

## 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.

## Tatmadaw (Air) Urged to Sustain Strength and Achievements



State Security and Peace Commission Chairman and Defence Services Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla attend ceremony to commission aircraft and enhance Tatmadaw (Air) capability.

**Tatmadaw (Air) must nurture qualified, well-rounded personnel to fully utilize resources in strengthening air force capability.**

Chairman of the State Security and Peace Commission and Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing said so at the ceremony to commission

aircraft for enhancement of the air capabilities of Tatmadaw (Air) at the local airbase in Meiktila Station yesterday morning.

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### Salient points of the speech delivered by the Senior General at the commissioning of aircraft

1. Tatmadaw (Air) must have qualified and well-rounded human resources so that Tatmadaw members are capable of fully handling and using the resources in order to ensure the strengthening of air force capability.
2. Ownership of aircraft and helicopters can be defined as possessing not only aircraft and helicopters but also various supporting systems, maintenance and logistic systems, and a variety of training systems.
3. Tatmadaw members were urged to systematically and skillfully operate and utilize the aircraft, helicopters, weapon systems and airpower resources in their possession.

# NATIONAL

## Call to Transform Air Power into Strong, Modern Air Force

❖ Given that our country possesses unique circumstances both geopolitically and in terms of its political geography, air power is indispensable for fully securing, enjoying, and utilizing the benefits arising from these conditions. Moreover, it is essential to strive to build it into a strong and modern force.

*(An excerpt from the speech delivered by Acting President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and State Security and Peace Commission Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the ceremony to commission aircraft and helicopters into service on 7 November 2025)*

- 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 81<sup>st</sup> 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 Our 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 Our Three Main National Causes while serving duties for durable peace, as the resolution of armed conflicts play key role in moving towards a genuine and disciplined multiparty democratic pathway
- 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

THE 2026 Maha Thingyan Festival in Shan State will feature a grand celebration of the Inlay Floating Thingyan Festival in the Inlay Lake area in southern Shan State, according to the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism (Shan State).

During this year's Thingyan festival period, major cities in southern and eastern Shan State, where tourists frequently visit, will host lively celebrations with water-splashing pavilions and entertainment stages. The well-known Inlay Floating Thingyan Festival will also be held on a grand scale.

"Shan State is one of the regions that receives a high number of tourists throughout the year. As visitor numbers are expected to increase during this year's Thingyan festival, celebrations with water-splashing pavilions and entertainment stages will be organized in towns such as Taunggyi, Kalaw, Inlay, Aung-

## 2026 Grand Inlay Floating Thingyan Festival set for Shan State

ban, Pindaya, Tachilek and Kengtung.

At the Inlay Lake in Nyaungshwe Township,

the traditional Myanmar Ata Thingyan Festival will be celebrated this year with the Inlay Floating

Thingyan event. Thingyan pavilions will be set up along Bogyoke Road in Taunggyi, while the Inlay Floating Thingyan Festival will include traditional Thingyan dance competitions and entertainment programmes. Additionally, we are arranging for Satuditha (charity food donations) and a traditional Myanmar Thanaka Thingyan," said an official from the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism (Shan State).

During the Inlay Floating Thingyan Festival, activities on the waters of Inlay Lake will include the offering of the early year rice alms offering to Buddhist monks, Dhamma talks, water-splashing celebrations using boats and rafts, performances of traditional Myanmar Thingyan dances accompanied by music, and ethnic traditional dance competitions. These activities will take place from the Thingyan eve until the Myanmar New Year's Day. — ASH/MKKS



Photos depict the Inlay Floating Thingyan Festival held in the previous year. Shan State plans to hold the festival on a grand scale this year.

# 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)*

## Tatmadaw (Air) Urged to Sustain Strength ...

### FROM PAGE 1

Speaking at the ceremony, the Senior General said that Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air) must be built to be strengthened in order to fully safeguard the territory of the State and protect the national interest. Only when Tatmadaw is strong with high capabilities will it safeguard and uplift independence, sovereignty and national integrity.

He noted that only when Tatmadaw (Air) is strong and capable of air control will it protect the State interest effectively. Ownership of aircraft and helicopters can be defined as possessing not only aircraft and helicopters but also various supporting systems, maintenance and logistic systems, and a variety of training systems.

He stressed that Tatmadaw (Air) must have qualified and well-rounded human resources so that Tatmadaw members are capable of fully handling and using the resources in order to ensure the strengthening of air capability. As such, it is necessary to turn out skilled and capable Tatmadaw members continuously.

Since its establishment, the Senior General continued that Tatmadaw (Air) has been serving duties assigned by the State and Tatmadaw diligently. It showed off its brilliant capabilities in anti-internal insurgency operations, counter-terrorism operations, and the operations to repel and defeat external aggression. Moreover,



State Security and Peace Commission Chairman and Defence Services Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing speaks at the ceremony to commission aircraft and enhance Tatmadaw (Air) capability yesterday.

Tatmadaw (Air) participated in nation-building endeavours, search and rescue operations in natural disasters, environmental conservation measures and drug eradication operations in various ways and means.

The Senior General urged them to sustain and further strengthen the momentum of progress and achievements of Tatmadaw (Air) and to successfully fulfil the various duties assigned by the State and Tatmadaw. He also called them on to systematically and skillfully operate and utilize the aircraft, helicopters, weapon systems

and airpower resources in their possession, and to demonstrate that Tatmadaw (Air) is a capable and highly proficient force. In addition, the Senior General encouraged them to respect, take pride in and value the fine traditions of Tatmadaw (Air), and to pass on this legacy to future generations.

Commander-in-Chief (Air) General Tun Aung explained measures to commission aircraft into service, while Chief of Staff (Air) Lt-Gen Tun Win declared the commissioning of aircraft.

General Tun Aung pre-

sented a commemorative gift of commissioning aircraft and helicopters to the Senior General.

The demonstration of flying aircraft and helicopters in squadrons followed as part of saluting the Senior General.

The Senior General and party sprinkled scented water on the commissioned aircraft, viewed around them and posed for documentary photos.

The Senior General cordially greeted the pilots who participated in the flight demonstration and presented cash awards to them.

Also, present at the ceremony were Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, the wife of the Senior General; Commission Secretary and Commander-in-Chief (Army) General Ye Win Oo and his wife, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Htein Win and his wife, Commander-in-Chief (Air) General Tun Aung and his wife, Union ministers, the Mandalay Region chief minister, senior Tatmadaw officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief and their wives, the commander of Central Command, and airbase commanders. — MNA/TTA

## U Aung Min Oo concurrently accredited as Ambassador of Myanmar to Federal Republic of Somalia

THE Acting President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and State Security and

Peace Commission Chairman has appointed U Aung Min Oo, Ambassador Extraordinary and

Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Federal Democratic Republic of

Ethiopia, concurrently as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic

of the Union of Myanmar to the Federal Republic of Somalia. — MNA

# NATIONAL

## Departmental work plans must align with National Planning Law, regional development plans, says PM

THE Union Government held a 2/2026 meeting at its office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon, attended by Prime Minister U Nyo Saw.

Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister said that the Forum on the Dawn of a New State will be held in Nay Pyi Taw on 13 and 14 March so that elected Hluttaw representatives can participate in the forum with broader perspectives in political, economic and social sectors with new ideas and landscape to effectively serve the national interest.

He continued that the government has not only faced and resolved the challenges encountered during the political transition processes but has also worked diligently to promote the social and economic development of the people, ensure the stability and peace of the nation, and uphold the rule of law.

In implementing departmental work plans, he noted that it is necessary to formulate and implement the National Planning Law and the regional development plans, which can bring good results to the State and the people.

He stressed that perpetrators of illegal telecom fraud and online gambling enter Myanmar through various methods, often from other nations. Such individuals who cross the border illegally are systematically checked along the way, and prompt legal action and repatriation meas-



Prime Minister U Nyo Saw presides over the 2/2026 meeting of the Union Government yesterday.

ures are taken in accordance with the law. Combatting illegal trade and preventing and suppressing narcotics is regarded as a national duty, and authorities at all levels have to carry out preventive and awareness-raising measures.

The Prime Minister underscored that the government is actively promoting the development of agro-based industrialisation in the country. In livestock farming, if local chickens, pigs and cattle are bred using modern techniques rather than traditional methods, production can be increased significantly, which will greatly contribute to the region's food supply.

He highlighted that in implementing MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise) operations, it is necessary to ensure that substitute products for imports and export goods are produced with high quality and that business operations are carried out more efficiently. MSME enterprises must also work collaboratively to increase their participation and sales in international markets.

Regarding the education sector, he emphasized that efforts must be made to ensure systematic grade-level transitions in basic education and to enable all schools to operate at full capacity. Therefore, it is

necessary for teachers to implement modern teaching methods in line with modern standards. Since a Private Education Law has been enacted for private or independently managed schools, responsible authorities must supervise and ensure that these institutions comply with the law and its regulations.

In the health sector, the Prime Minister spotted that it is necessary to implement projects that enhance healthcare services and raise the life expectancy of the people.

In every town and village, he added that it is necessary to designate and maintain green zone areas, give priority to pre-

venting deforestation, and systematically conserve and protect aboveground and underground natural resources as a national duty.

The Prime Minister recounted that due to the recent conflict in the Middle East, which has affected the global fuel supply, the government has issued public announcements urging citizens to use fuel more sparingly to manage the shortage. In accordance with these announcements, ministries and organizations are assisting in monitoring and enforcing compliance, while the people are also cooperating and participating in these efforts.

In order to hold the traditional Thingyan Festival, the Prime Minister pointed out that this year, the aim is to celebrate the traditional Thingyan Festival more fully. At this time, it is possible to prioritize and organize walking-style Thingyan celebrations appropriate for the current circumstances.

Union ministers discussed their efforts in implementing relevant sectors and plans.

The Prime Minister coordinated their discussions and presentations before giving a concluding remark.

Union ministers and officials in person attended the meeting, while chief ministers of regions and states joined the meeting through videoconferencing. — MNA/TTA



## World Kidney Day celebrated at Kanthaya Hospital in Yangon

THE World Kidney Day ceremony was held at 9 am on 12 March at Kanthaya Hospital, Pyay Road, Hline Township, Yangon.

The ceremony was attend-

This photo captures Dr Aung Ko Lwin presents certificates of honour to the kidney donar.

ed by health specialists and guests from the medical field.

First, Dr Win Myat Oo delivered the opening speech on World Kidney Day, followed by Dr Aung Chan Nyein's presentation on kidney disease.

Then, Dr Aung Ko Lwin, a kidney transplant specialist, explained the importance of kidney transplantation and presented certificates of ap-

preciation to two kidney donors.

In addition, GAIA Pilates Studio demonstrated exercise programmes, and the World Kidney Day celebration continued with related activities. World Kidney Day was first celebrated on 12 March 2006 and will celebrate its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 12 March 2026. — MNA/MKKS

# NATIONAL

## Matric Exam Day 2: Over 254,000 candidates sit English exam nationwide

THE 2026 matriculation examination and the 2026 industrial, agricultural and livestock matriculation examinations continued yesterday morning nationwide, including at overseas examination centres, according to reports.

For the 2026 matriculation examination, a total of 887 examination centres were opened this year, comprising 16 overseas centres and 871 domestic centres. A total of 268,753 candidates registered for the examination. On the

second day, 254,946 candidates sat the English subject, while 13,807 candidates were absent, resulting in an attendance rate of 94.86 per cent.

For the 2026 industrial, agricultural and livestock matriculation examinations, a total of

53 domestic examination centres were opened. Altogether 3,386 candidates registered for the examinations. On the second day, industrial students sat the English subject, agricultural students sat Crop Production 1, and livestock students

sat the Poultry Production subject. A total of 3,364 candidates sat the examinations, while 22 candidates were absent, giving an attendance rate of 99.35 per cent, according to the Ministry of Education. — MNA/MKKS



Bokpyin, Taninthayi Region.



Pakokku Township.



Tangyan, Shan State (North).



Loikaw, Kayah State.



Sedoktara, Minbu District, Magway Region.



Mongphyat.



Mawlaik, Sagaing Region.



Myitkyina.



Lashio.



Hlaingbwe Township, Hpa-an District, Kayin State.



Katha.



Gyobingauk Township, Thayawady District, Bago Region.



Moehnyin students appear for the Industrial, Agricultural, and Livestock Matriculation Exam.



Kalaw.



Tamu, Sagaing Region.

# NATIONAL

## Union Education Minister observes students sitting English exam for 2026 matriculation

UNION Minister for Education Dr Chaw Chaw Sein, along with Mon State Chief Minister U Aung Kyi Thein, Commander of the South-East Command Maj-Gen Kyaw Lin Maung, and other officials, visited examination centres at Shwe Nat Taung Basic Education High School, No 7 Basic Education High School, No 12 Basic Education High School in Mawlamyine, Mon State, as well as Basic Education High School in Chaungzon and Basic Education High School in Kyaikmaraw, yesterday morning to observe the students sitting for the English subject of the 2026 matriculation examination.

A total of 10,934 students registered to take the matriculation examination at 30 examination centres in Mon State, and 10,538 students took the English subject on the second day.

In the afternoon, the Union minister arrived at Mawlamyine



Union Minister Dr Chaw Chaw Sein is pictured during her inspection tour of the 2026 Matriculation Examination in Mon State yesterday.

University, meeting with the rector, pro-rector, professors, lecturers, and staff, instructing them to conduct research activities supporting regional development in the subjects

studied at the university, to systematically implement the Quality Assurance (QA) system, and to explore how teachers can effectively apply AI, urging efforts to make library-based, pro-

ject-based, and research-based learning a reality, and directing that the university be divided into zones with cleaning activities carried out in each zone to keep the campus clean and

beautiful.

The Union minister then coordinated the staff's presentations and toured the campus, visiting lecture halls, student dormitories, academic departments, and research centre.

She then visited Mawlamyine Education Degree College, meeting faculty members and students, and stated that, with some degree colleges planned to be upgraded to universities of education, students will have opportunities to continue learning advanced subjects and therefore need to strive for education now, emphasizing that trainees should dress in accordance with the culture and follow the rules systematically.

Afterwards, she presented grants to students from Mawlamyine Education Degree College and Dawei Education Degree College, touring the campus. — MNA/TH

## 46,806 candidates sit on Day 2 of 2026 matric exam in Yangon Region

THE 2025–2026 academic year matriculation examination and the industrial, agricultural and livestock matriculation examination are being held nationwide. On the second day of the matriculation examination, students sat the English subject at 111 examination centres across the Yangon Region.

For the 2026 matriculation examination, a total of 111 examination centres have been opened in the Yangon Region. On the day of the English examination, 46,806 candidates, including 20,757 male students and 26,049 female students, sat the exam, with an attendance rate of 95.03 per cent, according to the Yangon Region Education Office.

At examination centres throughout the Yangon Region, teachers on duty reminded students entering the centres to bring their examination admission cards and necessary writing materials. Officials at the respective centres also provided timely assistance to



Yangon Region students ready for Day 2 of 2026 Matriculation Examination. **PHOTO: KANU**

those who had forgotten their admission cards and to those who required health care.

Among the 111 examination centres in 45 townships across 14 districts in Yangon Region, the second day of the matriculation examination was conducted at 107 centres, while the industrial, agricultural and livestock matriculation examination was held at four centres.

At the examination centre in Insein Central Prison, 36 candidates, including 33 males and three females, sat the examination. Meanwhile, seven candidates took the examination at hospitals: two candidates (one male and one female) at Yangon General Hospital and five candidates (two males and three females) at North Okkalapa General Hospital. — Nyein Thu (MNA)/MKKS

## 876 students receive degrees from PIU College and partner schools



The 12<sup>th</sup> graduation ceremony of the PIU is in progress in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: KO LWIN**

THE 12<sup>th</sup> PIU College graduation ceremony and the graduation ceremonies of its partner schools – Pyinnya Parami, GEC, SEC and SEA – were held at the Novotel Hotel Yangon yesterday.

In the morning, the 12<sup>th</sup> PIU College graduation ceremony was held. PIU College Principal Dr Kyaw Thura delivered the opening remarks, Career Connect CEO U Lin Myat Ko explained the job opportunities available to students, and Hext Education Group General Manager Daw Thuzar Aye and

officials presented gifts to PIU College teachers. Dr Kyaw Thura and the teachers then presented awards and certificates to 451 outstanding graduates and students.

In the evening, the graduation ceremony continued at the hotel. PIU College Principal Dr Kyaw Thura delivered the opening speech, an official explained the job opportunities available to students, and Dr Kyaw Thura and the teachers presented 425 students with their graduation certificates. — Oktha/MKKS

# NATIONAL

## Tatmadaw recaptures Tagaung, clears mines, restores infrastructure

TATMADAW columns have successfully regained control of Tagaung, previously under temporary occupation by PDF terrorists under the NUG, and are continuing mine-clearance and reconstruction efforts in the area.

PDF terrorists operating in parts of the Sagaing and Mandalay regions had engaged in acts of sabotage and terror, including the arson of civilian homes, looting of property, destruction of factories and workplaces, and the establishment of temporary military posts in religious and cultural sites in Tagaung and surrounding areas. These attacks forced residents to flee their homes, leaving behind their property and assets.

To restore security and normality, Tatmadaw columns conducted preparatory operations and counter-attacks, successfully recapturing Tagaung on 12 March 2026. Prior operations had already secured key communication routes, including the Mandalay-Madaya-Singu-Thabeikkyin

and Mandalay-Thabeikkyin-Mogoke roads, reopening them for civilian traffic and commercial transport on 20 January 2026. This has facilitated the resumption of trade, education, healthcare, and other socioeconomic activities, earning strong support and confidence from residents in Tatmadaw operations.

Following the recapture, Tatmadaw columns systematically cleared insurgent positions in surrounding villages, including Yaychanzin, Shardaw, Banwe, Daungpon, Shwekyunpin, Pauktapin, Theegon, Wayongon, Shwesaka, Myintha, Kyahnyat, Koepin, Badeephyu, Mingon, Sezingon, Latpangon, Yayyin, Wegyi, Pawdawmu, Magyigon, Sinhnyatgon, Tagaung Intersection, and Nyaunglebin, from 6 February to 10 March 2026.

During the terrorist occupation, terrorists had planted landmines and used religious, educational, government, and residential buildings to launch attacks against Tatmadaw units



Images depict the Tatmadaw's marching columns regaining control of Tagaung on the location map.



to their homes. Local communities have expressed gratitude and renewed confidence in Tatmadaw protection, while some former insurgents, recognizing the futility of resistance, have surrendered themselves to the authorities.

The Myawady TV team under the Directorate of the Public Relations and Psychological Warfare reported on these developments, highlighting the determination and dedication of Tatmadaw personnel and the support of residents in restoring peace and security. — MNA/KZL

and civilians. In accordance with operational rules of engagement, security forces conducted systematic mine-clearance operations to prevent civilian casualties.

Tatmadaw columns are now continuing reconstruction efforts in Tagaung and neighbouring areas, including clearing debris, restoring infrastructure, and enabling residents to return safely



These documentary photos show Tatmadaw personnel restoring Myintha Village and Tagaung City (above) and displaying confiscated weapons and munitions (top).

## OPINION

### Implement development projects with proper allocation of the State budget

**T**O achieve progress beyond the current situation, continued efforts must be made to increase the country's GDP. In doing so, it is necessary to promote the development of the agricultural and livestock production sectors, which are the main pillars of the economy. Only then will other sectors, such as industrial manufacturing and services, also grow and develop. Above all, it is essential that all citizens genuinely work for national development.

For the 2026-2027 financial year, the state has projected that the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will reach K195,032 billion. The economic growth rate is also expected to reach 3.4 per cent. Therefore, in preparing the estimated budget for the 2026-2027 financial year, it is important to carefully scrutinize and allocate only the amounts that can realistically be completed within the fiscal year for the tasks that truly need to be carried out, in line with the government's policies, objectives, and programmes.

Union ministries, organizations, and regional and state governments must ensure that the funds allocated to them are used effectively and beneficially for the nation. Therefore, it is necessary to complete the planned projects on time, maintain a proper balance between project completion and financial expenditure, ensure the required quality standards, and strictly supervise the use of state funds so that there is no waste or loss.

The state is promoting and supporting efforts for national prosperity, food security, and the development of MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) businesses. In doing so, priority must be given to developing agro-based industries, which are driven by agriculture — the main engine of the nation's economic development. At the same time, emphasis must be placed on achieving long-term Sustainable Development goals for the future.

To improve the socioeconomic lives of rural residents, priority is being given to developing essential infrastructure, such as improving roads and bridges, ensuring access to irrigation water for agriculture, and providing electricity. With better transport and connectivity, rural people will be able to transport their products within a shorter time, which will help increase household incomes and reduce poverty.

Union ministries and the governments of regions and states must, during their respective terms of responsibility, fully and effectively implement the objectives and mottos set by the National Defence and Security Council. They should also work together in unity within their respective sectors to promote the country's future economic development. Furthermore, they must systematically pave a successful path of development for the new government that will emerge.

# The Silent Power of Staying True

By Laura Htet (UDE)

**T**he story of a baby monkey who grew up tightly clutching a toy because he had no mother is heartbreaking for anyone who sees it. At the Ichikawa Zoo in Chiba Prefecture, there is a little monkey named Punch. At birth, his mother abandoned him, so he grew up without a mother's embrace, without anyone to hold him. His life began not with warmth and protection, but with absence and silence, in a world where touch and connection mean everything.

When other baby monkeys fall, they run into their mothers' arms. When they get scared, they cling tightly to their mothers' fur. But Punch had no one to run to and nothing to cling to. There was no familiar heartbeat to calm him, no soft fur to hide in, no arms to carry him away from fear. His small body learned early what loneliness feels like.

So, the zookeepers gave him a small orangutan doll. From that

day on, the doll became Punch's "mother". When he slept, he hugged it. When he walked, he dragged it along. Even when learning to socialize with other monkeys, he never let the doll leave his side. That tiny figure — one hand tightly gripping the doll — explored the world timidly and fearfully. Not because he lacked courage, but because he needed more emotional security than others.

Watching him, we suddenly realize something important about life itself. Some children are born already wrapped in loving arms, protected by care, attention, and warmth. Others grow up by clutching onto the smallest bit of warmth, gritting their teeth, and pushing forward on their own with determination. Punch belongs to this second group. Yet Punch is not weak. Even though he is afraid, he still wants to try. He still wants to move forward. That image of "being afraid yet taking small

steps forward" is deeply moving, because it reflects a truth that many of us live every day.

In truth, most of us are like Punch. We learn how to blend naturally into crowds, pretending to stay calm even while anxiety stirs inside. We smile, work, speak, and move through our routines as if everything is under control, while quietly carrying fears that no one else can see. We lean on something for support as we make it through each day. That support might be a habit, a memory, a person, or even something we simply cannot let go of. These small anchors, like Punch's doll, give us the strength to keep going when life feels too heavy.

Growing up is never easy. Sometimes, it does not mean becoming strong overnight or suddenly understanding everything. Sometimes, it simply means hugging our little "doll" tightly and taking one more step forward. If

lately we have been feeling lonely and cannot find a shoulder to lean on, it's okay. We can take it slowly. Even if, right now, all we can do is hold onto our own "doll", that doesn't mean we are weak. It simply means we are in transition, learning how to survive in a new stage of life.

If even an animal can replace a mother's warmth with a simple toy, then surely humans can find many ways to heal their wounds, too. Some wounds may fade, but emotional security takes time to rebuild — slowly and patiently. Healing is not dramatic. It is quiet. It happens in ordinary days, in small choices, in moments when we decide not to give up, even when we feel tired and unsure.

We hope Punch finds his own sense of safety and belonging. And we hope that everyone who is struggling to grow can find warmth along their journey. Because the need for belonging lives inside all of us. No matter our age,



A motherless baby monkey named Punch finds emotional security by tightly clutching a toy doll as a substitute for his mother's embrace.

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

our background, or our strength, we all want to feel that we matter somewhere, that we are accepted, and that we are not alone.

Punch didn't change who he was just to fit in among the other monkeys. He didn't harden him-

self. He didn't become cold or indifferent. He didn't ignore himself because of rejection. From the moment his mother abandoned him, his story could have ended there. He could have become fearful, distant, and closed off from the

world. But he refused to let his heart shatter.

Clutching tightly to the little doll that gave him comfort and safety, with a gentle heart, he stepped bravely into a group that did not accept him. At first, he stood at the edges — pushed away, corrected, tested. He watched others from a distance, unsure where he belonged. Yet his gentle nature never disappeared. He never stopped being curious. He never hesitated to reach out first. And he never let go of the doll that gave him emotional safety.

Slowly, the community began to change. An older monkey began grooming his fur, a quiet act of care and trust. Other companions invited him to play. Acceptance came not because he became tougher, but because he dared to live as himself and found the place where he truly belonged. His courage was not loud or dramatic. It was silent, steady, and deeply powerful.

Punch teaches us an important lesson. Being rejected does not mean we are wrong. Being lonely does not mean we are weak. Sometimes, it simply means we have stepped into the wrong environment. We do not need to change our hearts to please others. What truly matters is living as ourselves and finding the people and places that understand us. This is not a weakness. It is a quiet, unshakable strength.

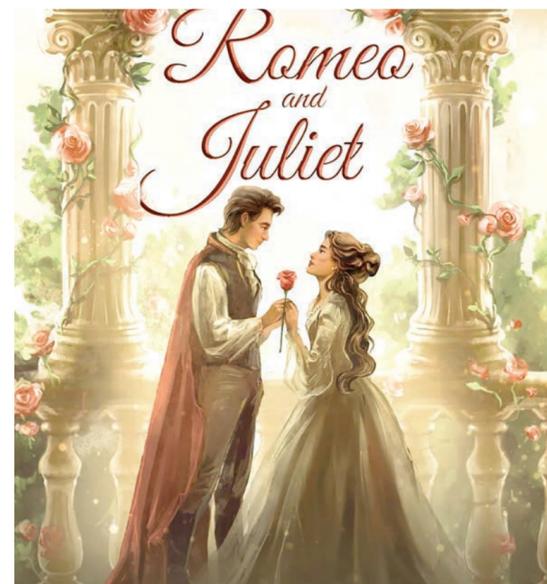
When we look at Punch hold-

ing his little doll, we see our own hidden fears and hopes. We see the parts of ourselves that long for comfort and connection. We see the courage it takes to stay gentle in a world that often demands hardness. His story reminds us that softness is not failure, and sensitivity is not weakness. They are signs of a heart that still believes in warmth.

Perhaps we all carry our own "doll" — a memory, a dream, a habit, or a person that helps us feel safe. Holding onto these things does not make us fragile. It makes us human. It means we are still trying, still hoping, still moving forward in our own quiet ways.

Like Punch, we may walk through life with cautious steps. But as long as we keep moving, keep reaching out, and keep believing in warmth, we are already stronger than we think. Sometimes courage looks like bold action. Sometimes it looks like simply surviving another day. And sometimes, it looks like a small monkey holding a toy and stepping forward into a world that once felt too big.

In that small figure, clutching comfort and walking forward with fear and hope side by side, we find a reflection of ourselves. And in Punch's journey, we are reminded that even the smallest steps, taken with a gentle heart, can lead us towards belonging, healing, and a place where we are finally safe to be who we truly are.



Romeo and Juliet (Shakespeare Classics): A timeless tragedy where love and feud collide, creating the ultimate dramatic arc of passion and fate.

ILLUSTRATION: AMAZON

**D**rama had occupied the golden age in world literature, we all know. Perhaps there would be no reader who has not heard the tragedy 'Romeo and Juliet' by William Shakespeare at all. As global literature is often categorized as three main parts — prose, poetry and drama, works of art in drama can be found in heaps all over the globe. In fact, although drama differs from the first two types of literature in that it depends on thematic material, it is mostly a combination of poetry and prose in its writing. That is to say, Myanmar drama, especially classical drama, was seen to be written in verse as well as in prose. No matter whether it was done, the common features of drama will be described herein.

Of course, drama is identical to fiction for the most part simply because plays have plots, themes, characters and setting as well

## Building Blocks of Drama

By Hu Wo (Cuckoo's Song)

as the playwright can make use of these elements of literature. Among the elements of a play, a proper understanding of the four elements — story, dialogue, action, and character is crucial to the appreciation of drama.

Firstly, a drama tends to emphasize the story with chronological developments of premediated and artistically arranged action, yielding a dramatic plot which contains five key structures, namely exposition, complication, crisis, falling action, and resolution. As usual, the exposition provides essential background information, introduces the cast, begins the characterization and initiates the action. Similarly, the complication also introduces and develops the crisis, so there is often no sharp

division between these two parts. The crisis or turning point of a play usually involves a decisive action between a protagonist and an antagonist, particularly commencing when one or more main characters first become aware of an impending difficulty or when their relations start to change. But identifying when the crisis takes place is no easy task, as always. As the consequences of the crisis accumulate, the plot thickens, and its events develop a momentum of their own. The falling action of a play may result from the protagonist's loss of control, and a final catastrophe then appears inevitable very often. Usually, the resolution brings to an end the conflict that has been implicit or even explicit since the play's opening scenes.

When the curtain comes down, the relationships among the characters of a story will have once more stabilized.

Secondly, dialogue is indispensable in a drama, which is quite different from ordinary dialogues since dramatic dialogue is composed of concrete nouns and active verbs, eliminating irrelevancies; unnecessary repetitions and sufficient background information of the time, place or circumstances of an action must be included in it as well. Such a dialogue in the form of discussion, argument or inquiry offers vital factual information, to reminisce, to speculate and to foreshadow.

Also, a playwright makes good use of different language styles, such as formal, colloquial and informal, as a tool of characterization.

Thirdly, actions in a play are commonly the inevitable by-products of a performance, though they can be indicated or suggested in the script, affecting both the characterization of speakers and the degree of dramatic emphasis given to their words, as well as drama readers must be sensitive to actions implied in the dialogue. Most modern texts of a play formally incorporate the actions in editorial staged directions, but in all drama, the script itself is only a partial guide to the dramatic

action. Whatever is said, the formally staged directions and the creative contributions of actors and directors are designed either to highlight the themes and character traits introduced in the dialogue or to stimulate further dialogue. After all, dramatic actions enhance and emphasize the value and clarity of a dialogue.

Finally, dramatis personae or characters of a play are protagonists, antagonists and sometimes confidants. Major characters like the protagonist and antagonist have complex motives. We are able to learn characterizing details from the names, physical appearance and patterns of action of those characters, where dialect, choice words, and grammar may even hold the clues to each character's background situation and intelligence. The way a character responds to others and what others say about a character can help us understand them, actually.

## ARTICLE

# NATIONAL BUSINESS

## C of I payment available at 7-Eleven without agents, says Labour Dept

MYANMAR migrant workers in Thailand should avoid using agents for Certificate of Identity (COI) application, but they can do it themselves at 7-Eleven stores by paying 2670 baht and just choose the preferred COI station name and date, said the Department of Labour on 9 March.

C of I books have been issued at Samut Sakhon, Samut Prakan, Surat Thani, Chiang Mai and Chonburi, in order to help Myanmar migrant workers to live officially in Thailand under the

legal protection.

Migrant workers can complete the C of I application either on their own or with the employer's arrangement, and they don't need to hire agents; they just need to go to the C of I station on the desired date with the 7-Eleven receipt.

If they have any inconvenience in C of, I process, workers can contact the labour attaché office for help through the following contact numbers: call centre at 02 0030015, Labour Attaché (Bang-



A 7-Eleven store in Thailand.

kok) at 06 1810845, Labour Officer (Bangkok) at 06 52206952, Labour

Attaché (Maesot) at 06 52206953, Labour Officer (Chang Mai): 09

45866607 and Labour Officer (Ranong) at 06 34818121. — MT/ZS

## MFVP invites members to ASIA Fruit Logistica 2026 SEA Meet Up (Thailand)

MYANMAR Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producer and Exporter Association (MFVP) invited its members to participate in ASIA Fruit Logistica 2026 South East Asia Meet Up (Thailand), taking place on 18-19 May at JW Marriott Hotel in Bangkok.

This event is mainly organized by Global Produce Event (HK) Co Ltd. This will serve as

a pivotal platform for growers, suppliers, retailers and logistics experts to connect, exchange insights and explore business opportunities across the region, welcoming industry professionals from more than 30 countries to shape the region's fresh produce landscape.

MFVP also co-organized this event. This Asia Fruit Logistica attracted over 300-

400 suppliers worldwide. Those members participating in this event can use the MFVP logo to build trust with international companies, expand business networking with foreign partners, advertise their business and explore new potential. Interested companies can register through <https://www.asiafruitlogistica.com/meet-ups-2026-se-asia/>. — NN/KK

## Mines Dept to sell 300MT of cathode copper through open tender

THE Department of Mines under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation invited copper companies, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and manufacturers to submit a bid for sales of 300 metric tonnes of cathode copper with kyat payment, according to the tender committee. The department will sell 300 metric tonnes of cathode cop-

per in 30 lots (10 metric tonnes per lot) through open tender.

The floor price of the cathode copper will be set according to the global reference prices on the London Metal Exchange LME. The prices must be mentioned as (LME+ premium) in US dollars. Those with the highest offers will be announced as the tender winner.

Cathode copper can be claimed in Yangon. Tender

winners must bear transport, loading and unloading costs from the mining site to Yangon.

The tender submission will be closed by noon on 25 March 2026. The tender opening will be held at 3 pm on that day.

Individuals can enquire about tender forms at Office 19, Nay Pyi Taw, through the contact numbers of the ministry at 067 3409378, 067 3409372, and 067 3409377. — NN/KK

## CBM to inject US\$30M into fuel oil businesses

THE Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) announced on 11 March that it would sell US\$30 million to those engaged in fuel oil businesses.

Furthermore, CBM sold over \$1 million to edible oil-importing companies on that day, along with an injection of \$120,000 and two million baht in the forex market.

CBM also sold over \$2.1 million to edible oil-importing companies on 10 March alongside an injection of over \$450,000 and 6.7 million baht into the market.

CBM has constantly injected a large amount of US dollars into the edible oil sector on 3 to 9 March, with \$1.97 million on 9 March, \$1.96 million on 6 March, \$2.65 million on 5 March, over

\$1.24 million on 4 March and \$1 million on 3 March. Additionally, CBM injected \$1 million into the fuel oil import sector on 3 March.

CBM injected forex into the market, with a view to curbing 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

The people are urged to receive vaccination of COVID-19 without fail as full-time vaccination of COVID-19 and receiving booster shots can effectively mitigate infection of the virus, severe suffering from the disease and increase of death rate due to the disease.



# NATIONAL

## Myanmar, Thailand hold talks to strengthen bilateral cooperation on labour affairs

MYANMAR had negotiations with the Thai authorities on the promotion of bilateral cooperation in labour affairs to ensure workplace safety and health benefits, according to the Labour Attaché Office.

The delegation led by the Labour Attaché from the Bangkok office met the director general from the Thailand

Department of Labour Protection and Welfare on 9 March to strengthen the cooperation in labour affairs between the two countries.

The meeting highlighted the protection of fundamental rights, workplace safety and health benefits of Myanmar migrant workers, as well as exchanging experience in

labour management and information based on the friendship relation between the two countries to harmonize the bilateral cooperation in labour affairs.

Thailand also affirmed to emphasize workplace safety and the welfare of all workers without discrimination under the law. — MT/ZS



Myanmar and Thailand officials discuss labour affairs.

## Use of digital technology urged to drive business growth



The opening ceremony of the "Regional Digital Technology Seminar", conducted under the Mekong-Lanchang Cooperation Special Fund (2024).

UNION Minister for Cooperatives and Rural Development U Hla Moe called on relevant sectors to collaborate, and urged departmental staff and small-scale producers to utilize digital tools to further develop their enterprises at the "Regional Digital Technology Seminar" held in Nay Pyi Taw on 12 March.

The Department of Small-Scale Industries organized the event under the Mekong-Lanchang Cooperation Special Fund (2024).

The Union minister highlighted that in today's world, digital technology plays a vital role in national development and better public services. The Department of Small-Scale Industries is currently implementing two-year projects funded by the Mekong-Lanchang

Cooperation Special Fund (2024) to bolster Myanmar's agro-based industries and high-quality production.

The Union minister explained that this regional seminar is a key component of the digital skills enhancement project. Major initiatives under this project include an online registration platform and e-commerce upgrade.

The Union minister concluded by urging related ministries and organizations to collaborate across sectors to develop Myanmar's digital economy. He encouraged the participants to apply the knowledge gained to their practical workspaces. He reaffirmed that the Ministry will continue to provide necessary assistance to ensure ongoing development. — MT/ZN

## ATOM, uab Bank launch 'uab Thaw Ka Kinn Way TelcoCare' digital life insurance service

ATOM Myanmar and uab Bank PCL have officially launched a service called 'uab Thaw Ka Kinn Way TelcoCare', a simple and accessible life insurance protection scheme specially designed for ATOM users.

ATOM users can begin accessing the service from 10 March 2026 through the ATOM Store App or via the official website of ATOM.

"We at ATOM are continuously expanding our digital ecosystem to provide more meaningful benefits for our customers. Through this innovative 'uab Thaw Ka Kinn Way TelcoCare' digital life insurance service, users will be able to enjoy better experiences and benefits in their daily lives. Therefore, this collaboration reflects our objective of enhancing financial security through digital technology in addition to our telecommunications network services," said ATOM Chief Executive Officer Mr Ahmad Abdallah.

The 'uab Thaw Ka Kinn Way TelcoCare' programme is specially tailored for young people and middle-aged individuals between 18 and 45 years of age who wish to obtain life insurance protection at affordable rates with attractive benefits. Policyholders will receive a three-year insurance policy term and may choose a



Attendees are seen at the launch ceremony of the digital-first life insurance service "uab Thaw Ka Kinn Way TelcoCare".

coverage amount ranging from K1 million to K10 million.

Under this programme, financial protection will be provided not only for death or permanent total disability, but also for accidental death and loss of limbs.

In addition to life insurance protection, ATOM will also provide policyholders with exclusive telecommunications packages, including data and voice call benefits, depending on the amount of the insurance premium paid.

By combining ATOM's digital platform with uab bank's expertise in risk management, the collaboration aims to reduce the gap in access to insurance protection and enhance the financial security of families across Myanmar. Further details about "uab Thaw Ka Kinn Way TelcoCare" can be viewed at Thaw Ka Kinn Way Life Insurance. — ASH/KNN



# ECON: WORLD

## Japan's ruling LDP urges oil routes bypassing Hormuz amid Iran situation



Japan's strategic oil reserves are among the world's largest and stood at more than 400 million barrels as of December. **PHOTO: KYODO**

*The LDP seeks action to ensure a stable supply of liquefied natural gas and the swift release of stockpiles in coordination with oil wholesalers and other firms.*

JAPAN'S ruling Liberal Democratic Party on Thursday mapped out an emergency proposal in response to the Iran situation, urging the government to secure alternative oil suppliers and routes bypassing the Strait of Hormuz, lawmakers said.

The proposal calls on Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's government to take flexible steps, including releasing more petroleum reserves. The lawmakers said the party, headed by Takaichi, plans to submit the proposal to the prime minister soon.

The LDP seeks action to ensure a stable supply of liquefied natural gas and the swift release of stockpiles in coordination with oil wholesalers and other firms, in preparation for the risk of a prolonged crisis.

The party said the government should consider using reserve funds to mitigate the negative impact of energy price surges on people's lives. The government should also carry out public outreach to consumers to prevent panic buying and stockpiling. — Kyodo

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Australia to loosen fuel quality standards to boost supply

THE Australian government is amending the country's fuel quality standards to allow higher sulfur levels for the next 60 days for more supply, according to the energy minister on Thursday.

"This will allow around 100 million liters a month of new petrol supply that would otherwise have been exported to be blended instead into the Australian domestic supply," said Minister for Climate Change and Energy Chris Bowen.

Ampol Australia has committed to ensuring this redirected supply will be prioritized for regions facing shortages and for the wholesale spot market that supports independent distributors and harvesters, he said, noting that while Australian fuel consumption has not changed, this will help relieve pressure on distribution chains disrupted by elevated demand. — Xinhua

#### New Zealand to release 6 days of fuel under IEA oil plan

New Zealand will release the equivalent of about six days' fuel supply as part of a coordinated move by the International Energy Agency (IEA), the government said Thursday.

The IEA has decided to release 400 million barrels of oil from global reserves in a bid to curb soaring prices triggered by the Middle East conflict.

Senior ministers met late Wednesday to review New Zealand's fuel stores and supply chains as part of the government's response, the first session of the new Ministerial Economic Security and Supply Chains Group, set up to coordinate cross-agency planning on energy and trade security. — Xinhua

## Venezuela interim president names new oil minister

VENEZUELA'S interim president Delcy Rodriguez on Wednesday appointed a new minister of hydrocarbons, a key position in the oil-rich nation that she previously held under

ousted leader Nicolas Maduro. The new appointment comes shortly after high-profile visits by US President Donald Trump's energy and interior chiefs to discuss ramping up oil

and gas output following Maduro's removal. Rodriguez said in a post on Telegram that she was naming "petroleum engineer Paula Henao as the new Minister of Hydrocarbons." — AFP

## Iraq suspends oil port operations following attacks on 2 tankers

OPERATIONS at Iraqi oil ports have been suspended following an attack on two oil

tankers near the port of Basrah in southern Iraq, Farhan Al-Fartusi, director-general

of the General Company for Ports of Iraq, said on Thursday.

"Commercial ports are operating, but oil ports have stopped operating," Al-Fartusi said.

He noted that rescue teams are conducting a search operation in the area of the explosion of unknown origin that damaged two oil tankers.

"Thirty-one people have been rescued, and the search for the missing continues," Al-Fartusi added. — SPUTNIK



Two men walk along the pier at the port of Umm Qasr, south of Iraq's southern city of Basra on 14 March 2021. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

## Cathay Pacific roughly doubles fuel surcharge on most routes

HONG Kong aviation giant Cathay Pacific announced new fuel surcharges for most routes Thursday that are roughly double the existing ones.

The company revealed a detailed list of affected routes in a statement titled "Fuel surcharge updates", a day after warning that fuel prices had soared in March with the outbreak of war in the Middle East.

Cathay Group's CEO Ronald Lam told a Wednesday media session the cost of fuel so far this

month is double the average of the previous two months.

The hike in fees will apply to tickets from 18 March, the statement said. For example, for flights between Hong Kong and Europe that were purchased in Hong Kong, the surcharge will rise from HK\$569 (around US\$73) to HK\$1164. On Thursday, Cathay also announced additional flights to London to meet increased market demand for travel to Europe. — AFP



Cathay Pacific announced new fuel surcharges for most routes that are roughly double the existing ones. **PHOTO: AFP**

## S Korea's ICT export hits record high for Feb

SOUTH Korea's export of information and communications technology (ICT) products hit a record high for February due to soaring semiconductor demand, government data showed Thursday.

The ICT products shipment surged 103.3 per cent from a year earlier to US\$33.62 billion in February, reaching an all-time high for the month, according to the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Re-

sources.

Chip exports more than doubled to \$25.17 billion, fuelled by surging global investment in artificial intelligence (AI) infrastructure that led to higher demand and price increases for memory chips.

Display panel shipment declined 7.5 per cent to \$1.36 billion, but mobile phone export jumped 16.9 per cent to \$1.24 billion. — Xinhua

## Chinese firm joins international automotive standardization organization

CHINESE automaker BYD has officially joined the International Automotive Task Force (IATF), an international standardization organization in the automotive industry, the company announced on Wednesday.

The IATF is a group of automotive manufacturers and their respective national automotive industry associations dedicated to formulating fundamental quality system requirements for the automobile supply chain. Its members include BMW Group, Ford Motor Company and Volkswagen AG, with its certification scheme recognized by major automakers worldwide. Zhao Jianping, Vice-President of BYD, said the company views the joining as a strong recognition from an authoritative international organization



This photo taken on 3 November 2025 shows a new energy vehicle (NEV) assembly line of BYD, China's leading NEV manufacturer, at the plant of BYD in Zhengzhou, central China's Henan Province. **PHOTO: LI JIANAN/XINHUA**

for Chinese automakers.

He added that BYD will deepen coordination with the IATF, its members, and the IATF Over-

sight Offices to integrate technological innovations and quality management experience in the new energy vehicle (NEV) sector

into the global standards system, contributing to the green transition of the global automotive industry. — Xinhua

## Electric vehicle rethink to cost Honda almost \$16 billion

JAPAN'S Honda said Thursday it expected to book nearly \$16 billion in expenses and losses related to a major reorientation of its electric vehicle (EV) strategy, blaming US policy changes and tariffs.

es and tariffs.

"Honda believed EVs would be the optimal solution from a long-term perspective. Based on this belief, Honda shifted its strategic direction towards the popularization

of EVs," the firm said.

But it added that the profitability of its auto business was declining because of "the United States government policy shift including the imposition of import tariffs".

It also pointed to the abolition of US tax incentives for EV purchases and the easing of fossil fuel regulations, as well as a decline in the competitiveness of its products in Asia. — AFP

### Notice for change of distributor

We, **Agrodan Chemical Co., Ltd**, would like to change the Distributor of the following product, which registered under Pesticide Registration Board, Myanmar, from **Shwe Taung International Trading Co., Ltd** to **MYANMAR AGD AGRO CO., LTD**. If any objection or enquiry, please contact to Co-Secretary, Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Department of Agriculture, West Gyogone, Insein township, Yangon from here to next two weeks.

No	Old Distributor	Trade Name	Active Ingredient name	Registration Type	Registration number	New Distributor
1	Shwe Taung International Trading Co., Ltd	Pho Shwe La Tecozobin	Tebuconazole 50% + Trifloxystrobin 25% WG	Provisional	P2025 - 6887	MYANMAR AGD AGRO CO., LTD

MYANMAR AGD AGRO CO., LTD. (Address: NO.6B407 YADANAR HNINSI RESIDENCE, DAGON SEIKKAN TOWNSHIP, YANGON REGION, MYANMAR. Ph no .09403723854)

# ROLLING UPDATES WORLD

## War in the Middle East: latest developments

### Here are the latest events in the Middle East war:

- # The war “is creating the largest supply disruption in the history of the global oil market”, as Iran’s chokehold on regional supplies forces Gulf producers to slash production, the International Energy Agency said Thursday. An IEA market report said crude oil production was currently down by at least 8.0 million barrels per day, with an additional 2.0 million of petroleum products shut off. Oil prices briefly rose back over \$100 a barrel on Thursday.
- # A series of powerful explosions hit the Iranian capital on Thursday, an AFP journalist said. Smoke was seen rising from western Tehran but it was not immediately clear what was targeted, the journalist said. Israel’s military said it began a new “wide-scale” wave of strikes across Iran.
- # Up to 3.2 million people have been displaced inside Iran since the war erupted nearly two weeks ago, the United Nations refugee agency said Thursday.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah visits Kuwait International Airport to inspect the damage sustained by an Iranian drone strike. **PHOTO: KUNA/AFP**

- # Dubai reported a drone attack and fallen debris in two locations on Thursday while Kuwait’s airport was damaged in yet another strike on the facility during Iran’s Gulf campaign in the war.
- # An attack on an Italian military base in Iraqi Kurdistan, where Italian troops train Kurdistan security forces, caused damage but no injuries, officials said. Drones were shot down on Wednesday over Erbil by US-led international forces based at Erbil airport, a Kurdish security source said.

Italy’s health ministry said that eight people were killed and 31 injured in an Israeli strike on the sea-front area of Beirut, where some displaced people have been sleeping out in the open, hours after another attack in the heart of the

- # The opening week of the war against Iran cost the United States military more than \$11.3 billion, lawmakers were told in a Pentagon briefing, according to a New York Times report.

- capital.
- # Iran’s Revolutionary Guards said Thursday they had struck a Marshall Islands-flagged ship, which they claimed was US-owned, in the northern part of the Gulf. Meanwhile, three crew believed trapped on a Thai bulk carrier hit by projectiles in the crucial Strait of Hormuz were yet to be rescued, the vessel’s owner said. Two oil tankers were attacked off Iraq’s coast, government officials told the INA news agency.
- # Air strikes killed at least nine Iran-backed fighters in Iraq on Thursday near the Iraqi-Syrian border, two senior security officials told AFP. Another 10 fighters were wounded in the strikes on a base belonging to the US-blacklisted Harakat Ansar Allah al-Awfiya, the officials added.
- # The opening week of the war against Iran cost the United States military more than \$11.3 billion, lawmakers were told in a Pentagon briefing, according to a New York Times report.

## UNSC resolution urges Iran to stop strikes on Gulf states as Russia calls document unbalanced

IRAN has repeatedly struck the Gulf states, where American military bases are located,

in retaliation for US-Israeli attacks that killed Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah

Ali Khamenei and continue to pummel Iranian sites.

The UN Security Council resolution, passed by 13 votes with two abstentions from Russia and China, does not mention US and Israeli attacks on Iran, and instead demands the immediate cessation of all strikes by the Islamic Republic against Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Jordan.

The document also condemns any actions or threats by Iran aimed at closing, obstructing, or interfering with international navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran’s Permanent Representative to the UN Amir Saeid Irvani criticized the resolution. Russian Permanent Envoy to the UN Vassily Nebenzia for his part slammed the resolution as a “highly unbalanced” document that “does not serve the aim to maintain international peace and order”.

— SPUTNIK

## Intl passenger train from China to DPRK arrives in Pyongyang

An international passenger train from Dandong in northeast China’s Liaoning Province to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) has just arrived in Pyongyang. Xinhua reporters witnessed the arrival at a railway station in central Pyongyang on Thursday. China State Railway Group Co Ltd announced Tuesday that international passenger trains connecting China and the DPRK will begin operating in both directions on Thursday.

The services will connect Beijing and the northeastern border city of Dandong with the DPRK capital Pyongyang, helping to facilitate cross-border travel and boost economic, trade and cultural exchanges between the two countries, the Chinese railway operator said. — Xinhua



A tall smoke plume billows following an explosion from an Iranian strike on an industrial zone in Fujairah, United Arab Emirates, 3 March 2026. **PHOTO: FADEL SENNA / AFP**

# SPORTS

## Shan eyes 7<sup>th</sup> MNL title with 99-match unbeaten run

SHAN United defeated Mahar United 2-1 in the 2025-2026 Myanmar National League (MNL) season's Matchday 21, which took place on 12 March 2026 at Taunggyi Stadium.

With this victory, Shan United moved within reach of their seventh MNL championship and a potential sixth consecutive title. The team will secure the championship if they win their final match against Hanthawady United. Despite Mahar United's strong challenge, Shan United earned full three points with a winning goal by striker Sa Aung Pyae Ko, maintaining a remarkable 99-match unbeaten run in league history, marking an extraordinary milestone for the club.

Shan United made some changes to their starting lineup, while Mahar United fielded a full squad, including foreign players. The opening goal came in the 22<sup>nd</sup> minute from Khun Kyaw Zin Hein for Shan United,

giving them a one-goal lead at halftime. Mahar United equalized in the 65<sup>th</sup> minute through striker Patrick, but Shan United regained the lead in the 77<sup>th</sup> minute with a goal from Sa Aung Pyae Ko, whose tally this season has reached 17 goals, putting him close to the top scorer title.

Heading into the final matchday, Shan United leads the table with 55 points, just ahead of Yangon United in second place with 54 points.

Matchday 22 will be held at 4 pm today at the Thuwunna Youth Training Centre, with Shan United facing Ayeyawady United and Rakhine United. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

Shan United and Mahar United in action during the match. **PHOTO: NYI NYI MIN (MNL)**



## YRG FC wins the Glan Master Futsal League 2025-2026



The awarding ceremony of the Glan Master Futsal League 2025-2026.

WHEN all matches of the Glan Master Futsal League 2025-2026 ended, YRG FC won the championship title with a total score of 63, according to the Myanmar Football Federation.

The final matches took place on 11 March at MFF Futsal Stadium, and the awards ceremony

was held afterwards. MFF Futsal and Beach Football Committee chair U Win Thaw presented gifts to referees.

MFF President U Zaw Zaw awarded K15 million to the champion YRG FC, and Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein presented the champion trophy.

The most-clean sheet, the Gold Dream FC was rewarded K500,000 by Century Beverage Co, Ltd managing director U Sai Win Aung and the regional minister for ethnic affairs, U Saw Jacob Htoo presented K500,000 to best goalkeeper, Kyaw Ye Thway from YCDC Dream Team, and the regional minister for transport, U Kyaw Kyaw Soe presented K500,000 to the best player, Ko Ko Lwin from YRG FC.

Yangon Region Minister for Natural Resources U Zaw Win presented K3 million to the fourth winner, M2K FC. The third winner, MIU FC, was awarded K5 million by Yangon Region Minister for Economics U Myo Myint Aung, and the second winner, YCDC Dream Team FC, was rewarded K10 million by U Bo Htay, Yangon Region Minister for development affairs and Mayor. — MT/ZS

## Messi stuck on 899 goals after 0-0 Miami draw at Nashville

LIONEL Messi was denied his 900<sup>th</sup> career goal on Wednesday as reigning MLS champion Inter Miami played a 0-0 draw at Nashville in the CONCACAF Champions Cup.

The 38-year-old Argentine superstar striker was tightly marked throughout the match, a first leg showdown in the round of 16 in the

North American club showdown.

Inter Miami will host the second leg next Wednesday.

Messi moved within one goal of the milestone 900<sup>th</sup> career tally after netting his 80<sup>th</sup> goal for Miami, and 899<sup>th</sup> of his career, last Saturday in an MLS triumph over DC United.

The eight-time Ballon D'Or winner, who turns 39 in June, scored 672 goals for Barcelona earlier in his career and 32 at Paris Saint-Germain, with a further 115 international goals for Argentina.

Rain arrived after a scoreless first half but defenders still dominated. — AFP

## Myanmar U17 women lose first friendly to India

THE Myanmar U17 women's national team suffered a 2-0 defeat to the India U17 side in their first friendly match ahead of the 2026 AFC U17 Women's Championship, held on 12 March 2026 at the Thuwunna Youth Training Centre.

Following their successful AFC qualifying campaign, Myanmar's young squad played their first international friendly but could not find the net, conceding two goals in the first half. India opened the scoring in 38 minutes through Preethika, who added a second goal in 49 minutes.

With just over 40 days of preparation before the main tournament, Myanmar's U17 team is still developing their tactical sharpness and match fitness to compete for a place beyond the group stage. Despite pressuring India early on, the team could not convert opportunities into goals.

The second friendly match between Myanmar U17 and India U17 will be held at 5 pm on 14 March 2026 at the Thuwunna Youth Training Centre. — Shine Htet Zaw/KZL



Myanmar players (red) vying for the ball against opponents. **PHOTO: SOE NYUNT THAW**



Russia, Iran and a group of regional countries remain interested in the International North-South Transport Corridor project, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Thursday.

“It is obvious that the implementation cannot be carried out in Iran now, you must understand this yourself. But as for the interest of Tehran and a whole group of regional states, of course, our interest remains,” Peskov told reporters.

Moscow expects the project to be implemented, as much has already been accomplished, the official added.

The Kremlin does not give assessments on the topic of sending experts on unmanned systems by Kyiv to the countries of the Middle East, as this is a matter of their bilateral relations, Peskov underscored.

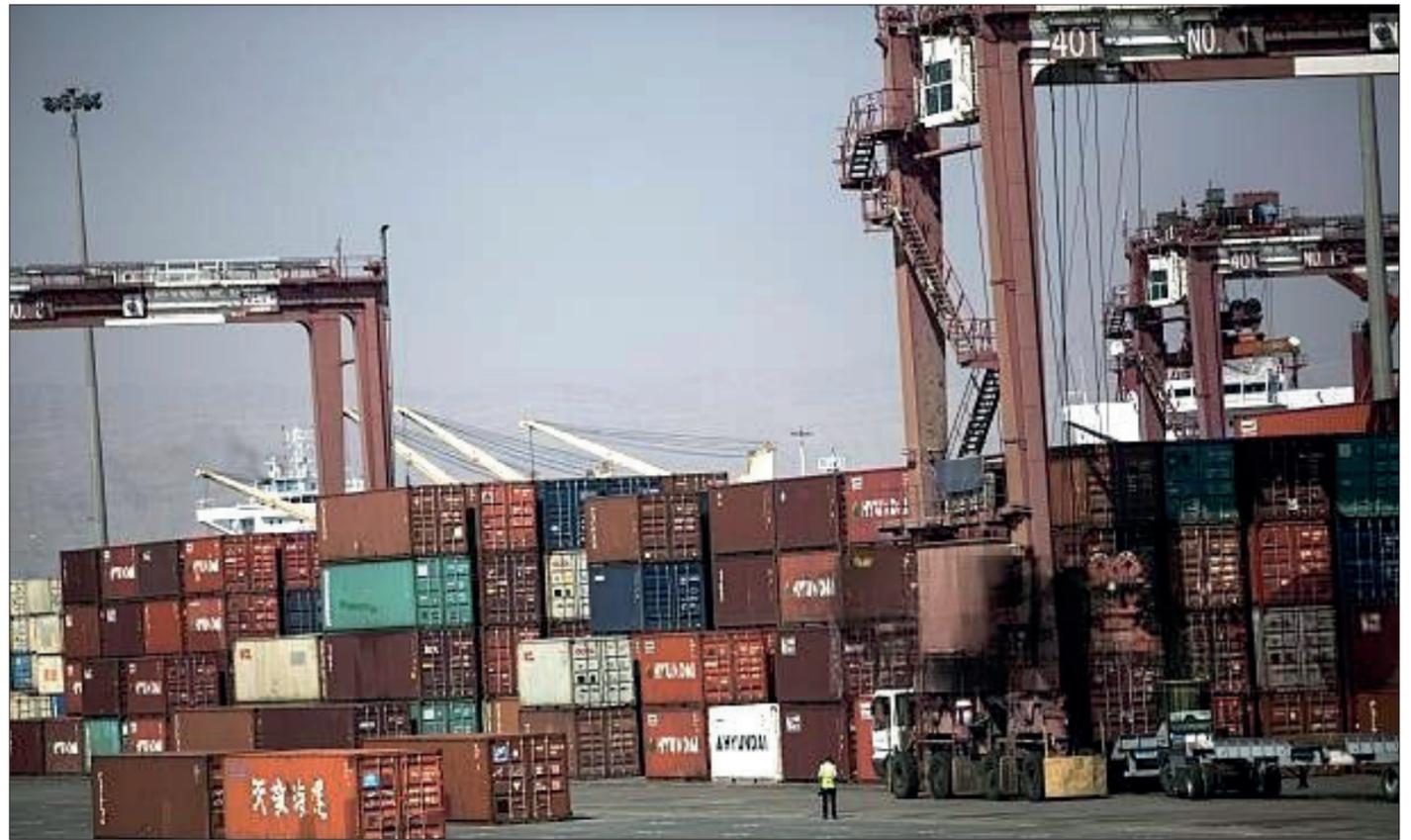
“In this case, it is more a matter of bilateral relations between the Kyiv regime and those countries that have requested this type of assistance. We do not give any estimates in this case,” Peskov told reporters.

It is too early to talk about effective cooperation between Russia and the United States in the energy sector, but this topic is certainly being discussed, the Kremlin spokesman said.

“As for the details of Dmitriev’s contacts in Miami, we need to wait until he returns home today and reports to the president,” Peskov told reporters. — SPUTNIK

## Russia, Iran remain interested in North-South Corridor project: Kremlin

*Moscow expects the project to be implemented, as much has already been accomplished.*



Bandar Abbas Port in Iran serves as the primary southern maritime gateway for the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).  
PHOTO: AFP/FILE

## Qatar will start supplying crude to India once route is open: Govt sources

AMID a severe energy crisis currently unfolding in the Middle East, Government sources have revealed that Qatar has provided specific guarantees regarding supply continuity, noting,

“We are assured by Qatar that they will start supplying to India on the very first minute once the route is open.”

This is complemented by a global interest in supplying the Indian market,

as officials said that “We have surplus stock of LNG” and “We have got offer of LNG from a large number of countries.”

The supply route from Qatar is effectively paralyzed because the Strait of Hormuz—the narrow but vital shipping corridor that connects the Persian Gulf to the open sea—has been severely impacted by the ongoing conflict between Iran, the United States, and Israel.

Government sources also gave a positive update on the cargo movements, saying that the “cargo movement near the Strait of Hormuz may start soon”.

“This comes after Iran pledges not to target neighbours unless attacked from their territory,” the sources added.

Addressing concerns over supply chain vulnerabilities, the government has successfully reduced its reliance on the volatile Strait of Hormuz by diversifying its import routes. — ANI



A file photo shows a Qatari liquid natural gas (LNG) tanker being loaded up with LNG at Ras Laffan, northern Qatar. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

## USFK preparing to relocate THAAD to ME: Media

US forces in South Korea were preparing to relocate interceptor missiles of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) battery to the Middle East, a local newspaper said Wednesday.

An unidentified high-ranking South Korean government official was quoted by Dong-A Ilbo as saying that the THAAD interceptor missiles had been moved to the Osan Air Base in Pyeongtaek, about 70 kilometres south of the capital Seoul, from Seongju county, North Gyeongsang province. It was seen as the US Forces Korea (USFK) making preparations to redeploy the missiles to the Middle East, another official noted. — Xinhua