

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

Unrealistic Sustainability Demands Risk Undermining Organizations

EAOs, both NCA signatories and non-signatories, are invited to take part in peace talks scheduled to be held before 31 July.

President U Min Aung Hlaing underscored the 100-day programme of the government at the meeting of the Union government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar at its meeting hall of the Presidential Palace Reception Hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

Speaking on the occasion, the President recounted that he had replied to the media at the reaffirmation ceremony, saying that he will prioritize peace and stability of the State and development measures. Moreover, he had urged the people to work in concert and unity.

In order to develop the country's education sector, the President stated that the government has transformed the system into a compulsory education system up to KG+9. In the 2026-2027 financial year, 6.92 per cent of the State budget has been allocated to the Ministry of Education, and when education-related expenditures of other ministries are included, a total of 9.22 per cent of the State budget will be spent on the education sector. In the upcoming financial year, the budget allocation for the education sector will be increased to no less than 10 per cent of the national budget, and within the following year, it will be further raised to 15 per cent. Over the five-year term of the government, spending on education will be increased to up to 20 per cent of the national budget.

The President noted that it is necessary to improve the mindset of the people by enhancing the education sector.

According to the press release, he highlighted that the poverty rate of Myanmar is higher among the regional



President U Min Aung Hlaing addresses the Union government meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

countries. In this regard, rural people are suffering the impacts of poverty. As such, only when the government strives to improve the economy of the rural people will they have increased income and enjoy an improvement of socioeconomic lives. Consequently, the poverty rate will decline. The government has planned to establish more industrial, agriculture and livestock basic education high schools across the nation.

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Key points from the speech delivered by President U Min Aung Hlaing at the Union government meeting

1. The Ministry of Finance and Revenue will increase the disbursement of loans to farmers under the loan disbursement plan within 100 days.
2. Railways will be upgraded as much as possible, prioritizing the Yangon-Mandalay, Yangon-Mawlamyine and Yangon-Pyay sections.
3. Twenty-seven mobile stations will be extended within 100 days, nine mobile stations of which will be upgraded to 4G LTE facilities.
4. Primarily, Naypyitaw State Academy, Yangon University and Mandalay University will be set as the research and project pilot universities.

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Low-cost diesel distributed directly to farmers for summer cultivation season

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Yangon palm oil wholesale reference price sees upward trend

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Bago's Shwemawdaw to host rice offering, watering banyan tree



This photo shows last year's rice-offering ceremony and the water-pouring ritual at the banyan tree.

ACCORDING to U Tin Aung Myint, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Shwemawdaw Pagoda, a ceremony to offer rice to 1,000 monks and 100 nuns will be held at the pagoda in conjunction with the watering of banyan trees on Vesak Day, which falls on 30 April.

On Vesak Day, also known as Buddha Day, 1,000 monks will participate in the consecration of the Shwemawdaw Pagoda. In addition, well-wishers will offer rice and alms to 1,000 monks and 100 nuns. In the afternoon, a ceremony to pour water on the banyan trees will take place.

"The pagoda will be consecrated by 1,000 members of the Sangha from monasteries in Bago at 5 am on the full moon day of Kason, 30 April. At 5:30 am, meals will be offered to 1,000 members of the Sangha and 100 nuns. The rice-offering ceremony will take place on the pagoda platform. From 4 pm, the banyan trees within the precinct of the pagoda will be watered. At about 6 pm, a venerable Sayadaw will deliver a sermon at Buddha Beikman," said U Tin Aung Myint.

At Shwemawdaw Pagoda, the banyan tree watering ceremony is held annually on the full moon day of Kason. Since 2025, consecration, rice-offering, and sermon-delivery ceremonies have also been held there. In the evening, meals will be served to guests attending the ceremonies. — ASH/MKKS

Botahtaung Pagoda's 10th blood donation event planned in Apr

THE 10th blood donation event of the Botahtaung Pagoda has been planned to be held in April, and all individuals can participate, the pagoda's trustees board urged.

Organized by the pagoda's trustees board, the blood donation will take place from 9 am to noon on 26 April at the pagoda.

Along with the pagoda's workers, pilgrims can also donate blood in the 10th blood donation event, it is urged.

The previous 9th blood donation was concluded successfully, and details can be requested from the trustees board's phone numbers 09 453200820 and 09 795684318. — MT/ZS



The Botahtaung Pagoda's blood donation is in progress in 2023.

Over 50,000 travellers visit Ngwetaung Beach in Mar



This photo captures travellers enjoying their time at Ngwetaung Beach in March 2026.

NGWETAUNG Beach in Hainggyikyun, Ngaputaw Township, Ayeyawady Region, attracted 55,104 domestic visitors in March, with tourist arrivals continuing to rise, according to Daw Ni Ni Mar, an executive of the Myanmar Tourism Entrepreneurs

Association (Ngwetaung Beach).

Located near the Mawtinsun Pagoda, Ngwetaung Beach is a popular year-round destination for domestic travellers. Most visitors reportedly come from the Yangon Region and the Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.

"In January, there were 29,755 domestic travellers, increasing to 54,522 in February. In March, the number rose further to 55,104. Visitor arrivals are steadily increasing, and the beach continues to welcome visitors throughout the year," Daw Ni Ni Mar said.

To ensure visitors enjoy a safe and pleasant experience, facilities and services such as bicycle rentals, motorboat rides, and horse riding have been arranged. In addition, stalls offer local food, consumer goods, and souvenirs. — ASH/MKKS

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7 pm Monday 20 April 2026)

BAY INFERENCE: The weather is cloudy over the South Bay of Bengal and has a few clouds to partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF 21 April 2026: Rain or thundershowers will be fairly widespread in Kachin and (southern and eastern)Shan States, scattered in Upper Sagaing Region and northern Shan State and isolated in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Magway, Lower Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions and Kayah, Kayin, Chin and Mon States. The degree of certainty is 80 per cent. The weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States.

THE CONDITION OF CUMULONIMBUS CLOUD: The cumulonimbus clouds are developing in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions and Kachin, Kayah and Shan States. In the area along the cumulonimbus clouds movement, the weather phenomena such as strong winds accompanied with rain, thunder, lightning and Hail may occur and therefore it is recommended to be aware in advance these phenomena.

STATE OF THE SEA: The sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about four to six feet off and along the Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR THE SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Isolated to scattered rain or thundershowers in Upper

Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions and Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Mon and Shan States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 21 April 2026: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. The degree of certainty is 60 per cent.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 21 April 2026: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 21 April 2026: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is 60 per cent. — DMH

NATIONAL

Unrealistic Sustainability Demands Risk Undermining Organizations

FROM PAGE 1

The President stressed that efforts must be made to generate hydropower from renewable energy and solar power in order to develop the nation. Micro, small and medium enterprises are playing a key role in boosting the production of goods. The government issues loans to MSME businesses for their development by easing necessary restrictions. Likewise, the manufacturing of products must be carried out through the cooperative system. Now, in a digital technological era, relevant ministries need to strive for improvement of technologies in the international landscape by keeping abreast of other countries in information technology.

Regarding peace, the President noted that PDF terrorist groups have been committing various destructive acts in some areas of the country. Most of these actions include collecting extortion money and illegal checkpoint fees, as well as unlawfully extracting forest resources and natural resources both above and below ground for their own benefit. At present, the democratically elected government has already assumed state responsibilities. So, efforts will be made to invite these PDF terrorist groups to return to the legal framework.

Concerning the 100-day programme of the government, the President said: "Since it is 100 days, today would be the 20th of April, so it is easy to remember. We can set 31 July as the 100th day. I would like to briefly mention the 100 days, setting 31 July as the final date. Regarding the PDF issue mentioned earlier, we have already stated that they are also invited to participate in dialogue and peace efforts for peace and reconciliation. At present, many have already returned to the legal fold. In areas of the Central Command and Southern Command, there have been many who have returned to the legal fold. In the Central Command area in particular, the number is quite large – hundreds have already come in. Some have made requests to join. We wel-

come them. About the PDFs, we are inviting them to come forward for peace within these 100 days.

"I would like to emphasize two portions for the Ethnic Armed Organization (EAO). For the first one, some EAOs have signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), and others have not yet signed it. So, we invite both types of EAOs, including the NCA non-signatories. Before 31 July, we invite the NCA non-signatories to hold talks. Tomorrow, we will release announcements. Now, I talk about it in advance. Another point: some NCA signatories did not hold talks within five years. For example, these are KNU, CNF and ABSDF. So, I invite them. We invite these EAOs to hold talks. Moreover, some NCA signatories have inked agreements. For example, they agreed on 43 points. They have signed the NCA and agreed to the Union Accords. We will submit these in sections at the upcoming Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

"For groups that have not yet engaged in dialogue and negotiation, we also invite them to come and participate in discussions by the final deadline of 31 July. We also desire peace. If there is no stability and peace in the country, nothing can be done in terms of development. Only when peace is achieved and stability exists can development activities be carried out. If construction work is carried out ahead, but destructive activities come in from behind. Therefore, in terms of peace, if unrealistic demands are being made and it is claimed that this is for the sustainability of one's own organization that would be a mistake. From our side as well, the State will need to take necessary and appropriate actions where required. Therefore, EAOs, including both NCA signatories and non-signatories, are invited to participate in the peace process. Meetings and discussions will be held before 31 July. Similarly, in regard to the PDFs, they are also invited to enter the legal framework during this period. There are no valid political justifications for what is

happening. As mentioned earlier, they are simply being exploited. Therefore, they are urged to avoid being used or manipulated."

The President stated that the Ministry of Finance and Revenue of the government will increase the disbursement of loans to farmers under the loan disbursement plan within 100 days. In this regard, the ministry will issue K300,000 for paddy, wheat and long staple cotton, K250,000 for the other 18 kinds of crops and K150,000 for niger, canola and jute. Moreover, the loans will be set at less than K300 million and more than K300 million for agricultural machinery.

The President expressed his 100-day plan, stating that the government will finish the upgrade of Anisakhan Airfield. Myanma Port Authority will prioritize the construction of warehouses. Moreover, railways will be upgraded as much as possible, prioritizing the Yangon-Mandalay, Yangon-Mawlamyine and Yangon-Pyay sections. Roads and tracks will be repaired on the Myitkyina-Mogaung-Mohnyin railway. In addition, locomotives, carriages and factories will be improved. In the communication sector, 27 new mobile stations will be extended within 100 days. Of them, nine mobile stations will be upgraded to 4G LTE facilities.

He added that the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development will carry out rural water supply for consumption and agricultural activities through the solar-powered water pumping system. The Ministry of Education will establish the pilot universities to enhance the research capacity. Primarily, Naypyitaw State Academy, Yangon University and Mandalay University will be set as the research and project pilot universities. Starting from the 2026-27 academic year, the middle school education will be facilitated with industrial, agriculture and livestock subjects. Civic ethics and morality subjects will be taught at basic education schools. To emerge the schools with five strengths, the Ministry of Sports,

the Ministry of Youth Affairs, and the Myanmar Football Federation will conduct the smart school and football for school programmes at the schools in Yangon, Mandalay, Ayeyawady and Bago regions and Shan State as pilot projects.

The President underlined that the Ministry of Health will appoint deputy health officers in 50 regions and states, districts and townships in order to enhance the healthcare activities. Medical wards at the heart treatment units at Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay will conduct the medical treatment, assessing the heart diseases for 100,000 patients in cooperation with China. Moreover, nursing schools in regions and states will be upgraded to nursing institutes.

Union ministers and the Kachin State government reported on matters related to signing the MoU and the MoA, invitation to tender, issuance of the citizenship scrutiny cards for children above 10 years, collection of data for EID and knowledge-sharing of the Ayeyawady Myitson project.

In his response, the President said that inviting tenders must meet the qualification and standards without wasting time. He urged all to prioritize development undertakings in regions and states which face lesser improvement. The President pledged that development projects in education, health and transport will be implemented in addition to the rehabilitation of government buildings, roads, bridges and communication infrastructures damaged by the natural disasters. Moreover, the earthquake-affected staff housing will be repaired soon. He urged all to efficiently spend the State budget without waste.

Also, present at the meeting were Vice-Presidents U Nyo Saw and Nan Ni Ni Aye, Union ministers and the Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman, together with chief ministers of regions and states through videoconferencing. – MNA/TTA

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News and Periodicals Enterprise



NATIONAL

Youth Affairs Union Minister further elaborates on President's speech

UNION Minister for Youth Affairs Dr Maung Thin attended a ceremony yesterday morning at the Nay Pyi Taw Sports Training Camp (Gold Camp), where he provided clarification on the President's address.

Also present were Deputy Minister U Sitt Naing, Director-General U Kyaw Soe Moe, deputy directors-general, directors and staff.

The Union minister first elaborated on the points raised in the President's speech concerning the youth sector. He noted that, in order to build a developed democratic Union, the country requires a large number of highly skilled intellectuals, professionals, and human resources. He pointed out that many young people are unable to attend school for various reasons, and stressed that improving access to education in line with international standards is essential for the development of human resources. He empha-



Union Minister Dr Maung Thin provides further clarification on the President's speech.

sized that the education sector must be strengthened collectively to raise educational standards, as a nation cannot be built by those who lack education, knowledge, or awareness. He further highlighted that young people represent the country's future, its strength, and the driv-

ing force behind nation-building, and therefore, the youth sector must be actively promoted.

He added that promoting the youth sector requires time, as progress must be achieved progressively across generations. A sound and systematic foundation is essential from

the outset. Moreover, young people must be nurtured to develop appropriate thinking, attitudes, analytical ability, and sound judgement according to their age and level of maturity. Emphasizing the important role of youth, who will shoulder the responsibilities of the na-

tion in the future, he explained that the Ministry of Youth Affairs was established anew to ensure effective and sustained implementation of youth-related initiatives, to encourage active youth participation in national development processes, and to promote all-around youth development.

He also stated that, to develop the five strengths of young people – physical, intellectual, moral, social, and economic – awareness talks on youth affairs and health, vocational training, computer and language courses, scouting and Red Cross training, as well as disaster preparedness programmes, will be conducted in schools in cooperation with relevant ministries. He urged the ministry staff to continue working with dedication and enthusiasm, using their full capacity to promote the development of the youth sector and to nurture high-quality, well-rounded young people. — MNA/MKKS

Myanmar eyes waste-to-energy projects with Chinese tech support

THE Ministry of Electricity and Energy has announced that projects to generate electricity from various types of waste will be implemented in Myanmar, in cooperation with Chinese partners.

To support the implementation of these waste-to-energy projects, a delegation from the Ministry visited the Grandtop Fushan Circular Economic Industrial Park in Guangzhou, where they held discussions with officials. The delegation also studied operational processes within the industrial park, including the sorting, storage, and transportation of different types of waste for power generation.

In addition to observing the stages involved in generating electricity from waste, the delegation examined how the electricity produced is transmitted through distribution lines and integrated into the national grid. They also

observed how operations are monitored and controlled from the control room to ensure compliance with established standards.

According to the discussions, Myanmar will send a technical team to the Grandtop Fushan Circular Economic Industrial Park to undertake further studies. Likewise, China will dispatch technical teams to Myanmar to conduct on-site assessments and collaborate on the projects.

The Guangzhou Waste-to-Energy Power Plant, located within the industrial park, is the largest facility in China for generating electricity from waste. It has a processing capacity of 9,300 tonnes of waste per day, or approximately 3.1 million tonnes annually, and produces over 1,200 million units of electricity each year, which are supplied to the national grid. — ASH/KNN

Low-cost diesel distributed directly to farmers for summer cultivation season



Officials monitor the direct distribution of low-cost diesel to farmers for the summer cultivation season.

THE Ministry of Electricity and Energy, in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation and regional and state governments, is directly distributing domestically produced diesel to farmers at their worksites.

This initiative aims to ease fuel shortages and enable farmers to purchase fuel easily at an affordable price.

For the 2025-2026 summer paddy and oil crop cultivation season, diesel is being sold at a rate of K10,000 per gallon on a cash payment basis to villages where ploughing and planting are still ongoing.

As part of this direct distribution, a total of 7,609 gallons of diesel were delivered today. Of this, 650 gallons were distributed in Tatkon Township and Pobbathiri

Township; 110 gallons in Pyaw Township; 2,271 gallons in Amarapura Township, Wundwin Township, and Pyawbwe Township; and 4,578 gallons in Pwintbyu Township.

Diesel will continue to be distributed on a cash payment basis, in cooperation with relevant authorities, to farmers in the remaining regions and states. — MNA/MKKS

NATIONAL

11 PDF members reintegrate into society

THE government is extending an invitation to those involved in various armed groups, including the PDF, to return to the legal fold. Those who do so are being provided with necessary assistance and support.

The PDF members – 11 males – entered the legal fold with their arms and ammunition yesterday.

These returning members stated that they could no longer accept the terrorist acts committed by the armed groups and PDF, such as forced conscription, threatening, arresting, and killing innocent civilians and civil servants for the benefit of terrorist organizations, planting mines and destroying non-military infrastructure like roads and bridges. They also cited discrimination, internal hierarchical oppression, torture, killings, violence, poor living conditions, and demoralization due to an inability to resist Tatmadaw operations as reasons for leaving.



A ceremony welcoming 11 PDF members who returned to the legal fold, along with the provision of cash assistance, is underway in Toungoo, Bago Region, yesterday.

Moreover, they expressed trust in the State and Tatmadaw's peace processes and a desire to live peacefully under the law, hoping to contribute back to the State and people whom they had caused losses to.

The 11 individuals from Paukkaung, Nattalin, Minhla and Nyaunglebin townships of Bago Region entered the legal fold, and were accepted by responsible officials.

At the handover ceremony,

PDF members were handed over to their parents or guardians at Aye Chan Pyo Hall of the Southern Command Headquarters yesterday.

At the event, the commander made a speech.

Those who rejoined the legal fold handed over one MA1, two MA3s, one BA63, one homemade M79, 252 bullets, eight magazines and one 40mm grenade to the commander.

The commander and officials rewarded K5 million for one rifle, totalling K20 million for four rifles, K500,000 for one homemade rifle, and K300,000 per returnee, totalling K3.3 million for 11 returnees.

The returnees signed pledges after receiving gifts and were handed back to their parents or guardians.

There are still individuals who wish to return to the legal fold. Those who intend to do so are encouraged to promptly contact and report to the nearest Tatmadaw bases or police stations. They will be welcomed and accepted, provided with the necessary assistance and support, and cash rewards for any arms and ammunition. — MNA/KTZH

Air Quality Measurements in Yangon on 19 April

THE Environmental Conservation Department of Yangon Region conducts 24-hour monitoring of six parameters — Particulate Matter 2.5 (PM2.5), Particulate Matter 10 (PM10), Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂), Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), Ozone (O₃) and Carbon Monoxide (CO) — using an Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Station with a mobile unit (AQMS Mobile Car) and a Compact Air Quality Monitoring Station (AQM 65) at three locations as follows: -

No	Air quality monitoring sites in Yangon Region	Parameters					
		PM 2.5	PM 10	SO ₂	NO ₂	O ₃	CO
1	Botahtaung Township, Yangon	Good					
2	International Business Centre, Hline, Yangon	Good					
3	Dagon Township, Yangon	Good					

Air Quality Index - AQI	
0-50	Good air quality
51-100	Acceptable air quality
101-150	Unhealthy for sensitive groups
151-200	Unhealthy
201-300	Very unhealthy
301-500	Hazardous

The measured air quality results may vary depending on factors such as temperature, wind speed and direction, humidity, rainfall, vehicle usage, dust dispersion due to hot and dry conditions, emissions from factories, and surrounding environmental conditions near the monitoring sites.

Environmental Conservation Department

MCEF to host Build-Smart & Biggest Myanmar Production Expo 2026

THE Myanmar Construction Entrepreneurs Federation (MCEF) has announced that it will host the MCEF Build-Smart & Biggest Myanmar Production Expo 2026, featuring construction and related industries, to commemorate its 30th Anniversary.

It will be held in collaboration with Builders Mall Expo from 15 to 17 May at the Yangon Convention Centre (YCC), Inya Lake Hotel, Kaba Aye Pagoda Road.

It will showcase Yangon Real Estate, Renewable Energy Solutions, Construction Companies & Materials, Electronics & Electricals, Interior Decoration & Products, Modern Furniture, and Heavy Machinery, with planned participation of major member companies, as well as Myanmar's largest enterprises.

According to MCEF, this expo will feature technical seminars led by expert consultants, real estate talks, and performances by artistes and dancers. As a special 30th-anniversary event, MCEF highlights that



This image features a poster for the MCEF Build-Smart & Biggest Myanmar Production Expo 2026.

this is an unmissable opportunity to enhance its marketing and branding of the firms.

Companies and brands wishing to participate and secure Exhibition Key Point Locations can pre-register at the following offices: MCEF Head Office in Thingangyun Township, 09 893217109, 09 660282000, Viber: 09 893217109, Email: mcef1996@gmail.com or MCEF Nay Pyi Taw Office: 09 25 445 4656. — MT/ZN

NATIONAL



Frontline Tatmadaw members welcomed back

A ceremony to warmly welcome back the triumphant frontline Tatmadaw members who courageously served duties in Muse Township, Shan State (North), was held at the local battalion in Mongkhok, Shan State (East), yesterday.

Deputy Commander of the Triangle Region Command Brig-Gen Kyaw Naing Soe, relevant departmental officials, members of the Myanmar Police Force, war veterans' organization and local ethnic people wel-

comed back returning soldiers with heartfelt enthusiasm.

The Deputy Commander and officials welcomed back the victorious Tatmadaw members with sprigs of Eugenia, and presented the cash prizes to the returnees. The event included traditional dance and music performances.

The Deputy Commander and party had lunch together with the victorious Tatmadaw members. — MNA/KTZH

Triumphant Tatmadaw troops are seen being warmly welcomed back in the Triangle Region Command.

Surasura Tadoku to run in 2 sessions from Apr

SURASURA Tadoku reading event, in which Japanese language learners from any level (from N5 to N1) are eligible to participate, will be held in two sections with free admission starting from April, according to the Japan Foundation, Yangon.

Tadoku means reading many books in simple Japanese language in a fun way, and JFYG holds this reading event on the last Friday of the month.

Starting from this month, the reading event will take place in two parts on 24 April— the first part is scheduled from 10 am to 11:30 am, and the second part is scheduled from 2 pm to 3:30 pm. All Japanese language learners are eligible to apply, it said.

Participants can choose a preferred time, but attendance for all sections is also allowed. Applications can be submitted to this link- https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=oy_Hk-Jxhhky73GK1b_fZOcx1DayfGCZOuKx-p21RgZbpUOTRTTkhDSE8xTjBJT-kQ1Q0hOMUs5Vlo2NC4u. Application will be closed by noon on 22 April, and attendees are limited to 30, so the closing time may be earlier when there is a massive application. More information can be requested to JFYG phone numbers: 01 430920 and 01 430921. Tadoku reading cards will be issued for readers, and rewards will be presented every time they get three points. — MT/ZS

MOGE, domestic entrepreneurs to collaborate on Standard Well Drilling for oil production



Manageable local oil exploration site.

MYANMA Oil and Gas Enterprise under the Ministry of Electricity and Energy is joining hands with domestic entrepreneurs to implement standard

well drilling projects for oil production, according to the Ministry of Electricity and Energy.

MoEE will supervise the standard

well drilling operations using digital technology and will also provide technical assistance.

Citizen entrepreneurs will be allowed to set up public companies for these standard well drilling projects. This initiative aims to systematically develop the private oil exploration sector.

“The Ministry is planning to systematically drill standard wells for crude oil to produce greater quantities and higher quality of CNG, LPG, fuel, and agricultural fertilizers,” said an official from the ministry.

Furthermore, contracts have already been signed with domestic entrepreneurs to collaborate on standard well drilling to increase domestic oil production. Efforts are also underway to enact legislation related to standard well drilling operations. — ASH/KK

Trading Amount and Foreign Exchange Rate in the Market on 20 April 2026

	US\$	Chinese yuan	Thai Baht	Indian rupee
Exchange rate	3,663.20-3,666.00	557.50-558.20	125.50-125.60	43.60
Trading amount in the market	10,837,024.59	2,260,096.21	16,820,778.48	
The amount sold by CBM to the market			3,861,529.38	

THE amount of foreign currencies traded in the foreign exchange market was sold for the import of edible oil, fuel oil, industrial raw

materials, car/motorcycle spare parts, construction equipment, communication equipment, and consumer foodstuffs. From the CMP

sector revenue, US\$2.48 million was sold to the edible oil sector, and the Central Bank of Myanmar sold 3.86 million baht to the

industrial raw materials sector, auto parts sector, agricultural equipment sector, and construction sector. — MNA

Yangon palm oil wholesale reference price sees upward trend

THE wholesale reference rate of palm oil set for the Yangon market edged up to K6,985 per viss this week ending 23 April, up from K6,735 per viss recorded last week, according to the Supervisory Committee on Edible Oil Import and Distribution.

The rise in palm oil price was attributed to a sharp drop in the palm oil output in major producing countries starting from January 2026, strengthening Malaysia Ringgits, Indonesia's tax hike in palm oil export from 10 per cent to 12.5 per cent starting from 1 March, low global stock levels in palm oil reserve situation with tight supplies dropping to 19 per cent in 2025-2026 Financial Year from 20 per cent, pushing the FOB price in the producing countries, the Department of Consumer Affairs speculated the market price.

The Supervisory Commit-



Oil mill workers are organizing cooking oil jerry cans for distribution and sale.

tee on Edible Oil Import and Distribution under the Ministry of Commerce has been closely observing the FOB prices in Malaysia and Indonesia, adding transport costs, tariffs and banking services to decide

the wholesale market reference rate for edible oil weekly. Despite the reference price, market rates remain high. To curb overcharging, the Consumer Affairs Department under the Ministry of Com-

merce announced in late August that consumers can lodge complaints via its call centre hotline. The department also urged the public not to purchase palm oil at inflated prices.

The committee warned that those engaged in price gouging or hoarding oil to manipulate the market will face legal action under the Essential Goods and Services Law. The department is working with the Myanmar Oil Dealers' Association and the cooking oil importers to ensure imported palm oil is sold to consumers at affordable rates. Complaints about overcharging can be filed through the Consumer Affairs Department's call centre hotline 1535 or via its Facebook page, as well as through the relevant regional and state departments.

The domestic consumption of palm oil is estimated at one million tonnes per year. Farmers and businesspersons are striving to meet the demand of people for oil consumption by growing oil crops and engaging in oil palm farms. — NN/KK

Tender opens for premium diesel supply to Kyaukpyu Power Plant

A tender has been called for the purchase of premium diesel for Phase II of the Kyaukpyu Combined Cycle Power Plant Project.

Kyaukpyu Electric Power Company Limited, under project code KPEPC PR 35, will purchase 13,000 litres of premium diesel. The goods must be delivered to the diesel warehouse of the Combined Cycle Power Plant in Kyaukpyu, Rakhine State, within 10 calendar days after contract signing.

Therefore, interested bidders may contact Ms San San Wai at 09 776943668,

email sansanwai.hytrustenergy.sg@gmail.com, or at 25th Floor, Office Tower 1, Myanmar Plaza, Bahan Township, Yangon, Myanmar.

Qualification requirements for bidding stated that bidders must be a registered company holding necessary business licenses and must provide stable, regular service for the required volume of premium diesel. Furthermore, premium diesel must meet national standards and include quality test reports, and suppliers must undertake the required storage, transportation, and good services

as specified in the contract. Tender documents are available by 5:30 pm on 22 April. Those wishing to visit the office in person must bring a business license, DICA registration, company extract, KTK FORM 2, company profile, authorization letter, and the original registration card of the representative. They can also enquire details by sending an email to sansanwai.hytrustenergy.sg@gmail.com. The company will respond by email after verification. Document fees are free of charge. — NN/KK

TTI to offer export business startup course on 4-8 May

THE Trade Training Institute (TTI) under the Ministry of Commerce's Trade Department will conduct its Batch 21 intensive course on starting an export business from 9 am to 4 pm on 4-8 May 2026.

The institute is located at

228/240, the corner of Strand Road and Shwebontha Street. The maximum number of trainees is 50. Trainees can register at the institute by submitting an application form, three passport-size photos, a bachelor's degree certificate, a

matriculation pass certificate, a citizenship scrutiny card, and other related documents. Individuals can enquire about details using the Institute's contact numbers: 01 8250871, 09 254075848, and 09 442134380. — NN/KK

Myanmar spotlights local goods at Guangxi "33 Consumption Festival" 2026



Myanmar's Consul-General and relevant officials pose for a commemorative photo.

THE Shopping in China 2026 Guangxi "33 Consumption Festival" recently held in Nanning of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region featured local products and ASEAN goods.

The festival organized by the Department of Commerce of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in Nanning, kicked off with presentations highlighting Guangxi's regional brands, local products, special benefits for consumers, AI-powered spring holidays, joyful shopping experiences in Guangxi, smart

technologies connecting with the world, and a special sales programme on online shopping platforms.

ASEAN premium product selection programmes, an AI-powered magic show, initiatives involving thousands of stores and millions of products and cross-border payment systems. Consul-General Daw Khaing Su Linn attended the opening ceremony of the Shopping in China 2026 Guangxi "33 Consumption Festival". — ASH/KK

OPINION

Expedite capability to build the country in new era

AT PRESENT, the new State machinery is being formed in accordance with the Constitution, and the respective components of the legislative, executive, and judicial estates are beginning to take shape. In the Myanmar New Year, following the Thingyan festival, everyone must work together in unity – with renewed people, renewed spirit, renewed strength, new thinking, and new perspectives – to build a modern and developed new nation.

Building a new nation means overcoming conditions of slow and lagging development and rising towards a state of rapid progress and growth. In doing so, obstacles that hinder development must be identified and removed, and conditions that enable development must be created. In this process, efforts must build upon both the positive and negative legacies. As such, while many challenges lie ahead for the new government and the people, some opportunities must be seized.

In recent years, Myanmar has consecutively faced major man-made and natural disasters, resulting in significant losses of human resources, financial resources, and natural resources. Armed terrorist groups remain dispersed across various regions within the country and continue to commit destructive acts under the pretext of differing political ideologies. Their anti-government destructive activities have led to the damage and destruction of many infrastructures that had been built over long periods for the benefit of the people. In addition, unscrupulous elements are maliciously inciting divisions from multiple angles, including ethnic and religious lines, with the intent to erode moral values, undermine unity, foster hatred, and destabilize society.

Among the challenges that will continue to be faced in the country's future, natural disasters must be addressed through advanced preparedness and preventive measures, as well as by building a resilient society capable of withstanding such hazards. As for man-made threats such as armed terrorists, on one hand, the path to peace will be kept open for those willing to engage in peace talks; on the other hand, destructive elements threatening the State must be decisively suppressed through the joint efforts of Tatmadaw and the people.

Among the challenges that will continue to be faced in the country's future, natural disasters must be addressed through advanced preparedness and preventive measures, as well as by building a resilient society capable of withstanding such hazards. As for man-made threats such as armed terrorists, on one hand, the path to peace will be kept open for those willing to engage in peace talks; on the other hand, destructive elements threatening the State must be decisively suppressed through the joint efforts of Tatmadaw and the people.

In carrying out efforts for national stability and development, the Government must assume more effective leadership to bring about changes in both infrastructure and the mindset and perceptions of the people. In building a nation, domestic strength is the primary and central factor. Therefore, it is essential for the Government, Tatmadaw, and the people to work together in unity guided by the four principles of leadership: desire, effort, will, and wisdom, and to strive collectively towards national progress.

THE meaningful occasion of Myanmar New Year's Day has come again – the transition from the Myanmar Era year 1387 to 1388. It is an auspicious Day, a day of renewal, reflection, and hope for the entire nation. This day symbolizes not only the passage of time but also a fresh beginning filled with opportunities for individuals and the country as a whole to move forward with peace, harmony, and prosperity.

The grand and vibrant Thingyan Water Festival, which has just concluded, was celebrated across towns and cities throughout Myanmar with great enthusiasm and joy. As the most distinctive and lively of Myanmar's traditional twelve seasonal festivals, Thingyan is not merely a time for festivity and enjoyment. It carries deep cultural and spiritual significance, reminding people to cleanse their minds of past misdeeds and welcome the New Year with purity, kindness, and renewed determination.

Now that the festive days of Thingyan have passed, we arrive at Myanmar New Year's Day – a moment that holds special importance in the hearts of the Myanmar people. It is a day traditionally dedicated to performing meritorious deeds and engaging in acts of compassion, generosity, and respect. Across the country, people continue to observe long-standing customs: offering alms to monks, donating to the needy, observing religious precepts, paying homage

THE Water Festival, known as Thingyan, is one of the most cherished and symbolic celebrations in Myanmar. It marks not only the transition into a new year but also the cleansing of the past and the welcoming of new hopes. This year's Thingyan, however, felt different from the previous years. Across the country, there was a noticeable return of joy, laughter, and a sense of renewed spirit among the people. After years of uncertainty and emotional restraint, many Myanmar citizens seemed to celebrate more freely, more openly, and with a deeper sense of meaning.

One possible reason for this collective happiness lies in the recent political developments. For nearly five years, the absence of functioning parliamentary institutions – the Pyithu Hluttaw, Amyotha Hluttaw, and Pyidaungsu Hluttaw – left a significant void in the

Myanmar New Year: A Renewed Commitment to Peace, Prosperity, and National Unity

By Min Min Zan



This photo illustrate pilgrims thronging on the platform of the Shwedagon Pagoda on the Myanmar New Year Day. PHOTO: AUNG MYINT (IPRD)

at pagodas, and practising meditation. Families come together to honour elders, washing their hair with traditional herbal shampoo and offering them scented water as a gesture of gratitude and reverence. Many also release fish and other animals as acts of kindness, symbolizing the wish for all beings to be free from suffering.

These practices reflect the essence of Myanmar's cultural identity – a harmonious blend of joy and virtue. Even as modern times bring new forms of entertainment and changing life-

styles, it is encouraging to see that these meaningful traditions remain alive. The spirit of doing good deeds alongside celebration continues to define the Myanmar New Year, preserving a cultural legacy that has been passed down through generations.

At the same time, Myanmar New Year's Day is not only a time to look back on traditions but also a time to look ahead. It is a moment for every individual to reflect deeply and set intentions for the year to come. Just as people around the world make New Year's resolutions, Myanmar citizens can embrace this day as an opportunity to make firm, heartfelt commitments – resolutions guided by wisdom, compassion, and a strong sense of responsibility.

As we step into the new year, it is important for each person to cultivate inner strength and clarity of purpose. With full determination in our hearts, we should set meaningful goals and strive to achieve them throughout the coming year. These resolutions should not only focus on personal growth but also contribute to



Volunteers manicure nails of senior residents in Mongyan, Shan State, on the Myanmar New Year Day, on 17 April 2026. PHOTO: TUN TUN HTOO

the well-being of society and the nation. First and foremost, peace must be placed at the centre of our aspirations. A peaceful nation is the foundation upon which all progress is built. Without peace, there can be no stability, and without stability, development cannot flourish. Therefore, every citizen should commit to fostering understanding, tolerance, and unity, avoiding conflict, and working together to build a harmonious society.

Secondly, economic development is essential for improving the quality of life for all people. As individuals, we should strive to work diligently, enhance our skills, and contribute productively to the economy. At the same time, there should be a shared commitment to fairness, integrity, and cooperation in economic activities. A strong and sustainable economy will not only bring prosperity to individuals but also strengthen the nation as a whole.

Health is another crucial aspect that should not be overlooked. A healthy population is

Resolution After Water Festival

By Ms Monn

been held back for years. Over the past five years, many people have had to suppress their happiness due to various challenges and uncertainties. Celebrations were often limited, and the spirit of togetherness was overshadowed by concerns about the future. This year, however, with the re-emergence of representative institutions, people seemed to find a reason to let go of their worries – at least temporarily – and celebrate with genuine freedom.

Yet, while the joy of the festival is meaningful, it should also serve as a turning point. Thingyan is not only about celebration; it is also about reflection and renewal. As the country moves forward from this moment of emotional release, it is essential to think about the future and the responsibilities that lie ahead. The road to rebuilding the nation will not be easy, but it is a journey that must be undertaken with determination and unity.

In terms of politics, the re-establishment of parliamentary institutions must be strengthened and protected. Transparent governance, accountability, and the rule of law should be prioritized to ensure that the trust of the people is not misplaced. Leaders must remain committed to representing the true will of the people and working towards policies that benefit

all citizens, not just a select few.

Economically, the country faces numerous challenges that require immediate attention. Efforts should be made to stabilize the economy, create job opportunities, and support local businesses. Investment in infrastructure and innovation will be crucial in promoting sustainable growth. At the same time, measures must be taken to reduce inequality and ensure that economic progress reaches all levels of society.

Education is another vital area that demands focus. A strong education system is the foundation of a nation's future. Schools, universities, and training institutions must be revitalized to provide quality learning opportunities for all students. Teachers should be

vital for national progress. During this New Year, individuals should resolve to take better care of their physical and mental well-being. This includes adopting healthy lifestyles, maintaining cleanliness, supporting public health efforts, and helping one another in times of need. When people are healthy, they are better able to contribute positively to society.

In addition, the goal of national prosperity and well-being should guide our collective efforts. Prosperity is not only measured in material wealth but also in the happiness, security, and dignity of the people. By working together with a spirit of unity and shared responsibility, citizens can help create a society where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Education and moral values should also be emphasized in our New Year's resolutions. Continuous learning, respect for knowledge, and adherence to ethical principles are key factors in building a strong and progressive nation. By nurturing these values, we can ensure that future generations inherit a society that is both enlightened and compassionate.

Furthermore, preserving and promoting Myanmar's rich cultur-

al heritage remains an important duty for all citizens. Traditions, customs, and cultural practices are the identity of a nation. While embracing modernization and development, it is essential to maintain these cultural roots, ensuring that they are not lost but instead carried forward with pride.

As Myanmar enters this new chapter, there is also hope for continued progress in building a modern, democratic nation. With the emergence of new leadership and governance, there is an opportunity to strengthen unity, uphold justice, and work towards the collective good. Citizens should actively participate in nation-building efforts, supporting initiatives that promote peace, development, and social harmony.

Ultimately, Myanmar New Year's Day is a powerful reminder that every ending is also a new beginning. It encourages us to let go of past shortcomings, embrace positive change, and move forward with renewed determination. By setting strong and meaningful resolutions and by working together with sincerity and dedication, the people of Myanmar can shape a brighter future for themselves and for generations to come.

May this New Year bring peace to the nation, strength to its people, and prosperity to all. Let us welcome it with open hearts, clear minds, and unwavering commitment to building a better tomorrow.

ARTICLE

SCI/ENVIRON WORLD

Nations gather for first-ever conference on fossil fuel exit



(Files) Mining vehicles extract coal from a lignite coal mine, as the Elbistan thermal power plant, is seen in the background in Elbistan on 11 February 2026. **PHOTO: OZAN KOSE / AFP**

MORE than 50 nations are attending a world-first conference on phasing out fossil fuels in Colombia next week as the Iran war underscores how dependent countries remain on planet-heating coal, oil and gas.

Ministers arrive in the Caribbean city of Santa Marta against a backdrop of wartime fuel shortages, soaring prices and a scramble for energy security in what the International Energy Agency has called the biggest oil supply shock ever.

The gathering was born out of frustration with consensus-based United Nations climate talks, where efforts to negotiate a fossil fuel exit strategy have stalled.

But organisers say the energy shock caused by Iran's chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz, the key transit point for Gulf oil and gas shipments, has strengthened the case for a fossil fuel phaseout, even as some countries look to coal in the short-term to secure supplies.

Concerns over energy security are expected to shape the high-level discus-

sions over 28 and 29 April as much as climate priorities, analysts say.

The meeting was announced months ago but has taken on "greater relevance" with the energy crisis, said Colombia's environment minister Irene Velez Torres, whose country is co-hosting with the Netherlands.

Major fossil fuel producing nations Australia, Canada and Norway are expected along with developing oil giants Angola, Mexico and Brazil and coal-reliant emerging markets Türkiye and Vietnam. They will join dozens of other countries from small-island developing states to major economies Germany, France and the UK.

However the world's biggest coal, oil and gas producers — notably the United States, China, Saudi Arabia and Russia — are skipping the event.

'Honest space'

It will be closely watched for political signals from an emerging coalition of fossil fuel producers and consumers pushing for a phaseout outside the UN process.

Colombia — a coal and oil export-

er — said the "strategically important" participating countries accounted for one-fifth of global fossil fuel production and nearly one-third of consumption.

Fossil fuel interests have been accused of influencing UN negotiations on climate change and some governments and activists have questioned the involvement of producer nations in Santa Marta.

"The larger the group of countries, the more diffused the interests are and the less chance you've got of getting a sharp outcome," climate scientist Bill Hare, founder of Climate Analytics think tank, told AFP.

Velez Torres said, however, it was a "major step forward" to have producer countries present tackling this "taboo".

"We need to start a more honest space where we can discuss this more openly, and bring all cards to the table. Nobody is saying that the way to eliminating fossil fuels is easy. But we need to bring these people together," she said.

For some, the conference's appeal is partly its distance from the UN climate talks. — AFP

Scientists map over 1,000 hidden coral reefs in northern Australia

SCIENTISTS have discovered and mapped over 1,000 previously uncharted coral reefs in northern Australia, vastly expanding known marine habitat in the region.

The reefs, stretching from Houtman Abrolhos in the state of Western Australia through to western Cape York in the state of Queensland, have until now been mostly invisible and overlooked in conservation and development planning, said a statement of the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) released Monday.

The Marine and Coastal Hub project, led by AIMS in partnership with the University of Queensland, unveiled the reefs which are typically hidden in sediment-rich waters, it said, adding they were revealed not by sea expeditions but through advanced analysis of satellite imagery.

Combining around 200 satellite images of the area, the team created a composite image, which allowed them to "peek deeper into the water column" and map the reefs, researchers said.

The work revealed that northern Australia had a similar quantity of reefs as the Great Barrier Reef, though many were much smaller, said AIMS e-Atlas Project Manager Eric Lawrey.

"It's a vast set of reefs that's been largely unknown about," Lawrey said, adding that the reefs, being a habitat for a wide range of marine life, were possibly known by locals.

Previously, most of the northern Australian coastline was unsurveyed. The best mapping could be found in the marine charts, which did not distinguish between coral reefs and rocky reefs as they were simply designed to warn vessels to stay clear. — Xinhua



Suzana Carvalho, a local resident, holds a cup of herbal beverage tailored for her by a traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) intelligent robot at the Instituto Universitario Egas Moniz in Lisbon, Portugal, 17 April 2026. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

AI brings traditional Chinese medicine closer to Portuguese public

SUZANA Carvalho, a resident of the Portuguese capital Lisbon, stood before a robot resembling a sleek vending machine.

About five minutes later, she smiled as she held a steaming cup of herbal drink tailored to support her health after undergoing a brief scan and answering a series of questions from the device.

"It's incredible," Carvalho said. "I've always been curious about traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), but I didn't expect it to be so advanced."

The demonstration took place on Friday at Instituto Universitario Egas Moniz in Lisbon, where medical professionals from China and Portugal, along with faculty members and students, gathered

to witness the robot's campus debut.

The robot was jointly developed by Macau University of Science and Technology and the Guangdong Provincial Laboratory of Traditional Chinese Medicine in southern China, aiming to modernize and enhance the accessibility of traditional Chinese medicine. — Xinhua

China's film studios eye IP-driven future as near-total reliance on box office comes under strain

CHINA'S major film studios are changing how they measure the value of a movie — moving away from a near-total dependence on theatrical ticket sales towards a broader model built on intellectual property (IP) development, licensing, and consumer experiences.

This shift was discussed at the industry forum of the 16th Beijing International Film Festival, where executives from Enlight Media, China Film Group and Shanghai Film Group highlighted strategies for building IP franchises that generate returns well beyond the multiplex.

Their discussions reflected a growing concern among China's leading studios that the old model — built almost entirely on box office revenue that has weakened from its 2019 peak — may no longer be sufficient to sustain the sector on its own.

Wang Changtian, chairman



A man walks past a screen showing a poster of the Chinese animated film Ne Zha 2 before a preview screening at the BFI IMAX theatre in London, Britain, 14 March 2025. PHOTO: XINHUA

of Enlight Media, pointed out a structural imbalance that the industry faces. He said that studios are increasingly factoring non-theatrical value into their project decisions because box

office revenue alone can no longer cover the investment in most films. By contrast, many leading Western studios have long derived the majority of their income from copyright licensing,

merchandise and ancillary sources, with theatrical ticket sales representing a smaller share, he added.

In China, film copyright sales generate little income for rights

holders — licensing conditions are onerous and prices are low — while merchandise revenue has yet to reach meaningful scale, Wang said. With both streams effectively absent, Chinese studios are left dependent on box office for more than 90 per cent of their revenue — the very source that is now shrinking.

He predicted that the industry's film output would fall, with box office revenue becoming even more concentrated in blockbuster titles. However, some smaller, lower-cost films with genuinely original ideas may still find room to succeed, he added.

For China's established film studios, the response to such pressure is increasingly pointing towards building and managing IP across multiple revenue channels — with the film itself potentially recast as a starting point rather than an end product. — Xinhua

'Super Mario Galaxy' rules N America box office for third week

"THE Super Mario Galaxy Movie" — based on Nintendo's popular video game franchise — topped North America's box office for the third week in a row, industry estimates showed Sunday.

The animated sequel from Universal and Illumination Studios tracking the adventures of Mario, Luigi and friends in outer space raked in another \$35 million, Exhibitor Relations reported.

That puts the worldwide box office total of the film — which features the voices of Jack Black, Chris Pratt, Anya Taylor-Joy and Brie Larson — at nearly \$750 million.

Holding its own in second place is another space adventure, Amazon MGM's smash hit "Project Hail Mary", which earned \$20.4 million over the weekend in the United States and Canada.

The film, which stars Ryan Gosling as a teacher-turned-astronaut who awakes on a space-



(L-R) American actors Chris Meledandri, Jack Black, Benny Safdie, Donald Glover, Chris Pratt, Anya Taylor Joy, Charlie Day, Keegan-Michael Key, Brie Larson and Shigeru Miyamoto attend the world premiere of 'The Super Mario Galaxy Movie' at Minamiza Theatre in Kyoto on 28 March 2026. PHOTO: AFP

ship with a mission to save Earth from a dimming sun, has earned more than \$570 million worldwide, and its run in movie theatres has been extended.

"Super Mario' and 'Project Hail Mary' continue to drive the business in their third and fifth weekends — they're carrying the box office," said analyst David A Gross of Franchise Entertainment Research.

Debuting in third place is

"Lee Cronin's The Mummy," an original horror flick from Warner Bros, which earned \$13.5 million. The film is not related to Universal's adventure films starring Brendan Fraser.

In the fourth spot at \$4.8 million was "The Drama," A24's romantic comedy with a dark twist starring Zendaya and Robert Pattinson about a couple unravelling just before their wedding. — AFP

More Japan firms plan to cut new graduate hires for FY 2027 as AI use grows

MORE major Japanese companies plan to reduce the number of new graduates they hire from fiscal 2027 despite the country's labour shortage as they turn to digital solutions including artificial intelligence to improve productivity, a Kyodo News survey showed Sunday.

A survey of 111 companies suggests a possible shift in the aggressive hiring trend seen since the COVID-19 pandemic, with digitalization reshaping labour-intensive work and the Middle East crisis making the economic outlook uncertain.

In the survey conducted from mid-March to early April, 23 per cent, or 25 firms, said they plan to reduce the number of new graduates they hire for the financial year starting in April 2027, up 11 percentage points from a year earlier.

By contrast, just 16 per cent, or 18 companies, said they would increase hiring, making the first

time in five years that there are more companies planning to cut the number of new graduates than increase.

The results also highlight a shift towards more diverse hiring beyond new graduates, including foreign workers and mid-career recruits.

Some 39 per cent of the firms, including Fujifilm Holdings Corp and restaurant chain operator Skylark Holdings Co, said they plan to hire more foreign workers for positions in Japan, citing expectations for innovation and overseas business expansion.

Companies are also increasingly turning to mid-career hiring to secure skilled workers.

Hitachi Ltd and MUFG Bank said the number of their fiscal 2027 new graduate hires will be less than their mid-career hires in fiscal 2026, citing their urgent need to secure talent with experience in digital fields. — Kyodo

ECONOMY WORLD

Malaysia's exports rise 12.7% in Q1 on E&E demand



An angler fishes as a cargo ship is docked at Malaysia's North Klang port in Port Klang, on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur on 6 April 2026. **PHOTO: AFP**

MALAYSIA'S exports rose 12.7 per cent year on year to 426.53 billion ringgit (about US\$107.86 billion) in the first quarter, primarily driven by stronger demand for manufactured goods, particularly electrical and electronic (E&E) products, official data showed Monday.

These products continued to anchor overall export growth, with exports increasing by more than 40 billion ringgit, underpinned by sustained global demand and ongoing technological adoption across key markets, the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry said in a statement.

In terms of markets, exports to key trading partners, namely China and the United

States, recorded robust double-digit growth, while exports to ASEAN registered moderate expansion.

Meanwhile, Malaysia's trade remained on an expansionary path in the first quarter of 2026, expanding by 10.4 per cent to 789.85 billion ringgit.

Its imports increased by 7.7 per cent to 363.31 billion ringgit, resulting in a trade surplus of 63.22 billion ringgit during the quarter.

As for March, Malaysia's trade sustained its upward trajectory, expanding by 9.3 per cent year on year to 272.95 billion ringgit, supported by growth in both exports and imports.

Its exports rose 8.3 per cent to 148.75 billion ringgit, while imports increased by 10.4 per cent to 124.20 billion ringgit.

"Heightened geopolitical tensions in the Middle East have amplified volatility in global trade, exerting upward pressure on logistics costs and supply chain efficiency," said the ministry.

It said the ministry will continue to closely monitor global developments while exporters are encouraged to leverage existing free trade agreements (FTAs), tap into emerging markets and diversify product offerings to strengthen resilience amid ongoing uncertainties. — Xinhua

NEWS IN BIREF

Cambodia's insurance industry continues to enjoy positive growth in last 5 years

CAMBODIA'S insurance industry has continued to experience positive growth in the last five years, with an average annual growth of more than six per cent, a senior official said here on Monday.

Speaking at a dissemination seminar on Cambodia's insurance development strategic plan 2025-2030, Bou Chanphirou, director-general of the Insurance Regulator of Cambodia, said the South-East Asian country currently has 18 general insurers, 14 life insurers, six micro-insurance companies and one reinsurance firm, as well as 21 insurance brokers.

"Along with a rise in the number of insurance companies, the size of the insurance market had also surged remarkably, with the gross premium increasing to more than US\$367 million in 2025 from \$300 million in 2021," he said. — Xinhua

First direct flight links northwest China, Austria

THE first direct flight connecting Xi'an, capital of northwest China's Shaanxi Province, and Vienna, Austria, took off in the early hours of Monday, marking the inauguration of the first direct air service from northwest China to Austria.

An Airbus A330 wide-body aircraft, operating as China Eastern Airlines flight MU5063, departed from Xi'an Xianyang International Airport at 1:52 am local time. This route will be operated three times per week.

With this addition, China Eastern Airlines now operates 16 international routes from Xi'an Xianyang International Airport, connecting the city to 14 destinations worldwide. — Xinhua

Philippine EV sales rise in Q1 amid oil pressures, overall auto slump

DESPITE the overall car sales slump in the Philippines in the first quarter, electric vehicles (EVs) stood out as the sector's lone bright spot, amid the global oil crisis, industry data showed on Monday.

Total vehicle sales in the first three months reached 105,642 units, down from 117,074 units in the same period last year, according to figures released Monday by the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines, Inc (CAMPI) and the Truck Manufacturers Association. — Xinhua

ANA, JAL to hike fuel surcharges from May amid Middle East conflict

ANA Holdings Inc and Japan Airlines Co on Monday said they will raise fuel surcharges for international flights beginning May, a month earlier than previously reported, to counter the recent surge in fuel costs amid tensions in the Middle East.

Both airlines will apply fuel surcharges of up to 59,000 yen (\$370) for one-way flights to Europe and North America, up from the previous ceiling

of 55,000 yen under ANA and 50,000 yen under JAL.

The airlines calculate the surcharge — a fee paid by passengers that reflects the fluctuation of fuel costs — every two months based on the average price of kerosene, the primary source of its fuel produced by refining crude oil. The price in February and March exceeded the expected maximum cost.

Surcharges for April and May were initially based on ker-



osene prices from December 2025 and January this year, but the companies will move them forward, reflecting the price from February and March for tickets bought in May and June. — Kyodo

File photo shows ANA Holdings Inc and Japan Airlines Co planes at Haneda airport in Tokyo on 12 April 2026. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Shizuoka new tea fetches 1.18 mln yen per kg at year's first auction

MACHINE-PROCESSED new Japanese tea leaves from central Japan's Shizuoka Prefecture fetched a top price of 1.18 million yen (\$7,400) per kilogramme at the season's inaugural auction on Monday.

The green tea leaves were grown in the city of Shizuoka, and sold at the Shizuoka Japanese Tea Market's annual auction of the latest crop. Market officials said this year's tea grew steadily, helped by early spring rainfall that supported strong bud growth.

Natsuki Wada, a Shizuoka tea wholesaler who bought the top-priced lot, said, "It was tea that truly met my expectations. I hope to let everyone get a taste of Japanese culture" through the tea.

The market, which introduced electronic bidding this year, reported



A participant of the season's inaugural auction of new Japanese tea leaves at the Shizuoka Japanese Tea Market checks the scent of tea leaves in Shizuoka on 20 April 2026. PHOTO: KYODO

that about 1,169 kilogrammes of tea produced in Shizuoka Prefecture had been traded by 9:10 am, at an average price of 10,686 yen per kilogramme.

Yasuhide Uchino, the market's president, expressed hopes that the

new bidding system would help attract more buyers from beyond the prefecture.

Shizuoka Prefecture is renowned in Japan for its green tea. Late April is expected to be the peak for tea-leaf harvesting. — Kyodo

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V UNI ACCORD VOY.NO. (845N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V UNI ACCORD VOY.NO. (845N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **18-4-2026** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

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

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SITC HAODE VOY.NO. (2608S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SITC HAODE VOY.NO. (2608S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **18-4-2026** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SITC CONTAINER LINE CO., LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V PELICAN VOY.NO. (0090N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V PELICAN VOY.NO. (0090N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **18-4-2026** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT/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:

(ONE) OCEAN NETWORK EXPRESS LINE

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V NAWATA BHUM VOY.NO. (336N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V NAWATA BHUM VOY.NO. (336N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **20-4-2026** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES

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Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V NERAKI VOY. NO. (02/2026)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **20-4-2026** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MKH** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S WILHELMSSEN PORT SERVICES (S) PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MCL 9 VOY.NO. (24N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MCL 9 VOY. NO. (24N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **20-4-2026** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **YIGTL** 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 MAWLAMYINE CENTURY LOGISITCS COMPANY LIMITED

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ERASMUS LEO VOY.NO. (614W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ERASMUS LEO VOY.NO. (614W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **21-4-2026** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S MAERSK A/S

ROLLING UPDATES WORLD

Pope Leo blasts 'exploitation' on visit to resource-rich Angola

POPE Leo XIV condemned exploitation and corruption by the rich and powerful on Monday during a visit to Angola's diamond-rich northeast, returning to a theme of his 11-day tour of Africa.

The American pope, on the eighth day of his trip to four African nations, visited Saurimo, some 800 kilometres (500 miles) east of the capital, Luanda.

Under tropical heat and heavy security, Leo drove through the city of around 200,000 people along a route lined by hundreds of singing and cheering locals dressed in colourful outfits and waving white scarves.

Saurimo is the capital of the historically marginalized Lunda Sul province and close to Angola's largest diamond mine, Catoca, which extracts around 75 per cent

of the country's diamonds.

The Portuguese-speaking country is one of Africa's top producers of crude oil and diamonds, yet around a third of its people live below the World Bank poverty line.

"We can see today how the hope of many people is frustrated by violence, exploited by the powerful and defrauded by the rich," the pope said in Portuguese at a giant open-air Mass.

"Consequently, when injustice corrupts hearts, the bread of all becomes the possession of a few."

Authorities estimated that about 40,000 people attended the mass with another 20,000 taking part from surrounding areas.

The pope also criticized tyranny and exploitation in the first two legs of his marathon Africa



Pope Leo XIV (C) rides the Popemobile as he arrives to lead the Holy Mass at the Saurimo esplanade in Saurimo on the eighth day of an 11-day apostolic journey to Africa on 20 April 2026. **PHOTO: AFP**

journey, in Algeria and Cameroon, showing a tougher tone from a previously more reserved style.

Meeting the elderly

Soon after landing in Saurimo earlier Monday, the pope was welcomed at a home for around 60 elderly people who are either abandoned by their families or victims of violence.

"Your presence in this home is a blessing from God," 72-year-old Antonio Joaquin told him.

Despite its mineral wealth, Lunda Sul province bordering the Democratic Republic of Congo suffers extreme poverty, with mining also blamed for environmental damage and displacing communities.

On the first day of his An-

gola stopover on Saturday, the pope spoke out against the harm caused by the rampant exploitation of the continent's natural resources. "How much suffering, how many deaths, how many social and environmental disasters are caused by this logic of exploitation," he said in an address to government officials including President Joao Lourenco. — AFP

M7.7 jolts northeastern Japan, tsunami advisories in effect

A powerful quake with a magnitude of 7.7 struck northeastern and northern Japan on Monday, prompting the country's weather agency to issue a tsunami warning and a special advisory regarding the increased risk of another strong quake in the next week.

Tsunami warnings were issued for the Pacific coasts of Hokkaido, Aomori and Iwate prefectures, with the Japan Meteorological Agency forecasting tsunami waves of up to three metres. Later in the day, the warnings were downgraded to advisories.

An 80-centimetre tsunami was observed at Kuji port in Iwate Prefecture, the agency said.

The agency has issued a special weeklong alert covering 182 municipalities in seven prefectures from Hokkaido to Chiba due to the increased risk of another strong quake.

It marks only the second



An electronic bulletin board warning about the earthquake after hitting northern Japan, in Sendai city of Miyagi Prefecture on 20 April 2026. **PHOTO: AFP**

time the alert has been issued since the system began operating in December 2022. The first time it was issued was in December last year, following a M7.5 quake off the eastern coast of Aomori Prefecture.

The alert system, called an "Off the Coast of Hokkaido and Sanriku Subsequent Earthquake Advisory," is based on lessons learned from the

M9.0 megaquake that devastated northeastern Japan on 11 March, 2011, followed by an M7.3 temblor.

Such alerts are issued following an earthquake in the area with a confirmed magnitude of 7.0 or greater; and when the agency assesses there is an increased chance that an M8 quake or greater could occur within seven days. — Kyodo

Canadian PM urges economic diversification amid trade tensions with US

CANADIAN Prime Minister Mark Carney said on Sunday that Canada's former strengths based on close ties with the United States have become "weaknesses" that require correction through global trade diversification.

In a video address titled "Forward Guidance" posted on his social media, Carney provid-

ed an assessment of the current Canada-US relations.

"The US has fundamentally changed its approach to trade, raising its tariffs to levels last seen during the Great Depression," Carney said, referring to the heavy duties currently impacting Canada's automotive, steel and lumber industries. — Xinhua

New Zealand capital declares state of emergency amid severe flooding

A state of emergency was declared Monday in New Zealand's capital of Wellington, as torrential rain triggered severe flooding and landslides, and a man was unaccounted for.

Police are searching for Philip Sutton, a man in his 60s from the suburb of Karori, who was reported missing after floodwater and debris impacted his home, said a police statement.

The region remains under a high-risk red heavy rain warning until Tuesday night, according to the country's meteorological service.

Residents in low-lying and flood-prone areas have been told to self-evacuate for the next 24 hours, despite no mandatory evacuations so far. An emergency assistance centre has opened for those displaced. — Xinhua

SPORTS

Myanmar Women's U17 Team departs early for friendlies ahead of AFC Cup

THE Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) has announced that the Myanmar U17 Women's Team departed for China on 18 April to undergo final preparations for the upcoming 2026 AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup, which will be hosted by China.

MFF arranged for the squad of 23 players, led by Japanese Head Coach Ms Kumiko Tashiro, to arrive more than 10 days before the tournament for preparations. The team is scheduled to play warm-up matches against a Chinese women's team and the Philippines U17 Women's team. In Yangon, the squad played friendlies against the India



The Myanmar U17 Women's Team is seen off at Yangon International Airport.

U17 team and weekly matches against Myanmar League wom-

en's clubs. The MFF noted that players have undergone system-

atic gym training, with special attention to nutrition to adapt to

China's diet and climate.

Myanmar has been placed in Group A alongside host China, Thailand, and Vietnam. Their match schedule is: Myanmar versus host China at 6 pm local time on 1 May, Thailand at 2 pm local time on 4 May and Vietnam at 6 pm local time on 7 May. With three groups, the top two teams from each group, along with the two best third teams, will advance to the quarterfinals.

All matches, including Myanmar's fixtures, will be broadcast live on the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) official YouTube channel: <https://gtly.ink/0wUF3L0uo>. — MT/ZN

Undisputed champ Inoue confident as momentous Nakatani clash looms



Undisputed super bantamweight champion Naoya Inoue trains at his Ohashi Gym in Yokohama on 20 April 2026. **PHOTO: KYODO**

JAPANESE boxing superstar Naoya Inoue cut a relaxed figure Monday as the undisputed super bantamweight champion opened his training to the media ahead of his blockbuster 2 May fight against compatri-

ot Junto Nakatani at Tokyo Dome.

"The Monster" Inoue, currently on a record 27-match winning streak in world title bouts, will square off against a fellow pound-for-pound elite in

Nakatani, who comes into the highly anticipated matchup with an identical 32-0 career record.

"I'm in a really good state, both mentally and physically," the 33-year-old Inoue said at his Ohashi Gym in Yokohama, where he went through a round each of shadow boxing, pad work and bag work. "I already have the fixed image of how to conquer him and I'm looking forward to it."

Inoue, who has 27 knockout wins to Nakatani's 24, welcomed his 28-year-old opponent's gym president among the onlookers. He did not hesitate in showing off his variety of punches, including body shots from low angles, which will presumably form part of his arsenal against the taller Nakatani. — Kyodo

French Open sensation Boisson returns to action after 'most difficult' spell

LOIS Boisson, the French player who lit up Roland Garros last year with her stunning run to the French Open semi-finals, told AFP she cannot wait to return to action on Tuesday at the Madrid Open after months out injured.

Ranked 361st in the world before the 2025 edition of Roland Garros, Boisson created a sensation by reaching the last four of the Grand Slam tournament, beating top 10 players Jessica Pegula and Mirra Andreeva in the process.

The 22-year-old backed up her maiden major appearance by winning a first tour-level title on clay in Hamburg in July and breaking into the world's top 50, but has subsequently been plagued by injuries. — AFP

Copa del Rey defeat leaves two big injury worries for Atletico Madrid

ATLETICO Madrid has paid a worrying price for its defeat on penalties to Real Sociedad in the Copa del Rey final on Saturday night, with the news that Nigerian forward Ademola Lookman and striker Alexander Sorloth both ended the game with "physical problems" that make them doubts for Atletico's Champions League semifinal against Arsenal.

Lookman was taken off after 62 minutes of the final, with Atletico trailing 2-1 after scoring his side's first goal in a match that ended 2-2 after extra time. Sorloth came on as a sec-

ond-half substitute and missed a vital penalty in the shootout that saw Real Sociedad lift the Copa del Rey.

"Ademola Lookman and Alexander Sorloth finished the Copa del Rey final with discomfort. The club's medical staff have conducted tests that advise maximum caution to avoid the risk of injury, so they will follow an individualized plan in the coming days, training separately from the group," the club website said, adding that the duo's return would "depend on how their discomfort progresses." — Xinhua



Atletico Madrid's English forward (22) Ademola Lookman (R) celebrates scoring his team's first goal during the Copa del Rey (King's Cup) final football match between Club Atletico de Madrid and Real Sociedad at La Cartuja stadium in Seville on 18 April 2026. **PHOTO: AFP**



Xi says normal passage through Strait of Hormuz should be maintained

CHINESE President Xi Jinping on Monday said normal passage through the Strait of Hormuz should be maintained.

Xi made the remarks during a phone conversation with Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud.

Xi pointed out that China attaches great importance to developing relations with Saudi Arabia and has always adhered to the principles of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit.

Noting that this year marks the 10th anniversary of the comprehensive strategic partnership between China and Saudi Arabia, Xi said China is willing to work with Saudi Arabia to seize this opportunity to deepen strategic mutual trust, strengthen practical cooperation, and enhance exchanges at all levels, so as to continuously expand the breadth and depth of bilateral relations and set as an example for advancing relations between China and Arab countries.

On the current situation in the Middle East and the Gulf region, Xi stressed that China calls for an immediate and



Chinese President Xi Jinping holds talks with Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud at the royal palace in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 8 December 2022. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

comprehensive ceasefire and cessation of hostilities, supports all efforts conducive to restoring peace, and remains committed to resolving disputes through political and diplomatic means.

Xi said that the normal passage through the Strait of Hormuz serves the common interests of regional countries

and the international community, adding that China supports regional countries in building a common home marked by good-neighbourliness, development, security and cooperation, mastering their own future and destiny, and promoting long-term peace and stability in the region.

Mohammed, for his part, said that Saudi-China relations are strategic and developing relations with China is vital to his country, noting that the current conflict in the Middle East undermines the security of Gulf nations and severely impacts global energy supply and economic operation. — Xinhua

Pakistan, Iran FMs discuss ceasefire efforts, regional stability

PAKISTAN'S Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Monday spoke with his Iranian counterpart Seyed Abbas Araghchi and discussed ceasefire efforts and regional stability, the Foreign Office said.

Dar stressed the need for continued dialogue and early engagement to resolve pending issues through diplomatic channels and promote peace in the region. Both sides agreed to remain closely engaged, said the office.

This was the second contact between the two foreign ministers in less than 24 hours, reflecting intensified diplomatic efforts as Pakistan continues to support peaceful resolution of regional tensions. — Xinhua

Israeli, Lebanese officials to meet Thursday for 2nd round of peace talks — Israeli source

ISRAELI and Lebanese officials will meet on Thursday for a second round of peace talks, an Israeli official told Xinhua on Monday. The two sides will meet in Washington for direct talks, the official said on condition of anonymity, without providing further details.

Meanwhile, Reuters, citing an Israeli source, reported that Israeli Ambassador to the United States Yechiel Leiter, who took part in the first round of talks on Tuesday, will lead the Israeli delegation this time.

The meeting will be the first of its kind since a fragile 10-day ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon took effect at midnight between Thursday and Friday local time (2100 GMT) after weeks of fighting between Israel and Hezbollah. Earlier on Monday, the Lebanese presidency said on social media platform X that the Lebanese delegation will be headed by former Lebanese Ambassador to the United States Simon Karam. — Xinhua

India, South Korea target doubling trade by 2030

INDIA and South Korea aim to double bilateral trade to \$50 billion by 2030, the leaders of both countries said on Monday following talks in New Delhi.

South Korea's President Lee Jae-myung, on his first visit to India, was accorded a ceremonial welcome at the presidential palace, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi standing alongside him as honour guards marched past.

In a speech following the talks, Lee said the two countries had agreed to speed up negotiations to upgrade their 2010 comprehensive economic partnership agreement.

"We agreed to upgrade our economic cooperation framework to create new drivers for mutual growth," the South Ko-



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi (2nd R) and South Korea's President Lee Jae Myung (L) plant a tree during a meeting at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi on 20 April 2026. **PHOTO: AFP**

rean president said.

"We aim to increase the current \$25 billion level of annual trade volume to around \$50 billion by 2030."

Modi said that "we have

taken several important decisions today" to double bilateral trade.

Both sides said the discussions focused on shipbuilding, artificial intelligence, finance

and defence cooperation, as they seek to broaden a strategic partnership underpinned by trade and technology.

"From chips to ships, from talent to technology, from environment to energy, we will realize new opportunities for cooperation in every sector," Modi said. Seoul and New Delhi are looking to work together as global supply chains and energy markets face disruption amid growing security tensions.

"In the era of hyper-uncertainty, we share the view that Korea and India can be the most ideal partners for comprehensive cooperation to promote mutual growth and innovation," Lee said in a statement on social media earlier Monday. — AFP