heightening fears of broader economic fallout. Analysts say Washington is facing growing pressure as the war strains alliances, fuels anti-war sentiment and deepens instability in energy markets. — Xinhua

IEA discussing further oil releases, says executive director

THE International Energy Agency (IEA) is in talks with member countries on releasing more stockpiled oil in response to the supply crisis driven by the conflict in the Middle East, IEA executive director Fatih Birol said here on Monday.

Addressing the National Press Club, Birol said he has been in contact with international colleagues on a daily basis regarding a second oil release after the agency's member countries agreed in March to release 400 million barrels from strategic stockpiles.

"If it is necessary, of course, we will do it," he said of a second release, but warned that it would not solve the supply shortfall.

"A stock release will help to comfort the markets, but this is not the solution. It will only help to reduce the pain in the economy," he said, describing the situation as "very severe." — Xinhua

15 heat-related cases reported, including 1 death, Malaysian official says

A total of 15 heat-related cases have been reported, including three cases of heatstroke and one death involving a child left in a vehicle, Health Minister Dzulkefly Ahmad said on Monday.

The current extreme heat requires everyone to be more vigilant, including monitoring early signs of heatstroke such as prolonged dizziness, unusual thirst and a rising body temperature, he said in a statement. He also urged the public not to leave children or anyone else unattended in vehicles, stressing that infants and children, the elderly, chronic patients and individuals active in hot weather are among the groups at higher risk of heatstroke. — Xinhua

Russia's Progress MS-33 cargo spacecraft to dock with ISS in manual mode

RUSSIA'S Progress MS-33 cargo spacecraft is expected to dock with the International Space Station (ISS) on Tuesday in manual mode, Russia's state space corporation Roscosmos said Sunday.

According to flight control for the ISS Russian segment, one antenna of the Kurs system, which is used for automatic docking of the spacecraft, failed to fully deploy after the spacecraft's launch earlier in the day. Specialists are monitoring the spacecraft's flight parameters and preparing for a manual docking by the crew aboard the Russian segment of the ISS, Roscosmos said. — Xinhua

Slovenian parliamentary election begins amid tight race

ABOUT 1.7 million eligible voters are expected to vote in Slovenia's parliamentary election on Sunday, with incumbent

Prime Minister Robert Golob facing a strong challenge from right-wing opposition leader Janez Jansa.



A voter casts her ballot during the 2026 Slovenian parliamentary election at a polling station in Radomlje, Slovenia, 22 March 2026. PHOTO: XINHUA

Poll stations across the country opened doors at 7 am local time (0500 GMT) and will close at 7 pm (1700 GMT). Preliminary results are expected later in the evening, according to the election commission.

Recent opinion polls suggest a tight contest between Golob's Freedom Movement and Jansa's Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS), with smaller parties likely to play a vital role in forming a governing coalition.

The pre-election campaign has been marked by controversy. Observers described it as increasingly contentious, with allegations of corruption, foreign interference and the release of covertly recorded videos intensifying political tensions.

With no party expected to secure an outright majority, post-election coalition negotiations are likely to be crucial in shaping Slovenia's next government. — Xinhua

SPORTS

Legendary Myanmar footballer and coach U Tin Myint Aung passes away

U Tin Myint Aung, aged 59, a former Myanmar national team player from the "Silver Age" and a midfielder for the Finance & Revenue club, passed away on the morning of 23 March due to natural causes.

The Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) issued a statement expressing deep condolences for the passing of U Tin Myint Aung, who served in various high-level capacities, including Technical Director, Associate Technical Director, and Head Coach for both the Myanmar Men's and Women's National Teams.

His career spanned several successful eras: the University Selection team from 1985 to

1994, Finance & Revenue from 1987 to 2000, and the Malaysian Armed Forces FC from 1989 to 1991. He represented the Myanmar National Team from 1989 to 2000. He was a key player of the squad that won the Silver Medal at the 1993 SEA Games. He won multiple domestic championships with Finance & Revenue and was honoured as Best Player in 1997.

After retiring from play, he transitioned into a coaching career starting in 2002: served as Assistant Coach for the National Team, and later as Head Coach for the Women's National Team, the Men's National Team, and the Myanmar U23 team and served as the Head

Coach for Ayeyawady United FC.

Beyond coaching, he managed youth development projects and collaborated with local and international experts on technical advancements for the sport. Recognizing his lifelong dedication as a player, coach, technician, and administrator, the MFF awarded him the MFF Service Award during the MFF Congress on 28 November, 2025.

The President and Executive Committee of the MFF concluded their statement by noting that the demise of U Tin Myint Aung is a significant loss for Myanmar football, offering their deepest sympathies to his grieving family. — MT/ZN

Barcelona maintains La Liga lead as Madrid edges Atletico in derby thriller



Real Madrid's Federico Valverde shoots to score during a La Liga football match between Real Madrid and Atletico de Madrid in Madrid, Spain, on 22 March 2026. PHOTO: XINHUA

BARCELONA took a four-point lead over Real Madrid into the international break after grinding out a 1-0 home win over Rayo Vallecano on Sunday, while Madrid beat Atletico Madrid 3-2 in a lively derby.

Atletico struck first at the Santiago Bernabeu when Giuliano Simeone combined neatly with Ademola Lookman, who opened the scoring in the 33rd minute.

Vinicius Junior levelled from the penalty spot 10 minutes after halftime after David

Hancko fouled Brahim Diaz, and poor defending from Jose Gimenez allowed Fede Valverde to put Madrid ahead three minutes later.

Nahuel Molina equalized with a superb long-range effort, but Vinicius restored Madrid's lead in 72 minutes, cutting inside before curling a shot into the far corner.

Valverde was later sent off for a late challenge on Alex Baena, and Julian Alvarez rattled the post from distance, but Atletico could not find a second

equalizer.

Barcelona was far from convincing in its 1-0 win over Rayo Vallecano, needing Ronald Araujo's first-half goal and an outstanding display from goalkeeper Joan Garcia to secure the points. Garcia, who received his first call-up to the Spain squad on Friday, made several fine saves in the second half as Rayo repeatedly exposed gaps in Barcelona's defence. The home side looked tired and sloppy in possession for long spells. — Xinhua

Charlton takes third consecutive gold at World Indoor Athletics Championships

DEVYNNE Charlton of the Bahamas equalled her own world record of 7.65 seconds on Sunday and became the first woman to win three world indoor titles in the 60-metre hurdles.

Charlton, who also won in 2024 and 2025, celebrated by placing a crown on her head and draping herself in the Bahamian flag during her lap of honour.

"I didn't have the best start, I stumbled a bit but I tried to fix it as fast as I could," Charlton said. "I knew I had it when I crossed the finish line. I know I could have run a little bit faster too."

In the women's pentathlon, Sofie Dokter of the Netherlands produced a career-best performance to upset world champion Anna Hall of the United States and world silver medallist Kate O'Connor of Ireland, winning gold with a world-leading 4,888 points. Dokter cried on the podium as the Dutch anthem played.

New Zealand's Tom Walsh secured the men's shot put title with a season-best throw of 21.82 metres in the sixth and final round. Americans Jordan Geist and Roger Steen took silver and bronze.

The men's long jump final also produced late drama as Portugal's Gerson Balde surged from behind with a world-leading leap of 8.46 metres in the sixth round to overtake Italy's Mattia Furlani for gold. Furlani claimed silver with a personal-best 8.39 metres, while Bulgaria's Bozhidar Saraboyukov took bronze with 8.31 metres.

Portugal added another gold in the women's long jump through Agate De Sousa, who jumped 6.92 metres in the fifth round. Italy's Larissa Iapichino took silver with 6.87 metres in the final round, and Colombia's Natalia Linares won bronze with 6.80 metres.

Britain enjoyed a strong final day in the middle-distance events. Georgia Hunter Bell won the women's 1,500 metres in a world-leading 3:58.53, while Australia's Jessica Hull, bronze medallist in the 3,000 metres a day earlier, took silver in 3:59.45.

Keely Hodgkinson added another British gold in the women's 800 metres, setting a championship record of 1:55.30. Molly Caudery then won the women's pole vault with 4.85 metres. — Xinhua

Trump says US delays strikes on Iran's energy sites for 5 days

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WORLD

1st session of new parliament opens in Laos

The Lao National Assembly's 10th legislature opened its inaugural session on Monday, convening top leaders and representatives from across the country to set the agenda for key national priorities.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, President of the Lao National Assembly (NA) Xaysomphone Phomvihane highlighted the session's focus on electing key state leaders and addressing major national priorities.

Xaysomphone outlined the 10th legislature's priorities during its inaugural session, highlighting five years of progress and an ambitious agenda for 2026-2030.

Reviewing the previous term, he noted that the country has maintained firm political stability, safeguarded national sovereignty, and achieved con-



President of the Lao National Assembly (NA) Xaysomphone Phomvihane (front, R) congratulates President Thongloun Sisoulith (front, L) in Vientiane, Laos, 23 March 2026. PHOTO: LAO NEWS AGENCY/HANDOUT VIA XINHUA

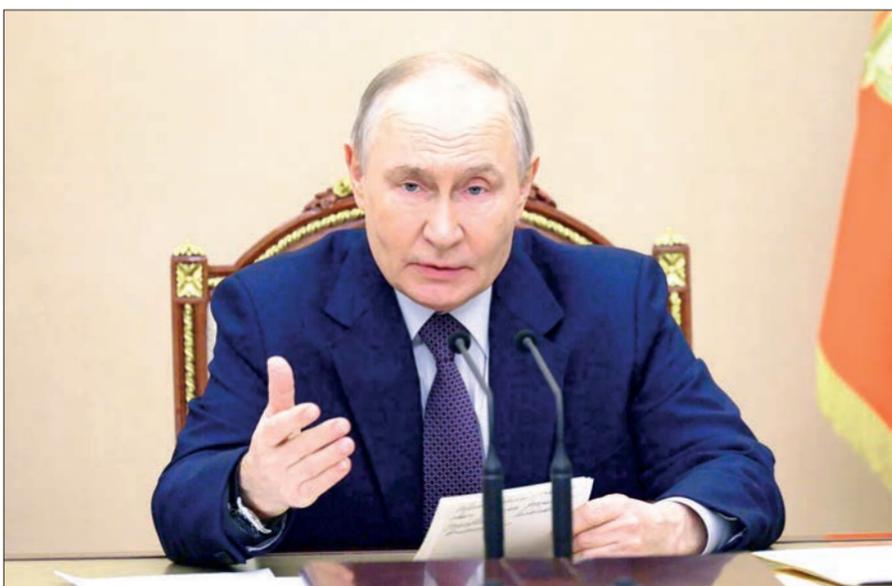
sistent economic growth. Key milestones included the streamlined restructuring of state apparatus and a significant 2025 constitutional amendment, which enhanced the effective-

ness of governance and the rule of law.

During the session, Thongloun Sisoulith, general secretary of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP) Central Committee, was elected President of Laos. Sonexay Siphandone, a politburo member of the LPRP's Central Committee, was elected Prime Minister. The session also elected the Vice-President, Deputy Prime Minister, and Vice-Presidents of the National Assembly.

Scheduled for 23 to 27 March, the session allows lawmakers to review and approve major national agendas, including legislative plans, development strategies, and institutional frameworks for the new term. The session is expected to adopt 19 resolutions, setting the stage for continued stability and sustainable development in Laos. — Xinhua

Putin notes general tension in world, related fluctuations in energy markets



Russian President Vladimir Putin chairs a government meeting focused on the situation on the global energy market at the Kremlin, in Moscow, Russia. PHOTO: SPUTNIK

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin on Monday spoke about the general tension in the world and the related fluctuations in energy markets.

“Bearing in mind the general tension in the world and the related fluctuations in energy markets, and the same thing is happening for many other goods, you and

I are well aware of this, there are many goods and product groups in the chain of everything related to energy,” Putin said at a meeting on economic issues.

Russia must respond to external risks in advance by building a macroeconomic policy, Russian president Vladimir Putin said.

Russia's GDP in January showed a decline of 2.1 per cent, and there was nothing unexpected in this, Putin said. It is necessary to return to the trajectory of sustainable economic growth, while inflation should decrease, the president said, adding that inflation in Russia is fixed at below six per cent in annual terms.

Additionally, the president said that the balance of the entire macroeconomic structure of the country is an important condition for economic growth.

Mining in Russia has increased by 0.5 per cent in January, Russian President Vladimir Putin said. — SPUTNIK

Thailand confirms sufficient oil supply, advancing inspections of oil market

THE Thai government has affirmed that the country maintains sufficient oil reserves to meet demand for up to 103 days, and it is advancing regulatory measures to enhance transparency in the market.

Sarawut Kaewtatip, director-general of the Department of Energy Business, confirmed on Sunday that Thailand maintains sufficient overall oil reserves, estimated to last around 103 days, with supply levels exceeding normal demand.

Thailand currently produces approximately 35.28 million litres of gasoline per day, closely matching the daily consumption of 34.41 million litres. For diesel, it produces around 79.91 million litres per day, which adequately meets domestic demand of averaging 67 to 70 million litres daily, he said. — Xinhua

Vietnam's 14th party central committee convenes second meeting

THE 14th Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee (CPVCC) opened its second meeting in Hanoi on Monday, the Vietnam News Agency reported.

The committee is set to deliberate and decide on a wide range of issues, underpinning the implementation of the resolution adopted at the 14th National Party

Congress, political system efficiency, and the country's sustainable development for the 2026-2031 period and beyond, said the report. — Xinhua