



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing addresses the Union government meeting yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

Urban redesign plan for Nay Pyi Taw in progress

The government has set a plan to provide financial aid for quake-affected people and damaged buildings.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing underlined that it is necessary to verify some damaged buildings regarding the failure to adhere to the designated standards and designs.

Chairman of the State Administration Council, Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, delivered a speech at the Union government meeting at the SAC Chairman’s Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

In his speech, the Senior General unveiled that the government has set a plan to provide financial aid for quake-affected people and damaged buildings.

He noted that it is necessary to supervise the repair of dam-

aged schools to ensure further strengthening. Moreover, some hospitals must be repaired systematically.

In the reconstruction of office buildings, the Senior General underscored that it is necessary to conduct soil tests before proceeding with new construction and renovation works. Moreover, the buildings on the Fault line must be resettled in appropriate areas. A plan is underway to redesign the urban layout of Nay Pyi Taw.

The Senior General underlined that it is necessary to verify some damaged buildings regarding the failure to adhere to the designated standards and designs.

He added that in construct-

ing buildings, it is necessary to carry out construction in accordance with engineering standards from an engineering point of view, ensuring the structures are earthquake-resistant. When undertaking reconstruction and renovation work on office buildings, priority should be given to repairing those buildings that have sustained only minor damage.

In the reconstruction of staff housing, he highlighted that buildings must be constructed to withstand up to Richter scale 8 earthquakes. For temporary housing, only duplex units must be built with a sufficient supply of water and electricity.

The Senior General instructed that emphasis must be placed

on the renovation of railways, bridges and roads systematically. Likewise, officials need to check dams and reservoirs.

He spotted that the government is taking rehabilitation measures with the assistance of the international community.

The Senior General recounted that he met the ASEAN Rotating Chair and Malaysian Prime Minister in Bangkok, Thailand, on 17 April, and during the discussions, ASEAN pledged to provide support and assistance for Myanmar.

Council members, Union-level dignitaries and Union ministers reported on observation on further aftershocks of the Mandalay earthquake, distribution of rescue equipment provid-

Salient points from the speech delivered by the Senior General at the Union government meeting

- 1.It is necessary to conduct soil tests before proceeding with new construction and renovation work.
- 2.The buildings on the Fault line must be resettled in appropriate areas.
- 3.It is necessary to verify some damaged buildings regarding the failure to adhere to the designated standards and designs.
- 4.For temporary housing, only duplex units must be built with a sufficient supply of water and electricity.

ed by the international community, repairs of roads and bridges, efforts to improve the connection of communications, repairing of staff housing in phases, damage to offices and departments of relevant ministries and operation of temporary hospitals.

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Unlocking Knowledge: The Essential Role of Libraries and Reading Habits

- A library is an institution dedicated to disseminating knowledge.
- It is essential to cultivate a reading habit.
- Individuals should read books to acquire knowledge.
- They must take notes from their readings to deepen their understanding.
- Reading is a powerful tool for accumulating knowledge.

(Excerpt from the speech given by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to the ceremony to donate cash and books to libraries across the nation for their development on 10 April 2024)

U Thit Linn Ohn presents Credentials to President of Republic of Kazakhstan

U Thit Linn Ohn, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Republic of Kazakhstan, presented his Credentials to Mr Kassym-Jomart K Tokayev, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, on 17 April

2025 at the Presidential Palace in Astana, Kazakhstan. — MNA

Kazakhstan's President Mr Kassym-Jomart K Tokayev and Ambassador U Thit Linn Ohn, and dignitaries are pictured during the credentials acceptance event.



Bhutanese emergency medical team departs from Nay Pyi Taw

A 36-member Bhutanese Royal Emergency Medical Team led by Dasho Tashi Wangyal departed for Bhutan by air yesterday morning as the second batch. Ambassador U Kyaw Htun from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and officials from the National Disaster Management Committee saw them off at Nay Pyi Taw Airport.

The full Bhutanese medical team comprised 87 members, of whom 51 had already returned to Bhutan the previous day as the first batch. The Bhutanese medical team collaborated with medical personnel from the Tatmadaw Medical Corps and professionals from the Ministry of Health, including specialists, doctors, nurses

and other medical staff at the temporary hospital (Paunglaung) located at Paunglaung Sports Ground in Pyinmana, Nay Pyi Taw.

The team provided medical check-ups, treatments, and surgical procedures between 3 and 16 April for people affected by the earthquake. — MNA/KZL



The Bhutanese team is seen before departure yesterday.

Thailand's Special Task Force: 3rd batch arrives

A new team of medical personnel from the Ministry of Public Health of Thailand has replaced the previous team. They will continue their mission in Mandalay alongside the 3rd batch of the Royal Thai Armed Forces Task Force, which arrived yesterday.

Meanwhile, an engineering team from the Royal Thai Armed Forces has constructed

additional temporary shelters on the opposite side of No 17 High School in Mandalay. Another engineering team has also continued repair work on the Basic Education High School in Kyauk-mee, under royal patronage, in Mandalay.

Thailand always stands in support of the people of Myanmar. — GNLM



The third batch of the Royal Thai Armed Forces Task Force arrives in Myanmar on 18 April 2025.

Weather

Untimely Rainfall Warning 21

Issued at 6 pm MST on 18 April 2025

ACCORDING to the observations at 5:30 pm MST today, due to the western disturbances and the eastern disturbances, development of convective clouds, rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated to scattered in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Bago, Magway and Lower Sagaing Regions and Rakhine and Shan States and fairly widespread to widespread in Yangon, Upper Sagaing,

Ayeyawady, Taninthayi Regions and Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin and Mon States with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls during today evening to 20 April 2025.

Advisory

People should be aware of untimely rainfall accompanied with strong wind, thunder, lightning, hails and landslides. — DMH

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.

(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)



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing views the damaged portion of the ministries' offices in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing inspected the loss and damage to ministerial offices caused by the Mandalay earthquake in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. Accompanied by SAC Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Council Secretary General Aung Lin Dwe, Joint Secretary General Ye Win Oo, Union ministers and the Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman, the Senior General looked into damaged parts at the offices of the Union Supreme Court and the Ministry of Labour, collapsed retaining walls of the Legal Affairs Ministry, buildings of the Ministry of Planning and Finance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the head office of the Social Security Board under the Ministry of Labour, and temporary accommodation for service personnel. Union-level dignitaries and Union ministers reported to the Senior General on loss and damage to the buildings, the opening of temporary offices to

Government ensures systematic housing for staff families

It is necessary to seek advice from the earthquake and construction professionals in rebuilding the offices and departments to have resilience to earthquakes in the long run.

carry out office work, and providing temporary accommodation for staff families. In his response, the Senior General stressed the need to promptly move away important documents, machinery and movable materials from the offices. It is necessary to seek advice from earthquake and construction professionals in rebuilding the offices and departments to have resilience to earthquakes in the long run. In constructing the buildings, it is necessary to systematically plan and equip the required water and electrical lines to ensure long-term durability. The government will systematically provide temporary housing for staff families. The government will arrange



The Senior General looks into the temporary clinic set up by the Ministry of Legal Affairs.

temporary accommodation for staff families systematically. Moreover, it is necessary to supply drinking water and safe water to the staff families, and the government has planned to provide a convenient food supply for service personnel. — MNA/TTA

NATIONAL

Urban redesign plan for Nay Pyi Taw in progress

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Council Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win explained temporary settlement of people from the earthquake-affected areas, accommodation for staff families, requirements to give medicines to people from the relief camps to prevent diarrhoeal disease, systematic issuance of citizenship scrutiny cards and household registration for the affected people and sales of goods by mobile market vehicle.

Also, present at the meeting were Council Secretary General Aung Lin Dwe, Joint Secretary General Ye Win Oo and officials. — MNA/TTA

Rescue operations after Mandalay earthquake, aftershocks

DUE to the Mandalay earthquake on 28 March in Myanmar, 3,726 died, 5,105 were injured, and 129 remained missing until 7 am on 18 April 2025. There are also 141 aftershocks.

The damage assessments show 65,096 houses, 2,514 schools, 4,317 monasteries and nunneries, 6,027 pagodas and temples, 350 hospitals and clinics, 38 rail tracks, 269 roads, 203 sections of expressway, 586 dams and 170 bridges.

The Myanmar Fire Brigade, local and foreign rescue team members searched and rescued 653 victims, and 754 dead bodies. In rescue work, the rescue members from 16 countries also saved eight people alive and 205 dead bodies. A total of 45 international leaders, governmental heads and persons also sent messages of condolences, respectively.

The local well-wishers donated cash and materials for quake-affected people, and the international organizations and donors also provided cash and materials. Until 7 am on 18 April, 136 flights, six ships and 23 vehicles from 25 countries and Hong Kong arrived in Myanmar carrying 1,975 medics, 2,332.98 tonnes of supplies and 1,170.59 tonnes of relief items, totalling 3,503.57 tonnes. The relief items are distributed to the quake-stricken people as rapidly as possible.

National Disaster Management Committee

MEXT scholarship 2026 applications open 7 May



Applications are invited for the MEXT Research Students Scholarship Programme 2026.

FOR the Research Students Scholarship Programme 2026 offered by Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), registration is welcome as of 14 April, and the acceptance of applications will begin on 7 May, said the Myanmar Association of Japan Alumni (MAJA).

Detailed information, including application forms and requirements, can be available at <https://www.studyinjapan.go.jp/en/smap-stopj-applications-research.html>. Those who live in Myanmar and

graduated from any local or foreign university are only eligible, under MEXT's guidelines.

Registration in Google Form will be accepted until 3 pm from 14 April to 6 May, and applications will be accepted until 3 pm from 7 to 14 May. Documents which are not registered in Google Forms are not acceptable, it said.

The submission of necessary documents such as MEXT's application form, university attended, certificate of graduation, research plan, and screenshot proof of application will be addressed to the MAJA office located in Thingangyun Township, Yangon, either in person or by post, by 3 pm on 14 May.

Eligible candidates for the written test, which is scheduled on 17 May, will be announced on 15 May, and the interview will be held at the Yangon exam station. Detailed information will be announced on 20 May, together with written test results.

The interviews will be held on 31 May and 1 June, and the Embassy of Japan to Myanmar will continue the selection of shortlisted candidates. The exam timetable will be sent to eligible candidates by email on 15 May. — MT/ZS



Union Minister Dr Thet Khaing Win holds talks with the IFRC delegation.

MoH Union Minister receives IFRC delegation

UNION Minister for Health Dr Thet Khaing Win met Ms Nadia Khoury, Head of Delegation of the IFRC (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) in Myanmar, and Dr Myo Nyunt, President of the Myanmar Red Cross Society, at the Ministry's temporary office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

During the meeting, both sides discussed medical support for Mandalay earthquake victims through joint efforts by local and international medical teams, the ongoing care provided by the Ministry of Health, and further collaboration between the Myanmar Red Cross Society and IFRC on rehabilitation efforts, including the installation of mobile water purifiers, temporary shelters, sanitation facilities, and the provision of prosthetic limbs in affected areas such as Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Sagaing, and Inlay. — MNA/MKKS

NATIONAL

Rescue, rehabilitation & healthcare aid for quake zones continue

THE Mandalay earthquake caused damage to roads, bridges and buildings, and the Tatmadaw members, Myanmar Police Force, Fire Brigade, international rescue teams, departmental staff, social welfare organizations and locals conduct rescue operations promptly.

Yesterday morning, Lt-Gen Thet Pon from the Commander-in-Chief (Army) office and relevant officials inspected the cleanliness activities at No 3 BEHS in Yahtaung ward, Sagaing, relief camps in Parami ward, SoonU Ponnyashin, Uminkoese, Sitagu and Yadana Htutkhaung pagoda, and healthcare services of the Tatmadaw mobile medical team.

In the afternoon, they inspected the quake-affected buildings at the University of Cooperative and Management



Lt-Gen Thet Pon inspects the destroyed parts of SoonU Ponnyashin.

(Sagaing), the healthcare services of the Malaysian medical team led by Colonel Nurul, the

relief camp in Parami ward, and destroyed religious buildings at Dhamma Thitala monastery in

NanOo Myothit and Zinawdaya Pariyatti monastery in Thawtapan ward.

Similarly, Lt-Gen Myo Thant Naing from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) and officials inspected the potential for landslides caused by rising water levels in the Zawgyi River due to heavy rainfall in MyoOo ward, Kyaukse Township. During the inspection, he instructed the need to conduct river management activities such as river straightening, ensuring smooth and efficient river flow, constructing retaining walls where needed along the riverbanks, planting trees that can help prevent erosion along the riverbanks and cutting the sandbanks on the opposite side of the river to change the water flow and report to the

Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems to prevent further damage to houses and to avoid erosion.

Then, they inspected the cleanliness activities at the quake-affected buildings in Kyaukse. The board members checked the quake-hit buildings in Kyaukse township under SOP, and they demolished 40 dangerous buildings. Plans are underway to demolish the remaining 23 buildings.

They also checked the 20.56 acres wide Phaungywakwin in Phaungywa ward to open a temporary market as the Myoma market currently in the danger zone of Kyaukhitta on Shwethalyaung mountain in Sugyi ward, Kyaukse, cannot be opened. They watched the CCTV record regarding the existence of Kyaukhitta and inspected the Shwemuttaw pagoda.

They proceeded to the quake-hit Ayemyakyilin Market in Ayemyakyilin ward and inspected the completed maintenance and market situation.

Lt-Gen Soe Tint Naing from the Commander-in-Chief (Army) office and officials paid homage to the Presiding Sayadaw Bhaddanta Dhammadi-
pataya Lankara of Moekaung Monastery in Mandalay and checked the damage.

They also inspected the quake-affected buildings in Taungthaman monastery and instructed the officials to conduct cleanliness activities and reconstruction processes. — MNA/KTZH



Lt-Gen Myo Thant Naing and officials concerned oversee the rubble cleanup in Kyaukse.

Body of girl discovered in Mandalay Sky Villa collapse on 18 Apr

THE Myanmar Fire Services Department said that the body of a girl was found in the collapsed Mandalay Sky Villa building at 1:55 pm on 18 April during its ongoing search and rescue operations after the quake.

Similarly, the MFSD has been carrying out rescue operations for the trapped people at the sites of the collapsed Regional Cooperative Department building on 27th and 28th Streets, 84th Street, Mandalay, the collapsed ancient historic Nan Myint Tower in TadaU Township, and the Golden City Hotel on

30th Street between 70th and 71st Streets due to the earthquake.

During such search and rescue operations, important documents, memory sticks and cash were found in the Regional Cooperative Department Office, and jewellery, cash and important documents were found in the Ingyin Condominium building between 21st and 22nd Streets and 80th and 81st Streets have been handed over to their respective owners by the MFSD. — Htun Htun/ZN



Search and rescue operations are ongoing at the Sky Villa building.

NATIONAL

Shwedagon marks Myanmar New Year 1387 with fish-releasing ceremonies



The Shwedagon Pagoda and devotees on its precinct.

THE 1387 Myanmar New Year and fish-releasing ceremonies were held at the Shwedagon Pagoda on New Year Day, 17 April, according to the pagoda board of trustees, with the New Year ceremony taking place at the prayer hall of ancient Buddha images on the southern part of the pagoda, where venerable monks recited Paritta to ward off dangers and share merits.

A total of 1,000 fish were released and fed during a ceremony at Shin Uppagutta Lake in Singuttara Park, on the pagoda’s lower terrace near the northern archway, attended by cabinet members from the Yangon Region government as part of the New Year celebrations.



The fish-releasing ceremony at Shwedagon Pagoda.

On the Myanmar New Year Day, many pilgrims from across the country came to pay homage to the Shwedagon Pagoda, filling the four stairways and parking areas, where charity feast offerings were generously provided. — ASH/MKKS

Interfaith families offer charity feasts at Shwedagon during Thingyan



This photo captures the families of the Interfaith Dialogue Group (Central) donating refreshments to people.

FAMILIES of the Interfaith Dialogue Group donated Satuditha (charity food) offerings to pilgrims at the Shwedagon Pagoda during Thingyan festival, from 13 to 16 April. During the Maha Thingyan festival, the chairman, members, and families of the Interfaith Dialogue Group (Central) donated charity feast offerings to monks and visitors from across the country at the parking compound of the Western Stairs of the Shwedagon Pagoda, feeding over 4,000 people daily. — ASH/MKKS

Vehicle donated to Dhamma Vihara Monastery

ACTOR Khant Si Thu and his family, along with fellow artistes donated a vehicle to be used at the Dhamma Vihara Buddhism Learning Centre and Meditation Centre in Thingangyun Township, Yangon Region, on 17 April. “We provided meals for 550 monks, nuns and Yogi (Vipassana Students) staying at the Centre and also donated a car worth K40 million to assist the resident monks with transportation during examination periods,” Khant

Si Thu said. The merit-making ceremony saw other artistes such as Thuta Aung, Han Htoo Zan, Saung Eaindray Htun, Akari Susan and Academy Aung Khine, who joined the family in taking part in the religious activities. They also donated K20 million to the Nay Pyi Taw General Hospital (1,000-bed) on 16 April to support emergency medical treatment for patients with physical injuries. — ASH/KZL



Actor Khant Si Thu, his family and artistes at their collective donation ceremony.

Myanmar Wanbao, FAW Group, & CRFD unite to aid quake survivors

MYANMAR Wanbao Mining Copper Ltd, FAW Group and China Foundation for Rural Development (CRFD) donated relief supplies to earthquake survivors in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay and Sagaing regions.

Myanmar Wanbao Mining Copper Ltd and CRFD donated K44 million worth of relief supplies and medical supplies, including surgical equipment and materials, injection doses and pharmaceuticals to the Sagaing People's Hospital.

Similarly, FAW Group and CFRD also joined hands in rescue activities in earthquake-affected Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw areas and provided temporary shelters and relief supplies to earthquake survivors.



This picture shows donations by the Myanmar Wanbao Mining Copper Ltd, FAW Group and CRFD.

They supported 100 tents, 6,000-kilogramme rice, 450 litres of cooking oil, 500 mosquito nets, 300 tarpaulin sheets and 10 generators and relief supplies to 500 earthquake-affected households. — ASH/KK

MMA to host webinar on collective trauma & resilience

MYANMAR Microfinance Association will hold a webinar under the theme of “Collective Trauma and Emotional Resilience” from 2 pm to 3 pm on 25 April 2025, hosted by Dr Thinnie (Mental Health Clinician). This webinar aims to help them acquire knowledge the damage and loss of loved ones and possessions. They can engage in healthy coping mechanisms for the distress and post-traumatic growth of the people towards healing and recovery, individually or collectively. It will also help seek mental support for social issues and post-disaster challenges by providing emotional support and facilitating community rebuilding efforts through the workplace. Anyone can join the webinar for free through <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc1cZA1PPMQXAU-fYsW7c1TcgkAYL-qd6rbElWDSb4iBVU-LyjQ/viewform?usp=dialog>. Interested individuals can register via the link by 24 April, MMFA requested. — NN/KK

Myanmar’s mango yield plunges by 50% this year

MYANMAR’S mango yield is down by 50 per cent this year amid domestic and foreign weak demand, according to the Khwanyo Fruit Trading Depot.

At present, Myanmar has started exporting mangoes to China, yet exporters cannot even cover the cost, facing losses.

“We exported mango in the early part of the season. Yet, a delay in transport degrades the quality of the mango and impacts shelf life. The fastest delivery is about three days. The mango is easily perishable due to environmental conditions, low input during cultivation and improper post-harvest handling methods. The first batch of the mango export did not cover transportation, basket cost and labour wages. Furthermore, there is a misunderstanding between growers and exporters regarding mango inferior quality. There were five trucks ahead of us. They fetched a pretty high price,” an official of the Khwanyo Fruit Trading Depot.

Officials of the Mandalay Region Chambers of Commerce and Industry (MRCCI) and the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Dehong Prefecture discussed matters to facilitate Myanmar’s mango export to China at the MRCCI’s office in late 2024, in the presence of mango growers.

They highlighted the fast delivery of Myanmar’s mango to China through possible road channels, smooth customs clearance, and exploration of potential trade channels. Moreover, they coordinated on matters regarding trade barriers that exporters experienced on the Kengtung-Mongla-Dalo road channels, including tax and freight shipping time.

The traders are bracing for transport hurdles, such as rough roads and extreme weather conditions, that affect the quality of the fruits. Therefore, there seems to be no other option than Muse Road during the mango season, the Khwanyo Fruit Depot observed.

As a result of this, exporters face big challenges depending on the export channel and fruit quality, according to the Khwanyo Fruit Trading Depot.

The high cost of cultivation inputs batters growers. Last year, low use of cultivation inputs affected quality, causing postharvest diseases such as stem end rot and black spots in fruit. Some traders did not even cover the cultivation cost due to the inferior quality of Seintalone mango. Of about 200 mango varieties that originated in Myanmar, Seintalone, Shwehintha, Padamya Ngamauk, Yinkwe, and Machitsu varieties are primarily grown. The foreign market prefers Seintalone varieties. Ayeyawady Region possesses the most extensive mango plantation acres, having about 46,000 acres. Bago Region is the second largest producer, with 43,000 acres, and Mandalay has 29,000 acres of mango. There are over 24,000 acres in Kayin State, over 20,400 acres in Shan State and over 20,000 acres in Sagaing Region, according to the association. — NN/KK



Fuel bowzers spearhead oil distribution across regions and states.

FUEL oil prices declined below K3,000 per litre in the domestic market.

The set fuel prices were K3,050 per litre of Octane 92, K3,110 for Octane 95, K2,590 for diesel and K3,200 for premium diesel during the week from 11 to 17 April. Then, the prices dipped to K2,740 per litre of Octane 92, K2,800 for Octane 95, K2,390 for diesel and K2,960 for premium diesel this week ending 24 April, showing a decrease of K200-K310 per litre compared to those of the previous week.

The price index set by Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS), the pricing basis for many refined products in Southeast Asia, influences the domestic fuel prices, according to the Supervisory Committee on Oil Import, Storage and Distribution of Fuel Oil. Under the Supervisory Committee on Oil Import, Storage and Distribution of Fuel Oil, the Petroleum Products Regulatory Department has been issuing daily reference wholesale prices to ensure price stability for energy consumers.

The committee is inspecting the fuel stations to see whether they are overcharging. Authorities are taking action against those retailers of fuel stations under the Petroleum and Petroleum Products Law 2017 if they are found overcharging rather than the set reference rate. As per the statement, 90 per cent of fuel oil in Myanmar is imported, while the remaining 10 per cent is produced locally. Domestic fuel prices are highly correlated with international prices. The State is steering the market to mitigate the loss experienced by the importers, sellers and energy consumers. Consequently, the government is trying to distribute the oil at a reasonable price compared to that of regional countries.

Some countries levied higher tax rates and hiked oil prices than Myanmar’s. However, Malaysia’s oil sector receives government subsidies, and the prices are about 60 per cent lower than those of Myanmar. Every country lays down different policy patterns to fix oil prices, the Supervisory Committee on Oil Import, Storage and Distribution of Fuel Oil stated. — NN/KK

UMFCCI leads post-quake building assessments

THE Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) has been providing relief supplies to quake survivors and conducting post-earthquake usability supplies in schools and other buildings.

UMFCCI and affiliated associations donated medicines, food and consumer goods to quake survivors in Mandalay through the Mandalay Region Chambers of Commerce and Industry on 15 April.

Before the beginning of the academic year, the federation also carried out building assessments in six earthquake-stricken primary schools and three high schools in Sagaing Region and helped maintain the buildings starting from the Thingyan holidays.

Moreover, an earthquake clinic led by the UMFCCI in collaboration with the earthquake committee run by the Federation of Myanmar Engineering Society, Sagaing Region Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the residents, was formed on 12 April to check quake-hit buildings for usability.

UMFCCI is carrying out rescue activities in collaboration with affiliated associations and partner organizations. The federation has also formed the UMFCCI Earthquake Relief and Rehabilitation Task Force to help those affected by the earthquake. It will link with local organizations in quake-hit regions to help the earthquake survivors.

Furthermore, it also announced that it welcomes well-wishers, businesspeople and domestic and international organizations to join the funding of the UMFCCI directly through contact numbers (09 776999920 and 09 776999940 of the Member Affairs Department, and 09 450200640 of Public Relations Department). — NN/KK

Strictly follow the construction guidelines for the safety of buildings

THE earthquake that struck Mandalay on 28 March 2025 stands as the second most powerful and the deadliest in Myanmar’s history. As of 18 April, official reports confirmed 3,668 deaths, 4,824 injuries, and 126 people still missing. The destruction is deeply heartbreaking, and it underscores the urgent need to prepare more effectively for future disasters.

Although Myanmar’s building codes require structures to withstand earthquakes up to magnitude 8, many buildings have not been constructed to this standard. Consequently, these buildings suffered severe damage, resulting in unnecessary injuries and deaths. In response, authorities have reinforced the mandate that all new structures must meet the minimum requirement of resisting magnitude 8 quakes.

This earthquake serves as a stark reminder: negligence in construction has devastating consequences. Going forward, all stakeholders – from builders to inspectors – must uphold quality and safety at every stage. Only through systematic and responsible construction can Myanmar protect its people and infrastructure from future disasters.

The Mandalay quake revealed serious shortcomings in construction practices over the years. High-rise buildings constructed with proper engineering methods generally suffered only minor damage. However, those built without adhering to standard safety protocols collapsed completely, causing heavy casualties and destruction. This loss could have been avoided with stricter compliance and oversight.

A strong example of successful earthquake-resistant design is the Maravijaya Buddha Image and its throne in Nay Pyi Taw, which emerged from the quake undamaged. Minor damage occurred at other religious buildings, but overall, the structures built with long-term durability and disaster resilience in mind proved their worth. The use of modern engineering and planning ensured the integrity of these significant monuments.

To minimize future loss, construction must be carried out with systematic planning and close adherence to safety standards. Government bodies responsible for approving building projects have already set clear requirements for design, materials, and execution. These guidelines must be followed not only before construction but throughout the building process. Once completed, structures must be inspected to ensure compliance. If violations are found, appropriate action must be taken.

Responsibility lies not only with construction companies but also with the inspectors and authorities overseeing these projects. While some contractors follow proper procedures and work with qualified professionals, others cut corners in pursuit of profit, leading to tragic outcomes. Using unqualified workers or ignoring building standards puts countless lives at risk. As such, those responsible for the construction field have to consider that their unprofessional actions can lead to regrettable casualties for residents.

THERE is something beautifully complex about being human. We carry hearts capable of deep compassion, minds that can build and destroy, and emotions that stretch between joy and sorrow. In life, we all face problems. Some are small, like a broken cup or a forgotten appointment. Others are much heavier: loss, fear, tragedy. Regardless of the size, how we respond to problems shapes who we are.

We humans, when faced with a problem, tend to resort to blaming and trying to easily resolve the issue. By blaming someone or a certain situation, we often attempt to escape from the problem. Blaming someone is very easy. Some even form groups to blame others. However, blaming does not solve the problem. Blame gives us a false sense of power. It creates the illusion that if we find the cause of the pain outside of ourselves, we can feel better. But this is not healing. This is escape.

Blame puts a wall between people. It pushes away understanding, kindness, and the chance to grow. Instead of constantly blaming someone, try to put ourselves in their shoes for a moment. If we think, “What if I were in their place?” we will gain the ability to understand why they acted in a certain way. Once we understand someone, we can no longer blame them. When we begin to feel their fear, their confusion, their reasons, we

see them not as a problem, but as another human, like us.

Sadly, it’s not always others we blame. Some people blame themselves. With words like “I’m incompetent,” “I’m useless,” or “It’s my fault,” they treat themselves so harshly that they cannot recover. The result is a loss of self-respect, feelings of inferiority, self-doubt, and a struggle with a lack of confidence. These quiet battles happen in the silence of people’s hearts. We might walk past someone who looks fine on the outside, but inside, we are hurting from our own harsh inner voice.

We need to learn a new language of love for ourselves. Whenever we make a mistake, try treating ourselves with forgiveness and understanding. Think, “I made a mistake this time, but I’ll forgive myself. I’ll learn from this mistake”. With such relieving thoughts, we should give ourselves a second chance. Someone who can avoid blaming themselves and instead offer understanding and forgiveness is also someone who respects and loves themselves.

This doesn’t mean we never take responsibility. It means we take it with kindness. We allow ourselves to grow instead of shrink. We allow the pain to teach, not to punish. Forgiving ourselves is not weakness – it is emotional courage.

Then there are those who blame their circumstances. Some people blame the circumstances.

The Art of Being Gentle in a Not-So-Gentle World

By Laura Htet (UDE)

They say things like, “Because of this situation, I lost my opportunities,” or “I’m stuck and can’t move forward,” blaming the circumstances and thereby giving themselves an excuse to feel free. It’s true, life can be incredibly unfair. Sometimes people do everything they can, but the door still doesn’t open. Opportunities disappear. Time runs out. And pain arrives.

But even then, we have to remember — circumstances are often beyond our control. We cannot decide when the rain will fall or when the earth will shake. In reality, external circumstances are things we cannot control. No matter how difficult or obstructive external conditions may be, we must find our own liberation. The person who can control and manage their mind is the one who can find freedom, no matter the circumstances.

This truth has become clearer recently, especially after the earthquake that shook many parts of our country, Myanmar. In just a few seconds, homes

were damaged, hearts were broken, and fear settled in. It was not something anyone could have prevented or expected. It was frightening. It was painful. For many, it felt like life suddenly fell apart.

And in times like these, when the ground under our feet becomes unstable — literally and emotionally — we look for something to hold on to. Some



Embrace kindness, patience, and understanding daily. Allow healing and growth, teaching that pain leads to new beginnings and insights. ILLUSTRATION: CONCEPT ART

But in these moments, what we need most is not blame. What we need is compassion. For others and for ourselves. We need to say to each other, “I see your pain. I feel it too.” We need to say to ourselves, “You’re allowed to feel this. And you’ll get through it.”

There is something deep and unshakable in the human spirit. Despite the broken walls and broken hearts, people still helped each other. They brought water, food, blankets, and even just a warm smile. Some made space in their homes for those who had lost theirs. These actions may seem small, but they are powerful. They are the signs of people who chose not to stay in fear or blame, but who chose love, connection, and courage.

This is the power we carry inside of us. The power to respond with kindness even when the world feels cruel. The power to choose peace even when the noise outside is loud. The power to rebuild not just houses, but also trust, understanding, and inner strength.

We do not have control over every event in our lives. Earthquakes will come. Accidents will happen. People will make mistakes – so will we. But in all of this, we do have control over something very important: our hearts. We can choose what kind of heart we want to have.

A blaming heart is tired and afraid. A blaming heart pushes others away and makes the world

feel darker. But a heart that seeks to understand, that chooses to forgive, that learns and grows — that kind of heart lights up even the darkest moment.

So today, if we find ourselves blaming someone, pause and ask ourselves, “Do we really know what they’ve been through?” If we find ourselves blaming ourselves, take a deep breath. Tell ourselves, “We are learning. We are trying. We are worthy.” And if we find ourselves blaming our circumstances, remember, that the strongest light shines when the surroundings are darkest. We still have the power to move, to think, to feel, and to love.

Life may not always be gentle. But we can be. Towards others and towards ourselves. That is how we rebuild — not just our homes, but our humanity.

Let’s carry this spirit with us as we move forward. Not just during times of crisis, but every day. Let us be gentle with our words, kind with our thoughts, and patient with our hearts. Let us give space for healing and time for growth. Let us teach ourselves and each other that pain is not the end – it is the beginning of understanding.

And when the next challenge comes, as it surely will, may we be ready — not with blame, but with strength. Not with anger, but with love. Not with fear, but with the quiet courage that lives in every human soul.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

My Esteemed Editor-in-Chief,

Before 2018, I had been purchasing and reading your newspaper through a local agent until I stopped this practice. In truth, I am an avid reader who eagerly looks forward to your daily publication. The reason I stopped buying the physical newspaper (hard copy) was that I discovered your newspaper available online as a PDF file. I downloaded it and found that reading it on my computer using Portable Document Format software was remarkably convenient.

By the end of that year, I discontinued my subscription through the agent. Instead, every morning before dawn, I would sit at my computer, download the newspaper, and read it with great satisfaction. Now, in 2025, I have been reading your newspaper this way for over six years. As someone who wakes up

early, I find great joy in reading the newspaper in the quiet of the early morning – it has become a cherished part of my routine.

However, this routine came to a halt on the morning of 30 March. As usual, after my morning prayers, I sat at my computer to download the newspaper. Despite a stable internet connection, I couldn’t access your newspaper’s website. I also tried accessing other state-owned newspapers, such as The Mirror and The Myanma Alinn, but their websites were inaccessible too. I checked my internet connection, which was working fine, and even accessed YouTube without any issues. It was surprising to find that only the websites of state-owned newspapers were affected.

The 30th and 31st of March passed, and the month ended without resolution. On 1 and 2 April, the websites remained inaccessible. By then, I hadn’t read a newspaper for four days,

and it left me feeling restless. Reading the newspaper is an integral part of my daily routine, and its absence made me feel unsettled, almost anxious.

In my frustration, I had an idea. I immediately called the newspaper agent, but the phone was switched off, and I couldn’t get through. Determined, I decided to visit the agent’s house in person. I hired a motorcycle taxi and went to his home. Fortunately, I met the agent and expressed my interest in subscribing to an English-language newspaper starting at the beginning of the month. The agent informed me that only two or three people in our town read English newspapers. They were unsure if they could increase the order but promised to contact the newspaper office to check. With that uncertain response, I returned home.

To my surprise and relief, the next evening, the agent delivered the newspapers for 1 and 2 April. Though they arrived late, I was grateful to reconnect with my reading habit, and it felt like a weight had been lifted. In the days that followed, I heard news that an earthquake had disrupted access to government ministry websites, including those of state-owned newspapers. I realized this must have caused the issue. I assumed it might

take another month to resolve, but to my delight, on the evening of 10 April, my daughter, who was using the computer, told me that the newspaper websites were accessible again.

I quickly checked the website on my phone, and indeed, it worked perfectly. I was overjoyed. I am deeply grateful to the workers who tirelessly restored access within just ten days despite the challenges caused by the earthquake. Now, I have happily resumed my early morning routine of waking up and reading the newspaper, just as before.

Sincerely,
Min Zan



NATIONAL

278 undocumented foreign entrants detained during telecom fraud crackdown



Immigration officials processing deportation of undocumented foreign nationals.

MYANMAR authorities detained 278 foreign nationals yesterday for illegally entering the Kyaukkhet area in Myawady, Kayin State, via illegal routes.

Between 30 January and 18 April 2025, a total of 9,018 illegal immigrants were identified and detained in Myanmar. Of this number, 7,288 individuals have already been deported through Thailand to their respective countries, while arrangements are being made to deport the remaining 1,729 individuals. These individuals are currently under detention while awaiting repatriation.

The Myanmar government takes strict action against illegal online fraud and scam operations, particularly in border areas. Authorities are collaborating with neighbouring countries and international organizations to crack down on illegal online gambling networks and telecom fraud, ensuring effective investigations and legal actions against those involved. — MNA/KTZH

Illegal commercial goods, foodstuffs and unregistered vehicle seized

UNDER the supervision of the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee, joint inspection teams led by the Customs Department are taking effective action against illegal trade under the law. A Myanmar national arriving from Malaysia on flight 8M 504/SF-3581 was found carrying foodstuffs without valid supporting documents, valued at approximately K2.8 million at Yangon International Airport on 14 April 2025. Similarly, another Myanmar national arriving from Thailand on the same flight number (8M 504/SF-3581) was found carrying one type of commercial item without valid documentation, with an estimated value of K10 million at the same airport on 17 April 2025. The total value of the two seizures amounted to K12.8 million. Authorities are taking action per Customs procedures.

Supervised by the Sagaing Region Illegal Trade Eradication Task Force, a combined team inspected Natlu Htaikpan Ward, Monywa, on 18 April 2025. The team seized one unlicensed Hijet, estimated to be worth K5 million. Legal action is being taken under the Import and Export Law.

In total, three separate cases involving the seizure of goods and an unregistered vehicle, valued at approximately K17.8 million, were recorded on 14, 17 and 18 April 2025. Such illegal imports can reduce the competitiveness of legitimate traders and cause significant revenue losses to the State. As a result, relevant authorities will intensify inspections and enforcement measures to prevent illegal import activities.

Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee



Confiscated items at Yangon International Airport.

Thai Embassy urges visa applicants to follow guidelines

THE Royal Thai Embassy in Yangon has announced that visa applicants should carefully read the embassy's guidelines before applying.

Visa applicants must apply for an e-visa at <https://www.thaievisa.go.th/>, make an appointment for payment at <https://www.thaiconsularyangon.com/evisapay/index.php/make-an-appointments>, and make the payment at the Thai Embassy. E-visa must be applied for at least 15 days before the departure date. The embassy will not be responsible for the applicant's pre-arranged travel, and the visa process will take approximately 10 to 15 days after receiving the necessary documents.

E-visa is for a single application only, and multiple applications may result in a longer processing period than 15 days. Applicants are advised to carefully review the information and documents before applying, as inaccurate information may result in difficulties in entering Thailand.

If a rejected applicant wishes to reapply, he/she must notify the embassy's visa counter before paying the visa fee to cancel the incorrect visa application. With no notification, the newly applied visa may be rejected again.

To change the visa type, a current visa must be asked to cancel before paying the visa fee. After paying the fee, the Visa Dashboard and email must be checked regularly, and the embassy will send appointments via email. If no reply is received to an email for two consecutive weeks, the visa will be cancelled.

Applicants are responsible for their personal information, and any use of false information or forged documents will result in the visa being rejected, and the applicant may be denied entry into Thailand. — MT/ZN



The outpatient ward at the new Yangon General Hospital.

Rehabilitation outpatient ward relocates to new Yangon General Hospital

THE outpatient ward of the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation of the Yangon General Hospital has been relocated to the new YGH's four-storey building on 10 April.

Medical service for outpatients will begin on 22 April every Tuesday and Thursday on the ground floor of the new four-storey building.

Rehabilitation exercises and treatment by devices will be provided on weekdays from 8 am to 12 pm regularly. — MT/ZS

Japan govt mistakenly stops 20,000 My Number-linked accounts

The suspension occurred due to erroneous data from a credit union association, which claimed the accounts were unusable.



A sample "My Number" card supplied by the Internal Affairs and Communications Ministry. **PHOTO: KYODO/FILE**

JAPAN'S Digital Agency said Thursday it had mistakenly suspended the use of around 20,000 bank accounts that people had registered under the "My Number" national identification system to receive state benefits.

The registrations were disabled last Friday based on erroneous data from an association of credit unions saying the accounts were not usable, it said, adding that restoration work is underway. Recipients of public funds

such as pension payments and child benefits can voluntarily link their bank accounts to their ID numbers, and the agency checks with banks and other financial institutions to see if the accounts have not been closed or suspended.

The agency invalidated the registrations of the accounts on the system and notified the account owners of the move before discovering that the information provided by the Tokyo-based association was wrong and included usable accounts.

Since the My Number ID system was introduced in 2016, a series of personal information leaks and registration errors have come to light, such as in 2023 when some bank accounts were found linked to the wrong ID cards. — Kyodo

704 climbers permitted to climb Nepal peaks this spring

NEPAL has issued permits to 704 climbers, including 156 females, for ascending 21 mountains in the country during the

spring climbing season which runs through May, an official said on Thursday. Among them, 253 males

and 58 females were allowed to scale Mount Qomolangma, the world's tallest peak at 8,848.86 metres, which straddles Nepal and China.

"We have been receiving applications daily, mainly for Mount Qomolangma," Lladhar Awasthi, director at the Department of Tourism, told Xinhua.

Nepal has earned US\$ 3.84 million in revenues by issuing the permits, with \$3.38 million from Mount Qomolangma alone.

The Nepali government is to raise foreign nationals' climbing fee for Mount Qomolangma from \$5,500 to \$7,500 from 1 September, when the autumn climbing season starts. — Xinhua



Mount Qomolangma, the world's highest peak, is seen in this aerial photo taken on 14 May 2020. **PHOTO: XINHUA/FILE**

US Homeland Security threatens to strip Harvard University's eligibility to enrol international students

US Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem has threatened to revoke Harvard University's eligibility to enrol international students if it does not turn over records on international students' "illegal and violent activities", the agency has said according to CNN.

As per a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) news release on Wednesday, Noem "wrote a scathing letter demanding detailed records on Harvard's foreign student visa holders' illegal and violent activities by 30 April 2025, or face immediate loss of Student and Exchange Visitor Programme (SEVP) certification."

The certification enables

universities to issue forms to admitted students from abroad that they can use for applying visa to enter the US, according to DHS. As per the university's data, 6,793 international students study in Harvard University and comprise 27.2 per cent of its enrolment in the 2024-25 academic year. On Wednesday, DHS announced the cancellation of two federal grants worth US\$2.7 million to Harvard University. In a statement, a Harvard spokesperson said that the university is aware about the letter. However, they stand by their previous statement that they "will not surrender its independence or relinquish its constitutional rights". — ANI



People walk through a gate as they exit Harvard Yard on the campus of Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on 15 April 2025. **PHOTO: JOSEPH PREZIOSO/AFP**

Historical artefacts of 16-17 centuries found in Moscow

NEAR the Church of Elijah the Prophet of Obydenny in the centre of the capital, archaeologists have discovered the rarest find of the 16th-early 17th century – a double-sided seal-matrix. This is reported by the official portal of the Moscow Mayor and Moscow Government, according to TV BRICS.

On one side it shows a lion, on the other – a warrior with a sword and dagger, but not in full height, as it was customary, and at the waist. This format is extremely rare and may shed light on the peculiarities of local sym-

bolism of the late Middle Ages. In Obydenskie street the researchers also found an overlay of coloured metal of the XVII century with the image of a lion. According to experts, such elements could have served as decorations for belts or bags. All artefacts will be transferred to museums.

According to Moscow Mayor Sergey Sobyenin, over the past 14 years, the capital's researchers have found more than 120 thousand unique items, with more than 47 thousand of them added to the museum fund over the past five years. — ANI

ECONOMY

WORLD

India poised to become trusted bridge of global connectivity through India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor: Piyush Goyal

Goyal highlighted that IMEC will link not only trade but also civilizations and cultures from Southeast Asia to the Gulf and Central Europe.



IMEC will include railways, roadways, energy pipelines, and clean energy infrastructure, including undersea cables. The photo shows Jammu-Srinagar highway. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

UNION Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, addressed the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) High-Level Roundtable on Connectivity and Economic Growth in New Delhi on Wednesday, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry said in a release on Wednesday.

During the event, Goyal said that the IMEC is a powerful endorsement of the leadership and partnership of India, Middle East and East Europe a very forward and visionary concept that has caught the fancy of the world.

As per the statement, the Minister stated that IMEC is not merely a trade route, but a modern-day Silk Route — a partnership of equals — that fosters synergy, connectivity, and inclusive prosperity. “It will bring down logistics costs by up to 30 per cent, reduce transport time by 40 per cent, and create seamless trade linkages across continents,” he said.

He added, “We will not only be linking trade; we will be linking civilisations and cultures — from Southeast Asia to the Gulf, from the Middle East to Central Europe.”

Highlighting its potential reach, Goyal added that IMEC could even enhance connectivity to Africa through the Middle East. — ANI

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ukraine, US sign memorandum on minerals deal

UKRAINE and the United States signed a memorandum on minerals deal on Thursday, Ukraine’s First Deputy Prime Minister and Economy Minister Yulia Svyrydenko said.

“Ukraine and the United States of America signed a Memorandum, which attests to the constructive collaboration of our teams and the intention to finalize and conclude an agreement that will benefit both our peoples,” Svyrydenko wrote in a Facebook post.

According to the post, the document was signed by Svyrydenko in Kyiv and US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent in Washington.

Svyrydenko said the two countries will finalize the text of the minerals agreement and sign it in the near future, adding that the agreement will be subject to “ratification by parliaments”.

Earlier on Thursday, US President Donald Trump said the agreement could be signed next week. — Xinhua

US tariff-related uncertainty to reduce Italy’s GDP growth, employment: govt entities

UNCERTAINTY sparked by dramatic changes in the United States’ tariff regime will have an oversized impact on the Italian economy, with two reports released Thursday predicting reduced economic growth and the loss of tens of thousands of jobs.

In a hearing on the government’s budget plan Thursday, ISTAT, Italy’s National Statistics Institute, predicted the current situation would likely reduce the country’s economic growth by 0.2 per cent this year and 0.3 per cent in 2026, significant levels considering ISTAT’s economic growth prognostications are for just 0.6 per cent and 0.8 per cent this year and next, respectively.

Meanwhile, in the remarks at the same hearing, Lilia Cavallari, chair of the Parliamentary Budget Office, or the UPB, said the US tariffs would “impact nearly every sector of the Italian economy,” saying that their impacts would reduce employment in Italy by “around 68,000 jobs”.

The estimates were released the same day Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni was in Washington to meet with US President Donald Trump, with the tariff policy the main item on the agenda.

Meloni is the first European Union leader to meet Trump since the US leader unveiled unexpectedly harsh global tariffs on 2 April. Trump’s initial tariffs on products imported to the United States from the European Union were set to be 20 per cent, though that policy was quickly paused for 90 days. — Xinhua

Japanese low-cost eateries thrive in China as economy sputters

CHINA’S dining scene is thriving as Japanese chains like Torikizoku, Sushiro, and Saizeriya capitalize on economic challenges by offering affordable dining options. Torikizoku, a popular yakitori chain from Osaka, opened its first location in Shanghai in late February, pricing all items at a uniform 18 yuan (\$2.50). This pricing strategy allows customers to enjoy a variety of dishes without worrying about costs, contributing to its immediate popularity.

The store manager reported a two-and-a-half-hour wait for about 200 customers on opening day, many of whom were familiar with the chain from Japan.

Local diners appreciate the value, with one 28-year-old praising the affordability compared to typical yakitori prices in Shanghai. A graduate student expressed satisfaction at being able to enjoy Japanese cuisine for around 100 yuan. Amid rising unemployment and a stagnant economy, private consumption in China has declined, with the consumer price index rising only 0.2 per cent year-on-year in 2023 and 2024.

Torikizoku aims to expand to 650 stores in China, mirroring its presence in Japan. Sushiro and Saizeriya are also experiencing growth, with Sushiro expanding to 51 outlets and Saizeriya operating over 400 stores, targeting 7,000 to 10,000 locations in the future. — Kyodo



Diners enjoy “yakitori” skewered grilled chicken at Torikizoku’s first mainland China location in Shanghai in March 2025. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Proposed US pharmaceutical tariffs a ‘lose-lose’, say UK experts

THE United States should avoid imposing tariffs on pharmaceutical imports, as such measures would disrupt global medical supply chains, drive up health-care costs for American consumers, and undermine crucial international scientific collaboration, a senior British trade official has warned.

In an exclusive interview with Xinhua, William Bain, head of trade policy at the British Chambers of Commerce, said that proposals by former US President Donald Trump

to introduce a 25 per cent tariff on imported medicines could “deliver a serious blow to Britain’s pharmaceutical industry and threaten longstanding transatlantic partnerships.” “There are currently zero tariffs on pharmaceutical drugs in the US,” Bain said. “So, if across-the-board tariffs were introduced at a rate of 25 per cent, the economic impact on the sector in the United Kingdom (UK) and the Republic of Ireland would be considerable.” — Xinhua

US halts Equinor’s wind farm construction off New York

NORWEGIAN energy company Equinor said Thursday that the United States had ordered a halt to construction of its wind farm project off the New York coast, citing an insufficient environmental analysis by the previous administration of president Joe Biden.

“Last night we received a notification from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) regarding our Empire Wind 1 project, which has been in construction since 2024,” Equinor told AFP in an email.

“We will engage directly with BOEM and the Department of Interior to



Equinor has stated it will engage with the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) and the Interior Department to clarify the issues surrounding the permits and to determine the path forward for the project. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ AFP/FILE**

understand the questions raised about the permits we have received from authorities,” it said.

Equinor added that it would “not comment about the potential consequences until we know more”. — AFP

US judge rules Google illegally monopolizes digital advertising market

A US federal judge ruled Thursday that Google violated antitrust law by monopolizing the open-web digital advertising markets, marking another major setback for the tech giant in its antitrust litigation.

According to the US District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, the company “harmed Google’s publishing customers, the competitive process, and, ultimately, consumers of information on the open web.”

“This is a landmark

victory in the ongoing fight to stop Google from monopolizing the digital public square,” US Attorney-General Pamela Bondi said in a statement. Assistant Attorney-General Abigail Slater of the Justice Department’s Antitrust Division said that Google’s unlawful dominance allows them to “censor and even deplatform American voices,” noting that “at the same time, Google destroyed and hid information that exposed its illegal conduct.” — Xinhua



This is a landmark victory in the ongoing fight to stop Google from monopolizing the digital public square. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Japan court orders govt to pay damages over asbestos disease

A Japanese court on Thursday ordered the state to pay damages to the surviving family of a former labourer who developed pneumoconiosis after working in a factory that handled asbestos, overturning a lower court ruling that dismissed the claim.

The point of contention in the trial at the Osaka

High Court was when the 20-year statute of limitations on a damages claim begins.

The court, which awarded six million yen (\$42,000), including late charges as sought by the family, found that the government’s decision in 2019 to change the point of commencement of the statute of limitations was

inappropriate.

The government did not make public its 2019 decision to change the starting point to when illnesses from asbestos exposure were recognized, rather than when local labour bureaus acknowledged health damage, as had been the case before.

The deceased labourer in Amagasaki, Hyogo

Prefecture, was diagnosed with pneumoconiosis in October 1999, and the harm to his health was recognized by authorities in May 2000. He filed a damages claim in May 2020, but the government deemed him ineligible for state compensation under a 2019 revision to the statute of limitations. — Kyodo

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V OTANA BHUM VOY.NO. (225N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V OTANA BHUM VOY.NO. (225N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **19-4-2025** 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 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm 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 LINE

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V KUO LIN VOY.NO. (0UVCYS1NC)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V KUO LIN VOY. NO. (0UVCYS1NC)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **19-4-2025** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/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 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm 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 CMA-CGM SHIPPING LINE

GLOBAL VIEWPOINTS:
FEATURED REPORTS FOR THIS WEEK

ITALIAN Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni heads to Washington for a high-stakes meeting with Donald Trump, aiming to leverage their personal rapport to defuse trade tensions and shield Italy from looming US tariffs on EU goods.

Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni meets Donald Trump Thursday in Washington, hoping a personal charm offensive can help convince the US president to cut a more favourable deal on EU tariffs.

The far-right Meloni — described by Trump as a “fantastic leader” who shares many of his conservative views — is the first European leader to meet Trump since his trade war with the bloc began.

She has looked to maintain ties with the mercurial leader despite the widespread disruption caused by his tariff policies, even while criticizing as “wrong” his 20 per cent duties on EU exports, which he later suspended for 90 days.

Amid the uncertainty, Meloni has called for cool heads, urging Brussels not to retaliate while casting herself as the only EU leader able to potentially de-escalate the conflict through her personal relationship with the US president.

Her bilateral meeting with Trump, scheduled for noon at the White House, does not come without risk, however.

Italian newspapers on Wednesday floated the possibility that Meloni could end up in a trap similar to the White

Italy's Meloni in Washington seeking EU tariff deal from Trump

Meloni has urged calm and called on the EU not to retaliate, positioning herself as a potential bridge to de-escalate the conflict through her relationship with Trump.



Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni will try to convince US President Donald Trump to cut his tariffs on EU goods. PHOTO: AFP

House meeting in February with Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky, in which Trump and his Vice-President JD Vance berated their guest in front of reporters.

Meloni has been a staunch ally of Ukraine and Zelensky since Russia's invasion of the country in 2022, most recently calling Moscow's Palm Sunday attack on the city of Sumy “horrible and vile”.

The only EU leader to be invited to Trump's inauguration in January, Meloni has acknowledged the uncertainty weighing on her quick visit.

“We know we're going through a difficult period, let's see how it goes in the coming hours. I don't feel any pressure, as you can imagine, for my next two days, let's say,” she joked at an awards ceremony for Italian goods Tuesday.

“Surely, I am aware of what I represent and I am aware of what I am defending,” she added. — AFP

Gaza 'annexation' part of military strategy: Israel Defence Minister Katz

ISRAEL'S Defence Minister, Israel Katz, has affirmed that Gaza's annexation was part of a military strategy and troops will remain in the security zones created in Lebanon and Syria indefinitely, Al Jazeera reported.

Defence Minister Israel Katz said the Israeli military will continue to block humanitarian aid from entering Gaza in order to pressure Hamas to surrender.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on Thursday stated that 3,696 Palestinian children were newly admitted for acute malnutrition, which marked a stark increase compared with the

number in February, which was 2,027.

“Food consumption in Gaza has sharply deteriorated due to the blockade on the entry of humanitarian aid and other critical supplies now in its seventh week,” OCHA said.

“Consumption of key food groups - such as meat, poultry, dairy, vegetables, and fruits - remains critically low,” it added.

The lack of access to water in Gaza is also fuelling “a severe survival crisis with far-reaching consequences for public health and protection. Water is essential for survival, yet access to safe water has become dangerously limited,” the UN Humanitarian Affairs agency said. — ANI

Pandemic agreement: key points

Countries commit to sharing data on emerging pathogens and ensuring equitable access to resulting health products, including vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics.

AFTER more than three years of thorny negotiations, World Health Organization member states finalized early Wednesday a major agreement on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.

The WHO Pandemic Agree-

ment aims to enhance global pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response, addressing the inequities highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Guided by principles of equity, solidarity, and transparency, the agreement emphasizes respect for state sovereignty.

A key component is the proposed Pathogen Access and Benefit-Sharing System (PABS), which facilitates rapid sharing of pathogen data with pharmaceutical companies to expedite the development of vaccines and treatments. Countries will commit to sharing data on emerging pathogens, ensuring equitable access to resulting health products.

The agreement also addresses technology transfer, advocating for “mutually agreed” terms rather than mandatory transfers, with incentives to promote sharing of production know-how, especially to developing nations. — AFP



The agreement promotes technology transfer on mutually agreed terms, supports building national pandemic preparedness capacities, and encourages routine immunization and biological risk management. PHOTO: SARAH PABST/WHO

SPORTS

HARRY Maguire's dramatic extra-time header capped a wild 7-6 aggregate victory for Manchester United over Lyon on Thursday, sending them into the Europa League semifinals alongside Tottenham and Norwegian underdogs Bodo/Glimt.

Harry Maguire headed in the winner as Manchester United produced an astonishing extra-time comeback on Thursday to beat Lyon and set up a Europa League semifinal against Athletic Bilbao, while Tottenham Hotspur are also through to the last four after beating Eintracht Frankfurt.

Maguire's header in added time in extra time gave United a 5-4 win on the night at Old Trafford, and a 7-6 triumph on aggregate. They appeared to be cruising towards the last four when, after a 2-2 first-leg draw

Man Utd beat Lyon in Europa League epic, Spurs and Athletic Bilbao reach



last week in France, Manuel Ugarte turned in an Alejandro Garnacho cutback on 10 minutes and then Diogo Dalot fired home in first-half injury time.

Bruno Fernandes had hit the bar with a brilliant volley in between, and United had chances to kill the tie before Corentin Tolisso's headed goal on 71 minutes gave Lyon hope. — AFP

Harry Maguire (L) celebrates with teammates after scoring Manchester United's dramatic late winner against Lyon. **PHOTO: AFP**

Liverpool poised for Premier League coronation, Leicester, Ipswich for relegation



Aston Villa are targeting a return to the Champions League next season. **PHOTO: AFP**

LIVERPOOL could seal the Premier League on Sunday should the runaway leaders condemn Leicester to relegation and Arsenal suffer a Champions League hangover

by losing at Ipswich.

Victory for the Gunners at Portman Road could also see Ipswich mathematically relegated should West Ham and Wolves win.

Unlike the battles for the league title and to avoid the drop, the race for a place in next season's Champions League is set to go down to the wire.

Just five points separate Newcastle in third from seventh-placed Aston Villa ahead of their clash at Villa Park.

AFP Sports looks at the major talking points ahead of this weekend's action. — AFP

Flick demands answers from La Liga for 'joke' schedule

BARCELONA coach Hansi Flick on Friday demanded to meet with La Liga officials over what he called a "joke" schedule, saying Spanish football was failing to take care of players.

The Catalan giants' La Liga game at Real Valladolid on Saturday, 3 May will kick off at 9:00 pm (1900 GMT) after being moved from an afternoon start on Sunday, 4 May.

That rescheduling still gives them less than three days to prepare for the pivotal

Champions League semifinal return leg at Inter Milan on 6 May.

"I want to see this guy who's responsible for that. For me it's a joke," Flick told a news conference on Friday. — AFP

Boxing: Nakatani, Nishida set for world title unification bout

WBC bantamweight champion Junto Nakatani and his IBF counterpart Ryosuke Nishida will square off to unify their world championship belts on 8 June at Tokyo's Ariake Colosseum, organizers said Friday.

Nakatani has verbally agreed with undisputed super bantamweight champion Naoya "Monster" Inoue to fight next year in what would be one of the most intriguing all-Japanese matchups in boxing history.

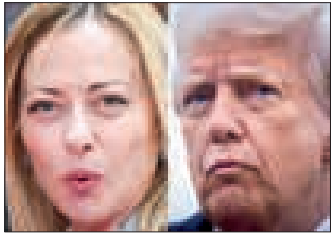
Nakatani, 27, has a 30-0 record with 23 wins by knockout, while 28-year-old Nishida is 10-0 with two KOs.

"I've been looking for this kind of fight. I'm ready to raise the level of all my skills," Nakatani said.

Nakatani is the second-highest ranked Japanese boxer in Ring magazine's pound-for-pound rankings at eighth. Inoue sits second, behind Ukraine's Oleksandr Usyk. — Kyodo



WBC bantamweight champion Junto Nakatani (L) and his IBF counterpart Ryosuke Nishida pose for a photo in Tokyo on 18 April 2025, following a press conference for their bout to unify their world championship belts on 8 June at Tokyo's Ariake Colosseum. **PHOTO: KYODO**



PM Modi, Elon Musk discuss immense potential for collaboration in technology and innovation

The talks come at a time when Tesla is poised to enter the Indian market, with ongoing negotiations for a bilateral trade agreement between India and the US underway.

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi held a telephonic conversation with Tesla CEO Elon Musk on Friday and discussed the immense potential for collaboration in the technology and innovation sectors.

PM Modi expressed India's commitment to advancing India's partnership with the US in these domains. PM Modi said that they held talks on various issues, including the topics they covered during their meeting in the US in February this year.

In a post on X, PM Modi stated, "Spoke to elonmusk and talked about various issues, including the topics we covered during our meeting in Washington DC earlier this year. We discussed the immense potential for collaboration in the areas of technology and innovation. India remains committed to advancing our partnerships with the US in these domains."

Earlier in February, Elon Musk called on PM Modi at Blair House in Washington, DC. During the meeting, PM Modi and Musk discussed strengthening collaboration between entities of India and the US in innovation, space exploration, artificial intelligence, and sustainable



They explored opportunities in innovation, space exploration, artificial intelligence, and sustainable development.
PHOTO: ANI

development. PM Modi and Elon Musk also spoke about opportunities to deepen cooperation in emerging technologies, entrepreneurship and good governance.

Musk, who heads the US Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), was accompanied by three of his children. — ANI

Moscow international film festival kicks off in Russian capital



Guests pose for photos as they arrive to attend the opening ceremony of the 47th Moscow International Film Festival in Moscow, Russia, on 17 April 2025. **PHOTO: ALEXANDER ZEMLIANICHENKO JR/XINHUA**

THE 47th Moscow International Film Festival (MIFF) opened Thursday in the Russian capital, with a dedicated BRICS film programme featured among its lineup.

Running through 24 April, the festival will showcase 200 films from 50 countries and regions, according to the organizing committee. A BRICS film festival, held within the framework of the MIFF, will highlight cinematic works from BRICS member states, including China, Russia, India, Iran, Egypt, and others. This year marks the 90th anniversary of the MIFF, which was first held in Moscow in 1935 and became regular since 1959. The main prize of the festival, Golden Saint George, is awarded for the best film of the competition programme. — Xinhua

HEROIC INTERVENTION

US citizen attempts to hijack plane in Belize, shot dead by passenger

A knife-wielding US citizen attempted to hijack a small Tropic Air plane in Belize on Thursday (local time), injuring three people before being shot dead by a fellow passenger, the New York Post reported, citing officials.

The incident occurred mid-air on a flight bound for San Pedro, when the 49-year-old suspect started attacking passengers with a knife.

The assailant was later identified as Akinyela Sawa Taylor, a US citizen, according to Belize Commissioner of Police Chester Williams.

Commissioner Williams praised the passenger who intervened and shot Taylor, calling them a "hero", as reported by the New York Post.

Authorities said that it remains unclear how Taylor managed to bring a knife onto the plane. Belizean officials have contacted the US Embassy for assistance in the ongoing investigation into the incident. — ANI