

15 Nursing Training Schools Upgraded to Nursing Institutes

Humanity, compassion, kindness, and loving care, the true 'Art of Nursing', can never be replaced by material objects or machinery.



President U Min Aung Hlaing warmly greets trainees at the library during unveiling ceremony of the Institute of Nursing (Nay Pyi Taw).

It is necessary to standardize Myanmar's nursing and midwifery education to produce qualified nurses and midwives comparable with those of South-East Asian countries, said President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Min Aung Hlaing at the inauguration of the Institute of Nursing (Nay Pyi Taw) yesterday morning.

The President officially inaugurated the Institute of Nursing in Nay Pyi Taw alongside several regional and state institutes.

In his opening speech, the President stated that opportunities will be available for nurses to pursue step-by-step higher education up to the doctoral level in nursing at universities both within and outside the country. Therefore, nursing training schools have been upgraded into nursing institutes as they are now to promote the development of nursing education.

He noted that the remaining 27 nursing, midwifery, and allied training schools have also been upgraded in their organiza-

tional structure, designated as a priority within the new government's first 100-day plan. In the 2026-2027 academic year, the President revealed that the institutes

will admit 2,900 trainees for the three-year nursing-midwifery diploma course and 1,400 for the two-year comprehensive midwifery diploma course.

The President underlined that as the future healthcare system is transforming into a technology-based system, students need to strive to improve

their research skills, digital technology capabilities, ability to utilize artificial intelligence (AI) technology, and English language proficiency. **SEE PAGE 3**



Crowds flock to bamboo rafting at Rathepyan Cave

PAGE 2

Visitors enjoying bamboo rafting at Alawan Lake, Rathepyan Cave, Kayin State.

YR Acts to Safeguard Water, Avert Floods

THE Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department has announced that measures are being implemented across Yangon Region to prevent flooding associated with the El Niño phenomenon, ensure an adequate supply of irrigation water for agriculture, and avoid shortages of drinking water. **SEE PAGE 2**



A reservoir in Yangon Region.

MFSPEA arranges regional procurement of urea, compound fertilizer

THE Myanmar Fertilizer, Seed, and Pesticide Entrepreneurs Association (MFSPEA) has announced arrangements for the regional procurement of urea and compound fertilizer. These fertilizers are primarily

used for monsoon paddy, cotton, and other monsoon crops, and sufficient quantities will be available in each region.

Interested farmers can contact MFSPEA at 09 665407890. Additionally, MFSPEA has invited

companies interested in importing fertilizers and distributing them through a competitive pricing system for the third quarter (July to September 2026).

MFSPEA will oversee the importation of

high-quality DAP-based 15-15-15 compound fertilizer for the third quarter, implementing competitive pricing under the guidance of the Urea Fertilizer Purchasing and Distribution Steering Committee. — NN/KK

NATIONAL

Crowds flock to bamboo rafting at Rathepyan Cave

FROM PAGE 1

According to locals in Hpa-an, there is a high influx of tourists visiting the bamboo rafting tour at Alawan Lake and Rathepyan Cave in Kayin State. Hpa-an is a popular destination for domestic travellers during the rainy season, as the region hosts abundant natural beauty,

leading to increased visits to its iconic landmarks. To ensure a smooth and convenient experience, Tourism Hpa-an has announced that bookings for the Rathepyan Cave and Alawan Lake bamboo rafting tour can be made online starting 16 July. Visitors planning to explore Rathepyan Cave

are advised to book in advance to save time, secure seamless access to the bamboo rafting service, and schedule their trip on preferred dates. For tour enquiries, visitors may contact Tourism Hpa-an through comments on their social media page or by phone. — MT/ZN

YR Acts to Safeguard Water, Avert Floods

FROM PAGE 1

According to the department, reservoirs across the region are currently operating at an average storage level of 51 per cent, while average rainfall has reached about 45 inches. As a result, there is no cause for concern during this year's rainy season. Water storage is also expected to be sufficient to meet irrigation and drinking water needs during the coming summer. In addition, dams and embankments are being systematically maintained to prevent damage and minimize rainwater losses.

imizing rainwater losses.

In coordination with the Yangon City Development Committee, the department is also implementing measures to prevent floodwater from entering low-lying villages, wards and paddy fields during the rainy season, protect embankments and sluice gates from damage, supply irrigation water during the summer, prevent saltwater intrusion into farmland, and ensure a sufficient supply of drinking water to Yangon City. — ASH/KN

Public Notice for Martyrs' Day Visitors to Mausoleum

1. Ballpoint pens, mobile phones, flags, handbags, cameras, lighters, flower wreaths, bouquets, baskets, vinyl, bottles, sticks, and flagpoles are strictly prohibited within the compound of the Martyrs' Mausoleum.
2. All the visitors are required to wear masks systematically without fail.
3. All visitors must thoroughly wash their hands at the designated stations and use the provided hand sanitizers before entering.
4. For temperature screening and medical checkups at Link Road in Bahan Township, individuals are required to present a Citizenship Scrutiny Card, employee card, student ID, or another valid identification card, along with personal details such as name, ID number, address, and phone number.
5. Visitors must queue at least six feet apart in compliance with the Ministry of Health's social distancing guidelines. Anyone displaying suspicious symptoms, such as a high temperature (38°C/100.4°F), cough, breathing difficulties, or fatigue, will be required to follow the instructions of the relevant authorities.
6. They have to follow the arrangements of those serving duties at the mausoleum.
7. Those paying tributes must queue at least six feet apart, with only ten people permitted at a time. Inside the mausoleum, they are also required to maintain the same sixfoot distance.
8. All the visitors must strictly follow the COVID-19 health notices and information released by the Ministry of Health.
9. Elderly people and those with chronic illnesses are not allowed to visit.
10. Those suffering from fever, cough, difficulty breathing or fatigue are not allowed to visit.
11. For group tributes, a time limit of no more than ten minutes is recommended.

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Myanmar's Sheepadee price rises amid scarcity, strong demand

THE price of cordyceps fungus, Sheepadee (*Ophiocordyceps sinensis*), one of the world's most valuable natural medicinal fungi found in the snow-capped mountains of northern Myanmar, is high in the market due to increasing scarcity and strong demand, according to the Myitkyina Sheepadee market. Sheepadee in Myanmar grows at an altitude of over 10,000 feet, like the snow-capped Tibetan Plateau, Khakaborazi National Park, Hponkanrazi and Gamlangrazi, Kachin State. The locals usually search for the fungus from May to July, when the snow begins to melt, spending weeks on mountain grasslands and rocky



A Sheepadee hunter at Mount Hponkanrazi. PHOTO: ZWE MARN

slopes while enduring harsh weather conditions. Sheepadee has been used to boost the immune system, reduce fatigue, improve the respiratory system, support kidney and liver function, and

serve as a natural energy tonic. Research is still ongoing to establish stronger scientific evidence for its effectiveness as a medicinal supplement in disease treatment. "Searching for Sheepadee on freezing snow mountains is a daily challenge for people like us who live in the highlands. There are many days when we spend the entire day kneeling in the snow without finding a single piece. To collect one tiny Sheepadee, barely the size of a needle, we have to dig through ice. We must constantly watch out for strong icy winds and poor visibility. Although it is a valuable medicinal product for consumers, it represents our family's livelihood, our future dreams and the daily struggle behind life in the snow mountains. The higher the price, the harder it becomes to find. We can earn more by selling it in Myitkyina. However, we usually sell it in PutaO because we want to return to the mountains again before the end of July," said U Wam Di, a Sheepadee hunter. Sheepadee is a rare medicinal organism formed when a parasitic fungus grows inside the larva of a caterpillar. Demand has remained strong in both Myanmar and China this year. Prices vary depending on harvest volume, market conditions and quality. Transactions

are generally negotiated between collectors, brokers and buyers based on quality. Last year, it sold for between K5,000 and K7,000 per piece in the PutaO market, while prices reached up to K10,000 per piece in Myitkyina. In China's market, prices range from more than US\$20,000 to over US\$30,000 per kilogramme, depending on the place of origin, size, drying quality and authenticity. As demand continues to rise, counterfeit Sheepadee has also become more common. Genuine Sheepadee consists of a caterpillar body naturally attached to a single fungal stalk (stroma), with clearly visible body segments and a single stalk that tapers toward the tip. Counterfeit ones are often made by attaching artificial caterpillar-shaped materials to mushrooms, appear

unnaturally uniform, and are frequently dyed to produce overly bright colours. Authentic specimens have pale yellowish-brown to brown caterpillar bodies and dark brown fungal stalks. Genuine caterpillar fungus also has a natural earthy and mushroom-like aroma, whereas counterfeit products may emit chemical or glue-like odours. China remains the world's largest market for caterpillar fungus, with demand remaining particularly strong this season. The continued price increase is attributed to the growing scarcity of the fungus in Myanmar's snow-capped mountain regions, its widespread use in traditional Chinese medicine, its popularity as a premium gift and its increasing consumption as a health supplement. — Thitsa (MNA)/KTZH

15 Nursing Training Schools Upgraded to Nursing Institutes

FROM PAGE 1

The President urged the nurses not to forget their humanity, loving care, compassion and kindness as “The Art of Nursing,” which cannot be replaced by any other material objects or machinery. They have to take pride in, respect and value this noble profession.

With regard to outstanding nurses, he recounted that the four nurses and midwives from Myanmar who received the internationally recognized Florence Nightingale Award were conferred the Wunna Kyaw Htin title in 2023, while the President of the Myanmar Nurse and Midwife Council was awarded the Theikpa Kyaw Swa title in 2025.

As honouring the nurses and midwives, the President highlighted that the State also takes pride in the outstanding dedication and sacrifices of nurses and midwives who, whenever the country faced pandemics, natural disasters and emergencies, served as frontline responders, putting aside their own safety

and difficulties to protect and care for the lives and health of the people.

The President and dignitaries watched a video clip on the opening of institutes of nursing.

President U Min Aung Hlaing, Vice-President U Nyo Saw and Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services General Ye Win Oo sprinkled scented water on the plaque at the lecture hall of the Institute of Nursing (Nay Pyi Taw).

The President inspected the library, the computer pool, the lecture hall, the discussion room and the simulator training room and gave necessary guidance to the Union Minister for Health and officials.

The Ministry of Health is currently providing education and training at five medical universities. In 2023, the Faculty of Medicine was established at Naypyitaw State Academy. Therefore, there are now 17 universities, comprising six medical universities and 11 health-related universities.

Since 1962, a total of 45,245 nursing midwifery diploma holders and 42,524

Salient points from the guidance given by the President at the opening of the Nursing Institute

1. Trainees can now pursue doctoral-level nursing education at universities both at home and abroad.

2. The remaining 27 nursing, midwifery, and allied training schools have been upgraded in their organizational structure.

3. Nurses were reminded to uphold humanity, compassion, kindness, and loving care, embracing “The Art of Nursing”, and to take pride in, respect, and value this noble profession.

midwives have faithfully served as public servants, carrying out their responsibilities in delivering health-care services to the people. — MNA/TTA

VP holds talks with CPC party secretary of Xizang Autonomous Region

VICE-PRESIDENT of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Nan Ni Ni Aye, who is currently in Nyingchi (Linzhi) in the Xizang Autonomous Region of the People’s Republic of China to attend the Fifth China-Xizang Trans-Himalaya Forum for International Cooperation in China’s Xizang (Tibet) Autonomous Region, met a delegation led by Mr Wang Junzheng, Party Secretary of the Xizang Autonomous Regional Committee of the Communist Party of China, at the Nyingchi Rui Crown Hotel yesterday evening.



Vice-President Nan Ni Ni Aye meets Mr Wang Junzheng, Party Secretary of the Xizang Autonomous Regional Committee of the Communist Party of China.

Both sides held cordial and frank discussions on further promoting cooperation between Myanmar and the Xizang Autonomous Region in the areas of culture, trade, renewable energy,

and livestock sectors; and promoting cooperation in traditional medicine and the MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) sectors.

The meeting was also attended by deputy ministers U Naing Min Kyaw and Dr Thaung Naing Oo, along with other officials. Relevant officials also accompanied the party secretary.

In the evening, Vice-President Nan Ni Ni Aye, together with heads of state and delegates from other participating countries, attended the forum welcoming dinner. — MNA/TH

MoFR briefs Amyotha Hluttaw representatives on budgeting & tax reforms

THE Ministry of Finance and Revenue briefed members of the Amyotha Hluttaw on its budget management and tax administration during a meeting held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The event was attended by Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Aung Lin Dwe, Deputy Speaker Jeng Phang Naw Taung, lawmakers and ministry officials.

Director-General Daw Thida Tun of the Budget Department explained the national budget process, including budget planning, the budget cycle, medium-term financial framework, budget approval, implementation, monitoring, reporting and auditing. Director-General Daw Mya Mya Oo of the Internal Revenue Department outlined Myanmar’s tax system, major tax laws, tax categories and ongoing tax reform measures.

The briefing concluded with ministry officials responding to questions and recommendations from lawmakers. — MNA/ST



A briefing on budgeting and tax reforms from the Ministry of Finance and Revenue is in progress in Nay Pyi Taw.

DIPLOMACY

MoFR UM receives UNOPS Country Director & Representative

UNION Minister for Finance and Revenue Dr Kan Zaw received Ms Sara Austin Netzer, Country Director and Representative of the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) in Myanmar, at the Ministry of Finance and Revenue in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

They discussed the development programmes being implemented by UNOPS in Myanmar and areas for further cooperation with the organization.

Deputy Minister Daw Than Than Lin, the permanent secretary and other officials also attended the meeting. — MNA/MKKS



The UNOPS Country Director and Representative calls on Union Minister Dr Kan Zaw.

NATIONAL

HLUTTAW

Pyithu Hluttaw Debates Mobile Coverage, Roads, Bridges and IDP Assistance

THE Third Pyithu Hluttaw held the 24th day of its second regular session, during which lawmakers raised 12 questions on telecommunications, roads, bridges, sports facilities and assistance for internally displaced persons (IDPs), while also debating a proposal and introducing a bill.

Sai Kyaw Hla, MP for the Kunhing Constituency, asked whether two mobile towers could be built to provide network coverage to 72 villages in Kunhing Township. Deputy Minister for Digital Development and Communications U Thet Win Aung said there are currently no plans to build new towers because of the area's difficult terrain, lack of electricity and limited telecommunications infrastructure. However, he said

surveys would be conducted, and future expansion would depend on funding and technical feasibility.

U Rah Ni, MP for the PutaO Constituency, asked whether the remaining 10 miles of the PutaO-Namht-wamhku village road would be upgraded to concrete. Deputy Minister for Border Affairs Maj-Gen Kyaw Swa Oo said the project would be implemented in a suitable financial year, subject to transportation conditions and budget availability.

U Aye Chan, MP for the Hlinethaya East Constituency, sought details on the objectives and plans of the newly established Ministry of Women's Affairs. Deputy Minister Daw San San Nwe said the ministry would strengthen women's development through public



The 24th-day meeting of the Third Pyithu Hluttaw's second regular session is underway in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

awareness campaigns, cooperation with relevant organizations and improved policy implementation.

U Ngwar Ye Hse, MP for the Machanbaw Constituency, asked whether a township sports office and sports ground would

be built. Deputy Minister for Sports U Nyi Nyi said the ministry would seek approval and funding to construct a football field and office building.

U Kyaw Lin, MP for the Bhamo Constituency, asked whether monthly financial

assistance for IDPs would resume. Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Than Soe said the payments, which were provided throughout 2025, could not continue in 2026 because disaster management

funds are being prioritized for Mandalay earthquake recovery and reconstruction of infrastructure damaged by conflict.

Other questions were raised by MPs from Shwedaung, Thanatpin, Kyangin, Wundwin, Myittha, Mindon and Hmawby constituencies on flood-control embankments, drainage improvements, rural roads and bridges. Most replies were given by Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Bo Bo Kyaw and Deputy Minister for Cooperatives and Rural Development U Theik Soe, who said the proposed projects would be considered according to budget availability and future financial-year priorities.

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DIPLOMACY

MCRD Union Minister receives UNDP Resident Representative to Myanmar

UNION Minister for Cooperatives and Rural Development U Myo Zaw Thein received UNDP Resident Representative to Myanmar Mr Norimasa Shimomura at the Union Minister's Office Guest Hall in Nay Pyi Taw.

They exchanged views on the UNDP's "Community Recovery and Resilience Project" that has been implemented since 2023, with the Rural Development Department under

the Ministry acting as the Technical Focal Point, the cooperation with relevant partner organizations on

project activities, including earthquake response activities, and plans for continued cooperation. — MNA



Union Minister U Myo Zaw Thein meets UNDP Resident Representative Mr Norimasa Shimomura.

DIPLOMACY

MNPIFER Union Minister receives new UNDP Resident Representative

UNION Minister for National Planning, Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Aung Kyaw Hoe received a delegation led by Mr Norimasa Shimomura, new Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to Myanmar, at Office 1, Ministry of National Planning, Investment and Foreign Economic Relations yesterday morning.

They frankly discussed and exchanged views on matters related



The new UNDP Resident Representative calls on Union Minister U Aung Kyaw Hoe.

to the implementation of ongoing programmes, UNDP coordination plans for the State's economic development and human resources development.

Senior officers from

the Ministry of National Planning, Investment and Foreign Economic Relations and representatives from the UNDP office in Myanmar attended this meeting. — MNPIFER

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NATIONAL

Construction materials for Falam reconstruction delivered

DEPUTY Minister for Construction U Myo Myint delivered construction materials to residents of Falam Township, Chin State, to support the repair and reconstruction of houses damaged during violent incidents.

Accompanied by members of the Chin State Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Committee, the deputy minister inspected the arrival and temporary storage of government-supplied materials and instructed officials to ensure proper storage, prevent wastage, assess actual needs and distribute the supplies promptly.

Construction materials, including cement, roofing sheets and roofing

nails, were handed over to affected households. The deputy minister also inspected repairs to houses that were completely, partially, or slightly damaged, being carried out jointly by security personnel, police, firefighters, departmental officials, and residents.

Assistance for damaged houses in Tlanlo, Vualai and Cinmual wards included 100 bags of cement, 520 CI sheets and roofing nails for 21 houses. A further 165 CI sheets were provided for Falam Township Police buildings, Basic Education High School No 2 and residents' homes. Additional assistance will continue for damaged buildings and houses. — MNA/KZL



A handover ceremony of construction materials is underway in Falam, Chin State.

HLUTTAW

Proposal urged to govt to amend certain sections of Farmland Rules



The 17th-day meeting of the second regular session of the Third Amyotha Hluttaw is in progress on 16 July, chaired by Speaker U Aung Lin Dwe.

THE Amyotha Hluttaw featured the activities of a question-and-answer session, the formation of associations and the submission of a proposal urging the government at its 17th-day session yesterday.

MP U Myo Thant from the Ayeyawady Region Constituency 6 tabled a motion urging the government to amend Sections 103, 104, 106 (a), (b) and (f) and Section 112 (a) of Chapter XII of the Farmland Rules under Notification 2/2012. MP Daw Khin Than Oo from the Ayeyawady Region Constituency 12 seconded the motion.

MP U Kyaw Zin Tun from the Sagaing Region Constituency 8 asked about

the plan to build a fuel jetty urgently in Homalin of Sagaing Region. Deputy Minister for Transport U Tun Lu stated that the Sagaing Region Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems scrutinizes proposal for the construction of jetties at 15 locations on the bank in Homalin under the law. If it approves the proposal, the projects will be allowed to be implemented in the 2026-27 financial year. The regional government will scrutinize and allow the proposals from individuals or companies to build jetties for fuel tankers in Homalin. But the regional government does not have any plan to construct a standard fuel

jetty there.

Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy U Aye Kyaw responded to the questions raised by MP U Thein Hlaing from the Sagaing Region Constituency 7, saying that the project site is located within a high seismic zone. It will be necessary to revise and redesign the dam and its associated hydraulic structures to ensure that they can withstand earthquake impacts. There are plans to resume implementation of the Manipur Hydropower Project in Kalay Township of Sagaing Region once peace and stability are restored throughout the entire project area, if the companies are interested in implementing the pro-

ject under a Joint Venture or Build-Operate-Transfer arrangement.

Deputy Minister for Finance and Revenue Daw Than Lin replied to the queries submitted by MP U Aye Paing from the Yangon Region Constituency 6. She stated that there is no plan to establish a branch of Myanmar Economic Bank in Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) Township, as MEB branches in Dagon Myothit (South) Townships and private banks in Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) and (South) townships are providing banking services to the people smoothly.

The deputy minister also answered the questions raised by MP Daw Mie Mie Kyaw Tun from the Kachin State Constituency 4, stating that the highest number of farmers from Tanai Township who dealt with the Mogaung Township bank branch of Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank was only 378 in 2020, while only 19 farmers obtained monsoon cultivation loans in 2025. Therefore, there are currently no plans to open a bank branch in Tanai Township.

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DIPLOMACY

MNHRC and ICRC meet

COMMISSION Member Dr Swe Swe Aung of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, along with Deputy Director-General Dr Khine Khine Win, Directors U Thura Kyaw and U Zeyar Linn met the delegation from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), led by Protection Coordinator Mr Sebastien Bole Besancon. The meeting took place at the Commission's Call Room yesterday.



A group photo session of the meeting between the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The discussions of human rights, the ICRC operations, and potential areas of co-operation between the two institutions. — MNHRC

National Flag to be hoisted at half-mast on 79th Martyrs' Day

ON the 79th Anniversary of Martyrs' Day, the public is urged to fly the Myanmar National Flag at half-mast and observe a siren-sounding ceremony in tribute to the fallen leaders.

The President's Office has informed all government offices and organizations nation-

wide to fly the Flag of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar at half-mast as a mark of mourning. MRTV will sound sirens at 10:37 am to pay tribute to the fallen leaders. During this time, vehicles on the roads are required to stop and sound their horns. — MNA/MKKS

MRTV to Broadcast 79th Martyrs' Day Ceremony Live

THE 79th Martyrs' Day ceremony will be held on 19 July at the Martyrs' Mausoleum in Yangon.

The ceremony will be broadcast live starting at 7:40 am on MRTV HD Channel, MRTV News Channel, MRTV Parliament Channel, MRTV NRC Channel, MITV, MWD HD, MWD Variety HD and affiliate channels such as Readers' Channel, Sky Net Up to Date Channel,

Channel 9, Channel K, Hey Play Sports Channel, M Channel, UNI TV, Shwe Nadi Shwe Yi Entertainment Channel and Channel 24, as well as Myanmar Radio, Shwe FM, Padamyia FM, Pyinsawady FM, Mandalay FM, Cherry FM, FM Bagan, Thazin FM, Star FM. Live streaming will also be broadcast on the MRTV Website, MRTV app and online. — MNA/KZL

NATIONAL

Supreme Court announces AI adoption and judicial reform measures

THE Supreme Court of the Union has announced that artificial intelligence (AI) technology is being introduced into the judicial system.

The court stated that the judiciary must not only hear cases fairly and promptly in accordance with the law but also ensure that offenders are not acquitted without punishment, that sentences are proportionate to the offences committed, and that innocent people are not wrongfully convicted, thereby upholding the integrity of the justice system.



This photo captures the 31st work coordination meeting of the Supreme Court of the Union and the Chief Justices of the Regions/States, the Judges of the Self-Administered Division/Judges of the Self-Administered Zones, and District Judges.

It also said effective deterrent penalties would be imposed for offences involving narcotics, hu-

man trafficking, online fraud, unlawful groups that threaten the rule of law, and acts endangering

national security.

The court will continue to implement awareness programmes and follow relevant laws, rules and procedures to make the court-led mediation system more accessible to the public and raise awareness of proceedings under Myanmar's copyright laws.

The announcement further stressed that corruption undermines both personal integrity and public confidence in the judiciary, adding that all court personnel will be closely monitored to prevent corruption. — ASH/MKKS

Hopong's regional development projects inspected

DIRECTOR-GENERAL U Myo Naing Aung of the Department of Rural Development, under the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development, conducted field inspections of regional development projects, rural road construction works and small-scale product development activities in Hopong Township, Shan State (South), yesterday.

DG U Myo Naing Aung and party met members of the Pa-O Self-Administered Zone Leading Body to discuss the implementation of regional

development projects. At the meeting, Hopong Township Department of Rural Development Head U Soe Lwin Myint briefed them on the progress of development projects being implemented during the 2026-2027 financial year.

The inspection team then visited the Green Gold Coffee Factory to observe coffee powder production and coordinated necessary support with the production group. They also inspected the asphalt paving work on the Aungpwe-Taphukaling-Gontalay-Honam



Officials oversee one of the regional projects in Hopong Township.

village-to-village road, being implemented by the Department of Rural Road Development, and the completed village concrete road in Lwelwam Village under the Village Development Plan (VDP), urging village committee members to maintain the road systematically for long-term durability.

Afterwards, the director-general visited a

refresher tailoring training course on traditional Pa-O costumes conducted by the Department of Small-Scale Industries under the Pa-O Self-Administered Zone, where he observed the training, met trainees and instructed responsible officials to coordinate and address the requirements raised during the presentations. — Cho Than Nyunt (Rural)

HLUTTAW

Proposal urged to govt to amend ...

FROM PAGE 5

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Aung Lin Dwe sought the approval from the Hluttaw to set up the Myanmar-China Parliamentary Friendship Association chaired by MP U Chit Swe from the Ayeyawady Region Constituency 10 and the Myanmar-India Parliamentary Friendship Association

led by MP U Rakwi Pung from the Kachin State Constituency 1.

The Speaker urged the Hluttaw representatives wishing to discuss the motion to list at the director-general of the Amyotha Hluttaw Office.

The Amyotha Hluttaw will continue its 18th-day session on 17 July. — MNA/TTA

Pinlaung's RBF project launched, committee formed



The launch and committee formation ceremony of the Rural Business Fund project is underway in Pinlaung Township.

THE Department of Rural Development, under the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development, conducted an introductory briefing on the Rural Business Fund (RBF) Project to be implemented and formed a project committee in Htilon Village, Pinlaung Township, yesterday.

Pinlaung Township Department of Rural Development Head U Kyaw Swa met village elders and villagers in Htilone Village and explained the objectives, expected benefits and implementation procedures of the Rural Business Fund (RBF) Project, as well as the rules and regulations set out in the project manual. Afterwards, township officials and residents elected and

endorsed by public consensus a five-member Village Rural Business Fund (RBF) Project Committee, comprising three men and two women, to oversee project implementation in the village.

To prepare for the future disbursement of project loans, officials also organized 20 members into four livelihood groups, comprising three potato fried production groups and one potato cultivation group. The project is designed to provide farmers, livestock producers, and small and medium-sized entrepreneurs with access to capital, promote group-based livelihood activities, strengthen rural production, and increase household incomes. — Karan (Rural)

Trading Amount and Forex Rate in the Market on 16 July 2026

	US\$	Chinese yuan	Thai baht	Indian rupee
Exchange rates	3,653.00~3,669.00	555.30~558.70	125.30~125.70	43.60
Trading amount in the market	13,866,363.13	17,698,400.51	61,154,204.76	4,670,870.00
The amount sold by CBM to the market				

THE volume of the foreign currency traded in the market was for the import of fuel, pharmaceutical and pharmaceutical raw materials, industrial raw materials, communication equipment, wheat, animal feed, fertilizers, and packaging materials. — MNA

12-storey illegal building demolished in Shwe Kokko

AUTHORITIES have demolished another 12-storey illegal building in the Shwe Kokko area of Myawady Township, Kayin State, which was used for online scam and illegal gambling activities.

Joint departmental teams are systematically demolishing illegal buildings and destroying equipment used in online fraud and gambling operations in the Shwe Kokko and KK Park areas.

Of the 77 illegal build-

ings identified in Shwe Kokko, 57 were designated for demolition using machinery, while 20 were scheduled for controlled demolition. The latest 12-storey building was among those planned for controlled demolition.

Authorities said that 74 illegal buildings used for online scam and gambling activities had been demolished so far, with the remaining three set to be destroyed as the operation continues. — MNA/KZL

Mongton’s MSY income-generating activities inspected

THE Department of Rural Development, under the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development inspected the implementation of income-generating activities under the Mya Sein Yaung Village Project in Hpachei Village, Mongton Township, yesterday.

Mongton District Department of Rural Development Head Daw Kyawt Khaing and officials observed the systematic cultivation of seasonal crops being carried out with loans from the project’s revolving fund. They also met members of the Mya Sein Yaung Village Project committee to check whether monthly financial records had been properly completed and encouraged them to expand income-generating activities to improve household

earnings.

The Emerald Green Village Project was launched in Hpachei Village, enabling the revolving fund to grow to K18.5 million, which has been lent at concessional interest rates to 13 members during the sixth loan cycle, all of whom are successfully operating local income-generating activities with support from the project. — Sein Lwin (Rural)

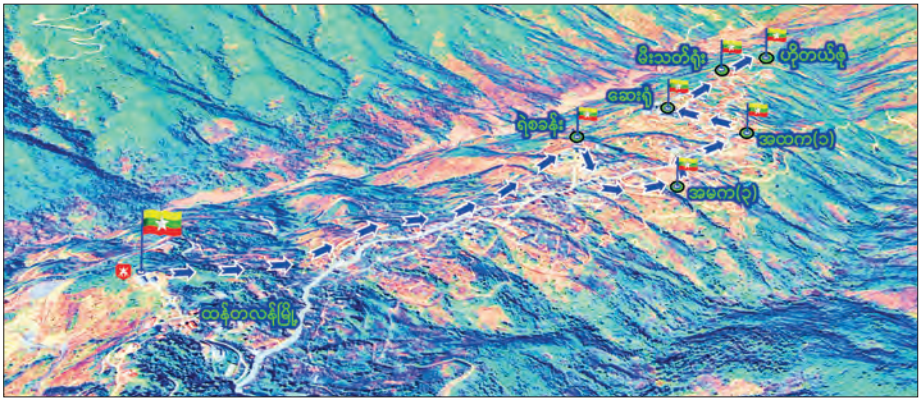


Officials inspect one of the implementation sites of income-generating activities.

Tatmadaw regains full control of Thantlang

CNF and CDF terrorist groups, subordinates of NUG and CRPH, launched attacks on security forces stationed in Thantlang, Chin State, in February 2023, intending to disrupt the government’s administrative mechanism in the town. They employed excessive manpower and heavy weapons, using non-military targets, including government offices, religious buildings, schools, hospitals and residential buildings as cover for their attacks. Although security personnel fought bravely at the risk of their lives, they had to make a temporary withdrawal from Thantlang due to mounting casualties, dwindling ammunition supplies, adverse weather, difficult terrain, and increasing damage to civilian homes and government buildings.

When the terrorist groups temporarily controlled Thantlang, they looted household belongings and valuables from residential homes. They also fortified government offices, religious buildings, schools and hospitals by constructing bunkers, trenches and communication trenches, intending to establish defensive positions and expand fighting into urban and village areas. In response, Tatmadaw columns formulated operational plans and made the necessary preparations to protect civilians and recapture the town while minimizing damage to government facilities and



This image displays a map indicating the movement of Tatmadaw columns marching to retake Thantlang in Chin State.

residential buildings. A counter-terrorism operation was launched, and on 29 October 2023, the Tatmadaw announced that it had fully recaptured Thantlang, with the terrorist groups retreating after suffering heavy casualties.

Following these losses, the CNF and CDF terrorist groups regrouped, replenished their members and weapons, and launched a second attack against security forces on 22 July 2024. Although security members resisted fiercely to prevent the town from falling, the terrorist groups continued to reinforce their forces, while damage to civilian homes and government buildings increased. Consequently, security forces temporarily withdrew from certain positions within the town while continuing to face the enemy.

After completing the necessary preparations to retake the temporarily abandoned positions, Tatmadaw columns launched operations against the terrorist groups beginning on 12 June 2026 despite nu-

merous challenges. They recaptured the township police station on 13 June, Basic Education Primary School No 3 on 19 June, Basic Education High School No 1 on 5 July, the public hospital on 8 July, the township fire station on 12 July, and the hotel zone on the evening of 15 July. The Tatmadaw fully regained control of Thantlang yesterday.

During the successive operations to retake the town, Tatmadaw columns seized the bodies of insurgents, various weapons, ammunition and related military equipment from the terrorist groups. Some security members sacrificed their lives in the service of the State and Tatmadaw.

Tatmadaw columns have recaptured towns and villages in Chin State that were temporarily held by armed groups, reopened transportation routes, and are delivering relief and reconstruction supplies by air and land to support rehabilitation efforts.

Following the recap-

ture of Thantlang, Tatmadaw found that armed groups had used government offices, religious buildings, schools, hospitals and residential houses as defensive positions, and had looted and damaged civilian property.

NUG and CRPH developed the PDF terrorists by cooperating with EAOs and launched conflicts that destroyed towns and villages and forced residents to flee. The local people are now cooperating with Tatmadaw by providing information on the movements and locations of armed groups to support security operations.

The locals welcomed the recapture of Thantlang and surrounding areas. In coordination with relevant government departments and local communities, efforts would be made to help displaced residents return home, clear landmines, repair damaged infrastructure, and carry out rehabilitation work to restore education, healthcare and livelihoods as quickly as possible. — MNA/KTZH

11 seized lots to be auctioned on 17 July at Nyaungkhashay Checkpoint

ILLEGAL goods seized at the Nyaungkhashay Permanent Checkpoint in Waw Township, Bago Region, will be auctioned on 17 July, according to the auction committee.

A total of 11 lots of confiscated goods will be sold through open

bidding at 9:30 am at the checkpoint on the Yangon-Mawlamyine Road. The items, including used phones, copiers, machine parts, tyres, batteries, food products and consumer goods, will be sold in their current condition.

Interested buyers can purchase auction forms for K10,000 per set from 13 to 16 July during office hours. Only those who buy the forms and pay the required security deposit will be allowed to inspect the goods before the auction. — TWA/KZL



Photos display certain seized vehicles and goods.

Prevention needed to curb mosquito-borne diseases in the rainy season

DURING the rainy season each year, people should take preventive measures and adopt healthy living practices to protect themselves from seasonal diseases. The diseases most commonly occurring during the rainy season include dengue fever, malaria, seasonal influenza, acute diarrhoea, dysentery, and respiratory tract infections.

The humid rainy season is a period when influenza viruses that affect the respiratory system thrive and spread. It is also the time when seasonal influenza and other respiratory tract infections become more prevalent. Therefore, local authorities and health staff

Prevention is better than cure. Therefore, to protect against diseases that commonly occur during the rainy season, people are advised to eliminate mosquito breeding sites and places where mosquitoes can rest, avoid eating overripe fruit, keep their homes and surroundings clean, ensure proper drainage in ditches and drains, maintain good personal hygiene, and wash their hands frequently. By consistently practising these health awareness and preventive measures, everyone can help protect themselves from seasonal diseases during the rainy season.

eases such as acute diarrhoea, dysentery, and typhoid fever by paying close attention to food hygiene and drinking safe water. The means must include that food should be kept clean, fresh vegetables, fruits, meat, and fish should be thoroughly cooked before consumption, and only clean or boiled drinking water should be used. To prevent diseases, the best approach is to maintain good health and a strong immune system by choosing clean and nutritious food and practising good personal hygiene and healthy living habits.

Prevention is better than cure. Therefore, to protect against diseases that commonly occur during the rainy season, people are advised to eliminate mosquito breeding sites and places where mosquitoes can rest, avoid eating overripe fruit, keep their homes and surroundings clean, ensure proper drainage in ditches and drains, maintain good personal hygiene, and wash their hands frequently. By consistently practising these health awareness and preventive measures, everyone can help protect themselves from seasonal diseases during the rainy season.

have to raise public awareness about how to maintain good health and take appropriate precautions to prevent infection from these diseases.

Among the diseases that occur during the rainy season, health staff members need to brief the people on the outbreak of dengue fever transmitted by Aedes mosquitoes. If so, people will have the health knowledge about how to take care to avoid being bitten by Aedes mosquitoes. They will understand that Aedes mosquitoes typically bite during the daytime and tend to rest in dark, shaded areas inside homes.

To prevent dengue fever, it is important to eliminate mosquito breeding sites and places where mosquitoes can rest. That is why people and health staff have to conduct regular inspections to identify and eliminate potential breeding sites. The most effective way to prevent diseases that commonly occur during the rainy season is to protect people from mosquito bites.

In addition, health staff have to share ways and means with the people in relevant communities to prevent diseases

THE State Government's recent announcement of extended tax exemptions on essential imports — diesel, liquefied natural gas (LNG), and fertilizers — is more than just an economic policy; it is a testament to a nation's unwavering commitment to its people amidst a landscape of global uncertainties. This proactive stance, designed to stabilize the economy, alleviate the socioeconomic burdens on its citizens, and fortify the tax sector, reflects a deep understanding of the challenges faced and a resolute spirit to overcome them. It is in these moments of adversity that the true character of a nation and its people shines brightest, revealing a profound resilience and an enduring hope for a brighter future.

Myanmar, a land rich in culture, history, and natural beauty, is also home to a people renowned for their fortitude and adaptability. Through generations, the Myanmar people have navigated various trials with a quiet strength and an unyielding spirit. This inherent resilience is not merely about enduring hardship; it is about finding innovative solutions, supporting one another, and maintaining a sense of community and optimism even when circumstances are daunting. The current global climate, marked by geopolitical tensions

Resilience and Hope: Myanmar's Path Forward Amidst Global Challenges

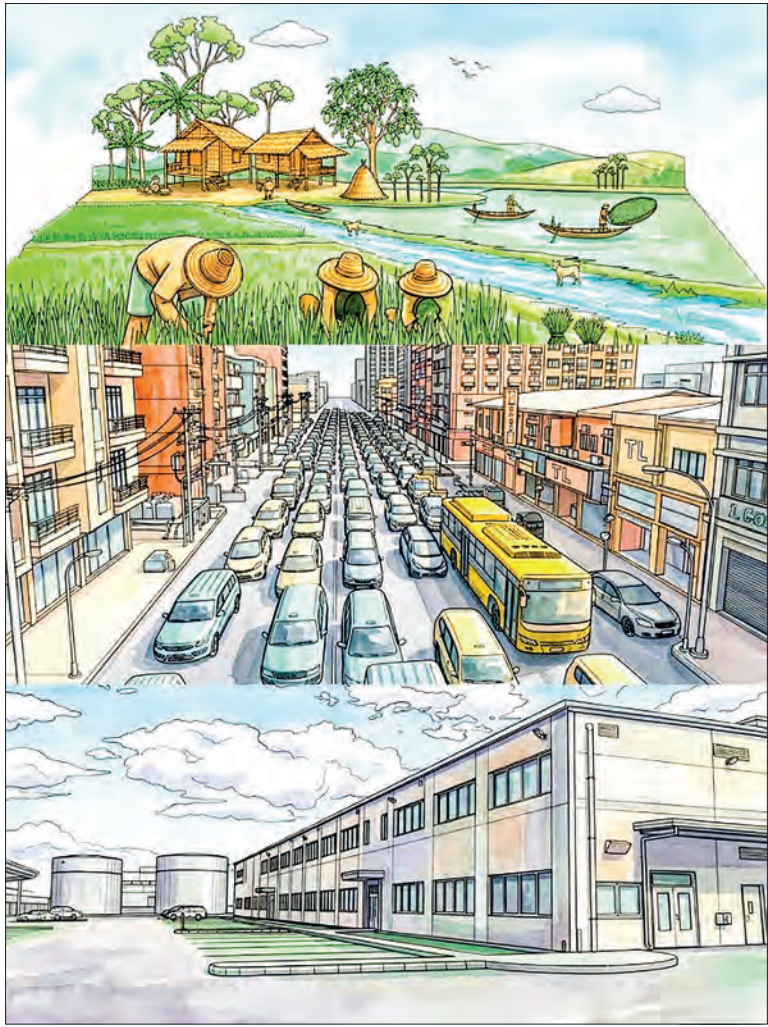
By Ms Moon

in the Middle East and their ripple effects on international commodity markets, presents significant economic pressures. Yet, the response from both the government and the populace underscores a collective determination to safeguard livelihoods and foster stability.

The global surge in fuel prices, directly attributable to ongoing conflicts, has a tangible impact on daily life. For a nation like Myanmar, where transport and production are heavily reliant on diesel, these price hikes could easily translate into increased costs for basic necessities. Recognizing this, the Ministry of Finance and Revenue has stepped in with timely interventions, extending monthly exemptions on customs duties, special goods taxes, commercial taxes, and advance income taxes for imported Diesel HSD (500 ppm). This measure, initially implemented from 1 April to 30 June 2026, following the onset

of the Middle East conflict, has now been further extended until 31 July 2026. Such extensions are not arbitrary; they are carefully considered responses to evolving conditions, demonstrating a flexible and responsive governance approach focused on public welfare.

The rationale behind these exemptions is multifaceted and deeply rooted in the well-being of the Myanmar people. By stabilizing the price of Diesel HSD (500 ppm), the government aims to support critical sectors such as agriculture, transportation, and manufacturing. These sectors are the backbone of the economy and directly influence the cost of living for every citizen. Reducing production costs for farmers and manufacturers means that essential goods remain affordable, thereby easing the financial strain on households. This focus on the grassroots public's socioeconomic convenience highlights a compass-



sionate governance model that prioritizes the fundamental needs of its population.

The impact of global energy price fluctuations extends beyond just diesel. The rising cost of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) also poses a challenge, particularly for electricity generation. In response, the government has similarly extended tax exemptions on LNG imports, covering customs duties, commercial taxes, and advance income taxes. This strategic move is designed to bolster electricity production and, crucially, to keep electricity tariffs affordable for the public. Access to stable and affordable energy is a cornerstone of modern life, supporting everything from household needs to industrial output. By ensuring this, the government is investing in both the immediate comfort and the long-term productivity of its citizens.

Agriculture, often referred to as the lifeblood of Myanmar, receives special attention. The continuous development of this sector is seen as a fundamental

pillar for the nation's overall economic growth. To this end, tax exemptions on imported fertilizers have also been extended. This measure directly benefits farmers by reducing their input costs, thereby encouraging higher agricultural output and contributing to food security. The dedication to supporting farmers, who form a significant portion of the population, reflects an understanding that a thriving agricultural sector is synonymous with a prosperous and stable society.

The current global energy crisis, exacerbated by geopolitical events, undeniably presents significant challenges to the daily lives and commodity prices within Myanmar. The government acknowledges this direct impact on the public's livelihood and is committed to continuous, real-time monitoring and regulation of the situation. This vigilance extends to a monthly review of Middle East conflict developments, global fuel price trends, domestic diesel and basic foodstuff prices, and the responses of other regional countries. This comprehensive approach ensures that policy adjustments are informed, timely, and effective.

Furthermore, the State Government is not merely reacting to crises but is actively planning for

future stability. Submissions are being made to the Union Government and the Union Parliament to consider further extensions of tax exemptions on Diesel HSD (500 ppm) and LNG, should the need arise. This forward-thinking strategy underscores a commitment to sustained economic relief and protection for its citizens against external shocks.

In essence, the government's actions are a clear demonstration of its dedication to protecting the public from the adverse effects of the ongoing fuel energy crisis. It is a call to action for relevant officials to prioritize the public interest and a heartfelt appeal to the citizens to appreciate these efforts and utilize energy resources judiciously. The Myanmar people, with their inherent resilience and collective spirit, are not passive recipients of aid but active participants in their nation's journey towards stability and prosperity. Their ability to adapt, innovate, and support one another through challenging times is a powerful testament to their enduring strength. As Myanmar navigates these complex global currents, the unity between its government and its people, driven by a shared vision of progress and well-being, will undoubtedly pave the way for a resilient and hopeful future.

EVERY generation has searched for the secret to staying young. We buy expensive skincare products, follow beauty trends, and admire youthful faces on our screens. Yet no matter how hard we try, one thing remains true – time never stops. It quietly moves forward, changing not only our appearance but also our hearts, our minds, and our understanding of life. Instead of fearing these changes, perhaps it is time to see them as the greatest gifts life can offer.

There is a beautiful saying: “If our faces never show signs of ageing, how can they truly reflect all the happiness and sadness we have experienced in life?” Those simple words carry a powerful truth. A face without the marks of time may look young, but it cannot tell the story of a life that has been fully lived.

When we stop and think about those words, many of us

realize something surprising. What we have feared was never wrinkles or grey hair. What we have truly feared is growing old.

But time has never taken anyone's side.

It has never spared anyone. Day by day, tiny lines appear around our eyes. Year by year, more grey hairs quietly arrive. No one can remain young forever, and perhaps that is not something to regret. It is simply the natural rhythm of life.

There was once a time when many of us believed youth would last forever. Today, we understand something much more valuable. We cannot hold on to our youth, but we can hold on to our love for life. That love grows stronger with every challenge we overcome and every lesson we learn.

Wrinkles are not merely signs of ageing. They are proof that we have laughed until our eyes filled with tears, cried through painful moments, loved

The Beauty That Time Cannot Steal

deeply, and faced life with courage. Grey hair is not a symbol of losing our youth. It is a quiet medal that time gently places upon us after years of perseverance, patience, and resilience.

Life also teaches us that nothing lasts forever.

Along the way, we lose people we love. We let go of dreams that no longer belong to us. We experience disappointment, failure, and heartbreak. At the time, those moments feel impossible to bear. Yet as the years pass, they slowly become the stories that remind us how strong we truly are.

The mountain that once looked impossible to climb becomes a memory. The person

we once believed we could never live without becomes someone we can sincerely thank before continuing our own journey. Pain does not disappear overnight, but time quietly transforms it into wisdom.

Growing older also changes the way we see relationships.

We no longer feel the need to explain ourselves to everyone. We stop arguing simply to prove that we are right. We stop sacrificing our peace just to keep someone from leaving. This is not because we have become cold or uncaring.

It is because experience teaches us that holding on is not always the strongest choice. Sometimes letting go requires

even greater courage. We discover that some goodbyes bring more peace than relationships held together by fear, guilt, or obligation.

Perhaps this is one of life's greatest lessons: peace is more valuable than pride, and self-respect is more important than endless approval from others.

Life leaves behind much more than wrinkles. It leaves behind wisdom that no classroom can teach. It leaves behind compassion that only hardship can create. It leaves behind gratitude for ordinary moments that once seemed too small to notice.

Our heads carry more than grey hair. They carry memories of every victory, every mistake,

By Laura Htet (UDE)

every friendship, every farewell, and every dream that helped shape the people we have become.

Instead of complaining about getting older, perhaps we should celebrate it. Every passing year is evidence that we have continued moving forward despite disappointment, uncertainty, and loss. Every birthday reminds us that we have survived another chapter and earned another opportunity to grow.

Let us welcome the passing of time instead of fearing it. Let us embrace change with open hearts. Even though we are no longer as young as we once were, we can become kinder,

wiser, calmer, and more understanding than ever before. After all, youth is only one season of life. Wisdom is the harvest.

The greatest beauty has never been found in a smooth face or flawless skin. It is found in a peaceful heart, a grateful spirit, and a life filled with purpose. These are treasures that time cannot steal. In fact, time is what helps us discover them.

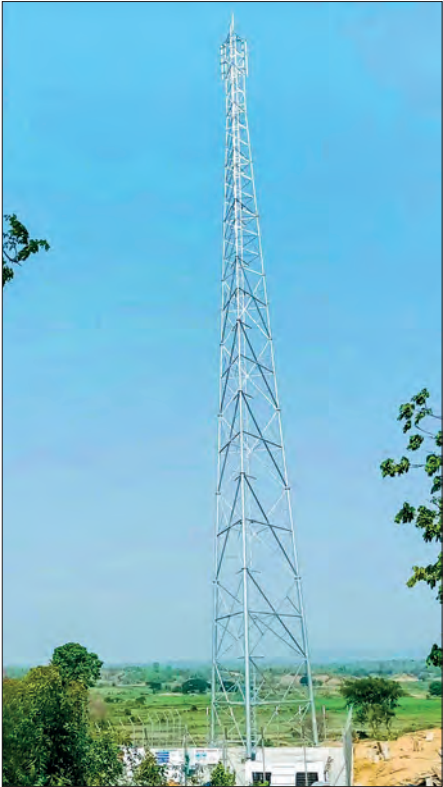
Growing older is not something to fear. It is a privilege that not everyone is given. Every wrinkle tells a story. Every grey hair carries a lesson. Every passing year reminds us that we are still here — still learning, still loving, still becoming better than we were yesterday.

In the end, the true measure of a beautiful life is not how long we managed to look young. It is how fully we lived, how deeply we loved, how courageously we faced change, and how gracefully we embraced every season that life placed before us.



NATIONAL

MPT expands network with new 4G LTE base stations



This image shows a telecommunications tower owned by MPT. **PHOTO: KO LWIN**

MPT has expanded its telecommunications network by launching 27 new mobile base stations and upgrading nine existing stations to high-speed 4G LTE services,

according to its headquarters in Yangon. The expansion aims to improve connectivity for customers and businesses across eight regions and states, particularly in previously underserved areas. It will enable rural communities and farmers to access information more easily, connect with wider markets and receive timely market updates. MPT said the upgrades will also support online learning and help small and medium-sized enterprises expand through digital technology, contributing to socioeconomic development. The new base stations are located in the Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, Kayin State, Mon State, eastern and southern Shan State, Ayeyawady Region and eastern Bago Region, while the nine upgraded stations are in Magway Region. MPT Technology Department official Mr Minoru Nagata said the company would continue expanding services in areas with limited coverage to meet growing demand for mobile internet and improve service quality. As part of the programme, a new network station opened in Gwepinyoe Village, Ottarathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, on 12 July. — Oktha/KZL

Minhla’s stone-paved road construction inspected

THE Department of Rural Road Development, under the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development, inspected the ongoing stone road surfacing work on the road connecting Minhla to Uyin Village, which is being implemented with the Regional Government Capital Fund for the 2026-2027 financial year, yesterday. The Project Inspection and Quality Control Team from the head office of the Department of Rural Road Development, together with Daw Lae Lae Win, Township Engineer (Civil) of the Minhla Township Department of Rural Road Development and officials, inspected the progress of the gravel road surfacing work. They also met the responsible personnel

from the construction company and instructed them to complete the project on schedule in compliance with the prescribed standards and specifications. The road connecting Minhla to Uyin Village is four furlongs in length and 16 feet in width, with a six-inch-thick gravel-layer surface. Officials oversee the ongoing road construction project in Minhla Township.

Ye Htut Hlaing Company is implementing the project with a budget of K165.27 million from the Regional Government Capital Fund in the 2026-2027 financial year. Construction began in the first week of July 2026, and approximately 10 per cent of the work has been reportedly completed to date. — Naw Lu (Rural)



HLUTTAW

Pyithu Hluttaw Debates Mobile Coverage, Roads, Bridges and IDP ...

FROM PAGE 4

The session also debated a motion submitted by Dr Htein Win, MP for the Kyaunggong Constituency, calling on the Union Government to establish a National Population and Development Commission to systematically manage census data for evidence-based policymaking and national development. MPs from Labutta, Thabaung, Kyauktan, Bago, Botahtaung, Dagon Myothit (South), Paungde, Pinlaung, Waw, Hline-thaya, Tachilek, Kyunsu and Hmawby constituencies spoke in support of the proposal. Deputy Minister for Immigration and Popula-

tion U Lin Zaw Tun said population policies must take into account factors such as demographic trends, natural resources, economic and social conditions, geographic population distribution and national security needs. He noted that while Myanmar has yet to adopt a comprehensive population policy, relevant programmes are already being implemented. The deputy minister said the 2024 Population and Housing Census fully covered 152 of the country’s 330 townships, with 58 townships not surveyed. He added that a National Population and Development Commission should

be established only after a more complete census and socioeconomic data become available. The Fourth Amendment to the Political Parties Registration Bill was introduced to the Pyithu Hluttaw by Union Election Commission Member U Khin Maung Oo, while U Tint Lwin, a member of the Bill Committee, presented the committee’s review report. Speaker U Khin Yi invited MPs wishing to propose amendments to register their names. The 24th day of the second regular session of the Third Pyithu Hluttaw was then adjourned, with the next sitting scheduled for 17 July. — MNA/ST

Lewe’s rural development projects completed



The completed road is seen in the picture.

THE Department of Rural Development, under the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development, announced that a total of nine rural development projects implemented in nine villages across Lewe and Dekkhinathiri townships have been completed for the 2026-2027 financial year. To create employment opportunities and increase household incomes of rural communities, the department implemented projects under the Rural Business Fund (RBF) Project, the Mya Sein Yaung

Village Project, and the Village Development Project (VDP), including the construction of concrete roads in villages. Additionally, rural production roads, slab culverts, pipe culverts, and rural production bridges were constructed to facilitate agricultural production and improve the transport of goods. To ensure an adequate supply of irrigation and drinking water, solar-powered water supply systems and stream water pumping projects were also completed in compliance with the required

technical standards. These projects were carried out under close supervision from the Lewe District Department of Rural Development, technical support from township DRD heads and staff, and the active participation of residents. A total investment of K158.3378 million was utilized, consisting of K156.6 million in approved government funding and K1.7378 million in community contributions. Work on these projects began in the first week of May this year and has now been accomplished. The completed projects are expected to improve transport, ensure better access to drinking and irrigation water, increase household incomes, and further enhance the socioeconomic well-being of rural residents in the nine beneficiary villages. — Maung Khaing (Rural)

Yangon's rental surge fuelled by booming migrant influx

THE property rental market has been more active in Yangon, and it is hard to find rooms which are being rented directly between owners and tenants.

The domestic migrant population in Yangon has been steadily increasing, leading to a consistent rise in the rental market across nearly all townships in the city.

“The rental market has been active in nearly all townships. It doesn’t need to wait long for the next tenant after the for-

mer one moved. Despite slow buying and selling activities, the rental market has been growing,” said an estate agent.

In past, some rented rooms were advertised along with the owner’s phone number, but now such rooms are difficult to find, and tenants have to contact estate agents to find rented rooms, according to tenants in Yangon.

In addition, rent prices become higher depending on locations, and most are six-month or one-year



Apartment buildings in Yangon.

contracts.

“The price is around K300,000 even for higher floors, while it is K400,000 or K500,000 for lower

floors. Prices are expensive if the property is conveniently located,” said a Yangon resident. — MT/ZS

No 3 Heavy Industries Enterprise seeks open tenders for raw materials procurement

THE No 3 Heavy Industries Enterprise invited qualified suppliers to participate in open tender for the procurement of raw materials to be utilized in its state-owned cotton ginning and textile mills for the 2026-2027 financial year.

Those raw materials include 350,000 pounds of 150D 100 per cent Polyester Textured Yarn (white/vibrant colours), 105,000 pounds of 300D 100 per cent Polyester Textured Yarn (white/vibrant colours), 2,000 pieces of sponge (78 inches by 36

inches by 3 inches), 20,000 yards of navy-blue faux leather, 160,000 yards of 80-inch mosquito net (lace, coloured), 100,000 yards of 90-inch Canopy fabric (coloured) and 37,500 kilogrammes of coloured canvas (SJ) including coated canvas.

The deadline for tender submission is at 4 pm on 14 August. Interested individuals can obtain the tender form and enquire about the details at the Production Department of the No 3 Heavy Industries Enterprise, located at Office 37 in Nay Pyi Taw, at 067 3408138, 067 3408439, or 067 3408492. — NN/KK

Board slaps 2-year ban on Thiamethoxam, Clothianidin

THE Pesticide Registration Board, operated under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, enacted a two-year ban on Thiamethoxam and Clothianidin from registration, distribution, storage, modification, importation, repackaging, sales, or utilization starting from 15 July 2026, during its meeting held on 7 July 2026.

Those pesticides are identified, including toxic chemicals that can pose hazards to human beings, animals, crops and the environment.

The remaining two pesticides are required to be sent to the nearest Agriculture Department by 31 July 2026. Any governmental institutions, organizations, farmers and shop owners are prohibited from registering, distributing, importing, repackaging, selling,

or using Thiamethoxam and Clothianidin for two years. Those failing to do so will face legal actions under the Pesticide Law.

The Pesticide Registration Board has issued permits for 4,670 pesticides. Reviews on the registration of 179 pesticides were also conducted at its 48th meeting.

The pesticide registration board also provides pesticide standard criteria, issues orders, specifications, and instructions from time to time and monitors agricultural products to ensure food safety and a pesticide-residue-free status. The Myanmar Agricultural Import Registration System (MAIRS) online portal has been launched to streamline the pesticide registration process since 2021. — NN/KK

Palm oil arrivals and distribution updates released for Yangon townships

THE Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers’ Association released a statement on 15 July detailing the distribution and arrival of palm oil across various townships in the Yangon Region.

According to the township-by-township distribution list, the quantities of palm oil delivered are as follows: Botahtaung Township, 1,540 viss for three companies; Dawbon Township, 800 viss for four companies; Mingala Taungnyunt Township, 4,620 viss for three companies; Pazundaung Township, 1,760 viss for one company; Thakayta Township, 8,470 viss for three companies; Thingangyun Township, 9,790 viss for five companies; South Okkalapa



This photo features the distribution and arrival of palm oil across various townships.

Township, 5,665 viss for three companies; Yankin Township, 3,080 viss for two companies; Tamway Township, 6,050 viss for three companies; Than-

lyin Township, 13,200 viss for four companies; Kyauktan Township, 6,380 viss for three companies; Thongwa Township, 6,050 viss for two companies;

Kayan Township, 3,520 viss for two companies; Hlinethaya (East) Township, 14,850 viss for seven companies; Kamayut Township, 3,410 viss for two companies; and Bahan Township, 3,740 viss for one company.

Similarly, the distribution list shows that palm oil has also arrived in the following townships: Kyauktada Township, 550 viss for three companies; Pabedan Township, 990 viss for one company; Latha Township, 880 viss for three companies; Lanmadaw Township, 1,980 viss for three companies; Dagon Myothit (East) Township, 9,350 viss for four companies; Dagon Myothit (North) Township, 7,205 viss for five companies; Dagon Myothit (South) Township, 14,960 viss for four companies; Twantay Township, 8,030 viss for two companies;

Dala Township, 6,380 viss for one company; Kawhmu Township, 4,070 viss for two companies; and Kungyan-gon Township, 4,290 viss for one company.

In addition, the distribution records show that palm oil has also arrived in the following townships: Ahlon Township, 1,925 viss for four companies; Shwepyitha Township, 17,050 viss for nine companies; Hlegu Township, 13,530 viss for four companies; Hmawby Township, 11,330 viss for seven companies; Htantabin Township, 8,910 viss for two companies; Hlinethaya (West) Township, 13,860 viss for eight companies; Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) Township, 10,450 viss for seven companies; Hline Township, 6,820 viss for four companies; Mayan-gon Township, 7,480 viss for three companies; and

Sanchaung Township, 4,070 viss for two companies.

Furthermore, a meeting was recently held at the assembly hall of the Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers’ Association to discuss increasing the distribution of palm oil to Nay Pyi Taw, the Yangon Region, and the Mandalay Region during July. The discussions focused on ensuring that the increased July allocation reaches consumers across these areas in a timely manner. Participants also discussed measures to ensure that local wholesale and retail agents appointed by the companies promptly distribute and sell the oil at the designated reference price, as well as ways to expedite the transport and withdrawal of palm oil from storage tanks in Yangon. — MT/TH

ECONOMY
WORLD

Japan notifies local govts
they may “ban” private
lodgings amid problems

Japan issued a notice on rising private lodgings impacting resident living environments.

THE Japanese government has notified local governments that they may effectively ban “minpaku” private lodgings through ordinances to protect residential areas from noise, garbage and other disturbances.

The notice, dated Wednesday, was issued by the Japan Tourism Agency and two other government entities, following a rise in private lodgings that has impacted the living environment of residents.

Under Japanese law,



Japan allows local governments to ban minpaku private lodgings for residents. **PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/TOUR RADAR**

owners can rent out vacant homes or rooms to tourists for up to 180 days

per year. But there has been a movement to set the limit on the days to

zero with an ordinance, effectively banning the private lodging operation.

The latest notice endorses such a move, stating it is appropriate to prohibit private lodging services or to limit business if the environment of a residential area or educational facility is disrupted.

The move marks a turnaround in the government’s stance, as it previously stated that such restrictions were inappropriate in promoting private lodgings. — Kyodo

S Vietnam intl financial centre secures US\$20 bln
in investment commitments

THE Vietnam International Financial Centre in the southern economic hub of Ho Chi Minh City has

secured around US\$20 billion in investment commitments from domestic and foreign investors af-

ter about five months of operation, the Vietnam News Agency reported Wednesday.

Associate Professor Nguyen Huu Huan, vice-chairman of the centre’s executive board, said the centre’s ultimate goal is not merely to secure investment commitments but to turn them into actual capital inflows into the economy. From now through the end of the year, the centre plans to launch its first finan-

cial products, prioritizing investment funds and international bond products, including municipal bonds, international infrastructure bonds, green bonds and international corporate bonds, according to the report. Officially launched on 11 February 2026, the centre has focused on building its operational foundation in the areas of aviation finance, maritime finance, fintech and international inter-bank services. — Xinhua



The Ho Chi Minh City financial centre secured \$20 billion in five months. **PHOTO: VISUAL PURPOSE/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS**

Federal Reserve reaffirms 2% inflation target

WHILE the US economy remains resilient, risks have increasingly shifted toward inflation rather than employment, prompting Federal Reserve Governor Lisa D Cook to reaffirm her commitment to

bringing inflation back to the central bank’s two per cent target, according to a statement by the Federal Reserve. Delivering her speech at the Exchequer Club on the economic outlook, Cook noted that

persistently high inflation continues to place a heavy burden on American households; hence, restoring price stability remains the Federal Reserve’s primary responsibility.

“Even though this

week’s consumer price index and producer price index reports were softer than expected, they still imply that the price index we target rose 3.7 per cent in the 12 months through June. — ANI

Sri Lanka clears
US\$80.5-mln rooftop
solar project

SRI Lanka’s cabinet approved loan and grant agreements for a US\$80.5 million project on Tuesday, aiming at expanding rooftop solar generation, introducing virtual net metering and modernizing electricity distribution networks.

The financing package includes a US\$35 million concessional loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), a 15.4 million euro (US\$16.9 million) grant from the Eu-

ropean Union, and a \$5.5 million grant from the Japan Fund for the Joint Crediting Mechanism. Counterpart funding from implementing agencies will cover the balance of the project cost.

The cabinet approved a proposal submitted by President Anura Kumara Dissanayake in his capacity as Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to enter into the agreements. — Xinhua



Sri Lanka aims at expanding rooftop solar generation. **PHOTO: ADB/FILE**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Patimban Port launches container
shipping route

INDONESIA’S Patimban Port in West Java province has launched its first international container shipping route following the arrival of a Mediterranean Shipping Company vessel from Singapore, marking the start of international operations at the port’s container terminal.

The new service is expected to help establish an international logistics network and enhance Indonesia’s competitiveness in global trade, local media reported Thursday. As the world’s largest archipelagic country, Indonesia needs more than just major ports. — Xinhua

Mozambique to establish state-
owned fuel procurement company

MOZAMBIQUE’S government has approved the creation of a state-owned company to centralize the procurement and management of petroleum products, aiming to strengthen the country’s energy security following months of fuel supply disruptions. The National Petroleum Products Procurement Company (ENAPP) will be responsible for coordinating fuel procurement and supply for the domestic market, replacing a procurement model that has been in place for about three decades. — Xinhua

Cameroon cracks down on under-reported gold production

CAMEROON'S government announced Wednesday it was cracking down on its gold mining sector over discrepancies between the volumes produced and declared by companies, potentially costing billions in lost tax revenue.

Cameroonian authorities estimate that the illegal export of gold to the United Arab Emirates has deprived the state of around 2,000 billion CFA francs (about

\$3.5 billion) over the past five years.

"The main problem does not necessarily lie in the disappearance of gold belonging to the state, but in the under-reporting of part of the production by certain private operators," acting mining minister Fuh Calistus Gentry told journalists. Cameroon's mining sector has faced recurring criticism over the low revenues generated from gold extraction. —AFP



Illegal export of gold to the United Arab Emirates has deprived the state of around 2,000 billion CFA francs (about \$3.5 billion) over the past five years. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Finnish firm develops battlefield AI

FINNISH defence technology company NestAI said on Tuesday that it would begin developing artificial intelligence (AI) models for battlefield applications, as Europe seeks greater control over critical defence technologies.

Peter Sarlin, founder and chairman of NestAI, told Finnish business daily Kauppalehti that the initiative was intended to strengthen Europe's technological sovereignty in defense.

"The intelligence at the core of European defence must be European-owned, and it must be built and developed on Europe's own terms," Sarlin said.

He said NestAI aimed to develop AI plat-

forms that armed forces could own, control and continuously improve, rather than relying on fixed systems supplied from abroad. Europe remained heavily dependent on US technology in defence-related AI, he added, underscoring the need for stronger European control over critical models and infrastructure.

Unlike general-purpose large language models, NestAI's project will focus on specialized AI systems for defence and battlefield applications.

According to Sarlin, battlefield AI systems must be able to adapt as adversaries, technologies and operational conditions evolve. —Xinhua

Nvidia supports Japan developing homegrown AI infrastructure

NVIDIA Corp CEO Jensen Huang said Thursday his company will help Japan develop a domestic artificial intelligence foundation model by providing advanced AI chips as part of its deeper ties with the country's technology industry.

The US chip giant will work with Noetra Corp, a government-backed company, to build an AI factory that will provide the computing foundation to develop multimodal foundation models for physical AI, technology that enables robots and



Nvidia Corp CEO Jensen Huang (front R) and Noetra Corp President Hironobu Tamba (front L) shake hands at an event hosted by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry in Tokyo on 16 July 2026. **PHOTO: KYODO**

other devices to operate autonomously.

Noetra, established in

January by a consortium of 44 Japanese companies including Sony Group

Corp, SoftBank Corp, NEC Corp and Honda Motor Co, started full-scale operations Thursday, with government financial support of 1 trillion yen (\$6 billion) over five years.

Nvidia will provide 27,500 Rubin graphics processing units to operate the AI factory.

"Nvidia is honored to provide the computing systems for Japan's first national AI infrastructure," the CEO said at an event hosted by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry in Tokyo. —Kyodo

IBM shares plunge as Q2 results miss expectations

IBM shares plummeted in the morning session on Tuesday after the US technology giant reported preliminary second-quarter financial results that fell significantly short of Wall Street expectations.

The hardware, software, and consulting provider reported adjusted earnings of US\$2.93 per share on revenue of \$17.2 billion for the second quarter. Both figures missed analyst consensus estimates, which had projected earnings of \$3.01 per share and revenue of \$17.86 billion, according to data and analytics company FactSet. Following the announcement, IBM shares sank nearly 25 per cent in morning trading.

In a letter to investors, IBM Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Arvind Krishna attributed the shortfall primarily to weakness in the company's software and infrastructure businesses, acknowledging execution missteps during a volatile period. —Xinhua

S Korea's import price turns downward in June

PRICE for imported goods to South Korea turned downward due to lower crude oil price, central bank data showed Wednesday.

The import price index declined 4.4 per cent in June from a month earlier, after inching up 0.2 per cent in the previous month, according to the Bank of Korea (BOK).

Price for Dubai crude, South Korea's benchmark, averaged US\$79.45 per barrel in June, sharply down from \$103.15 in May.

The average South Korean won versus US dollar exchange rate gained to 1,527.30 won in June from 1,490.11 won in the prior month.

Price for imported raw materials, including mining products, dived 10.3 per cent in June on a monthly basis, keeping a downward trend for three consecutive months. Import price for intermediary goods retreated 3.2 per cent amid a double-digit decrease in oil products price. —Xinhua

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SITC ZHI VOY.NO. (2614S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SITC ZHI VOY. NO. (2614S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **17-7-2026** 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. (249N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V FSL SINGAPORE VOY.NO. (249N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **17-7-2026** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP/MITT** 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

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

Trump announces plan to raise US military spending to \$1.5 trillion next year

Trump claimed his administration heavily invested in the US military.

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday announced plans to increase US military spending to \$1.5 trillion next year, saying the investment was necessary to strengthen national defence while creating American jobs.

Speaking at the Pennsylvania Defence and Innovation Summit, Trump said his administration had already made a record investment in the US military.

"We've invested a record \$1 trillion in the United States military, and next year, I'm proud to say, and Pete (War Secretary), we have to get moving on this, a \$ 1.5 trillion we're going up to. We need it," Trump said.



This photo taken on 19 February 2020 shows the Pentagon seen from an airplane over Washington DC, the United States. **PHOTO: XINHUA/FILE**

Trump argued that the increased defence spending would also support domestic employment because the military equipment would be manufactured in the United States. He said, "It's all made in the USA, so it's

not fully a cost, you know it's a cost, we gotta take something, but it's called jobs and when you think of it that way."

The US President also highlighted his previous military investments, saying, "I built the military

in my first term, and I used it in my second term."

Referring to military action involving Venezuela, Trump said, "As you know, Venezuela was, that was actually 48 minutes, but let's call it one day, and we've paid for the cost of that war 50 times over, more than 50 times over already."

Here, Trump was referring to a January 2026 US military operation that ousted and captured Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro. Trump claimed the operation took "exactly 48 minutes" to win and that seized Venezuelan oil had already paid for the cost of the intervention "more than 50 times over". — ANI

Solar cell developed by China sets world efficiency record

CHINESE researchers have recently developed a novel perovskite-organic tandem solar cell that has set a new world record of 28.04 per cent for steady-

state photoelectric conversion efficiency, according to a study published on Monday in the journal Nature.

The cell, developed

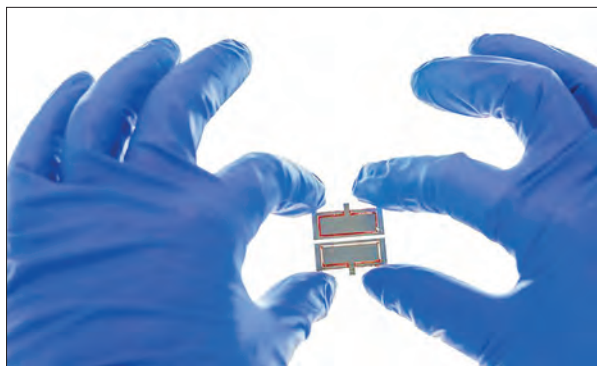
by the Institute of Chemistry of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), features a wide-bandgap perovskite top subcell that has achieved the highest open-circuit voltage ever recorded for its type.

When precisely integrated with an organic bottom subcell, the laboratory power conversion efficiency of the tandem device peaked at 28.80 per cent, with a certified steady-state efficiency of 28.04 per cent. The cell also demonstrated remarkable operational stability, retaining 90 per cent of its initial efficiency

after 625 hours of continuous illumination.

"This perovskite-organic tandem solar cell combines lightweight design, mechanical flexibility and high efficiency," said Li Yongfang, a CAS academician who led the research team.

"Beyond applications in buildings, transport and wearable electronics, its exceptional power-to-weight ratio makes it a promising candidate for future space missions, including satellites and space stations, where lighter and more efficient energy sources are critical," Li said. — Xinhua



A researcher demonstrates the high-performance perovskite-organic tandem solar cell device at a laboratory of the Institute of Chemistry, Chinese Academy of Sciences (ICCAS), in Beijing, capital of China, 3 July 2026.

PHOTO: XINHUA

NEWS IN BRIEF

Japan's 1st Nobel laureate in medicine dies

SUSUMU Tonegawa, Japan's first recipient of the Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine and professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has died, the university said Wednesday. He was 86.

Tonegawa, who died on Saturday, won the prize in 1987 for his discovery of the genetic principle for the generation of antibody diversity. He made "landmark discoveries about how the immune system generates antibody diversity and how the brain forms memories," according to the university. — Kyodo

Moscow says West trades loans for resources

WESTERN countries are hoping to gain control over Ukraine's natural resources and land wealth as compensation for their financial losses or in exchange for loans allocated to Kyiv, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said on Wednesday.

"Western countries, having chosen Ukraine as a tool for a geopolitical battering ram against our country, are simultaneously eyeing the country's rich land and natural resources. They expect to seize them either for a pittance as compensation for financial losses, or simply in exchange for loans, or more precisely, interest on the loans," Zakharova said at a briefing. — SPUTNIK

OpenAI fails to trademark name in EU



OpenAI had previously lost an appeal to the EUIPO. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

OPENAI, the owner the ChatGPT chatbot, lost Wednesday its appeal against the EU's refusal to register its name as a trademark. The US firm had sought to overturn a decision by the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) that accepted protecting OpenAI's logo but not the name.

EUIPO had ruled

that the combination of the two common words in English, "open" and "AI", could describe many business activities in the area of artificial intelligence.

EU regulations do not allow trademarking a brand that simply describes a product or service, as that would mean competitors could no longer use those terms in their advertising. — AFP

2026

FIFA WORLD CUP

UNITED STATES | CANADA | MÉXICO

SPORTS

Argentina World Cup semifinal hero Martinez 'dreamt' of scoring winner

ARGENTINA'S World Cup semifinal match-winner Lautaro Martinez said he had "dreamt" of scoring the goal which took his team through to the final at England's expense on Wednesday.

"I dreamt it. I told Alexis (Mac Allister) that I was going to score," Martinez said after his heroics off the bench in Atlanta as the reigning champions won the game 2-1.

"And I said on the bench to Facundo Medina that I was going to come on and score."

The World Cup holders were trailing 1-0 at the Mercedes-Benz Stadium when the Inter Milan striker was sent on in 81 minutes in place of



left-back Nicolas Tagliafico.

Lionel Messi set up Enzo Fernandez to equalise in 85 minutes and the Argentina captain then crossed for Martinez to head in the winner in the second minute of injury time.

"When my old man first bought me a pair of boots, I always dreamed of scoring this goal," said an emotional Martinez.

When he spoke again to reporters after leaving the dressing room, Martinez said he had just got off the phone to his mother, who was

at work.

The 28-year-old Martinez lost his place in Lionel Scaloni's Argentina team early on their run to glory at the 2022 World Cup.

He started all three group games this time, scoring in the 3-1 win over Jordan, but was substituted in the narrow victory over Cape Verde in the last 32 and has not started since.

Nevertheless, he came on to score in the 3-1 extra-time defeat of Switzerland in the quarterfinals before his decisive role against England.

Argentina will now take on Spain in Sunday's final in New Jersey. — AFP

Tuchel defends tactics after England World Cup dream dies

ENGLAND manager Thomas Tuchel defended his tactics after the Three Lions' World Cup dream ended in an agonizing late defeat to Argentina on Wednesday.

England appeared poised to reach their first World Cup final since 1966 after Anthony Gordon fired them into the lead early in the second half in Atlanta.

But England then invited wave after wave of late pressure from the defending champions and goals from Enzo Fernandez and Lautaro Martinez secured a famous 2-1 victory.

Tuchel said his team had become "too passive" after taking the lead at the Mercedes-Benz Stadium.

"We're disappointed, we were so close but we got too passive after we scored and conceded a lot of chances," Tuchel told the BBC.

"We could not turn the ball possession around and then conceded so many crosses, chances and shots," the German coach added.

"We were close but couldn't keep the level up after we scored."

Tuchel is likely to face serious scrutiny for his substitutions, notably the decision to bring goalscorer Gordon off for defender Ezri Konsa in 72 minutes.

"I did also offensive substitutions in the last games, we just tried to help the players," he said. — AFP

UK minister urges FIFA to investigate Argentina over World Cup Falklands banner



Argentina's players hold up a banner saying. PHOTO: AFP

A British minister Thursday called for FIFA to investigate after Argentina's players held up a banner reading "Las Malvinas son Argentinas" (The Falklands are Argentine) after their 2-1 victory over England.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer's Downing Street office backed the calls by Business Minister Peter

the British Overseas Territory in the South Atlantic in 1982.

But Britain regained the archipelago in a brief war after then prime minister Margaret Thatcher despatched a naval taskforce.

Kyle urged football's global governing body FIFA to "thoroughly" investigate the banner incident after Wednesday's match in Atlanta.

"Politics needs to be separate from football. In fact, the World Cup has one of its central tenets that politics is separate from football," he told BBC television.

"That is now a matter for FIFA ... We expect FIFA to undertake an investigation into this," he added. — AFP

Messi magic sends Argentina into World Cup final

LIONEL Messi engineered a spectacular comeback for Argentina against England in their World Cup semifinal on Wednesday to keep his team on track for back-to-back titles.

England were agonisingly close to reaching their first World Cup final for 60 years before succumbing to relentless pressure from Lionel Scaloni's team, who roared back to win 2-1 in Atlanta.

It sets up a mouth-watering contest between reigning European champions Spain and South American champions Argentina in New Jersey on Sunday.

The Albiceleste, followed at the 2026 World Cup by legions of fans,



Argentina forward Lionel Messi celebrates victory against England in the World Cup semifinals. PHOTO: AFP

are just 90 minutes away from becoming the first side since Brazil in 1962 to win consecutive World Cups.

"The other day I said this group never stops surprising me," said Scaloni. "And I'll tell you the truth, we're going to try to win, we're going to leave everything out there."

"But after this it's very difficult to get people to understand what these players are showing. It's incredible. We are unique, truly, and it's not arrogance, it's from the heart." — AFP

Trump announces plan to raise US military spending to \$1.5 trillion next year

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WORLD

India, Maldives near trade agreement after talks

INDIA and the Maldives have moved a step closer to signing a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) after the successful conclusion of the first round of negotiations, with both countries making substantive progress across multiple negotiating tracks and reaffirming their commitment to expedite the agreement.

According to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the first round of India-Maldives FTA negotiations was held in virtual mode from 29 June to 7 July, with negotiating teams from both sides holding text-based discussions across eight technical sessions covering eight policy areas.

Highlighting the progress made, the ministry said, "Both sides made substantive progress across the negotiating tracks and reached broad convergence on several issues." — ANI



Maldives Ports Limited (MPL) initiated vessel operations at its Thilafushi berth on 3 May 2026. **PHOTO: MALDIVES PORTS LIMITED (MPL)**

New Singapore-Malaysia rail link to promote cross-border spending

SINGAPORE consumers are expected to spend an additional 1.05 billion Singapore dollars (US\$810 million) annually in Johor Bahru, Malaysia's southernmost city bordering Singapore, once the Rapid Transit System (RTS) Link between the two cities opens, according to a study released on Thursday.

Visitors from Johor Bahru are also expected to spend an additional 756 million Singapore dollars annually in Singapore, the study by the Singapore Business Federation, the Restaurant Association of Singapore and the Singapore Retailers Association found.

Singapore and Johor Bahru already have close economic and social links, with traffic congestion frequently building up at the land crossings connecting the two sides during peak periods and holidays. Currently, about 19.4 million annual round trips were made from Singapore to Johor Bahru, and 5.9 million in the opposite direction, using existing transport modes. — Xinhua

Jointly advancing sound, safe, orderly AI development for human well-being

Chinese President Xi Jinping will attend the opening ceremony of the conference in Shanghai, scheduled from 17 to 20 July.

AS ARTIFICIAL intelligence develops at an unprecedented pace, the 2026 World AI Conference (WAIC) & High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance is poised to be a milestone event, championing the sound, safe, and orderly advancement of AI to serve global development and human well-being.

Chinese President Xi Jinping will attend the opening ceremony of the conference in Shanghai, scheduled from 17 to 20 July, and deliver a keynote speech, in which he will systemically elaborate on China's policies, position, visions and propositions regarding AI development and governance.

AI is a strategic technology driving a new round of technological revolution and industrial transformation. It is pro-



At the "AI for Good Global Summit" held in Geneva, Switzerland, Chinese company AgiBot's humanoid robot performs a dance for the audience on 7 July. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

foundly reshaping humanity's modes of production and daily life. Today, a surge of breakthroughs in AI innovation presents the international community with both immense opportunities and complex challenges. Consequently, global AI governance has emerged as a universal imperative that bears upon the shared future of all nations.

China upholds a people-centered approach and the principle of AI for good and for all. It attaches great importance to AI development and governance. Capitalizing on its abundant data resources, comprehensive industrial ecosystem, vast application scenarios, and immense market potential, China is actively deepening AI technological integration with industrial innovation. — Xinhua

Turkiye ready to participate in Black Sea security mechanism

TURKIYE is ready to engage in possible mechanisms to ensure security in the Black Sea after the conclusion of a peace agreement on Ukraine, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said on Thursday.

"We have accepted our partners' proposal regarding possible maritime security provision after the secured peace agreement. Certain planning is underway in this regard," Fidan said at a press conference in Kyiv.

Fidan did not speci-

fy what countries made the proposal or what specific security measures could be implemented, but said that Türkiye is coordinating its actions with partners and considering various options for



This photo shows the waters of the Bosphorus Strait near the Fatih Sultan Mehmet Bridge in Istanbul, Türkiye. **PHOTO: XINHUA/FILE**

participating in security mechanisms.

The minister added that Türkiye hopes that the ceasefire in Ukraine will be achieved and peace talks will be resumed regardless of the persisting difficulties, saying that "light is already visible in this deep darkness". He further reaffirmed Turkish commitment to host direct Russian-Ukrainian talks, adding that diplomacy is the only way to achieve a sustainable settlement. — SPUTNIK