

Four Objectives of the National Defence and Security Council

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

Day Meals Offered to Religious Title-Recipient Sayadaws and Nun

Religious titles for 2026 will be conferred upon 146 Sayadaws at home and abroad, along with one nun.

A ceremony to offer day meals to religious title recipient Sayadaws for 2026 took place at the Agga Dhipati Sasana Beikman in the precinct of the Maravijaya Buddha Image Park in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning, with the attendance of Acting President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and State Security and Peace Commission Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and his wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla to offer day meals.

The ceremony was attended by 146 title-receiving Sayadaws at home and abroad, and one recipient nun, led by Chairman of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Aggamaha Saddhammajotikadhaja Thanlyin Minkyaung Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Candima Bhivamsa, and Secretary Sayadaw Presiding Patron of Dhammathameikdi Monastery of Mandalay's Masoeyein Taikthit Aggamaha Pandita Aggamaha Saddhammajotikadhaja Maha Dhammakathika Bahujanahitadhara Bhaddanta Vasettha Bhivamsa.

Also, present at the ceremony were Commission Vice-Chairman Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Commission Member Prime Minister U Nyo Saw and his wife, Commission Member Executive Chief U Aung Lin Dwe and his wife, Commission Secretary General Ye Win Oo and his wife, commission members and their wives,



Acting President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and State Security and Peace Commission Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and his wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla present donations to Chairman of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Thanlyin Minkyaung Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Candima Bhivamsa in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Union-level dignitaries, Union ministers and their wives, the Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman, senior Tatmadaw officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief and their wives, the commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command and officials.

Before the ceremony, the Senior General offered meals in the emerald alms-bowl, fruits, flowers, water and oil lights to the Maravijaya Naungdawgyi Buddha Image in the Agga Dhipati Sasana Beikman.

The Chairman Sayadaw administered

the Five Precepts while members of the Sangha recited the Metta Sutta.

The Senior General and his wife donated offerings to the Chairman Sayadaw, the Commission Vice-Chairman to the Secretary Sayadaw, the Commission Member Prime Minister and his wife, the Commission Member Executive Chief and his wife, the Commission Secretary and his wife, the Commission members and their wives and officials to religious title-recipient Sayadaws.

The wife of the Senior General also presented donations to a religious title-receiving nun.

The Secretary Sayadaw delivered a sermon, followed by sharing merits gained.

After the ceremony, the Senior General and his wife, together with officials, offered day meals to the Chairman Sayadaw, the Secretary Sayadaw, title-recipient Sayadaws at home and abroad and a title-recipient nun. — MNA/TTA

NATIONAL

Systematic Public Voting Brings Honour to the State

- The activity of willingly accepting and aspiring to a multiparty democratic system, and casting votes systematically and peacefully with dignity befitting the nation, is indeed a matter of pride for the country.
- It was found that preparations were made to hold the election while electoral laws were enacted systematically.

(An excerpt from the speech delivered by Acting President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and State Security and Peace Commission Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting with the Union Election Commission Chairman, the Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman and chief ministers of regions and states on 9 February 2026)

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

Objectives of 81st Armed Forces Day

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

Revision to Electricity Bills

- The Ministry of Electric Power, exercising the authority conferred under Subsection (b) of Section 72 of the Electricity Law, and with the approval of the Union Government in accordance with Section 41 of the said Law, issued Notification 89/2026 on 27 February 2026, prescribing electricity tariff rates.
- The electricity generated from Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) power plants will be supplied via direct lines to non-domestic consumers located within industrial zones and special economic zones. Except in cases of line faults and system breakdowns, there will be no load shedding, and a dedicated 24-hour electricity supply will be provided. For such electricity, a fixed tariff rate of K900 per unit will be charged.
- Industrial and business enterprises located outside industrial zones and special economic zones can apply to the department if they wish to receive a 24-hour electricity supply at the fixed rate of K900 per unit as stated in paragraph 2, and arrangements will be made accordingly.
- However, depending on the generation capacity of existing power plants and the transmission capacity of power lines, electricity supplied under the normal distribution system to the public and to industrial and business enterprises will continue to be charged at the current tariff rates (according to the respective layers for domestic and non-domestic categories), without any revision or change.
- The electricity tariff rates to be charged according to categories of electricity consumers are set as follows:-

No	Type of consumers	Rate	
		Used unit	Kyat
(a)	Domestic (Domestic, household power meter, large sum consumption (household), non-commercial religious buildings) Remark- There is no change in electricity tariffs.	1 to 50	50
		51 to 100	100
		101 to 200	150
		Over 201	300
(b)	Non-domestic (Industries, businesses, large sums, temporary consumption, lamp posts, governmental buildings, State-owned industries, river water pumping stations, municipal departments and workplaces, non-governmental organizations, foreign embassies, international organizations) Remark- (1) There is no change in electricity tariffs. (2) If electricity generation and distribution capacity are insufficient, load shedding may occur. (3) If industrial and business enterprises located outside industrial zones and special economic zones apply to the department if they wish to receive a 24-hour electricity supply at the fixed rate of K900 per unit, arrangements will be made accordingly.	1 to 5,000	250
		5,001 to 20,000	400
		Over 20,001	500
(c)	Industrial zones, special economic zones, and industrial/ business enterprises that receive electricity through a dedicated direct line with an uninterrupted 24-hour supply (without load shedding).	One unit and above	900

- The revised electricity bill rates will come into force effective from 1 February 2026.

Public Notice

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

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

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

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

Anti-Corruption Commission



NATIONAL

Residents Urged to Prioritize Public Safety Amid Armed Terrorist Threats

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

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

MSYA UM tours Pathein hotels, sports facilities to spur tourism, youth development

TO promote the systematic development of hotel businesses in the Ayeyawady Region, enhance the cleanliness and appeal of tourist sites, and encourage a steady rise in both domestic and international visitors, Jeng Phang Naw Taung, Union Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs and for Hotels and Tourism, inspected hotels in Pathein yesterday morning.

Hotel representatives briefed the Union Minister on their operations, arrangements to meet visitors' needs, and initiatives to attract more guests.

In his remarks, the Union minister noted that as Pathein is both the regional capital and a key tourist destination, hotels must continuously improve service standards to draw more visitors. He stressed the importance of training competent staff, showcasing locally produced traditional handicrafts, and serving regional cuisine to a high standard. He also called for attractive interior and exterior décor to create a welcoming at-



Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism Jeng Phang Naw Taung inspects hotels in Pathein yesterday.

mosphere for longer stays, and instructed that hotel premises and façades be kept clean and well-maintained.

In the afternoon, the Union minister, together with the Region's Minister for Social Affairs and the Director-General of the Department of Sports and Physical Education, inspected construction works at the

Sports and Physical Education Institute in Pathein. Ongoing projects funded under the 2025-2026 Union Budget include a three-storey reinforced concrete trainees' dormitory with ten rooms and the installation of a 315 kVA transformer. He also reviewed facilities completed under the 2024-2025 Union Budget, including an gymna-

sium. He instructed officials to ensure that all projects meet prescribed standards, are completed on schedule, and use quality materials to guarantee long-term durability.

The Union minister later met officers and staff from regional, district and township Departments of Sports and Physical Education, as well

as the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism. He urged close coordination with relevant departments across Regions and States to implement the Ministry's policies and objectives for the development of sports and youth affairs.

He subsequently visited Koethein Stadium in Pathein, where he directed officials to clear weeds from the football pitch and carry out regular maintenance to ensure a clean and well-kept environment.

Finally, he inspected the 50-metre swimming pool and diving pool at the Pathein Advanced Swimming Pool, completed under the 2023-2024 Union Budget, and observed ongoing summer swimming courses. He instructed that proper chlorination and regular water treatment be maintained to preserve the facilities. He also emphasised the importance of organizing continuous summer training programmes to nurture a new generation of swimmers. — MNA/KZL

Dy Minister reviews repairs on quake-damaged Yangon-Mandalay Expressway

DEPUTY Minister for Construction U Myo Myint, accompanied by departmental officials, inspected ongoing repair and reconstruction works on roads and bridges damaged by the recent earthquake along the Nay Pyi Taw-Yangon section of the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway yesterday morning.

He first visited the site of the Swa Creek Bridge (inbound) between mileposts 165/1 and 165/3. Officials report-

ed on soil test undertaken to secure an earthquake-resistant foundation design, including geophysical surveys carried out by specialists.

They also explained that HRB 500E high-strength reinforcing steel bars, which are stronger than the previously used HRB 500 bars, are being installed in sections of the bridge most vulnerable to seismic impact, and outlined forthcoming work plans. The

chief engineers of the Bridges Department and the Highways Department provided further clarification.

The Deputy Minister stated that the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway is a key transport route and instructed officials to ensure uninterrupted traffic flow, conduct regular bridge inspections, maintain smooth approach roads through inter-departmental coordination, and prioritise site safety.



Deputy Minister U Myo Myint inspects ongoing repair works on roads and bridges along the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway yesterday.

He also inspected asphalt resurfacing, cement grouting works, and operations at the 115-mile (Pyu) toll gate, calling

for strict adherence to technical standards, accurate toll records, and proper maintenance of facilities. — MNA/KZL

NATIONAL

Myanmar joins international fleet review, MILAN exercise in India

THE Tatmadaw naval vessel Aung Zeya led by Commodore Kyaw Swa Htet arrived back in Yangon yesterday after joining the International Fleet Review 2026 (IFR 2026) and MILAN 2026 in Visakhapatnam, India, from 15 to 25 February.

The naval vessel left Yangon on 11 February to join IFR 2026 and MILAN 2026, and arrived in India at noon on 14 February.

Indian President Mr Droupadi Murmu attended the IFR-2026, which was also joined by the Myanmar delegation led by Chief of Staff (Navy) Vice-Admiral Aye Min Htwe.

Senior naval officers from 74 countries, along with warships from international, regional, and neighbouring navies, attended the ceremony. In connection with these events, a delegation led by the Chief of Staff (Navy) also participated in the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium and the Goa



This image shows the commemorative group photo session of the International Fleet Review 2026 and MILAN 2026 in India.

Maritime Conclave.

The frigate Aung Zeya took part in the International Fleet Review (IFR 2026) held on 18

February. It also attended the opening ceremony of the multinational naval exercise MILAN-2026, conducted from 19

to 25 February. During the port phase, it participated in the International Maritime Seminar together with 74 countries,

engaged in mutual ship visits, attended subject matter expert discussions, observed a demonstration of an underwater search and rescue vessel system, and joined city tour programmes.

Moreover, the members took part in a military parade with international naval personnel, conducted junior officer exchanges, competed in friendly sports events, and paid visits to Agra and Bodh Gaya for sight-seeing and religious observation. They also participated in a gala dinner programme featuring traditional cultural dance performances. The ship also joined coordinated at-sea practical exercises together with international naval vessels.

The naval ship, Aung Zeya, sailed a total of 2,377.4 nautical miles during the voyage and successfully participated in the IFR-2026 and MILAN-2026. — MNA/KTZH

10,000+ MPT blood donors supply nearly 9,600 blood bags

THE blood donation project organized by MPT could encourage more than 10,000 blood donors and supply nearly 9,600 blood bags for saving lives, said MPT.

As a commitment to support the public health sector and promote a voluntary spirit among the community, the blood donation was organized successfully for the 18th time on 27 February.

Together with MPT staff, more than 140 blood donors participated in the blood donation event at the training centre of the Myanma Posts and Telecommunications. The event aimed to raise awareness of the importance of regular blood donation, which can save lives and produce health benefits.

Since its inception in 2016, the blood donation project has attracted the support of up to 10,000 donors, including MPT staff. These donors have supplied nearly 9,600 lifesaving blood bags, demonstrating MPT's steadfast effort for the public healthcare, one of the most important sectors in Myanmar.

"This 18th time of blood donation reflects MPT's unwavering commitment to raising awareness of the health sector and encouraging voluntary spirits. I really thank all participating blood donors, and I feel proud of our collective effort to save many lives. Through this cooperation, I hope the public knows how much a blood dona-



An MPT blood donation event.

tion is productive for themselves but also for the community, so that more and more people want to participate in voluntary works," said Mr Hiroyuki Okai

from MPTJO.

As a part of CSR in health, MPT has initiated CSR projects such as health education programmes in cooperation with

well-known hospitals, and it has also provided public health knowledge through MPT4U and social media pages for people across Myanmar. — MT/ZS

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Weekly Roundup

22 February

Myanmar strongly objects press release of UNSG's special rep

The UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict issued a press release on 2 February 2026, entitled "UN Special Representative Pramila Patten Calls for Accountability as Sexual Violence continues Five Years After Myanmar Military Seized Power". The UN statement contains unverified information and relies on one-sided allegations from mechanisms such as the so-called Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM). This appears to be politically motivated pressure intended to damage the State's prestige and image. Therefore, Myanmar strongly objects and firmly rejects this statement. Myanmar remains committed to exerting its utmost efforts to safeguard the rights and safety of women and other vulnerable groups. Myanmar strongly urges the United Nations to issue only credible statements and to adopt a constructive approach towards member states.

24 February

Vice-Senior General Soe Win inspects local regiments and training schools in Bahtoo

State Security and Peace Commission Vice-Chairman, Defence Services Deputy Commander-in-Chief, and Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, inspected local regiments and units, and training schools in Bahtoo Cantonment.

Announcements issued to convene Hluttaws

The Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker hereby declared that the first regular session of the Third Pyithu Hluttaw will be convened at 10 am on Monday (16 March 2026) in Nay Pyi Taw, whereas the National Defence and Security Council hereby declared to convene the Amyotha Hluttaw at 10 am on Wednesday (18 March 2026) in Nay Pyi Taw and Region and State Hluttaws on Friday, 20 March 2026.

25 February

Vice-Senior General Soe Win meets Tatmadaw members and families

State Security and Peace Commission Vice-Chairman, Defence Services Deputy Commander-in-Chief, and Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win held separate meetings with Tatmadaw members and families at local

battalions in Nawngwoe, Kengkham and Mongping stations.

Vice-Senior General Soe Win holds meeting with trainees

State Security and Peace Commission Vice-Chairman, Defence Services Deputy Commander-in-Chief, and Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win met trainees of infantry commanding officer, company commander and platoon commander courses and cadets in Bahtoo station at Aung San Hall of the Tatmadaw (Army) Combat Forces Training School.

26 February

Head of State receives C-in-C of the Royal Thai Air Force

Acting President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and State Security and Peace Commission Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received a delegation led by Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF) Air Chief Marshal Sakesan Kantha at Zeyathiri Beikman in Nay Pyi Taw.

Vice-Senior General Soe Win instructs trainees in Bahtoo station

State Security and Peace Commission Vice-Chairman, Defence Services Deputy Commander-in-Chief, and Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win gave instructions to officers, other ranks and families and course instructors in Bahtoo station.

OTS (Bahtoo) holds 129th passing out parade

Vice-Senior General Thiri Pyanchi Maha Thray Sithu Soe Win delivered a speech at the passing out parade of the 129th intake of Tatmadaw (Army) Officer Training School (Bahtoo) at its parade ground on behalf of State Security and Peace Commission Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing.

27 February

Head of State receives General Director of Roscosmos

General Director Mr Dmitry V Bakanov of State-owned Corporation Roscosmos of the Russian Federation, who led a delegation, called on Acting President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and State Security and Peace Commission Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at Zeyathiri

Beikman in Nay Pyi Taw.

Vice-Senior General Soe Win tours Nyaungshwe Township

Vice-Chairman of the State Security and Peace Commission, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, and Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, paid homage to Inlay PhaungdawU Pagoda at the bejewelled chamber and inspected the repair of damaged religious buildings caused by the Mandalay earthquake in Inlay region of Nyaungshwe Township of Shan State.

28 February

Digital Myanmar Forum and Exhibition commences

Acting President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and State Security and Peace Commission Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing attended the opening of the Digital Myanmar Forum and Exhibition at the Yadanabon Teleport Building in Yadanabon New City Project, PyinOoLwin.

Advanced Thumngala Market commissioned in PyinOoLwin

A ceremony to inaugurate the advanced Thumngala market took place in PyinOoLwin graced by the presence of Acting President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and State Security and Peace Commission Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

Head of State inspects PyinOoLwin

Acting President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and State Security and Peace Commission Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, inspected urban development undertakings in PyinOoLwin.

Vice-Senior General Soe Win meets Tatmadaw members in Kalaw Station

State Security and Peace Commission Vice-Chairman Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win met Tatmadaw members and families of Kalaw Station at the hall of the local battalion.

Civil Servants urged to Foster Love for Nation

State Security and Peace Commission Vice-Chairman, Defence Services Deputy Commander-in-Chief, and Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win met district and township-level departmental officials of Yaksawk, Kalaw, Heho and Aungban townships in Shan State separately in Yaksawk and Kalaw townships. — GNLM/TTA

Myanmar, Yunnan ink MoU to co-host gemstone expo in Ruili

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the Government of Myanmar and Yunnan Province to jointly organize the Myanmar Gems and Jewellery Exhibition in Ruili, China.

According to the MoU, the two sides will work together to further expand the gemstone trade, promote cultural exchange,

and prevent and control the illegal trade in gemstones, including jade.

The signing marks an important step toward improving border trade and formalizing the gemstone market.

The MoU to jointly host the Myanmar Gemstone Exhibition in Ruili, China, was signed on 25 February at the Haigeng Garden

Conference Hall in Kunming, China, by the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation of Myanmar and the deputy governor of Yunnan Province. — ASH/TH

This photo features the recently held Myanmar gemstone exhibition.



NATIONAL

Minbu bustles with pilgrims

MINBU, located in Minbu District, Magway Region, is a peaceful and pleasant town in central Myanmar situated along the banks of the Ayeyawady River. As a key transportation hub with convenient road access, the town attracts many travellers. With numerous famous places to visit, it becomes especially lively during the pagoda festival season with the increasing number of visitors.

It covers an area of 164.273 square miles and lies 164 feet above sea level along the Ayeyawady River. Its stable and pleasant atmosphere, along with its well-developed transport network that allows easy and quick travel from one place to another, makes it an enjoyable destination for visitors from across the country.

It is surrounded by hills and mountains such as Phalanyon Hill, Singyan Hill, Thinganleik Hill, and Khwaykatat Hill,



Photo shows one of pagodas in Minbu Township. **PHOTO: ZEYA NAING (SHWE KAN MYAY)**

and creeks including Hsapwet Creek, Mone Creek, and Mann Creek. From the summit of Leik Hill and the platform of Setkeinte Pagoda, visitors can

enjoy the picturesque views of valleys and natural landscapes.

The township municipality staff grow shady trees and flowers along the roadside.

The Minbu District Highways Department carry out projects such as cutting back dangerous road bends and blind spots, constructing roadside drainage

systems, and laying 24-foot-wide tar overlays. Moreover, Special Road Taskforce 11 expands the Minbu-Salin-Tanyaung-Seikphyu road (internal road of Minbu) from 30 feet to 48 feet in width and upgrades it with nylon asphalt surfacing.

Moreover, the sculptures and mural paintings of the Bagan and Kongbaung eras at Shwesettaw, Setkeinte, Shin Minbu Pagoda, Thamotta Giri Myazedi and Nagabwat Hill, Hmankin Yokeson Monastery, Thonehtat Yokeson Monastery, KanU Monastery and ShwetaungU Pagoda in Kywetae Village attract the visitors.

For possessing such famous pagodas and sites, and during the dry season of Taboung, the Mann Shwesettaw pagoda festival, the town is crowded with a large crowd of visitors, as the pilgrims visit there by express and private cars. — Zeya Naing (Shwe Kan Myay)/KTZH

Royal Thai Embassy hosts 2026 Thai Speech Contest

ON 11 February 2026, the Royal Thai Embassy in Yangon, in collaboration with Yangon University of Foreign Languages (YUFL) and Mandalay University of Foreign Languages (MUFL), organized the 2026 Thai Speech Contest at the embassy.

The competition aimed to provide students majoring in the Thai Language with an opportunity to showcase their language proficiency, deepen their knowledge of Thailand, and exchange experiences with one another. This year marks the third consecutive year that the Embassy has hosted this event.

At the opening ceremony, Mr Sakeson Sarobol, Chargé d'Affaires, delivered the opening remarks and was honoured by the presence of Daw Me Me Tin, Head of the Thai Department at YUFL, together with approximately 70 lecturers and students from both universities.

The competition took place from 9 am to noon, featuring six fourth-year students, three from YUFL and three from

MUFL. Each contestant delivered a five-minute speech in Thai on a topic drawn by lot, including: The Richness of the Thai Language, What Makes 'Travelling in Thailand' Great? Popular Thai Cuisine, What I Admire Most About Thailand, How to Encourage Myanmar People to "Fall in Love" with Thailand, and My Future Plan After Graduation.

The performances were evaluated by a panel of four distinguished judges. Ma Nang Hom Seng Kao (YUFL) won the first prize, first runner-up Maung Sai Yan Lin Naing (MUFL), and 2nd runner-up Ma Kyal Sin Min (YUFL), with Ma Yoon Lei Thon (YUFL),

Ma Thae Su Nway (MUFL), and Ma Thin Thant Zaw (MUFL) winning honourable-mentioned prizes.

The Chargé d'Affaires and the judges presented cash prizes and certificates to all contestants. On this occasion, the Embassy also presented a financial grant of US\$ 1,200 to each

university to support their Thai language departments.

In addition, students participated in a Thai vocabulary challenge focusing on Thai culture and general knowledge. Their performances demonstrated impressive fluency and a strong

understanding of the language, reflecting the high standard of Thai language education in Myanmar.

The Royal Thai Embassy remains committed to organizing this annual event to encourage Myanmar youth to use the

Thai Language with confidence and proficiency. Such initiatives contribute to strengthening mutual understanding and laying a foundation for sustainable people-to-people relations between the two countries. — Sources from the Royal Thai Embassy.



Contestants of the 2026 Thai Speech Contest and officials from the Royal Thai Embassy in Yangon seen at the Contest at the Thai Embassy in Yangon on 11 February 2026. **PHOTO: ROYAL THAI EMBASSY**

59 container vessels slated to call in Yangon Port in Mar

A total of 59 container vessels are scheduled to enter the Yangon Port in March 2026, the Myanmar Authority announced.

Thirteen container vessels run by M/S Cosco Shipping Line, seven each by M/S SITC Shipping Line and M/S Maersk A/S Line, six each by M/S One Line and M/S Samudera Shipping Line, five by M/S MSC Line and three each by M/S CMA CGM Asia Line, M/S RCL Line and M/S Ti2 Logistics Line, two each by M/S BLPL Shipping Line, M/S Evergreen ASIA Line and M/S Land And Sea are scheduled to dock at the Yangon Port in March.

The Myanmar Port Authority

has arranged maritime trade channels to handle increasing imports to meet domestic demand, to bolster exports, and to improve port capacity for significant arrivals of ships. Myanmar Port Authority notified that it will inform exporters and importers of ship arrival schedules promptly upon an extended schedule. Yangon Port handled 60 container vessels in February and 60 in January 2026.

After the new navigation channel (Kings Bank Channel) accessing the inner Yangon River was found, the draft extension work was accelerated. After that, the port can now handle larger ships. The contain-



File photo shows containers being loaded and unloaded aboard container vessels at the international port of Yangon.

er vessel MV SITC Zhaoming (185.99-metre LOA, 35.25-metre Beam, 29,232 GRT and 2,698

TEUs) of Hong Kong-based SITC Shipping Line docked at Asia World Port Terminal for the

first time on 22 June, which is the largest ship that AWPT Port handled. — NN/KK

Myanmar Corn Body, PITC seal deal to boost maize exports



Heaps of Myanmar's maize at the purchase centre.

MYANMAR Corn Industrial Association and the Philippines International Trade Corporation-PITC signed a bilateral trade agreement to boost maize export on 26 February in Manila, the Philippines, according to the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization.

This agreement is aimed at enhancing bilateral trade cooperation between the two countries, strengthening the agricultural value chain and exploring new market opportunities that will benefit industry stakeholders in both countries.

Through this collaboration, Myanmar will deepen cooperation in international connectivity through trade facilitation and continue creating business opportunities for Myanmar entrepreneurs. This signing ceremony strengthens cooperation between the two countries and serves as a driving force of sustainability.

Maize is the second most important crop after rice in Myanmar's agricultural sector and is a potential cash crop. Maize is commonly grown in Shan State, Kayah State, Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay and Sagaing re-

gions. Monsoon maize is cultivated in May and June, while winter maize is grown in October and November.

Maize is an essential raw material in the feed processing industry. It is a crop with steady international demand. Maize is utilized in producing corn starch, oil and sugar-substitute sweeteners. Furthermore, some countries convert maize into biofuel (ethanol) for automobiles.

Myanmar's maize is highly demanded by Thailand, China, Vietnam and the Philippines due to its premium quality. It is also purchased by India and Bangladesh. Million tonnes are delivered to neighbouring countries through border checkpoints, generating a foreign income for the country. As the maize is easy to cultivate and has a strong market, the crop will contribute to farmers and the nation's economy upon systematic cultivation.

Thailand gives green light for maize imports under zero tariff (with Form-D), between 1 February and 31 August. However, Thailand imposes the maximum tax rate of 73 per cent on maize imports to protect the rights of their growers if the maize is imported during the maize season of Thailand.

Additionally, China has been purchasing Myanmar's maize through cross-border trade under the alternative development programme. Legitimate maize trade between Myanmar and China commenced at the end of 2022. A total of 112 Myanmar companies have been permitted for maize exports. Myanmar ships over two million tonnes of maize to foreign trade partners yearly. The maize is cultivated in Shan, Kachin, Kayah and Kayin states and Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway regions. Myanmar has three maize seasons – winter, summer and monsoon. Myanmar's annual maize output is estimated at 2.5-3 million tonnes. — NN/KK

CBM injects CNY130K, THB2.5M, US\$2.9M into market

THE Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) sold over US\$1.95 million to edible oil-importing companies and \$1 million to fuel oil-importing companies on 27 February, along with an injection of 130,000 yuan and over 2.55 million baht into the market.

CBM announced on 26 February that it would sell 50 million baht to importers. Furthermore, CBM injected three million baht into the market on that day and sold over \$2.21 million to edible oil-importing companies and \$1 million to fuel oil-importing companies.

CBM announced on 25 February that it would inject \$30 million into the fuel oil sector.

CBM also sold over \$2.44 million to edible oil-importing companies and \$2 million to fuel oil-importing companies on that day, along with an injection of over \$1.83 million, 300,000 yuan, and three million baht in the market.

CBM injected 2.1 million baht and \$180,000 into the market on 24 February, in addition to selling over \$2.5 million to edible oil-importing companies.

CBM sold \$1.1 million, purchased from CMP companies, to edible oil-importing companies, in addition to selling 260,000 yuan in the market on 23 February.

CBM sold over \$43 million, 65 million baht and over four million yuan in January 2026. CBM aims to curb the instability in the foreign exchange market and currency devaluation. According to CBM's notification on 15 March 2024, it has been collaborating with law enforcement agencies to combat and prosecute those who attempt to manipulate the currency market under the existing laws. CBM allowed authorized dealers (private banks) to operate online foreign exchange trading freely as per the market rate, depending on supply and demand, starting from 5 December 2023. — NN/KK

OPINION

BOOKRACK POEM

Implement a multiparty democratic system through utmost efforts

THE provisions of the Constitution (2008) of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the relevant laws and procedures concerning the Pyithu Hluttaw have been applied, and announcements have been issued accordingly by each legislature calling for the first regular sessions of the third Pyithu Hluttaw, Amyotha Hluttaw, and the regional/state Hluttaws to be convened in accordance with the Constitution and the respective Hluttaw laws.

Whether or not they have received an invitation, the respective Hluttaw representatives will arrive at their designated locations on the scheduled dates to make the necessary preparations for the sessions. Starting from 16 March, Myanmar will witness the commencement of the third chapter of its democratic era. In Myanmar, a multiparty democratic system was systematically implemented through the general elections held in 2010 and 2015. Tatmadaw systematically conducted the general elections in 2025.

By applying a combination of the first-past-the-post system and proportional representation, it is believed that governments can be formed with justice, broad representation, and stable unity. Based on the election results, the newly formed government will be able to carry out the responsibilities of the state in accordance with democratic standards.

from ethnic parties have also entered the Hluttaws among those who won in the elections, the wishes and aspirations of ethnic groups can now be addressed through democratic procedures. Only in this way can the needs and goals of different communities be openly discussed and collectively implemented.

By applying a combination of the first-past-the-post system and proportional representation, it is believed that governments can be formed with justice, broad representation, and stable unity. Based on the election results, the newly formed government will be able to carry out the responsibilities of the state in accordance with democratic standards.

In 2026, a better and renewed democratic culture will begin to be established for the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. During the upcoming third democratic term, efforts will be actively and vigorously carried out for the benefit of the state and the people. That is why freedom and justice will be fully realized and exercised in accordance with laws, rules, and regulations, allowing a truly disciplined and comprehensive democratic system to be fully implemented.



Book Title - Love Story of Father and Mother
 Author - Lu Khar
 Publishing House - Sar Yeik Myaing
 Publication Date - February 2026 (1st Edition)
 Price - K7,500

Love Story of Father and Mother

THE title of the book sounds unique and interesting. Regarding the name, the author admits that it was simply taken from the title of a manuscript he had written, dedicated to his father and mother, Love Story of Father and Mother. He also describes the book as “the longing for Anyar (Upper Myanmar)... the longing for father and mother of a man from Anyar living far away from his native land.” The author is none other than Lu Khar, a writer who has won the National Literature Award and other literary prizes. This book is his eleventh publication.

The book carries 25 articles about Anya, and those who read it will be reminded of their father or mother, and those who are far from their hometowns will find themselves returning there in their imagination.

Here are some excerpts from the book...

“Just by looking at a person, one can immediately tell he is a man from Anya, a simple and honest man. That characteristic is something that my father possesses. He is short. No matter what kind of shoes he wears, they always seem bigger than his feet. No matter how fine the clothes he puts on, he is entirely without pomposity.” (From “Love Story of Father and Mother” page 8)

“Ok, we’ll perform a play. But who will write it?” The village head called a meeting with one representative from each household, so I went along with the other villagers to his house. As soon as we arrived, he announced that they wanted to stage a community play for the Thingyan festival and the school celebration.” (From The Night when the Civilian Perform a Play page 54)

In fact, at that time, I was

not a special writer. But when my father earnestly told me, “You should write,” I felt deeply moved. His words have remained in my ears ever since. (From “The Essay My Father Wanted Me to Write” page 90)

“My mother was walking along the road with a large basket on her head, heading to the bus stop. From where I lived, it would take about forty-five minutes to walk there. She had already reached halfway. No matter how much I called out, she would not get onto a trishaw.” (From Mother of a Trishaw Driver” page 94)

Moreover, the readers can read the heartfelt writing style of the author.

For someone from Anyar who lives far from his native, Anyar is not merely a place on a map but a collective of father’s sweat, mother’s loving-kindness, and the memories of childhood.

In fact, at that time, I was not a special writer. But when my father earnestly told me, “You should write,” I felt deeply moved. His words have remained in my ears ever since.

The days when I gathered cotton in the western fields of the village with my mother, on heavy rainy days, we drove a bullock cart along muddy roads to town, the days when I ploughed the fields with my father, singing songs together, and I know time will never return those days, yet the longing has not faded.

The meals rich in sesame oil and chilli cooked by my mother, her proud voice saying, “My son would never do that,” my father’s back, soaked in sweat as he worked in the field.

Such writings are not created with flowery language but with deep feeling and heartfelt pain. In the book Love Story of Father and Mother, the author records them with the full fragrance of Anya.

In conclusion, this book is valuable if read while one’s parents are still alive. For those whose parents have passed away, each page will quietly bring tears of longing. Therefore, it is a book worth reading for anyone who loves their parents and for anyone who longs for Anya.



Book Title - Longing for Bontaw (Collection of Pastoral-Themed Stories)
 Author - Nay Chi Nu (Yenangyoung)
 Publishing House - Lin Lun Khin
 Publication Date - December 2024 (1st Edition)
 Price - K7,000

Longing for Bontaw (Collection of Pastoral-Themed Stories)

THIS week’s picks are based on pastoral and agrarian themes in literature, encompassing a wide range of topics that focus on the relationship between humans, animals and the natural environment. The first one is a book titled ‘Longing for Bontaw’ (Collection of Pastoral-Themed Stories), written by Saya Nay Chi Nu (Yenangyoung), published by Lin Lun Khin Publishing House to mark its 17th anniversary.

The endpaper illustrates the pictures of small puppets (traditional marionettes) that are found hanging from the trees in the Bagan ancient cultural zone, along with the following quotation.

“The small puppets are used as culturally rich decorations in hotel lobbies, resorts, rooms, showrooms, and stores. Lively and dynamic traditional marionette performances (notably Yoke Thay, string-controlled puppetry arts) are nearly extinct. Conse-

quently, the marionette has become just a wooden figure with no lifelike movement”

The book started with a foreword by the renowned writer Chit Oo Nyo. He pointed out that all the literature works crafted by Nay Chi Nu (Yenangyoung) from various perspectives and a multitude of emotions highlighted only the white colour, representing loving kindness and compassion. Furthermore, reading this collection will make you feel satisfied as if you are enjoying a truly home-cooked meal served with utmost hospitality by the family of your friend when you are extremely hungry.

It is like the saying that when you eat delicious food, you remember those you love and care for. Similarly, if I find good books, I cannot resist recommending them to others. So, I hereby affirm that it is a must-read for fellow avid readers.

The author writes in the preface under the title of A Letter to Readers, Letters from Readers that if I had to summarize and introduce this book with one specific sentence, I would say: “As I am someone born in central Myanmar village, I penned those literary works to document rural life, culture, tradition and customs and encourage future generations to cherish, preserve and value them.”

The book contains 11 nostalgic stories: While Mother is Still in the Village, Longing for the Sound of Bontaw Calling to Alms, Locals Applying Thanaka on Face (Pakwatky) on Carts and Boats, Let’s Go and Share Alms, Chapped Lips on the Earthen Pot, Which Direction it Goes, Traditional Village Game, Thanaka Pieces, Memorable Calendars, A Nostalgic Painting and Pay Homage to Mother.

Here is a piece of Saya Nay

Chi Nu (Yenangyoung)’s writing about his beloved mother, whose heart is aching for his son, who has not returned to the village for a long period, while reading letters from her son. Therefore, she wrote a letter to his son on a summer day.

“No, dear son, please come back to me.

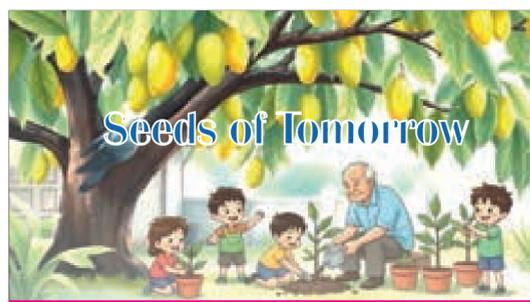
Even if it was just for a little while,

While mom is still in the village,

Mom does not desire snacks or money. Once you are free, drop by for a while”. Those letters are filled with the mother’s painful tears, moaning and deep desire for a son to return home.

Although I cannot read my mother’s heart, this letter brings tears to my eyes. The sound of a mother’s longing for his son, especially for the chapter, While the Mother is Still in the Village, touched my heart and soul. Even though that sound echoed in my heart, I just got married.

“The nature of mothers is giving. They tend to deliver loving-kindness and compassion. If they have to take something, it is certain until the end of the world that they do not expect anything in return except for the reciprocated love of their children. (While the Mother is Still in the Village).



Plant wisdom in young minds.
 Water it with patience.
 Guard it with discipline.
 Every invention once began.
 as a fragile thought.
 Every reform once started.
 as a whispered vision.
 A nation flourishes
 when its people choose progress
 over comfort,
 responsibility over blame,
 action over complaint.
 The harvest of tomorrow
 depends on what we cultivate
 today.
 Let us sow
 respect for truth,
 respect for labour,
 respect for one another.
 For the richest soil
 is unity.

Seeds of Progress

By Min Min Zan

Through books we learn to think and choose,
 To see what’s false and what is true;
 They shape our minds, our hearts, our way,
 And guide our steps in work and play.

While screens may glow both night and noon,
 Their shallow waves will fade too soon.
 But pages hold a deeper light,
 That builds our strength and clears our sight.

So let us read from youth to age,
 And turn each day a wiser page;
 For minds that grow through words well-read
 Will walk the path where hopes are led.

(Dedicating to youth to read regularly...)

Ask Permission

Translated By Hu Wo (Cuckoo’s Song)

Before parents and teachers,
 Please don’t eat in a hurry.

Anything that parents and teachers left
 Never take in their absence.

If you want to eat or take it willingly,
 Ask their permission pleadingly.

21 February 2026

ခွင့်တောင်းပါ

မိနီးဖဗ္ဗိယံ ဆရာဦးကို
 ခူးရွှဲအလျှင် မစားနှင့်။

မိဘဆရာ၊ တားသည့်ဟာကို
 မျက်နှာကွယ်လျှင် မယူငင်နှင့်။

လိုချင်သောအား၊ စားချင်ငြားက
 ဝတ်တူးမယ၊ တောင်းပါကြ။

ရှင်မဟာသီလဝံသ

NATIONAL Entertainment



Honorary dinner for 2025 Myanmar Film Academy Award winners, organizers

THE Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization (MMPO) held a ceremony on the evening of 26 February to honour the recipients of the 2025 Academy Awards and those who supported the event.

The organization presented K500,000 to each

Academy awardee. The patrons and executive members also presented gifts to those who supported the event. The organization also hosted a dinner for the attendees.

The event was attended by MMPO executive

committee members, patrons, Academy Award and Lifetime Achievement Award-winning artistes and professionals, individuals who had contributed support to the awards ceremony, and invitees. — Htun Htun/KTZH

committee members, patrons, Academy Award and Lifetime Achievement Award-winning artistes and professionals, individuals who had contributed support to the awards ceremony, and invitees. — Htun Htun/KTZH

Daw Khin Lay Swe

"Winning the Lifetime Award for Film Achievement is just like winning the lottery. My grandchildren are happy for that. On that day, Sai Sai paid homage to me with K50,000 and played TikTok together. Those who love him will not hate him even if others speak badly about him," said Daw Khin Lay Swe, at the academy dinner event.



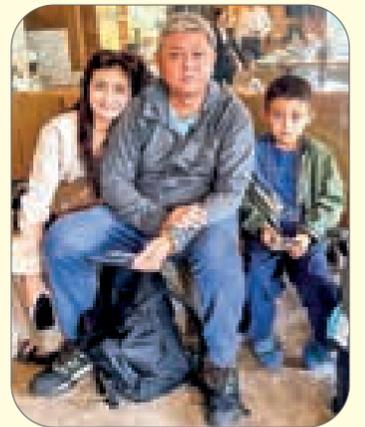
Chit Chit Zaw and Lin Zarni Zaw

The famous novel of author Tin Nyunt 'Hmi' has been granted permission by the author to be adapted into a film. The production will be handled by Chit Chit Zaw and Lin Zarni Zaw, who are the daughters of director U Khin Zaw (Kaythipan) and the younger sisters of director Mite Tee. Currently, Lin Zarni Zaw is also acting as Daw Myo Thiri Nwe in the Mahar series Second Marriage directed by Kyaw Hnin Si.



Lwin Moe

Actor Lwin Moe, who has recently been focusing more on Dhamma practice, has been consistently meditating both at meditation centres and at home. On 25 February, he travelled with his family to Bodh Gaya in India. The actor took roles for screenwriter and director for a new film named "Father". The cast are Lwin Moe, Khay Dra Myint Mo, Ayine, Gawzila and other artistes.



CELEBRITY

Aw Ratha

Academy Award Aw Ratha paid homage to his mentor director Nyi Nyi Tun Lwin with the gold star of his academy statue. He also paid homage to director Nyi Nyi Tun Lwin when he won academy with the 'Mone Swe' film.



Kyi Tha (Pwe Kyite Khin)

The artistes, who joined and supported the Aung Zabu traditional stage performance at the Yan Myo Aung Pagoda Festival in Thingangyun, were Kyi Tha (Pwe Kyite Khin), among others. He also performed together with Aung Zabu and announced that he allows Aung Zabu to sing the 'Pwe Kyite Khin' song consistently. The renowned song Pwe Kyite Khin was composed by Saung (Burmese harp) U Ba Than, father of the late Pianist Hteik Tin Win and U Kyi Tha, who currently holds the copyright to the song.



Myit Myat

Academy Myit Myat, together with M Production and Hein Production's Academy Ko Hein, donated K20 million on 26 February to the Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization to support film industry members with rice, cooking oil, and food supplies. At the Academy dinner event, Myint Myat also mentioned that he would pay respect to his mentor, director Nay Paing, and would donate to municipal staff in Dawei Chaung as well. — Htun Htun/KTZH



NATIONAL

CBM to launch digital transaction-based MSME loans

THE Central Bank of Myanmar is planning to offer loans through digital transaction records of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), substituting collateral-based lending.

CBM is focusing on implementing digital credit for MSMEs, stepping forward to a Cashless Society. MSMEs, the main driving force of Myanmar's economy, are experiencing challenges in obtaining loans with collateral.

The use of digital data footprints generated by QR payments like MMQR and mobile wallets helps build credit pro-

files and will allow lenders to assess creditworthiness as it functions as digital collateral, substituting traditional and physical assets.

Adopting a cashless society will encourage MSMEs to enter the formal financial sector and bring about benefits, including smoother retail transitions.

Building a comprehensive cashless ecosystem is extremely difficult to accomplish through the banking sector alone. Collaboration not only with banks but also with other government digitalization will reap a fruitful result. — ASH/KK



A consumer is seen using the MMQR payment system.

Kyonkapyin-Tapseik area draws birdwatchers with rare and migratory species



Rare endemic and migratory birds spotted at the Kyonkapyin-Tapseik Conservation Area.

THE Kyonkapyin-Tapseik wildlife Conservation Area warmly invites travellers to spend their holidays immersed in nature, offering a unique opportunity to observe rare endemic birds and migratory species.

According to officials from the conservation group, January surveys revealed that the area is home to over 100 species of both resident and migratory birds.

Visitors can enjoy breath-

taking views of lush green grasslands and serene water stretching as far as the eye can see. It is an ideal spot to unwind from daily stress by breathing fresh air. Key experiences include: boat tours to explore the natural beauty led by local guides; birdwatching, a perfect destination for bird enthusiasts and nature lovers to find peace; an authentic connection with nature and the local way of life; and an excel-

lent location for photographers to capture bird behaviours and stunning sunsets.

To escape the noise of urban life and listen to the music of nature, the conservation team encourages everyone to visit during their holidays and create unforgettable memories. While the area has attracted international tourists, it is currently seeing a surge in popularity among domestic birdwatchers. — MT/ZN

Labour Attaché Office urges migrants to use official channels to enter Thailand

THE Office of the Labour Attaché in Bangkok, Thailand, has announced that Myanmar citizens can enter the country only through legal routes, as the Thai government is currently intensifying its efforts to arrest undocumented immigrants.

They are ramping up operations to arrest illegal individuals entering via border crossings or those travelling without valid identification documents, such as passports. Those apprehended are facing legal penalties and sentencing under Thai law. So, the office emphasizes that Myanmar citizens must migrate only through official channels.

The office advised to use overseas employment agencies licensed by the Depart-



Thai authorities detaining individuals who entered the country illegally.

ment of Labour specifically for Thailand, in accordance with the bilateral Memorandum of

Understanding. Those seeking skilled employment on their own must submit their case to

the Department of Labour and obtain formal permission.

It also warned Myanmar

citizens must adhere to the job descriptions listed on their work permits: 27 prohibited jobs for foreign workers, three jobs permitted under international agreements, eight skilled jobs permitted only with an employer and two jobs permitted for MOU workers.

The office further advised Myanmar migrants to reside and work in accordance with existing Thai laws, avoid working in unauthorized businesses, respect Thai culture and traditions, and carry valid identification documents (passport, Certificate of Identity, or work permit) at all times when going out. Individuals requiring assistance can contact their office in Bangkok, Thailand, for support. — MT/ZN

ECONOMY WORLD



People visit the 29th International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition in Tehran, Iran, on 8 May 2025. **PHOTO: XINHUA/FILE**

How will US, Israeli strikes on Iran affect oil markets?

Iran, a top-10 producer, outputs 3.1 million barrels per day (bpd) despite sanctions slashing production from 1970s peaks of 6 million bpd.

US and Israeli strikes on Iran could disrupt global crude oil supplies, driving prices to multi-year highs, warns AFP.

Iran, a top-10 producer, outputs 3.1 million barrels per day (bpd) despite sanctions slashing production from 1970s peaks of six million bpd. It holds the world's third-largest reserves, with low extraction costs of \$10 per barrel — far below Western levels of \$40–60 — making high prices hugely

profitable for its oil-dependent economy. Exports hover at 1.3–1.5 million bpd, mostly to Chinese “teapot” refineries evading US sanctions revived under Trump.

The gravest threat

Iran blockading the Strait of Hormuz, through which 20 million bpd (20 per cent of global consumption) flowed in 2024. Narrow (50 kilometres) and shallow (60 metres maximum), it's highly vulnerable;

security fears alone would spike insurance premiums, halting tankers. Only Saudi Arabia and UAE have limited bypasses (max 2.6 million bpd). Neighbors like Gulf states, Türkiye, and Pakistan hosting US bases fear Iranian missile retaliation on oil hubs, power plants, and desalination facilities. Skyrocketing prices — potentially \$100/bbl — could reignite global inflation, hampering economies. — AFP

Future of Indian gold demand lies in institutional portfolios: WGC CEO

THE future of Indian gold demand will be driven by institutions such as pension and insurance funds, that increasingly embed the asset within their portfolios, according to David Tait, CEO of the World Gold Council.

Speaking at the News18 India Rising Bharat Summit 2026 on Friday, Tait stated that while jewellery remains a cultural staple in India, the institutional and investment-driven segment

represents the next phase of growth for the market.

“I think India's market is particularly well supported. It's part of your culture. But I do think the most notable part of the future of Indian gold demand will be your institutions, and as your pension funds and insurance funds manage to, I suppose, embed it within portfolios. That is still relatively nascent. We all know jewellery is not nascent in India. It's



The future of Indian gold demand will be driven by institutions such as pension and insurance funds, that increasingly embed the asset within their portfolios. **PHOTO: PIXABAY**

certainly well established,” he said. — ANI

NEWS IN BRIEF

Sri Lanka construction PMI rises to 75 in January

Sri Lanka's construction sector expanded sharply in January 2026, with the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for Construction, as reflected by the Total Activity Index, rising from 67.1 in December to 75.0, the second-highest reading recorded, according to data released by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka on Friday.

The increase in the Total Activity Index indicated a higher rate of growth month on month. The January figure was second only to the peak of 75.7 recorded in July 2020. Most firms reported higher project activity during the month, supported by the commencement of new projects at the start of the year and the easing of weather-related disruptions experienced in December. — Xinhua

Japan researchers develop melons that ripen on demand



Photo shows a decaying melon 40 days after harvest (top) and a gene-edited melon in which ripening has been suppressed. **PHOTO: NATIONAL AGRICULTURE AND FOOD RESEARCH ORGANIZATION/**

A national agricultural research institute and the University of Tsukuba have developed a muskmelon that can be ripened on demand, aiming to overcome the fruit's relatively short shelf life and boost exports.

The team inactivated a gene required to produce ethylene, which acts as a plant hormone to promote fruit ripening, and succeeded in keeping the melon firm and green for up to two months. The National Agriculture and Food Research Organization and the university said they hope to register the variety with the

government and commercialize it within three years. Muskmelons typically come into season from spring through midsummer. The fast pace of ripening after harvest, caused by the release of ethylene, means the fruit does not keep well for long and spoils during ocean transport when shipped overseas. Japanese melons have seen strong overseas demand. Exports totaled 1,089 tonnes in 2025 on a preliminary basis, more than triple the 309 tonnes shipped in 2015, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. — Kyodo

New Pokemon titles on horizon as 30th anniversary approaches

PIKACHU and friends are set to return to consoles in two new games next year, the Pokemon Company said Friday, as it celebrated 30 years of the monster-collecting franchise.

Set for release on Nintendo's latest Switch 2 console, "Pokemon Winds" and "Pokemon Waves" will see the fan-favourite critters return and new beasts emerge as players explore a colourful, tropical world stretch-

ing down to the ocean floor.

The Pokemon Company — jointly owned by Nintendo, Japanese studio Game Freak and the Creatures company — controls the brand for the franchise with more than 1,000 "pocket monsters" to date. Longtime followers of the series will also be able to play the original games released for the portable Game Boy in 1996 on Switch, Nintendo said.— AFP



Pokemon raked in \$12 billion in revenue in 2024.
PHOTO: AFP

OpenAI to get \$110 billion investment

OpenAI, the US artificial intelligence company behind ChatGPT, said Friday it will receive a total of \$110 billion in investments from Amazon.com Inc, SoftBank Group Corp and Nvidia Corp. Amazon will invest \$50 billion, while SoftBank and Nvidia will contribute \$30 billion each. The Japanese conglomerate says its latest investment in OpenAI will increase its ownership share from about 11 per cent to around 13 per cent. — Kyodo

Airspace closed, flights cancelled as US, Israel strike Iran

FLIGHTS across the Middle East were being cancelled Saturday as several countries slammed their airspace shut after the United States and Israel launched strikes on Iran.

Iran, Iraq, Israel, Syria, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates all announced at least partial closures of their skies in the hours after smoke began rising over Tehran and Iran began retaliatory attacks in the region.

Carriers including Air France, Air India, Turkish Airlines, Norwegian, Air Algerie and Lufthansa announced widespread cancellations.

Iran swiftly closed its airspace.

"The airspace of the entire country is closed



Carriers including Air France, Air India, Turkish Airlines, Norwegian, Air Algerie and Lufthansa announced widespread cancellations. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

until further notice," announced the spokesman of Iran's Civil Aviation Organization, quoted by Tasnim news agency.

Israel also closed its airspace to civilian flights, its transport minister, Miri Regev, announced.

Iraq also shut down

airspace, state media said, while the United Arab Emirates said it was closing its skies "partially and temporarily". — AFP

ESCWA anticipates Arab economic growth

THE United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) has forecast a gradual resurgence for the Arab economy during 2026, with the growth rate ascending to 3.7 per cent, compared to 2.9 per cent in the previous year.

The report issued to-

day by the UN Commission, entitled "Macroeconomic Projections for the Arab Region," elucidated that this improvement materializes notwithstanding escalating geopolitical tensions and the persistence of global financial pressures. It indicated a likely decline in the regional in-

flation rate to 5.4 per cent by the year 2027, propelled by the stabilization of supply chains and the expansion of non-oil sectors.

The report noted a disparity in growth indicators among Arab states; it is anticipated that high-income nations will register growth of

4.2 per cent, while middle-income countries are projected to achieve growth of 3.3 per cent. Conversely, low-income nations confront acute financial and humanitarian strains, with expectations of only a limited recovery over the forthcoming two years. — ANI

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MTT PORT KELANG VOY.NO. (608N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MTT PORT KELANG VOY.NO. (608N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **1-3-2026** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **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 MAERSK A/S

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MSC SUPARNA F VOY.NO. (SB608A)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MSC SUPARNA F VOY.NO. (SB608A)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **1-3-2026** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S MEDITERRANEAN SHIPPING COMPANY S.A

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V NAWATA BHUM VOY.NO. (330W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V NAWATA BHUM VOY.NO. (330W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **1-3-2026** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS DIGEST



The Kakrapar Atomic Power Station of the Nuclear Power Corporation Of India Limited.
PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/ NUCLEAR POWER CORPORATION OF INDIA LIMITED, KAKRAPAR ATOMIC POWER STATION

FEBRUARY 28

Canada pursues \$2.8 billion uranium deal during major India visit

SASKATCHEWAN Premier Scott Moe, who, along with Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, is on a visit to India, is hopeful that Canada and India are close to finalizing a uranium supply deal, according to The Globe and Mail.

The deal, potentially worth US\$2.8 billion, involves Cameco Corp supplying uranium to India. Prime Minister Mark Carney, accompanied by Premiers Scott Moe (Saskatchewan) and Susan Holt (New Brunswick), has landed in Mumbai

with a singular mission: to aggressively diversify Canada's trade away from an increasingly protectionist United States.

India is keen on accessing Canadian resources, and Canada aims to reduce reliance on the US market. The visit may also address Indian tariffs on Canadian agricultural products.

Premier Scott Moe confirmed that a 10-year agreement to supply Indian reactors with Canadian uranium is 'very possible in the near future'. — ANI

FEBRUARY 27

US shoots down own border drone

US military forces accidentally shot down a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) government drone with a laser near the Mexican border on Thursday, leading to temporary airspace closure around Fort Hancock, Texas, US media reported. The incident, near El Paso, stemmed from CBP's failure to notify the Pentagon or obtain FAA approval for the drone launch in military airspace.

Democratic lawmakers, including Reps. Rick Larsen, Bennie Thompson, and Andre Carson, condemned the Trump administration's "incompetence" and "lack of coordination," demanding an investigation. It echoed an earlier mishap where border officials lasered a party balloon mistaken for a drone. The Pentagon, CBP, and FAA issued a joint statement pledging enhanced cooperation to avoid repeats, referring to the Department of Defence as the "Department of War" under Trump's rebrand. — AFP

FEBRUARY 26

Amazon's "Trainium" chips challenge Nvidia

TECH titan Amazon is working to step out of Nvidia's shadow with custom "Trainium" chips designed specially for machine learning as billions of dollars are poured into artificial intelligence (AI).

Amazon subsidiary Annapurna Labs in Austin, Texas, was testing the longevity of its latest generation Trainium during a recent visit by AFP to the facility.

Texas is emerging as a US tech world El Dorado, luring investments with cheap energy, relaxed regulations, tax incentives and reasonably affordable real estate for massive data centers.

Amidst a deafening roar, UltraServers packed with 144 of the Trainium AI-accelerator chips were being put through their paces at Annapurna in a routine check prior to delivery. — AFP

FEBRUARY 25

Microsoft Cloud probe targets monopoly abuse

JAPAN'S antitrust watchdog has launched an investigation into Microsoft Corp on suspicion that it violated the anti-monopoly law by allegedly charging higher fees to businesses using its software on rival cloud services, sources close to the matter said Wednesday.

The Japan Fair Trade Commission conducted an on-site inspection of the IT giant's Japanese subsidiary in Tokyo the same day, the sources said.

According to the sources, users of the Microsoft 365 software suite and the Windows operating system are charged higher licensing fees when running them on cloud platforms other than Microsoft Azure.

Cloud services allow businesses and individuals to use software and storage over the internet without having to own their own servers.

The Japanese unit of Microsoft said in a statement it will cooperate fully with the commission. — AFP

FEBRUARY 24

Japan pushes urgent budget enactment post-election

PRIME Minister Sanae Takaichi said Tuesday her government aims for the enactment of the draft fiscal 2026 initial budget by the end of next month, as parliamentary deliberations are behind schedule due to her decision to hold a snap election.

At the first questioning session in parliament after the ruling bloc's landslide general election victory, Takaichi called on opposition parties for their cooperation to enact the budget before the next fiscal year starts in April "to avoid any difficulties in people's daily lives".

Takaichi was responding to questions from Junya Ogawa, leader of the largest opposition party, the Centrist Reform Alliance, who said that the government should not commit to the budget being enacted within the current financial year and that "thorough discussions" should be held. She also stressed that her Liberal Democratic Party is serious about its campaign pledge of suspending the eight per cent consumption tax on food and beverage items for two years. — Kyodo

FEBRUARY 23

Egypt, Saudi urge Gaza ceasefire adherence

EGYPTIAN President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud discussed on Monday developments in the Gaza Strip and other regional and international issues.

During a meeting in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, they stressed the necessity for all parties to adhere to the ceasefire agreement to stop the war and implement the peace plan for Gaza, the Egyptian Presidency said in a statement.

They also highlighted the importance of increasing the delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza without obstacles and the need to expedite the early recovery and reconstruction process.

Furthermore, they rejected attempts to displace the Palestinian people from their land. — Xinhua

FEBRUARY 22

Milan-Cortina Olympics close with China's record

THE MILAN-CORTINA Winter Olympics concluded on Sunday, after 17 days of competition that saw broad participation, historic breakthroughs and China's best-ever performance at an overseas Winter Games.

International Olympic Committee president Kirsty Coventry declared the Games closed at the historic Verona Arena, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

"This is the true Olympic spirit: competing, embracing, lifting each other up whatever the result. You showed us what excellence, respect and friendship look like in a world that often forgets these values," Coventry said in her closing speech.

"The flame may soon go out, but its light will stay with us - in every child inspired to dream big, in every person reminded that courage and kindness still matter." — Xinhua

SPORTS

Referee trainees officiate Myanmar Fight Lethwei

THE 2026 Myanmar Fight next-generation traditional Lethwei bouts were held at 1 pm at Theinbyu Gymnasium in Mingala Taungnyunt Township, Yangon Region.

The event was jointly organized by the Department of Sports and Physical Education, the Traditional Myanmar Lethwei Federation and the Myanmar Martial Art Group, with major sponsorship from Myanmar Economic Holdings Public Company Limited.

A total of 14 three-round men's bouts were contested, producing six wins and eight draws.

Referee trainees from the 1/2026 referee course opened by the Traditional Myanmar Lethwei Federation officiated the next-generation bouts as



Banya Oo (Strong Wrestler) fights against Kaung Htet Zaw (STL) during the 2026 Myanmar Fight next-generation traditional Lethwei at Theinbyu Gymnasium in Yangon.

part of their practical training.

The course covered refereeing rules and regulations, proper conduct and demeanor, and the mindset required of officials. A total of 28 trainees with experience in traditional Lethwei from regions and states nationwide attended the

course, which ran from 22 to 28 February.

Traditional Myanmar Lethwei Federation President Dr Tin Aung Lwin and executive members attended the event, watched the bouts and presented prizes to the winners. — Bala/ KZL



Photo shows some Myanmar U17 players. PHOTO: SOE NYUNT THAW

MFF waives admission for Myanmar-India U17 friendlies

THE Myanmar Football Federation has announced free admission for two friendly matches between the Myanmar and India U17 national teams on 3 and 5 March.

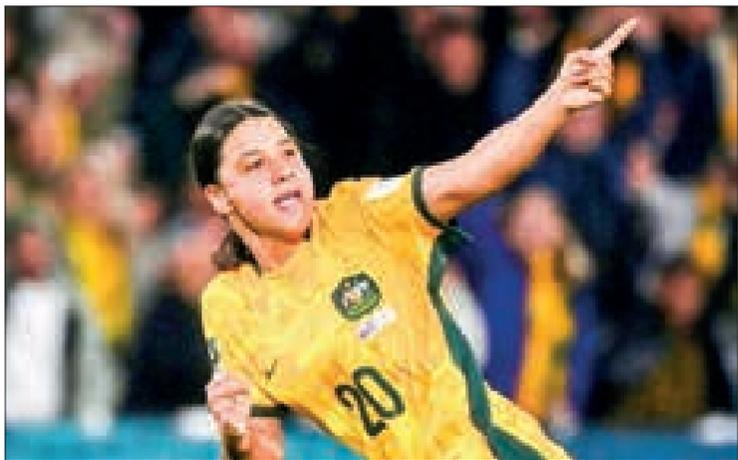
The fixtures, part of preparations for the 2026 AFC U17 Asian Cup finals in Saudi Arabia, will be played at Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon, kicking off at 7 pm on 3 March and 6 pm

on 5 March.

Myanmar's U17 side, coached by U Kyaw Zeya, has been in training since late last year, and the friendlies will mark their first international outings of 2026.

The team is also set to compete in the 2026 ASEAN U17 Championship in Indonesia in April ahead of the Asian Cup finals. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

Kerr says only '85%' fit for Women's Asian Cup



Australia's Sam Kerr returned to club football for Chelsea in September in her first match since a serious knee injury in December 2023. PHOTO: AFP

AUSTRALIA captain Sam Kerr admitted Saturday she was still only "85 per cent" fit leading into the Women's Asian Cup, but the Chelsea striker warned she was starting to hit her peak again.

Kerr returned to club football for Chelsea in September in her first match since picking up a serious knee injury in December 2023.

Being ready for the Asian

Cup on home soil has been at the forefront of her mind and the 32-year-old will lead out Australia against the Philippines in Perth on Sunday in the opening game of the 12-team tournament.

"When you're out for so long, you have all this self-doubt creep in," said Kerr, who signed off with a goal against Manchester United in her final match before the Asian Cup. — AFP

Wolves secure rare win to dent Villa's bid for Champions League place

WOLVES won for just the second time in the Premier League this season as Joao Gomes inspired a shock 2-0 victory against Aston Villa on Friday.

Joao Gomes grabbed his first league goal this season in the second half before Rodrigo Gomes finished off lacklustre Villa at rain-lashed Molineux.

With third-placed Villa well below their best, Rob Edwards' bottom of the table side were able to celebrate three points for the first time since beating West Ham in early January.

Sitting 14 points from safety with only nine matches left, Wolves' first win in nine league games is unlikely to spark a

late escape from relegation.

The west midlands derby victory was still a sweet moment for the Wolves faithful as it dented their rivals' bid to qualify for next season's Champions League.

It also ensured Wolves would avoid setting a new record-low Premier League points total. — AFP



Wolves midfielder Joao Gomes (R) scored the winner against Aston Villa. PHOTO: AFP

Michelangelo's "The Last Judgement" fresco gets sweat-free revival

Michelangelo's "The Last Judgement" fresco in the Sistine Chapel undergoes its largest restoration in over 30 years, removing invisible sweaty visitor residue to revive its vibrant 16th-century colours.

Michelangelo's famous The Last Judgement fresco in the Sistine Chapel is getting its biggest facelift in more than three decades to remove a light whitish residue left by sweaty visitors.

The restoration of the 16th century masterpiece in the Vatican is aimed at bringing back to light the vibrant colours of the

work, which measures nearly 14 metres (46 feet) high.

Visitors will still be able to access the Sistine Chapel during the restoration but the fresco is obscured by a large scaffolding covered with a reproduction of the work.

Vatican Museums director Barbara Jatta described the veil being removed as "a bit like a cataract", during a press tour



The restoration of the 16th century masterpiece in the Vatican is aimed at bringing back to light the vibrant colours of the work. **PHOTO: MUSEI VATICANI/AFP**

on Saturday of the project, due to be completed before Easter.

The Vatican said the substance was "invisible to the naked eye".

The fresco is being dabbed

with distilled water through a layer of Japanese paper to remove the substance, identified as calcium lactate.

"Transpiration has increased in recent years because

of climate change. Due to transpiration we produce lactic acid... which becomes calcium lactate," Fabio Morresi, head of scientific research at the Vatican Museums, told reporters. — AFP

Internship in English-speaking Niseko provides immersive "study abroad"



A participant, right, in an internship programme serves customers at a cafe frequented by foreign tourists in Kutchan, Hokkaido, in February 2024. **PHOTO: THE HOKKAIDO GOVERNMENT'S SHIRIBESHI BUREAU/KYODO**

HOKKAIDO'S decade-old internship programme immerses Japanese university students in Niseko's ski resorts for a month, offering "domestic study abroad" amid English-speaking environments and inbound tourism. Launched in 2017, it has engaged 430 participants, many from outside Hokkaido like Saitama and Kumamoto, who work at hotels and restaurants fac-

Hokkaido students live and work at Niseko ski resorts for a month of English practice.

ing labour shortages. Students set goals like cultural immersion and confident English use, living with diverse roommates to build skills often lacking at university. The programme addresses Niseko's high jobless ratio (2.13 in December), especially in ser-

vice roles, while boosting population — 20 per cent of alumni relocated, some securing full-time jobs. Companies (90 per cent) want to continue, praising future hires. Officials aim to expand beyond Niseko amid powder snow fame. — Kyodo

Bulgaria ski station becomes refuge for digital nomads

BANSKO, Bulgaria's ski haven in the Pirin Mountains, faces climate threats to its 75-kilometre slopes but pivots to year-round vitality with digital nomads.

Co-working hubs have mushroomed, fuelled by fast internet and savvy infrastructure, luring a global mix of remote workers amid Mount Vihren's 3,000-metre majesty.

Dane Oscar Train, 25, splits his year here since 2021, skiing mornings

Digital nomads flock to Bansko for ski Mornings, nomad fest, tax savings now.

(thanks to London's one-hour lag) before desk duty for a UK insurer—taxes at 15 per cent vs. 45 per cent back home.

Summers buzz with Nomad Fest, blending networking and culture. Mayor Stoycho Banenski hails foreigners' economic boost, smoothing post-Covid tourism dips and sparking idea exchanges, per Sofia's Institute of Market Economics. French expats Anne Dupal and Christian Rudnicki swapped design for a micro-bakery in 2022, loving neighborly tomatoes alongside Indonesian chats, though gentrification hikes rents. Local racer Nikola Kalistrin, 29, welcomes the international vibe benefiting youth.

From hot springs to Sofia (two hours away), Bansko blends slopes, screens, and community — proving resilience over snowmelt. — AFP



The 10,000-inhabitant Bansko is conveniently located. **PHOTO: AFP**